

**ABUSE OF POWER AND RESISTANCE IN SELECTED
POST-COLONIAL SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN NOVELS**

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ABSTRACT

Abuse of power, an excessive use of authority in governance or homes; and resistance, the attempt to confront such abuses, have occupied a prominent position in socio-political discourses in African literature. Existing studies on sub-Sahara African novels written from the late 1980s have focused on thematic concerns such as gender issues, disillusionments and exploitation, without giving adequate attention to the issue of abuse of power and resistance. This study, therefore, examined the forms of abuse of public and domestic power, and forms of resistance to the abuses in the selected novels, with a view to establishing the features of the abuse of power and resistance.

The study adopted subalternism, a variant of postcolonial theory which articulates the lopsided relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, and the strategies deployed by the latter to counter the excesses of the former. Five sub-Sahara African novels were selected based on their thematic affinity, relevance and period of study. The novels are Tiyaambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* (South Africa); Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit* (East Africa); Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Jude Dibia's *Unbridled* from West Africa where abuse of power and resistance is more prominent among novelists. The data were subjected to literary analysis.

Two forms of abuse of power were identified: public and domestic. Public abuse of power is manifested in democratic and military tyranny. Domestic power abuse is demonstrated through benevolent dictatorship, physical and sexual violence. Four forms of resistance were identified: activism, dissent and exile, strategic operations, and strategic confrontations. Public abuse of power in South Africa is manifested in democratic tyranny in *Smouldering Charcoal*. The government uses 'Youth Militia Group' to unleash terror on those who failed to obtain party cards, and unjustly arrests and detains unsuspecting citizens. This is resisted by the victims through political and trade union activism. In East Africa, *Snakepit* depicts military tyranny as General Bazooka uses his position to oppress the citizens, an act resisted by some members of the military through dissent, while others in the civil society go into exile. In West Africa, *Purple Hibiscus* dwells on domestic power abuse revealed through benevolent dictatorship in the home. The family head, though a generous man, brutalises members of his family. The victims resist through silence and poisoning him to death. While *Beyond the Horizon* captures domestic abuse of power in a Ghanaian family, as women are physically abused and raped, and they resist through secret service operations; *Unbridled* portrays abuse of power in terms of beatings, harassments and sexual abuses in the home. The victim resists through violent confrontations, and runs away.

Abuse of power, with differing manifestations, such as tyranny, dictatorship, physical and sexual abuses occur in civil, military and home contexts; and resistance through activism, dissent, strategic operations and violent physical confrontations in post-colonial sub-Sahara African novels.

Key words: Post-colonial abuse of power and resistance, sub-Sahara African novels, Public power, Domestic power,

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mr. K.O. Onyijen in the Department of English, University of Ibadan

Supervisor
Dr. R.O. Oriaku

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DEDICATION

To the only true God, Jehovah, the Supreme Spirit and the unbeatable and undefeatable

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Abuse of power, which is a high-handed use of authority in governance or homes; and resistance which is the attempt to confront such abuses have occupied a prominent position in socio-political discourses in African literature. African literature, the novel genre in particular, has been one the African has over the years used to capture his cultural and socio-political experiences as a way of documenting this for posterity. Since the late 1980s, the novel has assumed an imposing status as a set of writers emerged. Their emergence has given an impetus to the development of the sub-Saharan African novel in particular.

Adesanmi and Dunton (2005) labelled this set of writers as third generation writers. They argue that:

The mid-1980s witnessed the gradual emergence in Africa of a new generation of writers born mostly after 1960, the emblematic year of African political independence from colonialism. This generation, the first in Africa to be severed from the colonial event – except in cases like Zimbabwe and South Africa – came to be identified as writers of the third generation in Anglophone and Francophone critical traditions. The initial third generation names to come into international reckoning were not Nigerians: Uganda's Moses Isegawa, Ghana's Amma Darko, Zimbabwe's Yvonne Vera. Tsitsi Dangarembga, Cameroun's Calixthe Beyala and Djibouti's Abdourahman Ali Waberi became the canonized international icons of third generation writing at a time when the phenomenon was still largely confined to poetry in Nigeria. (14)

It is imperative to equally note that these African writers have drawn attention to the growth and development of African fiction with their works, which expose the socio-political and cultural landscape of Africa, relying in some cases on personal experiences in their homelands. The African in this context, is the writer whose creative vision is influenced by his African personality, while Africa is a geographical and cultural space. Ojaide (2009) buttresses this when he writes that:

Africa is a geographical, political, and socio-cultural entity. For this reason the African[...] is not limited to the racial but also covers the totality of a diverse continent. African writers are those writers that express the African sensibility in their works. (2)

But it must be reiterated that the focus of this study is sub-Saharan African society.

1.1 Background to the study

In a study of this kind, it is imperative to attempt a survey of trends, since the writer emphasises on the evolution and development of African novel, a kind of leap backwards to see what obtained. Lindfors (2002), while writing on early Nigerian literature, which is also applicable to sub-Saharan African fiction generally, argues that “WHEN EXAMINING ANYTHING THAT HAS CHANGED over time, usually it is a good thing to begin at the beginning. The past can teach us much about the present [...]” (1). Lindfors’ contention calls for a re-examination of developments in African novel since its evolution in the 1950s. Doing so will help us a great deal to understand the present development.

The African writer at the evolution of African fiction in the 1950s has engaged the African society as he mirrors a world-view that demonstrates culture conflict, cultural assertions, as a way of re-establishing a debased African culture, consequent upon colonial contact. Palmer (1982) writing on the emergence of African novel, remarks that:

The emergence of very large corpus of African novels in both English and French has been one of the most interesting literary developments of the last twenty-five years (between 1950s and late 1970s). It was perhaps inevitable that the movement towards self-determination, and the emergence into prominence of a powerful, well educated, and articulate elite, would result in a number of works of art designed to express the strength, validity, and beauty of African life and culture. (viii)

In the main, literary expressions in Africa have tried to fictionalise the happenings around and within Africa, from pre-colonial times to the post-colonial era. From each region of sub-Saharan Africa, one observes that fictional creations represent the peoples’ socio-economic and political experiences.

However, Nkosi (1981) tells us that:

[...] the literature [novel genre inclusive] of Southern Africa is wholly concerned with the theme of struggle and conflict – conflict between the white conquerors and the conquered blacks, between white masters and black servitors, between the village and the city. (76)

Nkosi in this statement above draws attention to the literary expressions of his people (Southern Africans) during the apartheid years, when the white minority political

overlords lorded it over the black majority. In fact, Nkosi concludes that “Southern African literature has always been a literature of protest and social commitment...” 76), consequent upon the oppressive and exploitative and racially discriminatory society they find themselves born into. Notable writers who have emerged from this region include Peter Abrahams, Richard Rive, Alex La Guma to mention a few.

East and Central African literary writings, one observes, reflect mainly colonial and post-colonial cultural dilemmas. These gave rise to the kind of conflict and resistance fictional creations of writers like Ngugi wa Thiong’o from East Africa. Msiska (1997) comments that: “The dominant pre-occupation throughout the history of the literature of the region has been with the place of African culture in the new cultural dispensation” (62).

Williams (1997) comments that in West Africa, Chinua Achebe for instance presents us with a cosmos where characters dramatise cultural and post-independence disillusionment (33-36). It is worth mentioning that novel writing in Africa has in no small measure occurred from the West African sub-region where notable writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana), Mongo Beti, Sembene Ousmane (Senegal), to mention a few happened to be at the forefront of African novel writing.

Consequently, all these sub-Sahara African literary artists created in their world, a society that mirrors the prevailing cultural, socio-economic, political and moral or philosophical realities of their times. Early writers invented a “...lachrymal” world, a kind of “weeping literature, a literature of lamentation, following Africa’s unhappy experience with slavery and colonialism[...].” (1), according to Nnolim (2006). Indeed, Nnolim further argues that “[m]odern African literature[...] arose after the psychic trauma of slavery and colonialism had made her literature one with a running sore, a stigmata that forced her writers to dissipate their energies in a dogged fight to re-establish the African personality” (2). No wonder Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2003) in *Chinua Achebe: Straight from the Heart* quotes Chinua Achebe thus: “Colonialism was the most important event in our history [...], it is the most important single thing that has happened to us after the slave trade” (4-5). Palmer (1979) corroborates these conclusions when he says that:

Broadly speaking, the African novel is a response to and a record of the traumatic consequences of the impact of western capitalist colonialism on the traditional values and institutions

of the African people. This largely explains the African writers' initial preoccupation with the past. (63)

Besides, many other writers focused their critical searchlight on sub-Saharan Africa's post-independence problems such as political upheavals, military dictatorship and tyranny, corruption, wars, social injustice and religious hypocrisy, among others. In this regard, Larson (1978) reminds us that "The African writer himself has almost always been a microcosm of the accumulated experiences of his society" (279-280). These accumulated experiences include post-independence problems in sub-Saharan Africa as mentioned above.

Since the late 1980s, there emerged a crop of artistically adventurous writers who gave an impetus to sub-Saharan African fiction. These writers include males and females in good number who in their various ways narrate their travails, a kind of autobiographical voice in some cases, to showcase and dramatise national tragedies and traumas. Indeed, these writers narrate their homelands in an attempt to interrogate the current happenings in Africa. This recent development in African fiction fulfils Nnolim's (2010) prediction while writing on trends in Nigerian novel, which is also applicable to the sub-Saharan African novel, that "[...]if diversity has marked the Nigerian [sub-Saharan African] novel so far, greater diversity is to be expected in the future" (204). That greater and future diversity is the current experience in sub-Saharan African narratives in the late 20th century to date. This vision gains fulfillment in the emergence of these writers who imaginatively capture the sub-Saharan African society, in order to expose the pains, struggles and sorrows of a people who find themselves in helpless post-colonial situations, arising from power relations.

Indeed, abuse of power on the part of the rulers and heads of domestic homes against their subordinates has become a major socio-political challenge in the society. In the sub-Saharan African society, the lopsided relationship between the rulers and the ruled at the civic level, and between heads of family and members of the family at the home space, has attracted African novelists who imaginatively dwell on this issue as a way of demonstrating its prevalence and the need to address the ugly trend.

1.2 Statement of problem

Existing studies on sub-Saharan African novels written from the late 1980s have focused critical attention on thematic issues such as gender relations, disillusionments

and exploitations, without giving adequate attention to the issue of abuse of power and resistance. This study thus examined the forms of abuse of power at the public and domestic spaces and forms of resistance to the abuses in the selected novels, with a view to establishing the features of the abuse of power and resistance.

1.3 Justification of the study

This study on selected post-colonial sub-Saharan African novels that emerged since the late 1980s, focusing on abuse of power and resistance is one that attracts critical attention because some critics and scholars have hastily concluded that African literature has reached a state of mild exhaustion. One of such scholars and critics is Nnolim (2006) earlier quoted, who in his essay titled “African Literature in the 21st century: Challenges for Writers and Critics” concludes that towards the end of the 20th century, African literature appears moribund, extinct, as it appears there were no noticeable published works. He says thus:

[...] African Literature in the 20th century seemed to have reached a point of exhaustion [...].
A spiritual vacuum seems to have crept in toward the end of the 20th century, among African writers; an ashen paralysis that has not spared our most celebrated writers of that epoch [...]. It seems that the devastations of the economic order, the instabilities of governments in most African countries south of the Sahara, the frequent disruptions of the democratic order through military rule, and the ravages of diseases especially, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, have taken their toll in the area of literary production. (2)

Nnolim’s submission in the above excerpt is one that needs critical evaluation. His conclusion indeed motivates scholarship as African writing (the novel genre inclusive) has assumed a vibrant status since the late 20th century to-date. Ironically, his conclusion has formed the foundation for the emergence of sub-Saharan African writing and the basis for the selection of texts for this study. Many of these novelists pre-occupy themselves with economic collapse and fraud, political instability, consequent upon political tyranny, diseases such as the HIV/AIDS, gender and domestic violence of different kinds and sexual misdemeanours such as rape, lesbianism, homosexuality and incest; child-soldiering, tribal genocide, among others. Furthermore, a literary tradition which has many patrons cannot reach a state of exhaustion in this era of all kinds of socio-economic and political disorders and globalisation, as writers are chroniclers and recorders of the happenings around them. This therefore informs our critical focus in this study as our

topic and choice of texts show that sub-Saharan African writing is neither in limbo nor in a state of exhaustion.

Writers have neither exhausted strategies nor creativity. That many readers, scholars and critics today do not have easy access to novels of the late 1980s to date does not make one conclude that African writing has reached a state of exhaustion. One must not forget that during the late 1980s till the 1990s (the last two decades of the 20th century) when the wind of democratic change began to blow across Africa, South of the Sahara, most of the nations were under military rule. And it was common knowledge that during that era, development (economic and social) was comatose, especially with publishing houses which were liquidated because there were no printing materials locally, and hardly any foreign exchange with which to procure materials abroad. And this exacerbated the problem of getting works published and distributed easily to the reading audience at home. Even critical comments hardly get to scholars to enable them know what has been, and is going on in the field. One must not forget too that vanity press publishes, without giving attention to the views of critics. That these constraints exist and scholars have no easy access to criticism does not mean that no criticism was being done. Much could be going on that was not known to the reading public.

It is important to establish thus far, that sub-Saharan African writing that began in the late 1980s, as Adesanmi and Dunton conclude, is of interest to scholars. But one might go a step further to ascertain why it began at this time. The reason for a shift or development in African novel at this time is not far-fetched as it was in this period many African States had military rules with bad policies that brought about painful socio-economic and political experiences which writers cashed in on. Garuba (2005) buttresses this when he writes on the Nigerian situation thus:

Any number of reasons can be adduced for this shift [in African writing]. There is the World Bank/IMF induced structural adjustment policies of the 1980s which dramatically affected the infrastructures of literary production in Nigeria [as in other parts of Africa that embraced it]; the waning of metropolitan publishing houses as active agents within the Nigerian publishing scene; or the new military dictatorships that installed a culture of corruption and mismanagement and consolidated an economic and social regime of primitive accumulation of chaotic individualism. (66)

However, it is important to note that inasmuch as these writers in sub-Saharan African writings began in the late 1980s in some parts, it did not begin at the same time

in a place like Nigeria in the novel genre. While it began in Poetry particularly at that time, it began in the novel in the late 1990s and early 21st century, in the new millennium. In fact, Nigerian novelists of this group of writers emerged in the 1990s. Adesanmi and Dunton (2005), to quote them again argue that:

What may be termed the first real break for the third generation novel came when Biyi Bandele relocated to England in the early 1990s and soon began to publish fiction. His three novels, *The Sympathetic Undertaker and Other Dreams*, *The Man Who Came in from the Back of Beyond* and *The Street* were, arguably the first works of fiction by a member of the new generation to break into international academic cannon, entering African literature syllabi in South Africa, Canada and the United States. (10)

Biyi Bandele appears to be one of the earliest of these writers in Nigeria. Another and major reason for the study of the selected texts and topic lies in its attempt to expose and evaluate the asymmetric relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed and how resistance becomes the primary instrument available to the marginalised for changing the status quo in the power relations. Before self-rule emerged in colonial Africa, beginning with Liberia, Ethiopia and Ghana, many societies were under the subjugation of Western colonial masters from Britain or France or Europe generally. During the colonial days, Africans had no voice in government. In fact, the African was seen as a noble savage, barbarian, and inferior. This jaundiced view psychologically debased the African, and put him in a sub-human status. But when struggles for political independence began, many states were granted political freedom. Before now, novelists and fiction writers generally have emerged in good quantity and quality to give artistic expressions to these happenings around them. In their endeavours, the early writers at their emergence in the 1950s created a society that reflected cultural assertion, culture-conflicts, struggles for political independence, and the frustration and disillusionment that characterised pre-independence African leadership, who practised oppressive and exploitative governance. Thus these writers emphasised the moods of disillusionment which this generates. Some of these writers include Chinua Achebe of Nigeria, Camara Laye of Guinea, Ayi Kwei Armah of Ghana, Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya, Peter Abrahams and Alex La Guma of Southern Africa, to mention a few from sub-Saharan Africa. There were writers who, as the novel genre developed in Africa, drew their readers' attention to the disturbing post-colonial social ills, and the widening gulf between the rich and the poor in African society. Wright (1997) buttresses this when he writes that:

[...] there emerged in the fiction of the late 1970s and 1980s (Festus Iyayi, Meja Mwangi, Aminata Sow Fall) a new proletarian social realism devoted to the deprived and dispossessed of African society, in which a subversive anger and an urgent insistence on change resounds through the grim depiction of social horrors [...]. (8)

Besides, it is interesting to note that consequent upon post-independence dilemmas, sub-Saharan Africa became a failed society in the eyes of Africans as the society became politically, socially and economically harsh for her citizens. Some novelists have dwelt on such issues in their works, as mentioned in this study. Nevertheless, writers present post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa as a landscape that is splattered with misrule which engendered abuse of power such as oppression, dictatorship, corruption, exploitation, moral failures as observed in earlier writers. But, we note in addition to these, a remarkable focus on dictatorship, exile, homelessness, alienation, identity crisis, migration, displacement and dislocation, advanced fee fraud (code-named in Nigeria as 419), debasing sexual practices and abuses such as homosexuality, lesbianism and incest to mention a few, in the way these sub-Saharan African writers present the society, using their individual and immediate locale. We need to observe that these writers do not emerge from the sky, but are part of an evolving and existing literary tradition. These novelists are thus expanding the frontiers of the older writers. Examples of these writers include Moses Isegawa, Yvonne Owor, Goretti Kyamuhendo, Tstisti Dangarembga, Yvonne Vera, Tiyaambe Zeleza, John Nkemngong Nkengasong, Margeret Afuh, Calixth Beyala, Djibouti Abdaurahman, Ali Waberi, Chinjera Hove, Shimer Chimdnoya, Petina Gappah, Amma Darko, Daniel Mengara, Ahmadou Kourouma, Dinaw Mengestu, Zakes Ndah, Sello Duiker, J.M., Coetzee, Wicomb Zoe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Maik Nwosu, Bandele Thomas, Sefi Atta, Okey Ndibe, Ike Oguine, Helon Habila, Chris Abani, Jude Dibia, Uzodinma Iweala, Segun Afolabi, to mention some. Indeed, Nwakanma (2008) writing on new generation of Nigerian writers, which on a larger scale also applies to sub-Saharan African fiction writers of this category, supports this argument that a new set of writers have emerged. He remarks that "... a new generation of novelists has emerged within the last decade to shape the direction of contemporary Nigeria fiction in the third phase" (4).

It must be mentioned at this juncture, that one other feature that marks out these writers, which justifies our study is the fact that some of them in their works blend experiences at home with experiences abroad, in that their invented characters mediate

between home and abroad, a kind of transnational invention. This is quite different from what the early writers experimented with. In the story of past writers, we find for instance, their tales taking off from airports in their homelands (countries) as their invented protagonist return from years of study abroad. This is the creation of the “been-to” characters we find in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments*, Festus Iyayi’s *The Contract*, Tanure Ojaide’s *The Activist*, to mention a few. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo also experimented with *Trafficked* and tried to blend experiences abroad with experiences at home through the device of recollections/reminiscences. But among the writers under study, we find in some of them full fictionalisation of life abroad and life at home in a well-woven scheme.

Also noticeable among these novelists is the preponderance of female writers. There is an observed good number of female writers among this group, more than there had been in the years of Flora Nwapa for instance. This is consequent upon the feminist spirit and wind of change blowing across the world especially in Africa from the last quarter of the 20th century, when the female writers and activists made more concerted efforts against the woman being relegated to the kitchen and bedroom and her being subjected to the whims and caprices of her man. Their emergence in good number is a kind of protest against this attitude, and to show that the woman can as well delve into areas where the males have dominated since its evolution in the 1950s. Indeed, during the time of Nwapa, the woman was thought to be almost less than human, and only a few of them dared practise fiction writing, but since the wind of change and globalisation began to blow across the continents of the world, and with the high spirit of feminism in Africa, many female writers emerged and dared where they feared to tread decades earlier.

It is pertinent to mention that generational stratification is not an easy engagement as many scholars have the opinion that the third generation writers do not exist. They argue against their existence because of the challenges involved. In fact Okuyade (2014) concurs when he says that “[...] the enterprise of generational stratification is not only fussy but challenging” (xiv). Though the enterprise is fussy and challenging as Okuyade remarks above, there are obvious features which point to the fact that there is a third generation of writers. There are basic issues they deal with in their narratives. Though many of them live abroad, they look backward to create their fictional world, a kind of rear-ward looking into military dictatorship to address the failures of present democratic arrangements in Africa. There is no doubt that a third generation of

writers exist. Reading these writers shows that there is a remarkable departure from the older generation of writers. Okuyade confirms these when he mentions specifically, features such as bildungsroman, child soldiering, violence, and lack of the evocation of African landscape in the narratives of the third generation writers (xx-xxiv). In addition to these features are transnational, migration and exile. Jowitt (2011) while writing on literary trends in the new (third generation) Nigerian writers, which also applies to sub-Saharan African writers generally, adds that “scenes of explicit sex or violence” (9) prevalent in British and American novels, are now present in the writings of these writers. These features are indeed found in the works of this generation of writers as maintained so far.

Most critics prior to this time and even since the emergence of these novelists, focused their critical attention on older and already established writers and their works. This lack of interest in emerging writers or apathy towards their works as it were, is unhealthy for the revaluation and development of African fiction. It is thus important that scholars and critics examine these writers and their works as a way of informing the reading audience of their existence and redressing the gap in critical discourse Izevbaye (1979) corroborates this position when he writes that:

A periodic revaluation of the African novel is necessary in order to develop a lively critical heritage as support for its growth [...] and encourage a redefinition of existing literature in the light of new knowledge about literature and society. (7)

This argument becomes relevant because such scholarly exercise will help to explicate and indicate the direction of the novel genre. This will help to sustain a critical support base for its growth. Indeed, if African literary outpourings are not revaluated from time to time, as the years, decades and centuries roll-by, scholars would not be able to know whether there is a change in trend, in fictional realisations as society changes. In fact, society is dynamic. Consequently, one expects to note the dynamism in African novels. It is therefore expected that writers too should move with the changing society as literary materials are got from the writers social surroundings. This indeed informs the choice of texts from sub-Saharan Africa, and topic to illustrate. Okuyade (2011) in his essay on “Weaving Memories of Childhood: The New Nigerian Novel and the Genre of Bildungsroman” argues that:

The last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the third millennium exhibit a subtle shift in the artistic curve of sub-Saharan African literature, especially in the novel genre.

This shift is not total, as it were, but marks the beginning of a new epoch. This curvature does not denote that the new writers have signaled a complete distinction from the narratives of the succeeding generation[...]. Their styles and thematic concerns do not only bequeath the badge of newness and “nowness” to their arts, but also give them a discrete position in the development of the African novel. (138)

Okuyade in the above excerpt, shows that there is a new crop of sub-Sahara African novelists whose works have contributed to the development of the African novel. Consequently, there is the need to have a critical look at some of these novels to affirm the emergence of their authors. These include Tiyambe Zeleza’s *Smouldering Charcoal* (1992), Moses Isegawa’s *Snakepit* (2004), Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon* (1995), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), and Jude Dibia’s *Unbridled* (2007). A look at the above texts and authors would reveal that our choice concentrates on sub-Sahara African writers from South, East and West Africa. Nigeria has a larger representation in this selection because the country has many more of such writers who dwell on abuse of power and resistance in more profound and interesting ways. Adesanmi and Dunton (2005), quoted earlier confirm this observation when they write that:

Third generation writing in much of Africa is still largely a phenomenon of isolated names and works, recognized continentally and sometimes internationally [...]. Nigeria presents a singular case of several hundred writers from the same country who subscribe to the third generation identity and are conscious of that collective image within the reins and dynamics of the broader national literary self-imaging. (15)

Critical and close study of these novels selected, reveals a conscious effort by the novelists to recount their sad experiences in their spatial and temporal settings. Characters invented are situated in a post-colonial society where they contend with power relations at the public and domestic levels. It must be noted that our study tries to demonstrate the abuse of power in our contemporary society and homes, and the strategies for resistance.

1.4 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that sub-Sahara African novel of the late 1980s show the concerted efforts of a group of sub-Sahara African novelists who

engage the politics of power. It thus shows the enactment of abuse of power in public and domestic domains, and the strategies victims devise to resist such abuses.

1.5 Significance of study/contribution to knowledge

This study, at its conclusion would have increased the volume of criticism on sub-Saharan African novels that emerged since the late 1980s. The study will show that novelists explore the excessive exercise of power and its resistance in contemporary sub-Saharan African society. This, therefore, will enhance the readers' understanding of abuse of power and resistance.

1.6 Scope/limitation of study

The study focuses on sub-Saharan African novels. It deals with novelists who started publishing from the late 1980s. It will be observed that some of the authors to be examined include females. This does not in any way make or turn the study into that of African female novelists. This is not our intention, but to give a representation to women in the study as they have become prominent among these writers, unlike during the time of Nwapa, when they were a few voices.

This study therefore examines abuse of power and resistance in the selected post-colonial sub-Saharan African novels. Attention will be focused on abuse of power in public and domestic spaces, and the strategies of resistance against such power abuses.

1.7 Theoretical background/framework

This study employs postcolonial critical theory with emphasis on sub-alternism, a variant of postcolonial theory. It is important, before examining postcolonial theory, to mention the difference between 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonialism' as these will be used in this study. 'Post-colonial' refers to a socio-political culture after colonialism. In other words, it is used or affixed with reference to a society weaned politically from her colonial overlords. For instance, Nigerian society after her independence from Britain in 1960 is a post-colonial society. However, 'postcolonial' refers to a theory. It is used to distinguish a critical position that examines a post-colonial society. This distinction gives a better understanding of the use of the terms 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonialism'

Tyson (1999) says that postcolonial theory examines:

[...] the initial contact with the coloniser and the disruption of indigenous culture, the journey of the European outsider

through an unfamiliar wilderness with a native guide, ordering and colonial oppression in all its forms, mimicry (the attempt of the colonised to imitate the dress, behavior, speech and lifestyles of the coloniser); exile (the experience of being an outsider in one's own land or a foreign wanderer in Britain); post-independence exuberance followed by disillusionment, the struggle for individual and collective culture identity and the related themes of alienation, unhomeliness and hybridity; and the need for continuity with a pre-colonial past and self-definition of the political future. In addition, most post-colonial critics analyse the ways in which a literary text, whatever its themes, is colonialist or anti-colonialist, that is, the ways in which the text reinforces or resists colonialism oppressive ideology. (374)

Hale (2006) in an introduction to "Post colonialism and the Novel" states that:

In one sense, post-colonialism can be viewed as offering simply another category for socially constitutive experience to be added to those already in play; class, race, gender, sexuality and now imperialism[...] post-colonial theory may be seen as the culmination of late twentieth century preoccupation with identity politics in novel studies. (654)

She adds that "the post-colonial theorist thus finds himself in the position of psychoanalyst, studying the effect of narrativisation, the conditions produced in the social subjects by his or her specific experience of the modern condition of knowledge" (671).

On their part, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) see postcolonial theory thus:

A major feature of post-colonial literature is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the specific post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. (8)

They add that:

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation or voluntary removal from indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. (9)

Continuing, they argue that as a result, "The development of national literatures and criticism is fundamental to the whole enterprise of post-colonial studies" (16), but did

not fail to mention that post-colonial studies include or overlap with feminist perspective (30). These foregoing theoretical positions show that post-colonialism in novel studies involve contemporary issues as they are being experienced in colonised or decolonised societies. These are issues sub-Saharan African novelists pre-occupy themselves with. But in the works of writers emerging since the late 1980s, we note contemporary concerns which were not the artistic interests of their predecessors. Issues such as race, gender, sexuality and sexual misdemeanours, AIDS pandemic and identity politics to mention a few, now occupy the centre stage on their artistic canvas. In the invented societies, we observe a lopsided relationship between the rulers, the super-ordinates and the ruled, their subordinates.

Kaplan and Anderson (2000) in an introduction to Homi K. Bhabha's essay on postcolonial theory, say that "... post-colonial criticism tends to focus on works produced in those portions of the world that were once part of the large European colonial empires that reached their height in the nineteenth century" (763). But, for Homi K. Bhabha, they continued:

[...] the notion of post-coloniality encompasses more than this and has significance even for people who were never colonised in the most traditional sense of the word[...] and touches on race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and even the threat of AIDS, as well as the more central post-colonial concerns of nation and identity. (763)

However, Bhabha (2000) argues that:

Post-coloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent 'neocolonial' relations within the 'new' world order and the multinational division of labour. Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance. Beyond this, however, post-colonial critique bears witness to those countries and communities in the North and South, urban and rural-constituted [...]. (769)

It is pertinent to conclude that postcolonial theory is that which a critic employs in the analysis of any literary work, for example the narrative genre (novel) that has been produced from or set in non-colonised, colonised or decolonised societies. It takes cognizance of the trappings of colonial or neocolonial oppression, exploitation, frustration and disillusionment and strategies for the resistance by indigenous victims. In addition, the theory also examines the issues of class, race, gender, exile, place,

displacement, dislocation, migration from the homeland, alienation, identity crisis and homelessness or unhomeness as these affect relationships nationally or internationally.

Indeed, it is imperative, having examined what postcolonial theory is, to focus our theoretical frame on subalternism specifically, as an aspect of postcolonial critical theory. Patode (2012) reminds us that “post-colonial [l]iterary Theory is an intellectual field which makes an enquiry into the conditions of the colonised during and after colonisation” (196).

Subalternism helps to examine the conditions of the marginalised and oppressed in colonised and decolonised societies. Referring to one of the exponents of subalternism as a critical theory, Morton (2003) argues that subaltern studies historians see subalternism “as the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (48). Morton adds that “Spivak’s theory of the subaltern is part of a longer history of left-wing anti-colonial thought that was concerned to challenge the class/caste system in India” (69). Chanturvedi (2007) comments that “[i]n the early 1980s, a small group of Marxist scholars influenced by Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* introduced “subaltern” as a new analytic category within modern Indian historiography” (9). Continuing, he argues that “[...] subaltern politics tend to be violent because subaltern classes were forced to resist the conditions of elite domination and extra-economic coercion in their everyday lives” (10). Subalternism as a postcolonial critical theory deals with texts emanating from, and on colonised and, or decolonised societies of the world. It examines the lives of the ‘sub’ or ‘secondary’ subordinated masses or the ruled, either in governance or in the home, and strategies or ways of resistance. Thus it deals with the use of political or leadership powers, its abuses and efforts put up by victims to resist such untoward domination in their locale or space.

Tilwani (2013) writing on this critical theory, concludes:

The term, subalternity, remarkably and aptly employed by Spivak, to highlight the predicament of those who are allotted ‘sub’ or ‘secondary’ space in the human society. Subaltern is used as an umbrella term for all those who are marginalised and deprived of the voice to ‘speak’. (113)

No doubt, subalternism is a critical literary theory that gives insight into the state of the marginalised who lost their voices to speak. It also caters for attempts made to voice out their pains, oppressions, exploitations and general violence in public as well as in private

life. The theory thus becomes imperative for the literary analysis of our chosen texts for this study, since the texts are products of a post-colonial society.

It is necessary, before we examine abuse of power and resistance in the selected novels, to mention that abuse of power and resistance is as a result of the unbecoming attitudes of political leaders, in the discharge of their leadership responsibilities in African post-colonial societies. Fanon (1963) copiously argues on power to the effect that he concludes:

African unity can only be achieved through the upward thrust of the people, and under the leadership of the people, that is to say, in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie. (132)

Here, Fanon's argument shows that in the exercise of power in politics, African unity can only be possible through the combined efforts of the people and their leaders. But this means that the masses must have a defiant spirit as the leaders are often inclined to protecting their bourgeoisie interests. Continuing, Fanon argues that "[t]he bourgeoisie dictatorship of under-developed countries draws its strength from the existence of a leader" (133). Fanon's argument reveals a power politics that engenders dictatorship in governance. The bourgeoisie is observed to draw its power from a leader whose political orientation is coloured with abuses.

Besides, in a democratic society, the leaders are elected through their political parties. This empowers them to exercise a political will over the people. Fanon in his argument on the use of power in post-colonial African societies, sees the party system as an instrument of power. He writes:

The party, a true instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie reinforces the machine, and ensures that the people are hemmed in and immobilized. The party helps the government to hold the people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an implement of coercion. (138)

There is no doubt that Fanon points to the fact that post-colonial African societies are ruled by indigenous people who turned themselves into a bourgeoisie clique and use the party as a formidable instrument of exercise of power. In such exercise, there is high-handedness as the political leaders ensure that the led have no say in government. The people thus live in fear as they are forced and intimidated to comply with the dictates of the rulers. This is indeed, an abuse of the exercise of political power. Fanon puts it more concretely thus:

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The party, instead of welcoming the expression of popular discontentment, instead of taking for its fundamental purpose the free flow of ideas from the people up to the government, forms a screen, and forbids such ideas [...] and] hastens to send the people back to their caves. (147)

This argument above points at the need for the examination of abuse of power and resistance in sub-Saharan African society. This is because, a political party in government with leaders who do not welcome open expression of popular discontentment but employs force to cow the people, expects nothing more than resistance. This power politics is also extended to the domestic domain, one of our critical interests in this study. According to Hayes (2014) “Violence against women does not occur in a vacuum, but occurred in the context of a socially structured system of politics, class, race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity”(7). The politics of power abuse is such that victims employ strategies against it. In the domestic space, Hayes adds that “[...] the abusive male may be able to physically overpower the woman when she physically resists. Nevertheless, some women still engage in physical resistance, [...]” (4).

Fanon’s and Hayes’s submissions on power politics are such that help us look at the selected novels for this study in the light of postcolonial critical theory with reference to subalternism as our main theoretical frame, as it focuses on the unbalanced relationship between the leader and the led, and the superordinate and subordinate in the domestic domain.

From this theoretical background, we arrive at a frame work that enables us look at the selected texts in this study. We thus employ subalternism as a critical theory, in order to examine abuse of power and resistance as demonstrated at the public and domestic spaces.

1.8 Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is literary analysis of the five selected sub-Saharan African novels. These are: Tiyambe Zeleza’s *Smouldering Charcoal* (1992), Moses Isegawa’s *Snakepit* (2004), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon* (1995) and Jude Dibia’s *Unbridled* (2007).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In African literature, one notes three phases namely, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Pre-colonial Africa was one rich cultural and socially cohesive society where individuals were culturally and socially threaded and bound with one religious philosophy. Literature at this time was oral. This was performed in the form of folktales, legends, proverbs, songs, chants usually performed during moonlight plays, festivals and some special occasions in communities. These oral performances function as sources of entertainment, education and information. This is where oral and written literature have a convergence – entertainment, education and information. Writing about the history of Africa south of the Sahara, Awoonor (2005) comments that:

The institution of chieftaincy, the divine concept of the role of chiefs, the cult of ancestors, initiation of the various rites of passage from birth to death, the nature and power of kinship groups based on blood, ideas about the Supreme Creator, and the role and assignments of minor gods and deities, the metaphorical conception of the world – these are all generally shared in a united culture and origin in the very dim past. (4)

Besides, while orality characterises pre-colonial literature, colonial literature is characterised by written form. This is as a result of formal education which gave reading and writing skills to the colonised. This helped the colonised to champion the course of nationalism which culminated in the granting of independence to colonised States. Therefore, one can conclude that colonial literature was an offshoot of colonialism in colonially dominated sub-Saharan African States. Through the literature, writers protested against colonialism, and as such deconstructed the colonial engagement. Writers whose works dramatise this encounter and tensions caused by foreign culture include Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God*), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (*Weep Not Child, The River Between and A Grain of Wheat*) Alex La Guma (*The Stone Country and A Walk in the Night*), Camara Laye (*The African Child*) and Amadou Hampâté Bâ (*The Fortunes of Wangrin*), to mention a few. Onwuekwusi (2005) argues that literature was one of the ways Africans deconstructed the colonial engagement (76).

Writing on the post-colonial condition of African literature, Gover, Gonteh-Morgan and Bryce (2000) argue that:

For many of the critics and scholars who work in the field of African literature, the phrase/postcolonial has a straight forward historical meaning, as a term for contemporary

African writing during the last thirty to forty years after many nations on the continent attained political independence from European colonialism.

During this past generation, African writers have grappled with the colonial legacy and other disillusioning realities of postcolonial politics. In many cases, the hopes and expectations born in the 1960s with political independence have developed into bitter fruit. African writers have often served as the leading social critics of their own societies [...].
(2).

In this editorial comment, Gover et al argue that post-independence Africa has been a society where the hopes and aspirations of the masses turned into cold ash as they get confronted with myriads of political, social and economic problems. Thus disillusionment sets in.

However, colonial struggles from colonial contact and tensions gave rise to political freedoms in many parts of colonised Africa from 1957 with Ghana, to Nigeria in 1960. And this political freedom to these States and others gave high hopes of post-independence well-being. Every African looked forward to a life full of freedom, social and economic wealth. No sooner had African States gained political independence than frustrations and disillusionments arising from failure of African independence and bureaucratic inefficiency set in. Thus, post-colonial Africa began to degenerate and wallow in one socio-economic and political crises and another. At this juncture, post-colonial issues began to attract the critical lens of fiction writers who used their art to mirror sub-Sahara Africa as a failed society. Shohat (2009) argues that “the ‘post-colonial’ did not emerge to fill an empty space in the language of political-cultural analysis” (100). He adds that the post-colonial is “[...] a new designation for critical discourses which thematise issues emerging from colonial relations and their aftermath, covering a long historical span (including the present)” (101).

It is sad to observe that post-colonial Africa is a disappointment to the hopes and aspirations of anti-colonial struggles. The aftermath of colonialism is a total failure in the post-colonial present; the expected good life for all citizens did not materialise.

“What is the post-colonial?” (13), Young (2009) asks. After much argument that some see the term “post-colonial” as coming after colonial, resistance to the colonial at any time, Young concludes that the term might simply be referred to:

[...] as the aftermath of the colonial. The situations and problems that have followed decolonisation – whether in the formerly colonising or colonised country – are then encompassed in the term post-coloniality. (13)

Continuing in his argument, Young asks again:

What then would the term post-colonialism mean? Whereas postcoloniality describes the condition of the post-colonial, post-colonialism describes its politics – a radical tricontinental politics of transformation [...] the postcolonial is simply the product of human experience, but human experience of the kind that has to typically been registered or represented at any institutional level. (13)

Young's position above reveals "the post-colonial" to be a product of human experience emerging from colonial relations and the consequences of such relationship. It is temporal and spatial as it deals with the politics of power transformation at a time when colonialists held sway, spanning into the present in Africa's once colonised space, in this era of decolonisation.

Zeleza (2006) in his essay on post-colonialism quotes Loomba thus:

It indicates a new way of thinking in which cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes are seen to work together in the formation, perpetration and dismantling of colonialism. (Loomba). (94)

This new way of thinking, according to Loomba, quoted in Zeleza, is as a result of the messed up politics of post-independence Africa. Those who took over the reins of power from the colonialists, it is observed, have failed woefully as the post-colonial society got plunged into socio-economic and political imbroglios. This is against the high hopes of good life which served as impetus to the nationalist struggles for independence. In an introduction to postcolonial theory, Childs and Williams (1982) say that:

The obvious implication of the term post-colonial is that it refers to a period coming after the end of colonialism[...] that sense of an ending of the completion of one period of history and the emergence of another,[...]. That so many millions now live in the world formed by decolonisation is one justification for the use of the term post-colonial.

Post-colonialism may then refer in part to the period after colonialism,[...]. (1)

Childs and Williams' conclusion on what post-colonialism stands for, is quite impressive as it gives a simple and meaningful insight into the term.

Schraeder (2004) in his book on African politics and society says that "During the 1950s, African novelists continued to glorify the African past and added a new twist: the intrusion of colonial cultures on traditional African cultures" (159). But it must be noted that African leaders appear to, and immediately after independence in the late 1950s and in the 1960s, enjoy what we could call relative peace and well-being as they bask in the euphoria of independence from colonial overlords. However, Schraeder, to quote him again comments that:

After the initial honeymoon period African leaders enjoyed in the first decades of independence, a variety of negative trends – socio-economic decline, the rise of single-party rule, the increase in military rule, and the general authoritarianism inherent in numerous African states – led African novelists of the 1960s to begin articulating themes of disenchantment with national elites and disillusionment with previously held ideas of progress. (161)

In sub-Sahara African society, independence struggles were to make life better. But after independence, civil life came to be disrupted by single-party, sit-tight rulers and military administrators who turned dictators and tyrants. Consequently, this ill-wind of high-handedness and oppression engendered by bad leadership, also found its way into the domestic life of many Africans. Hence we find people imitate the toughness of the military, in an attempt to make a point or superimpose themselves on others, either as fathers or husbands. This tough attitude towards a subordinate is also a demonstration of present reality in Nigeria. In the present day Nigeria political administration, the ruled (the subordinates) see the ruler (the president) as a weakling. This assessment is because he does not seem to have the expected strong-arm tactics or tough bearing like that of a military tyrant or an erstwhile-military-officer-turned civilian-president which they had become accustomed. Consequently, the masses seem to have unwittingly accepted military toughness or high handedness in governance and the home as a necessity. Even then, people have a natural urge to resist injustice and reject situations that are thought to be detrimental to their well being. Thus, one can safely conclude at this point that there is abuse of power- in politics and in homes – in contemporary sub-Sahara African society. It is observed in the society that citizens and family members no longer sit complacently and watch oppressive use of power in governance or in the family. Victims

thus evolve strategies to resist this. And this indeed attracts the creative energies of the novelists selected for this study.

African literature, prose fiction in particular, dwells more on African experiences after colonialism, the post-colonial period. Most writers find myriads of issues confronting African society, which compelled them to zoom their artistic lens on these problems. Ugwanyi (2011) in his abstract on an essay on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*, reminds us that:

The colonial experiences of most African countries have refused to go after many decades since the colonial masters left. This is as a result of the myriad of social, political and economic problems still facing the continent. Independence promised a lot of good things for the masses and this brought about their active participation in the struggle for independence alongside the nationalist fighters in some African countries. It is pertinent to note also that some countries got their independence with fewer struggles though with equal promise of good life for the masses. Many factors have contributed to the plaguing of African development, with the major factor being bad leadership[...]. Why has leadership styles of most African countries refused to change for the better in spite of the rapid development trends all over the world today? (218)

This observation Ugwanyi makes above captures post-colonial African experience. It is sad to note that despite the high promise during independence struggles, post-colonial Africa embraced a deluge of socio-economic and political, and even cultural problems.

Recent African novelists have been observed to concern themselves with the African landscape. In doing this, they focus their artistic lens on post-colonial issues. It is noted that their writings reveal issues such as economic, social, political and moral problems in contemporary African society. These indeed are significant ideas in respect of the prevailing social conditions of post-independence Africa. Okuyade (2010) confirms this when he tells us that "African literature at large [...] has been thematically bifocal. It is either geared towards the issue of democratisation or the appraisal of post-independence malaise" (20). Part of the malaise is the politics of abuse of power which has forced victims to resist its abuse.

Writing on power as a political science concept, Grigsby (2005) asks: "What is power?" (37), and responds thus: "[...] power is an ability to influence an event or outcome that allows the agent to achieve an objective and/or to influence another agent to act in a manner in which the second agent, on its own would not choose to act" (37). Boonstra and Gravenhorst (1998) argue that power is "[...] a dynamical social process

affecting opinions, emotions, and behaviour of interest groups in which inequalities are involved with respect to the realisation of wishes and interests” (99).

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Uwasomba (2006) thus adds that “Power is also the ability to influence those who could determine outcomes, and the ability to influence others in one’s interest. Power is therefore, a component of politics the ruling class uses effectively to maintain and sustain their hegemony” (96).

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Looking at these views on power, one agrees that it is a social and political referent. One uses it to influence the other to one’s own interest, or advantage. An abuse of such exercise of power becomes operative when one who wields it employs it high-handedly or excessively to force another to submission. This happens in politics or governance where rulers abuse power in their attempt to maintain the status quo with the ruled. In such an environment, resistance becomes the only liberation tool in the hands of the oppressed. Uwasomba argues that “[L]iberation is an arm or product of resistance [...]” (96). This lopsided relationship between the rulers and the ruled, super-ordinate and subordinate is the focus of this study of the selected novels.

In terms of critical attention, the selected novels, to the best of the knowledge of this writer, have not attracted much critical comments. During the research for the study, getting critical materials was a herculean task, as in most cases, nothing meaningful exists, except a few reviews.

However, Chimamada Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* appears to be the most critiqued. One of the many critics who have examined the novel include Okuyade (2009) who argues that:

The book begins with silence and ends with silence. However, the silence at the concluding phase of the book, which also marks the wholeness of Kambili’s metamorphosis, is distinct. At the beginning of the book, the children and their mother rely heavily on silence and live on assumptions. This silence is dopey and empty[...]. (257)

Reading the novel, one tends to agree with Okuyade who concludes that the novel is built on silence, as the watchword in Eugene Achike’s household is silence. Children, mother and even house-help, all have to live in silence as the head of the home, Eugene Achike, Kambili’s father, appears unfriendly. One does not agree totally with Okuyade that the novel ends with silence. A critical study reveals that towards the end of the

novel, the funless and silent atmosphere give way as Kambili and Jaja laugh, and mother smiles in the closing part of the narrative. This loosening of the tension-filled atmosphere in the Achike household is as a result of the death of the fanatical tyrant, Eugene Achike who takes delight in his dictatorial attitude towards his family. Okuyade (2010) comments that:

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* begins at(sic) *in medias res*, realised through flashback. The novel charts the physical and psychological development of the protagonist, Kambili and her brother Jaja. A development which designates their struggle to define themselves beyond the stiffened and funless world, their Calvinistic father has designed for them [...]. (10)

In this excerpt, Okuyade's critical examination reveals Adichie as a writer whose *Purple Hibiscus* dramatises her protagonist's development. In fact, he concludes that *Purple Hibiscus* fits into the category of the female bildungsroman (a novel of growing up). He further argues that Kambili's physical and psychological development is exposed. Inasmuch as this appears to be the case, one notes that Adichie does not open her tale on Kambili in the latter's infancy but at age sixteen (16) while she is already in school. Writing about a child's development, physically and psychologically and, even emotionally, one would need to take up the child from infancy in order to be objective in the evaluation and conclusion reached on the child. While Okuyade's effort is quite commendable, one disagrees with him from the foregoing arguments being put forward.

In her review of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Nyairo (2006) comments that the novel:

[...] focused on the emotional flowering of its young heroine, and on the psychological effects of her father's religious fanaticism had on his wife and children. The disintegration of family the novel portrays with its challenge of patriarchy, symbolises the fragility engendered by political dictatorship and the anxieties and uncertainties generated by military rulers. (16)

Nyairo from the above, no doubt, focuses on the development of Kambili, Adichie's chief character in the novel being examined, as Okuyade does. But in the case of Nyairo, she reveals in addition, that Kambili's father's religious fanaticism has adverse effects on the entire household. Thus, she concludes that family disintegration results, as this symbolises the fragility in the wider society as a result of political dictatorship.

This argument appears laudable but Nyairo does not give detailed illustration from the text of how patriarchy poses a challenge and how this captures the uncertainties and anxieties in the homeland.

Bryce (2008) says that “*Purple Hibiscus* takes the form of a bildungsroman set in a society in which attitudes have hardened, where violence that was external has become entrenched in the family” (58).

No doubt, Bryce looks at the tension and violence Adichie laces Kambili’s world with, and sees it as one that is entrenched. In addition, she writes that:

The *Purple Hibiscus* of the title, which grows in Auntie Ifeoma’s garden, is counterpoised with the red hibiscus of home. It is metonymic of a series of oppositions on which the novel is structured: silence and speech, repression and spontaneity, state violence (for example, public executions) and family abuse, censorship and press freedom, harsh and gentle versions of masculinity. (59)

Bryce appears to sum up Adichie’s pre-occupation in the above excerpt. But it is obvious that *Purple Hibiscus*, as the novel is titled, refers to, according to her, the protagonist’s repressed speech, state violence, press censorship and Eugene Achike’s show of manly force in his home.

Okuyade (2011) while writing on the Bildungsroman as a narrative form employed by Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus*, comments that:

Adichie’s appropriation of the form is more ambitious because it aptly foregrounds duality as an important feature of the postcolonial African *Bildungsroman*. She uses the growth process of her protagonist to interrogate that of her nation. Thus socio-political problems are explored as analogous to themes of patriarchal dominance. (353)

There is no doubt here that Okuyade sees *Purple Hibiscus* as a novel of growth. Adichie’s effort at this form is used to reveal the growth process of her nation as socio-political problems like oppression and abuses are prevalent in Kambili’s home as well as the outside. The developmental process of a child is akin to that of a nation, Okuyade suggests.

Indeed, Ouma (2009), writing on childhood in *Purple Hibiscus* argues that:

Purple Hibiscus, Adichie’s first novel, is an ideal case for the study of childhood. Through the child protagonist and her

memories, the text foregrounds ways in which childhood can be considered as a set of ideas in examining the underlying problem of identity. By means of memory, we are able to engage with the time of childhood experienced through the relations with the father figure. In this way, childhood is seen as grappling with an inherited sense of history [...]. The representation of childhood in *Purple Hibiscus* is thus informed by the experiences of movement and contact with other worlds [...]. (49)

The above excerpt from Ouma shows that Adichie's novel handles the issue of growing up – childhood. But specifically, the critic concludes that through memories, the novelist focuses on ways childhood could be seen as a set of ideas on the issue of identity.

Oha (2007), commenting on motif of freedom in *Purple Hibiscus* says that:

Adichie sees the African people as sufferers of bad governance due to many years of military rulership(sic). Political freedom is almost a dream in most African states. Political freedom seems a long sought-after need of the Nigerian people. Adichie takes a historical stance in the exposition of the travails of military oddities in the novel. (203)

On gender motif he argues that “Adichie revisited the issue of children as determinant of marriage in Africa” (204) and concludes on the motif of innocence thus:

The motif of innocence helps Adichie to achieve concrete realism devoid of exaggerations. In the world of the child, details are hardly seen but truth is hardly compressed. All these are seen in *Purple Hibiscus*. It is a novel shrouded in the reality of odds and the pains of anarchy. (208)

Oha in this contribution above shows that Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is one that is built on motifs – motifs of freedom, gender and innocence. In his discourse, he sees the post-colonial African as one who is caged, lacking basic freedoms, as a result of military rule in most African States. He also concludes that children determine marriage in Africa, but he does not show with ample evidence from the novel how this is so. However, his argument that in the innocent world of Kambili, details are not given, but the truth of incidents are not covered, is quite impressive as a critical reader would note this narrative pattern of Adichie who chooses to focus on the child. More details than the author gives should have been dramatised for a full presentation of the motif of innocence in the novel.

Besides, Hron (2008), while examining the figure of the child in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* argues that "Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* ostensibly examines the clash of civilisations characterising contemporary Nigeria: between Western and traditional values, between urban and rural settings, or between public and private spheres" (30). She latter says "[...] Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* examines gender violence and domestic abuse, or more implicitly broaches issues of censorship, state violence or corruption[...]" (44).

Hron's argument above reveals Adichie's novel to have focused on culture clash, violence as demonstrated in the child, Kambili. In other words, Adichie uses the figure of the child at the home-front to capture the wider society. Indeed, one tends to agree with this conclusion because in the novel, one notes the tension caused by religious culture in Kambili's home, and state violence. Similarly, Cooper (2010) comments thus:

What we witness in the novel is the attempt to re-fetishise objects linked to pre-colonial rituals, but concretised with the Church and with European culture and integrated into a global modernity. The figurines, in other words, are Mama's protecting spirits, albeit hybridised in the African Catholic home. The étagère was her shrine; the spirits of old have resurged. Papa has desecrated the sacred space and he will be punished. (5)

Cooper here makes one valid and obvious point. She sees Kambili's mother as one who is highly devoted to her figurines. The latter feels religious and thus spiritual satisfaction with her Catholic faith. Hence Cooper could conclude that she feels protected. This critical position is commendable as the crux of the crisis in the novel is religious loyalty. Ojaruega (2009) on her part, writes on Adichie thus:

[...] she recounts the story [*Purple Hibiscus*] through a female using the first person narrative. Hers is a slow and simple form of narrative using the teenage view (Kambili Achike) through which she comments on the blatant misuse of privileges. This is enunciated through parallelism. The religious fanaticism of a father, Eugene Achike, who runs his household like a barrack, punishing any misdemeanour from his wife and children with physical and psychological torture, runs alongside the incarceration and even wanton killing of innocent and helpless citizens by a military regime that brooks no opposition. (102-103)

It is instructive to note Ojaruega's conclusion here. She draws reader's attention to the fact that Adichie's novel is told in the first person and the tale reveals abuse of privileges

of being a father and a ruler. In the home, the father runs the house with military force, parallel to the harsh military rule hoisted over the masses outside the home – the entire society.

Nevertheless, Awhefeada (2009) focuses on individual consciousness in the novel and concludes that:

In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, one encounters the formation of an individual consciousness in Kambili who is the novel's narrator. Kambili's consciousness is hinged on a duality which manifests through tyranny both in the home front and on the national scene. Though not in a physical prison[...], Kambili's home has similar suffocating structures which not only abridge her freedom, but also encrypt her being, her mother's and her brother's (Jaja). (115-116)

Awhefeada's critical position shows that Adichie's narrator, Kambili, is in a prison – her home – which the father has made to look like one, as there is no freedom, just as there is none outside. But Otu (2011) argues that:

The novelist [Adichie] creates a representative family which has been totally cut off from their life source – culture. Eugene Achike, head of the family, is an effective tool in the neo-colonialist machinery of economic exploitation and cultural imperialism[...]. Eugene is a completely assimilated Africa. Brainwashed to accept racial and cultural inferiority, he takes upon himself the duty of “salvaging” or “civilizing” everyone around him by Europeanising them. (345)

Otu's argument appears satirical as he sees Eugene Achike as a brainwashed African in the hands of the West, being used as a tool for cultural imperialism in the home in particular, and society at large. In fact, Eugene Achike in the novel is for everything Christian and against anything heathen in Christianity, a culture he grew up with.

Looking at critics submissions on Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* so far, it shows their focus to be cultural, political, sociological, linguistic and artistic. But interesting and a deviation from the above critical observation is Azumurana's (2012) critical focus. His study of the novel reveals Adichie's exploration of her dominant character's psychological being. He argues that “[...] little or no attention has been given to the psychological motivation (which is rooted in their [Adichie's dominant characters] familial and filial relationship) for the actions or inactions of Adichie's major characters [...]” (133). He thus concludes:

It is therefore, obvious that Adichie's characters are not just products of their cultural or sociological experience, but also of their psychological conflicts, which emanate from their familial and filial relationships. While Eugene is conflicted by his familial and filial relationship, his children (Jaja and Kambili) are products of their familial affiliation. Accordingly, there is much more to Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* than being a cultural, postcolonial and sociological narrative. (143-144)

Azumurana's conclusion on Adichie's novel is engaging as he examines it from a psychological point of view. Indeed reading the novel, one wonders why Eugene Achike behaves so fanatically. His Catholic upbringing and missionary tutelage seem to have ingrained in him and altered his emotional and psychological development. And this, as Azumurana infers, affected his relationships at home and outside his home. His motives and actions are psychologically driven.

However, Westman (2008) examines the novel as a postcolonial text and writes thus:

The postcolonial effects that occur in *Purple Hibiscus* are many and the characters are influenced by living in a postcolonial country. Adichie criticises the colonial power and the way European beliefs and culture have been introduced to the native people of Africa. In *Purple Hibiscus*, she presents the negative effects of colonialism through the eyes of the main character, Kambili. She has been taught through her father, "a good native", that the white way is superior to the native way. However, as time moves on, she realises that there are flaws in the way she has been brought up by her father. She is torn between the coloniser's ways and the native ways. (18)

Westman's view above is nothing but a clash of cultural values as the after-effects of colonialism in postcolonial Africa. Thus, he argues that *Purple Hibiscus* shows a critical view of culture in contact with the colonised and the sad and negative effect on the colonised as dramatised in Eugene Achike's household where African cultural values are in conflict with Western cultural values via religious piety – Christianity.

Fwangyil (2011) on her part argues that *Purple Hibiscus* is "[...] a dramatic indictment of the oppressive attitudes of men towards women and children that they are supposed to love and care for [...]" (263). Fwangyil in the above points out that Adichie's novel portrays men who oppress their wives and children they should have cared for. But she does not demonstrate how oppressive the man is, and whether

resistance was put up. He does not also show how much the love and care Adichie clothes Eugene Achike with. Nonetheless, we can conclude thus far that all the critical views on Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* are not only valid but also commendable critical efforts on a novel emerging from a young writer. It is obvious that none of the critics examined paid adequate attention to the issue of abuse of power and resistance.

Another novel selected for this study is Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*. This Zimbabwean writer has in no small way fictionalised post-colonial issues besetting Zimbabwe in particular and Africa in general. Though published since 1992, the novel has not attracted much critical attention. However, a few scholarly comments exist on *Smouldering Charcoal*. One of such is a review from Chirambo (1999). He writes thus:

Smouldering Charcoal also shows why the politics of oppression and exploitation in Africa is a vicious cycle that may never be broken. It is a story of frustrated dreams and aspirations, of disillusionment with post-independence leadership with no break in the cycle. It reviews the mistakes committed at independence which seriously shadow the prospects of regaining the dreams and aspirations of independence even through recent democratic efforts in many nations in Africa. (121)

In the above, Chirambo sees *Smouldering Charcoal* as a novel Zeleza uses to portray the frustrations, disappointments and disillusionments in post-independence Africa. Though a review, Chirambo does not show how Zeleza invents the politics of oppression and exploitation in Africa and as these lead to frustrations and disappointments in the society. In addition, Page (2000) on his part, while commenting on Zeleza's characterisation, argues that "[...] Zeleza's characters are sharply drawn and seem to voice fairly clear impressions about their circumstances" (303). He concludes that Zeleza's "*Smouldering Charcoal* represents an intellectual and artistic pinnacle in his work, bringing together many of the themes that others expressed particularly" (298). Page, in his brief essay on *Smouldering Charcoal* focuses on characterisation in the novel, but does not show enough from his effort. Mielk (1995) reviews the same novel and writes that "Zeleza critiques medicine, education, politics, the prison system, gender relations, economics, the treatment of the exile, and much more – all in a few well-written pages" (526).

A study of *Smouldering Charcoal* no doubt reveals Zeleza's critical vision on the themes. But Mielk does not show even a glimpse of how the novelist presents these issues in the novel. Though few, these critics who reviewed *Smouldering Charcoal* do

not in any way in the novel, tinker with abuse of power as a post-colonial problem in sub-Saharan Africa.

Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit* is one novel that appears in post-colonial Ugandan society that captures the reigns of military terror in the land. Though it suggests a political bombshell to any reader, the novel has not attracted serious critical attention hence it is chosen for this study on abuse of power and resistance, as a way of contributing to the knowledge of readers understanding of the novel.

Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* is another novel that fictionalises post-colonial African experience in a Ghanaian setting. But the work has attracted not much critical attention. Adjei (2009), while examining Darko's first three novels *Beyond the Horizon*, *The Housemaid* and *Faceless*, comments that *Beyond the Horizon*: "[...] is told from a first person narrative perspective. It is a story of the female protagonist Mara, told by her through a series of flashbacks" (49). A look at Adjei's conclusion shows that he examined the author's narrative point of view and noted the third person point of view which indeed is Darko's vantage position in the novel. However, Chasen (2010) in her thesis on *Beyond the Horizon* argues that:

By shifting her narrative from rural to urban and third world to first world space, Darko examines how "transnational flows" of capitalist progress travel across circumscribed national and regional borders and contribute to the global business of forced prostitution in the novel. (11)

From the foregoing, it appears Chasen tries to look at the setting of Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. But she does not explicitly show such. She mentions "urban and rural", "third world and first world", and does not show specifically where, how and why this is employed by the author in the novel. Thematically, Chasen quoted above, goes on in the same essay to argue that "[...] Darko emphasises that it is neither the institution of marriage nor local tradition that puts women in danger but rather the ways in which ubiquitous capitalist desire influences these domains" (14).

A look at contemporary African society shows the modern man's and woman's chase for material wealth, as African values get eroded. The modern housewife wants all the good things of life. Capitalism thus threatens Africa's once water-tight marital bond, as women walk out of the home to desire the good things of life to the detriment of their marriages. Thus one agrees with Chasen's view above.

However, Jude Dibia's *Unbridled* is another selected novel for this study. There appears to be no appreciable critical comments on the novel. This is consequent upon the fact that the author belongs to the emerged group of writers whose works are rarely examined as they are dominated by earlier writers. Though they make waves in Europe and America, they do not attract the same attention in home countries like Nigeria, in the case of Jude Dibia. Okuyade (2010) corroborates this conclusion, when he writes thus:

Currently in Nigeria, there is apprehension about the inability of the Nigerian literati to acquire and assess the novels of the third generation of Nigerian [African] writers. The dearth of novels of this generation has no doubt created a creative hiatus – psychologically. Most of these novels are published abroad and the writers are resident in the West [...] The novels of these exiles are either not found in Nigeria [their home country] or they are too expensive, taking into consideration Africa's compromised economy, when one is opportuned to stumble into these books. (1-2)

Okuyade's observation is quite concrete as the novels of these writers (our focus) are not easy to come by. This informs why there is dearth of scholarship on them.

This has been the major challenge in this study. But one cannot run away from examining these writers and their works in sub-Saharan Africa just because criticism on them are not easy to come by or do not exist. There is need to examine these writers despite the fact that their novels are not easily available and not much appear to have been done on them.

The voices of these writers have made a mark on the development of sub-Saharan African novel, which Tiyaambe Zeleza, Moses Isegawa, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Amma Darko and Jude Dibia are contributors. Eko (2006) tells us that "The new millennium has witnessed the emergence of quite an impressive number of African writers, who have won outstanding awards and prizes, both national and international" (43).

Indeed, the critical comments of scholars on the selected novels reveal a great deal of efforts at understanding the novels. These comments as varied as they are, help us to undertake a study of abuse of power and resistance. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* for instance, has been shown to focus on tension in the home and the larger society, lack of freedom in the home and the larger society, the motif of freedom, violence in the home and the society at large, the growth process of a child which reveals the growth process of a nation as evident in the oppression and abuses in Kambili's home as well as the

world outside. Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, is shown to have dwelt on frustrations, disappointments and disillusionments resulting from oppressive politics. *Snakepit* also focused on military terrorism in Ugandan society. These novels, it must be mentioned, are set in a democratic society as well as a military setup.

While critics' attention on Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* reveal a setting where forced prostitution and quest for material wealth are played out, Dibia's *Unbridled* attracted no appreciable comment as shown in the review. These critical observations show that scholars have examined issues relating to power politics in one way or the other.

It has become obvious that the many critics who examined Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, looked at it from various critical angles. The comments on Tiyanbe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit*, Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Jude Dibia's *Unbridled*, reveal critical views on the individual novels. Looking at their critical views, as enunciated in this review, one notes, that inasmuch as the comments are valid, none of these examined any of the novels as a demonstration of abuse of power. Therefore this study focuses primarily on the selected novels as a fictionalisation of abuse of power and resistance to such, as revealed in public and domestic domains.

CHAPTER THREE

ABUSE OF POWER IN PUBLIC SPACE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines abuse of power in public space in two sub-Saharan African novels, namely Tiyambe Zeleze's *Smoldering Charcoal* and Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit*. In this examination, attention will be focused on tyranny in democracy and military tyranny as forms of abuse of power. Resistance to these abuses through political and trade union activism, dissent and exile will also be exposed. But before we dwell on the texts to illustrate the above findings, it is imperative to examine tyranny. *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* defines tyranny as "Absolute power arbitrarily or unjustly administered; despotism[...] an arbitrarily cruel exercise of power; a tyrannical act[...]" (1360). The above definition reveals that tyranny is an unjust and an arbitrary use of power. In other words, we can conclude that it is an oppressive, abusive and violent use of power by the strong over the weak. In post-colonial African political setting, it is the use of absolute power by the ruler over the ruled. Thus we see one who uses absolute power over others as a tyrant.

Besides, Latey (1969) writing on tyranny, reminds us that "[a] tyrant is a ruler who exercises arbitrary power beyond the scope permitted by the laws, customs and standards of his time and society and who does so with a view to maintaining or increasing that power" (18).

Latey in the excerpt above posits that tyranny involves arbitrary use of power beyond what the land permits, as the user of such power does so with the intent to increase and maintain the use of such power. Latey continues when he says that:

Aristotle who must be regarded as one of the best experts on the subject, both from direct experience and from deep study, defined tyranny as 'irresponsible rule over equals or betters in the interest of the ruler but not in the interest of the ruled'.
(15)

Latey's reference to Aristotle's definition of tyranny helps us to understand the subject further as an irresponsible political use of power over equals or betters in the interest of the political leader. This means that a tyrant tries to exercise absolute and irresponsible power over his subjects, the ruled, among whom are his equals, politically, or those who are better either politically or economically.

However, Lock (2002) writes on tyranny thus:

As usurpation is the exercise of power which another hath a right to, so tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right, which nobody can have a right to. And this is making use of the power anyone has in his hands not for the good of those who are under it, but for his own private separate advantage. When the governor, however entitled, makes not the law but his will the rule, and his commands and actions are not direct to the preservation of the properties of his people, but the satisfaction of his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion. (91)

Lock in the above quoted essay on treatise of government and toleration, argues that a tyrant exercises power beyond right for his own personal favour and ambition, which at the end breeds revenge against possible opponents or perceived political enemies. Looking at the foregoing submissions on tyranny, and a critical look back in political history, revealed that the world in general and Africa in particular had had tyrants. Lambert (2012) writing on the tyrants of the past, submits on Adolf Hitler of Germany thus:

From 1940 Polish Jews were confined in ghettos. When the Germans invaded Russia in 1941 the mass murder of Jews in the east began. At first they were shot. Then at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 Nazi leaders decided to exterminate all Jews. So they were rounded up and deported to death camps. When they arrived some were selected for work (and worked to death) while others gassed. Afterwards the bodies were burnt. (8-9)

On Idi Amin of Uganda, Lambert writes:

In January 1971 when Prime Minister Milton Obote was in Singapore attending a meeting, Idi Amin staged a coup in Uganda. Amin turned out to be one of the worst tyrants of the 20th century. The number of people he murdered was at least 100,000 and possible many more. Apart from those Ugandans who were shot, others were tortured to death or bludgeoned to death with sledgehammers or iron bars. (8)

Lambert no doubt draws our attention to the notorious tyrants in history – Adolf Hitler of Germany (Europe) and Idi Amin of Uganda (Africa). Lambert's revelations on these two tyrants show that they have irresponsibly abused power to their own advantage and political convenience over their subjects.

It is interesting to observe that some post-colonial African states had had tyrannical experiences in the hands of the likes of Idi Amin in one way or the other. There was the experience in Uganda which Lambert reminds us, Zaire, Malawi and in not long ago, Nigeria, during the despotic rule of Sani Abacha. These experiences are what the selected sub-Saharan African novelists recreate for us. While Tiyambe Zeleza in *Smouldering Charcoal* focuses on abuse of power through tyranny in a democracy, Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit* pre-occupies itself with the same abuse through military tyranny. Both novelists invent resistance to such abuses.

3.2 Tyranny in a democracy

Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* reveals an abuse of power. A critical study of the novel reveals the author's weaving of a Zimbabwean society held hostage by a tyrants in a democratic government. The issue of tyrannical politics in some nations has been a worrisome phenomenon since the notoriety of Idi Amin of Uganda.

Zeleza captures this scenario as he creates Chola, one of his chief characters in *Smouldering Charcoal*, to unveil the terror that pervades in a society under tyranny. In the novel, the author opens this in a dramatic dialogue between Chola and the Party's Youth Militia. The novelist writes:

Where is your card?
I must have forgotten it.
You are not moving until you show us the card!
I said I forgot it.
You liar! Get out! [...]
You know that this country belongs to our great leader, and
yet you forgot the card.
Who are you trying to fool? (17)

Zeleza in this opening and dramatic scene in his novel, sets the stage for the unfolding of abuse of power in the African society he mirrors. This social environment has a government which engages an agency such as Youth Militia, an arm of the political party of the ruling government. In the dialogue, we observe a confrontation between Chola and the Youth Militia at a road checkpoint as Chola, a journalist, drives to work. It is no doubt expected that every citizen of the country move and live with the party card. This is a symbol of loyalty to the ruling party and government, which the great leader leads. But what Zeleza dramatises in the dialogue is not whether citizens carry the card with them or not, but how the government's agents such as the Youth Militia, abuse the power

vested in them to check this political loyalty. In a way, any individual who does not carry the card is seen as a subversive. The novelist throws more light on this as his third person narrator tells us that:

Chola didn't respond; in his stillness he even seemed to have stopped breathing. From his rear window he saw other drivers anxiously awaiting his fate, except whites who were exempt from the search. Every citizen of the country was supposed to have a party membership card. The Youth Militia carried out searches any time they wanted to, particularly during periods of political tension and unrest, which were quite frequent,[...].
(17)

The author here shows that there was dire need to always be with the party card. In the country, political tension is the order of the day. And this makes it mandatory for everybody except expatriates, to carry the card. But we note an arbitrary and cruel use of power as members of the Youth Militia unleash terror on members of the public who do not have the card on them, like a badge, or identity status. For Chola to be still and breathless shows the fear in him, as his watchers, fellow commuters, look on to see how members of the Youth Militia terrorise him. This is abuse of power in a democracy, as the militia group could have been civil in doing this. And acting in this manner reveals that the government that gives it such powers, is also using power cruelly on a large scale. This is possible because the country belongs to one man, a tyrant, the "Great Leader", who sets up the Youth Militia for his repressive actions.

Besides, the encounter between Chola and the Youth Militia shows the state machinery in place to unleash terror on those suspected to be subversives. The writer confirms this when he says that "All this was done in the name of rooting out subversive elements" (17) in the country. Aside from this maltreatment of Chola, the author reveals that "others were beaten to death, their houses burnt, or women raped and children banned from school, if they did not possess the almighty card" (18). The importance of this card cannot be over-emphasised as it is seen as "almighty" in the eyes of the people. This is because of the way government agents ensure compliance. In fact the novel reveals that "violence flowed in their [Youth Militia] veins like poisoned blood, draining them of meaning and purpose and leaving them with the spasms of death" (18). The author's fictionalisation of abuse of power in the Zimbabwean society is not in doubt. He thus uses this invention to show a time when tyrants held sway in African politics. In the main, he shows that such government is evil. He writes: "people must become aware that

the system we have at present is evil. It serves the rich and the powerful at the expense of the masses” (77).

Furthermore, Zeleza shows that abuse of power is rampant in the fictional cosmos he moulds. This he does as he brings in the sad news of the gruesome murder of Dambo, Chola’s friend, in the novel. Dambo in the novel is narrated to be an activist who tries to use his activism to conscientise the masses to enable them see the need to rise up and confront the tyrants in government. But this vociferous voice gets assassinated by government agents.

Chola laments while in hospital to identify Dambo’s corpse thus: “A friend of mine was murdered...” (81). The author tells us that Dambo’s death shows the political tension and terror in the land as a result of the leader’s blatant abuse of power. The narrator narrates:

Ever since they received the news of Dambo’s death neither Catherine nor Chola spoke much. Catherine was mortified by the thought that the fate which had overtaken Dambo might befall Chola, her future husband. Chola also thought about the possibility of his being murdered, but he vowed that he would not just sit and wait for it to happen. He was going to fight, to continue where Dambo had left off. (106)

The news of Dambo’s death sends shock into the spines of his friends such as Chola. In the novel, as evident in the excerpt above, the author gives a view of the state of tyranny in Zimbabwe, the independent African state the novel is set. Chola, though fears death in the hands of the state machinery, vows to continue to engage in activism in order to expose the blatant abuse of power in the society. In fact, he plans to document the sad tyrannical experiences of the people in a book. At this juncture, Zeleza uses this book project to project the frustrations and struggles the masses have been going through. Indeed, it is revealed that independent Zimbabwe is a concentration camp. This is a sad commentary on post-colonial sub-Saharan African states. The relative peace and euphoria of independence was shortlived as tyranny disrupts it. It is tragic to find that post-colonial dreams of a better and free independent African states turned into a mirage as the emerging rulers turned themselves into tyrants, thus forcing the state of terror on the entire country..

This situation spells doom for post-colonial sub-Saharan African states. No wonder, Uzoechi Nwagbara (2009) argues that:

The writers' engagement in politics and fighting for the masses through their fictive works is crucial in critiquing as well as contesting the social space in the postcolonial era, when the pressures of tyranny have been redoubled in the wake of corporatist thralldom and state violence. (130)

Nwagbara here corroborates Zeleza's fictional preoccupation with abuse of power in his fictional society. Indeed, tyranny is a kind of state violence. In a way, Zeleza uses *Smouldering Charcoal* to suggest the tyrannical violence African leaders unleash on the masses in post-colonial society. Nwagbara, while referring to the Nigerian State, to quote him again, says that "In Nigeria as well as other African nations, the ledger of postcolonial writers are replete with issues ranging from political corruption, state violence, to despotic, governance, among others" (125). It is interesting to note that tyranny as a form of abuse of power in the society also attracts the creative vision of Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his novel, *Wizard of the Crow* (2007). In this novel, Ngugi adroitly and skillfully mirrors political despotism. The novel reveals an absolute despot and tyrant. The novelist creates his character the Ruler, as one who exercises absolute political power and abuses it in the discharge of his responsibilities as a ruler and leader. The author sadly captures the character of tyrants in post-colonial Kenya particularly and Africa generally, as his narrator tells us of the Ruler thus:

It is said that the walls and ceiling of the chamber were made from the skeletons of the students, teachers, workers, and small farmers he had killed in all the regions of the country, for it was well known that he came into power with flaming swords, the bodies of the victims falling to the down to his left and right like banana trunks. The skulls of his most hated enemies hung on the walls and others from the ceiling, bone sculptures, white memories of victory and defeat. (10-11)

In the fictional Aburiria, the Ruler, it is observed, is a tyrant who takes delight in chilling killings as he exercises his power tyrannically. Ngugi's creation of the Ruler as in the quote above shows that post-colonial Kenya is disrupted by tyrants who see everybody as an enemy that should be coerced into submission or killed.

This ugly scenario in post-independence African politics is indeed a worrisome disruption of social cohesion and political stability. Adebayo Williams in *The Remains of the Last Emperor* (1994), also enacts the character of tyranny as the Emperor, in Williams' fictional society, jails all opposition. The narrator tells us that the Emperor built "the prison-yard in the land in the province of his bitterest political enemies" and he

sees it as the most viable and lucrative industry in the province (27). This shows that like in *Wizard of the Crow*, the Emperor is a tyrant who abuses power. There is no doubt that these characters in fiction, mirror the likes of Marshal Idi Amin of Uganda. Moses Isegawa captures this imaginatively in *Snakepit* (2005). In the novel, Isegawa tells us that “[...] Marshal Amin, King of Africa, created the new line of Kings and princes now in power” (99). This new line of kings and princes is evident in Ngugi’s fictional Ruler, Williams’ Emperor, who continue to ravage post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. Hence Tiyambe Zeleza highlights the evil of tyranny as a post-colonial malaise in Africa in his novel, through the dramatisation of tyranny in a democracy as an abuse of power. No wonder, Latey sadly concludes that “we live in an age of tyrants [...]. Indeed scarcely a year passes without the appearance of some new dictator who may well become a tyrant” (11). It is important to note at this juncture that the history of tyrants forms the raw material for African novelists. These tyrants have similar identities. They stand out as their names usually hint at their proclivity for exalted offices which they abuse: “the Great Leader”, “The Ruler” ‘Emperor”, “Marshal”. In these novels as in Tiyambe Zeleza’s *Smouldering Charcoal*, our focus, the novelists critique post-colonial Africa and see it as a place where tyranny reigns supreme as African leaders take pride in the cruel, arbitrary, violent and intoxicating use of power.

In addition, Zeleza’s fictional universe in *Smouldering Charcoal* is a tension-filled one as the masses have become enemies of the State. A critical study reveals a situation where the government sees everybody as a subversive and an economic saboteur. In order to expose this ugly state of things in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the novelist invents a picketing action involving bakery workers who dared complain against their slave wages in the face of economic boom. In the novel, the author shows bakery workers picket against their management who appear unyielding to the workers demand for better conditions of service. They thus organized and embarked on a strike action which brought bakery activities to a standstill. But management does not welcome this development. Rather they see the workers as economic saboteurs and subversives. In a swift response, the management carries out mass arrests and hauled all the victims into prison. The scene Zeleza creates in *Smouldering Charcoal* is with the intent to further show blatant abuse of power in the Zimbabwean society he mirrors.

The author focuses on the prison system and reveals a harrowing and painful picture. Among those arrested and detained, though not a bakery worker, is the author’s

protagonist, Chola. Through this character, Zeleza connects other characters in detention to reveal abuse of power. The narrator tells us:

Chola had not come to prison with any illusions about the conditions but he was shocked all the same. He had been brought the previous night and yet he felt that he had been there too long already [...]. (118)

Chola's arrest and detention in a squalid cell is not because he went on strike for poor wages against the management of *Daily Dispatch*, his employer, but because of his radical views evident in his newspaper articles and news reporting. The narrator tells us that Chola "... had noticed that he was being trailed by Special Branch" (113). In a free and independent society like post-independence Africa, there is supposed to be freedom of the press. But what we find in Zeleza's novel is a press which appears to be on the side of the Zimbabwean government. Hence Chola, who tries to engage the press differently, is seen as an enemy of the state and harassed and subsequently arrested and detained. This action by the state is an abuse of government's power to rule over her subjects. Zeleza captures this situation when he writes that:

They were led in single file by armed guards to a squad in the centre of the prison compound where they met thousands of other prisoners. Chola was astounded. There were prisoners of every description, and accused of every crime imaginable. It was hard to believe that all these people were kept within the prison compound by a high concrete wall ringed with barbed wire. (120)

This action the government takes against innocent and picketing bakery workers is nothing but an abuse of power in a democratic environment. There are several prisons in the land, where these victims could have been detained. But having all the detainees in a prison compound congests the prison. This shows that the government uses state power arbitrarily. A critical examination of the excerpt above shows that the victims are merely victims of the state as they are wrongfully accused and arrested. Zeleza uses this scene to dramatise the Zimbabwean and Malawian experiences of tyranny. In the contemporary society, the ruled have lived at the mercy of the rulers. The rulers have turned themselves into demi-gods, objects of fear and terror as they abuse public power. What engages the reader is the author's courage in his exposition. It is revealed in the novel that every part of the country is a cell of hell where everybody seems to be an enemy of the regime. In prison, the author shows that the detainees include all kinds of personalities:

Before he [Chola] and the bakery workers were transferred to A Block, Chola used to think that he was being deprived of the chance to meet the hardcore political opponents of the regime. But when he came to A Block he did not find the political agitators he had imagined. Side by side with the sworn enemies of the regime were many who had been detained simply because they happened to belong to the 'wrong' ethnic group, or had fallen out of favour with the powers-that-be. Others were associated with those who had fled into exile. There were school teachers, lawyers, civil servants, workers, peasants, and even a number of chiefs and former ministers. It was a microcosm of the potential of a country laid to waste because of pervasive fear, ruthless greed, political repression and moral bankruptcy. (149)

There is no gainsaying the fact that the entire fictional cosmos which Zeleza invents is one of terror. It is evident that anybody could be arrested and detained without genuine reason. The society is in fear as many members of the civil population have been arrested and detained, without genuine reason for such arrests. This is a clear case of abuse of power in the public space. The ruler, the "Great Leader" as Zeleza satirically calls him, has turned himself into a tyrant, as no one "coughs", as it were, in the land.

Besides, the arrest of peasants, mere civil servants and even school teachers shows that the government of the day is fully out to silent voices of dissent. No wonder the author writes that "[...] the government's hand is long and brutal" (147). One of the agents of state is the party. The government uses the party to terrorise and intimidate activists and critics like Chola, Dambo, Mchere and university dons like Ndaturo, who boldly critique the government constructively. These characters are representative of all voices in the society who critique the government in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The narrator tells us that "the party had eyes and ears everywhere. Safety lies in keeping one's eyes and ears open, but the mouth shut" (14). It is obvious that the government is brutal. The use of brute force in the exercise of public power is not in doubt, as the watchword for survival is silence. As a literary piece, Zeleza uses *Smouldering Charcoal* to mirror what has become a trend in Africa's politics. The author thus recreates for his audience, a dismal world where tyranny is the norm. Thus Wellek and Warren (1963) remind us that "... literature is simply a mirror of life, a reproduction and thus, obviously, a social document" (103-104). Zeleza indeed documents for us tyranny in a democracy as an abuse of power in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. As a writer, he is, as Wellek and Warren would say: "not only influenced by society: he influences it. [His] Art not merely reproduces life but also shapes it" (102). This issue of abuse of power as a demonstration of tyranny is one that has become the bane of political and social

development in Africa. Abuse of power is not only associated with military politics but also a democratic set up. In Africa, there was a time when the military was in power. But in recent times, most African states have embraced democratic mode of governance. It is observed that some leaders are tyrannical as they abuse power at will, using the state machinery to oppress and silence the opposition. This disruptive human situation is what Zeleza presents to his audience. As a novelist and writer, he mirrors Ngugi's image of the responsible writer as one who

... responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a sensitive needle, he registers with varying degrees of accuracy and success the conflicts and tensions in his changing society[...]. For the writer himself lives in and is shaped by history. (*Homecoming*, 47)

The writer, Zeleza, has in *Smouldering Charcoal*, demonstrated himself as one who lives in a post-colonial society that is full of conflicts and tensions as a result of tyranny in a democratic society. There is no doubt that he has been influenced by the history of abuse of power in Zimbabwean politics.

The author's creation of tyranny as evident in the government's abuse of power is further shown in prison. In the detention cell, and in a conversation between Chola and Ndatero, a university don, also detained for his activism, the novelist in a dramatic dialogue writes:

When will this madness end?
Until the thugs in power have been overthrown[...]. The problem is much deeper than simply getting rid of one government and substituting it with another. What guarantee is there that if your movement came to power it would not be as tyrannical as the present regime? [...]
The creative energies of our people have been paralysed by tyranny[...]. (151)

While in detention, Chola and Ndatero review the situation in the society outside the prison walls. They conclude that there is need to overthrow the tyrannical government. They note also that the creative and articulate energies of progressives in the society have been cramped by the suppressive actions of the government in power. This blatant abuse of power is pervasive everywhere as the "Great Leader", the ruler, delegates abusive power to all arms of government. Not only does the police and the Youth Militia, an arm

of the party abuse power, but also the prison superintendents in Zeleza's invented world.

In a long narration, the narrator tells us about detainees thus:

They [the detainees] were each taken to a different room. They were stripped naked. Each room was filled with icy water up to the knees. They could not sit or walk around or sleep. The room was kept dark. Occasionally a powerful light bulb was turned on. Every now and then the door would be opened abruptly and they would be flushed with a bucket of cold water or a water hose. They peed and shitted in the water. This went on for three days. The men grew weaker. Some became delirious.

On the fourth day, the same routine was repeated. Then each prisoner heard something drop in the water. Since it was dark they couldn't tell what it was. Mchere felt something crawling on his legs. His shaking hand grabbed it. It was a snake. He screamed and threw it against the wall. He moved from corner to corner. His whole body trembled violently. (154-155)

This passage exemplifies the tyrannical use of power in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The prison environment is nothing but a miniature hell on earth where the state unleashes terror on its victims. It is crystal clear from the quote above that the prison superintendents are agents of the state who are used to perpetrate tyranny. The abuse of public power indulged in by them is no doubt obvious. This is shown by the way they treat prison inmates. As prison overseers, they are meant to guide and guard the inmates from escape as they remain incommunicado. But in the scene created, as quoted, Zeleza shows heartless and cruel officers who are nothing but tyrants as they arbitrarily use the power vested in them as prison superintendents. This is intended to terrorise them and others to submission. It must be noted that these inmates are innocent. They have not in any way committed any offence or crime against the State. Their crime is that they are constructively critical of the government, as they engage in activism, as in the case of Chola, the journalist, Ndatero the university don, Mchere, Botha, Tione (trade unionists), and the others who are mere slave wage earners of a bakery; also incarcerated under such inhuman conditions are countless civil servants, peasants, traditional heads, teachers and all categories of personalities in the society. This indeed is where the abuse of public power in a tyrannical society lies. Thus the novelist suggests that tyranny, as shown in the abuse of power, is evil as the rulers indulge in the wrong use of power.

3.3 Resistance to tyranny in a democracy

Latey, while still dwelling on tyranny, writes that “Tyranny, in fact, breeds tyranny” (50). For this reason, one observes that the masses at the receiving end of despotic and arbitrary use of power often make attempts to resist the rulers and their agents. In the course of doing this, there are bound to be conflicts and tensions, sometimes even resulting in further arrests and detentions, physical, psychological and emotional tortures, and even death. Consequently, the victims often do not remain completely subservient or helpless but challenge public abuse of power even when they know the dangers in doing so. Berghe (1978) writing on the subject of tyranny argues:

It is in the nature of power to be resented and challenged by those at the receiving end of the stick, and to be retained and defended by those who hold it. Violence or the threat of violence is the ultimate argument in a power contest. (174)

The reactions to tyranny in any society where it operates is resistance. In sub-Saharan Africa, which is the setting of the selected novels for this study, it is observed that the rulers and leaders have employed one tactic or the other to abuse power, in the discharge of their political responsibilities. Many African states under military rule (when it was in vogue) or democracy, as it is being practised now, are a kind of concentration camp where the masses see themselves as people who have been caged in an oppressive environment. Interestingly, there is a limit to human endurance. In fact, no man would want to remain under the sledgehammer of a tyrant as a subject of the government in power. This situation indeed calls for resistance as the people begin to see the need to regain self-worth and live freely and happily. Tiyambe Zeleza’s *Smouldering Charcoal* fictionalises the attempt to resist tyranny in a democracy in the Zimbabwean society through political and trade union activism.

3.3.1 Political and trade union activism

In the novel, Zeleza skilfully and courageously captures the masses’ bold effort to say “no” to tyranny in a democracy through political activism. The author writes that “people must be aware that the system we have at present is evil. It serves the rich and the powerful at the expense of the masses” (77). The society Zeleza presents in the novel is one where the rich, the powerful and indeed, those in government wield power abusively and oppressively. The masses, it is revealed in the novel, live in pains as they suffer want and remain poor while a few others live in affluence and happiness. In spite

of the fact that “the government’s hand is long and brutal...” as they use state machinery to unleash terror on the citizens, Dambo, one of the characters says and concludes: “... we are not cripples either” (47). Dambo’s conclusion points to the fact that the masses, the ruled, are active and ready to confront the government, the rulers. This is a show of political activism among the citizens

It is intriguing to note that the author’s invention of resistance in his novel is strengthened as he takes us to the prison scene where Mchere and others have been camped. In the prison, Chola, a journalist and political activist in the novel, suggests the formation of a movement, to create awareness on tyranny and the need to resist it. In a way, the movement itself is a social machinery, a ready tool in the hands of the masses to resist tyranny. Chola tells his fellow inmates thus:

The movement is striving to bring together all the oppressed people and classes in our society in order to wage a common struggle against poverty, exploitation and oppression. That’s why it’s called the Movement for National Transformation [...]. You see, we hear of a strike here, a demonstration there, and so on. But these acts on their own, important as they may be, can only tinker with the system. There is a need for overall organisation, an overall strategy, an overall objective. And that’s precisely where the movement comes in. (148-149)

The formation of Movement for National Transformation as suggested by Chola, is nothing but an instrument for resistance. Chola reveals it all in his awareness campaign in the cell. The aim of the movement is to bring an end to exploitation, oppression, and grim poverty, which most post-colonial African states are known for. Zeleza in this scene shows that the masses can organise themselves to form a formidable force to resist the government of the day that takes delight in the abuse of power. There is no doubt that there is dire need for a workable political strategy to conscientise the masses and form a common base on which they can stand to oppose and resist the tyrants in government. Adebayo Williams in his novel *The Remains of the Last Emperor*, like Zeleza, shows that tyrants need to be resisted. He, Williams, thus suggests the need for mass struggle against the Emperor and his allies in his *The Remains of the Last Emperor*, where he writes: “Our lives are not that important. What is important is to lay the foundation of perpetual struggles, a cult of heroic example” (109).

The situation that calls for resistance in society exists because the leaders have not been able to lead the masses to the promised land. The masses (the ruled) observe toughness from rulers as the latter amass wealth, live in affluence and create inequality

sustained by abuse of political power to silence the masses. Young, reminds us that “those in power often develop a curious but symptomatic deafness” (18) to the masses hue and cry for a better deal, like the bakery workers and the general masses in Zeleza’s *Smouldering Charcoal*. Such deafness is no doubt tyrannical and needs to be resisted, the novelist suggests.

There is no grain of doubt that Zeleza’s world is an oppressive and tyrannical one that needs to be resisted. There is fear and terror as there are series of unlawful arrests and detentions and politically motivated assassinations. Consequently, many run into exile as they can no longer bear the pains and constant fear in the land. The novelist writes that “the creative energies of our people have been paralysed by tyranny. These energies must be released and given room to dance” (151). Indeed, in the early part of the novel, and in the encounter between Chola and the Youth Militia, an arm of government (agent) established to oppress the masses, the novelist reveals his concern for resistance. Chola in his encounter with the Youth Militia gets forced to obtain the political card for easy passage. Having bought the card from the group, Chola throws it on the back seat of his car. The narrator tells us: “[h]e threw the card on the back seat. It would be burned in the evening like the others. In this way he kept alive his faith in his own resistance and struggle against oppression [...]” (18).

Reading the novel, one notes that Chola maintained his resolve to resist and struggle against oppression all through. He is the brain behind the formation of Movement for National Transformation. He gets arrested and detained along with striking bakery workers who also resist their employer’s exploitation, oppression and bad administration.

The novelist artfully demonstrates trade union activism as a form of resistance in the masses when he takes his reader to the bakery scene. The reader sees the workers here engage in trade union activism to confront what they see as tyrannical oppression in the hands of their employer in a democratic setting. At the bakery scene, the author reveals that the workers feel unsatisfied with their working condition and pay packets, while they see their employers and in fact government functionaries eat fat. They thus plan for picketing to show their displeasure. This industrial unrest which resulted in a strike action does not go down well with the bakery management. They thus engage force to discourage strike. Consequently, the striking workers among whom are Mchere, Bota and many others get hauled into jail. Mchere in jail, laments and painfully narrates the encounter thus:

We immediately suspected that something was wrong when we got there the next day [...]. The gates of the bakery were locked and nobody from management came again to try to stop the strike. Instead, union officials asked us to resume work pending further negotiations over our dispute with management [...].

We stuck to our guns because we knew that if we retreated at that moment management would interpret that as weakness. We stood there in the scorching heat without anything to eat. We kept ourselves going by telling stories of our experiences in similar situations. Then just after two o'clock the managing director came again and asked us for the last time to reconsider our stand [...].

We were all tense as we looked at each other wondering who would be our Judas. But nobody moved and we were filled with pride [...].

Anyway [...] at about four o'clock a truck approached the bakery. It hardly stopped when policemen jumped out with guns and batons. Some of us tried to run away but the police were too fast for us. We were no match for them. I was hit so hard that I fell to the ground. For two days afterwards I could hardly swallow because my mouth was swollen. And so we ended up here. (127-128)

In the above long excerpt, the author, using Mchere his character, tells us the ordeal the bakery workers went through. Zeleza captures for his audience, the tyranny of the agents of state against the poor masses. Mchere here recounts how they came to be in police custody, in prison. Painfully, he shows the state as a tyrannical and oppressive one as they brutalise the bakery workers who try to challenge and resist their oppressive, exploitative and tyrannical employers. The novelist uses this scene of picketing at the bakery gate, which Mchere narrates while in detention, to picture what happens in post-colonial Zimbabwean society where capitalism and neo-colonialism have gripped the poor. The victims try to resist such tyrannical actions not minding the consequences. That the bakery directors invite the police to force striking workers back to work is nothing but oppressive and tyrannical. This is tragic indeed, as it muzzles the mouth of dissent. In a free society, there is freedom of expression. But in a tyrannical one like Zeleza's world, there is no freedom as everybody is under siege. The author thus expresses the life of his time in such a way and manner that mirrors Zimbabwean post-colonial world. No wonder Wellek and Warren write that "[...] an author should express the life of his own time fully, that he should be 'representative' of his age and society [...]" (95). Zeleza has no doubt expressed his society and time fully, as he does not only

reveal abuse of power but also the act of resistance demonstrated by the tyrannically oppressed and brutalised. In a way, he suggests that tyranny should be challenged, resisted in order to end it, for the masses to live happily.

The author's presentation of resistance to tyranny in a democracy through trade union activism, using bakery workers, is further revealed as he presents Tione, one of the workers and spokesman at a union meeting thus:

We have tried all we could to settle the dispute between us and the management peacefully, but we have been snubbed. There is only one course of action left for us to take now, and that is to strike. Strike, I say [...].

Our patience is over! We will no longer let ourselves be ignored and trampled upon like ants. Brothers, ~~striking~~, striking is the only language they understand. We will take no more insults from them. Brothers, no more degradation! No more peanut pay! No more miserable conditions! No more!
(24-25)

Tione here forcefully, and in the spirit of a core trade union activist, fearlessly bares his mind on the industrial dispute between the bakery management and his comrades. A critical examination of Tione's speech in the excerpt above, shows that he calls on his fellow workers to embark on a strike to possibly put an end to what they see as exploitation, oppression and dehumanising working condition at the bakery. This action, and the subsequent picketing revealed in the novel are acts of resistance. This scenario in *Smouldering Charcoal* reminds us of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi also invents a tense society where the masses are exploited, oppressed, and dehumanised. Picketing as a form of resistance became a ready tool in the hands of the people. Essential is the fact that there is a trade dispute where Karega, one of the dominant characters in the novel speaks, calling out the workers for a strike, to press home their demand for better working condition and pay. Karega speaks out thus:

They are bound to fail. Can't you see:

[...] we the workers, the poor peasants, ordinary people, the masses are now too aware to be deceived about tribal loyalties, regional assemblages, glorious pasts [...] when we are starving and we are jobless, or else living on miserable pay [...] we shall no longer let others reap where they never planted, harvest where they never cultivated, take to their banks from where they never sweat. Tell them this: There are a million Karegas for every ten Kimerias. (326-327)

It is evident from the above that Karega is a trade unionist like Mchere, Bota and Tione in *Smouldering Charcoal*. In *Petals of Blood*, Karega tries to conscientise the masses on the need to rise up and resist the tyrannical economic oppressors and exploiters in Ilmorog, as in Zeleza's locale in *Smouldering Charcoal*, our focus in this study. Zeleza comments, through Bota, his character and trade unionist thus:

All bosses are the same because they exploit us, and we are all the same because we are exploited, whether we like each other or not. You see we have no choice but to stand up together [and resist them]. (27)

Bota's speech at the trade union's meeting on the need for strike makes one clear point: Post-colonial Zimbabwe is a stratified society. It is stratified into classes of the "haves" and the "have nots", the rich and the poor, the exploiter and the exploited, the oppressor and the oppressed- in a nutshell, the tyrant and the tyrannised. Zeleza in his novel, skilfully and imaginatively creates his fictional society as one that manifests tyrannical attitudes, and the deft move for resistance. Indeed, Young argues that:

[...] a postcolonial politics seeks to change the inequitable power structures of the world. Some of the world is rich. Very much more of the world is poor. Post-colonialism challenges the global apartheid system according to which different nations are divided up in absurd disparities of wealth – so that inhabitants of rich parts of the world spend millions of dollars into trying to lose weight, while so many millions of others in other parts of the world do not have enough to eat. (25)

Young in his conclusion above, corroborates Zeleza's vision in *Smouldering Charcoal*. The need for resistance as articulated by Chola, Mchere, Bota and Tione, becomes necessary because the society they live in is not only stratified, as Young argues in his work on post-colonialism, but also tyrannical as African leaders are prone to wealth accumulation, sustenance of inequality, protected by a tyrannically oppressive governments that perpetuate and nurture the status quo.

3.4 Military tyranny

Abuse of power in sub-Sahara African society is not only manifested in democratic governance but also in military administration. In the lopsided relationship between the ruler and the ruled, one observes that the society is such that gives reign to oppressive use of power. This is what one finds in Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit*. The novel depicts a Ugandan society held down by the military whose leadership is nothing but

tyrannical. Thus, it is observed that there is public abuse of power demonstrated through military tyranny.

The author demonstrates public abuse of power through military tyranny when General Bazooka, a prominent character in the novel, uses his military might in an abusive manner against unsuspecting civilians mainly, and some military colleagues as well. *Snakepit* shows Uganda as a world where everybody appears to be in a pit full of snakes. This image of snakepit is used to assert the tyrannical mode of power administration in the military government. "The soldiers are in power, [...]" (130), the author writes. Bat, the dominant character of the novel notes that he does not "like the sight of soldiers, but this was a military government" (10). This confirms the author's milieu to be military. For Bat to dislike soldiers in a military regime shows that the soldiers are brutal in government. It is revealed in the narrative that General Bazooka conducts a job interview for Bat, in an airplane. A critical reader wonders why an army general and minister would conduct a job interview in an airplane. General Bazooka says:

I own a fifth of everything in this country. That comes down to about four million people, ten million fishes, two thousand crocodiles, twenty islands and much more. You can imagine the feeling. (7)

In the above excerpt, Isegawa reveals the arrogance of the military in power, as General Bazooka conducts job interview in the air. The author thus sets the stage for the dramatisation of public abuse of power through military tyranny. General Bazooka's feeling in the above quotation, is nothing but the feeling of a man who feels that he has the country under his thumb, and thus could do anything. Only a tyrant would conduct a job interview informally, as Bazzoka does in the Avenger, a military helicopter in this opening scene.

Furthermore, Isegawa skilfully weaves military tyranny for the reader as he uses the love affair between Bat and Victoria, who was once a lover and a spy for General Bazooka, to expose the sad political situation in Uganda. The novel shows that Victoria fell in love with General Bazooka and got recruited as a spy to the General who exploits her employment into the State Research Bureau, to serve as a decoy (16). Indeed, General Bazooka's aim of engaging Victoria his employee and lover, is to sexually ensnare and destroy the career and life of Bat, whom he equally employed in his ministry. This action is nothing but an abuse of public power in the military. The narrator

confirms: “Sex had been nothing but an extension of her [Victoria] work, a tool like a gun or a knife [...]” (24).

Victoria confesses that General Bazooka wanted her “to track Bat and bring him to a downfall” (24). General Bazooka’s use of Victoria to track and bring down unsuspecting members of the public is nothing but an abuse of power and show of military tyranny. No wonder Victoria ponders over the situation generally and laments the presence of the General’s spies everywhere and her duty to lure unsuspecting citizens to death or destruction (31).

It is revealed in the novel that Victoria falls in love with Bat as they meet in a party organised by General Bazooka. Instead of carrying out her espionage engagement to Bat, as directed by General Bazooka, she decides to break her relationship with the General, fall in love with Bat and even considered having a child with him to cement the relationship. The author uses this pair, Victoria and Bat, to expose military tyranny as an abuse of public power in the Ugandan society he invents. In a conversation between Bat and Victoria, now lovers, Bat says:

[...] look at the state this country is in. What has a young person got to hold on to, to obsess about? Family? When people get killed and soldiers can force a father to fornicate with his daughter for all to watch? [...]. (60)

The above excerpt confirms the sad situation prevailing in the society. It is sad because it is rude and tyrannically obscene, and an abuse of military power as soldiers inflict psychological and emotional injury on the family and the entire society. The masses live in fear of the tyrannical boot of the military. Bat sums up the situation as he confides in Victoria thus: “[t]he situation is too hot. People are getting killed every day” (54). A society where the military kills at will is no doubt, a society where tyranny reigns from the barrel of the gun. Thus, the novelist presents to the reader public abuse of power through military tyranny as soldiers kill people for no justifiable reason (55). Bat, the author’s protagonist laments: “It is a shame we have not yet found a way to get rid of the vipers [soldiers]” (55), the tyrants and their tyrannical rule over the civil society, as the police is also engaged in the brutality while carrying out their own duty to the State. A victim concludes: “Police brutality was common[...]. A policeman was like a lion[...].” (213). The image of a lion evoked here by the author is to demonstrate the tense atmosphere the masses live in. The army and the police are like a plague, enveloping the masses with no hope of survival.

Besides, the situation degenerates further as Bat gets abducted by soldiers for no justifiable reason, the novel reveals. The narrator tells us:

Late in the evening the door was flung open. Bat was shaken by a scalding rush of fear. Soldiers entered, lifted him off the floor, blind folded him and, twisting his arms behind, his back, led him out. He felt his stomach fell to below his knees. (85-86)

Before he was abducted to an unknown destination, Bat has always lived in fear of the military. He is faced with all kinds of threats: "... abduction, imprisonment, torture, blackmail" (75). He walks and works in fear, full of anxiety over assassination in a tension-filled tyrannical society. That the military abuses power through its tyrannical use is not in doubt. Isegawa in his novel, shows that Bat is not the only victim of the military's abuse of public power. A professor and character in the novel is also shown to lament over the death of his brother who was wrongfully accused of supporting dissidents in the country (55). This is tyrannical as the narrative reveals at this scene that the professor's brother was stripped of his money and wrist watch (55). What a sad commentary on post-colonial Ugandan society in particular and sub-Sahara Africa in general!

The novelist's protagonist Bat, is used by the author to weave a demonstration of public abuse of power through military tyranny as the latter further takes the reader to the detention scene to show a display of tyranny. The author writes:

On the way he [Bat] saw other prisoners, some dressed, some in different stages of undress. Some looked fat, some skinny, bones glaring. The building had long history of detention and misrule. Amin's predecessor, Obote, had his offices here, security agencies on floors above and below him. Political detainees were held here [...]. (87-88)

The novelist in this quote shows, through his protagonist, Bat, the inhuman and tyrannical treatment victims of military tyranny experience. Some are undressed, and inhumanly treated as they appear skinny. In fact, the detention camp has a history of abuse of power as the building is a sad reminder of political repression as suspected enemies of the state are unjustly arrested and detained there. The entire society in the novel is one that is subjected to terror as everybody is a target of the government's high-handedness. Isegawa's instrument of public abuse of power through tyranny in the novel, General Bazooka, does not only show hostility against the civilians, but also some

military colleagues. By this the author shows that military tyranny is not against the defenceless and powerless civilians alone, but also against some soldiers as well.

General Bazooka in *Snakepit* extends his tyrannical hostility to army officers whom he sees as threats to his powers. Thus the rank and file see him as a threat to their military career. One of the victims of his abuse of power is an officer named “Reptile” in the novel. General Bazooka sees him as “the real trouble causer” (108) in the army, and so deserves death.

He orders his loyalists thus: “Bomb his house. Ambush him. Cut his tongue, anything [...]. Everywhere I look I see that snake, crawling, slithering, smearing everything with slime. Bring me its head [...].” (108-109).

General Bazooka in this scene where he issues orders to ambush a fellow soldier and get him bombed to death is a demonstration of military tyranny, illustrating public abuse of power.

A critical reader wonders the kind of powers he has to order with ease the bombing of a fellow soldier, when he is just a minister and not the Head of State. No wonder he is seen in the novel as having the power of life and death. That he is a tyrant who is eager to silence anything on his way and against his private interest. A tyrant has no public interest at heart. Personal interest overrides public interest. Thus he insists on the elimination of Bat, his civil service employee and target. He tells a colonel in the army: “I still want to kill Bat. The quicker the better” (107). It is sad that Bat who returns from Britain after training as a Mathematician, to contribute his quota to the development of Ugandan society, becomes an innocent victim of the tyrannical army general who sees himself as lord over all others. The novelist uses this to artistically demonstrate public abuse of power through military tyranny in post-independence Uganda. He thus makes himself a writer who uses the weapon of literary expression to not only educate the masses but also document for posterity an enlightening political scenario that occurred in the history of Uganda when there was a line of dictators and tyrants. General Bazooka dramatises it thus:

I am a prince, ... I can do whatever I want, I can assure you. If I want somebody's eye, I pluck it. If I want somebody's arm, I harvest it, ha-ha-ha. It is what the princes of old used to do, ha-ha-ha. (98)

Who are the princes of old? A critical reader would want to ask. These are the military dictators and tyrants of Ugandan political history. The narrator of *Snakepit* confirms thus: “The conqueror has been in exile, when Marshal Amin, King of Africa, created the new line of kings and princes now in power” (99).

The narrator reveals that there were old kings who lorded it over the masses, and the new kings and princes were now having their turn in tyrannical abuse of power (100). Indeed, these old kings who handed over tyranny to the new kings and princes are Marshal Idi Amin of Uganda, Mobutu Sese Sekou of Zaire, Emperor Bokassa of the Central Africa Republic and General Buhari (100) and General Sani Abacha of Nigeria as well and many others of African political history of dictators and tyrants. The masses indeed do not wish to fold their hands and watch their being, being incarcerated and destroyed, hence they put up a resistance to public abuse of power through dissent and exile.

3.5 Resistance to military tyranny

It is interesting to remind us that the society Isegawa weaves in *Snakepit* is one that has the military in government. And in such a military configuration, and where you have a cabal or an individual military officer turned tyrannical, there must be courageous soldiers, and members of the public (the ruled), who will summon the courage to resist such obnoxious and tyrannical abuse of power. This is the situation one finds in *Snakepit* as some soldiers and members of the public engaged in dissent and exile as forms of resistance to register their displeasure in the mode of governance of the military government in power.

3.5.1 Dissent and exile

The prevailing situation in Uganda is such that engenders rebellion in the army. Some members of the military are not happy with the toughness and tyrannical abuse of power of their senior colleagues in government. Moses Isegawa’s narrator focuses on General Bazooka in *Snakepit*, and tells us that he, General Bazooka “had crushed the core of the rebellion. He was busy mopping up the operation” (69). This exposure shows that the rank and file of the army appears terrorised and does not want to continue to live and serve in fear of tyrants. It is intriguing to note in the novel that the military leaders resorted to astrology (69) in order to sustain and perpetuate themselves in power. This enables them feel relaxed and secured, while they oppress the masses.

Consequently, and in view of the electric-wire tension in the land, some soldiers among the rank and file decide to launch an attack on the military in power. The novelist shows this in a dramatic dialogue between Bat and his brother in the army, Tayani, while the latter try to avenge the exploitation and betrayal of the former by Bat's erstwhile lover. In doing this, the author skilfully brings in the revolutionary and dissenting military action of Tayani, as he talks fiercely like the men (army) he is fighting (215) and concludes thus:

I can't allow injustice to go unpunished. It is the very reason why this country is still dominated by soldiers. Everybody is afraid to do a thing against them. I have done something, and I am sure that it has helped [...]. They are looking for me, but before they get me, I will put many in hospital [...]. I decided to offer myself to the nation. To die for the cause [...]. It is a vocation, like Priesthood [...]. The law! There is no law in this country, except the gun. The bigger the better. Soldiers have the licence to kill. I take that licence in my hands and I want to use it. (215-216)

A critical look at the above quote shows that Tayani, Bat's brother in the army is a dissenter.

Being dissatisfied with the way things are going in the army and government, he decides to take action against his domain, the military for their public abuse of power through tyranny. Through him the author reveals that everybody is afraid to dissent. But he decides to courageously put his life on the line to right the wrong of tyrannical use of military power in governance. Indeed Tayani sees his chosen action of dissent as a vocation, and service to his fatherland, as he relies on the barrel of the gun as a soldier, to resist the cabal in power. He calls it licence to kill. By so doing he shows that a section of the army is not happy with the tyranny in governance. It also shows too that he appears to fight on the side of the masses who have no access to gun, and thus powerless to resist tyranny in the land through fire power. Tayani's action of dissent is no doubt a form of resistance. He resists the government's tyrannical use of power in governance in the society. He is a representative of the force of resistance among the army rank and file against the military cabal in power.

In addition, not only does Tayani demonstrate his resistance to the abuse of power through dissent, but also the members of the public, specifically, the church. The narrator tells us that Bat, the author's chief character:

[...] liked the fact that these days the church had turned into a human rights podium. Priests spoke out directly or indirectly against the disappearances, the killings, the abuses. The clergy had felt the bite of the bayonet, the string of the bullet, [...]. (203-204)

The church in Bat's observation above has turned itself into an organ for resistance, as a channel through which the masses can put up a resistance to tyrannical abuse of power. It is an avenue to reach the masses in order to conscientise them on the need to rise up, and resist the oppression and military brutality in the society. Bat as a member of the society, reports that they spread Amin-Go-Away leaflets in the city, as they also plan to use the electronic media to spread their dissent against the public abuse of power through tyranny. This is a demonstration of resistance to wrong use of military power as crafted by Isegawa in *Snakepit*. The church's involvement in activism as it were, is a show of dissent and an outright and courageous resistance to abuse of power. Thus the entire society is rising to the occasion in attempt to confront the military's reckless and wrong use of political power.

However, it is interesting to know that some individual members of the public demonstrated their resistance to public abuse of power through exile. Bat in the novel took to drinking. His indulging in alcoholism is an indication to the fact that he is weary of the military's blatant abuse of human rights in the society. He says that his drinking is "an act of resistance". He concludes: "I am resisting the violence of a regime drunk on blood and chaos" (77). Bat's situation here can be seen as psychological exile. His act of resistance no doubt is exilic as his attitude towards the military's abuse of power is to take to drinking. This response to the political situation is psychological, as it has to do with a reaction to military actions in the politics of Ugandan society.

The novel shows that while Bat drinks to suppress his emotional and mental traumas resulting from the political situation in Isegawa's fictional Uganda, some other members of the public took to permanent exile as a way of surviving the wrong use of political power by the military against the masses. The author reveals that Bat considers running away from the country to Europe, where he studied and returned to meet the political mess in his Ugandan society. Babit, his lover asks him thus: "Are we going to come back [from their journey abroad]?" (171). The narrator tells us that "Babit asked that night, worried that like many people these days they might be embarking on permanent exile" (171). This shows that many people have taken their flight out of the country as a

way of resisting the government's public abuse of power through tyranny. When there is political crisis such as military tyranny, people tend to run away for safety. This exilic consciousness is manifest also in the Professor, whose brother was murdered in cold blood by the tyrannical regime.

Being released from detention, Bat chooses to make his public appearance first to his friend, the Professor whom he imagines to be busy with his lecturing duty in Makerere University, "dreaming getting away" (159). That Bat sees Professor dreaming of getting away demonstrates the fact that the latter is considering going into exile as a way of resisting the tyranny in the land, his brother having been a victim of a gruesome murder. This scenario reminds the reader of Ade Coker in *Purple Hibiscus*, whom the military in Adichie's fictional society gruesomely bombed to death for being critical of military tyranny through his newspaper publications in Nigeria society (202). No wonder citizens begin to flee as a way of resisting the blatant abuse of public power by the military through tyrannical actions.

Thus far, one observes that while the rank and file of the military employ dissent as a form of resistance to military tyranny, members of the civil society go into exile to also demonstrate their disapproval of public abuse of power through military tyranny.

3.6 Conclusion

Public abuse of power through tyranny in a democracy and military tyranny, and resistance to such through political and trade union activism, and dissent and exile are demonstrated in Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* and Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit*.

In *Smouldering Charcoal*, we noted the author's fictional representation of tyranny in a democracy in Zimbabwean society. He focused attention on the public life of his chief character, Chola as he confronts the Youth Militia Group at a road check point. Zeleza uses this scene at the early part of the novel to introduce the political leaders' public abuse of power. In the encounter, Chola is fiercely confronted, and asked to produce the party cards, to show his loyalty to the "Great Leader," the tyrant.

Besides, the author's dramatisation of abuse of power is also noted in this study as the novelist takes his reader to the strike action embarked upon by bakery workers, which culminated in their arrest and detention. It was also noted in the study that the government of the day extends its dragnet to haul in all voices of dissent. While in detention, the government uses prison superintendents to unleash terror on prison

inmates – all bakery workers and people from civil society. This indeed, we concluded, is an abuse of democratic power.

It was noted also that Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit* shows abuse of public power in the form of military tyranny. We noted General Bazooka abuse his military power as he terrorises Bat, his ministry employee. He spies on him, using Victoria, a former lover and employee as well. He also uses the army to arrest and detain Bat. Fellow soldiers are not also left out in his abuses. He tries to kill anyone who does not work to his advantage. All this we concluded are a demonstration of abuse of public power through military tyranny.

However, we also observed that in a society such as the one Zeleza and Isegawa shape and mirror in their novels, the masses are bound to resist, and protest arbitrary use of power. Political and trade union activism, dissent and exile were noted as forms of resistance. In *Smouldering Charcoal*, the author presents Chola, Ndatero, Mchere, Bota, Tione and indeed the murdered Dambo as those who in their various capacities, put up a resistance against the government's abusive use of power in the public domain. Thus we noted the formation of a movement, a social organization through which the masses can come together and form a common front to resist the tyrants through political and trade union activism. Resistance in the novel is open, as the masses (those arrested and detained) stubbornly resist the terror and dehumanising treatment meted to them even while in prison.

On *Snakepit*, we noted dissent and exile as forms of resistance to military tyranny. Tayani is noted to engage in dissent as he makes himself a self-appointed messiah to rebel against the army and save people from tyranny. We noted that he decide to use his gun to fight his colleagues in the army who have made life unbearable for him, and some civilians. It was also concluded that the church engages in dissent as it became the channel through which Amin-must-go away leaflet was distributed.

The civilians engaged in exile as an option to resist military tyranny. Bat, we noted, indulges in drunkenness as a form of resistance. In addition, he considers feeling out of the country as a way of escape from military tyranny. The professor, we also noted, dreams of proceeding on exile in order to be safe from the high-handedness of the soldiers in power.

All this we concluded, are forms of resistance to public abuse of power, as manifested in political and trade union activism, and dissent and exile.

CHAPTER FOUR

ABUSE OF POWER IN DOMESTIC SPACE

4.1 Introduction

In the domestic space, one finds that the family features prominently. The family consists of the father (male), mother (female) and children (biological or adopted) in most cases. In this domestic sphere, it is a general knowledge that the man, in African society, is assumed to be the head, and superordinate, while the woman and the children are subordinated. It has been observed that in this spousal relationship, there is power politics as the man tries to be seen, heard and feared as the head of the woman, and family generally. In his exercise of powers of leadership, sometimes the man indulges in spousal abuses as he attempts to exercise his authority over the woman. Violence thus occurs in the home. This pits the man against the woman. By so doing, the man abuses domestic power over his spouse through violent actions. In most cases, it results in physical assaults and even sexual wrongs.

In addition, Steven (2007) concludes in her essay on patriarchy and domestic violence that “Domestic violence [which is an abuse of power] continues to be a hideous global social problem” (594).

Violence at the home front is no doubt an abuse of male power over the female. Indeed, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, reported a Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) that domestic violence,

... means any act of gender based physical, sexual or psychological violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, or girl-children, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Violence that occurs in private within the family includes battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, [...] marital rape [...]. (17)

No wonder Steven sees it as a global social problem. Indeed, Omonubi-McDonnel (2003) writes that:

Feminists define spousal abuses as maltreatment, mistreatment or ill-treatment of a spouse. Feminists believe that spousal abuse is discernable only through a scrutiny of the social situation [...]. Men of different social classes and races can possibly use violence as a strong mode of subjecting women. (37-38)

Domestic abuse of power in form of violent actions has attracted the attention of feminists who feel worried, and the need to bring it into public knowledge to stem the tide. In sub-Saharan Africa, and before the post-colonial era, it is observed that violence was by way of shouting down at the woman, forcing her into silence on issues in the home which the man dominates. Occasionally, there occurs too, some physical beating. These we note to have been narrated in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, to mention a few. In the post-colonial and contemporary era, domestic abuse of power goes beyond the physical intimidation into silence through shouting and beating. The issue of abuse of power against women is not an issue that can be trivialised. It cuts across race, tribe, and class. It is a universal phenomena. And as argued by Akintunde (2002), it is endemic. We note in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Dibia's *Unbridled*, that there is the conscious invention of benevolent dictatorship, physical and sexual violence respectively, as forms of abuse of power in domestic space, and strategic and secret service operations and physical confrontations as forms of resistance to such abuses.

4.2 Benevolent dictatorship

Benevolent dictatorship, as a form of domestic abuse of power is the artistic interest of Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus*. In the wider society, at the public level, we noted tyranny in a democracy and military tyranny as forms of abuse of power in Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* and Isegawa's *Snakepit* respectively. In some post-colonial African homes, dictatorship reigns as family heads turned themselves into dictators. In *Purple Hibiscus*, set in a Nigerian home, Adichie narrates this ugly trend in post-independence Nigeria, her spatial setting, as she moulds one of her major characters, Eugene Achike in the novel, as a benevolent dictator. The author's invention of benevolent dictatorship is one that reveals the family circle as a kind of hell – a cell – as the members see themselves in a precarious situation. They see themselves in a tension-filled atmosphere, in the home as in the wider society. Thus, fear envelops everybody at home as the fear of Papa Eugene Achike, the family head, is the beginning of wisdom. The first-person narrator of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili, a participant in the narration, as well as a member of the home she tells us about, narrates:

We went upstairs to change, Jaja and Mama and I. Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as our Sundays: the silence of waiting until Papa was done with his siesta so we could have lunch; the silence of reflection time, when Papa

gave us a scripture passage or a book by one of the early church fathers to read and meditate on; the silence of evening rosary; the silence of driving to the church for benediction afterwards. Even our family time on Sundays was quiet, without chess games or newspaper discussions, more in tune with the Day of Rest. (31)

A critical look at the preceding quote, reveals that Adichie skilfully summarises the situation in Kambili's home. In the home, silence in everything is the keyword. Eugene Achike's behavioural attitude towards his nuclear family turns the home into a graveyard, as one could hear even a pin-drop sound. As a father and family head, Eugene Achike supposed to be a source of peace and love. His home supposed to radiate these fine qualities. But like the wider society where the rulers had held everybody hostage in tyranny, (146, 198) as shown in the novel, Achike's home is nothing but a house of psychological war. The entire family is subjected to fear. They thus suffer psychological trauma and emotional pains as they at every moment think about who would be the next victim of their father's dictatorial posture. Thus silence on the part of the children, in order not to attract his bullying and violent action, becomes the best way to live. Adichie by so creating Achike demonstrates that the family head, a product of colonial orientation, is dictatorial in the home. This is tragic as one gets disappointed that the African man with rich familial cultural orientation that shuns animosity and tension-filled home is nothing but a false representation.

Adichie further pursues this issue of benevolent dictatorship in the home when Kambili, her narrator, tells us another painful experience thus:

He [father] unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layer 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[...]. 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. (102-103)

In the above excerpt, the novelist captures the dictatorship in the home of Eugene Achike. Her narrator, Kambili, reveals that her father is a dictator. This scene shows Eugene Achike descend rudely and brutally too, on every member of his household – wife, son and daughter. He dictatorially descends on them for what he perceives as desecration of Catholic mass, as Kambili eats ten minutes before mass as a result of her

menstrual pain. However, a critical reader gets tempted to conclude that Eugene Achike appears to be protecting Catholic values in a home where family members try to be deviant and spiritually unyielding to catholic values and teachings. Nevertheless, he does not need to be dictatorial in his posture, as he, a catholic Christian, ought to be a lord at home who tenderly cares and relates with his family compassionately. But brutalising Kambili because she “desecrates” mass, as she eats ten minutes before mass, is nothing but Achike’s demonstration of dictatorial fatherhood and harsh catholic lordship.

It is an open secret in a woman’s physiological make-up that pains accompany her monthly menstrual periods. At this period, the woman’s mood changes. Eating habit could be altered as she copes with the pain nature imposes on her. Every woman expects love, and emotional understanding from family members, especially husband (in the case of a wife), father and mother (in the case of a daughter) or even a fiancé (in the case of a fiancée- the betrothed). But in the circumstance Kambili narrates to us, in her own experience, the reader observes that the father unleashes violence on the entire family just because Kambili eats before mass. That was not enough for a family head to hit at his household. Adichie’s creation is with the artistic intent to show Eugene Achike to be a dictator, abusing the domestic power of a father and family head. Consequently, the entire home is not a place of rest any more. Fear grips everybody as no one knows whom father would descend on next. Kambili, Adichie’s recorder and narrator of this ugly situation in the home, she being an eye witness and participant in the scenario, confirms:

There was something hanging over all of us. Sometimes I wanted it to be a dream — the missal flung at the etagere, the shattered figurines, the brittle air. It was too new, too foreign, and I did not know what to be or how to be. I walked to the bathroom and kitchen and dining room on tip toe. (252)

Kambili here in the above excerpt, fearfully walks on tiptoe in her father’s house because of the fearful atmosphere that prevails. She finds it uncomfortable to continue to live with a father who has turned his home into a battle field, as none is spared in the war. She laments:

I did not want to talk to Papa, to hear his voice, to tell him what I had eaten and what I had prayed about so that he would approve, so that he would smile so much his eyes would crinkle at the edges. And yet, I did not want to talk to him, I wanted to leave with father Amadi, or with Auntie Ifeoma and never come back. (262)

Kambili, the character through whose perceptive eyes, like a focal lens, we see the dictatorship in Eugene Achike’s home, tells us that she can no longer cope with the

father's homeless and tensioned-filled home environment. She thus desires to run away to leave with Father Amadi, or her aunty, Ifeoma, in whose home she hopes to find peace and love which are absent in her father's home.

However, Eugene Achike who psychologically exiles his children, and wife in the home is a benevolent father. In fact, in the eyes of neighbours and extended family members, Achike is the stark opposite of what he is in the home. Outside his nuclear family, he is a benevolent character. In his devout spiritual expressions, as he prays in the home, Kambili tells us that "... when Papa [Eugene Achike] prayed, he added longer passages urging God to bring about the downfall of the Godless men ruling our country, and he intoned over and over, "our Lady Shield of the Nigerian people, pray for us" (43). While Eugene Achike prays for the end of the Godless tyrants outside his home, the tyrannical leadership of the military government, he does not feel that there is dire need for his own nuclear society (his household) to also be rescued by God from his high-handedness and dictatorship in the home. His concern for freedom of speech, movement and association which he uses his *Standard Newspaper* to call out publicly, is lacking in his home. Father Benedict, another character in the novel, reveals:

Look at Brother Eugene [Achike]. He would 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 business. But no, he used *The Standard* to speak the truth even though it meant the paper lost advertising. Brother Eugene spoke out for freedom. (4-5)

No doubt, Eugene Achike uses his newspaper as a medium to speak out for the oppressed, tyrannically brutalised in post-colonial governance. But ironically, himself is a dictator in the home, as the freedom he prays for, and uses his paper to fight for, on behalf of the society, is lacking in his home. He thus appears a human rights crusader in the eyes of the public, but in his private home, he is a human rights abuser and a dictator, as the entire family is in bondage and thus maintains silence in everything they do. What an irony! Adebayo (2000) writing on feminism in Francophone literature buttresses this irony when she writes that

Eugene is a staunch Catholic – a religious fanatic – and a philanthropist who uses his newspaper *The Standard*, to champion human rights activities. In spite of these, he is so stern and authoritarian in dealing with his household. (268)

Besides, even in the distant rural area, in the village, Eugene Achike is not seen as a dictator in his relationships and use of power, but a benevolent father and son of the community. He is seen as one who generously gives to the needy. In his power relations with his community and outsider generally, Achike is seen as one who exerts power and influence positively. In every festival period, he travels home with the family. His presence and visit is usually felt as everybody receives his generous presents. Thus he appears benevolent. He is seen as a father, son and brother who cares. In the village, he is a rallying point as he gives generously. Kambili tells us that Papa's title (given by the villagers) is "...omelora, after all, The One Who Does for the community" (56). No wonder Torelli (2010) argues: "However, recent research has suggested that power holders can also behave in a more benevolent or attentive way, showing concern about others' interests, attending to them as individuals" (704). Eugene Achike's lovely disposition, is not restricted to his public life, though a dictator at home. While his extended family members in the village expected him to marry an additional wife to Kambili's mother, he resists the pressure. This was at a time when there was need, as the wife does not take in after Kambili's birth. Kambili's mother tells her:

God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our umuna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters and many were university graduates too. They might have born many sons and taken over our house and driven us out, like Mr. Ezendu's second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us [as one united and homely family]. (20)

But ironically, this same husband and father who resists the pressure to marry a second wife, to possibly have more children, as the incumbent wife is yet to get pregnant again, brutalises this woman, his wife, whom he shows love. His wife narrates one of her ordeals to her daughter, Kambili thus:

You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, [...] Your father broke it in my belly [...]. 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. (243)

Eugene Achike, the author reveals here, beats his wife. The latter's six weeks pregnancy gets aborted. This violence from a man, husband and father who preaches peace, love and acts generously, is ironic. He is indeed a dictator at home, but a benevolent one. We

thus see him as one who has split personality. The novelist does not show in her creation that Pa Eugene Achike starves his household with food, money and general care. There is no such complaint from any member of the household. But he does live up to their expectation as he plays his role as a father well. This is a kind of benevolence from a man who turns his home to a war zone, brutalising and antagonising every member of the family.

His benevolence is foreshadowed when he carries his wife like a jute's bag, from the bedroom to board a car to the hospital as the wife bleeds from his aggressive brutality (243). Kambili, the author's eye and mouthpiece in the novel, narrates:

I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers brought in bulk at the Seme Border. He opened the dining room door. Then we heard the front door open, heard him say something to the gate man, Adamu[...]. We cleaned the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red water-colour all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped. (33)

For a man who is always in his elements, kicking, beating and brutalising his children and wife to rush his wife to the hospital is not only a display of benevolent magnanimity, but also a show of heroism. Like the dictator that he is, he could have allowed his wife to bleed to death. But he does not, and instead tries to salvage her six weeks old pregnancy but to no avail. Adichie's dramatisation of benevolent dictatorship as an abuse of domestic power in her novel under study, is no doubt a great artistic achievement, as she invents a character with split personality. Fwangyil, to quote her again, comments on Eugene Achike's character thus:

Kambili and Jaja are physically violated by their father and live in constant fear of his violent attacks. Although Eugene expresses his love for them and caters for their needs, the inhuman treatment he metes out to them at the slightest provocation far surpasses the love he claims to have for them. (265)

No doubt, it is "[...] in effect, a dramatic indictment of the oppressive attitudes of men towards women and children that they are supposed to love and care for [...]" (263), Fwangyil concludes.

Fwangyil generally sees the novel as an indictment on all oppressive men. But Eugene Achike's expression of love for his family is not in doubt. While his children are

with Aunty Ifeoma in Nsukka, he calls regularly to ascertain their welfare (146). Adichie here reveals that though a dictator, Eugene Achike is a benevolent one as he has feelings for the same children he antagonises and makes the home uncomfortable for. Kurtz (2012) summarises Eugene Achike's benevolent dictatorial disposition thus:

Eugene is heroic in two ways: he combats governmental corruption in the running of its many enterprises, most notably by publishing an independent and outspoken newspaper; and he also rejects pressures to take a second wife when his marriage fails to produce what the extended family considers an adequate number of children for such an important man. Ironically Eugene's admirable and progressive public stances are matched by a marked intolerance and tyranny in his own household. He harshly punishes his children if they achieve anything other than first place in their class. Their every hour is carefully programmed [...]. (26-27)

In the home, Eugene Achike is both a dictator and one who cares (a benevolent dictator).

It is intriguing to note Adichie's use of irony in the contrivance of benevolent dictatorship in *Purple Hibiscus*. In her invention, the novelist presents Eugene Achike in the novel as a character who is benevolent but a dictator at the same time. This paradoxical dramatisation is situationally ironic indeed. All through the novel as studies reveal, Adichie does not show Eugene Achike as a wicked and uncaring father, husband and community member. Rather, he is a character who is known to be a benevolent and magnanimous giver, within the extended family and communal circle. In the wider society, he is a human rights activist who uses his newspaper to fight against oppression and tyranny from the government of the day. At the home front, he also cares for his family as a father and husband. But it is observed that ironically, he is a dictator in the home, though he appears loving and caring in the same home. In the use of irony as a device in fiction writing, Perrine (1983) reminds us that:

IN IRONY OF SITUATION, usually the most important kind for the story writer, the discrepancy is between appearance and reality or between expectation and fulfillment, or between what is and what would seem appropriate. (203)

A critical reading of *Purple Hibiscus* reveals the author's employment of situational irony as a device. The reader sees Eugene Achike as one who appears to be humane, kind, generous and a defender of the oppressed and tyrannically brutalised in the society. But in reality, he is a dictator in the home as there is electric wire tension that forces the entire family to live in constant fear, as they watch every step they take and every

utterance they make. In fact, silence is their worn garment. There is no doubt that Adichie in her novelistic creation, has demonstrated herself as a committed writer, as she skilfully presents her art, and does justice to her presentation of benevolent dictatorship. Ogunديpe-Leslie (1987) corroborates this when she writes about the female writer (Adichie being one), and commitment thus:

As a writer, she has to be committed to her art, seeking to do justice to it at the highest levels of her expertise. She should be committed to her vision, what it is, which means she has to be willing to stand or fall for that vision. She must tell her own truth and write what she wishes to write. But she must be certain that what she is telling is the truth and nothing but albeit her own truth. (10)

In her vision of benevolent dictatorship as an abuse of domestic powers in households, Adichie has no doubt artfully presented a microcosm of the macrocosm of the Nigerian society, her fictional locale, and African contemporary world generally. She suggestively reveals in her novel that most families in post-colonial Africa are under the dictatorial leadership of their fathers, just as the wider society is under the brute force of political leaders, whether democratic or military.

4.3 Resistance to benevolent dictatorship

Adichie in her novel dramatises the dire need for the tyrannically oppressed and dehumanised to resist such brutality meted to him or her. In the novel, Kambili, Jaja and their mother (Mama) summon the courage to subtly challenge and end the dictatorial authority of their father, Eugene Achike, through strategic operations.

Resistance in *Purple Hibiscus* begins when Eugene Achike's children and wife begin to see themselves as people who live under the brute force and authority of an unyielding dictator. Consequently, they see their peace, love and harmony as a family completely eroded. There appears to be no love lost between them and their father, though not demonstrated outrightly; but it is subtly shown. Critical reading of *Purple Hibiscus* reveals that the entire family is dissatisfied with the way things are going. In reaction to the violent and brutal kicking of Kambili by the father (206) which of course is a recurrent in the home, Auntie Ifeoma boldly comments:

This cannot go on [...]. When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head.
It has never happened like this before. He has never punished her like this before, [...].

Kambili will come to Nsukka when she leaves the hospital.
[...] I want Kambili and Jaja to stay with us, at least until
Easter. Pack your own things and come to Nsukka. It will be
easier for you to leave when they are not there.
It has never happened like this before. (209)

In the above quote, Auntie Ifeoma responds to Eugene Achike's dictatorship and abuse of power in the home as she suggests that Kambili and Jaja relocate to stay with her in Nsukka. Mama, Kambili's mother could pack her things and come along, as a way of preparing for final escape. Adichie here tries to show that the entire family, and even relations such as Auntie Ifeoma are fed up with the way Eugene Achike subjugates the family. Thus, Auntie Ifeoma employs strategic operation as a form of resistance as she suggests that the entire family of Eugene Achike come to spend some time with her. This is a form of resistance to register her dissatisfaction with her in-law's dictatorial attitude towards his family.

The novelist captures a family that is not happy with the killjoy attitude of their father, Eugene Achike. All through the relationship dramatised in the novel, the novelist presents a cat and mice relationship, as father is always on the throes of children and wife, and children and wife are always on the run, caged into a silent shell. Voiceless and subservient, one sees them as people forced into solitude because of psychological and emotional tension in the home. But it is intriguing to know from critical reading of the text that resistance to Eugene Achike's dictatorial behaviour is one that Adichie skilfully schemes. She does this as she invents Kambili in hospital, contemplates not going home after treatment. She says "I did not want to leave the hospital. I did not want to go home" (210).

Adichie here, reveals that Kambili is eager to leave her home for elsewhere. Kambili is no longer ready to continue to tolerate, endure and underrate the father's high-handedness and violence in the home. Fear grips her, hence she does not want to leave the hospital. This is strategic indeed as she thus feels she could get some respite, peace and love in a tension-free environment. Thus, she shows that any serious minded human need to respond to domestic abuse of power, and not remain subservient and helpless. One can conclude here that Adichie uses this to dramatise Kambili's subtle resistance, through self and psychological exile. Indeed, she has to be subtle, considering her feminine structure and nature, and position in the home, a daughter. She could not have been able to violently confront her father, whose dictatorial attitude has reduced the

entire household into conquered beings who have no choice of their own. No wonder she tells us:

Mama told me that evening [in the hospital] that I would be discharged in two days. But I would not be going home, I would be going to Nsukka for a week, and Jaja would go with me. She did not know how Aunty Ifeoma had convinced papa, but he had agreed that Nsukka air would be good for me, for my recuperation. (211)

This arrangement is with the intent to make Kambili have some rest and be free from father's brutality. This also informs why she contemplates leaving the home to stay with Father Amadi, or Aunty Ifeoma (262). These are strategic moves and operations to evade Eugene Achike's benevolent dictatorship at home.

While Kambili is in Aunty Ifeoma's home, as a way of being away from her own loveless and funless home, Mama, her mother, calls. Mama tells Kambili thus: "Kambili, it's your father. They called me from the factory, they found him lying dead on his desk" (280). This news of Eugene Achike's death is one that the author uses to show the end of benevolent dictatorship in the domestic space. Every member of the family sees Eugene Achike as an indomitable creature. Kambili puts things in perspective thus: "I had never considered the possibility that Papa would die. He was different from Ade Coker, from all the other people they had killed. He had seemed immortal" (281).

Kambili's perception of her father is that of a formidable dictator whom nothing could bring down. He appears immortal because of the way he lived his life in the home. His death shows that man is a mortal being. In the narrative, it is revealed that Eugene Achike is poisoned. In a telephone conversation, Mama (Kambili's mother) tells Kambili thus: "They did an autopsy [...] they have found the poison in your father's body" (283). This conversational dialogue reveals that Eugene Achike was poisoned. But Kambili, in astonishment asks the mother "Poison?" (283). And the mother responds: "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witchdoctor" (283). Eugene Achike's wife apparently unable to bear the husband's beatings anymore. She seems tired of benevolent dictatorship, hence she vehemently resists it and puts an end to it through death by food poisoning. This action is no doubt a silent and strategic operation to end domestic abuse of power. It is sad to know that a wife could poison her husband. But one must not forget that this same woman has for long endured the husband's bashings and violent intimidations and actions.

The poisoned husband is a dictator, though a benevolent one. In this death scene, Adichie suggests an end to dictatorship. The author thus shows that a dictator is a dictator, whether benevolent, like Achike or malevolent, like the “Great Leader” in *Smouldering Charcoal*. This scene of resistance to benevolent dictatorship suggests a clarion call to all and sundry to rise up courageously against high-handedness in post-colonial sub-Saharan African society. Using Eugene Achike’s miniature family to demonstrate this, is a schematic and a skilful presentation of her vision of post-colonial African society. One tends to sympathise with Eugene Achike, as a father and breadwinner. But one would recall too that Mama and the entire household had had no peace as a result of the husband’s oppression, as the entire household is barricaded off into perpetual fear and silence. In a way, the death scene is the climax of the family’s resistance of their father’s dominating domestic abuse of power through benevolent dictatorship.

Besides, it must be noted that resistance is strategically silent and subtle in the novel. Adichie thus suggests that for the masses to end abuse of power in a dictatorial and tyrannical society, they must employ subtle means as dictators and tyrants are not always willing to relinquish power. Indeed, the novelist weaves in the story of the death of a Head of State whom the reader identifies suggestively, as General Sanni Abacha, Nigerian military Head of State (289). It must be recalled too, as Adichie narrates, that the Head of State held the entire Nigerian public hostage. His tyrannical posture is akin to that of Idi Amin of Uganda. But his death signals that tyranny could come to an end. In fact, Adichie’s passing reference to that historical record shows adroit narrative depth and deftness in her effort. It also shows her determination to tell her audience to be hopeful that tyranny in post-colonial Africa would come to an end. But for this to occur, the masses must form a common front and courageously resist the evil, and determinedly bring it to an end. The author uses the miniature home of the Achikes to dramatise this. By so doing, she has shown herself as a novelist who is concerned with the ills of post-colonial Nigerian politics (her setting), one of which is abuse of power. There is no doubt that Adichie lives in a society that is dynamic, always changing. Hence she gives us a slice of her post-independence African world, using the family circle in a Nigerian setting.

One must not forget the fact that the entire family of Achike in the novel see the death of their father as not only a welcome development, but also a relief, psychologically. Though Jaja, Kambili’s brother, boldly accepts responsibility for

poisoning their father to death, and thus gets arrested and detained, the entire family feels relieved, having been liberated from their tormentor. The real culprit, their mother, does not show any sign of perplexity and guilt. The novelist writes that the entire family is happy at the release of Jaja from detention. Kambili, tells us:

We will take Jaja to Nsukka first, and then we'll go to America to visit Aunty Ifeoma.
[...] I am laughing. I reach out and place my arm around Mama's shoulder and she leans towards me and smiles. (298)

For the first time in the novel, Adichie shows the Achike's family in a happy mood. Kambili could now laugh and mother could now smile. Even "Jaja laughed" (281). They no longer fear to giggle or express joy through smiles or laughter. They never expressed these emotions in the house of Eugene Achike, the benevolent dictator. Thus, the whole family is obviously joyous. The author in her narrative uses this invention of resistance to abuse of power to give hope to the hopeless who are held down by our leaders whose actions are tyrannical and dictatorial, either in the public or domestic domain. The end brings joy and a new lease of life, Adichie seems to suggest. The Achike family are now relieved of the psychological and emotional trauma living with a dictator and an abuser of domestic power engenders. They can now "cough", and even laugh as the novel shows. Adichie thus invents the triumphant entry of the entire family into total freedom from dictatorship, no matter how benevolent. Dictatorship is dictatorship, and a dictator is a dictator. He must be resisted and overthrown.

4.4 Physical and sexual violence

Physical and sexual violence as forms of abuse of domestic power is demonstrated in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Jude Dibia's *Unbridled*. Amma Darko in her novel portrays abuse of power by way of shaping Akobi, a character in the novel, to be physically violent in his relationship with his wife, Mara, the main protagonist. Mara in the novel is observed to be a character whom the husband bullies all the time. Her experiences in the hands of her husband are harrowing. A critical study of *Beyond the Horizon* reveals that Mara is a victim of domestic abuse of power as the husband physically unleashes terror on her, through physical beating.

From her first person narrative vantage position, Darko engages Mara to reveal her ordeal thus:

Akobi returned home that night just after midnight. Though I heard him, I continued to feign a deep sleep, when suddenly I

felt a painful kick in my ribs. Astounded to the point of foolishness, I jumped up in confusion. What had I done? He had never kicked nor slapped me before so what was wrong? He wasn't drunk. Before I could ask what had I done, he bellowed angrily, 'You foolish lazy idiot! What do you think you are sitting her all day doing [...] You think here is a pension house?' [...] 'Shut up!' he roared, landing me a slap on one cheek. I scurried into one corner and slumped on the floor, my burning face buried in my hands. I understood the world no more. (11)

In the above excerpt, Darko presents her narrator – participant character, Mara, as one whom the husband brutalises physically. The novel reveals that Mara lives in the city with Akobi, her husband. Though formally unemployed, she helps Mama Kiosk, another character, to empty her refuse bin and gets some foodstuffs from her in return. But Akobi does not see this as an effort aimed at helping out with the care of the home. Sadly, Akobi, a husband, who married Mara legally according to traditional laws and custom, beats her physically. The excerpt shows Akobi as a character who takes delight in wife beating. Not satisfied with beating her, he subjects her to verbal abuse. As if these are not enough, he goes on to banish her from their bed – “[S]leep on your mat today. I want to sleep on the mattress alone”(11). While he enjoyed his sleep, she lay “on the mat spread on the hard floor, trying to tolerate the mice and cockroaches, [her] eyes wide open” all the night long! (11-12).

Besides, Mara is observed to be a loyal wife who, despite Akobi's bullying, still renders him his sexual due. But unfortunately, Akobi appears callous as he queries his wife and slaps her for being pregnant. He is expected to be happy that he not only gets sexual pleasure from the wife, but also is able to make her pregnant. Unfortunately for Mara, her pregnancy attracts physical violence from the husband. In response to Akobi's query: “And why did you get pregnant” (17), Mara recalls painfully:

I thought: I couldn't have heard right. 'Pardon?' I replied spontaneously, and before I knew what was happening... Wham! first slap... wham! wham! wham! three more in succession. And I scurried into what had now become my favourite corner, slumping to the floor... I was sleeping on the floor. I didn't dare to sleep on the mattress. He stumbled into the room and went straight to bed. For the next two days he spoke no word to me [...]. What African man got angry because his wife was carrying a baby? And the first baby at that. (17)

Mara's painfully narrated ordeal at the hands of her husband is one that puts her in a slavish position in the gender relations of a couple. In the African-Ghanaian society where Darko sets her narrative, pregnancy in the marital life of a couple is a thing of joy. Many get emotionally and psychologically perturbed if their wives do not get pregnant. In fact, while the marriage is being formalised, parents and well-wishers of couples expect the good news of pregnancy. But we note in the spousal relationship between Akobi and Mara in Darko's fictional world, that pregnancy brings sadness where ordinarily great joy should have been the prevalent feeling. The first pregnancy that is expected, in African context, to bring joy and happiness to the home, and thus confirm the fertility of the couples, is observed to attract pains, slaps, beatings and thus unhappiness for Mara, as Akobi unleashes physical violence on her. Amazed, Mara rhetorically asks in the above quote as repeated thus: "What African man got angry because his wife was carrying a baby? And the first baby at that." This scene in the novel shows domestic abuse of power through physical beatings. While Mara is happy that she is fertile, being pregnant, Akobi, her husband is angry and beats her for it. This is the first hint that Akobi has some other role envisaged for Mara, a role other than the traditional ones of a wife and mother. Darko in her invention shows that Akobi tries to shy away from parental responsibilities to a baby, when born. She also shows that some men are physically violent in their marital relationships. Physical violence by way of beating is against good spousal relationship. Darko fictionalises this not only to draw attention to what has become a nightmare in some women's marital life but also to alert the world of the ugly trend in Ghana particularly and in Africa generally. Akintunde (2004), writes that "In Africa, wife-beating is one aspect of domestic violence around which a heavy cloak of silence is drawn" (14). This heavy cloak of silence and thus lack of attention to domestic abuse of power in marriages is what Darko unveils. The novelist does not want to watch like some other women as they suffer violently in the hands of their husbands, but to use her imaginative world to voice out a social malaise. Indeed, Omonubi-McDonnell quoted earlier, confirms that wife abuse is a social issue. She argues:

Wife abuse has existed for centuries and continues to exist in societies of varying social and familial settings as well as different political persuasions and structures[...]. Spousal abuse is not a personal issue but a social one. (38)

Spousal abuse as Mara experiences in *Beyond the Horizon* is no doubt a social issue which Darko finds imaginatively engaging in her narrative. By so doing, she weaves

Akobi into a post-colonial African personality whose sensibility is a reflection of one who has lost his sense of marital love and respect for one's spouse in an African setting.

In addition, it is interesting to note that Darko reveals physical violence early in her narrative as she begins her design with the coming together of Mara and Akobi's family in marriage. In her marital home, Mara is none other than a slave, a housemaid and not a wife. She is supposed to be a lovely wife, legally married, dowry paid in cash and kind, but she turned out to be a tool in the hands of her husband - an object to be kicked, physically abused now, and then put on 'sale'. Darko's creation shows Mara as a character who serves her husband not as a wife but as slave. Mara though remembers that her mother advises her to be loyal and respectful to her husband, the latter, never cherishes her slavish condition in his hands. She cooks and serves the food. She also provides, serves the bathing water, brings the bathing soap, towel and waits by the bathroom door for her husband to bath, for her to remove the materials for bathing. What a loyal and submissive wife! This experience- no doubt demonstrates a slavish service to a man who does not appreciate such love and loyalty from a spouse. Mara often gets beaten for bringing in wet towel for Akobi to dry his body after bathing, when she is not the cause of the wetness. With this attitude against Mara, Akobi shows himself as a character who has no respect for his wife, and has no love for the marital union. He thus abuses his masculine power, and headship in the home. Indeed he has no respect for womanhood. He feels no qualms about the violent treatment he mets to his wife, as he frequently assaults her physically. Thus he demonstrates his masculine superiority over the woman, his wife.

Orebiyi (2002) comments:

In African countries, a variety of norms and beliefs are particularly powerful in perpetrating violence against woman. This include a belief that men are inherently superior to women, that men have a right to "correct" female behaviour, that hitting is an appropriate way to discipline women, that a man's honour is linked to a woman's sexual behaviour. (108)

Though Orebiyi argues in the above quote that men show their superiority over women through violence, in African countries, Darko in her creative vision in *Beyond the Horizon* writes that physical violence against women cuts across race and continent. She invents Gitte, a German, who narrates the physical violence in her parents' home. Gitte tells Mara thus: "As for my father, when he heard that I had married a negro, he started

to drink. Now he drinks so much and beats my mother, blaming her for not bringing me up properly” (123-124).

In the above, the novelist reveals a soured relationship between Gitte and the family for marrying Akobi. Of critical interest to the reader in her narration to Mara, is the fact that her father resorted to physical violence as a way of querying her mother for not bringing her up well. That Gitte’s father beats the wife (Gitte’s mother) shows that physical violence against women in marriage for instance, is not peculiar to Africa, but a social phenomenon that is observable beyond African society. Darko thus demonstrates that not only do Africans beat women (their wives) but also the whites as well, such as Gitte narrates to Mara in the novel. By so doing, Darko uses her artistic effort to demonstrate that domestic abuse of power on the part of men is widespread and needs to be checked to save womanhood from the oppressive and masculine domineering and violent posture in the society.

Continuing in her invention of physical violence as a form of abuse of domestic power, Darko frowns at the way Akobi relates with his wife who tries to find something to do so as to assist in taking care of the home front. Saddled with the responsibility of cooking and serving the husband as a housewife, Mara tells Mama Kiosk, another character, the physical violence Akobi metes out to her while carrying out such responsibility. She narrates:

Akobi hated to come home and be faced with the prospect of having to wait a couple of minutes longer than usual for his supper. Initially, he used only to grumble to show his disapproval, then when that still did not bring a change he began to act. When I didn’t bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee. When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap in the face. And when the napkin was not at hand when he howled for it, I received a knuckle knock on my forehead. (18-19)

Is Mara a slave and a housemaid? This is the critical and rhetorical question a reader would ask. Mara’s experience captured in the above excerpt speaks volumes. It reveals Mara as a character Darko uses to portray physical violence in domestic space. The novel shows that there appears to be no love lost in the relationship between Mara and Akobi (wife and husband respectively). Akobi the husband hates to come home from work and wait for his supper. Dinner ready, served, he seizes the ample opportunity of the service

of his loyal and dutiful wife to demonstrate his masculinity. This he does as he kicks, slaps and knocks his wife like a stubborn child who does not know her right from her left. It is obvious that Akobi does not relate with his wife, Mara, as a wife, but as a service tool, a maid, and indeed a slave. For only a slave in bondage can endure such humiliating and violent treatment from a harsh and despotic master. Thus, one can conclude that Akobi is a master over Mara in a slavish abuse of power in the domestic domain.

The novelist has no doubt, imaginatively staged her male and female protagonists, (husband and wife) as they artfully dramatise abuse of power. It is appalling for a husband to physically assault his wife, whom he legally married. It is equally a cause for concern for a husband to beat his wife who not only warms his bed, but also cooks and serves his food with all humility. Darko in her novel does not invent this scenario for entertainment only, but also to educate the reader that domestic abuse of power as evident in physical violence in the novel is an attack on the female victims' "physical and mental integrity. It is an underlying experience of most women in all societies" (357), to quote Okoye (2010). There is no iota of doubt the author has been influenced by her African society, where the man dominates and rules the woman oppressively in matrimonial relationship. Indeed Woolf (2006) reminds us: "that experience has a great influence on fiction is indisputable" (581). Buchi Emecheta in *Second Class Citizen* (1974) schematically captures this ugly trend that portrays the woman like a second class citizen, to borrow her phrase. In the novel, just as Darko our focus, invents a couple always in a fighting mood, with the man unleashing violence on the woman, Emecheta also gives us a slice of this in her fictional world encompassing Francis and Adah (a couple) in London as they are shown to be combative. The narrator tells us that "She [Adah] had been through the worst. Even his [Francis] beatings and slappings did not move her any more" (162). Emecheta in this passage demonstrates that there is crisis in the familial relationship of the Francis. As a couple, they ought to be in love and show good example in the home. But instead, they are always fighting, as Francis the initiator takes delight in physically and violently hitting the wife. This is an abuse power at the domestic level indeed.

It is intriguing to know that while Akobi relates with his wife, Mara, like a slave, and a housemaid, he plans to travel to Germany in search of greener pastures to graze. Sadly, he sells Mara's jewelry to get more money to finance his trip to Europe (33-34). Akobi no doubt is a sadist in character as he unleashes physical and psychological

violence on his wife. Mara tries to know what he does with her jewelry, but Akobi tries to convince her with the need for investment abroad. The plan concluded, Akobi travels. But Mara in a very long recollections done in tears, summarises her sordid and sad experience with her husband. Clutching Akobi's towel, she narrates:

When I had finished I walked back into our room, took his old towel, hopped into the grass bed, clutched the towel intimately to myself and cried my whole God-given eyeballs out. I was an irony into my own self. This towel I clutched intimately to myself had many a time caused me beatings, like when it stubbornly refused to dry up because the weather was damp during the night and in its wet state I offered it to Akobi in the morning. I got beaten as though it was me in control of the world's weather. As though I caused the dampness. ...here was I crying because he was gone; because no longer would I receive his beatings, his kicks, his slaps, scolds and humiliations. (43-44)

In this excerpt above, Mara gives us the summary of her ordeals in the hands of her husband, Akobi, who treats his wife not as a wife or a woman but as a maid and a slave. He beats and kicks Mara unfeelingly, as if she is his fellowman, equal in power, strength and masculine physique. Though gone to Europe, Mara feels his absence as she cries her eyeballs out. Be that as it may, Mara does not fail to recall the pains, and humiliations she has suffered in the hands of Akobi. Darko in her imaginative creation, gives us a world where the man demonstrates his masculine strength against his female counterpart, the woman. She uses her novel to mirror this ugly trend as she focuses her critical searchlight on the marital home of Akobi to expose the vice. In her novelistic effort, the author concurs with Igbudu (2004) who argues in her essay on gender-based violence that:

One of the most common forms of violence against women is one perpetrated by a husband or other intimate male partner [...]. Many women [like Mara in *Beyond the Horizon*] live everyday in fear of violence often from their husbands. Gender-based violence often called intimate partner violence, or domestic violence takes a variety of forms, including physical (e.g. slaps, punches, kicks, assaults with a weapon, homicide) [...]. (56)

Indeed, in Darko's world in *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara suffers it all in her gender relations with Akobi, her husband. Akobi beats, slaps, kicks, punches and assaults Mara.

Darko undoubtedly has imaginatively captured for her audience a prevailing social malaise in our society as Igbudu's research revealed.

Furthermore, this untold brutality meted to Mara in *Beyond the Horizon*, demonstrating domestic abuse of power as evident in physical violence is also the artistic concern of Jude Dibia in *Unbridled*. Dibia in his fictional world encompassing Erika and James, his dominant characters on whom the society invented revolves, reveals James as a man who dramatises violence in his domestic space. It is important to observe in the novel that James, a British in London, wooed Erika, a Nigerian in Nigeria, on the internet. During the period of on-line courtship, James presents himself as one who loves sincerely and needs an African queen. He sees Erika as the "Queen" he seeks, and thus concludes arrangement for the latter to migrate to London to meet him. On the part of Erika, she sees James, the British, as a dream come true. She happily accepts the date and plans to migrate to London to meet her new found love and soon to be husband.

However, it is intriguing to note in the novel that on arrival in London, Erika finds James' moral dispositional quality to be at variance with that displayed on the internet, during their on-line dating period. She painfully narrates:

I have often questioned what really happened the night James first hit me. What was it I did wrong? Was it really me? But most important, I had struggled to understand how he had changed to the violent man that he had become. (63)

Erika here in this excerpt above, sees James as one who has altered in his character trait. Compared to the loving, quiet and calm character that wooed and dated her on the internet, James is a violent man in character. It is interesting to note that James further demonstrates his violence when his sister, Claudia talks with him on phone. James in his relationship with his sister at home during their telephone conversation barks at her sister. As the African woman that she is, Erika asks James: "what was that all about, James?" (163) as James barks at her sister on phone. The latter says nothing was wrong and begs the former to leave him alone. But Erika gets the greatest shock of her life as she narrates:

It happened then, almost like in slow motion. James shrugged my hands away from his shoulder, swiveling round at the same time. He shot out of the chair. His right hand was raised and then came crashing down on my face. His blow so unexpected that I was knocked off my feet, I landed on my back side on the wooden floor with my back hitting the

kitchen cabinet. I watched his foot smash into my sides repeatedly. (43-44)

Erika in this passage is invented as a character who mirrors the physical violence men unleash on their women victims in their homes. Erika is knocked down and kicked repeatedly. For a man (an adult) physically strong to engage a woman, a spouse for that matter is not only sad but also uncivil. Erika thus lives in palpable fear in her relationship with James husband in London. Dibia throws more light on this domestic abuse of power through physical violence in the fictional world of Erika and James as Erika tells us further:

We had another fight on Thursday. No. we didn't fight, he just hit me again[...].
May be tonight I will sleep, I didn't sleep last night. I was afraid he would return in a fowler mood and start looking for another fight. I'm tired. I'm much too tired[...]. (165-166)

A critical reading of the novel and with particular reference to the quote above, reveals that James is violent and thus makes his home uncomfortable for his wife as the latter is in constant fear of attack. In fact, situation gets worse by the day as Erika says: "Things are getting worse it seems everyday now a new scar is added to the existing ones. Even when there are no marks to show, the scars inside me are widening" (168).

There is no doubt that Erika is both physically, emotionally and psychologically brutalised. The domestic violence she suffers in her relationship with the husband, James, is untoward and sad. It is disruptive of the expected marital peace and love in marriage. It is sad to note that Dibia extends his critical vision beyond James family setting. In his narrative, he captures Bessie, a character in the novel, and a neighbour and a confidant to Erika. Dibia in his novel brings Bessie and Erika together as the former meets the latter to console her. Dibia opens her up as she narrates her ordeal with her husband back in Ghana. Bessie tells Erika thus:

Back in Ghana. He used to hit me all the time. He complained about everything. One day I was so fat, the next day I was lazy. I did everything to please him[...]. Men don't change especially not for women. But women always make adjustments and changes to suit men. The day Kwesi [her husband] hit me in front of our child, I packed my things and I left him. (88)

In her attempt to console Erika, Bessie, reveals her own sad marital history which culminated in her packing out of her marriage. Bessie's husband, like James, Erika's husband, beats Bessie. This is a sad and ugly scenario in domestic space. What is most painful is the physical violence carried out in the presence of children sometimes, as in the case of Bessie, and this is sad. Dibia in no uncertain terms uses this slice of experience from Bessie to buttress his fictional focus, where domestic abuse of power in contemporary marriages, unlike what the Achebe's and Emecheta's created in their earlier works, as mentioned in the early part of this chapter, prevails.

Dibia has in his artistic effort set in Nigeria and Britain, shown that domestic abuse of power at the physical level is not only peculiar to African society (Nigeria), but also prevalent in western society (Britain) as well. Looking at the narrative done in first person's narrative point of view, one observes that it is set between Nigeria and London – a western society. That James is cruel and violent, and indeed a fighter of the opposite sex because she is a woman is not in doubt. Thus he abuses his masculine power.

Kaye-Kantrowitz (2003) argue that “violence is an aspect of power” (483). James fights Erika, his wife often. It is not because he is a termagant, but because he sees Erika as a woman, a weaker vessel as it were, whom he can subjugate, kick and beat at will even without provocation from Erika.

The issue of domestic abuse of power in society has become such that the concerned public has observed that men not only batter their wives, or psychologically and emotional traumatise them in their relationships, but also increase the woman's psychological and emotional woes through sexual assault.

Sexual violence thus becomes a ready act at the disposal of every male, especially men to coerce and subjugate their spouse. It is humiliating and traumatic as the victim feels her privacy invaded and brutalised. This is an abuse of power at the domestic level. Wanjiru (2011), writing on sexual violence concludes that:

The subject of sexual violence against women has been an issue of worldwide concern. This kind of violence is broad-based. It includes rape and defilement of women[...] assault, prostitution[...]. Sexual violence cuts across lines of income, class, age and culture. (219-220)

That sexual violence as a form of domestic abuse of power is a universal phenomenon that is not peculiar to Africa, is not in doubt. This attracts the artistic lens of Amma Darko and Jude Dibia, as they fictionalise this in their novels.

Darko on her part invents her narrator-protagonist as a victim of domestic abuse of power who has not only suffered physically in the hands of her husband, Akobi, but also has been victim of sexual assaults. In *Beyond the Horizon*, our critical focus, Darko reveals that men can be callous in their demand for sexual pleasure from their wives. This she shows as her narrator and victim, Mara, tells us her experience with her husband, Akobi, thus:

He was lying on the mattress face up, looking thoughtfully at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did so, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me [through the back]. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone. (22)

This that Darko vividly captures here is no doubt a sorry and sad one as a husband engages his lovely and legally married wife in sexual act in a callous and beastly fashion. Akobi's demand for sex and the way he carries out the act is nothing but violent. It is violent as he lovelessly and without passion orders his wife like a sex slave, harlot paid for, and turns her like a robot under his manipulation. Most painful is the post sex act action of Akobi. He orders his wife, Mara, out of the mattress to go and lay on a mat on a hard cement floor after subjecting her to a squatting position to enable him satisfy his sexual desire. Akobi is indeed a heartless and callous husband who does not care about the comfort and pleasure of his spouse during sex act. He is selfish and atrociously violent as he unleashes sexual violence on his wife. Darko thus shows that men in their gender relations with their wives can be brutal and beastly like Akobi. What an abuse of domestic power! It is a great artistic achievement for Darko to courageously capture this scene and others in her novel to dramatise sexual violence as a form of domestic abuse of power. As a female writer, she writes in harmony with Mill's (1997) conclusion that

The gender part of what women write about women is mere sycophancy to men[...]. Literary women [which Darko is one] are becoming more free-spoken, and more willing to express their real sentiments. (25)

That Darko as a novelist has freely expressed her real sentiments on a universal issue such as domestic abuse of power, as it is evident in sexual violence is not in doubt. The author, Darko, has indeed crafted this ugly scenario as she imaginatively follows Mara to Germany, as the latter travels to meet her husband, Akobi.

It is revealed in the novel that Mara goes to meet the husband in Europe after the husband had gone for two years. On arrival at the airport in Germany, it is observed that Akobi sends his friend Osey to receive his wife and bring her home. But most revealing in this errand is the fact that Osey seems to be a tool in the hands of Akobi to be used to work on Mara's sense of morality and decent culture from Africa. This is revealed as Osey boards a train with Mara to meet Akobi, the latter's wife. Mara tells us that Osey took her to "a film house to watch a film full of action" (61). The so-called action packed film is nothing but a pornographic film intended to wet Mara's sexual appetite. Consequently, Osey makes amorous advances at Mara. But Mara, out of moral decency as a woman, expresses shock and surprise at the intention of Osey. But Osey calls her reaction a "monkey drama" and rhetorically asks: "Did I eat you?" (65). Here, a critical reader can observe that Osey tries to loosen Mara's strong sense of morality as a married woman coming to Europe to meet her husband from Africa. Osey's intention as concluded above is further buttressed by the fact that Osey tells Mara that beautiful African women like she, are in Europe engaging in commercial sex to become rich (68). Thus one can conclude that Osey is just working on Mara's psyche to prepare her mind, repackage her moral consciousness for prostitution in Europe, as the novel further reveals. Darko skilfully invents Mara into morally degenerating sex trade as the latter laments:

I felt drained, so drained that I had to ask for a glass of water.
My husband brings me from home [Ghana, Africa] to a
foreign land and puts me in a brothel to work, and what money
I make, he uses to pay the rent on his lover's apartment, and to
renovate a house for her in her village back home. (137-138)

This final plunge into commercial sex was made easy by a conspiracy between Akobi and Osey to sexually assault Mara, as husband and friend, in order to make sure she strips off her culture of moral decency. This is indeed psychologically violent in the relationship between a husband and wife and the former's friend. But the novelist in a dramatic scene in the novel, shows that Akobi is violent in his sexual relationship with his wife. Mara narrates her sexually violent ordeal in the hands of her husband thus:

"Remove it quick quick," pointing to my trousers.
By the time I had got out of them he too had got his trousers
down to his knees. Emanating an aura of no-nonsense, time-is-
too-precious-to waste on you, he signalled with his right
forefinger that I should kneel; which I did, still in my
sweatshirt. Then he took my jeans, spread them on the

bathroom floor, and knelt down. I felt him enter me from behind and the next second he was out of me again and demanding hastily to know whether I had taken something against pregnancy. When I replied that I hadn't, I heard him curse impatiently[...]. Seconds later Osey's hand poked through and laughed out loud and said to me 'you look like you're waiting to grind your mother's millet for her, Mara'. An expensive joke at my kneeling position, naked from waist down, my bare bottom exposed[...]. My thoughts were curtailed when I felt the sudden sharp pain of Akobi's entry in me. He was brutal and over-fast with me, [...]. And then he was up and I was still kneeling there, very much in pain because what he did was a clear case of domestic rape[...]. I emerged from the bathroom feeling embarrassed and ashamed. I kept my eyes down. (84-85)

In this long and detailed sex scene involving a couple, Darko demonstrates her novelistic skill as she is able to give her audience a picture of sexual violence in the marital relations between a couple. It is sad that Akobi treats his wife without passion. He makes love to her without emotional feeling and attachment. As the passage shows, one can critically conclude that Akobi, known as "Cobby" in Europe is a beast. The way he orders his wife "remove it quick, quick" to pull, in a military fashion, and give kneel-down position for sex, is most appalling and disheartening. Indeed, he enters Mara beastly through the back again as he did back home in Ghana. This sexual act is no doubt very dissatisfactory to Mara, as she feels sharp pain after the brutal sex act from her husband. In fact, she describes the action as domestic rape. It is a well known fact between couples that sex act is expected to be a pleasurable expression of love for each other. It is mutual and passionately motivated. But what one finds in *Beyond the Horizon* is a sex act between couples that is not passionately motivated and not a pleasurable expression of love as Mara is treated like a paid prostitute, a sex object, and not a wife. It is no doubt a case of domestic rape and an abuse of power as Mara herself concludes after the ugly experience. Commenting on rape and defilement in Kenya, Wanjiru quoted earlier says that:

Victims of sexual violence [like Mara in *Beyond the Horizon*] are usually left traumatised. After violation, the victim feels used, vulnerable, abused and frightened. Basically, they are unable to face themselves. They lose their self-esteem and self-worth and become emotionally paralysed. They sink deep into trauma. (221)

Wanjiru's conclusion rightly captures Mara's psychological and emotional feeling after the husband's brutal sex act. Indeed, Omonubi-McDonnell again argues that "Rape is not a crime of lust. It is a crime of violence" (43). This argument buttresses Darko's creation to the effect that what Akobi does to her wife is not a case of mutual love and sex act, but a case of domestic rape, as Mara describes it. This no doubt is sexual violence, and a demonstration of male abuse of power in the domestic domain.

What Darko does in her novel is to sound it loud and clear that sexual violence in the marital relations between couples is rampant and worrisome. This is so because, even Osey in the novel also makes love to his Ghanaian wife on bathroom floor as if his wife was not a human being that deserves dignity and a modicum of comfort while giving him sexual pleasure. Most appalling is the way he initiates it. Mara tells us: "The beating over, Osey pushed his wife into the bathroom..." (74). A husband, after beating his wife, pushes her, not into bed, but into the bathroom without a bed but a hard cement floor, for sexual pleasure. Osey and Akobi are callously and sexually violent in their relationships with their wives. This is domestic abuse of power indeed, as it is being carried out in the home.

Furthermore, the novel shows that Akobi and Mara are traditionally and legally married. Both parents consented to the union. Consequently, one expects a harmonious co-existence between both couples. None is expected to undo the other in a normal marital relationship. Be that as it may, Darko in her imaginative dramatisation of abuse of power as an issue in post-colonial Ghana, demonstrates that a husband can abuse and violently maltreat, without sense of decency, a woman he loved and married. This is most appalling as shown in the character of Akobi who in Germany takes his wife Mara, to a party. Taking her out for the first time since she flew into Germany from Ghana, Akobi takes her to an unknown destination. Mara narrates:

Then Gitte [Akobi's German wife] told me that because she and Cobby [Akobi, as known and called in Germany] had been out a couple of times without me, Cobby had suggested to her that, for once, he should take me out alone, to give me a good time. Where we drove to I don't know but I was certain that it was outside Hamburg. (110)

One wonders what could be morally wrong with Akobi, a husband, to have lost all sense of morality and decency as he takes his wife to an unknown destination for "a good time".

However, the author skilfully reveals Akobi's debased moral dispositional qualities in her invention as her narrator and victim of domestic abuse of power, Mara, narrates her ordeal further in the outing with her husband thus:

Akobi returned some minutes later and brought me a glass of wine. Then I was left on my own again for a long, long while during which I finished off my wine and waited. Then something started happening to me. I was still conscious but I was losing control of myself. Something was in the wine I had drunk. It made me see double and I felt strange and happy and high[...] so high that I was certain I could fly free. Then suddenly the room was filled with people, all men, and they all were talking and laughing and drinking. And they were completely naked! There must have been at least ten men for what I saw were at least twenty images. Then they all around me, many hairy bodies, and they were stripping me, fondling me, playing with my body, pushing my legs apart, wide, wide apart. As for the rest of the story, I hope that the gods of Naka didn't witness it[...]. (111)

A critical study of the excerpts above reveals that Akobi took his lovely and legally married wife, to a whore house in Germany. Mara's experience reveals Akobi, as a character who is morally degenerate and lacks conscience, as he takes his wife for an outing, only to get her drunk with an intoxicating substance and hands her over to macho men to sexually abuse her debasingly. The reader sympathises with Mara, who innocently gets lured into the hands of "devouring lions" who sexually abuse her. It is disheartening too to note that ten men had sex with one woman, who had not been in the whore business before the encounter. It is quite sad and horrific that a husband, Akobi, could act this way against his wife. At this scene, one can conclude that in the marital relationship between Akobi and Mara (husband and wife), there is nothing but violence. This is because of the austere relationship between the couples. Akobi is heartless and loveless as he in a way uses the so-called outing for a good time to prepare his wife for a life of whoredom for financial gain in Germany. He thus abuses his position as a husband. His use of the power vested on him as the man and husband of the woman is abused in this scene, as he exploits and debases his wife. The novelist shows that Mara, after this experience plunges into prostitution as she has been stripped off of her moral culture, in an attempt to eke out a living in Europe (113-120). She painfully says: "As for the morals of life my mother brought me up by, I have cemented them with coal tar in my conscience" (131). Mara had no choice but to concur with the morally diabolic plan of Akobi and his friend Osey to systematically expose her to the "cold world" of

prostitution, as she sees it (115). She cannot run back to Ghana as she has no means to do so. Moreso, she will be exposed to blackmail as her “outing for a good time” with her husband was filmed and Akobi has the video. Mara tells us again:

The situation was this: the three of us [Akobi, Osey and herself, Mara] were watching a video film that showed me completely naked, with men’s hands moving all over my body. Then some held my two legs wide apart while one after the other, many men, white, black, brown, even one who looked Chinese, took turns upon me. All this was captured clearly on the video film. And this was what Osey and Akobi blackmailed me with so that I agreed to do the job at peep [a whore house for commercial sex]. (115)

What a sexual violence, an abuse of the power of a husband, and a pity! Mara appears invited by the husband, Akobi to Germany as “bundle” (71) to be debased, dehumanised and forced, frustrated unwittingly, and unwillingly into the world of prostitutes in Europe for economic gain. This is violence, physically, sexually, psychological, emotionally and socially speaking. Darko the novelist is highly remarkable in the adroit and artistic manner in which she has been able to give flesh and blood to an issue as sensitive as this in her novel.

Domestic abuse of power as it operates at the sexual level is nothing but abnormal experience for a woman in her marital relationship with her man. There is no doubt that the novelist has represented the life of sadistic, callous and inhuman men like Akobi and Osey in their gender relations as it operates at a sexually violent level. Thus Darko’s artistic effort concurs with Henry James’ comment as quoted in *Criticism: Major Statements*, thus: “The reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life” (360).

Jude Dibia in *Unbridled* also explores this issue of sexual violence as a form of abuse of domestic power. In *Unbridled*, just as Mara of *Beyond the Horizon* travels from Ghana to meet Akobi her husband in Germany, Erika travels from Nigeria to London to meet James, her fiancé who later became her husband, in London. In London, Erika finds James as one who appears different from the picture he painted of himself in their internet date. The novelist reveals that James is sexually violent. He does not seek Erika’s mutual consent for sex, but experiences it even when Erika does not enjoy the act. On arrival in London and in James apartment, Erika finds herself being subjected to sexual act thus:

In no time, he was by my side kissing me and fiddling with my bra. I was soon naked before him. Many thoughts flashed through my head. I was not given an opportunity to ask him anything at all about what I was doing here and what plans he had for me now that I was here. There were promises of marriage and citizenship while I was still in Nigeria, but nothing was said that night. The only noise he made was grunting and ejaculating expletives while he jabbed at my insides with his withering prick. Did he care that I felt no pleasure from this? (34)

A look at the passage above shows Dibia gradually expose James as a character who is sexually violent. This is so because he invites his found love in the internet, to London for possible marriage and citizenship. He does not welcome her or try to allow her settle down, but subjects her to sexual act which Erika does not enjoy. She experiences nothing pleasurable in the act that appears forced on her. But James does not bother about Erika's pleasure but his own pleasure and excitement. This is sexual violence which he unleashes on Erika. The act reveals him to be a selfish character. An examination of Dibia's use of the verb "jab" in the passage shows an action unsolicited. *Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary* quoted earlier in this study 'sees jab' as a verb that denotes "to penetrate suddenly with a pointed object [such as James penis], to thrust, to poke sharply, [...] a quick poke or stab" (518). The use of this verb gives a very vivid descriptive picture of the sex act James had with Erika, a woman he calls his fiancée, and with the plan to marry and make a British citizen. That James suddenly, sharply and in a quick manner stabs Erika with his penis is nothing but violent. He is violent in the act. He thus has no feeling or regard for the feminine nature and frame of the woman, Erika. No wonder Erika does not enjoy the sex act as she feels pounced upon like a devouring beast pounces on its prey, and devour.

However, Dibia takes us to a rape scene, employing reminiscences as a mode of character exposition in his novel. The author shows Erika reminisce when her father forcefully rapes her during her childhood, thereby committing incest. This was her first encounter with sexual experience. This indeed is sexual violence and an abuse of the power of a father, in an encounter between a daughter and a father. Erika in her childhood innocence narrates:

His [her father] tone scared me. His words carried no meaning to me. There was a claustrophobic sense of violence that seemed to hang around the little room and I was aware that there was nowhere to run to [...].

I was too late. He pounced on me and before I knew it, he had ripped off my wrapper and pinned me to the raffia mat on the floor. I screamed once. It was loud. It was piercing. It was animal. It was terror. He shoved one of his hands into my mouth to suppress my scream and I bit hard, draining blood[...]. He withdrew his bleeding hand and hit me several times across the face until I stopped screaming and was reduced to subdued sobs[...]. I felt my father fully inside me and the pain brought visions of one particular wasp that always made its way into my room through the open window. (148-149)

This scene no doubt, portrays domestic abuse of power in the relationship between father (a male) and daughter (a female). The rape scene is nothing but a violent deflowering of a young and innocent maiden who sees the father as her protector and guardian. Amazingly, she finds the father violently pounce on her to satisfy his inordinate sexual desire, which he could have had with his wife or any other woman outside the nuclear or even extended family circle.

Indeed, it is chilling and sadistic, animalistic, heinous and dastardly violent for a father to sexually abuse a biological daughter. He hits Erika to unwilling submission in order to successfully carry out his violent act. The novelist's dexterity and artistic prowess in his fictionalisation of sexual violence as a demonstration of male power abuse in post-colonial Nigeria is remarkable. He does not only show the vicious nature of men's relationship with women, (males and females), but also demonstrates his art in fiction. This he does, as he weaves his victim and protagonist of sexual abuse tale, Erika, to be a sex object to every male. Most disheartening and painful is the fact that Erika always feels sad and unhappy after an experience that is designed to bring joy and happiness. This is because she is always violently engaged in it and unwillingly subdued. The psychological and emotional pains she suffers is quite obvious. No wonder she laments:

And like many women, I imagined, who had been physically and emotionally abused by men, what letting go meant was to simply vanish into the shadows where the past could not catch up ever again with the future. (175)

Dibia indeed gives us a relationship that is riddled with violence. Thus he invents for his audience a society that dramatises a contemporary social malaise. Domestic abuse of power in male/female relationship has become a serious issue for concern. Hence Dibia chooses to use fiction to not only expose the violent and rampant nature, but also to

condemn it as the reader sympathises with the female victim who helplessly and unwillingly gets 'butchered' by sex crazed men.

However, a critical study of the novels *Beyond the Horizon* and *Unbridled*, reveals a peculiar device employed by the novelists. In *Beyond the Horizon*, one observes the artful deployment of irony as a narrative device. Mara, the protagonist of the novel travels to meet her husband, Akobi, in Europe with the hope of a better life. Her excitement is obvious as she happily prepares and boards a plane to Germany. But the author weaves Mara as one who loses her sense of decency and morality as she tries to survive economically in Europe by engaging in commercial sex. One recalls that her husband, Akobi promises better life, resulting from material gains. But what Mara finds on arrival is shocking as she gets re-oriented and lured into prostitution by the husband and his friend, Osey. This broken hope and promise, dashed Mara's world and vision. Ironically, she does not get her hopes and aspirations before she travelled from Ghana to Germany, fulfilled.

Besides, Erika in *Unbridled* has high hopes as an "African Queen" in the hands of James, a British, who woos her for friendship and marriage via the internet. Erika embraces James' promises of migration to Britain from Nigeria, job opportunities and marriage. Indeed, Erika sees herself as one who was running away from Nigeria at a time the country was down economically. She looks forward to living in London with a European husband, James, in the affluence and influence of a Briton. Unfortunately, her hopes burst like soap bubbles as she begins to find uncomfortable, her relationship with James, as the latter becomes violent physically and even sexually. It is ironic that Erika migrates to Britain from Nigeria for a better life (greener pastures), as a way of escaping the social and economic hardship in her home country, Nigeria.

Both Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* and Erika in *Unbridled* are two of a kind. They have the same hopes and aspirations as promised by their individual male partners. Ironically, their hopes dashed as they met with harsh social and economic realities as they get physically and sexually abused by their men in their domestic spaces. The novelists fictional cosmos is cast in situational irony, as Perrine defines it, and as employed by Adichie as well, in *Purple Hibiscus*. The use of situation irony is well commented on, in this study on page 80.

Both novel's protagonists (Mara and Erika) though victims of domestic abuse of power in their various domestic domains, had high expectations of becoming socially and economically richer and better than they were in their individual home countries,

before migrating to Europe to join their men. But in terms of fulfillment of their expectations, they found themselves struggling to survive as they found themselves in the hands of physically and sexually abusive men and society. What a sad and an ironic situation!

4.5 Resistance to physical and sexual violence

In the power relations in the novels under study in this chapter, one notes resistance to the domestic abuse of power inherent. These are not militant in nature, as they are subtle and peripheral. This is because the victims are females who appear weak and lack the macho power in the male counterparts. Understandable is the fact that these female victims are wife's to the males who beat and intimidate them to psychological and emotional breakdown. There is no doubt that the victims feel the dire need to emancipate themselves from the violent power relations that exist between them and the males – their husbands, in each of the novels. Hence they resist in whatever way, no matter how overt or covert, as their power as females carries them. Thus they engage in strategic and secret service operations, as in *Beyond the Horizon* and violent confrontations as in *Unbridled*, to free themselves.

4.5.1 Resistance through strategic operations

Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* reveals the protagonist, Mara, as a character who puts up resistance to an early attempt to invade her womanhood. On arrival to Germany from Ghana, she meets Osey, Akobi's friend whom the latter sends to receive his wife (Mara) and bring her home. While taking Mara home from the airport by train, Osey tries to seduce Mara. From Mara's cultural and moral upbringing back in Ghana, Africa, this appears unwholesome and indecent, at least for a married woman that she is. She sees the attempt as a morally wrong move by Osey. Seducing a possibly unwilling opposite sex, especially one legally married to another, like Mara to Akobi, bothers on violence. There is no doubt that Osey's attempt is sexually violent. Hence Mara resists the attempt as she springs up in fury against Osey. She tells us the experience, asking Osey thus: "What is this eh? What are these foolish questions you are asking me, eh? Have you maybe forgotten who I am [a married woman]?" (65). This rhetorical question is strategic as it puts Osey on check, and thus resists his seductive attempts.

In the train to Hamburg, Germany, Osey begins to ask Mara some unpleasant and seductive questions in a way to put her at ease and create an ample chance for him to put

Mara into an immoral mood. In this male/female relations, we see Osey employ the power of the man, as man in sexuality, to wrongfully seduce and sexually exploit his friend's wife. But Mara resists this "betrayal" as she notices early enough, Osey's seductive destination, and resists him outrightly with her rhetorical questions as captured in the excerpt. Her rhetorical question here is strategic. It is a strategy employed to resist Osey's immoral advances. Indeed, Mara could have consented, but she feels the need to raise her head and resist the male's attempt to always cow, intimidate and seduce the female untowardly. She narrates further:

I couldn't understand the world any longer. I mean here was a man openly claiming to be my husband's best friend trying to seduce me, and who was not only bored and angry at my reaction [resistance], my threat to report him, but goes out of his way to call it monkey drama! (66)

In the above passage, Darko presents Mara as one whose sense of morality is high, at this point, in the novel. She is stunned at Osey's seductive move and moral sense toward his action. Osey sees Mara's resistance as monkey drama. But Mara does not in any way feel any qualms about her reaction. She threatens to report the man, Osey, to her husband. This is a subtle and strategic way of resisting Osey's attempt to sexually exploit her. Thus, in this gender relations, Darko exemplifies the use of male power as a weapon against the female's sexuality. But she demonstrates that in her fictional society, there are women who could stand up and resist the males abuse of sexual power. Thus Mara, a ready character in the author's creative hand, demonstrates resistance to such abuse of power at the sexual level, through strategic operations.

Furthermore, in the relationship between husband and wife, there supposed to be harmony and cordiality. But we find that in the case of Akobi and Mara, the latter comes to Germany, only to be talked into prostitution. As part of the abuse of the power of the husband (man) over the wife (woman) in preparation for the sexual violence through prostitution in Europe, Mara is told to accept Akobi's German wife, and play the role of a sister to Akobi, as they get home.

However, Mara protests and resists the attempt by Akobi and Osey to reduce her to a second class citizen in her own matrimonial home. She resists this attempt when she says: "But I'm not his sister" (79). Mara by so doing, boldly resists the conspiracy between two friends (her husband and his friend). There is no gain-saying the fact that Darko in these scenes suggests the need for the women folk to be bold and resist the

males' abuse of power in the home where culture and tradition makes the African woman, a possession of the husband, as the husband sees himself as the boss and superordinate. This is indeed a critical statement to the men folk that they cannot always have it with ease without resistance as it used to be. But the contemporary African woman, with her feminist spirit is now bold to challenge and ask questions where she previously kept mute.

Continuing in her artistic presentation of resistance to sexual violence as a form of abuse of domestic power, Darko employs strategic private secret service operations as a form of resistance against the abuse in her novel.

In the narrative, one notes Mara, as one who is frustrated and disappointed that her husband, Akobi has turned her into a commercial whore and profit making venture. She sweats to make the money, but Akobi takes the profit. She calls it whoring profits (118). Indeed she laments thus: "Every day, apart from Sundays, I took on at least three men. What they paid me went to Akobi" (118), and concludes: "So why did I wear myself out with men and let him [Akobi] take the money? If I couldn't help myself out of my situation then why not turn it to my advantage? (119). In view of this feeling and sad analysis of the situation, Mara decides to turn her situation to an advantage as she engages a private detective to secretly investigate Akobi, Gittle his German wife, and Comfort, his Ghanaian woman, and their activities in Germany. This is with the intent to ruin (their chances of continued stay and profiteering and thus resist Akobi's sexual violence against her all this while.

It is interesting to note that Kaye, a character and wife to Peepy, a whore house (116) owner, suggests the address of a private detective to Mara. Mara embraced the suggestion and goes to locate the private detective. Mara's engagement of a private detective to investigate her husband is not known to the later and his allies. Hence we conclude that it is a private secret service operation. In a dialogue between Mara and Gerhardt Strauss, the private detective at the latter's office, Mara describes comfort, Akobi and his German wife, Gitte. The novelist reveals the encounter in dramatic dialogue thus:

What's her name?
I only know her first name. Comfort.
Description?
'Tall, Brown. Big, beautiful eyes. Sophisticated [...] then plenty hair [...]. Akobi. He now calls himself Cobby[...]. Second name Ajaman. He is married to a German woman called Gitte who works at a carton

factory. She is short, fat, auburn and not pretty. Lives with him in Scharlemann Strasse 54’.

‘Anything precisely you want to know?’

‘I want to know about anything involving him and Comfort, or him and Gitte, or all three. All that he’s done and is doing. All that he’s achieved and is achieving and how he achieved these things. His intentions...’ (132-133)

A critical look at the dialogue between Gerhardt Strauss and Mara above, shows that Mara is eager to investigate Akobi.

This secret investigation initiated by Mara is with the intention to uncover all the activities of Akobi in Germany, and to destabilise his stay and possibly ground him. This she feels would put an end to his sexual violence, and exploitations as she could thence live her life without the subjugation of her husband, and subsequent abuse of power.

Darko narrates the outcome of Akobi’s investigation as she tells the reader that:

Comfort has been deported [...]

Akobi is in jail here in Germany [...] Everything he and Gitte owned has been taken by the bank. Gitte has divorced him and returned to her family. (138-139)

There is no doubt in the above excerpt that Darko has been able to weave in resistance to male abuse of domestic power. She has been able to reveal Mara’s successful investigation of Akobi and subsequent achievement of her aim to ground her husband and his cronies to a halt. Indeed, with the deportation of Comfort, imprisonment of Akobi and the dissolution of the marriage between Akobi and Gitte, Akobi is like a fish cast out of water, gasping for breath. Akobi thus is pulled down. His powers are destroyed as he is caged in jail. And Mara can be free at last. But she plunges fully into the world of prostitution (139) as she confesses. The novelist no doubt has been able to use her narrative to show that domestic abuse of power can be resisted. She suggests that male abusers will not always have it all, but sometimes be resisted, either overtly or covertly. Also to be noted in the resistance to domestic abuse of power in the novel, is female solidarity. This occurs as we see Kaye suggest secret detective to resist Akobi, to Mara, revealed in this study. Bessie also, a female character in the novel solidarises with Mara as she narrates her own ordeal in the hands of her Ghanaian husband who physically assaults her as well, but resisted by packing out of the matrimonial home. This is with the intent to not only console Mara, but also and specifically to suggest same action against Akobi as a form of resistance to the latter’s abuse of domestic power.

Amma Darko has been able to use her novel to show that abuse of power in Ghanaian society can be resisted. She thus suggests a wider application in contemporary sub-Saharan African society where abuse of power appears prominent not only in the public but also in the domestic space, her artistic canvass.

4.5.2 Resistance through violent confrontations

Resistance to domestic abuse of power is also the artistic concern of Jude Dibia in *Unbridled*, as his protagonist engages in violent confrontations as a form of resistance. Of great interest is the exposition in the fight scene between James and Erika to the effect that Dibia presents Erika as a strong and valiant woman, as she resists James battering by fighting back. Erika takes hold of a brass handle and hits James. Blood flows freely. Dibia shows this as he creates the couple – James and Erika – in a duel. Erika, the narrator-participant and protagonist of the world she lives in, tells us:

So when James struck me, it occurred to me that I could strike back. Somewhere between his blows, I struck back. And when he hit me to the ground, I searched for anything I could use as a weapon, I found a brass handle underneath the kitchen chain and I reached out and grabbed it despite his kicks. I pulled myself up and welding my weapon, I struck him squarely in the face. There was a piercing scream as well as blood everywhere – his and mine. He knocked the brass handle away from my hand and came to me again with renewed rage. I felt his blows deafening my ears, his kicks crushing my ribs and instead of crying and pleading for him to stop, I fought back. (172-173)

The above quote demonstrates violent confrontation as a way of resisting domestic abuse of power. Erika in the scene quoted tells James by her action, that women are not always weak and subservient. Erika's courage and bravery in the face of violent and humiliating attack from James is encouraging. Emecheta in her novel referred to earlier, also reinforces this need for the woman to challenge the man's abuse of power. She writes on Adah's (her character) resistance to domestic abuse of power thus "She [Adah] did not know where she got her courage from, but she was beginning to hit him [her husband] back, even biting him when need be[...]. Just a husband and wife fighting" (162). Emecheta by so creating Adah, suggests that women should not always sit, watch and accommodate their husband's violence in the home, just because they want to protect their marriages. This informs why Erika in *Unbridled*, our critical focus, later walks out of her marriage to James, just as her friend and confidant, Bessie, walked out on Kwesi,

her husband in Ghana. Dibia in his invention, thus suggests that no woman should tolerate an unbearable domestic abuse of power for too long, but resist and move out, if it becomes an unavoidable option, to find her voice.

Continuing, Dibia in no uncertain terms skilfully voices the need for the woman living under the brute force of a male tyrant and beastly superordinate, to employ any means of resistance. For Erika in *Unbridled*, Dibia invents she –running away from James stronghold as a way of escape from the latter’s abuse of power that has riddled their marital relationship.

Erika tells us:

I walked down the stairs with many thoughts running through my mind, most prominently the thought of escape. I had to somehow run away from all this madness. (85)

For Erika to consider the option of running away from the house means calling it quit in the relationship between the two. There is no doubt that James’ violent confrontation and attacks in the home has become unbearable for Erika. She can bear it no more, hence she contemplates escape, having resorted to violent physical confrontations, as a form of resistance to James’ abuse of domestic power. She feels that running away can ameliorate her sad situation in the relationship between her and the husband, James. Thus she uses this thought to resist the psychological and emotional torture she goes through, consequent upon the physical and sexual violence she suffers in the hands of James.

Dibia bluntly presents us with a vision of resistance to domestic abuse of power in his novel, as he further reveals Erika, who summarises her ordeal and the dire need for women to confront their male counterpart in an abusive power relations. She concludes:

It was not just him that I fought that night, it was all the men who had damaged me all through the years[...]. It was even man who had looked down on me because I was a woman; I finally looked them straight in the eyes and spat on them. (173)

4.6 Conclusion

It has been observed in this chapter that Adichie, Darko and Dibia fictionalise abuse of power in domestic space in *Purple Hibiscus*, *Beyond the Horizon* and *Unbridled* respectively. In their artistic visions, they capture benevolent dictatorship, physical and

sexual violence; and resistance through strategic operations and violent confrontations in the societies invented.

Domestic abuse of power as noted in the domestic space of Nigerian society is dramatised in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The author in the novel, we observed, uses the home of Pa Eugene Achike to show that dictators also exist and abuse power in the domestic sphere. Eugene Achike, it was noted, is a benevolent dictator in the domestic sphere.

We noted that Eugene Achike often beats, kicks and slaps his daughter and wife (Kambili and Bridget respectively). The home is not the haven of peace and love. He turned his home into a battle field, always flexing muscles with his children. This war-like atmosphere makes the home and situation uncomfortable and unbearable for the children. It was also noted that in spite of his dictatorial attitude in the home, Achike is noted as a human rights activist in public, who uses his *Standard Newspaper* to critique the tyranny of the government of the day. Moreso, he does extend good hands of fellowship to everybody in the community. Hence he is seen as "Omelora". His generosity and kindness is well noted in the community. And he also takes good care of his family. He provides adequately for their material comfort. But unfortunately, the family is not comfortable. Thus we concluded that Achike is a benevolent dictator as he abuses power and spices it with his benevolent disposition.

On the other hand, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* invents resistance to benevolent dictatorship in the home. In Eugene Achike's family, where the man, Achike himself is a dictator, the family resists his abuse of power when it became unbearable. Resistance in *Purple Hibiscus* is through strategic operations, silence and poisoning. Adichie's skilful presentation in her novel is noted as every member of the family began to contemplate leaving the home for Auntie Ifeoma's peaceful and lovely home in Nsukka. Kambili even plans to elope with Father Amadi as a way to escape her father's high-handedness. There is no open confrontation and resistance in the novel. But the victims of Achike's dictatorship subtly engage psychological battle of silence as a form of resistance. This silent posture culminates in the poisoning of Eugene Achike by his wife. His death thus puts an end to dictatorship in the home. Kambili, Jaja, their mother, and indeed the entire family heaved a sigh of relief as they laughed and smiled at the death of their father and breadwinner.

Physical and sexual violence are demonstrated in *Beyond the Horizon*. The author creates her protagonist-narrator, Mara, as a housewife whom her husband, Akobi,

violently kicks and slaps always at the slightest provocation. In the novel, Darko shows that physical violence in the power relations between males and females (husband and wife) for instance, is not only rampant but also a universal issue. This is observed when Darko writes that Gitte's father (a German) beats the wife as well. We thus concluded that this shows that domestic abuse of power is not only in African society but also a universal social issue, as it occurs in a German family as well.

Dibia in *Unbridled* is also noted to have artistically demonstrated abuse of power through physical violence at the domestic domain. This is shown in the relationship between Erika and James (fiancée and fiancé) who find themselves living together in London but in a trouble-filled atmosphere. Erika is often brutalised, beaten and even kicked by James. In their marital relationship, James appears to always employ his strength and power as a man to not only subjugate Erika but also to subdue her. This shows that man in his gender relationships sees the woman as an object for subjugation and intimidation.

However, sexual violence is also skilfully invented. *Beyond the Horizon* presents Mara (wife) and Akobi (husband) as couples who engage in violent sexual orgy. In the main, Mara is noted to be sexually abused. This is concluded because Akobi exposes and lures Mara to commercial sex work. But be that as it may, Akobi forcefully and violently obtains sexual pleasure from his wife. It will be recalled that Akobi orders his wife to squat for sex act. He beastly performs the act, and walks away from the scene with arrogance and pride, like a man who has just patronised a whore. Akobi is rude, uncaring, nonchalant and unloving in his sexual relationship with his wife, as he violently engages in sex act without love.

We also noted in *Unbridled* that James usually obtains sexual pleasure from Erika without the mutual consent of the latter. He most times pounces on Erika and jabs his penis penetratingly into her. It is observed that Erika derives no pleasure in this as it is forced on her. We concluded this to be abuse of domestic power through sexual violence. Besides, Erika also narrates to us how the father raped her, and thus committed incest. In this rape scene, Erika is seen brutalised and violently deflowered. This we concluded is a further demonstration of domestic abuse of power through sexual violence at the home as a father violently rapes a daughter. Darko and Dibia no doubt have deftly and artistically too, been able to use fiction to imaginatively cry out against the social and universal malaise called abuse of power at the domestic space, as it occurs physically and sexually.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study has been able to show that the sub-Saharan African novel since its evolution, has developed to include a group of writers who emerged on the literary scene since the late 1980s. These writers have boldly engaged the African continent to expose her travails. We identified Tiyaambe Zeleza, Moses Isegawa, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Amma Darko, and Jude Dibia, to be among these. Their selected works illustrate abuse of power and resistance in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, our critical focus.

The study exposed abuse of power in public life through tyranny in a democracy and military tyranny, and abuse of power in domestic space evident in physical and sexual violence. Resistance to these forms of abuses were also examined.

Our critical examination reveals that Zeleza's and Isegawa's *Smouldering Charcoal* and *Snakepit* respectively, portray abuse of power as shown in the fictionalisation of tyranny in a democracy and military tyranny and resistance to such abuses through political and trade union activism, dissent and exile.

In *Smouldering Charcoal*, we observed that Zeleza exposes public abuse of power in a democracy. This is obvious in the invention of the public life of Chola, his predominant character. In the creation, Chola is seen to have a tense confrontation with agents of the government of the day at a checkpoint. At this dramatic scene where the author employs dramatic dialogue as a device, the Youth Militia Group, an arm of government, fiercely confronts Chola to produce his party card. This card is an evidence of loyalty to the "Great Leader", the democratic tyrant and leader of the country. We noted that in a free and independent society, citizens are not expected to carry party cards like a label or a badge. But this is what the Youth Militia Group enforces forcefully. This is evidently an instance of abuse of power.

Furthermore, abuse of power in the novel is also evident in the unwarranted arrests and detention of bakery workers for embarking on a strike action to protest against poor wages they are paid for their services as bakery workers. The government's victim of arrests and detention also include all those whom the government sees as enemies of the state. These members of civil society who appear critical of the government are ill-treated along with the detained bakery workers in detention. Their arrest and detention, is tyrannical in a democratic society and as such, an abuse of power

in public space. It was also noted that the government uses her agents, the prison superintendents, to unleash terror on prison inmates as they languish in jail for one unexplainable reason and the other.

Snakepit also focuses on abuse of power in the public space. This is noted in the author's illustration of military tyranny in governance in Ugandan society. The novelist uses General Bazooka as a character who represents military officers who make life horrible and unsafe for their colleagues in the army, and civilians in the civil society. General Bazooka terrorises them as he plots their downfall. Sometimes he sets his military boys to arrest and detain unsuspecting soldiers and civilians. This is noted in the experience of Bat, the protagonist of the novel. Bat essentially is used by the author to act out the pains people go through in a society where the rulers oppress the ruled, employing military might. As a victim of military tyranny, we noted Bat to be trailed by General Bazooka who vows to bomb the latter to death by all means. This we noted in the novel as tyrannical on the part of the military.

These novels under study reveal the deft and bold resistance to tyranny in a democracy and military tyranny. In *Smouldering Charcoal*, Zeleza highlights protest against arbitrary use of power. He shows Chola, Ndatero, Nchere, Bota, Tione and Dambo, characters in the novel, as members of the society who in their various ways resist the government's abuse of power through political and trade union activism. Chola's confrontation with the Youth Militia Group at the road checkpoint is a form of resistance through political activism. His arrest and detention and formation of a social movement in detention, as a common front to resist the tyrants in government is crucial. Resistance in *Smouldering Charcoal* is also manifest in the dogged spirit of workers, who as trade unionists, to resist employers' abuse of power. Trade union activism in the novel is aimed at resisting employers' power to exploit and underpay their employees. In *Snakepit*, we noted dissent and exile as forms of resistance to military tyranny. Some soldiers resisted General Bazooka's intolerable abuse of power in public space. The military tyranny against military colleagues is observed to be resisted, as some soldiers engage in dissent. Tayani, Bat's brother for instance, vows to fight back as he plots blowing off some military interests. However, members of the citizenry such as Bat, Professor and others considered running into exile as a way of escape, and thus resist military tyranny in the society.

However, abuse of power in domestic space and resistance to the abuse is well demonstrated in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Dibia's

Unbridled. In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, our studies reveal benevolent dictatorship illustrated in the private and family life of Eugene Achike. It was noted that Adichie uses the family of Eugene Achike to show that abuse of power also plays out at the home-front. It was observed that Achike abuses power dictatorially. He shows himself as a benevolent dictator. This he does as he often beats, kicks and slaps his daughter, Kambili and wife. His high-handedness and the terror he unleashes in the home, keeps the entire family in perpetual fear. But despite this tension, consequent upon Eugene Achike's dictatorship, his benevolence is demonstrated in the public and in the home. He uses his *Standard Newspaper* to voice out his dissatisfaction with the tyrannical government of the day – a kind of human rights activism. He is a generous giver whom the community named "Omelora" (one who does for the community) as a result of his generosity and kindness. He also ~~takes good care of~~ provides adequately for the family he terrorises ~~as he provides for their material comfort adequately.~~ But, ironically, the family is not comfortable as a result of fear of who becomes the next victim of his dictatorship at home. Thus ~~we~~ can be concluded that Eugene Achike is a benevolent dictator ~~as~~ since he abuses power and spices it with benevolence.

Adichie's ~~in~~ *Purple Hibiscus*; ~~it was observed, invents~~ illustrates resistance to benevolent dictatorship in the domestic sphere. Resistance is effected through silent and strategic operation as ~~the Achike's members of Pa Eugene's family~~ engage him in psychological battle of strategic silence as a sure way of resistance.

~~It was observed that~~ This silent disposition in the home culminates in the poisoning of Pa Eugene Achike as by his wife, Bridget, ~~pours killing substance in his tea.~~ We concluded that His death puts an end to benevolent dictatorship in the home of the Achikes. ~~Thus Kambili, Jaja, mother and the entire family members thence got relieved from their father's dictatorship.~~

— In the presentation of abuse of power in domestic space, we noted physical and sexual violence in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Jude Dibia's *Unbridled*. Darko's invention of physical violence in the marital relationship between Mara and Akobi in the novel, is one that attracted our attention. The novel ~~revealed~~ shows Mara as a victim of physical violence. Akobi; ~~we noted in our study,~~ always kicks, slaps, and dehumanises his wife, Mara. As a couple, they are expected to be in love and live in peace and harmony. However, this study ~~revealed~~ shows that Akobi treats his wife, Mara, as he would a slave. This he does as he physically brutalises her, causing her psychological and emotional trauma.

In addition, Jude Dibia's *Unbridled* also ~~gives us a slice of~~ shows physical violence in the relationship between Erika and James, ~~two unmarried, but dating couples, who later legalises their relationship as they go to the registry to register the relationship as married couples.~~ Having married, one feels that both would live in love and peace. But the study showed that ~~James is violent. He James~~ physically and violently kicks and knocks down Erika repeatedly. ~~James is violent and with a killing venom.~~ He appears friendly and lovely at the beginning of the relationship on-line (~~in~~ the internet), but shows his real self as soon as Erika joins him in London. Thus James is nothing but a bully, in his relationship with Erika as he physically brutalises the latter, his wife.

It is also noted that the novels studied in illustrate sexual violence as an abuse of power in domestic space in the relationship between the couples the novelists focus deploy in them. ~~their critical searchlight on.~~ In *Beyond the Horizon*, Darko presents Akobi as one who is sexually violent towards his wife, Mara. We noted this in the scenes where Akobi made love to his wife in a beastly manner. He does this, we observed, as he shouts at the woman to pull her wears undress. He also makes love to ~~heris wife~~ without emotional touch or feeling. In short, he wades into his wife rudely as if she were a prostitute, ~~to be paid her sexual services.~~ We also noted that Akobi heartlessly prepared and lured his wife into prostitution in Germany. He takes her to a club. ~~But Mara later finds that she was taken to a club to be re-characterised and put in line for where he has planned to initiate her into prostitution;~~ ~~asthere~~ she is drugged ~~and many into a state of unconsciousness during which many men had to have sex with her and got while someone~~ videod the event. This is sexually violent indeed as the action is not expected from a husband to a wife. Thus, Akobi is sexually violent in the power relations between him and his wife. Erika in Dibia's *Unbridled* is also noted as a victim of sexual violence. This form of abuse of power in domestic space is carried out by James who harshly and rudely makes love to his wife without emotion or passion. We noted that Erika does not derive pleasure from this as sometimes she feels pain after the act. James, we noted does not care how Erika feels.

However, these female victims of abuse of power in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Unbridled* courageously put up resistance to the ~~power~~ abuses in the respective novels. Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* resists the husband Akobi through strategic and secret service operations, as she bolts out of the house and goes into prostitution in full swing. We noted that she attempts to be independent of her husband as she tries to be on her own. Though engaging in prostitution, outside Akobi's control. ~~we noted that~~ she is

~~invented as one who does not seem to be~~ happy with the life she lives. She attempts at running back to Ghana as a way of resisting and running away from the husband's abuse of power. ~~We noted that she engaged a private detective to secretly investigate her husband. This eventually led to the deportation of the husband. It was observed that~~ Eventually, both Gitte (Akobi's German wife) and Comfort (~~his~~Akobi's Ghanaian mistress) lost out in the relationship with Akobi as the latter's marriage collapses — Gitte ~~is~~ divorced, ~~and~~ Comfort deported. All this as a result of Mara's ~~strategic secret service operations to resist investigation of~~ Akobi's ~~in her bid to checkmate him. She has the last laugh having turned the table on him, thus utterly ruining him. —abuse of power in domestic space.~~

Erika in *Unbridled* resorts to physical and violent confrontations as a way of resisting abuse of power in the relationship between her and the husband, James. Courageously, she withstands the man's physical brutality as she hits him back. By so doing, we concluded in our study that Erika uses it as a means to resist the husband's physical and sexual violence against her. Besides, Erika fearlessly and even without much means, decides to pack out of James' house, ~~and relocates. This action to relocate, we concluded, is an act of resistance to abuse of power in the novel. By relocating, she stays beyond his reach thus freeing herself from further abuse.~~

~~Conclusively, —In conclusion,~~ this study argues that the novels studied ~~depict various forms of fictionalise~~ abuse of power ~~and resistance in their various fictional societies, demonstrated in the public and domestic domains. —in both public and private spheres of life and at the same time they highlight the various ways in which the victims of abuse not only resist further brutalisation but also actually succeed in regaining their freedom and respectability.~~

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