BREAKING THE CHAINS OF COLONIAL CHRISTIANITY:

ORIGINS AND PURPOSES OF WEAPONIZED CHRISITIANITY IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

by

JAMAL LARUBA MCMILLION

July 2022

Director of Thesis: Seodial Frank H. Deena, Ph.D.

Major Department: English

In this thesis, I examine how weaponized colonial Christianity was the most effective means of Black subordination, and I assert that weaponized colonial Christianity gave license to Europeans to chronologically invade African geographies, commodify and objectify African bodies and negate African identity. Weaponized Christianity fostered anti-Blackness. Through textual analysis of selected colonial/postcolonial, I explored Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel*, Purple Hibiscus*; Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Olaudah Equiano's autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*; Richard Wright's novel, *Uncle Tom's Children*; and Alice Walker's novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* through a post-colonial lens of oppression and present European weaponization of Biblical ideologies as the underpinning of historical and contemporary Black oppression, as such ideologies were/are reinforced by majoritarian institutions and performative practices that created a global problematized social hierarchy that became more intractable as it persisted.

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF COLONIAL CHRISTIANITY:

ORIGINS AND PURPOSES OF WEAPONIZED CHRISITIANITY IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduated Faculty of the

Department of English

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

Concentration in Multicultural and Transnational Literatures

by

JAMAL LARUBA MCMILLION

July 2022

© Jamal Laruba McMillion, 2022

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF COLONIAL CHRISTIANITY:

ORIGINS AND PURPOSES OF WEAPONIZED CHRISITIANITY IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

by

JAMAL LARUBA MCMILLION

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS: ____________________
Seodial Frank H. Deena, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER: ____________________
William Banks, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER: ____________________
Marame Gueye, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER: ____________________
Reginald Watson, Ph.D.

CHAIR OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH: ____________________
Marianne Montgomery, Ph.D.

DEAN OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL: ____________________
Kathleen Cox, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I must thank Dr. Seodial Frank H. Deena for his assistance in the composition of my thesis. His patience, I am sure, was tested. Secondly, I would like to thank my thesis committee members: Dr. William Banks, Dr. Marame Gueye, and Dr. Reginald Watson. Each committee member forced me to reexamine the concept of race, sex, and gender and to explore how each concept was used as a means of colonial oppression.

Dr. Marame Gueye, the professor of my first graduate course, ENGL 7365 *Selected Topics Multicultural and Transnational Literature*, positioned me to analyze the power dynamic of imperialism between the subjugator and the subjected, as “Colonialism does not end with the end of colonial occupation. However, the psychological resistance to colonialism begins with the onset of colonialism” (Gandhi 17). Despite my having received a ‘C’ in my first graduate course, I learned the importance of coupling literary synopsis with postcolonial analysis. I will never forget Dr. Gueye’s emailed response to my submission: “The paper is really off. You summarized rather than analyze.” Her tutelage fostered a hunger in me to identify what license Europeans had to mercilessly oppress Black populations, as the detrimental effects of such oppression continue to resonate in the collective Black consciousness. She played a pivotal role in my evolution of consciousness.

Dr. William Banks, the professor of my English 6480 *LGBTQ+ Theories and Literatures: Queer-of-Color Literatures* course, assisted in my evolution of consciousness, as this course challenged me to deconstruct the concept of sex, gender, and masculinity through a lens of Western oppression. Two of the required readings Mia McKenzie’s (2012) *The Summer We Got Free*, a provocative narrative of a post-Civil Rights era binary African American family, that typified the dysfunction of heteronormativity; and Brandon Taylor’s (2020) *Real Life*, a

provocative narrative of an African American gay male that explored how forms of oppression such as race and sexuality intersect, fostered my interest in further examining of the role colonial Christianity played in heteronormative oppression. Additionally, this course was the first graduate course that exposed me to Critical Race Theory and which equipped me with necessary tools to examine the significance of race, not just as an individual experience but as part of a larger system of oppression, and to explore in what ways does race effected colonial/postcolonial African consciousness.

Dr. Reginald Watson, the professor of my English 6460 African American Studies in Literature, exposed me to the Black American Literature tradition and a variety of black-authored works that depicted the oppressive nature of hegemonic determination exampled by American slavery, arguably, one of the most egregious acts of identity erasure in recorded history and Jim Crow, the hegemonic response to the Emancipation Proclamation designed to exclude African American from white society. As conveyed by Henry Louis Gates, (2004),"The engendering impulse of African American literature is resistance to human tyranny. The sustaining spirit of African American literature is dedication to human dignity" (151). Authors such as Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano, Richard Wright, and Alice Walker, further substantiated the role colonial Christianity played in heteronormative oppression, give that Christianity was the underpinning of Western, societal racialization. As said by Douglas, “Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to the that enslavement, I should not regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity. For of all the slaveholders with who I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst” (Douglas et al. 430). It was in this course that I came to the realization that most of my life I had chased white acceptance. Not in the sense that I wanted to be white, but rather I wanted to represent the superlative African American in the racialized space that all African Americans inevitably must negotiate, hegemony.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1: Colonial Christianity and the emasculation of the Black Male................................7

CHAPTER 2: The Dehumanization and Objectification of the Black Female in Christian Hegemony...21

CHAPTER 3: Colonial Christianity, a Usurpation of Black Nativist Consciousness.................. 37

CONCLUSION...48

WORKS CITED 54

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial Theory analyzes the power dynamic of imperialism between the subjugator and the subjected, as "Colonialism does not end with the end of colonial occupation. However, the psychological resistance to colonialism begins with the onset of colonialism" (Gandhi 17). Columbus' supposed "discovery" of the West, replete with natural resources, set in motion a European invasion of the West that eventuated the Age of Imperialism/colonialism. As described by Suleiman, "In a nutshell, colonialism can be thought of as the practice of domination and imperialism as an idea behind the practice" (Suleiman 54). Imperial capitalistic greed was the impetus for Europeans to pillage entire geographies, kill entire populations, and replace them. The British Empire, specifically, with colonies in North America, Africa, and the Caribbean, permanently altered the social and psychological development of those spaces. The colonial encounter standardized "whiteness' as the measure of all things and inculcated indigenous geographies with Eurocentric ideologies purposed to ensure European dominance and indigenous subjugation. Eurocentric standards of normalcy positioned European hegemons as self-appointed masters. "Having overpowered African nations through their sophisticated weapons, the colonialists moved into the second stage of their ambition, namely: humiliation – to divide, rule and exploit the Africans to the maximum" (Suleiman 54). European might eventuated the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

"In reality, slavery in the Caribbean commenced from the time of Christopher Columbus' discovery of Hispaniola in 1492, and ceased in the 1960's, which means over 550 years of displacement and dislocation" (Deena 1). The institution of slavery was predicated by supposed Divine Right, which ensured a continuous sequence of white supremacy. The enslavement of black male warriors subjugated to labor on the estates of European oppressors was symbolic of

European, masculine triumphalism. The possession of power, glory, pleasure, and fame, attributes loosely espoused to masculinity, of which African males were familiar in their own cultural constructs, European hypermasculinity negated, reconstructed, and repressed Africanism as necessary in the perpetuation of White supremacy. “Under chattel slavery, the African imported to North America was divested as much as possible of his or her culture” (Gates et al.155). Alienated from their place of nativity, demeaned for their ignorance, dehumanized for their skin color, sexually objectified for their genetic makeup, Africans were posited at the bottom of an imperial hegemonic social strata, deprived of a voice.

The abjection of slavery was exponentially worse for the enslaved, African female, positioned at the lowest tier of patriarchal social stratification. Given her natural vulnerabilities, she often bore the brunt of hegemonic oppression to include the following: economic exploitation, sexual objectification, physical battery, verbal assaults, and forced motherhood. “Black women were both fetishized and regarded as impure, when seen in contrast to the modesty of white women; therefore, at the height of slavery, relationships with slave women were decidedly culturally unacceptable” (Cooper 32). However, the emergence of the mulatto evidenced the cultural hypocrisy of European hegemony. “The skin color of these children served as a visible reminder for the wives and the community of their husband’s infidelity” (Cooper 32). The oppressive nature of American slavery, divested the African female of feminine attributes and designated her and her offspring commodities. As Fredrick Douglas articulated, “‘Frequently, before the child has reached it twelfth month its mother us taken from it and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed in the care of an old woman, too old for field labor’” (qtd. in Gates et al. 369). The dehumanized and oppressed African American female existed in a frenzied state of fear given the intersectionality of racial

and gender oppression. The African American woman endured hundreds of years of "… an extreme physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual depravation, a kind of hell on earth" (Gates et al. 158).

Colonial majoritarian Christians weaponized the Bible to provide justification for the subjugation of supposed black heathens, which positioned Europeans for delusions of grandeur. The colonial depiction of God was a European man, as was every angel and every significant character. This deliberate and purposeful depiction and symbolism was to inculcate a Eurocentric system of social hierarchy, wherein divinity was found only in whiteness. Colonial interpretation of the curse of Ham in Gen 9:18–29 posited Black populations as the quintessential Ham and the Caucasian Christian as the quintessential Japhetite, a supposition that negated Black self-actualization. As conveyed by author Aime Cesaire (200), "…the chief culprit in this domain is Christian pedantry, which laid down the dishonest equations Christianity= civilization, paganism= savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the Yellow peoples, and the Negros" (33). Hegemonic weaponization of Biblical ideologies positioned Europeans as the apex of social stratification and positioned African and African American populations socially as suppliants. For example, the impressment of this bible verse could be argued to have stifled African American retributive justice: "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you" (KJV Luke 6:27).

Colonial Christians weaponized the Bible as a societal performative measure: "God announced his purpose of subordinating these nations one to another. This subordination was to harmonize with their leading traits of character, and its ultimate object was their general good"

(Park 8). Colonial purposed intention for allowing Blacks access to Christianity was to purport that "All earthly distinctions and blessings vanish into utter insignificance when compared with the eternal realities of the kingdom of heaven" (Park 13). "In the realm of the spirit, most whites were content with African Americans' claims to an equal right to God's grace as long as African Americans salvation did not entail a radical redemption of white dominated social order (Gates et al.15). Colonial Christianity assisted in cementing the fabricated construct of race, as "Race is a way of making up people" (Omi et al. 105). However, "Race is fate; there is no escape from the characteristics that are said to be carried by every single member of the group" (Weitz 21). As conveyed by Wongi Park, the interpretation of the curse of ham fostered "…a clear and sharp division of races as represented by the sons of Noah and their descendants" (Park 4). Agents of colonial Christianity such as Baptist pastor Thornton Stringfellow, (1788–1869) a fierce proslavery advocate, cited the curse of Ham as the primary evidence in the justification of chattel slavery by presenting Noah's three sons "…as representatives of superior, inferior, and medium nations" (Park 4). According to Stringfellow, each of Noah's sons functioned as an archetype of three distinct localities Europe, Asia, and Africa. "God decreed slavery—and shows in that decree, tokens of good-will to the master" (Park 13).

Colonial Christianity devolved into a racial project that positioned Europeans as God's chosen, foregrounding hegemony and white privilege. "…they [colonial Christians] defined "American' identity as white: as the negation of racialized 'otherness'…" (Omi et al. 131). Colonial Christian, Samuel Cartwright (1789–1864), a Mississippian physician, purported "Ham, the father of Canaan, when translated into plain English, reads that a black man was the father of the slave or knee-bending species of mankind" (qtd. in Park 8). Cartwright's contemporary, Dr. William Frederick Van Amringe (1791–1873), a Columbia University professor, who published

An Investigation of the Theories of the Natural History of Man and *The Nature and Origin of Heat and the Forces of the Universe* also, interpreted the Bible "…as the basis for dividing humanity into four disparate racial species—Shemitic, Japhetic, Ishmaelitic, and Canaanitic" (qtd. in Park 5). According to Amringe, each racial group was ranked by spiritual character. Amringe describes the Black populace as such: Attributes equally undeveloped. Inferiorly mental; not originative, inventive, or speculative; roving, revengeful, predatory, and highly sensual; warlike and destructive" (qtd. in Park 8). According to African American author and law professor Derrick Albert Bell Jr. (1930 –2011), Whites simply do not have to, consider equitable distribution of property and the privileges associated with that property" (qtd. in Annamma 297). While African Americans, as conveyed by African American author, James Baldwin (1924-1987) must contend with white racial apathy: "I knew that, according to many Christians, I was a descendant of Ham, who had been cursed, and that I was therefore predestined to be a slave. This had nothing to do with anything I was, or contained, or could become; my fate had been sealed forever" (qtd. in Park 18).

Through textual postcolonial analysis, I explored Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*; Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Olaudah Equiano's autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*; Richard Wright's novel, *Uncle Tom's Children*; and Alice Walker's novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* through a post-colonial lens of oppression and present European weaponization of Biblical ideologies as the underpinning of historical and contemporary Black oppression, as such ideologies were/are reinforced by majoritarian institutions and performative practices that created a global problematized social hierarchy that became more intractable as it persisted.

To achieve this assertion, I have formatted my argument into three chapters. In the first chapter, I explored the weaponization of colonial Christianity and its emasculating effects by centering the character, Uncle Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and Olaudah Equiano, author of *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* as exemplars of negated masculinity. In the second chapter, I centered, arguably, the most globally objectified, dehumanized, and marginalized human, the postcolonial Black woman negotiating a social dynamic that was underpinned by a weaponized version of Christianity, and I explored how it rendered her a theoretical "black bitch," while conveying the inevitable melancholia that ensued her one tier below that of 'nigger' by centering Richard Wright's novel *Uncle Tom's Children*, a variety of short stories that conveyed the oppressive nature of hegemonic determination; and Alice Walker's novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, where "...she explored the familial cruelty, especially as it is triggered by societal forces such as racism, unemployment, and sexism" (Gates et al. 2426). In the third chapter, I examined Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* and conveyed how colonial Christianity, weaponized, coopted the consciousness of the novel's patriarchal father, Eugene Achike, and presented how his negated Black consciousness was primed to internalize whiteness, and I explained how his negated Black consciousness affected his family dynamic. I concluded that European expansion permanently altered the world and transformed global geography into the Age of Imperialism/Colonialism. The aforenoted literary works are individually and collectively great didactic tools to present the causation of global Black exploitation and demoralization as colonial weaponization of Christianity.

CHAPTER 1: "Colonial Christianity as a Tool of Black Emasculation"

In this chapter, I will explore two novels that were impactful in deconstructing the Atlantic Slave Trade Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* and convey how the weaponization of Christianity emasculated the greatest threat to a colonial hegemonic social construct, the enslaved African male, by centering the character, Uncle Tom and abolitionist, author, Olaudah Equiano as exemplars of black emasculation. The religious indoctrination of colonial Christianity in the consciousness of the dispossessed, transplanted, African male was purposed, in part, to emasculate him, as such would preserve the integrity of majoritarian superiority. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ" (KJV Ephesians 6:5). Given the barbarous nature of colonial hegemons, historically evidenced, the enslaved African male came to identify with the suffering and prosecution associated with Christianity's central figure, Jesus Christ, which positioned him for a continuum of the same treatment. Purposefully passive, the enslaved African male was hegemonically reconstructed a 'boy.

The cover of *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* brandishes a picture of what looks to be George Washington holding a Bible superimposed with black skin. The picture, that of the author and abolitionist, Olaudah Equiano, made me read the title twice, 'the African'? The novel's cover instantaneously positioned me to question the cost and functionality of a white consciousness enveloped in black skin. Historically, the cost has been cultural suicide, and the functionally was provisional majoritarian acceptance. Such was the plight of Olaudah Equiano, who was arguably the first recorded formerly enslaved racial assimilationist. His autobiography, a spiritual and

Social odyssey, was published in 1789, during a period when Black populations were being introduced to hegemonic tyranny, provided a first-hand account of the abominable nature of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and was a global success. "He was the first to write the story of his life himself, without the aid or discernment of white ghost writers or editors, such as his predecessors in the slave narrative relied on… his story places more emphasis on the atrocities of slavery …" (Equiano et al 187), which he presented in complete supplication. "Permit me, with the greatest deference and respect, to lay at your feet the following genuine narrative" (Equiano and Gates 189). In the section I will examine four negatory moments of black emasculation that were predicated under the overarching influence of colonial Christianity.

Equiano's first negatory moment of masculinity when he was his abduction from the Ebo providence of Benin by African slavecatchers, who were complicit in Europe's commodification of the black body. It was hard for me with my twentieth century sensibilities to conceptualize the sheer horror and subsequent trauma that Equiano, eleven years old, had to contend on board an 18th century slave ship, a vessel the likes he had never seen, in the presence of people who looked, dressed or spoken like he did. Equiano described a scene of congested conditions, commodified black bodies, urine, feces, blood, and vomit. Equiano describe his descent as overwhelming. "The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable" (Equiano & Edwards 26). It is important to place emphasis on Equiano's initial barbaric depiction of the European as this depiction morphed with time. "…the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among my people such instances of brutal cruelty…" (Equiano & Edwards 26). Given the sadistic nature of European slave catchers, the abducted African male was situationally in a constant state of trepidation, which negated natural impulses of masculinity. "[Equiano] I now

wished for the last friend, death to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables, and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands and laid me across I think the windlass, and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely" (Equiano & Edwards 26). There were, however, according to Equiano, African enslaved males, who chose death over submission. Equiano described, "… two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery" (Equiano & Edwards 30). And although Equiano understood slavery be definition, as slavery existed in the Igbo locality of the country of Benin, he was not conversant with the European construct, the construct that positioned Europeans as gods and Africans as beasts in social perpetuity. "…but how different was their condition from that of the slaves in the West Indies! With us they do no more work than other members of the community, even their master; their food, clothing and lodging were nearly the same as theirs, (except that they were not permitted to eat with those who were free- born) …" (Equiano & Edwards 10). It was in Barbados that Equiano grasped the scope of devastation, exacted by the European scope of slavery. Equiano described how Africans of varied languages, sexes, and ages were all lumped together to be sold and scatter from one place to another, dispossessed of identity. The same fate awaited Equiano in the colony of Virginia, where he was sold to Royal Navy lieutenant, Michael Pascal, who arbitrarily renamed Gustavus Vassa.

The second negatory moment of black masculinity was experienced under subservience to Lieutenant Pascal: Majoritarian authority, predicated by colonial Christian dogma, created a relational dynamic that effectuated a humble enslaved African male. The renaming of the black body was an overt display of the god-like power colonial Europeans possessed. Native African names reflected connectivity to African identity. Equiano, the son of a prominent African elder,

was socially positioned to receive the mark of Embrenche, a mark of authority. He was predestined to follow the normative practices espoused to African masculinity. However, as the identity of the enslaved African male was a subsequence of the subjective relativism of his European oppressive master, Equiano "…lost his African name, being called first of all Michael, then Jacob, and finally, by his new master Lieutenant Pascal, Gustavus Vassa, the name he used for the rest of his life" (Equiano & Edwards *x*). Under his European moniker, Equiano was sailed to Falmouth a coastal town of southwest England, where he was exposed to the Christian church. Despite the language barrier, Equiano's introduction to Christianity fostered a childish sense of awe and wonder regarding Europeans, which manifested into a mimicry of that which was European. Equiano, however, realized his racialization, while left in the care of one of Pascal's mates and his family. The young daughter, who Equiano described as around six or seven years old, had a rosy, hued complexion that Equiano was fixated. When the child's mother washed the child's face, Equiano noticed that when the same action was applied to his own face, his complexion remained unchanged:

> I had often observed that when her mother washed her face it looked very rosy, but when she washed mine it did not look so: I therefore tried often times myself if I could not by washing make my face of the same colour as my little playmate (Mary), but it was all in vain, and I now began to be mortified at the difference in our complexions. (Equiano & Edwards 41)

Gustavus' developmental trajectory of anti-Black behavior patterns "… represents an early triggering not only of his sense of being socially disqualified by his own Blackness but also of his desire for rehabilitation - physically - as a White person" (Paul 854). Emphasis is placed on the fact that Gustavus spent most of servitude on at sea, where he was seldom in the company of

his likeness. His social positioning as slave of Pascal created the framework for episodic benevolent experiences with the English majoritarian, which fostered in him a sense of Europhilia. “I now not only felt myself quite easy with these new countrymen but relished their society and manners. I no longer looked upon them as spirits, but as men superior to us, and therefore I had the stronger desire to resemble them, to imbibe their spirit and imitate their manners…” (Equiano & Edwards 41). Subsequently, Gustavus, at every opportunity, ingratiated himself with the English majoritarian. Sailed to London and placed in the care of his master’s sisters, the Guerins, Gustavus was taught to read and write English and implore him to get baptized as Gustavus. It is important that I emphasis the symbolism of Gustavus’ baptismal. Acceptance, Gustavus’ baptismal was symbolic of transformation. Gustavus had publicly accepted that he was no longer the African, Equiano.

The third negatory moment of Equiano’s masculinity was when he did not seize the opportunity to escape under servitude of Robert King, the Quaker. Robert King, the Philadelphian, Quaker and powerful mercantilist of Montserrat, a British Territory in the Caribbean, benefited from all aspects of slavery, as he had slaves and he actively participated in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. However, Gustavus described King as an amenable ‘master.’ King communicated to Gustavus that “…the reason he had bought me was on account of my good character…” (Equiano & Edwards 63), and communicated that he would treat Equiano humanely. Gustavus having ingratiated himself with Captain Farmer, who commanded one of Robert King’s boats, positioned him to return to the sea. “[Equiano] “… the captain liked me also very much and I was entirely his right-hand man. I did all I could to deserve this favour and in return I received better treatment from him than any other I believe ever met with in the West Indies in my situation” (Equiano & Edwards 76). While accompanying Captain Farmer, in

service to King, Gustavus engaged mercantile pursuits to facilitate his freedom, as he described The West Indies as the most oppressive place for the African, free or enslaved. Gustavus watched as freed slaves with papers were abducted by hegemons without any regard. “they [Africans] are universally insulted and plundered without the possibility of redress; for such is the equity of the West Indian laws, that no free negro's evidence will be admitted in their courts of justice” (Equiano & Edwards 84). Gustavus understood the precariousness of his situational circumstances that he was environed by system of oppression that could easily envelop him if he remained in the West Indies. Gustavus, however, did not excogitate escape to Benin, his homeland. He had sat his eyes on England, as he was not the African, Equiano. Nevertheless, when given the opportunity to escape the horror of the West Indies, Gustavus did not seize the opportunity to liberate himself. “When we were at the island of Guadeloupe there was a large fleet of merchantmen bound for Old France, and seamen then being very scarce, they gave from fifteen to twenty pounds a man for the run. Our mate and all the white sailors left our vessel on this account, and went on board of the French ships” (Equiano & Edwards 85). Gustavus, having ingratiated the English ship’s crew, they implored Gustavus to join their abscondence. His not having taken his freedom, premised upon his master’s kindness. In that moment, Gustavus epitomized negated black masculinity in that he did not liberate himself, as he had been, deprived of strength and vigour; to weakened, made\ effeminate " (“Emasculate, n2”). It is important to emphasize that the Captain Farmers entire ‘white’ crew abandoned him. Gustavus’ having stayed behind in service to King, further ingratiated himself with Captain Farmer and his ‘master,’ King, who revealed that Gustavus could buy his freedom. After proving his loyalty, he was allowed to buy his freedom if he was enterprising enough on his own time to secure forty pounds, the amount King had paid for him, which Gustavus in time accomplished. However,

emasculated, still, as his heart and mind are sought on returning to England and seeing his former 'master' Pascal, who have given him the moniker of Gustavus and had sold him with any warning. "Capt. Pascal, who was hourly in my mind; for I still loved him, notwithstanding his usage of me, and I pleased myself with thinking of what he would say when he saw what the Lord had done for me in so short a time…" (Equiano & Edwards 98).

The fourth noteworthy negatory moment of Equiano's masculinity was under servitude of Dr. Irving, as a freeman, Gustavus owned slaves. Gustavus through trial and tribulation, returned to England and learned quickly that freedom required money. "In February 1768 I hired myself to Dr Charles Irving, in Pall-mall, so celebrated for his successful experiments in making sea-water fresh…" (Equiano & Edwards 123). It was in service to Dr. Irving that Gustavus was positioned as slave master, as Dr. Irving had plans to cultivate a plantation in Jamaica and to trust Gustavus as its overseer. "[Equiano] I accepted of the offer, knowing that the harvest was full ripe in those parts, and hoped to be the instrument, under God, of bringing some poor sinner to my well beloved master, Jesus Christ" (Equiano & Edwards 123). In this instance, once again, Gustavus negated his black masculinity in his complicity to the notion that Slaves by way of slavery could be granted salvation and such was God's will. In the provisional role as Englishman, Gustavus had become a propagator of colonial Christianity, an ideology of a racial oppression. "Our vessel being ready to sail for the Musquito shore, I went with the Doctor on board a Guinea-man, to purchase some slaves to carry with us and cultivate a plantation, and I chose them all from my own countrymen" (Equiano & Edwards 142). The indigenous people acquiesced land for the cultivation of Dr. Irving's plantation. Equiano described the indigenous as the most pious people that he had encountered in his travels. However, as with most if not all, colonial encounters, the indigenous were adversely affected. "They [the indigenous] are great

drinkers of strong liquors when they can get them. We used to distil rum from pineapples, which were very plentiful here, and then we could not get them away from our place" (Equiano & Edwards 144). Indigenous access to liquor provided the framework for indigenous confusion. Equiano described how the indigenous governor of the island, intoxicated by English liquor, engaged in a skirmish with one of the 'friendly,' indigenous chiefs. Dr. Irving, having abandoned Gustavus for the woods, positioned Gustavus as the sole agent of hegemony tasked to quell indigenous confusion. Gustavus utilized the most effective means of subordination, the Bible. "…I had read in the life of Columbus when he was amongst the Indians in Mexico or Peru, where on some occasion he frightened them by telling them of certain events in the heavens, I had recourse to the same expedient, and it succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations" (Equiano & Edwards 145). Colonial Christianity, a religion that had been weaponized by European, had so effectively inculcated Gustavus effectively a 'boy,' who wanted to be an Englishman with all rights afforded. Gustavus, could be viewed as the first archetypal, "Uncle Tom."

Prior to my exposure to various multicultural literary works that a master's program in English has afforded me, the moniker, Uncle Tom was cemented in my consciousness, as a pejorative term designated to the African American male who was committed to the destruction of his own race, a male, who saw the world through a Eurocentric lens as a boy, lacking the wherewithal to project masculinity in majoritarian spaces. It is important to note that my conceptual construct was not based on any expository research. Thus, when I approached *Harriet Beecher Stowe's, Uncle Tom's Cabin,* I did so with an understanding that the novel was written by a Caucasian woman through a lens of oppression nine years before the American Civil War, during the peak of Western slavery, with the intention reexamining my conceptual construct of

the term juxtaposed the fictional character. I did not understand that the novel was contended as the most culturally consequential novel of nineteenth century America. "…Stowe's novel became, as Langston Hughes put it, 'the most cussed and discussed book of its time'" (qtd. in Yarborough 57), as it pulled at the majoritarian, moral Christian consciousness by presenting the fictional character of Uncle Tom as "… an exemplary black slave who resists temptation for vengeance and disobedience and is ultimately murdered because of his faithfulness to his Master in heaven" (Evans 498). Stowe's depiction of Tom problematized the contemporary concept of the enslaved Black male because it revealed Tom's humanness. Stowe presented Tom as a 'true' Christian, which exposed majoritarian Christian racial hypocrisy. Bruce Levin, author of *Half Free and Half Slave: The Roots of the Civil War*, communicated that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was, "…surely the most effective piece of antislavery literature ever written'" (O'Loughlin 4). After having analyzed the novel through a postcolonial lens of oppression, I can see why Stowe's novel was impactful in exposing the barbarity and wickedness of Western slavery. Her depiction of the fictional character, Uncle Tom as Christ-like figure, tugged at the moral Western Christian consciousness; however, her depiction of an emasculated, forbearing, Christian, provided an illustrative typology that informed and codified the majoritarian construct of the American Black.

Religious inculcation reconstituted the character of Uncle Tom into a passive colonial Christian suppliant. His religious passivity typified Black emasculation, as he had accepted his oppression with hopes of pleasing God. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16 KJV). Self-determination, a concept loosely espoused to masculinity, was negated in the consciousness of Tom, first evidenced when Mr. Shelby, Tom's master, riddled in debt, opted to sell two commodities to

reconcile his indebtedness: his best hand, Tom and Harry, the prepubescent, mulatto son of enslaved, mulatta, Eliza. “[Mr. Shelby] Either they must go, or all must. Haley has come into possession of a mortgage, which, if I don't clear off with him directly, will take everything before it. I've raked, and scraped, and borrowed, and all but begged, and the price of these two was needed to make up the balance, and I had to give them up” (Stowe 33). One of the most brutal facets of living as a human commodity, was the impermanence of the Black family structure: “‘the slave can own nothing; he is not allowed to protect himself, his wife, his children…’” (Hoganson 580). Tom, apprised of this ill fate by Eliza, the mulatta, who had chosen to abscond as opposed to accepting her fate and relinquishing her maternal responsibilities into foreign hands “… collapsed, rather than seated himself, on his old chair, and sunk his head down upon his knees” (Stowe 36). The epitome of physical masculinity, could have chosen to flee as suggested by his wife, Chole. “‘Well, old man," said Aunt Chloe, " why don't you go too? Will you wait to be toted down river, where they kill niggers with hard work and starving? … There's time for ye; be off with Lizy—you 've got a pass to come and go any time. Come, bustle up, and I'll get your things together’" (Stowe 37). Regardless of Tom having a ‘pass’ to come and go as he pleased, a positioning that would have given both he and the mulatta, Eliza, an advantage, makes the following statement: “‘Mas'r always found me on the spot—he always will. I never have broke trust, nor used my pass no ways contrary to my word, and I never will. It's better for me alone to go than to break up the place and sell all. Mas'r an't to blame, Chloe; and he '11 take care of you and the poor’ " (Stowe 37). Tom was ‘sold down the river’, “The undiscovered country from whose bourne No traveler returns” (Stowe 76), as Eliza, the mulatta, was engaged in liberation. “‘I'm in the Lord's hands,” said Tom; “nothin' ean go no furder than he lets it… the Lord, he'll help me, — I know he will'” (Stowe 81). Tom's passivity towards the liberation

of he and his family when juxtaposed to that of Eliza, the mulatta, who was willing to risk both her and her son's life for the sake of liberation, evidenced Uncle Tom's colonial Christian acculturation, which negated Black masculinity.

Religious inculcation reduced Tom to a state of childlike docility. During Tom's painful travel 'down the river' on a vessel heading towards the unknown with his new 'master', Mr. Haley, a slave trader, Tom's feet were initially chained. "If freedom, as the Garrisonians argued, was the 'first essential condition of true manhood,' then restraints signified emasculation" (Hoganson 567). Tom, degendered, positions his eyes on Heaven, reading from his Bible, and did not deliberate on the possibility of escape. Submissively, Tom says "'Let—not—your—heart—be—troubled. In—my—Father's—house— are—many—mansions. I—go—to—prepare—a—place—for—you'" (Stowe 110). On the vessel with Tom, were a Louisianan gentleman, Augustine St. Clare, and his young prepubescent daughter, Eva, whom Tom exerted masculinity to save from drowning. "A broad-chested, strong-armed fellow, it was nothing for him to keep afloat in the water till, in a moment or two, the child rose to the surface, and he caught her in his arms, and, swimming with her to the boat-side, handed her up, all dripping, to the grasp of hundreds of hands…" (Stowe 112). Toms' act of self-sacrifice ingratiated him to both Eva and St. Clare, who purchased Tom at the behest of his daughter. St. Clare was conveyed as a 'good' master. As describe by his wife, "He really does act as if he set his servants before me, and before himself, too; for he lets them make him all sorts of trouble, and never lifts a finger" (Stowe 130). However, much to Tom's vexation, Mr. Shelby was not a Christian. "[Tom] 'Mas'r allays been good to me. I haven't nothing to complain of, on that head. But there is one that mas'r isn't good to" (Stowe 152). Tom, degendered, did not display the masculine attributes associated with nineteenth century standards of manliness. "'I's willin' to lay down my

life, this blessed day, to see mas'r a Christian'" (Stowe 220). Tom's willingness to lay down his life for his master typified the stereotypical docile 'Negro,' who when his master was sick, he was sick also. Tom's docility was further evidenced by his reverence for his young mistress, Eva. It was Tom who first acknowledged that Eva was not well, as it was later revealed that she suffered from an 'inexorable disease.' He gazed on her as the Italian sailor gazes on his image of the child Jesus — with a mixture of reverence and tenderness" (Stowe 190). Moved by his daughter's untimely death, Mr. Shelby attempted to honor Eva's dying wish by emancipating Tom. However, in a state of complete emasculation, Tom revealed that he could not be emancipated and allowed to return to his wife, Chloe, and his three children until Mr. Shelby's troubles were over. "'And when will my trouble be over?'" "'When Mas'r St. Clare 's a Christian,' said Tom" (Stowe 223).

Religious inculcation negated retributive justice. "We hear often of the distress of the negro-servants on the loss of a kind master, and with good reason; for no creature on God's earth is left more utterly unprotected and desolate than the slave in these circumstances" (Stowe 231). The consequential damage of Mr. Shelby's death, was Tom having been sold to Mr. Simon Legree, the epitome of depravity and debauchery, where Tom was physically brutalized without recompense. Cynthia Griffin's essay, 'Masculinity' in Uncle Tom's Cabin, explored the novel's depiction of the protagonist Uncle Tom, "… a thoroughly masculine protagonist who exhibits apparently feminine virtues" (brown 598) when juxtaposed to the contemporary social constructs of manliness. "'To be a real man, as every foreign observer remarked of Americans at this time, was to have strong opinions on a narrow range of subjects while bending one's life and liberty to the pursuit of money and property." Traits such as self-sacrifice and sensitivity to the needs of others were anathema to this crude masculine stereotype. Such "virtues" were deemed feminine--

ignominious and sissy!'" (Wolf 599). Wolf referenced several notable contemporary counter-narratives to that of degendered Uncle Tom. "As early as 1829, David Walker's Appeal called for militancy from black Americans, urging them "to prove their manhood, to rise up and take their freedom by force if necessary." Always, the relationship between militancy and "manhood" was deeply vexed for African Americans" (Wolf 603). Patrick Henry, an American 'founding father' and an American hegemon who coined the phrase, "Give me liberty or give me death," innately asserted masculinity without vexation. "Unlike white men, the black men of America had never been allowed the option of aggression, conquest, and domination as a mode of asserting or defining their masculinity--in public or in private" (Wolf 603). For example, Simon Legree was the embodiment of evil, the vilest character in the novel. Tom's piety was the bane of Legree's ungodly disposition. "Well, I'll soon have that out of you. I have none o' yer bawling, praying, singing niggers on my place; so remember. Now, mind yourself," he said, with a stamp and a fierce glance of his grey eye, directed at Tom, 'I'm your Church now! You understand—you 've got to be as /say'" (Stowe 170). Legree's determination to break of his piousness and Tom's determination to 'turn the other cheek eventuated his death. As Tom lay dying "… he opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. "Ye poor miserable critter!" … "I forgive you with all my soul! (Stowe 274).

Before exposure to colonial Christianity, the African did not belief Jesus was coming to save or protect him, nor was he familiar with the concept of race. To justify their economic reliance on the commodity of black bodies, white Christian oppressors opportunely misinterpreted the Bible to condemn an entire race of people by Divine right. One the most notable verses purported to be a facsimile of God's will, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto

Christ" (KJV, Ephesians 6;5), fostered an acceptance of racial oppression that was nearly irretractable. Two novels that were influential in the examination of slavery as a societal ill were *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* as both novels depicted colonial Christianity as the underpinning of Western, societal racialization and both protagonist, Uncle Tom and Equiano were both Christians, as a consequence of majoritarian oppression. It is important to emphasis that the fictional character of Uncle Tom, "A broad-chested, strong-armed fellow..." (Stowe 112), who attempted to love the lord obeyed his master, was of Western construction. "[Tom] 'I's willin' to lay down my life, this blessed day, to see mas'r a Christian'" (Stowe 220). However, Tom was never hurt a black person. For example, when his final oppressive master, Legree interrogates him as to the whereabouts of two of his favored oppressed black female slaves, Tom refused to reveal where they were hiding knowing that it would eventuate in his death. He still would not 'sellout.' Equiano, in contrast, penned his autobiography without European intervention although I would not have surmised as much on my own. Equiano, used much of his novel to deprecated his nativist African culture in favor of Eurocentrism and pleaded for white acceptance: "Are there not causes enough to which the apparent inferiority of an African may be ascribed, without limiting the goodness of God, and supposing he forbore a stamp of understanding on certainly his own image because "carved" in ebony" (Equiano and Gates 199). It is safe to conclude Equiano wanted to be white and to some degree achieved provisional Englishman stature, evidenced by Robert King, the man who had freed Gustavus. "…insisting, as I was much respected by all the gentlemen in the place, that I might do very well, and in a short time have land and slaves of my own" (Equiano & Edwards 120).

CHAPTER 2: “The Dehumanization and Objectification of the Black Female in Christian Hegemony”

In this chapter, I will explore the makings of the theoretic “black bitch” through a lens of Christian oppression via the selected African American female characters in Richard Wright’s *Uncle Tom’s Children* and Alice Walker’s *Third Life of Grange Copeland*, as both novels depicted the oppressive nature of hegemonic determination and conveyed that the oppressed black female identity was determinant of hegemonic designation.

In an American social construct that was foregrounded in colonial weaponized Christian ideologies, the Black female, historically, was sexually objectified, physically abused, mentally demeaned, deprived of a voice, and designated, ultimately, a ‘black bitch.’ Dwyer (2021) presented the dehumanization and objectification of the abducted Black female slave as a continuum of European patriarchy. “These ideas of objectification were strengthened through the gendered exploitation of enslaved women while travelling the Middle Passage” (9). Dwyer presented European ‘body snatchers’ as mentally deranged and hypersexualized although she did not write such in her article, she detailed, “Rape became commonplace onboard slave vessels travelling the Middle Passage because both slave traders and crew members commonly objectified black enslaved women” (Dwyer 10). When systems of oppression such as race and gender intersect, the point of intersection was at the base level of a patriarchal societal construct, a location that confines the Black woman. Few words of degradation have had the enduring effect as the word ‘Bitch’. www.merriam-webster.com defined bitch as “... a generalized term of abuse and disparagement for a woman... something that is extremely difficult, objectionable, or unpleasant”. Beverly Gross (1994) explored the epistemology of the word bitch. "A name of reproach for a woman" is how *Doctor Johnson's Dictionary* dealt with the word in the eighteenth

century…" (147). Gross depicted the word as ever changing, but the overarching commonality of the bevy of definitions was the idea that whatever the word bitch is, it connoted an assault on masculinity. In conjunction with *Doctor Johnson's Dictionary*, the Black female, given the intersectionality of her race and gender, existed in the most abject state of terror, as she was, initially, three fifths of a human being. Consequently, she was dispossessed of identity and inculcated to identify with the narrative that was created for her. Traumatized, she transitioned from the physical chains of slavery into the metaphorical chains of Jim Crow, as a 'bitch.' "Beverly Gross contends that "the bitch means to men whatever they find particularly threatening in a woman and it means to a woman whatever they particularly dislike about themselves. In either case the word functions as a misogynist club" (Gross 148).

Wright was born on a Mississippi Plantation, in 1908, less than fifty years after the Emancipation Proclamation. "'The state of Mississippi, Adams County, U.S.A, where Richard Wright was born... was a veritable hell'" (Wright and Yarborough x-xi). A product of the South, Wright's writing reflected the tyranny of majoritarian oppression, an oppression that was especially heinous for the pre-Civil Rights Movement oppressed Black female, as she did not have possession of her own body, as conveyed by Wright, who recalled a personal experience in his novel *Uncle Tom's Children* "As we passed the white night-watchman, he slapped the maid on her buttock" (Wright 23). Such incidences in the black experience, proved to be frustrating for the oppressed Black female, for she had no means of retributive justice, as the metaphorical deck was stacked against her on every front. Wright's novel was, in part, a protestation of the marginalization of the African American female identity that was manufactured by American hegemonic oppression into something other than woman, a bitch. Wright's commitment to literature as protest reflected in his novel *Uncle Tom's Children.* Set in the pre- Civil Rights,

American South, the novel explored the normalcy of contemporary hegemonic oppression in a country supposedly founded on Christian values. The fictional characters from the novel Lulu of 'Down by the River Side'; Sarah of 'Long Black Song' and Sue of 'Bright Morning Star' each represented the precarious nature black female existence negotiating racial and gender hegemony designated as a 'bitch.'

Wright's short-story, *Down by the River Side,* typified contemporary Black despondency, as the forces of racial oppression intersected with the adverse effects of mother-nature during the Jim Crow era of the American South, the Bible Belt**.** Hurricane Katrina in 2005, exampled, how American Black populations were most adversely affected during natural disasters. America watched as African American populations were marooned atop their homes, bridges, and buildings, begging for food, water, and a savior. Given that the world was watching, America was forced to provide relief although in many cases relief can too late. When natural disasters occurred during the Jim Crow era there was minimal to no relief for black populations, as evidenced by the fictional protagonist, Mann, who was forced to act as savior of the woman he loved, his wife, Lulu, who was "…sick with a child she could not deliver" (Wright 68), from the imminent danger of pervasive floodwaters. "But, Lawd, ef only tha old levee don break. Ef only tha ol levee don break…" (Wright 68). There was water everywhere and had been there for four days, so long that it seemed to have been there forever. Gun-shots rang from in town conveying the societal chaos the deluge had fostered. The gunshots portended of an ominous future of events. "Shucks, in times like these theyll shoota nigger down jus lika dog n think nothin of it. Tha shootin might mean anything. But likely as not its jus some po black man gone…" (Wright 69). This quote was poignant in that it was stated by Mann's brother Bob, whom, Mann had sent into to purchase a boat. As Mann waited on his brother, he also waited on God. "[Mann]'We jus

have t wait, thas all. Lawd, Ahm scared shell never have tha baby widout a doctah. Her hips is jus too little'" (Wright 70). A paradoxical development occurred when Bob returned with a stolen boat as a means of transporting Lulu to the hospital. "[Bob]'Ah stole tha boat from the Pos Office. Its old man Heart- fields, n yuh know how he hates niggers. Everybody knows his boat when they see it; its white n yuh couldnt git erway wid it" (Wright 73). Damned if he did; damned if he did not. Mann had to act purposefully and optimistically. "The white folks would take her in. They would have to take her in. They would not let a woman die just because she was black; they would not let a baby kill a woman" (Wright 70). Conversely, the stolen boat, directed by the floodwaters, drifted straight to the home of the Heartfiels. Oblivious, Mann yells, "Mah wifes sick! Shes in birth!" (Wright 82). And to his surprise, was met with a grave response. "'Where did you steal that boat, nigger! That's my boat!'... 'You sonofabitch! Bring my boat here'" (Wright 82). Both men were armed, both men were determined. Mann shot first and killed a 'white' man, a capital offense. Historically, Mann's fate was sealed, as he knew there would be a price to pay for his actions, yet he pressed on in the attempt to save his beloved wife, Lulu. However, Lulu's blackness marked her for marginalization, as evidenced by white national guards, whom later espy Tom navigating the deluge. "His bitch is sick having a picaninny. Shoot em over to the Red Cross Hospital" (Wright 88). The soldiers dialogue denoted the callousness of the white psyche as it pertained to the objectified black body of Lulu, as they spoke with fear of black masculine redress. Lulu arrived at the hospital, "Her face, her hair, and her clothes soaking wet" (Wright 90), dead. Having received neither sympathy or empathy with the exception of the words "Poor Nigger" (Wright 91) from one of the White nurses as the other white nurse giggled. The Black woman was not a woman in the eyes of the white hegemons. She was a bitch, a casualty of the flood, nothing more, as evidenced by the white observed his

circumstances further exampled by the white National Guard officer. “What’s the matter nigger?’... ‘What are you crying about?’” (Wright 98), as Lulu lay dead on the marble table. “‘Shucks, nigger! You ought to be glad you are not dead...’” (Wright 98).

Wright’s short-story, *Long Black Song* detailed another poor, African American family of man, woman, and child, negotiating hegemonic oppression during the Jim Crow era of the American South, the Bible Belt, where African Americans were dehumanized as objects made to serve the whim of hegemonic desires. “One way in which this can occur is through being transformed into a sexual object, whereby the individual is reduced from being a person to the status of a mere instrument, who can then be used and consumed for the pleasure of others” (Anderson et al. 462). Since her induction to the West and inculcation with its ideologies, the African American female has not had complete control of her body. During the era of the Jim Crow South, an unprotected African American woman could be abuse by any man in almost any fashion he desired. However, the white male was protected by the Western penal system as it was composed of hegemons, who negated the femininity and humanity of the African American female. This protection positioned white male to move with authority in all spaces, even in black spaces which were few. *Long Black Song* spoke to the physical and emotional vulnerability of the African American female.

Sarah, wife of hard-working Silas, was protected from the drudgery of hard labor, but not the lascivious nature of hegemonic dominance, as she was raped by a young white salesman, who had asserted “I won’t hurt you! I won’t hurt you...” (Wright 134), as he, the rapist, did not see his actions as harmful, evidenced by his action during and after Sarah’s assault. After having raped Silas’s wife, Sara, the white salesman informed Sarah that he was leaving the clock for a reduced price, as if he was doing her a favor. “‘I’ll be by early in the morning to see if your

husbands in'" (Wright 36). The white salesman, whom Sarah described as just a boy, felt no trepidation in returning the next day to face Silas because, given the space and time, he was protected by his 'whiteness.' The sanctity of Sarah's body was nonfactor to the young white salesman, as such was the hegemonic nature males cloaked in 'whiteness' in the Jim Crow Era South.

Black women, who were victimized, often were often held responsible for their victimization as exampled by Sarah's reluctance to tell her husband, Silas. Additionally, Sarah knew that her African American husband was powerless to avenge her. Yet, conditions in the family home evidenced that its integrity had been breached. Sarah's attempt to explain to her husband that her rape had meant nothing, triggered a disdain in Silas that was common of the African American male who could have nothing that was his own. Unmoved by the circumstances of Sarah's rape, Silas took out his anger and vengeance on his helpless African American wife. "'Ef yuh start layin wid white men AHll hoss-whip yuh t a incha yo life. Shos theres a Gawd in Heaven I will!'" (Wright 140). Silas' reaction to his wife's rape exampled her precarious existence, as the blame was placed on Sarah. Sarah was damned if she did and damned if she didn't, a common space of the oppressed African American female. Silas internalized his own oppression and exacted that oppression to Sarah, calling his wife what the young white salesman saw her as. "Comere, yu bitch! Comere, Ah say!'" (Wright 142) "... she [Sarah] wanted to tell him that it was nothing to be angry about; that what she had done did not matter: that she was sorry; that after all she was his wife and still loved him" (Wright 142) Silas's Sarah's victimization exemplified the historical oppression of the African American female, who fund no refuge from the lascivious nature of racial and gender hegemony in her own home. Despite Sarah's blamelessness, she was contextualized as 'Bitch', a position that in most cases

she was powerless to control. “And Silas would never forgive her fo something like that. If it were anybody but a white man I would be different” (Wright 145).

Wright’s short-story *Bright Morning Star,* detailed yet another southern Jim Crow era African American family negotiating hegemonic determination in the patriarchal American South, the Bible Belt, where hegemonic weaponization of Christianity positioned the African American female, regardless of age, in a constant state of fear and disillusion. Sue, the elderly, African American female, protagonist of the short-story, was no different. “Long hours of scrubbing floors for a few cents a day had taught her who Jesus was, what a great boon it was to sling to Him, to be like Him and suffer without mumbling a word” (Wright 224). Sue’s supplication was predicated upon Eurocentric ideology that taught her how to suffer without bemoaning her circumstances, which facilitated European dominance. Sue exemplified the protective, widowed, African American protective mother of an African American male, who she attempted to protect and to prepare for the barbarity of the Jim Crow South, while she, herself was unprotected. Her commitment to her African American son, positioned her as a threat to the integrity of hegemony, thus making her a ‘bitch’ in the eyes of majoritarian authority.

Sue’s opposition to majoritarian authority was spawned by the murder of her first son, Shug, murdered by southern hegemons for his affiliation with the anti-American ideology of Communism. Sue’s remaining son, Johnny-boy, was being hounded by the same southern hegemons for the very same reason. Just as the young white sales man in Wright’s short-story *Long Black Song*, had invaded the home of Silas and sexually assaulted his wife, Sarah, local hegemons invaded the privacy of Sue’s home in search of Johnny-boy. And just as Sarah was left unprotected as was Sue, which positioned her for a variety of hegemonic assaults. “‘Yuh white folks git ou. tta mah house!’” (Wright 237). Sue's intrepidness in the face of hegemonic

authority was met with swift action from one of the participating hegemons, who threw a handful of the collards that Sue was cooking onto her face. "'How they taste old, bitch?'… (Wright 237). The use of the term 'bitch' to describe, Sue, aligned with the definition describe by Gross (1994). "A bitch is a woman who makes the name caller feel uncomfortable" (150), evidenced by the response of one of the hegemons, who had burgled Sue's home. "'Lissen, Nigger woman, you talkin t white men!'" (Wright 238). When pressed by hegemonic authority on the whereabouts of her son, Sue remained defiant despite her vulnerability and was slapped by the sheriff twice. "She stood before him again, dry-eyed as though she had never been struck" (Wright 239). As the sheriff left her home, he implored Sue that if he finds her son, she will later have to cover his dead body with a sheet. Verily, his words were not without merit as Sue knew. Nonetheless, she mocked the sheriff. "You didn't get what you wanted! N yuh ain gonna nevah git it'" (Wright 239). The sheriff consequently struck Sue, and elderly woman again, whom the sheriff had known since he was a child, knocking her unconscious, evidencing the barbarity that the intersectionality of race and gender. The Sheriff's familiarity was negated as she was a 'Nigger-bitch' in his eyes.

Sue was awakened from the Sheriff's verbal and physical assault by another violation of her home. Booker, a recent convert to the Communist Party, who informed Sue that the sheriff's accomplices had her son, Johnny-boy. Sue was conflicted mentally, when Booker asked her the e names of the other Communist party members so that he could warn them of the sheriff's surveillance, as Booker was still a white man, an identity that historically positioned him in opposition to any oppressed African American female. "'Is yu scareda cause Ah white?'" (Wright 246). Despite her premonitions regarding placing trust in a white face, Sue revealed the names of the Community party members to Booker, who was later revealed to be one of the

sheriff's hegemons, which awakened, as conveyed by Gross (1994), the 'bitch,' "A spiteful, ill-tempered woman [World Book Dictionary] A malicious, unpleasant, selfish woman, esp. one who stops at nothing to reach her goal" (Gross 147). Sue's resolve to kill Booker for having betrayed her misplaced trust was clearly not what Jesus would have done, for it was at this point Christianity was negated by years of hegemonic tyranny. Sue ventured to the location where her son was being tortured and was allowed to watch, as she seemingly posed no threat. However, "She had already accepted all that they could do to her" (Wright 237). When Booker arrived, Sue, completely resolved, shot and killed Booker. "Yuh black bitch!" (Wright 262), the sheriff shouted, as "She gave up as much of her life as she could before they took if from her" (Wright 262). Sue paid the ultimate price of hegemonic tyranny, as did the characters of Men and Margret in Alice Walker's *Third Life of Grange Copeland.*

Born to sharecroppers on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, "... Walker described herself as an African American woman writer omitted to exploring the lives of black women" (Gates et al. 2425). Walker's having been reared under the tyranny of Jim Crow and educated during the socially conscious sixties was reflected in her writing. An exemplar of Walker's artistry, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, "...explored the familial cruelty, especially as it is triggered by societal forces such as racism, unemployment, and sexism" (Gates et al. 2426). Although the novel's central African American characters, father and son Grange and Brownfield Copeland were not slaves, the Western system of oppression known as Jim Crow, a system loosely based on weaponized Christianity ideologies purposed for racial oppression, that followed African American emancipation disenfranchised the African American male in such a manner that he was unable to fulfill the obligations of husband and father to his wife and children. Walker conveyed how majoritarian oppression created the framework for the African

American male to internalize h According to Harris (2022), “Unlike black writers in whose works the object of violence on the part of blacks is usually the white oppressor, Alice Walker, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, turns for a look at violent acts blacks commit against each other and themselves” (238). is oppression and violently project that oppression onto his African American wife. Grange’s reality was controlled by Mr. Shipley, the white landowner “…who literally owns him in the new system of slavery euphemistically called " sharecropping." He has no choices in determining his family's future. Each year, at the end of harvest, he will find that his bill adds up to more than the price of his bales of cotton” (Harris 239). It is important to note Brownfield’s violence was always verbal, as he often threatened his wife and son, but never made good on such threats. His having abandoned his family in an act of desperation led to his wife’s suicide and his Brownfield’s devolution into an instrument of patriarchal brutality. The female characters of Margaret, Grange’s wife; and Mem, the wife of Grange’s son, Brownfield, epitomized the vulnerability of the African American female identity, as both were socially constructed as ‘bitches’ as a result of the hegemonic oppression their husbands had internalized and exacted to them.

Richard Wright and Alice Walker via their perspective novels, *Uncle Tom’s Children* and the *Third Life of Grange Copeland* provided the framework to analyze the tyranny of majoritarian oppression perpetuated on the African American female. The abjection of oppression was multilayered for the African American female, as her conditions did not change drastically after her emancipation. Although freed from the physical bonds of oppression, she was designated a ‘bitch’ under a continuum of majoritarian oppression, which, in some cases, was exacted by Black husband.

Margaret Copeland, the matriarch of the Copeland family, described by her son, Brownfield, "…was like their dog in some ways. She didn't have a thing to say that did not in some way show her submission to his father" (Walker 5). Margaret's life typified the collective experiences of an oppressed African American wife/mother negotiating the hegemonic Jim Crow South as sharecropper. Margret's docile disposition was a consequence of her husband Grange, who was described as having worked for a "cracker" who owned him. Grange's spiral of indebtedness had stolen all of his hope, as he was in debt twelve hundred dollars to "the man who drove the truck and who owned the shack they occupied" (Walker 12). Situationally, the plight of the Copelands was so opaque that Grange turned to womanizing and alcoholism, which had a profound effect on Margret, whom Grange had described as "seductive and gay..." (Walker 175) when they had first gotten married. The Copeland family experience was reflective of how Grange felt on any given day of the week similar to the slave/slave master of American slavery. His weekends were spent in a drunken stupor or out on the town womanizing, as such made him feel like a man. As the cycle of Grange's irresponsibility continued, Margaret transformed. "Misery had awakened her, and he had not needed to tell her she had married not into ecstasy, but into dread. Not into freedom but into deeper despair" (Wright 176). Margret transformed from the "seductive and gay..." into the embodiment of lasciviousness. "Gone were the times she waited alone on Saturday afternoons for people who never came. Now when her husband left her at home and went into town she followed" (Wright 16). The climatic point of her waywardness was when she committed what was once a cardinal sin in African American culture. "…she had finally bedded down with Shipley, the man who had caused everything" (Walker 11).

Margaret's betrayal of Grange, having slept with Grange's white boss and consequently having his baby portended of a calamitous marital dynamic. Brownfield, blamed his father for

his mother's devolution. "For it was Grange she followed at first. It was Grange who led her to the rituals of song and dance and drink, which he had always rushed to at the end of the week, every Saturday night. It was Grange who had first turned to someone else" (Walker 19). Although Margret's dalliances were many "… there was a deference in her eyes that spoke of her love for Grange" (Walker 20). "Your mammy [Margret] was a fool, boy. Thinking she could keep Grange by making him jealous of other mens" (Walker 116). It was not, however, the number of lovers that Margret engaged sexually that bothered Grange, it was the fact that Margaret had given her body, to a White man. A crime that Grange could not forgive; acceptance of such was too much for him to bear. Grange "…blamed Margaret and he had blamed Shipley, all the Shipleys in the world" (Walker 178) when he, had transformed Margret into something that even Margret did not like. As conveyed by Gross "the bitch means…to a woman whatever they particularly dislike about themselves. (Gross 148). Having realized that Grange was factually gone, Mem poisons the love child and killed herself. The trauma of Grange's abandonment and Margaret's subsequent suicide positioned Brownfield's ability to transcend the patriarchal degeneracy of his father, as conveyed in his marriage to Mem.

Mem, the matriarch of the second generation of Copelands, was much like the character of her mother-in-law, Margaret. Shen was a 'good girl gone bad'. "For Mem was the kind of woman who sang while she cooked breakfast in the morning and sang when getting ready for bed at night" (Walker 99). However, her pleasant disposition was transformed into that of 'bitch', "…the perversion of womanly sweetness, compliance, pleasantness…" (Gross 150) by her husband Grange, who had internalized majoritarian gender stereotypes associated with his Western inculcation. The daughter of an adulterous African American pastor, lost her mother shortly after, positioning her to be reared in by her prostitute Aunt, Josie, in a whorehouse. Mem,

despite the from which she was in environed, she was educated and did not closely associate with her surroundings. “When she came home from school she was barely noticed. She stayed upstairs when the lounge was rocking, and when she did come down she kept right on out of the house and out walking, just walking, in the woods” (Walker 44). Although Mem was a teacher by trade, her education, however, still positioned her as an educated African American woman in a sharecropping social dynamic, where she had to contend with other African Americans whom had not evolved from the African American sharecropping mindset, which proved problematic. Mem’s having not married her equal, Brownfield Copland, a sharecropper, socially and psychologically positioned at the foot of majoritarian oppression, eventuated her devolution. According to Hogue (1985), “…T*he Third Life* is able to reinforce or motivate its ideologeme that when the Black man is bruised and dehumanized by the dominant social structure, he, in turn, maims and beats his wife, who is loyal and submissive, and mistreats his children” (Hogue 56). Brownfield was an exemplar of patriarchal hegemonic oppression. “He, jumped when the crackers called, and left his welfare up to them. He no longer had, as his father had maintained, even the desire to run away from them” (Walker 114). Brownfield internalized his oppression and projected it to Mem, negating her role as woman, wife and mother to that of ‘bitch’.

Conjugal felicity in the Jim Crow South was uncommon for African Americans given the patriarchal and hegemonic nature they had to negotiate. When Mem and Brownfield married, Brownfield had high hopes and seemed to have loved his wife. He promised Mem that they would not be stuck on the plantation that he worked for long. “Three years later when he was working the same farm and in debt up to his hatbrim and Mem was big with their second child, he could still look back on their wedding day as the pinnacle of his achievement…” (Walker 43). It was not until an epiphanic moment of watching his five-year-old daughter, Daphne, whom he

had taught the "… dangerous and disgusting business of hand mopping the cotton bushes with arsenic to keep off boll weevils" (Walker 53) made spectacle of by the landowner of the field and local hegemons, who came "…to watch the lone little pickaninny so tired she barely saw them, poisoning his cotton" (Walker 53). It was at that moment Brownfield was awakened to what he had not seen before. He had become his father unable to provide a life for his family, a failure. "He could not save his children from slavery; they did not even belong to him" (Walker 54). Brownfield's devolved state became his permanent consciousness, a consciousness bereft of hope. "He adopts a false sense of pride where controlling his family becomes his only source of power - even if it means resorting to violence" (Hogue 52). All the frustration that Brownfield experienced he projected on to Mem. Mem had no reprieved from the misogynistic majoritarian ideologies, as Brownfield was its conduit, seizing every moment to reinforce Mem's subservience, even in public. ""Hark, mah lady speaks, lets us dumb niggers listen!" Mem would turn ashen with shame, and tried to keep her mouth closed thereafter… He wanted her to talk, but to talk like what she was, a hopeless nigger woman who got her ass beat every Saturday night" (Walker 55). Mem down played her articulacy and burned all her books, and remained a faithful and dedicated wife, who tried in vain to contribute to the family upheaval by working, as Brownfield was determined to undermine all that she attempted, as her saw Mem as a 'bitch,' which according to Gross (1985), "…bitch means to men whatever they find particularly threatening…" (148).

African American female vulnerability was predicated by a system that was enforced by patriarchal hegemony, which often positioned the African American male as master of his wife, a marital dynamic that was not designed for love, but rather dominance. And in many cases, as was the case for Mem, the African American female was often espoused to African American

husbands who were unable to reciprocate love, as many did not know what the concept meant, given their social positioning as ‘nigger’ in the Jim Crow South. Mem’s attempt to love Brownfield, a man who described his mother as a female dog proved impossible, as she could not get from him that which he did not have to give. Years of ill treatment, however, emboldened Mem to take a stand, who having pulled a shotgun and having struck Brownfield conveyed the detriment of being treated as a ‘bitch.’ Her recitation of Brownfield’s vituperation, provided emphasis of its impact on her consciousness. "Woman ugly as you ought to call a man Mister, you been telling me since you beat the ugly into me!’" (Walker 95). Mem’s words connoted her having accepted that she had changed. “For Mem was the kind of woman who sang while she cooked breakfast in the morning and sang when getting ready for bed at night” (Walker 99). Mem was no longer that person. Brownfield’s subsequent confession that his acts of physical and verbal violence were the result of his inadequacy spoke to the fact he could change but he could visualize a path for change. “[Brownfield] ‘You knows I never wanted to be nothing but a man! Mem, baby, the white folks just don't let nobody feel like doing right’” (Walker 95). Mem, with gun in hand, was unmoved by Brownfield’s whining about how the ‘man’ had negated his masculinity, listed a ten-point plan: “And tenth, you ain't never going to call me ugly or black or nigger or bitch again, 'cause you done seen just what this black ugly nigger bitch can do when she gits mad!’” (Walker 95). However, Mem could not hold the gun over Brownfield forever as he knew. As her husband, Brownfield still had control over Mem’s body, as such was the nature of any patriarchal system. He had an agenda to keep his wife in a psychological prone position, which was to once again impregnate her, as he knew that such would affect her ability to work consistently. He plotted to get her pregnant to debilitate her and positioned Mem back to a place that he was familiar, the bottom. Paradoxically, when the child was born it did not look Black,

which alluded to his Mother, Margret, whom had a child with Mr. Shipley, a White man. "I beat the hell out of her a minute after I seen that baby's peculiar-looking eyes. She was just a-laying up there moaning, she were too weak to holler, and I beat her so she fell right out the bed" (Walker 223). Brownfield's self-hate killed Mem, long before he pulled the trigger that ended her physical life. Brownfield "...proved to be more cruel to her [Mem] than any white man or twenty" (Walker 226). In the end, Brownfield had kept his word: "I can stop everything for you, Bitch. I can stop you!'" (Walker 120).

CHAPTER 3: "Colonial Christianity, a Usurpation of African Nativist Consciousness"

In this chapter, I will examine, through a lens of postcolonial oppression, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel Purple Hibiscus and convey how weaponized colonial Christianity was a usurpation of African consciousness by centering the fictional character Eugene Achike, an African religious fanatic who wanted to be European, and exposing the patriarchal and hegemonic tyranny Eugene exacted upon his family dynamic that resulted.

"Through colonization, the African mind was groomed to embrace Christianity, together with education, as the most valuable components of social acceptance" (Ndabayakhe et al. 50). Ngozi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* explored the intersectionality of patriarchy, gender, class and religion by centering a wealthy, Christian Nigerian family negotiating a postcolonial Nigeria, a country in its nascent stages of independence from the British Empire and towards self-actualization, as victims of acculturation, a process that historically impacted the oppressed African consciousness with generational consequences. "In the Nigeria of the text the head of state has seized power after a coup, opponents of the regime are killed, newspapers are shut down, the police are corrupt and essential services—running water, electricity and petrol—are in short supply." (Stobie 428). Every geography that the European invaded, he impressed weaponized Christian ideologies upon the colonized, which disrupted the reality of the indigenous and created a whirlwind of chaos and confusion. "'The white missionaries brought us their god" Amaka was saying. "Which was the same color as them, worshiped in their language and packaged in the boxes they made" (Adichie 267), an event that fostered anti-Blackness, evidenced in the character of Eugene Achike.

Eugene character was synonymous to that of Olaudah Equiano both wanted to be Englishmen. Both subscribed to colonial Christianity, a religion that was weaponized to

positioned the progeny of Africa on the lowest tier of a Eurocentric social strata, internalized whiteness. “Race is the hardest and most exclusive form of identity. Race is present when a defined population group is seen to have particular characteristics that are indelible, immutable, and transgenerational” (Weitz 121). Father Benedict, the powerful European priest, the incarnate of European dominance, “…had changed things in the parish, such as insisting that the Credo and kyrie be recited only in Latin; Igbo was not acceptable. Also, hand clapping was to be kept at a minimum, lest the solemnity of Mass be compromised. But he allowed offertory songs in Igbo; he called them native songs. Eugene detested his Blackness and attempted to negate its innateness. “Through colonization, the African mind has been groomed to embrace Christianity, together with education, as the most valuable components of social acceptance” (Ndabayakhe and Mukhuba 50). “Papa [Eugen] changed his accent when he spoke, sounding British, just as he did when he spoke to Father Benedict. He was gracious, in the eager-to-please way that he always assumed with the religious, especially with the white religious” (Adichie 46). He lauded his father-in-law. “[Eugene] He did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now! Papa had a photo of Grandfather, in the full regalia of the Knights of St. John, framed in deep mahogany and hung on our wall back in Enugu” (Adichie 68). Eugene was rewarded for his agency, in White spaces. “On some Sundays, the congregation listened closely even when Father Benedict talked about things everybody already knew, about Papa making the biggest donations to Peter’s pence and St. Vincent de Paul” (Adichie 5). Eugene’s proximity to and recognition by colonial power structures cemented his Eurocentric consciousness.

At home with his family, Eugene personified colonial Christian dominance, wherein he exacted standards for his family that were nearly impossible to meet. The Achike family dynamic was composed of Eugene, the patriarchal father, a supplicant wife, Beatrice; a

pubescent daughter, Kambili; rebellious son, Jaja, Eugene's liberal Aunty Ifeoma and Eugene's nativist father, Papa-Nnukwu. Much like his colonial oppressors, Eugene became violent towards his family and hurt them as a 'necessary evil' to ensure compliance. "Eugene's failure — and his is a vicious failure — is not only his intolerance of his father's traditionalism, but also his failure to enact in his own family the liberalism which he demands that the state should observe" (Chennells 24). Eugene was a metaphor of colonial imperialism, the embodiment of anti-blackness, "'an embodied lived experience of social suffering and resistance... in which the Black is a despised thing-in-itself (but not person for herself or himself) in opposition to all that is pure, human(e), and White'" (qtd. in Blaisdell 70). "A visiting priest who we later learn is Father Amadi, the exemplary priest in the novel, breaks into an Igbo hymn during mass — worship in vernaculars was one of the earliest signs in Catholicism of inculturation — but Eugene has taught his family that only Latin or English are appropriate languages to communicate with God, and as the congregation takes up the hymn, the Achikes sit silently, intentionally set apart from their fellow worshippers (p. 28)" (qtd. in Chennells 19). Igbo was a reminder that Eugene was Black, which he could not associate Divinity. He could only see God in 'Whiteness', as colonial Christianity purports God to be a white male; thus, God did not hear prayers or confession articulated in Igbo, for God is not Igbo. Eugene, however, was Igbo equated Blackness to barbarity. However, "The idea of the barbaric Negro is a European invention" (Cesaire & Robin 53). "- their false objectivity, their chauvinism, their sly racism, their depraved passion for refusing to acknowledge any merit in the non-white races, especially the black-skinned races, their obsession with monopolizing all glory for their own race" (Cesaire & Robin 56).   Eugene's usurped consciousness provided the framework that positions him as an

agent of Eurocentric standards, which had deleterious effects on the collective consciousness of family dynamic, as evidenced in his daughter, Kambili.

Eugene's daughter and narrator of *Purple Hibiscus*, typified the problematized nature of Eurocentric religious impressment, as she was a spiritual and social hostage of Eugene, insulated from the 'ways of man', where she was programed to excel academically and spurn sin. To abet Kambili's intended focus, Eugene structured her daily routine to the hour. "…my daily schedule, pasted on the wall above me. Kambili was written in bold letters on top of the white sheet of paper" (Adichie 23). Kambili loved and idolized her father, Eugene, and strove to meet his impractical expectations. Under Eugene's tutelage, Kambili, initially, typified a negated nativist, Black consciousness. "I let my mind drift, imagining God laying out the hills of Nsukka with his wide white hands, crescent-moon shadows underneath his nails just like Father Benedict's. She, too, associated Divinity with whiteness. "In her world, her father had replaced the voices and opinions of all, even her own opinion did not matter. Second position might have been good enough to the principal, the teacher and even herself, but her father's opinion nullifies them all" (Ndabayakhe and Mukhuba 51). Eugene was slow to give praise and quick to dispense ire. When Kambili manages to perform superlatively academically, only then did Eugene communicate "'how proud he was and how she had fulfilled God's purpose'" (Adichie 39). However, when Kambili failed to meet the mark, Eugene's religious fanaticism manifested in the most abject form. "[Kambili] Cramps racked my belly. I imagined someone with buckteeth rhythmically biting deep into my stomach walls and letting go" (Adichie 100). Suffering from the pains associated with her menstrual cycle, Kambili's stomach was also empty, a condition that was problematized given "The Eucharist fast mandated that the faithful not eat solid food an hour before Mass. We never broke the Eucharistic fast" (Adichie 101). Kambili's decision to

‘quickly’ eat cornflakes and take a sedative was, surprisingly, espied by Eugene, whom Kambili thought was not in view. Unbuckling his belt, “Why do you walk into sin?” he asked. “Why do you like sin?” (Adichie 102), Eugene pelted his daughter. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (KJV Ephesians 6:1-3).

Eugene, to his detriment, allowed Kambili to visit Nsukka, which created the framework for Kambili, to see her father, Eugene, as fallible as any other mortal man. Outside the confines of Eugene’s domain, Kambili was exposed to a world of spiritual liberty, a space of comfort. “I laughed. It sounded strange, as if I were listening to the recorded laughter of a stranger being played back. I was not sure I had ever heard myself laugh” (Adichie 179). Nsukka, as revealed fostered a transformation in Kambili that was irreversible much like that of Eve, having eaten from the tree of knowledge. “Per- haps we all changed after Nsukka—even Papa—and things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order” (Adichie 209).

Influenced by weaponized Christianity, Eugene attempted to utilize the same tactics of religious oppression to control the ethical and spiritual behavior of his son, Jaja. His failed attempt to repress Africanism from Jaja’s consciousness was metaphorical of the great lengths European hegemons endeavored to usurp the African consciousness. Jaja’s defiance of Eugene’s dominance was possibly the most poignant event in the novel, as it was the climax of decolonial thought in the Achike home. Jaja Achike, nicknamed Jaja of Opobo, ‘The Stubborn King’, was much like his sister, Kambili, who strove for perfection in the attempt to appease their tyrannical father. “He [Jaja] was voted neatest junior boy last year, and Papa had hugged him so tight that Jaja thought his back had snapped” (Adichie 22). Failure by Eugene’s standards was anything

short of superlative. “When [Jaja] he was ten, he had missed two questions on his catechism test and was not named the best in his First Holy Communion class…” (Adichie 145). “The Catechism summarizes the Catholic view of the moral life in number 1700: ‘The dignity of the human person is rooted in the image or likeness of God ... this dignity is fulfilled in the vocation to divine beatitude’ (Bouchard 156). Jaja’s failure to be superlative in testifying his faith, in Eugene’s eyes, reflected Jaja’s inadequacy. To discipline his son, Eugene broke Jaja’s left hand, which left his finger maimed. “Later, Jaja told me that Papa had avoided his right hand because it is the hand he writes with” (Adichie 145). Jaja disrupted Eugene’s agency as a father in his rebellion. “Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion. Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the etagere. We had just returned from church” (Adichie 3). Holy Communion, a central ritual of Christian worship, as “…the intention of Holy Communion is twofold: It unites Christ and the church, and it unites Christians to one another (Von Allmen 1969 :55)” (qtd. in Ngcobo 7).

Eugene, to his detriment, allowed Jaja to visit Nsukka, which created the framework for Jaja to transition from religious supplicant to spiritual renegade. While in Nsukka, distant from Eugene’s authority, Jaja deviated from his laconic disposition that was fostered in the house of Achike, divulging family secrets. “[Kambili] Had Jaja forgotten that we never told, that there was so much that we never told? When people asked, he always said his finger was “something” that had happened at home. That way, it was not a lie…” (Adichie 145). Jaja, while in Nsukka, much to the surprised and dismay of Kambili, confided in Father Amadi, the exemplary priest in the novel who “breaks into an Igbo hymn during mass” (Chennells 19), who later reveals to Kambili that “Jaja told me a little about your father the other day, Kambili” (Adichie 145). Jaja was conditioned under Eugene’s religious fanaticism to keep secrets in the attempt to preserve

the Achike Christian public image with resounding results. "They are always so quiet,' he said, turning to Papa. 'So quiet'". (Adichie 57). When Jaja returns to Enugu, however, his consciousness was altered, evidenced by his actions the Sunday of Holy Communion. As the family was preparing for church, Kambili suffered from menstrual cramps. The medication to ease her discomfort required that she ingest food. Jaja, desecrated the Eucharist fast, having prepared a bowl of cereal for Kambili. In this moment Jaja thought for himself and accepted the consequence of his decision, as he was no longer afraid of Eugene. "Jaja had not put much cereal in the bowl, and I was almost done eating it when the door opened and Papa came in" (Adichie 101). Jaja took ownership of actions. "'I told her to eat corn flakes before she took Panadol, Papa. I made it for her" (Adichie 102). Eugene did not spare the rod. "It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder" (Adichie 102). By the novel's end, Jaja has rejected colonial Christianity and his father completely. "On this Palm Sunday, Jaja, the brother of the narrator Kambili, rebels against the authority of their father, the first gesture of the boy's defiance towards a Catholic orthodoxy that Eugene Achike has imposed on his family" (Chennells 18). Jaja, having found his independence in Nsukka, felt the guilt of not protecting his mother from Eugene's tyranny and oppression. "I should have taken care of Mama. Look how Obiora balances Aunty Ifeoma's family on his head, and I am older than he is. I should have taken care of Mama'" (Adichie 289).

Beatrice Achike, Eugene's wife, typified the helplessness of an African female espoused to an African agent of Eurocentric religious tyranny. "She spoke the way a bird eats, in small amounts" (Adichie 20). Beatrice was the daughter of a "…very light-skinned, almost albino, and it was said to be one of the reasons the missionaries had liked him" (Adichie 67), which insinuated that he was the product of racial miscegenation, a common occurrence within the

parameters of colonial tyranny. Eugene revered his father-in-law, as his father-in-law "…did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now!" (Adichie 68). The novel's brief description of Beatrice's father, insinuated that he negotiated colonial tyranny as an Anglophile. Subsequently, it could be inferred that Beatrice was in a familiar place, espoused to Eugene. At the beginning of the novel, Beatrice was revealed as a docile, plaintive wife to her husband, Eugene and loving mother to her children, Jaja and Kambili. However, her character devolved into a subversive force within the Achike home, a home devoid of conjugal felicity.

Beatrice served as a buffer to Eugene's tyrannical religious fanaticism. "His vicious beatings cause his wife to miscarry a fetus on at least two occasions" (Stobie 427). In her role as mother, Beatrice did not speak out against Eugene's violence towards their children. However, she was present to offer what little consolation she could. Such was exemplified when Kambili, according to her father, had knowingly walked into sin by having eaten corn flakes before mass, a cardinal sin in the Achike home, Eugene lashed out at Beatrice. "He turned to Mama. "You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, maka nnidi?" (Adichie 102). As if performing a ritual, Eugene unbuckled his belt and commenced to exacting physical brutality upon his family indiscriminately. When Eugene nearly kills Kambili, on another occasion for having 'liked sin', Beatrice pensively stated, "'It has never happened like this before. He has never punished her like this before?'" (Adichie 214). Eugene's treatment of Beatrice and Kambili reflected the social positioning of women as sub-human in a postcolonial construct that was foregrounded in postcolonial religious fanaticism. "Where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me, where would I go?" (Adichie 250). Given her social positioning, Beatrice realized that she had nowhere to run but inward. "It is possible that Beatrice will die if she does not take the

initiative to kill her husband. By killing Eugene, she not only saves her life but also reinstates her personal confidence" (Nwokocha 373).

Eugene's religious fanaticism impacted not only his immediate family, but it also positioned him for spiritual and social contestation with his younger sister, Ifeoma, the outspoken, educated professor at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka. Ifeoma, a widowed mother of two children, and sister of Eugene, "was as tall as Papa, with a well-proportioned body. She walked fast, like one who knew just where she was going and what she was going to do there. And she spoke the way she walked…" (Adichie 71). Ifeoma was not afraid to criticize any established standard, even her brother's. "Papa's sister, Aunty Ifeoma, said once that Papa was too much of a colonial product" (Adichie 13). Ironically, she, too, was Catholic. However, she evidenced religious liberalism in the novel. When Eugene and Ifeoma interacted, Eugene, who was godlike in the eyes of his family, suddenly seemed like a mere human, which was terrified for his daughter Kambili. Their interaction displayed how different the two siblings viewed the world. "Both Eugene and Ifeoma are products of the highest levels of Western education which have allowed them to become influential figures in modern Nigeria, newspaper owners and industrialists like Eugene or university lecturers" (Chennells 23-24). Ifeoma's religious liberalism, however, positioned her as Eugene's foil, for it was she who abetted Jaja and Kambili's psychological liberation from Eugene.

Eugene's religious tyranny had no effect on the home of Ifeoma. She did not rule her humble abode in Nsukka like Eugene. Ifeoma's home dynamic was composed of she and her three children, whom she respected and encouraged to think for themselves in stark contrast to the myopic religious fanaticism enforced in the Achike home. Nsukka, liberating and jovial, created the framework for Kambili and Jaja to see their father, Eugene and his fanatical religious ideologies as fallible. Eugene, familiar with his sister's liberalism, instructs Jaja and Kambili to follow the schedule that he has provided for them, which Ifeoma finds laughable. "If you do not

tell Eugene, eh, then how will he know that you did not follow the schedule, gbo? You are on holiday here and it is my house, so you will follow my own rules" (Adichie 124). Ifeoma was a pivotal character in the novel, as she represented religious tolerance, the only functional modality of a postcolonial societal construct. Her religious practice was a mixture of nativist principles and Christian ideologies. This religious functional blend disrupted the myopic colonial Christian Ideologies that had been impressed upon Jaja and Kambili by Eugene. "Until Nsukka. Nsukka started it all; Aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah of her flat in Nsukka began to lift the silence" …" (Adichie 16). "[Kambili] We did not know Aunty Ifeoma or her children very well because she and Papa had quarreled about Papa-Nnukwu. Mama told us. Aunty Ifeoma stopped speaking to Papa after he barred Papa-Nnukwu from coming to his house, and a few years passed before they finally started speaking to each other" (Adichie 65).

Weaponized Christian ideologies planted seeds of self-hatred in Eugene's heart that compromised the father-son relational dynamic between he and Nnukwu, as Nnukwu practiced the nativist religion of his Nigerian ancestors. Nnuwu's solitary regret was having allowed Eugene to become educated by Christian missionaries, which resulted in Eugene's Eurocentric brainwashing. As conveyed by Deena (2009), "The educational system was like a colonial funnel (filtering) system designed to train few to be loyal to the British in ruling the masses. The first major filtering begins with our class, color, and religion" (19). Eugene's inculcation with Eurocentric weaponized Christian ideologies "…. encouraged mimicry of all things European, because these possessed a particular power to invoke the true God" (Chennells 19). Nnukwu was a pagan in Eugene's eye would not supplicate to colonial ideologies and convert to Christianity, Eugene ostracized his father. "Papa himself never greeted Papa-Nnukwu, never visited him… (Adichie 62). Nor would Eugene allow Papa-Nnukwu in his house "because when Papa had

decreed that heathens were not allowed in his compound, he had not made an exception for his own father" (Adichie 63). Before allowing his children to see Papa- Nnukwu, Eugene "... prayed for the conversion of our Papa-Nnukwu, so that Papa-Nnukwu would be saved from hell. (Adichie 61). Because Nnukwu was of native Black consciousness, Eugene had no respect for his father. Conversely, he exalted Beatrice's father the 'very light-skinned, anglophile, who "...did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now!" (Adichie 68). Even when Eugene learned that Nnukwu had died, he remained apathetic. "Ifeoma, did you call a priest?" (Adichie 189), Eugene asked his sister, Ifeoma when she informed him of the death of Papa-Nnukwu, an unadulterated Black man, who negotiated reality with his indigenous consciousness, who died happy: Eugene was cemented in his Eurocentric consciousness to the point where he saw his father's death as the death of a heathen, a lost soul. "Is that all you can say, eh, Eugene? Have you nothing else to say, gbo? Our father has died! Has your head turned upside down? Will you not help me to bury our father?" (Adichie 188). When Eugene responded, he epitomized European usurpation of consciousness: "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral" (Adichie 189).

CONCLUSION

My pursuit of a Master of Arts in Multicultural and Transnational Literature at East Carolina University positioned me to reexamine the concept of race, sex, and gender and to explore how each intersected as a means of majoritarian oppression. In doing so, I have evolved from over fifty years of Eurocentric inculcation, as the majority of my life I have chased white acceptance. Not in the sense that I wanted to be white, but rather I wanted to represent the superlative African American in the racialized space that all African Americans inevitably must negotiate, hegemony. As a child, I remember a big picture of thirteen white men hanging on the wall of Canetuck Baptist Church, the Black Canetuck Baptist Church, as the white Canetuck Baptist Church was less than one-half mile down the road. Years of looking at the picture, convinced me that God was as white as the man who had taken my grandfather's land in the 1940s, a point of contention for me. In this program I became fixated on identifying what license Europeans to mercilessly oppress Black populations and exploring how such trauma continued to resonate in the collective Black consciousness.

Through textual analysis, via a postcolonial lens, I analyzed the power dynamic of imperialism between the subjugator and the subjected, and have concluded, European expansion permanently altered the world and transformed global geography into the Age of Imperialism/Colonialism. Europeans justified their colonial conquests by asserting Divine authority to rape, pillage, and plunder indigenous geographies and populations. The colonial encounter effectuated the European, male, Christian as the paradigm of power, which yielded, as Cesaire articulated: "…millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life-from life, from the dance, from wisdom" (Cesaire 43). "I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions, undermined, lands confiscated religions

smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out" (Cesaire 43). Majoritarian misinterpretation of the Bible positioned colonial Christianity as a viable platform to propagate a continuum of White supremacy. Majoritarian interpretation of the Biblical story, the 'Curse of Ham' posited the global Black populations as Ham's cursed descendants and positioned European hegemons as emissaries of God's will, which cemented Blacks in a metaphorical spiritual and psychological prone position and fostered anti-Blackness in the majoritarian consciousness. According to Dumas & Ross (2016), "'Anti-blackness is "an embodied lived experience of social suffering and resistance... in which the Black is a despised thing-in-itself (but not person for herself or himself) in opposition to all that is pure, human(e), and White'" (qtd. in Blaisdell 2020). Racism, a product of the colonial encounter, was nurtured and reinforced by majoritarian institutions and performative practices that created a global problematized social hierarchy that became more intractable as it persisted. "Being white means gaining access to a set of public and private privileges that allow for greater control over the critical aspects of one's life" (Brown and Jackson 2019). Although Postcolonial Theory analyses the power dynamic of imperialism between the subjugator and the subjected, it does not focus on the racialization of indigenous populations that was a subsequence of the colonial encounter. However, Critical Race Theory synergizes with postcolonial theory, as it is a scholarly/academic movement that analyzes the concept of race, "a fundamental organizing principal of social stratification" (Omi et al. 105-136) within majoritarian spaces by deconstructing the concept race with the intent to reveal or expose the dominant culture's subconscious and overt racism.

The weaponization of colonial Christianity emasculated the enslaved African male, as he was the greatest threat to imperialism/colonialism. Alienated from his own constitution and God, his identity was reconstructed to align with colonial propagandized biblical ideologies of black subservience. The African male was programmed to believe that he was cursed by the God of his oppressor. This predetermined fate, the black male was impressed upon to accept, which positioned him for pain, anguish, and supplication that could be redeemed in the afterlife. Uncle Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and Olaudah Equiano, author of *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* were exemplars of negated masculinity. Both had the opportunity to 'take' their liberation, yet neither seized the opportunity. Despite having lived his adolescent years in Africa as a free-thinking African, Equiano bowed in the presence of the European and begged for his approval from the onset of enslavement. His having purchased his freedom and not having returned to his native country typified his emasculation. Conversely, Equiano returned to England, the place of his baptismal, where he begged for European acceptance. "[Equiano] Permit me, with the greatest deference and respect, to lay at your feet the following genuine narrative" (Gates et al. 189). One hundred years later, the fictional character, Uncle Tom, emerged as the docile, devout and enslaved Christian male, who was described as the epitome of masculinity. The character pulled at the majoritarian, moral Christian consciousness, as the fictional character was "… an exemplary black slave who resists temptation for vengeance and disobedience and is ultimately murdered because of his faithfulness to his Master in heaven" (Evans 498). Despite his having been 'sold down the river' and tormented until his death, Tom accepted his fate as God's will. "'I'm in the Lord's hands," said Tom; "nothin' ean go no furder than he lets it… the Lord, he'll help me, — I know he will'" (Stowe 81). Tom's passivity

towards the liberation of he and his family when juxtaposed to that of Eliza, the mulatta, who was willing to risk both her and her son's life for the sake of liberation, evidenced Uncle Tom's colonial Christian acculturation, which negated his Black masculinity.

The weaponization of colonial Christianity dehumanized the enslaved black female, effectively defeminizing her. She often bore the brunt of hegemonic oppression given her natural vulnerabilities. As property the enslaved, black, female body was incessantly a risk of various forms of European sexual predation. She was violently reconstructed into an object of European reproach or 'bitch,' purposed to be raped, bred and exploited. Her conditions did not change after emancipation. Although freed from the physical bonds of slavery, she was still not free from her social designation in the Jim Crow societal construct that followed, wherein some cases she was not safe from the tyranny of her husband, who used her as a sponge to absorb the wrath that he suffered under such tyranny. Both Richard Wright and Alice Walker via their perspective novels, *Uncle Tom's Children* and *Third Life of Grange Copeland* and their perspective female characters were individually and collectively exampled how the concept of race and gender interacted to exact the most depraved consequences, the designation of 'bitch.' "Beverly Gross contended that "the bitch means to men whatever they find particularly threatening in a woman and it means to a woman whatever they particularly dislike about themselves. In either case the word functions as a misogynist club" (Gross 148).

Religion for many people equates to identity. Christianity, arguably the most powerful philosophical and ideological force on Earth, has historically, in the hands of Europeans, peripheralized nativist forms of thinking and being. The incipient relationship of the colonizer and the colonized necessitated African identity erasure. Colonized Africans were inculcated with a religion that promoted Eurocentric ethical behavior, that Europeans themselves did not follow.

Eugene Achike, the central male figure in Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus,* allowed his Christian fanaticism to destroy him, as he could never become what he yearned to be, much like the African author Olaudah Equiano, a white man. Eugene was most unique of the characters that I examined as he was a postcolonial African male in his native country, Nigeria. He was environed with Nigerian people, outside the electric gates of his home, who practiced indigenous beliefs, yet he embraced the colonial Christian ideologies and practices that negated his race as a people and disrupted the integrity of his homeland. Eugene was rewarded for his agency, in White spaces. "On some Sundays, the congregation listened closely even when Father Benedict talked about things everybody already knew, about Papa making the biggest donations to Peter's pence and St. Vincent de Paul" (Adichie 15). Eugene's proximity to and recognition by colonial power structures cemented his Eurocentric consciousness. Eugene's young daughter, at the onset of the novel described her father as fake. "Papa [Eugene] changed his accent when he spoke, sounding British, just as he did when he spoke to Father Benedict. He was gracious, in the eager-to-please way that he always assumed with the religious, especially with the white religious" (Adichie 46). Eugene in the public eye appeared to be the model representation of an obedient and charitable Nigerian Christian. However, behind the closed doors of his fortified mansion he was as tyrannical as the European, as he, in turn weaponized biblical scripture and performative practices to render his family hostages, subjected to physical and mental brutality. And just as colonized subject eventually finds the wherewithal to resist, so did the Achike family. Eugene, whose usurped consciousness internalized 'whiteness' as righteousness, was poised for insurrection that was exacted by his wife, Beatrice.

When explored through a post-colonial lens, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*; Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Olaudah Equiano's narrative, *The*

Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by himself; Richard Wright's novel*, Uncle Tom's Children*; and Alice Walker's novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, are, individually and collectively viable didactic tools for exposing how the concept of race (or whiteness) was perpetuated via Christianity and how people of color (and especially Black people) are affected by that act/process.

Works Cited

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus: A Novel By*. Vintage Canada, 2013.

Anderson, Joel R., et al. "Revisiting the Jezebel Stereotype: The Impact of Target Race on Sexual Objectification." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 4, Dec. 2018, pp. 461–476, doi:10.1177/0361684318791543.

Annamma, Subini Ancy. "Whiteness as Property: Innocence and Ability in Teacher Education." *The Urban Review*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2014, pp. 293–316., doi:10.1007/s11256-014-0293-6.

Blaisdell, Benjamin. "Cupcakes, White Rage, and the Epistemology of Antiblackness." *Taboo*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2020, pp. 70-90. *ProQuest*, https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/cupcakes-white-rage-epistemology-antiblackness/docview/2341736859/se-2?accountid=10639.

Césaire Aimé, and Kelley Robin D G. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Chapter Four: The Theory of Racial Formation." *Racial Formation in the United States*, by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2015, pp. 105–136.

Chennells, Anthony. "Inculturated Catholicisms in Chimamanda Adichie's*Purple Hibiscus*." *English Academy Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2009, pp. 15–26., doi:10.1080/10131750902768374.

Deena, Seodial Frank. *Situating Caribbean Literature and Criticism in Multicultural and Postcolonial Studies*. Peter Lang, 2009.

Dwyer, Kelsey**,** and East Carolina University. Department of History. *Shackles, Collars, and Chains: Exposing the Treatment of Enslaved Black Women during the Middle Passage*

and as Part of the Archaeological Record (1700-1886). East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., 2021.

Evans, Curtis. ""the Chief Glory of God [is] in Self-Denying, Suffering Love!": True Religion in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin." The Journal of Religion, vol. 92, no. 4, 2012, pp. 498-514.

Equiano, Olauda. "The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Norton, 2004, pp. 189–213.

Kleinman, Sherryl, Matthew B. Ezzell, and A. Corey Frost. "Reclaiming critical analysis: The social harms of 'bitch.'." *Sociological Analysis* 3.1 (2009): 46-68.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory : A Critical Introduction: Second Edition*, Columbia University Press, 2019. *ProQuest Ebook Central*

Gates, Louis, and Nellie McKay, editors. "FREDERICK DOUGLAS." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, by Frederick Douglas, 2nd ed., Norton, 2004, pp. 385–482.

Gates, Henry Louis., and Nellie Y. McKay. "The Literature of Slavery and Freedom 1746-1865." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Louis Gates, Norton, 2004, pp. 151–539.

Gross, Beverly. "bitch." *Salmagundi (Saratoga Springs)*, vol. 103, no. 103, 1994, pp. 146-156.

Hoganson, Kristin. "Garrisonian Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Gender, 1850-1860." *American Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 4, 1993, p. 558., doi:10.2307/2713309.

Hogue, W. Lawrence. "History, the Feminist Discourse, and Alice Walker's the Third Life of Grange Copeland." *MELUS*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1985, p. 45., doi:10.2307/467429.

McBean, K., & Johnston, I. (2018). Creating new meanings and understanding with postcolonial texts: Teaching purple hibiscus in a grade 10 classroom. *Language and Literacy, 20*(4), 78-92. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.20360/langandlit29441

Ndabayakhe, Vuyiswa, and Theophilus Mukhuba. “Christianity and Patriarchy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus.” *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2018, doi:10.31920/cpc_7_1_18.

Ndabayakhe, V., & Mukhuba, T. (2018). Christianity and patriarchy in chimamanda ngozi adichie's purple hibiscus. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa (JGIDA), 7*(1), 49-60. Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/christianity-patriarchy-chimamanda-ngozi-adichies/docview/2058343090/se-2?accountid=10639

O’Loughlin, Jim. “‘It Was Left for Others to Speak’: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Civil War.” *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 2021, pp. 1–8., doi:10.1080/0895769x.2021.1980714.

Park, Wongi. "The Blessing of Whiteness in the Curse of Ham: Reading Gen 9:18–29 in the Antebellum South." Religions, vol. 12, no. 11, 2021, pp. 928. ProQuest, https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/blessing-whiteness-curse-ham-reading-gen-9-18-29/docview/2602171593/se-2, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel12110928.

Paul, Ronald. “‘I Whitened My Face, That They Might Not Know Me.’” *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 39, no. 6, 2007, pp. 848–864., doi:10.1177/0021934707305397.

Suleiman, Yakubu. “Colonial Rule in Nigeria: The Auchi Kingdom Encounter with the British Colonialists and the Impacts.” Revista Brasileira De Estudos Africanos, vol. 6, no. 12, 2021, doi:10.22456/2448-3923.109656.

Shepherd, Dan. "Teaching about American Slavery and its Connections to Christianity and the Bible." *Social Studies Research and Practice*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2019, pp. 225-237. *ProQuest*, https://lenoircc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/teaching-about-american-slavery-connections/docview/2509254969/se-2?accountid=12050, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-04-2019-0021.

Stobie, C**.** “Dethroning the Infallible Father: Religion, Patriarchy and Politics in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus.” Literature and Theology, vol. 24, no. 4, 2010, pp. 421–435., doi:10.1093/litthe/frq051.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher, and Elizabeth Ammons. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. W.W. Norton, 2010.

Walker, Alice. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Harcourt, Inc., 1970.

Weitz, E. (2015). 1. Race and Nation: An intellectual history. *A Century of Genocide*, 16–52. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400866229-005.

Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. "'Masculinity' in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, edited by Russel Whitaker and Ellen McGeagh, vol. 195, Gale, 2008. *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/H1420082525/LitRC?u=ncliveecu&sid=summon&xid=2c185289. Accessed 24 Mar. 2022. Originally published in *American Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 4, Dec. 1995, pp. 595-618.

Wright, Richard, and Richard Yarborough. Uncle Tom's Children. HarperPerennial Modern Classics, 2008

Yarborough, Richard. "Strategies of Black Characterization in Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Early Afro-American Novel." *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin, Cambridge*. Edited by Eric J. Sundquist. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. *ProQuest*, https://www.proquest.com/books/strategies-black-characterization-uncle-toms/docview/2137983960/se-2?accountid=10639.