



## The fluidity and ambivalence of Richard as a post-colonialist in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (2006) *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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### Abstract

Postcolonial theory arose from anti-slavery and anti-colonial movements in Western and the tricontinental countries, (Africa, East or South East Asia and Latin America.) Postcolonial theory's aim is to provide a means of defiance by which any exploitative and discriminative practices regardless of time and space can be challenged. Richard, a British citizen and journalist is lured to newly independent Nigeria in the mid-sixties by Igbo Ukwu-art. Before long though, Nigeria which he is trying to adapt to breaks into civil war through a coup (it is suspected) instigated by the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, a predominantly Christian group dissatisfied with the political colonial imposition of the Islamic Hausa-Fulani of the North on them. A counter coup by the Northerners forces him to align himself with the seceding Igbo who want to form the State of Biafra, to which his girlfriend, Kainene belongs. His journey becomes a struggle to fit in, this grappling on his part as a post-colonialist in Adichie's text, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the trajectory of this paper. By a rigorous examination of his character through the lens of positivism and pessimism view-points, as critiqued by Young and Slemon it is found as fluid, ambivalent and even outright ambiguous thus failing the litmus test of a postcolonialist.

**Keywords:** Fluid; Ambivalence; Colonialism; Post-colonialism; New-colonialism (Imperialism)

### 1. Introduction

According to Young (2001), the philosophy underlying postcolonial theory is not declaring war on the past but declaring war against the present realities which implicitly or explicitly are the consequences of that past. Therefore, the attention of the struggle is concentrated on neo-colonialism and its agents (international and local) that are still enforced through political, economic and social exploitation in post-independence nations.

Which brings us to the crux of the problem, is Richard a solid or fluid postcolonialist in Adichie's (2006) *Half of a Yellow Sun* or even 'gaseous?' To respond to this, focus is drawn to Slemon (1995) who also borrows from Jacoby's (1995) argument that post postcolonial theory is problematic for researchers because of its 'lack of consensus and clarity,' (p.100). At the heels of Slemon, Young (2001) poses the question, 'Why does the language of postcolonial criticism often seem so impenetrable?' But it is again Slemon, (1995) who responds to this question. He argues that, this lack of clarity in the theory together with the 'fluidity and ambivalence, is what is genuinely enabling about the field,' (ibid.100). This notion is shared by Bhabha, (2001) who informs that postcolonial theory is a constant and continuing struggle that blur distinct identities, what he terms 'the in-between' or 'third space' for purposes of fitting in. The notion of 'fluidity and ambivalence' bears a pessimistic view and it is from this view-point I situate Richard in relation to the text.

Post-colonial criticism prefers an optimistic view-point and correctly so. For instance, Bhabha (1994) gives it a positive stand-point for it '... bears witness to the unequal and universal forces of cultural representation' (p.171) that is involved in a constant competition for political and economic control in the contemporary world. Through a dialectical discourse (postcolonial critique), facts of decolonisation are addressed as people emerging from social-political and economic

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domination are given a chance to reclaim their sovereignty; it gives them a negotiating space for equity. (cf: Spivak, 1988). Which beg the questions: How does Richard fit here? Which sovereignty is he reclaiming in Biafra as a British citizen? Space for which equity? From which colonialism (if he is not the Coloniser) is he emerging from so he might be treated as a neo-colonised?

Evidently, Richard contributes positively to the Biafran cause through his journalese, what I have termed 'his war effort.' But beyond that, he simply remains a sympathetic outsider to the cause, (see, Ranjan and Prasad, 2018), his interest in Igbo-Ukwu art, Morve, (2014) regardless. Even his shot at hybridization, by speaking Igbo, desiring to marry Kainene and calling himself 'Biafran,' so that he is sometimes referred to as 'Igbo-white man or White-Igbo man' does not succeed for Obi (2008) states that it is problematic because of multi-ethnicity (over 500 ethnic groups). These are the very ethnicities (tribes) that the British used to balkanize the country.

In addition, when Richard encounters the effects of war face to face, he turns out to be a pitiless character. When Ojukwu visits Nsukka before the break-out of the war, he observes Phyllis (an American, though married in Nigeria) and the others before he joins the furore, 'Ojukwu, give us guns,' (p.112). He is in the same status with Phyllis if he is to marry Kainene. Why then hesitate before he decides to imitate her? Could he be suffering from a lack of resolve to act?

He is also among the major male characters in the text, almost like Odenigbo and Ugwu. The latter is drafted into the army and earns the nick-name 'Target Destroyer' (p. 240), however informally and the former is not afraid to join the Biafran forces, especially, after the death of his mother but he is dissuaded by Olanna, (p.77). But Richard is a totally different kettle of fish. When he is arriving from London after attending his cousin's wedding, the plane touches down at Kano from where he is supposed to connect to Lagos. Unfortunately, that is when the counter-coup takes place. How does he react? When the Hausa soldiers are shooting the Igbo, including Nnaemeka, whose home he visits later, 'Richard...wet his trousers...almost missed his flight...stood aside vomiting,' (p.100). He further worries about what could have happened to Kainene had she accompanied him to England for the wedding. Of course, she could have been killed as he stood aside 'peeing and vomiting' on himself! Finally, without waging war against the proponents of the 'death of the author,' Adichie summarises him for us. He picks a fight with a man, Major Madu, who he knows he cannot win against. He has previously described him as being much taller and wider without mentioning that he is a trained army officer. He hits Madu once who also replies once. The result is that Richard is sprawled on the ground, 'trembling' and 'dabbing' (p.323) at his nose and perhaps 'hallucinating' at the loss of Kainene. And that is exactly where the author leaves him; on the ground, hurt. That is not the rightful position of a postcolonialist, he should always be a round and about fighting.

This has not been, is not, and should never be the spirit of a postcolonialist(s). He should have voiced his opposition even only for Nnaemeka's shooting with whom he had happily chatted a few minutes earlier. No wonder he receives a conceited reception when he finally delivers news of his death. The point here is not to propagate and manure violence. On the contrary, we have had such non-violent post-colonialists such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and others. But that does not mean that Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, Malcolm X, Amílcar Cabral, Fidel Castro, Muammar Gaddafi and their ilk are necessarily wrong. Richard scores lowly in both respects, and therefore, is not an authentic postcolonialist in Adichie's (2006) *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

## 2. His war effort

From a positivism point of view, Richard contributes positively to the war effort. His contribution comes in the form of informing the world what is exactly happening in Biafra unlike the other white journalists that are misrepresenting facts. A case in point, is when he writes 'points-of reply' in form of rebuttals concerning articles his aunt sends him that are published by mainstream papers in England concerning the war. The *Herald*, terms it 'Ancient tribal hatreds,' *Time*, says 'Nigeria must fight,' misinterprets Nigerian 'whack,'- eat for 'beat(ing), (p.109) only the *Observer* is close to what is taking place on the ground. In summary, he reminds the British populace and the world in general that the Nigerian civil war is a British creation triggered by its policies of divide and rule which dates back to 1945.

In addition, Major Madu has requested him, through Kainene to write to the foreign press which would believe what he writes because he is white. He writes about the fall of Onitsha, the killing of 'two hundred civilians' killed by the Nigerian Second Division who also 'defecated on the altar' (p.203) of the Holy Trinity Church before carrying out this heinous crime et cetera. And there is also a hint of him doing a bit of writing about the Igbo-'ogbunigwe,' (p.130, p.210) some type of shelling machine that the Biafran army had invented and used against the Nigerian soldiers.

Beyond the power of the pen, Richard does not fare very well as a post-colonialist whose intention is to liberate Biafra given his internal racist potential. Perhaps, the Swedish aristocrat, Count Von Rosen who is bombing Nigerian targets

with his small plane is more genuine. Here is a man of class embroiled in a war in which he believes a people have been wronged. When Richard enquires why he is in this war, he responds thus, 'I worked with the freedom fighters in Ethiopia and before that I flew in relief to the Warsaw ghetto... Now I must get on. Keep up the good work,' (p.206). Von Rosen seems to take sides with the minority/downtrodden, and he is doing this with a passion. Ethiopians probably against the Italians, and Jews and other groups against the German pogrom machine during the Second World War. Richard admits that Rosen is different from the German mercenary in a positive manner.

### 3. Debasing Richard as a postcolonialist

From a pessimistic perspective, a closer scrutiny of Richard reveals him to be shy and an introvert. The reader encounters Richard for the first time in a dialogue between the two twin sisters, Kainene and Olanna. Kainene informs her sister that Richard, like she will be going to Nsukka. She says, 'He is received the grant, and he is going to write his book there.' (p 22). She further hopes that Olanna introduces him to her 'Revolutionary lover,' (ibid. 22) (Odenigbo).

Olanna in a soliloque-flashback recalls the several white men her sister dated when they were studying in England and how they revealed a 'thinly veiled condescension, their false validations (which) irritated her.' (ibid.22). Richard seems to be different but what clearly exposes him are other peripheral limitations that prevent him from behaving like the 'canonical-white.'

As much as he does not show that he understands Africans more than they do themselves, he is haunted by an 'endearing uncertainty... - almost a shyness,' (op.cit. 22) and when Kainene had takes him for dinner at the Ozobias' home, her parents ignore him, unimpressed because he does not know anyone worth knowing.

This behaviour is perhaps as a result of his upbringing. Always a loner, deprived of parental love and only left at the care of nannies and close relatives, psychologically he can exhibit this kind of 'confused' temperate, a form of 'fixity' forced by limited parental nurture.

It is also worth noting that it is the elder lover, Susan who always introduces him to other whites in the various parties she takes him. She could tell the others that he is a writer interested in *Igbo-Ukwu-art* but he did not have the nerve to tell them that he is a journalist. The writer informs us that, he always 'felt out of place' in these parties and also 'felt awkward with the men,' (p.33) (preferring the company of women instead) who were mostly English ex-colonial administrators and business people from John Holt and Kingsway... Shell BP et cetera.

Richard might have felt out of place for two reasons: firstly, he is an introvert as earlier mentioned, secondly, although his parents seem to have been of means, they failed to introduce him to affluence and class. The result is that he fails to 'fit in and conform' in these discussions of the new-colonial-capitalist-imperialists that otherwise control post-independent Nigeria-Biafra. Therefore, he cannot be expected to assist in the 'de-colonization' process if he fails to understand the owners and agents of these multi-billion enterprises that call the shots.

Richard's sexual life is also found to be both ambivalent and ambiguous. His sexual philandering escapades do not seem to respect any boundaries. Whereas Ugwu's sexual desire lies largely in the sub-conscious, (Nnesinachi, Eberechi, p.78, Eberechi, p. 196 and Chinyere, a 'convenience' p. 197) those of Richard are real. He is received in Nigeria by Susan, a friend of his aunt, Elizabeth. His aunt had described Susan as 'vivacious and charming, a little older than he was,' (p.34.) For a few months he stays in a rented flat in Lagos before Susan initiates his movement from his flat to her house. Which excuses does she give? Her house in Ikoyi (still in Lagos) '...is large, the gardens are lovely ... and she proceeds to redecorate her airy study for him, so he moved in,' (ibid, 34).

Mentally, Richard is planning to move to Nsukka University. The foreign grant he has been offered requires that he carries out research from a university environment. Moving East could also bring him closer to *Igbo-Ukwu art*- his main reason for coming to Nigeria. Going to Susan's house entrap them into living as a couple although he does not love her. Then why stay with this eccentric woman who could shatter glasses in her house wherever and whenever he spoke to/with the other white women?

Perhaps his sexual lust comes out in its worst form when he sleeps with Kainene's twin sister, Olanna. When one is reading (2006) *Half of a Yellow Sun*, there are all indications that Richard sexually desires her as various instances a test. When he first goes to Odenigbo's house in Nsukka University, (during the university staffs' (part of) informal discussions), he is keen to observe and absorb everything including Olanna, '... each time he glanced at her he felt renewed .... He felt an unpleasant emotion, though, seeing Odenigbo's hand on her shoulder ... imagining them together in bed,' (p. 47). In the same house much later, Richard again psychologically behaves like Odenigbo's rival for Olanna.

After dinner, she is said to have put off the light because it was too bright, what was left was a dimness, which makes Richard start to wonder '... if Olanna and Odenigbo touched each other in the dimness ... it was no business of his .... He saw, too, how Olanna sometimes blinked at Odenigbo....,' (p.69).

So much later when Richard's fantasies take a realistic turn, he does not squander the chance. He takes advantage of her low emotional state and sleeps with her. This takes place after Odenigbo foolishly drinks himself silly and ends up having sexual intercourse with his mother's helper, Amala, (p.142). Richard admits to her that, 'You had emotional problems, and I should not have-', (p.162), and his, 'I should leave,' (p.155) does not materialize for he stays to make love to her. He further admits that she could have had sex with any man that day given her emotional confusion but that does not diminish his enjoyment at the spur of the moment, ... 'it had not marred the pleasure he found in her curvy body, her moving with him, .... He had never been so firm, never lasted so long as he had with her,' (p.156). Richard's excuse is that he finds Olanna beautiful. Does one sleep with their 'in-laws' because they are good looking?

Ironically, Richard's sexual life with Kainene to say the least is disastrous. Although he purports to love her, he fails the first and second times they are supposed to have sex. This is the experience the first round 'His naked body was pressed on hers and yet he was limp..., all the time willing his body and mind to work together, ... But he did not become hard ... felt the flaccid weight between his legs,' (p.39). And during the second encounter, his act is 'cock-hen' like for, '... seeing himself erect made him deliriously grateful ... he was only just inside her before he felt that involuntary tremble that he could not stop ..., and then he rolled off,' (p. 39-40). He associates this clumsiness with Kainene to anxiety, but still, this pushes him to a point of seeking for virility African herbs which the domestic workers fail to provide. His 'excellent' performance with Olanna but not with Kainene borders obfuscation.

Richard's randy behaviour towards the two twin-sisters metaphorically is not different from Goldie's double acquisition of both the North and South which after unification produce Nigeria. Olanna is physically more endowed compared to her sister. She is sometimes mistaken for a Fulani as exemplified by a man she travels with from the North to Lagos who is seriously complaining about the Igbo; 'Why should an Igbo man be the Vice-Chancellor in Lagos? ...Why can't they stay in their East? ... Are you Igbo? ... But you have the face of Fulani people.' (p. 150). This standard measure of beauty in itself is racist. The lean nature of most Hausa-Fulani which is closer to the whites make them (whites (even the Hausa-Fulani themselves) assume that they are more physically appealing than the Southerners. Olanna has an African physique, brown with a 'white or Arab' face, hence beautiful.

But Kainene, though lean exhibits attributes of a 'black' African, especially, her skin complexion, ebony coloured, almost black. She could not be mistaken for a 'Northerner', whose majority's physique and colour are closer to the colonizer and are, therefore, automatically advantaged unlike the 'Southerners,' that are to be neo-colonised and dispossessed - (Rwandan, Tutsi- Hutu come into mind.) Then 'naturally' Richard is to be attracted more to a lady who may 'passes' for White than African. But he loses both of them, Olanna is finally married to Odenigbo and Kainene disappears without a trace when she goes to trade a long enemy line. Like the British are tottering with independent Nigeria, perhaps having lost it to the African political elite who are busy experimenting with foreign political ideologies, Richard also fails in his sexual quest to enslave the two twin-sisters forever.

The hallmark of Richard's impossibility as a postcolonialist is captured when he totally fails to write a book that is to document what is happening in Biafra. He comes out as being indecisive and ignorant. He is first attracted to Igbo-Ugwu art (a magnificent roped pot) not for the money as for the aesthetics. But when he encounters Pa Anozie, (a man whose brother had 'stumbled' on the precious objects while digging a well) and his son Emeka who is among the men who had worked on the bronze excavations, his deep ignorance appales the old man. He mistakes the burial site for a king's when it must have belonged to a priest. Emeka translates his father's scandalisation thus; 'Papa said he thought you were among the white people who know something.' (p.44). Of course, he further informs him that kingship is a foreign phenomenon among the Igbo of South East Nigeria. They were ruled by elders and priests before colonialism as also confirms Achebe, (2000) '... and as for having one leader, Igbo people would regard the absence of such a recognised leader as the very defining principle of their social and political identity,'(p.4). They could even go a step further and name their children 'Ezebuilo' (p.16) 'a king is an enemy' and sometimes they could even depose gods who had overstayed their usefulness, (cf:Achebe, 1964, 1987).

This odious ignorance is almost inexcusable for a researcher who purports to have read about Igbo-Ugwu art before visiting the site. Again, before this actual visit, Richard has been spending countless hours in Susan's study, 'pored over books and bits of research material...although he was aware that he was typing and not writing...he had not written anything good so far...ideas in his head had not coalesced into character, and setting and theme.' (pp.34-5). His writing is also riddled with numerous shifts of topic and/or title, for example, when Olanna runs into him when Ojukwu is due to visit Nsukka University, she inquires of his book;

And your book is going well?

Yes. Thank you.

Is it still called, *The basket of Hands*?

...No. It's called, *In the Time of the Roped Pot*.

Interesting title, Olanna murmured.

Richard proceeds to start yet another book, *The World was Silent when We Died*, modelled on Okeoma's poem with the same title 'Were you Silent when We Died?' (p.248). None of these 'books' are written to completion by Richard. In pages (70-1) when Okeoma wants to know the progress of Richard's book, this is how the conversation goes;

How is your book coming along, by the way?

I'm plowing on.

Is it a novel about expatriates?

Well, no, not quite.

But it's a novel, isn't it?

...and (he) wondered what Okeoma would think if he knew the truth-that even he did not know whether it was a novel or not because the pages he had written did not make any coherent whole.

This 'incoherent- whole' is discarded by Richard himself. It ends in the dustbin because it involves three dis-jointed vignettes 'a sketch about an archaeologist (himself in relation to Igbo-Ugwu art) ... a love story between an Englishman and an African woman (Kainene and he) and ... about life in a small Nigerian town (Nsukka).' (p.46). *The Basket of Hands* is set ablaze by Kainene as a form of punishment for his 'animalistic behaviour'- sleeping with Olanna. 'I took your manuscript from the study this morning and I burned it,' she said.... 'The Basket of Hands,' the collection that was of pages that he was finally confident could become a book, was gone.' (p. 171). And 'In the Time of Roped Pots' 'died' when Harrison buried it in the garden in Nsukka when he was fleeing from the war to his hometown and later Port Harcourt. Harrison's 'Sorry, sir, ... I know I am burying it here, (p.321) does not produce any manuscript.

In brief, Richard totally fails to write a full-length book because of his indecision coupled with other individual frailties that are dogging him. For example, sometimes he could carry out research from other 'ignoramuses' like himself to use Odenigbo's expression. Ugwu, Harrison and Jomo given their current status in the text as house helps and farm hand may not possess robust information about the Igbo community regardless of their proletariat lingo compared to the Nigerian intelligentsia who swarmed Odenigbo's house. The narrator shades more light on this argument; 'Sometimes while the other guests retired to the living room, Mr Richard would come to the kitchen to ask Ugwu questions. They were laughable questions. Did his people have carvings or sculptures of gods? Had he ever been inside the shrine by the river? Ugwu was even more amused that Mr Richard wrote his answers down in a small book with a leather cover.' (pp. 54-5).

So, Ugwu who has a title of a book rolling in his mind, 'Narrative of the Life of a Country,' (p.320) inspired by the American writer Frederick Douglas' book changes his title to 'The World was Silent when We Died,' modelled on Okeoma's poem as mentioned earlier and later intimated by Major Madu to Richard. He picks it from here when finally, Richard declines to write a book at all. 'The war isn't my story to tell, really. Ugwu nodded. He had never thought that it was.' (p.320).

So, Ugwu thus dedicates his book (8) not to Richard but to his role model, Odenigbo: 'For Master, my good man.' (p.326).

#### 4. Postcolonialist theorists and critics' views

A myriad of postcolonialist theorists and literary critics have provided their perspectives why Richard could not be the right candidate to tell the story, 'Nigeria-Biafra' and I agree with them in toto. Ugwu's book, *The World was Silent when We Died*, (Sun, p.74) the second part summarises the Biafra war problem. The balkanisation-unification dilemma started in 1884 at the Berlin Conference when the British, led by Taubman Goldie beat the French to two protectorates around the River Niger. The text does not mention Ghana but focuses on what we know as Nigeria's North and South. In the North they encounter predominantly the Hausa-Fulani who are Muslims hence more 'civilised' and they use the *Emirs* to collect tax. In the South they come across the 'kaffirs,' mostly Yoruba and Igbo who have no sense of a god. So, for 'civilization' they introduce missionaries and 'warrant chiefs' and schools.

In 1914, the Governor-General unified the North and South and his wife whimsically bore Nigeria. 'Racial' stratification made the British force the North on the South politically after independence although the South had become more 'westernized' through western education. This imposition of the Hausa on the Igbo (Major Madu cites ethnic imbalance in the army, p.91), specifically lead to a coup and counter coup which result to the Nigerian civil war and the subsequent secession of Biafra- a state for the Igbo people who have been victimised.

It is equally important to note that the first 'black-African) country to be independent of colonialism is Ghana in 1957. The Biafra war is documented to have started in 1967, roughly ten years after Ghana's acquisition of self-rule and only seven years of Nigeria's. It then follows that Richard, a white British citizen who comes to Nigeria already having worked in Britain as a journalist must have been born while Nigeria was still in Britain's colonial claws. A theorist like Said (1978, 2001) can situate him as an Occident and the Nigerians/Biafra as Orient and the former cannot represent the latter. Spivak (1994) will allow the 'subaltern' speak. Neither would Fanon (1980), Cabral (1969) and che Guevara (1961) envision a citizen of the colonizing entity forming a 'political and cultural unity' of the neo-colonised nor Du Bois (1935), Gandhi (1948), Castro (1960) Lumumba (1960) X (1960s), Biko (1987) would dream of the colonizer becoming part of a team of Pan-Africanists, or a self-conscious/black-conscious or any form of Black Renaissance with/for the oppressed.

Two analysts/critics/essayists, in summary, have given their import in this argument why it is Ugwu who is better placed to write the book 'Nigeria/Biafra.' Connor (2013), says, that, 'Adichie prefers the history of Biafra to be penned by an ordinary Biafran. Richard is just a sympathetic expatriate, Odenigbo is a committed intellectual but Ugwu is the only character who is changing in the novel-(reflecting) the true side of the Igbo people. (cf: Achebe, *Home*, p. 18). He is also a minority (subaltern) as women, for example; poor, less educated, et cetera. (p.29)' Wenske (2016), concurs with Connor by asserting that; it is the African who gets to inscribe history from his point of view... it is the villager (and soldier) who gets to tell the story from his perspective. Adichie gives the underrepresented party the final voice in her novel. (p.16)'.

#### 5. His innate racial prejudices

Richard is not any different from the other whites in the text. He is full of prejudice and malice which echo such 'verbal' expletives of Joseph Conrad (ed. 1902), Karen Blixen (1937), Joyce Cary (1939), and Elspeth Huxley (1959) to mention just a few European writers who had accomplished the art of 'savaging' their African characters. Susan provides an ethnic stratification of some dominant speech communities (what Achebe refers to as 'nations') in Nigeria. '... the Hausa in the North are a dignified lot, the Igbo are surly and money-loving, and the Yoruba are rather jolly even if they are first-rate lickspittles,' (p.34). The whites think the Hausa-Fulani are superior to the other Africans as earlier mentioned. They have even ascribed the blacks some 'smells' that are repugnant. This negative perception is shared amongst the expatriates.

The western press does not fare any better. The two American journalists, both named Charles are more interested in covering one white man, (an Italian oil worker) at the expense of several thousands of blacks killed in the war. Richard himself is flabbergasted for he questions whether 'one dead white man is equal to a hundred Biafrans,' (p.243). The 'plump' journalist also assumes that the girls offer free sex and they are suffering from untreatable 'sexually transmitted diseases,' (p.244). It does not matter that he has just arrived a few hours in Biafra. The 'redhead' who is stinking according to Richard has the audacity to comment that, 'Niggers are never choosy about what they eat,' (ibid, 244), when they see children roasting rats and other rodents. As journalists they should have known that Nigeria was using 'starvation as a weapon of war,' (p.158). (cf: Israel-Palestine War since 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2023). These racist comments readily come to whites when they wear their racial lens. Even the expression 'nigger' is an American term used in a derogatory manner to refer to people of colour in the United States of America.

White governments also take sides in this civil-war instead of calling for a cease-fire and subsequent end of the war. Britain, America and Russia support the Federal Republic of Nigeria while France is selling Biafra some arms. Other whites, from South Africa and the then Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) only 'make noise.' Relief pilots are also from these countries, South Africa, America and Ireland (Britain). How efficient they could be with relief supplies is questionable because their countries are against Biafra's secession from Nigeria. The whites' interest is to exploit Nigeria's resources, especially, oil as her people strangle one another.

The epitome of exploitation is best illustrated by a German mercenary who has 'fallen in love' with Biafra, (p. 205). To confirm his love, he has adopted an Igbo child- a girl but he extends his love to 'raping girls in the open...' while 'holding his bag of money with the other hand.' (p.214). Rape is among the atrocities meted to women and young girls during war. It is a war crime. This man threatens Ojukwu that he will stop training the commandos and leave if his balance is not settled- so much love for the Biafrans! (cf: Republic of the Congo).

Richard's latent racism explodes when he encounters Major Madu after Kainene's disappearance. He abhors Madu's closeness to her for he reasons that there cannot be such a strong bond without sex. Madu and Kainene seem to have been acquainted very early in life. They also come from the same village of Ummunachi. Even Madu's admission that he loves her does not necessarily mean having sex with her. But it is the subject Richard is broaching which leads to a brawl. Even before now, when the war breaks out and the Major happens to be in the North, Richard severally wishes that Madu should die there. 'Madu is in Kaduna... he considered the possibility of Madu's death... He thought again of Madu dying....,' (p. 89).

So, when Madu revisits Kainene's disappearance in her parent's home in Lagos (he has arrived in the company of two men from Ummunachi) but Richard from Kainene's house in Port Harcourt, he wants to know if Madu 'touched her,' (p.323). When Madu senses that Richard has become emotional he tries to move away but Richard punches his face as he would like to know if he 'laid your (his) filthy black hand on her,' (ibid, 323). Madu responds and the punch lands on Richard's nose. What indicates that Madu does not want to fight is his moving away from Richard and his examining his nose which he says, 'I didn't break it,' (op.cit, 323). Richard does not voice this abuse but we get it through authorial intrusion which permeates into a character's psyche. The creation of a white hand/black hand (clean/filthy) opposition is what finally declares Richard as a white racist like any other. He could have abused Madu without necessarily bringing racism into play. Madu calls him 'idiot' without necessarily invoking the racial vocal diatribe.

Evidently, when he is hit, he falls on the ground and remains there and that is the last image of Richard the reader imprints in his/her mind. Darkness envelopes him because of Kainene's loss, 'he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpses,' (p.323), for he cannot own/belong to Biafra-Africa

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## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Ngozi's text touches on some key concepts of postcolonial theory such as struggles for autonomy, colonial and/or post-colonial discourse, othering and cultural hybridity. The British having colonised Nigeria, there remains minimum room, if at all, for Richard to represent the Nigerians from a post- colonial point of view.

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