

A POSTCOLONIAL ECOFEMINIST COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WAR FICTION:
THE CASE OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* AND CHIMAMANDA
NGOZI ADICHIE'S *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN*

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HLUMELO D LUNGA

201069091

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SUPERVISOR: DR NELSON MLAMBO

ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was to comparatively analyse *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective. Postcolonialism focuses on issues pertaining to power, culture, and religion in relation to humanity, whilst ecofeminism explores the links between the environment and women, connecting women to the epistemological understanding of nature. The research aimed at exploring the plight of women and the environment in a wartime postcolonial era through the literary lens. The application of postcolonialism and ecofeminism to the analysis of the texts necessitated the consideration and inclusion of themes such as; hybridity, gender trauma, subjugation, relationships and beliefs. The study is a desktop qualitative research and it employed content analysis in the interpretation and analysis of the two novels.

Women were portrayed as destitute who stay in subservient conditions, at the mercy of patriarchal societies, with no voice; sex objects for the husband's pleasures and that can be exchanged for material wealth. Nature is used as an agent of resistance in *The God of Small Things* (1997). For instance, Ammu uses the Meenachal River as an escape from patriarchal entrapment and psychological imprisonment where she goes to find peace and listen to her transistor. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Kainene profits from the civil war in the beginning, later becoming conscientious to the needs of the less fortunate and women are subjugated by both white and black male counterparts through exploitation by both the mercenaries and Biafra soldiers. Contrariwise, Roy and Adichie depict women as perceptive and sensible thinkers. In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu is protective of her naïve children because she is well aware of the evils of this world, most of which she herself has been a victim of. The study found that by reading *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) as contemporaries, there can be testament to some wealthy

accounts as the novels provide a coherent shape of the realistic operations of postcolonial ecofeminism in totality. The thrust of this study is to draw interconnections between men's domination of nature and the subjugation and dominance of women as depicted in the selected creative works. The study concluded that future studies need to consider the use of ecofeminism as a theory in the analysis of novels; merging ecofeminism with other theories in other genres such as poetry, drama and genocidal literature in the analysis of different literary works.

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DEDICATION

To my dear late mother, Babie Lunga, thank you for supporting my adventures and academic endeavours with constant love and encouragement. Thank you for always being there Mama, and raising me to be the woman I am today! I will forever be grateful.

DECLARATION

I, Hlumelo Dickens Lunga, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study; the significance of the study, limitations of the study as well as delimitations, definition of terms used in the study; and lastly organisation of the study are also highlighted.

1.2 Background of the study

This study aimed to comparatively analyse the two selected works, namely Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) and Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective. Peter (2010) states that the overall portrayal of women in society and literature in conservative societies has been presented in different ways ranging from gender stereotypes to gender inferiors. Women are viewed as nurturers and caregivers to their children and husbands and they are simply homemakers.

Female characters' treatment in society and the implications of such on the environment in the wartime literary texts was a focal point of this study. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) highlights the traumatic events experienced as a result of the civil war in effect and also as

a consequence of male dominance in society, further revealing that women were objectified and oppressed in patriarchal societies and were exploited to suit the needs of men.

In this study, the researcher assessed *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) with particular attention to the portrayal of women characters and the environment in a wartime postcolonial era. For example, the Meenachal River suffers greatly as a result of colonial inventions such as factory affluent. The macrocosm of biology that exists in and around the river is wiped out by the chemicals, this can be related to women in society's experiences of toxic masculinity Roy (1997).

However, the inter-links between the environment and feminism (ecofeminism) have been up to now an under researched phenomenon in comparative literary studies. The selected texts thus allowed for the comparison of African (Nigerian) and Eastern (Indian) literary perspectives, considering that ecofeminist criticism is a fairly new literary theory. When coupled with a postcolonial view, it created a novel and robust gap in research as this angle was largely unexplored, hence the need for this study.

Moreover, the depiction of women characters in war fiction, particularly in the two novels, is an issue that is central yet an under-researched thematic and ideological concern in contemporary literary criticism. Lilemba (2003) in *Power is Sweet* highlights the plight of a woman married to a man who does not contribute to the family structure, when the matter is taken to the elders, the verdict is not in her favour. This highlights the injustices that women were subjected to in a male dominated society. Belsey & Moore (1997, p. 1) noted that "for the feminist reader, there is no innocent or neutral approach to literature: all

interpretation is ‘political’ and it is a political philosophy that is calculated to keep women inferior to men. Scholars like Achebe laboured to reverse the stereotypes branded on Africa by penning texts such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Soyinka (1973) in *Season of Anomy* highlights the aspects pertaining to ecofeminism such toxic masculinity Tobalase (2016); nature as feminine Pasi (2017) and subjugation and resistance (Jaiswal, 2015). Boserup (1982) notes that the role played by sub-Saharan African women in maintaining and conserving the land has been significant.

Patriarchal forms of production use women’s knowledge but do not recognize it, thus it “den[ies] women and nature a productive role in the economic calculus” (Shiva, 1989, p. 6). Warren (2000) proffers that failure to acknowledge the important role of these activities in societies renders women and their efforts invisible. The literary elucidation of the correlation between women, nature and their inferiorisation was explored (Shiva, 1989, p. 19), connecting women to the epistemological understanding of nature, as the exploitation of the environment which should be considered ‘fertile’ is reduced to barren badlands (Mies & Shiva, 1993). Humans were directly interconnected to the environments they exist in, and as such, reciprocities were plausible.

Ojaruega (2013) states that “one does not need to be considered a scientist to know that humans and their environments are connected” (p. 31). Ecological feminism, or ecofeminism, rejects patriarchal paradigms that exploit women and women are in actuality, the feminine principle that signifies a natural unity with nature from which men developed (Mies & Shiva, 1993). This study brought to light the hardships faced by women and the effect war has on the environment, and the use of literature by the authors to highlight this.

Fighting and positively reversing the effects of land degradation requires a thorough understanding of the causes, effects and possible ways to reverse these negative consequences (Ojarueja, 2013). In some literary works such as the above mentioned two, the relationship between the characters and the environment they occupy is distinct, therefore a link can be established. By interrogating the position of women and the environment during and after interactions with traumatic events such as war, a connection was made in the current study between the women's place in politics and their ability to adapt and challenge their positions within the patriarchal societies.

To note, the theory of ecocriticism which has also been referred to as environmentalism or green studies is relatively new, however it is emerging as a pivotal perspective that explores the relationship between human beings and the environment. Eaton and Lorentzen (2003) state that women and nature's connection is largely based on three claims of a conceptual, empirical and epistemological character which further explains the women and nature interface. Scholars like Jaiswal (2015) and Pasi (2017) have made great strides in highlighting aspects pertaining to women subjugation and resistance in literary texts.

The environment plays a big role in African as well as Indian texts however, African critics have not contributed much to ecocriticism as it is fairly a new concept that is viewed as western (Slaymaker, 2007). Vambe (2013) acknowledges the paucity of works on ecocriticism in literary texts. Ecocriticism is defined by Glotfelty and Fromm (1999) as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment and the interest of the present study focuses on how the environment is presented in female authored texts in a postcolonial context.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The problem investigated was how the novels depict the plight of women characters and the environment in a wartime postcolonial era through literature. Biehl (1991), Mies and Shiva (1993), Shiva (1989), Plumwood (1992), Pasi (2017) and Schwarz and Ray (2005) have done extensive work on postcolonial ecofeminism and noted that postcolonial feminism connects colonialism with gender, race, class and sexuality in the different contexts of women's existence.

In *The God of Small Things* (1997), the focus was on female characters who have been victims of a patriarchal society and suffered various traumas perpetrated by male dominance. The central question in this study was to depict the plight of women and the environment in a wartime postcolonial era through literature. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) looks at the realities of a war that is based on tribal difference that take effect as influential figures eagerly ally themselves with powerful sides.

Other literary authors such as Thiong'o (1965) in *The River Between*, Achebe (1958) in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* highlight the struggles of women characters against prejudice and the narrow-mindedness of a male dominated society. The role of women in these societies is a subordinate one as their opinions and voice were not heard. Important societal decision making is done by elders who are predominantly male, including issues that directly involve women.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study objectives were to:

- explore the unique presentation of environmental and women concerns in war-torn societies from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective in the selected texts;
- assess how the two novelists present the relationships between human beings and their environment as explored through the ecofeminist tenets; and
- explore how environmental issues were comparatively presented to reflect socio-cultural problems addressed in the selected novels.

1.5 Significance of this study

Considering that ecofeminist criticism is a fairly new theory, the study unravelled ideas that are unique but mainly unexplored, thus nourishing the growing body of literature on the subject (Zapf, 2010; Jimmy, 2015). In Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), concerns pertaining to ecofeminism were examined, as the subjugation of women and the degradation of nature are presented, yet there is a dearth in literary criticism capturing this relationship. By employing ecofeminism and postcolonial theories, the study may inform other studies on the relationship that exists between women and the environment in literary works. This could convey a superior understanding of the intricate interlinking of human beings and their environment, and how this is uncovering expression through various grammars of articulation which include the literary one.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This study focused only on two selected female authored texts, *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Adichie. Of the eight connections in ecofeminism in which women and nature are interconnected, this research based its study on symbolic connections only. This excludes crucial contributions other novels could make and as such, the findings cannot be generated to all the war fiction. Furthermore, the study was bound theoretically to ecofeminism and postcolonial theoretical lenses which informed this study. The researcher used materials that were only available and accessible to the researcher and that which was not accessible, remained unconsidered.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

Only two novels were analysed and the narrowed focus provided the researcher an opportunity to do an ecofeminist and postcolonial theoretical in-depth analysis of the selected novels. The study was delimited to the focus of female characters and their environment in a postcolonial perspective in *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), therefore findings cannot be generalised to other novels and their characters which may possess like themes.

1.8 Organisation of the study

This study is organised as follows;

Chapter 1 provides the orientation of the study. The objectives of the study are outlined and the study significance highlighted. Also, the limitations and delimitations of the study are presented as well as the statement of the problem underlined. Chapter 2 specifies the two theories (postcolonialism and ecofeminism) that framed this study. Furthermore, reviewed literature shows how other scholars have applied these theories on other literary works. This chapter also provides the gap established through reviewing literature for this particular study.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology of how this study was carried out ranging from the first step of critical reading to the last stage of reporting on the findings, recommendations and conclusions. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and discussion of the chosen texts, *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) as framed by postcolonialism and ecofeminism and backed by the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 of this study. Chapter 5 states the conclusions, made some recommendations and finally concluded the study.

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the study, listed the objectives of the study, and highlighted the significance of the study as well as the limitations of the study. The statement of the problem was provided and the organisation of the study was laid down. The next chapter (Chapter 2) is on the theoretical framework and the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth look at the broad knowledge of literature that has been produced on the topic researched and the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework was discussed in connection to the title and why it best informs this study. The literature review is divided into subheadings which aid in reviewing the existing knowledge base and establishing the justification of carrying this research, as well as providing a basis on which this study was built.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Ecofeminism unifies feminism and nature while rejecting patriarchal paradigms, whilst postcolonialism focuses on issues pertaining power, religion, and culture with regards to their connectedness with humanity (Warren, 2000). These theories combined best inform this study on the basis that humanity may not be separated from the environment that surrounds them and their articulation in fiction is an indication of their coexistence.

2.2.1 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is the unity between ecology and feminism. Traditionally, women have generally and historically not had access to weaponry and have had more responsibility in domestic

chores and caregiving in literature while nature has been categorized as female and able to 'reproduce' through Western imagery (Reuther, 1993), while dualities such as men/women and culture nature deem some concepts as less/inferior/other due to their similarities (Warren, 2000).

Social ecofeminism cements the women-nature link as having an inherent epistemological bond with nature, highlighting sexism and naturism through patriarchy (Griffin, 1978). (Peter, 2010) asserts that the purpose of this discussion is to utilise the necessary literary theories as a means for analysis in order to facilitate the practical reading of the contexts, and also to assist in revealing the true meaning of the literary texts.

'Ecological feminism' is the name of a variety of different feminist perspectives to the nature of the connections between the domination "Ecological feminist philosophy" is the name of a diversity of philosophical approaches to the variety of different connections between feminism and the environment. These different perspectives reflect not only different feminist perspectives (e.g., liberal, traditional Marxist, radical, and socialist feminism); they also reflect different understandings of the nature, and solution to, pressing environmental problems of women (and other oppressed humans) and the domination of nature. (Warren, 2000, p. 1)

The elements between feminist and the green movement theories are brought together by ecofeminism whilst offering a challenge to both. Ecology or the green movement is concerned with the effects of human activities on the environment and feminism is concerned with the view of humanity in connection to gender and ways that subordinate and oppress women (Warren, 2000).

Feminism as a movement advocates for the equality of women in their treatment; it is defined by Reddock (1998) as the awareness of the oppression and subordination of women with society and the conscious act to change and convert this situation. Feminism is concerned with social transformations that benefit women and view the domination by men in society as the fuelling factor to the exploitation of women. Patriarchy imposes male superiority on women allowing different forms of domination on women and girls, notes Lunga (2010).

Feminism goes beyond awareness and aims to eradicate gender differences, transform and change the oppressive situation of women in society. Cornell (1998) states that feminism tends to be used for the women's movement which campaigns for the complete political, social and economic equality between men and women. Lunga (2010) views feminism as a complex, multi-faceted movement whose essence is to rebuild, not to destroy society, the prime target of feminism being patriarchy. The awareness of the dominance of men and male superiority constitutes the second limb of ecofeminism. Meeker (as cited in Glotfelty, 2007), unveils that literature can be examined to explore the relationship between the unjustified domination of women and that of nature.

Ecofeminism explores women and nature connections, the focus is not on women as humans but to "highlight women as women in their discussions of interconnected systems of unjustified domination" Warren (2000). Misogyny and exploitation of the environment are parallel forms of domination, with severe consequences on the lives of people and the environment they live in.

Ecofeminism views the domination of nature by patriarchy as synonymous with the exploitation of women by patriarchy Mazumdar (2013). This study looked at ascertaining the relation

between women and nature in literary works, providing a better understanding of the effects of male dominance on both. Manes (1996) is of the notion that human protagonists have an adverse influence on nature which is mute and passive. Ecofeminist views patriarchy as the primary cause of women oppression and environmental degradation.

King (1983) argues that the politics and culture of ecofeminism show all the different forms of domination as well as the domination of nonhuman nature whilst, Estok (2001) notes that the hatred of women and nature are intricately connected and mutually bound. The positioning of the environment and women into objects will be viewed as postcolonial ecofeminist discourse in this study. King (1983) observes that the hatred of women and the abhorrence of nature are intimately connected and reciprocally reinforcing whilst Warren (2000) concurs that there are strong connections between the unfounded dominations of women, children, the poor and the unwarranted domination of the environment.

Terms such as “Other” are used to refer to “woman” and “nature” Saidi (1978) helping us understand the connections between the domination of nature and oppression of women. Ecofeminism uses a feminist based approach in analysing and describing the women-nature interconnections and co-dependency. Nature is understood as feminine and terms such as “Mother Nature” are used. Kangira (2014) observes that human beings’ interaction with nature is most fulfilling in every aspect.

This study furthers the knowledge and understanding of nature as a subject, and reflects on the roles of women with regards to nature, with emphasis placed of ecofeminist beliefs that the domination of women is synonymous with the domination of nature. In both *The God of Small*

Things (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), nature provides at different times, both a nurturing and a rough terrain as it relates to the characters in the texts.

2.2.2 Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is the other theory that informed this study. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995), postcolonialism involves all attributes of the colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact. Given (2008, p. 650) asserts that, “postcolonialism is a broad theoretical approach that examines the past and present impact of colonialism and racism on social, political and economic systems.” Postcolonialism focuses on colonial hegemony and the effects on the present-day society (Brizee, Tompkins, Chernouski & Boyle, 2015), whilst (Olatunji, 2010, p. 125) states that postcolonialism “is a historical phenomenon which linked to observation, consideration and interrogation of the philosophical orientation, praxis and effects of colonialism other societies”.

Postcolonialism provides a historical as well as theoretical framework that is suited to this study in exposing the unequal and discriminatory forces of cultural representation in the literary works such as *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). This literary theory has a strong basis on otherness, power, religion and resistance and other elements in connection to colonial hegemony (Brizee, Tompkins, Chernouski & Boyle, 2015).

The presence of trans-disciplinary studies in the postcolonial theory analysis is exacerbated by the influence of various disciplines such as psychology, post-structuralism, philosophy and others. Ashcroft et al. (1995) argue that there is need to give much attention to the history of

colonialism by stating “the determining condition of what we refer to as post-colonial cultures is the historical phenomenon of colonialism” (p. 7).

In respect of the postcolonial theory dealing with the reading and writing of literature in formerly or currently colonised countries, this theory focuses particularly on the ways in which literature by the colonising culture misconstrues the realities of the colonised. Both novels are examples of postcolonial texts and emphasis must be given to the history of colonialism as both *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) originate in countries that have a history of British rule.

The postcolonial theory focuses on the literature written by the colonising culture distorts the experiences and realities of the colonised. Otherness is portrayed in texts through the use of inferiorisation of the colonised by the coloniser in texts such as *The God of Small Things* (1997). The culture of the colonised is devalued and simultaneously appropriated in the literature of the colonising countries through images, language, tradition and so forth (Lye, 1988).

Postcolonial theory is shrouded by controversy from defining the term to its universality due to its complexity. Bortella-Ordinas (2015) states that major contributors to postcolonial theory emerge from different backgrounds such as psychology, philosophy and other disciplines. The polemical contestation between Marxism and post modernism is an additional contributor to this quandary bringing about multiple definitions. Ashcroft et al. (1995) argue that;

Postcolonial critics and theorists should consider the full implications of restricting the meaning of the term to ‘after-colonialism’ or after independence. All post-colonial

societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination and independence has not solved this problem (p. 2).

It is against this Ashcroft et al. (1995) standing that this study considered the historical period surrounding the setting and plots of both *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997). Postcolonialism implies “the totality of practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterise the societies of the postcolonial world from the moment of colonialism to the present day” (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. xv). The two texts are both considered postcolonial novels and the application of the postcolonial theory better elucidates the events in the novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997).

Mukherjee (2006) states that environmentalism and postcolonialism have interconnections which are their “comprehensive critique of European modernity, in particular its core components of capitalism, colonialism/imperialism and patriarchy”, in that both place themselves “as being integral to the oppositional activism of decolonization and environmental/green movements” (p. 145). Colonising countries derive domination over colonised countries through inequality of power and unequal power relations on local and global levels. The ‘othered’ or subjugated countries are thus exploited in their own territories.

Olatunji (2010) directs the complexity of post-colonialism in practice being liable for the definitional problem, Botella-Ordinas (2015) cites the different disciplines the major authors emerge from as being another factor to this issue. Postcolonial analysis challenges Western ideologies of development and exposes the neo-colonial economic interests of growth and who benefits from them (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010). Shiva (1989) states that “ecological destruction” coupled with marginalization of subjugated women have been the “inevitable results of most

development projects” (p. xvii). Thus, *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) as both postcolonial and ecofeminist literature, communicate and redirect and understanding of the treatment of women and degradation of environments at the exposure of colonialism.

2.2.3 Patriarchy

This section explains the reviews of the selected novels under study. The two texts under study, being that ecofeminism is a fairly new phenomenon, have not been extensively investigated from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective.

Patriarchy is defined as male dominance in social structures. Men have social power in every important structure of society and women do not have access to these structures (Peter, 2010). Patriarchy is a system put in position by males for the purpose of dominating over females, this understanding based on feminist perspectives. Hooks (2013, p.1) states that “Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females.”

Patriarchy is a social or political institution designed to oppress and dominate women, placing males in positions of dominance, lowering women to social and political classes where they have little to no power in society Peter (2010). Female assertion is an ideological focus which sets out to correct the traditional image of women as indeterminate human beings who are heavily dependent, gullible, and voiceless and stuck in the background of patrimony which marked most African societies. Adichie (2006) indicts the patriarchal oppression of women and

encourages women to assert themselves regardless of cultural norms or archaic traditions which promote subordination and subjugation (Estok, 2001).

Patriarchy is a complex institution that uses power and control over women in the society. The significance of a male dominated structure is beneficial to men in their exercise of suppression of women and asserts that males are naturally and rightfully dominating (Ali and Gavino, 2007). This is a system that carries out the internalisation of norms through the process of socialisation Hooks (2013). Neopatriarchy is a new form of supremacy over the women in families which functions through different types of violence to suppress the woman's identity and create dependency in the family (Rehman, 2009; Sultana, 2012).

Neopatriarchy which aims to create a rift between resident women and the women who come into the family through marriage in the ways of governance and power control is experienced widely in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997). Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012) notes that the resident women are threatened by the new women and in an attempt to retain control and power, they use their power of affiliation and age to subjugate the new women, leading to discord between the two (Ali and Gavino, 2007).

Neopatriarchy can be subdivided into two domains which are public and private patriarchy (Sultana, 2012). Private patriarchy exists within the household, which directs the oppression of women in the family and public patriarchy which is centred at an economic level (Walby, 1990). In internalization of patriarchy, mothers-in-law play a role in the re-socialization of a woman after marriage in accordance to set patterns of patriarchal structure (Davaseeli, 2012).

Private patriarchy is experienced within the family through gender inequalities and gender roles. The family is the biggest perpetrator of private patriarchy and the family social structure focuses on natural gender segregation whereby male figures are considered breadwinners and female figures, homemakers (Walby, 1990). Gender roles thus encourage dependency and subordination of women socially, culturally and economically and encourages women's subjugation in the family. Patriarchy allows men to retain positions of power and control over economic resources, restricting women to household tasks and submission to men in the family (Parker & Reckenwald, 2008).

Public patriarchy is described by Heimer (2000) as controlling and limiting the power of women in comparison to men at an economic level and in the workplace. Employment and state are the most dominating social structures that suppress women and institutions such as state, government and religious places play a significant role in the establishment of public patriarchy (Walby 1990). Women are permitted to take up employment in said institutions however, they are suppressed by inequalities that include salary differences, promotions, and education and job requirements. (Atwell, 2002; Walby, 1990).

2.3 Literature review

A literature review is one of the most critical sections of research as a thorough literature review institutes reliability in a research. Creswell (2013) highlights that literature consists of different types which include; "literature review that integrates what others have done and said; that which criticizes previous scholarly works; that which builds bridges between related topics;

and that which identifies the central issues in a field” (p. 61). Creswell (2008) further states that there is no single way of conducting a literature review and use of one or all forms produce a formidable literature review.

O’Leary (2010) notes that “the production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge”(p. 71), and further asserts that, “a well-constructed literature review is an important criterion in establishing research credibility” (p. 72), whilst Schostak and Schostak (2013) state that “the aim of reviewing literature is to strengthen one’s project” (p. 34). Creswell (2013) further states that “The literature review helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying, and it provides insight into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry” (p. 57).

The literature review helps to guide the researcher on the scope to limit it to a particular area of enquiry and existing work already penned on ecofeminism and postcolonialism will create the basis on which to critique *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) which are the specific sample texts for this study.

2.3.1 Other studies on related works

In the world of literary studies, researchers are ideally dedicated to carrying out studies pertaining to ecofeminism, focusing on women’s plight in all their spheres and the domination of nature; violence, where different forms of violence are highlighted and labelled as the violation of human rights as well as the exploitation of nature. This study however, strived of nuanced analysis by deviating from these common topics and focused on merging

postcolonialism and ecofeminism in the analysis of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

Roy's novel has been analysed from different angles by Bhabha (1994), Naik (2003), Surendran (2000), Silima (2013) and Biyanak (2008), the postcolonial ecofeminist perspective has been looked at but not thoroughly hence presenting a gap in research. According to Anand (2005), the war novel is a portrayal of the undesirable norms of Indian society and the plight of the untouchable individuals in communities (p.95). The novel attempts to explore the relationship between ecological deterioration and gender oppression in postcolonial India.

Moreover, Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) has previously been looked at from a postcolonial and ecofeminist theoretical lens individually but hardly simultaneously. For example, Bhabha (1994), utilised a postcolonial cultural identity angle while Novak (2008), explores a trauma and diasporic exile viewpoint. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) share a history of British colonization and the conflicts that resulted from the colonial histories according to Shringarpure (2015). The analysis of these two texts together provides new insights that highlight gaps in research that are further explored in Chapter 4.

A rumination of what other scholars have written with regards to the application of ecofeminism and postcolonialism helps to build the discussion for this study. A literature review determines whether research is viable to pursue or not, this is done through the process of going through the foundations already laid down by other researchers Creswell (2013). *The God of Small Things* (1997) views the hierarchy of dualisms between men and women as ideological justification for domination. Plumwood (1992) highlighted that dualisms have legitimised the oppression and exploitation of women and destruction of nature.

Mhunduru (2013) and Rhode (2009) have examined the political, cultural and psychological impacts of colonisation from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective. Mhunduru (2013) explored the strength and resilience of women in literature focusing on the silenced women characters in patriarchal societies. Rhode (2009) looked at the effects of trauma (physical and mental) on physically abused women and the effects thereof in female authored texts.

In *Houseboy*, Oyono (1966) deplores the brutal effect of colonialism and in analysing *Houseboy* (1966), Babatunde (2012) notes that the work exposes the abject conditions of Africans in the colonial era and the liberal ideologies that plead with the oppressed. Babatunde (2012) concludes that, “traumatic experience of the protagonist articulates the evils, sufferings and injustice prevalent during the period in Cameroon” (p. 42). *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) are gently disposed to the liberal ideology as they highlight the colossal atrocities provoked by colonialism and its subsidiaries. Thus, this study endeavoured to unveil the traumatic experiences of the characters in the two texts and x-raying the injustices of colonialism perpetrated by the British colonisers in Nigeria and India on the colonised and this is fully explored in Chapter 4 of this study.

Ecofeminism is confronted by a number of scholars through their literary works that expose the relationship between women and the environment. The movement is of the view that the domination of women in patriarchal societies is synonymous with the domination of nature by patriarchy (Mazumdar 2013). Glotfelty (2007) defines ecocriticism as the study of nature as portrayed in literary works and the relationship between literature and the environment. Barry (2009) defines the environment as issues including “power, domination, and racism, and discrimination, lack of housing for the poor and homeless and hazardous working conditions.”

There is a strong interrelation between ecocriticism and ecofeminism in relation to the environment and women. Feminism pays attention the standing of women in society, advocating for complete political, social and economic equality as is for men Cornell (1998) while Lunga (2018, p. 28) has looked at feminism as a multifaceted movement aimed at rebuilding, not destroying society. Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) refer to ecocriticism as an earth centred literary studies approach, meaning that nature provides for human beings as for the purposes of this study can be compared to the way a ‘woman’ provides sustenance to her kin.

Nature has a strong influence on the existence of human beings, this approach highlights the connections between nature in terms of ecological concepts and literature. In *Arrow of God* (1986) by Achebe, nature is depicted as an agent of destruction and as wholesome as well as it provides life and nourishes the vegetation. The environment or nature can be characterised as an agent of destruction, an oppressor and a destroyer according to Asika and Madu (2015) in *The Land’s Lord* (1976).

Ecofeminist approaches in literature inevitably focus on environmental issues as ecofeminism ascertains significant relation between the two. Reuther (1992) states that ecofeminism brings to the forefront a critique of systems not conducive to women and nature advancement. Warren (2000) observes that, “what makes something a feminist issue is that an understanding of it contributes in some way to an understanding of the subordination of women.” Slaymaker (2007) views African literature as not having contributed much to ecocriticism as writers in Africa perceive ecofeminism as a western concept that does not apply to African concerns. Slaymaker (2001) unfortunately ascribes the place of ecocriticism in African literature by

prescribing a methodological approach to be followed by writers, underpinning an ecocritical orthodoxy that is rooted in the western countries and uses American and British literature.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) different types of masculinity are explored. Odenigbo's character represents a learned African man whose views on nationalism vary greatly from those experienced in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), whereby nationalism involves arms and bloodshed. The nationalism he propagates differs from the common idea of fighting with arms and force, his character shows the aspect of foresightedness that is vital in the development of a nation.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), the two American journalists sent to gather information on the progress of the Biafran war view the situation differently from Richard who has amassed himself into Biafra and this is fully explored in Chapter 4. The exploitation of nature and women characters is related; ecofeminist and postcolonial approaches can be used to analyse the two text above mentioned as they address women, land, colonialism and nature.

2.3.2 Women and environmental degradation

The position of women in society has evolved over the years. In pre-colonial years, societies were matrilineal. Women were accorded more power and great respect in their roles as givers of life (African Women in African Civilisation 2007, p. 2). The invasion by European settlers caused a change in these dynamics as the settlers brought about oppression and inevitably patriarchal societies rose to power.

African Women in African Civilisation (2007) further states that the invasion by the settlers affected the power the women possessed, capitalism eroded the African culture and dynamics.

The heavy tax system imposed on the male counterparts affected the wealth the women possessed as their bride wealth was used to pay said thus women lost their power and wealth thereafter.

In Indian societies, globalisation has is viewed as an extension of capitalism according to Eaton and Lorentzen (2003), it has exacerbated an ecological crisis and gender crises as patriarchal capitalist development has served ideologies of linear growth. This has led to the oppression of women, Shiva (1989) states that “ecological destruction” and marginalization of subjugated women have been a result of development projects. Spivak (1995) asserts that connections between patriarchal capitalism and global capital have strong ties to patriarchy and neo globalization in India.

Moreover, the oppression of women and exploitation of nature have been the opportunity cost of globalisation. Magnifying on colonialism and its subsidiaries, aspects of environmental degradation including the non-preservation of vegetation are prevalent in the texts *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small of Things* (1997) which is a major concern for this study.

Reser (2007) states that “environmental degradation is in large part caused by human behaviours and it directly affects health and well-being” (p. 2). Effects of resulting from this degradation of nature are highlighted and reflected in the novels *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and is further explored in Chapter 4. Shiva (1989) notes that development in society is a “new project of western patriarchy” (p. 1), and this is thoroughly explored in Chapter 4. Roy (1997) outlines inter-links between subordinations of women and non-human nature in reflecting effects of colonisation and subjugation of human

beings while Warren (2000) notes that “there are connections between unjustified denominations of women, children, minorities, the underprivileged and the unjustified denomination of nature” (p. 1).

The arrival of the British settlers in Africa saw the continent undergo various forms of exploitation and degradation. This is evidenced by the cutting down of trees to set up factories, production of chemicals whose excess waste is dumped in water bodies killing both flora and fauna, loss of farmlands due to repossession and health problems that were foreign to Africa Owhofasa (2013). In *The God of Small Things* (2006) the Meenachal River is clogged up by chemicals and the effects of globalisation and colonialism are experienced as looked at thoroughly in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

Colonisation and the vicious effects thereof such as destruction of nature and oppression of women are widely witnessed in both the texts *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) which are the major concerns of this study. Reser (2007) reiterates that experiences of nature degradation and loss lead to feelings of anxiety and guilt as well as pessimism.

2.3.3 Nature as an agent of destruction

In *The God of Small Things* (1997) nature as an agent of destruction agent is a common feature and affects the characters significantly. Jaiswal (2015) notes that nature reacts to the activities of humanity and how nature gives back is determined accordingly. Sophie Mol drowns in the river in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (1997) and the true sequence of events is only known to Rahel and

Esthappen, this is thoroughly explored in Chapter 4. Nature is a strong force that has the power to take in as much as she gives, the relationship is reciprocal and humans have no choice but to accept both nature's bounty and adversity (Shikha, 2011).

Exploitation of the environment is prevalent in the novels and actions of human beings cause adverse damage to the environment. This interconnectedness or symbiotic relationship between nature and people's livelihoods is a clear indicator that African writers have always been concerned with the environment. For this relationship to be maintained, both men and women should play a major role in tree management and conservation (Pasi, 2017). The community should be involved in protecting existing trees if the specific roles and needs of both men and women are met. According to Shikha (2011), the reciprocity is more of an ecosystem in the way it works in which everything is related to each other and therefore affects each other. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) the Meenachal River nurtures and provides sustenance for many but with time is reduced to a weak tide that accepts the daily offering of waste and chemicals to be deposited into the ocean like an unappreciated vehicle. Reser (2007) states that "environmental degradation is in large part caused by human behaviours and it directly affects health and well-being" (p. 2). Although the women are the backbone of agriculture, they are dominated and oppressed by their male counterparts (Pasi, 2017).

2.3.4 Depiction of women in Indian literature

Women have been objectified since the beginning of time. Social classes and politics dictate the behaviours of young women as potential brides to upper-class families (Rando, 1991).

These women had little to no say in socio-political spheres as male counterparts possessed all the power and money (Mukherjee, 2006). Women's inferiority was fuelled by social classes and wealth, hence the poorer families groomed their daughters for lives as labourers while the more affluent groomed them for marriage to potential suitors of the upper-class, and this is further explored in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

Women depended highly on men, patriarchal societies thrive in these conditions. Roy (1997) and Adichie (2006) highlight the plight of women who return from their marriages or those who have never married as being looked down on by society. They become second class citizens who were viewed as financial burdens to their families. Indian male novelists portray female characters as secondary characters such as wives and mothers, never the central character explored in Chapter 4, section 4.2.3. The characters have similarities of being weak and submissive to male domination, this is especially expected of women in male Indian texts Mukherjee (2006).

Female authored Indian texts such as depict female characters in a different light. The characters are prone to suffering and injustices in a patriarchal environment with nature being a victim of these actions nonetheless and this is explored in detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2. The characters lose their identities and social standing due to the actions of their male partners. Mukherjee (2006) portrays the characters in her novels as waning for freedom from the claws of patriarchy, they seek self-identity and emancipation from male dominance.

2.3.5 Depiction of women in African literature

Prior to colonization, women were power houses with economic stability and independence African Women in African Civilisation (2007). Colonisation changed the dynamics and women became weak in terms of economic wellbeing and gender bias took place due to patriarchy, gender bias gained stronghold as women became reliant on men as is explored in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2. This gender bias as a consequence of oppression brought about by European influences and views women as weak and ripe for exploitation (Caruth, 1996).

As (Caruth, 1996) states that women face unique challenges in society that vary greatly from men. Trauma such as rape, women trafficking, child marriages, isolation during time of menstruation and domestic violence tend to be more prevalent in women folk. Women perform most core duties within family structures with little to no recognition or credit given in most African societies (Walker, 1982). Married women are afforded greater respect than those who were not, the institution of marriage is held in high esteem in African settings and this is explored in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2. Marital affairs in regards to motherhood, wife and childhood status are involving of a woman therefore, 'Woman Rights' theory holds better meaning over feminism due to the dichotomy between the European and African societal views Walker (1982).

On the other side of the coin, women were depicted in texts as gullible and easy prey to deception in literature, in Matlwa (2007) Fiks' character is that of a township girl who is desperate to be sophisticated and shed her current image and falls prey to many a scam on the streets of Johannesburg due to being naïve and learns some hard lessons as a result. In *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) by Charles Mungoshi, the character Betty is a victim of patriarchal apathy towards the standing of women in society, overlooked by her father and uneducated, leaving

her in a hopeless position and vulnerable (Mungoshi, 1975). Betty is trapped in her environment with economic means to sustain her, family support or an education to elevate her. John asks Betty about her plans to go to Salisbury and she chokes at his indiscretion with her secret (Mungoshi, 1975, p. 28).

2.3.6 Gender trauma and the environment

The complex structure of colonialism renders it a pernicious practice that breeds dynamic multiple dimensions of human and environmental destruction. Through such practices, colonialism would therefore present nightmares for both the colonised and nature as represented in *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Bulhan (2015) states that, “no system of oppression lasts without occupation of the mind and ontology of the oppressed” (p. 252). Practices that are repressive in nature like colonialism result in traumatisation of victims and are prevalent in the two novels under study. Women participate in and witness horrifying acts against nature, psychological damage ensues and victims perform for their survival (Caruth, 1996).

Colonialism plays a big role in trauma, as it creates an unspoken fear that destroys identities of individuals or societies Balaev (2008). Women naming the unspeakable deeds they experience at the hands of colonists has been obliterated by the voice of patriarchal knowledge in the two texts being analysed and discussed. Trauma can be credited to the colonisation by the British in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997), societies functioned in different ways before the arrival of Western settlers.

Western practices forced the societies to modify their beliefs, adopt practices they were not familiar with forcibly and adapt survival behaviours foreign to them Mart (2011). Their traditions and culture were threatened and eroded by the repressive Western systems through indoctrination, mainly posed through religion. *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) both reflect that colonialism brought trauma to the colonised and colonists as well as nature. Colonisers in the texts were also affected by trauma, which rendered some double agents by participating in efforts to reverse or alleviate the effects of colonisation, this occurrence is explored in Chapter 4 in greater detail.

Trauma is defined as “wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (p. 3-4), according to (Caruth, 1996) therefore, it is more difficult to address as it is not a physical wound that can be treated inevitably affecting women and nature. Adichie (2006) is able to highlight in the novel that while war has gendered causes, it is also experienced in gendered ways. Sjoberg (2013) also claims “while war has gendered causes, gendered practices, and gendered consequences, it is also lived and experienced in gendered ways (p. 252)”. This in turn creates non-hierarchical relationships in women characters of different classes. The issues of gender trauma are explored in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2 in greater detail in the text *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

According to Pape (2011) gender war arises from “adverse circumstances, and their mastery of wartime life, their experiences of closeness to death, powerlessness and the disintegration of order which eventually results in a growth of their strength” (p. 100). In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), characters evolve in their roles such as Olanna and Kainene whose roles change to providers and caretakers as the Biafran War progresses as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.

Colonialism is a malicious practice that breeds dynamic multiple dimensions of human destruction due to its complex structure. The double faced nature of colonialism is experienced in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and in *The God of Small Things* (1997) and Ashcroft et al. (1995) state that 'postcolonial' theory rejects the egregious classification of 'First' and 'Third' World and contests the lingering fallacy that the postcolonial is somehow synonymous with the economically 'underdeveloped' (p. 3). Nonetheless, literature as a mirror reflection of society has cemented that some colonisers also suffered in the process of colonising the other, highlighting the double faced nature of colonialism in literary texts.

The postcolonial ecofeminist analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) shows that colonialism does affect the coloniser and the colonised as well as the environment. The two novels are a presentation and thematisation of trauma instigated by colonisation and this trauma extends to women and the environment.

2.3.7 Colonial education

Colonial education had its goals in creating turmoil and discord among the colonised thus allowing the coloniser to have total control. Woodson (1933) states that "When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions" (p. xiii). The colonised have been indoctrinated through education to accept the glamour of the coloniser's ways and models of development that are presented with hidden agendas and insincere intentions Ikuenobe (2014). Colonial education is prevalent in both *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small*

Things (1997) through the characters of Ugwu and Chacko respectively as extensively explored in Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.

Victims of colonial education isolate and alienate themselves from their societies, as Mart (2011) further cements that “Colonising nations through education tried to isolate students of Africa from their local communities” (p. 193).

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) a victim of colonial education Ugwu is experiencing isolation from his society due to exposure to colonial education. He is failing to relate to his family and the ways that he is familiar with. Colonial education makes individuals want to disengage from their land and identify with that which is furthest removed from them, mimicking the ways of the coloniser. Characters in both the novels, are due to colonial education, being removed from their indigenous learning structures and drawn towards the structures of the colonisers and effectively so and this is further discussed and analysed in Chapter 4.

According to Ashcroft et al. (1995), mimicry is an adoption of the coloniser’s culture, institutions and values, because it is an adoption, the representation is never simple resulting in identity crises and double consciousness. Ashcroft et al. (1995) further state that:

Hybridity occurs in postcolonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler-invaders dispossess indigenous people and force them to ‘assimilate’ to new social patterns. (p. 183).

Hybridity in characters such as Chacko sees him idolize Margaret Kochamma due to her being British, his character is infatuated with foreign books and model planes and he eventually

relocates back to Britain. Bhabha (1995) notes that hybridity manifests the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. Mart (2011) notes that threats have forced Africans to change their beliefs and behaviours in order to shed the label of “Third World People” and further comments on the “ideological pacification” of the colonised that occurs when the deceptive and humiliating idea is decisively implanted in African psyches and is accepted by Africans as their destiny. Evidence of this is seen in characters such as Ugwu and Harrison in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and is further analysed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.3. Colonialism stimulates the power of hybridity and influences the ways in which people subsequently interrelate in terms of family relations as well as interaction with their environment.

Colonisation poses the dangers of being a system that attempts to remove the colonised people from their indigenous learning structures and draw them towards the structure of the colonisers. Colonial education according to Thiong’o (1981) makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to disengage themselves from that wasteland. This newfound distinctiveness makes them want to identify with that which is furthest from them, a form of mimicry, just like in the character Harrison in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

2.3.8 African family structure

Colonialism had negative impact on family structure in the African context. African families embrace extended family ideology and comprise of one’s biological parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. This differs from western

families who comprise of the father, mother and one or two children. Communalism is strong encouraged and utilised in African communities and individualism is shunned. Mbiti (1970) affirms that an individual does not exist alone except corporately therefore a family constitutes of many individual entities that function collectively.

Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001) asserts that it is this kinship system that forms the basic social unit, the family being the social unit and the community revolves around this unit. The basic social unit includes the extended family structure as the model whereby the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces all live together. Makinwa-Adebusoye (2001) outlined African households as mostly rural, patriarchal and hierarchical, polygamous and open to kinship networks, lineage continuation being an important factor. These characteristics put emphasis on the number of children given birth to by women.

Marriage in Africa is universal, early and important in communities, the former average age of a first marriage being seventeen to twenty-two years of age for women. There is high value accorded to marriage and bearing children within the marriage especially male children as explored in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Women tend to have lower status in marriage than men as well as all members of the husband's family (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 2001). The relationships of the characters with each other are influenced by the backgrounds of the families which they are born into.

In reconnoitring ecofeminist components of life in war fiction, this study examines how colonialism would disrupt and breakdown family units and simultaneously impact on the environment which the women and children survive on.

2.3.9 History of war in Nigeria

Nigeria is the setting of the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and a brief synopsis of its history aids in understanding how colonialism was practiced within that space and how it was detrimental to women and the environment. Africa was colonised by Europe for the natural resources and raw materials needed for the European industries and the need for markets for the products of European industries. The abundance of resources that Africa had according to European perspective, Africans lacked the initiative or intellect to exploit them to their advantage (Ikuenobe, 2014) and thus Europeans descended on Africa to exploit the land under the guise of bringing civilization to Africa and her people.

Adichie (2006) and Obasanjo (1980) explore the factors of the causes of the Biafran Civil War that took place between 1967 and 1970 and raise important questions in their narratives. The role played by corruption, is very difficult to rule out as a factor as well as the differences and incompatibility of the multiple ethnic nationalities packed together as one Nigeria. This reinforces the culture of nepotism whereby the different ethnic groups have a preference for people from one's ethnicity, religion and/or language. This factor is largely explored in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and Obasanjo's account of the war, *My Command* (1980).

Efiong (2016) states that "Ethnicity had also been enthroned in the Nigerian political scene to the extent that the slogan 'North for the Northerners, West for the Westerners and East for the Easterners' had come to represent the feelings of hatred, division and victimization" (p. 42-43). The British government's protection of its oil interests in Nigeria contributed to pushing Nigeria to war against the secession of Biafra. Chibuike (2008) asserts that "British oil interests

played a much more important role in the determination of the British attitude to the war than is usually conceded” (p. 113).

The British capitalised on the lack of trust and differences in the various groups in the newly formed country to further its own political ideology by dividing Nigeria during the colonial period into three regions Northern, Western and Eastern in 1946. The British tampered with the African minds in order to control black people in totality. Perham (1970) describes the conference held in Aburi, Ghana in an effort to calm the civil war in Nigeria as follows:

Colonel Ojukwu drew his regime further and further out of the Federal orbit. His last meeting with the Federal military leaders had to be in a neutral place, Aburi in Ghana. The tape recording of this extraordinary and dramatic meeting, on what proved to be the edge of the war, is a document of fascinating but tragic interest. Here were these nine men, military governors of North, West, West, Lagos and the new Mid-West (carved out of the Federation after independence), with the heads of the army, navy and police, talking on Christian-name terms, and a little contemptuous of the politicians who, in their view, had so mismanaged affairs. They struggled for two days to find a solution. In the record Colonel Ojukwu is revealed as dominant both in argument and determination. A compromise plan was worked out, but it seems that both sides had gone too far in precautionary moves against the possibility of conflict to draw back, and, with accusations of bad faith, and, in spite of earnest attempts by leading Federal personalities to mediate, the two sides drifted into war (p. 234).

In 1914, the British colonial powers amalgamated Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria into the Nigerian State. In 1906, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos and the Protectorate of

Southern Nigeria were merged under a single administration called the Colony and the Protectorate of Nigeria and thus merged into the Nigerian state (Oduwobi, 2011). The Hausa-Fulani were situated in the Northern region, the Igbo in Southeast region and the Yoruba in the Southwest, this amalgamation favoured the British colonial masters. This arrangement worked against the local people due to the lack of similar cultures and equal rights to acquire property, common laws and a common judicial system. The Southerners made every effort to work against the unity of Nigeria whilst the Northerners did everything to stultify and kill anything that would foster it (Ojukwu, 1969).

According to Ademoyega (1981), the British “set up the North to be bigger than the South, planned to hand over to them, an Army that was more than 50% Northern” (p. 32), with the conclusion of the plan of handing the political leadership of the country over to them as well. Badru (1998) concludes that “duration and persistence depended largely on the ability of the British colonialists to play one ethnic group against the other” (p. 30). The ‘divide and conquer’ colonial tactic was employed by the colonists allowing for easier taking over and exploitation of resources. The above mentioned factors were widely explored in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

Nigerian societies agonised relentlessly under the despotic rule of the British colonialists. The colonialists’ ruthless dictatorship interfered with the social lives of the Nigerians and their greed for resources led them to putting in place practices that destroyed families. Customs and traditions were disapproved of by the settlers as a way of gaining total control over the black majority as underscored (Woodson, 1993). The British colonialists tampered with the minds of Africans in order to manipulate and control black societies. The introduction of their culture

and disapproval of black culture was aimed at eliminating black history and black culture and by extension affecting and influencing black people's communal lives and their link to nature and the environment.

The colonisers implemented a multitude of colonising schemes by setting up institutions that protected private properties and the extraction of minerals and raw materials. In some areas of Africa, the colonisers empowered the elite with education and skills to extract gold, silver and other valuable resources in countries such as Congo, Ghana and Burundi (Hrituleac, 2011). This was beneficial to the Europeans but it was detrimental to the colonized as colonialism encouraged conflicts amongst Africans. Hrituleac (2011) and Bulhan (2015) assert that "colonialism left behind enduring legacies that keep alive European domination" (p. 240-241).

The Nigeria- Biafra War was funded by the British with shipment of arms being availed in case there was need for use of force. Kirkpatrick (2015) notes "Britain is refreshing its efforts to end the war due to the threat of starvation of many civilians in Biafra and the continuing arms deals costing the country millions." France on the other hand also supported Biafra with hopes of favourable oil concessions in the event of victory against Nigeria (Draper, 1999, p. 185).

As noted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), black people were not educated on how to fully exploit their land for their own benefit. Crops failed season after season due to poor practice and crop management. The forced movement of Nigerians to areas with infertile land whilst the white minority hoarded the fertile land was also a contributing factor to the economic failure of black people. This encouraged the Igbo and Easterners to migrate to Northern Nigeria where the Northerners subsequently allocated themselves the top posts leaving the others to occupy meagre positions and this resulted in a revolt (Ojukwu, 1969, p. 299).

The coup resulted in the resentment of the Igbo by the Northerners and Westerners who plotted a countercoup in July 1966, funded by the British that saw the death of thousands of Igbo people. The mass murders, passivity of the Federal Government led to the secession of the Southeast into an independent republic called Biafra. The act of secession led to a civil war between Biafra and Nigeria that began in June 1967 and ended in 1970 resulting in the deaths of millions of Biafrans from starvation, majority of casualties being women and children. The links to the outside world were blocked by the federal troops as documented in *Half of Yellow Sun* (2006) who received support from western countries resulting in disease such as Kwashiorkor caused by shortage of food (Ojukwu, 1969). Colonialism is noted as being the major underwriter in the exploitation of women and the environment.

2.3.10 History of war in India

British presence India can be traced back to 1757 when the first merchants arrived in India for purposes of trade (Lyer, 2010) and acquired India from the Mughal Empire (Baber, 1996). India became an official British colony in 1876 and the breakdown of the Mughal Empire and the rise of British colonial power resulted from the intersection of internal and external, historical, conjectural and structural factors (Baber, 1996; De Sousa, 2008; Condos, 2016). Mercantilism as well as political and military control were the motivating factors behind the colonial expansion in the Indian subcontinent (Lloyd, 2008) and remained colonized for the next two hundred years (Lyer, 2010). India shares vast similarities and experiences with Nigeria in terms of patterns of colonisation such as cultural violence and use of religion in division and conquering of the people as discussed in section 2.3.8.

The British colonial government co-ordinated their economic and political objectives and ruled India which was one of the largest colonies land and population wise (Stokes, 1973). Due to the size of the colony, the British codified laws in terms of the rationalization of law to ensure uniformity and Bentham's liberal ideas of the rule of law and equality principles (Kolsky, 2010; De Sousa, 2008). The rule of laws was used against the locals to suppress uprisings and the British introduced the English language to strengthen its power and influence. The elite Indians remained biologically Indian but were culturally English through exposure to literature, culture and philosophy as explored in *The God of Small Things* (1997), similar to Nigeria whereby colonial education alienated individuals from their society in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

The Igbos and Hausa tribes in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) fought bitterly whilst the Hindus and Syrian Christians faced a major divide in *The God of Small Things* (1997), Badru (1998) concludes that "duration and persistence depended largely on the ability of the British colonialists to play one ethnic group against the other" (p. 30). The British sustained their colonial practices and presence through the application of divide and rule policies, colonial education and laws that discriminated against the locals promoting direct, structural and cultural violence amongst Indians (Galtung, 1969). The importance of religion in India was one of the first points that British colonialists targeted by inciting Hindus and Muslims against each other. The use of religion to create conflict resulted in millions of deaths, destruction of the economy and displacement of people (Lyer, 2010), putting in place caste divisions and class disparity among the Hindus. The education policy favoured Hindus and isolated Muslims resulting in the economic imbalance between the two religious sects.

The interference of the British in Indian education and religious affairs was delayed, initially they had no interest as they believed interference would compromise their political and commercial enterprise (Chopra, Puri and Das, 2003). Prior to British invasion, Indian school systems taught Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit and upon British arrival, the educational system was replaced by the British system which was a colonial motive (Chopra et al 2003; Nurullah & Naik, 1943). The English education system was designed for the elite and encouraged class distinction and engendered antagonism among Indian natives which fulfilled British domination and exploitation. Colonial education was recommended by the British in place of indigenous education and Thomas Babington Macaulay, an influential member of the Governor General's Council stated that:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern: a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class, we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees' fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (Macaulay, 1965, p. 116).

British education policies in India were an instrument of domination and a weapon of oppression to Indians. The system produced efficient workers such as clerks who helped the British collect revenue and further exploit the local cultures (De Sousa, 2008) as looked at in *The God of Small Things* (1997).

2.4 Gaps identified

From the foregoing, the gaps identified in the research area were as follows:

- this study recounted the effect of patriarchy on women and the environment in war fiction as a central yet under-researched thematic and ideological concern in contemporary literary criticism. The female characters in *The God of Small things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) suffer from the trauma and oppression of Western colonisation on both themselves and the environment.
- Mazumdar (2013) and Ojaruega (2013) have done extensive work to highlight the interconnections between humans and the environment from a postcolonial ecocriticism angle, Schwarz and Ray (2005) contributed to the body of literature prior to the earlier mentioned. This present research expanded further from the interconnections between humans and the environment by analysing the roles and contributions of women in the texts to environmental management and the family during war, from a postcolonial ecofeminist angle which is a fairly new perspective.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter 2 discussed the two theories, ecofeminism and postcolonialism and how the two theories may be merged and employed as the theoretical framework particularly for this study. In addition, other works that employed the two theories were highlighted and they provided a basis for which *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) could also be analysed. Related issues such as political unrest, cultures that amplify gender stereotypes

and how such influences affected women in relation to their environment, was also underlined.

These issues are amplified in the analysis of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) in Chapter 4 of this study. Using postcolonial and ecofeminist theoretical tenets, a character and thematic analysis of the novel was executed in response to the research objectives. The following chapter (Chapter 3) looks at the methodology that was used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 2) focused on the theoretical framework and literature review. This chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on the methodology and considers aspects such as the approach and design, population and sample as well as data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Approach and research design

Qualitative research is a pathway for exploring and understanding meaning individuals and groups impute to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). This study was qualitative as the delicate relationship that exists between the environment and human beings cannot be reduced to numbers hence the qualitative approach was the most appropriate approach for this study.

The researcher is the prime data gathering instrument whose role is to examine the issues under study and subsequently communicate the data in the form of words. Kothari (2004) asserts that, “the qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour” (p.5). This enables the researcher to pilot an inductive analysis of data and extricate information from a selection of sources, analyse and draw conclusions.

Maritz and Visagie (2006) note that good qualitative research methods focus on the research process and textual analysis is one of the tools to be put to use (p. 26). Two features of qualitative research design identified by Mason (2002) state that firstly, it is interpretative, meaning that it

is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of the social world. Lastly, it is both sensitive to social contexts in which the data is produced (p. 3). This differs from quantitative research methods that are designed for all studies by employing laid out formulas.

The qualitative approach was used on the merits that it is interpretative in nature, has the capability to provide an in-depth textual description and seeks to understand the qualities of social existence in literary texts such as *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). The study was limited to a desktop design due to the qualitative nature of the research therefore, there was not any field work.

3.3 Population

The population consisted all of postcolonial and ecofeminist literary texts written in English, that contain aspects relevant to ecofeminism. Research population according to Bhattacharjee (2012) is defined as all people or items (units of analysis) with the characteristics one hopes to study whereas, Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) define population as the entire set of objects and events or groups of people which is the object of research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics . Thus, the population of this study are all postcolonial literary texts that are from India and Africa written in English and share similar characteristics.

3.4 Sample

Purposive sampling was implemented as the researcher intentionally selected *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) from the total population as suitable texts to be

used in the proposed study as the texts are bound by common features of war in a postcolonial context and women's links to the environment. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) note that a sample is a total number of people allotted for research as it is representative of the total locale under study. The sample in this study was the two novels written by Roy (1997) and Adichie (2006) as the critical concepts of ecocriticism and postcolonialism were mutual in both texts, thus the chosen texts were similar from a thematic perspective thus allowing the fulfilment of the identified research objectives.

3.5 Procedure

In view of the fact that the study is based on critical reading of literary works related to the topic, data was collected through intense reading and critical analysis of the two novels *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997). The two novels were read against the research objectives and the literary analysis was based on the ecofeminist and postcolonial theories, in order to interpret the depiction of women characters as portrayed in the works.

The ecofeminist theory focuses, among other aspects, on issues relating to analysing women's status in society and the environment. The researcher considered relevant secondary sources which included journals, academic presentations, book reviews and works by literary critics. Furthermore, the sources complemented the analysis and facilitated a close and critical analysis of this study's topic. The chosen novels were analysed by applying the ecofeminism and post-colonial theories that formed the theoretical framework of this study, they were in addition

informed by the reviewed literature, and concluded in informed findings and judgements for the conclusions.

3.6 Data analysis

The proposed study employed content analysis to interpret and analyse the representation of the intrinsic relationship that exists between the environment and women in literary works. Content analysis was used as an approach to the study of the two novels, *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Content analysis is defined as “a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti as cited in Stemler, 2001, p. 1).

The use of thematic content analysis was used to identify portrayals that were significant to the research in both the novels in relation to the portrayal of women characters in relation to the environment. Khothari (2004) posits that, “content analysis consists of analysing the content of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and other content of all other verbal materials which can either be spoken or printed” (p. 110). The interpretation was done by the utilisation of both ecofeminist and postcolonial literary theories. According to Anderson (2010), data analysis is the interpretation and clarification of the data collected for the study. Data was then presented in narrative form and categorised according to themes. The findings were thus extracted from the interpretations and analysis, and they were used for the formulation of discussions and conclusions. The data was used to analyse the effects of patriarchy on women and nature from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective in war fiction. The

postcolonial and ecofeminist theories were implemented to interpret the data and the conclusions were presented in a narrative form.

3.7 Research ethics

The research was based on fictional works whose characters were of imaginative formation, thus did not involve human participants, and the novels were found in the public domain and the researcher considered not ridiculing the authors. Appropriate referencing was done and the researcher endeavoured to be objective by analysing the chosen texts based on the framing of ecofeminism and postcolonialism theories, as well as reporting different perspectives and contrary findings as presented in the chosen texts.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter (Chapter 3), focused mainly on the procedures that were used in the compilation of this research. The population and sample for this study were specified. Also noted were the considerations of research ethics that included and obligated the researcher not to ridicule the authors of the selected novels (sample) for this study. The next chapter (Chapter 4) focuses mainly on the in-depth and critical analysis of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) bound by ecofeminist and post-colonial frameworks, and as informed by the reviewed literature in Chapter 2, section 2.3 of this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* (1997) AND *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN* (2006)

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the selected novels *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) are analysed and discussed on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study and postcolonialism and ecofeminism as the theories. Sub-headings are used to focus on different themes and a summary of each text is provided first before the analysis of the novels. The chapter is divided into sections and the objectives that the study aimed to fulfil remain as follows:

- explore the unique presentation of environmental and women concerns in war-torn societies from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective in the selected texts;
- assess how the two novelists present the relationships between human beings and their environment as explored through the ecofeminist tenets; and
- explore how environmental issues are comparatively presented to reflect socio-cultural problems addressed in the selected novels.

4.2 *The God of Small Things* (1997) – Summary

The God of Small Things (1997) is centred on a family in 1969 Ayemenem in Kerala, India. The novel begins with a description of a lush green, a landscape engorged with delicious bursting fruit and an atmosphere of tranquillity and peace. A young Ammu, desperately wants to get away from the ill-treatment she is subjected to at the hands of her father, she manages to and moves away to stay with her aunt in Calcutta. It is a novel that focuses on subjugation of women in a patriarchal society. Ammu does not receive further education as her father Pappachi sees no value in educating a woman however, her brother Chacko receives colonial education from overseas. Chacko marries and divorces an English woman whom he has a daughter with, Sophie Mol. Sophie Mol drowns in the river Meenachal while in the company of the twins. Ammu in turn marries and divorces a Bengali Brahmin man in open defiance to her family. The treatment they both receive upon returning home as post-divorce differs greatly and highlights societal discrimination against women.

Ammu's return home from a broken marriage with two children in tow deprives her of any social prestige of position or rights. She rebels once more and enters into a relationship with Velutha, an 'untouchable'. This is forbidden in the conservative mind-set of her family members who view this act as unpardonable. The plot unfolds through Rahel who returns home to visit her brother Estha at the Ayemenem house as a thirty-one year old, the same age her mother died.

4.2.1 Women and environmental degradation in *The God of Small Things*

The female characters Ammu, Mammachi, Margaret and Rahel fight injustice and oppression in their refusal to be caged in the caste laws set by the conservative society of India. The justification of the obliteration of nature and domination of women characters as subjugated beings in the ongoing development of postcolonial India is highly critiqued by Roy (1997). Rahel's return to Ayemenem is greeted by rain which as an element gives new life to nature, is symbolic of new beginnings and acknowledges the complementarity that exists between humanity and the environment. Nature heals and rejuvenates and as such humanity is dependent on it, the water from the Meenachal River gives life to the plants as well as the residents of Ayemenem and is therefore a vital yet underappreciated feature in the novel.

The dreadful conditions of the Meenachal River in *The God of Small Things* (1997) can be ascribed as the opportunity cost of globalisation. The British settlers brought about the development of factories and the chemicals eradicated the macrocosm of biology that exists in the river and surroundings.

Once it had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent. It was just a slow sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying flowers. (Roy, 1997, p. 124)

Defecation into the river may allude to human kind's deliberate exploitation of the environment and comparable to the effect of patriarchy on society. "Despite that it was June, and raining, the river was no more than a swollen drain now. A thin ribbon of thick water that leaped wearily at the mud banks on either side, sequinned with the occasional silver slant of a dead fish" (Roy, 1997, p.125). The river had been sacrificed for rice, "So now they had two harvests a year

instead of one. More rice, for the price of a river” (Roy, 1997, p. 124). Oppression of women and men in the caste system is one of the major themes that prevails in this war fiction text.

Ammu, after a several beatings stands firm in her refusal to engage Babu’s request that would allow him to keep his job, she divorces him and returns to her parents’ home with the young children. She beats him with a book that she finds, with little remorse while he is in a drunken stupor. This act of defiance strips her of all rights in the conservative society that is heavily patriarchal. *The God of Small Things* (1997) echoes the effects of colonialism mainly on the colonised and environment, Mr Hollick who is Babu’s boss exercises hegemonic masculinity in his proposal to Babu.

Mr Hollick has a number of illegitimate children on the tea estate which is a practice frowned upon in the conservative society, exercising his feudal rights. Ammu is chastised together with her children at the funeral of Sophie Mol for being divorced with two children. Being an outcast, Ammu and her children were blamed for Sophie’s death.

On the back seat of the Plymouth, between Estha and Rahel, sat Baby Kochamma. Ex-nun, and an incumbent baby grand aunt. In the way that the unfortunate sometimes dislike the co-unfortunate, Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed, fatherless waifs. Worse still, they were Half-Hindu Hybrids who no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry. (Roy, 1997, p. 45)

The visual imagery painted of the town of Ayemenem in Chapter 1 is that of lush surroundings and fertile lands with red bananas ripening and jackfruit bursting (Roy, 1997 p. 1). The factory

is aptly named Paradise Pickles & Preserves and there were bright mangoes in still, dust green trees, the sentiments brought by this description were of a serene haven.

The novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) relates nature strongly to women in reference to the environment as “Mother Nature”. Warren (2000) states that prior to the seventeenth century, nature was conceived on an organic model as a benevolent female, a nurturing mother; after the scientific revolution, nature was conceived on a mechanistic model as a (mere) machine, inert, dead and on both models, nature was female.

The Earth is considered female evidenced in the history lesson that Chacko, the twins’ uncle gives them referring to nature as “Earth Woman”. Chacko tells the twins to imagine the earth as a forty-six year old woman who has spent her whole life cultivating all they see, the mountains, oceans and all of the earth’s organisms (Roy, 1997, p. 53-54). This bonds nature to women, which is similar to the process of birth, Mother Nature is fertile and reproduces, she, like the women characters in the text can also be exploited and subjugated.

In Chapter 4 of the novel, Rahel visits the Meenachal River which is a shadow of its former self. Monumental events have been associated with the once powerful river. Sophie Mol drowned in the river, Ammu and Velutha’s affair revolved around meeting near this river and it is considered the holder of secrets. Reser (2007) states that “environmental degradation is in large part caused by human behaviours and it directly affects health and well-being” (p. 2). The aftermath of colonization can be compared to the fish that survive the chemicals in the river “The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils.” (Roy, 1997, p. 13) Characters such as Mammachi after the death of Pappachi survive with the scars of oppression and survival of abuse.

Years later, when Rahel returned to the river, it greeted her with ghastly skull's smile, with holes where teeth had been, and a limp hand raised from a hospital bed. (Roy, 1997, p. 124)

The river is a symbol of life and rebirth, it played a significant role in the refinement of society. It nurtures and provides sustenance to human kind, similar to the traditional role of women in society. Ayemenem has benefitted greatly from the Meenachal River with the town receiving sustenance in the form of fish and other welfare. The once powerful Meenachal River is a drained and powerless reflective of the effects of colonisation whereby the colonisers claim and exploit the resources till depleted.

Colonisation brought about chemicals and industrial processes that destabilized harmony in the environment, "...the river banks that smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died" (Roy, 1997, p. 13). Patriarchal dominance has destroyed the female characters in similar ways that modernization has the Meenachal River.

Once it had had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent. It was just a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers. (Roy, 1997, p. 125)

The river is likened to a mother whose role is to traditionally nurture; however, it can be violent and lethal when provoked. Much like the trodden on and oppressed women characters in the text, the river 'rouses itself' at the end of each day to accept what it has been given and prepare for a new day. The people of Ayemenem use "unadulterated factory effluents" (Roy, 1997, p.

125) in the river water to wash their clothes, pots and bathe themselves with little to no consideration of the delicate ecosystem that is affected by the chemicals.

Children hung their bottoms over the edge and defecated directly onto the squelchy, sucking mud of the exposed river bed. The smaller ones left their dribbling mustard streaks to find their own way down. Eventually, the river would rouse itself to accept the day's offerings and splurge off to the sea, leaving wavy lines of thick white scum in its wake. (Roy, 1997, p. 125)

Occasionally, something inside of Ammu would awaken when she sat by the river listening to her transistor. The river serves as a therapeutic device that in nurturing, reawakening and healing the wounds of 'divorcehood', a death on its own. Ammu's character has a surface calm that hides a cauldron of emotions beneath, in Chapter 2, she beats Babu senselessly with a book before leaving with her two children. The river veils her secrets with Velutha as their affair takes place close to the river under the cover of night, it holds secrets of a life lost and of the secrets of the god of small things.

What was it that gave Ammu this Unsafe Edge? This air of unpredictability? It was what she had battling inside her. An unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber. It was this that eventually led her to love by night the man her children loved by day. To use by night the boat her children used by day. The boat that Estha sat on, and Rahel found. (Roy, 1997, p.72)

The effects of Rahel's upbringing stay with her forever. She fails to commit herself to aspects of life such as employment, marriage or education. She has temporary connections that will not destabilize her once removed. The only stable connection she has is with Estha, her twin brother and twin soul.

In those early amorphous years when memory had only just begun, when life was full of beginnings and no Ends, and Everything was For Ever, Estha and Rahel thought of themselves together as Me, and separately, individually, as We or Us. As though they were a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities. (Roy, 1997, p. 2)

They dreamt with each other and sensed each other's presence from behind closed doors. The interconnectedness between the twins may be likened to links between women and nature according to Reuther (1975).

4.2.2 Marginalisation, gender oppression and trauma

The female characters in this novel suffer oppression and marginalization at the hands of male characters, from the young Rahel to the older Mammachi. Ammu divorces husband, Babu for her own safety and is rejected by society and on her return home. A failed marriage in conservative Indian culture is frowned upon as a financial burden on the family. Rahel suffers the same fate when she returns to Ayemenem at the age of thirty-one with a divorce to her name.

“We, re divorced.” Rahel hoped to shock him into silence. “Die-vorced? His voice rose in such a high register that it cracked on the question mark. He even pronounced the words as though it was some form of death.” (Roy, 1997, p. 130).

This exchange between Rahel and Comrade Pillai which further reflects the rigidity of Indian society and expectations of women in comparison to men. Comrade Pillai likens divorce to death, a clear indication of a patriarchal mind-set with strong inclinations towards ownership of women and their lack of voice. His method of inquiry into Rahel’s life is incessant and blunt, bordering on discourteous. Patriarchal societies breed practices that allow male figures in society right of and superiority over female figures, Comrade Pillai has a sense of entitlement evidenced in the exchange below:

“Mol’s husband?” he wanted to know.

“Hasn’t come.”

“Any photos?”

“No.”

“Name?”

“Larry. Lawrence.”

“*Oower*. Lawrence.” Comrade Pillai nodded as though he agreed with it. As though given a choice, it was the very one he would have picked. (Roy, 1997, p. 130)

According to Okome (2013), colonialism destabilised the position of women within their society and relegated women to the perimeters of the household. Western colonialists eroded the cultures of the lands they seized, the men then emulated what they perceived beneficial to them and subsequently took over the position of exploiting the women and excluding them from systems of administration. This is highlighted in the lives of women characters in *The God of Small Things* (1997).

Female characters are shown as ‘other’ and ‘the marginalised’ throughout the text. The men according to nature tend to be providers and protectors. In the novel, we see the roles being reversed and Mammachi becomes a provider through her pickle factory. Chacko’s failure as a business person is masked and not brought to the surface to protect his masculinity and Pappachi is evidenced as displaying misplaced anger and frustration on his wife due his insecurities about the age difference they have and his envy of her success. Earlier in the text, his jealousy and envy are once again brought to the surface through the discontinuation of his wife’s violin lessons after hearing good remarks from her instructor.

“Pappachi, for his part, was having trouble coping with the ignominy of retirement. He was seventeen years older than Mammachi and realized with a shock that he was an old man when his wife was still in her prime” (Roy, 1997, p. 47).

Mammachi experiences patriarchal domination in the form of economic oppression from both Pappachi and Chacko. Dualistic and hierarchical features are oppressive in nature, this hierarchy sees Pappachi being succeeded by Chacko in the economic exploitation of Mammachi. The factory is run like a big kitchen before Chacko takes over and commercializes it, resigning Mammachi to a ‘sleeping partner’. Women’s knowledge is used but not recognized

and has been excluded from dominant economic means of production. The economic contributions of Ammu and Mammachi towards the family are minimised and unacknowledged for purposes of preserving the male ego.

Mammachi and Ammu have in the past, suffered at the hands of Pappachi who resorts to violence to mask his inferiority complex rooted in Mammachi's talent and success. Pappachi is envious of the flourishing pickle factory, he experiences limited success in his career and is depicted as a tyrant. His character "...wouldn't allow Mammachi or anyone else in the family to use it, or even sit in it. The Plymouth was Pappachi's revenge" (Roy, 1997, p. 48) against his reprisal for his abusive ways.

Pappachi discovered a moth which was mistakenly "...identified as slightly unusual race of a well-known species that belonged to the tropical family Lymantriidae" (Roy, 1997, p.49). Twelve years later, the moth was indeed identified as "...a separate species and genus hitherto unknown to science" (Roy, p. 49), the discovery was then named after another entomologist whom Pappachi despised. The moth incident is viewed as the root cause of all his violent outbursts and violence that he perpetrates on the female characters.

A week after he arrived, he found Pappachi beating Mammachi in the study. Chacko strode into the room, caught Pappachi's vase-hand and twisted it around his back.

I never want this to happen again, he told his father. Ever. (Roy, 1997, p. 48)

Chacko manages to end the physical abuse his mother has been at the receiving end of for years however, the emotional abuse begins in the form of silent protests. Suppression of women and the environment takes on different forms, Pappachi "...never touched Mammachi again. But

he never spoke to her either as long as he lived” (p. 48), this can be cited as emotional abuse by a male figure. At Pappachi’s funeral, Ammu explains to the twins that Mammachi is experiencing withdrawal symptoms of the abuse she has grown accustomed to and the presence of Pappachi and “humans are creatures of habit” (Roy, 1997, p. 50). Mammachi mourning is a sign of submission to the male figure, a sign that a male dominated society views men as the ultimate authority. Male figures have authority over sexual, economic, political and physical power over the women, the environment and children.

Ammu exhibits more strength of character as she fights Babu’s abuse by leaving him while on the contrary, Mammachi endures the abuse and is withdrawing from the loss of the toxicity she had become accustomed to “...and was used to being beaten from time to time” (Roy, p. 50). Ammu’s character has been the biggest victim of the patriarchal society she exists in, all three male figures in her life have inflicted some harm, whether intentional or otherwise. Her etymologist father is dismissive, her husband is physically abusive and her brother exploits her, showing her very little love and consideration. Being victims of the colonist regime themselves, they continually abuse the female characters and were generally alienated from the family.

Ammu’s husband Babu is a pathological liar and drunk who physically abuses her. He betrays her by being his willingness to sacrifice her dignity to his boss in exchange for his job, expecting Ammu to make a sacrifice for his poor choices. Hollick reasons that it is if “viewed practically, in the long run it was a proposition that would benefit both of them, he said. In fact all of them, if they considered the children’s education” (Roy, 1997, p. 41). Ammu eventually leaves him but not before he permanently bruises her self-esteem.

A woman who returns home from her marriage is not welcomed with open arms, as evidenced in Ammu's case. In poor families, she is viewed as a financial burden, a continued marriage is a source of financial stability for the family. Women were essentially 'sold' as a source of income and in exchange for dowry and other benefits for the family, as the family claims ownership as they were victims of objectification.

Gender discrimination is clearly exhibited in *The God of Small Things* (1997) especially in reference to children, marriages and divorces. Babu is Bengali-Hindu and Ammu, a Syrian Christian, there is a religious division between the two sects. Chacko is a Syrian Christian and Margaret Kochamma is an English woman and society ironically views this union as acceptable and admirable. "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed fatherless waifs" (Roy, 1997, p. 45) and therefore they received discriminatory treatment. In juxtaposition, Mammachi refers to Sophie Mol in conversation with Kochu Maria as 'our Sophie Mol', 'a beach coloured angel' and being 'very beautiful' despite her being non-Syrian Christian (Roy, 1997, p. 178). Exposure to colonial education has led them to disassociate themselves from their roots. The women were victims of a colonial and patriarchal society where domination of women, children and the environment were the norm.

The deciding factor on the treatment of divorced individuals is gender, as is the case of Ammu and Chacko. Both characters were divorced with two and one child respectively, the male characters and culture accorded a higher status than that identified with females, children or nature. Both characters were guilty of the same crime of exogamy resulting in divorce however the double standards that exist in Indian society pardon the male figure and consequently alienate the female figure.

Mammachi is an enabler of Chacko's feudal rights and his claim of women's bodies with no judgement from society. "He can't help having a Man's Needs" (Roy, 1997, p. 168) is the justification Mammachi gives Baby Kochamma and they both resign themselves to this explanation. They venture away from analysing the contradiction between Chacko's Marxist mind and feudal libido. Different standards were held for men and women as evidenced by the nonchalant indulgence of Chacko's behaviour below, indicative of gender discrimination and double standards. Mammachi condones his relations with low-caste female workers at the factory and in the village, who were viewed as low risk as compared to the male low-caste workers such as Velutha.

One door connected it to the main house and another (the separate entrance that Mammachi had installed for Chacko to pursue his 'Men's Needs' discreetly) led directly out into the side mittam. (Roy, 1997, p. 238)

In the events leading up to Velutha's succumbing to his wounds from police brutality, Ammu is ostracized and isolated in one of the rooms in the Ayemenem House. Upon Velutha's death, Ammu is left to deal with the consequences of their actions. Her place of comfort and solace is snatched from her and her happiness short-lived. Indian culture is largely patriarchal in nature thus favours the male characters as evidenced in *The God of Small Things* (1997), the only place to go back to for Ammu is Ayemenem after her divorce to live out her shame. To the rest of society, she is the divorced woman with a sex scandal who engages with the 'Untouchables' in society, bringing shame to her family.

Roy (1997) highlights figures of power who abuse their positions, Inspector Thomas Matthew's violation of Ammu by tapping her breasts is an example of intimidation and

gender oppression. The female characters in the text had no voice and were subjugated which is synonymous with colonisation and an effect of war.

Baby Kochamma is a victim of a patriarchal society, Reverend Ipe sends her to a university to acquire an education due to the understanding that her reputation being in tatters would unlikely aid her in securing a husband. The bitterness originates from the rejection by Father Mulligan, a visiting priest who managed to “recognize the sexual excitement that rose like a tide in the slender girl who hovered around the table long after lunch had been cleared away” (Roy, 1997, p. 23.), yet was not flattered adequately enough to act on the advances of the young girl.

In Chapter 4 in the novel, Ammu, Rahel and Baby Kochamma have a brief moment of unity and civility in the bathrooms at the cinema in Cochin where they take turns to use the facilities. There is a brief moment of humility when “Rahel was too short to balance in the air above the bot, so Ammu and Baby Kochamma held her up, her legs hooked over their arms” (Roy, 1997, p. 95). This moment of unity is followed by laughter among the three which is a rarity “Rahel giggled. Ammu giggled. Baby Kochamma giggled” (Roy, 1997, p. 95). Baby Kochamma temporarily suspends her bitterness and hatred towards Ammu and Rahel for a moment feel loved by Ammu.

Rahel liked all this. Holding the handbag. Everyone pissing in front of everyone. Like friends. She knew nothing then, of how precious a feeling this was. *Like friends*. They would never be together like this again. Ammu, Baby Kochamma and she. When Baby Kochamma finished, Rahel looked at her watch. ‘So long you took, Baby Kochamma, ’she said. ‘It’s ten to two. (Roy, 1997, p. 95)

This memory stands frozen in time, the calm before the storm of Estha's life changing molestation, Sophie Mol's death and all other events that shape and change their lives forever.

The encounter between Rahel and Estha leaves Baby Kochamma delighted that he is indifferent towards his twin sister as to the rest of the world.

She was delighted that Estha had not spoken to Rahel. That he had looked at her and walked straight past. Into the rain. As he did with everyone else. She was eighty-three. Her eyes spread like butter behind her thick glasses. (Roy, 1997, p. 20)

The perpetrators of violations against women and the environment were as evidenced not confined to male figures alone, Baby Kochamma has taken on the role of an antagonist against other women characters like Ammu and Rahel. The women have all been victims of patriarchy in conservative Ayemenem and are forced to assume roles assigned to them by society. Oppression among the characters in the caste system is one of the major themes that prevails in this war fiction text through the ill-fated inter-caste love of Velutha and Ammu.

The molestation of Estha by the Orange drink Lemon drink man is another highlight of male domination, the word of a man against a child would be hard to dispute hence patriarchy favours the men in society while exploiting and oppressing the weak. The trauma of that event slowly eats away at Estha till he finally stops speaking completely and blends into the shadows.

Effects of colonialism were shown through characters such Hollick who father many children through violating women with no care to take responsibility for their actions thereafter (Roy, 1997). Babu abuses Ammu during the marriage and later moves to Australia leaving his

responsibility in the form of Estha behind. Male dominance in this case transcends boundaries of colour as both the coloniser and colonised share common traits.

4.2.3 Subalternity in *The God of Small Things*

The Ayemenem House situated in the countryside is surrounded by ‘small things’ which are creatures and their activities, providing a world of biological elements. This reflects the intertwining of humans to their environment and the delicate relationship that exists.

The wild overgrown garden was full of the whisper and scurry of small lives. In the undergrowth a rat snake rubbed itself against a glistening stone. Hopeful yellow bullfrogs cruised the scrummy pond for mates. A drenched mangoose flashed across the leaf strewn driveway. (Roy, 1997, p.1-2).

The caste laws of Indian society forbid Paravans and Syrian Christians from inter mingling. Ammu and Velutha dare to challenge subalternity subconsciously in their forbidden and ominous caste love affair, Ammu through rebellion against her family and Velutha through his work at the pickle factory. Subalterns’ inability to speak up for themselves in the face of the oppressors’ tyranny is carried from generation to generation.

Velutha’s capentry skills were acknowledged by Mammachi in her employment of him at the factory however, “she paid Velutha less than she would a Touchable carpenter but more than she would a Paravan” (Roy, p.77). He is discriminated against and “Mammachi rehired Velutha as the factory carpenter and put him in charge of general maintenance. It caused a great deal of resentment among the other Touchable factory workers because, according to

them, Paravans are not *meant* to be carpenters” (Roy, 1997, p. 77). Classism alienates the workers and feeds the class divisions and animosity, an expected by-product of colonial education.

Rahel and Estha’s fondness of Velutha is frowned upon however, “in the months since he returned, they had grown to be the best of friends” (Roy, p. 78). Velutha was forbidden from entry into the Ayemenem House unless it is wholly necessary, the children in turn “were forbidden from visiting his house, but they did” (Roy, p. 78). Ammu’s affair with the man her children loved by day and whom she loved by night. Vellya Paapen, Velutha’s father makes the dreaded discovery of the affair that results in Velutha’s death.

Not until he saw, night after night, a little boat being rowed across the river. Not until he saw it return at dawn. Not until he saw what his Untouchable son had touched.

More than touched. (Roy, 1997, p. 78)

Velutha’s death highlights the level of betrayal among the colonised people who develop a distorted sense of identity, culture and beliefs which are imposed by the coloniser who considers this a superior normative. Vellya Paapen shows detachment from his son as evidenced in his report to Mammachi. “He asked God’s forgiveness for having spawned a monster. He offered to kill his own son with his own bare hands” (Roy, p. 78). The manipulation of the colonised leads to a belief system that is in awe of the coloniser, as evidenced above.

The servile attitude shown towards Margaret Kochamma, Sophie Mol by Chacko, Mammachi and Baby Kochamma emphasizes the perspective that attributes special value to westerners

and the classes considered superior. Mammachi has a soft spot for Sophie Mol and persistently hopes that she has Pappachi's nose, celebrating her foreign looks and colouring. The comparison of the grandchildren constantly glorified Sophie Mol and disregarded the age difference that the children had, which realistically explained the discrepancies in developmental milestones.

Colour consciousness, a product of colonialism and the glorification of western ways is a notable theme in *The God of Small Things* (1997). Baby Kochamma embodies the power structure that has been put in place by the coloniser to weaken the colonised. She is an extension of the coloniser by performing the destructive tasks of the colonisers in their absence. Chacko has consciousness of the erosion of history by the coloniser and western ways which is cultivated by colonial education and consciousness to colonisation in *The God of Small Things* (1997). British colonisers aimed to destroy this consciousness through colonial tactics such as introduction of religion that pitted tribes against one another such as the Hindus and Muslims and created religious unrest

Chacko acknowledges that they were a family of Anglophiles, pointed in the wrong direction and trapped in their own history. His marriage to Margaret Kochamma was a manifestation of the alienation and resentment of one's own heritage. He further explains that colonisation has locked the characters out of their own history "...we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war" (Roy, p. 53). The war spoken of is symbolic of colonialism and its destruction of culture and isolation of the colonised from their history. He further goes on to say;

We are prisoners of war...Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore. Our sorrows may never be sad enough. Our joys never happy enough. Our dreams never big enough. Our lives never important enough to matter. (Roy, 1997, p. 53)

Ammu and Baby Kochamma experience the British colonisers in vastly different ways. Mr Hollick is true to form, exploitative and a coloniser whilst Father Mulligan is receptive to Baby Kochamma's admiration for him without exploiting the situation. Father Mulligan's character shows that some British colonisers do have good intentions, much like Richard's character in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). The female characters were subjugated to the cruelty and abuse of patriarchal society in conservative India.

Rahel's failure to function in society and Estha's silence were symbolic of subalterns' failure to engage and lack of a voice in society. Her lack of ambition and rebellion to societal expectation draws equivalence to Estha's refusal to pursue higher education and his silence. Estha's character's rebellion may be interpreted as a novice method of protest against society, Ammu's marriage, divorce and subsequent affair with an Untouchable reflect strong insurgence against expectations.

Subaltern's show of strength of character is highlighted when Ammu returns to the society she had left behind eagerly. "For she herself knew that there would be no more chances. There was only Ayemenem now, a front veranda, and a back veranda, a hot river and a pickle factory" (Roy, p. 43). The temporary escape of marriage still carried the negative burden of toxic masculinity, the myopic society still held hostage in the illusion of the coloniser's chivalry.

4.2.4 Colonial education

Colonial education was a tool of colonisation (Falola, 2007), characters such as Chacko and Pappachi in *The God of Small Things* (1997) may be deemed victims of colonial education. The characters in *The God of Small Things* (1997) were victims in their interpretation and treatment of women, children and the environment around them. Colonial education like any colonial subsidiaries had no righteous purpose on orients (the colonised).

Pappachi, an Imperial Entemologist turned Joint Director of Entemology after the exit of the British settlers struggles with jealousy and pride. His identity is tied to his occupation and upon retirement, fails to assimilate himself back into his society and family resulting in his isolation. His envy of Mammachi's success at the pickle factory has developed into hatred towards his family and surrounding environment. "The beatings weren't new. What was new was the frequency with which they took place" (Roy, p. 47-48). In *The God of Small Things* (1997), abuse of the family matriarch leads to family disintegration as a ripple effect of colonial forces inevitable spilling into the social circles of its victims and colonial education encourages domination of women and exploitation of the environment.

Though Mammachi had conical corneas and was already practically blind, Pappachi would not help her with the pickle-making, because he did not consider pickle making a suitable job for a high-ranking ex-Government official. He had always been a jealous man, so he greatly resented the attention his wife was suddenly getting. (Roy, 1997, p 47)

Chacko, had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and his colonial education had rendered him knowledgeable and wise in a society that places learned men on a pedestal. A former lecturer at the Madras Christian College, he is deemed capable to make decisions at the pickle factory however, in true patriarchal form he manages to take over from Mammachi. He views himself as more qualified and efficient as the factory is his inheritance in his view.

Chacko's colonial education leads him have the pickle company "...registered as a partnership and informed Mammachi that she was a sleeping partner" (Roy, p. 57), essentially strong arming her out of her business. His superiority towards family members and the factory staff isolates him from his society. This further cements the view that colonial education was put in place to isolate individuals from their families as argued by Mart (2011).

In Chapter 2 of the novel, as Chacko and the twins drive in the sky-blue Plymouth, he quotes a book that he has read. This behaviour has been normalized and he "was permitted excesses and eccentricities nobody else was" (Roy, p. 38). His conversation with the twins regarding Pappachi being an Anglophile further cements his disconnection to his own identity and surrounding environment. He discusses human civilization and how the world came to be, the twins were fascinated by his knowledge but envision the History House in their minds.

Chacko uses his Reading Aloud voice (Roy, p. 54) in Ammu's view and she called them his "Oxford Moods" (Roy, p. 54).

Chacko is alienated from his reality even through his mental processes and may be viewed as a success story on the side of colonialism. He seems adamant in remaining colonised and does not recognize the hold the coloniser has over his point of views. Ammu remarks dryly that

Chacko married his conqueror and he ignores this and continues with his narrative of history to the twins.

The factory experiences changes implemented by Chacko, from the name to the purchase of machinery without the consent or approval of Mammachi or Ammu. The women do all the work and Mammachi "...just ran it like a large kitchen" (p. 57), meanwhile Chacko sees this operation as unbefitting of his standard. He seems eager to amend everything to a standard he deems acceptable at any cost, belittling her hard work. Much like a coloniser, Chacko finds the factory a profitable and successful enterprise and exploits the resources to the ground.

He invested I equipment...and expanded the labour force. Almost immediately, the financial slide began, but was artificially buoyed by the extravagant bank loans that Chacko raised by mortgaging the family's rice-fields around the Ayemenem House. (Roy, 1997, p. 57)

Ammu, a victim of colonial education in multiple ways, she is a victim of the victims of colonial education. She is eager to leave home due to the alienation and indifference her family projects towards her as her eighteenth birthday comes and goes unnoticed. Her future looks bleak and she grows desperate to escape "...from Ayemenem and the clutches of her ill-tempered father and bitter, long-suffering mother" (Roy, p. 39) to a distant relative in Calcutta. Colonial education is designed to make individuals in society detest their homes as evidenced in Ammu's character and this highlight the socio-cultural problems in the novel.

Ammu, the female protagonist in this text rebels against boundaries that threaten to confine her, "Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl..."

(Roy,p.38), the view of female children by society as a needless expenditure due to eventually leaving the family for marriage. Pappachi, a victim of colonial education “...even in the stifling Ayemenem heat, every single day, Pappachi wore a well-pressed three-piece suit and his gold pocket watch” (Roy, p.49).

The value system of characters like Pappachi is attached to western standards thus isolating himself from his family and his society. The system of colonialism and manipulation by the coloniser leads to disintegration of families and is synonymous with patriarchy. It is through the capacity of literary representation that colonialism is exposed as a substantial contributor to environmental degradation and manipulation of families through exposure to colonial education.

Ammu’s husband Babu comes from a once wealthy family of zamindars originating from Bengal and “He hadn’t been to college which accounted for his schoolboy humour” (p. 39). Babu exhibits entitlement and exploitative behaviour throughout the text towards Ammu and the children. The empowerment of the male child over the female reflects on the existence of colonial oppression as the coloniser ideologies remain in effect in a postcolonial era as evidenced in Pappachi’s decision to cut Ammu’s education short. Ammu fights the victimisation “...her walk changed from a safe mother-walk to another wilder sort of walk” (Roy, p. 44). She isolates herself from society as “She spent hours on the riverbank with her little plastic transistor shaped like a tangerine. She smoked cigarettes and had midnight swims” (Roy, p. 44), indicating a rift naissance between Ammu and her family. She repeatedly isolates herself from her family and they were feeling the distance hence “...people avoided her, made little loops around her, because everybody agreed that it was

best to just Let Her Be” (Roy, p. 45). She feels like an outcast and isolates herself though she is within reach of her close family.

The actions of Chacko illustrate the magnitude of the influence of his colonial education, his desperation to amend the factory show evidence of his discomfort with being linked to his environment. He has appointed himself the full beneficiary of the factory, fully exploiting his inheritance while Mammachi is still alive due to entitlement. He fully claims the business with no regard for Ammu who works just as hard, Ammu is aware of her standing as a woman in a conservative patriarchal Indian society, “Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society” (Roy, p. 57). Ammu’s insight denotes the dynamic operations of colonialism, injustices of a male dominated society and Chacko’s actions further provoke family disintegration in an already fragile setup.

4.3 *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) - Summary

The novel is set in Nigeria in the 1960s and looks to explore trauma, specifically the effects of the Biafran War, its impact on the middleclass Igbo women and the environment. The plot is unravelled through Ugwu, the houseboy, a young man who stands representative of the poor people of the outlying villages; Olanna, a twin and city born-and-bred daughter of a wealthy family who highlights the ways of the privileged and lastly, Richard, a white ex-patriot and partner to Olanna’s twin sister Kainene. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a symbol on the Biafra flag, the Igbo people had designed it to be a flag for their new nation. It is symbolic of a ray of hope for a new nation of the Igbo people where all struggles cease.

The novel explores relationships and politics in an era of social and political unrest. Odenigbo, an intellectual who is part of the highly educated subset and radical revolutionary believes that southern Nigeria can possibly become an independent country called Biafra. After Biafra's declaration of secession, a civil war breaks out. The text takes us to a dire situation whereby people are dying of hunger, children were conscripted into the war with inadequate training and women were raped by soldiers. As the war progresses, the focus ceases from being about the north/south conflict and in turn becomes centred on tribes, the Igbo people suffer great losses as they were massacred in the struggle.

4.3.1 Women's roles in postcolonial Nigeria

The women characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (1997) have a similar but slightly different experience to the women characters in *The God of Small Things* (2006) by virtue of being African. African societies prior to colonisation had empowered and wealthy women, the bride price paid for them gave women economic leverage that kept them independent and free of oppression due to dependency on male figures Msafropolitan (2013).

The text focuses on the changing roles of the female characters during the Biafran War in a patriarchal society, women were excluded from the decision-making process and Adichie illustrates the need for the recognition and acknowledgement of women's gendered experience of the war Sjoberg (2013). Olanna's mother-in-law visit to their home was reflective of private patriarchy and the internalisation of patriarchy. Mama attempts to re-socialize Olanna according to the set patterns of patriarchy and to realize that her position in the family is low

and temporary. Baby Kochamma in *The God of Small Things* (1997) embodies the internalisation of patriarchy as the aunt who the oppression of other female characters such as Ammu and Rahel. Mama is displeased with the standard of living her son is subjected to and Mama's character is discriminatory and condescending.

He will not marry an abnormal woman, unless you kill me first. Only over my dead body!" Master's mother clapped her hands then hooted and slapped her palm across her mouth so that the sound echoed. (Adichie, 2006, p. 122)

Olanna experiences negative judgement of her 'womanhood' from Odenigbo's elderly mother, Mama who is of the notion that women who have received too much schooling were ruined as women. Mama belongs to the older generation of the patriarchal Nigeria and has the belief that women should never be at the same educational ranks as men "...And on top of it, her parents sent her to university. Why? Too much schooling ruins a woman; everyone knows that. It gives a woman a big head and she will start to insult her husband. What kind of wife will that be?" (Adichie, 2006 p. 123).

Kainene embodies western values such as smoking and being with Richard, a British man. This deviation from African customs is symbolic of the effects of colonial education resulting in the alienation of the character from their own society and traditional values. Ammu is criticized for marrying a Hindu man in *The God of Small Things* (1997) and her children are described as half-breeds. This is contradicted by Chacko's character in *The God of Small Things* (1997) who is also highly educated as has "Oxford moods" (Roy, 1997, p. 54) , a half British daughter and his eccentric nature is tolerated with little to no discrimination from society. Richard's description of Kainene as having the appearance of a politician's mistress because of her

“brazenly red lipstick, her tight dress and her smoking” (Adichie, 2006, p. 71). Kainene’s character does not conform to the stereotype as she is a business woman who is involved in public spheres. Richard learns with time that he is replaceable and disposable and this realisation is not received well as he expects her to be a passive caretaker ascribed to women during wartime. Richard comes to the realisation that:

Seeing her in Lagos, in brief meetings at the hotel, he had not realized that hers was a life that ran fully and would run fully even if he was not in it...Her work came first, she was determined to make her father’s factories grow, to do better than he had done.
(Adichie, 2006, p. 78)

Women in postcolonial Nigeria were expected to be married and be mothers soon after marriage as related in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Children were the next logical step as a child identified a ‘real’ woman from a spoilt one and lack of children was perceived as a sin. The characters of Olanna and Kainene do not subscribe to this agenda both are childless due to education and family structure that allows for alternative choices. Olanna experiences private patriarchy from Odenigbo’s mother whose position as the mother-in-law is threatened by her daughter-in-law’s noncompliance with tradition as well as her independence, this is viewed as defiance and disrespect.

Hassan (1995) identified that the mother-in-law suppresses her daughter-in-law in order to secure her position in the family, this is due to a perceived diminishing of respect and importance in the family if the younger woman is to take over. “Mama---” Olanna said. “Don’t mama me,” Master’s mother said (Adichie, p. 123), an exchange between Olanna and her mother-in-law reflects the degree of insecurity. Mama projects dislike towards the educated and

unapologetic woman her son has chosen. This outburst is an attempt to retain control and authority over the household Sharma (2007) and is synonymous with the internalization of patriarchy in families. Ammu's character in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) is fairly hostile and combative towards Margaret Kochamma in an effort to ascertain her position in the family, patriarchy contributes to the behaviours of the characters in this manner.

In a typical African family, a man and/or marriage is viewed as a source of income or economic survival tool according to Packer & Reckdenwald, (2008). *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) underscores the interdependence between humans and their environment. Although the women are entrapped by both the patriarchal and colonial system, they are not portrayed as passive victims. Olanna's agency lies in her ability to teach children at refugee camp during the progression of the war. Her friend Alice at the camp tells her: "I don't know how you do it, keeping everything together and teaching children and all that. I wish I were more like you" (Adichie, 2006, p. 335). In comparison, Ammu exhibits great agency in attempting to maintain a healthy upbringing for her two children who are naïve and love blindly in a world that might potentially hurt them (Roy, 1997). This ability to adapt comes from the ability to eliminate pain and remain human while enduring the war.

4.3.2 Gender trauma and identity during conflict

Women characters experience gender trauma throughout *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), a struggle the female characters seek freedom from. In war fiction, the women, children and environment become the most vulnerable group. They are victims of rape, exploitation, hunger, disease,

death and humiliation in the domestic sphere and Johnson (1980) states that the Nigerian-Biafran war was indeed “a horrific and traumatic experience whose shock waves were felt throughout the Nigerian federation” (Adichie, p. 149).

Women were victims whose violation was celebrated as victories in wars notably so when they were from across enemy lines yet they exhibited perseverance in overcoming their difficulties. Men who do not participate in combat employ defensive mechanisms in an effort to preserve their masculinity therefore were likely to be the perpetrators of trauma and abuse (Sjoberg, 2013) against women and the environment.

Odenigbo’s character experienced a decline due to inability to provide for his family and defend them from horrors of the war as well as the murder of his mother by Northern soldiers. Odenigbo “no longer went into the interior with the Agitator Corps, no longer returned with lit-up eyes. Instead he went to Tanzania Bar every day and came back with a taciturn set to his mouth” (Adichie, 2006, p. 404). Pappachi’s character in *The God of Small Things* (1997) experiences a decline due to the moth he discovered being credited to someone else

Olanna assumed the role of head of the family at this point out of necessity. The civil war continued to “disrupt socialized female codes of behaviour” by placing women in positions that were superior among the men at home (Pape, 2011, p.51). A large portion of the trauma experienced can be attributed to the colonisation of Nigeria by the British.

Gender roles intensify during conflict and the female form often becomes the first target for violent interventions (Shringarpure, 2015), in *Half of a Yellow Sun* the victimized

representation of the female body is replaced by a narrative of ‘autonomy and agent of resistance’ (Shringarpure, 2015, p. 38) through the female characters.

The war reduces nations to economically unstable warzones with changing value systems and beliefs. Olanna’s new position as head of the family forced her to consider the survival of her family, she went to the relief centre daily to secure provisions to sustain them. Gender roles ceased to exist despite an inner conflict with herself despite the belief that “she was doing something improper, unethical: expecting to get food in exchange for nothing” (Adichie, 2006, p. 343).

Olanna and Kainene possess different character traits despite being twins, Kainene adopted the role of communal provider whilst Olanna was concerned with provisions for her nuclear family. This new role left Kainene with “a manic vibrancy about her, about the way she left for the refugee camp each day, about the exhaustion that shadowed her eyes when she returned in the evenings” (Adichie, 2006, p. 401). The character of Kainene experienced a shift in values and beliefs which is synonymous with traumatic experiences. Ammu amid her divorce and subsequent move back home assumes the role of protector to her children (Roy, 2006).

The Biafra war highlights the strength of the women which is oppressed in patriarchal societies, their ability to provide and rise above adversity is brought to the forefront. Their gender performance is brought forward by conflict and they start to recognize their potential within their communal spheres (Adichie, 2006). Whilst Kainene experiences positive feelings in regard to her new role, Olanna has a fairly opposite reaction as she feels rage at the confinement to her new reality.

The victim mind-set within her dies and strength and courage prevail, allowing her the realization of her own agency. The twins become empowered by their newfound realisation of their potential and refusal to conform to the gender roles and expectations of masculine society (Adichie, 2006, p. 351).

Education plays an important role in the level of trauma female characters experienced as well as how they handled the situations they experienced. The characters of Olanna and Kainene possessed tertiary education and were second degree holders, were highly educated and their level of education became the bulwark against the oppressive cultural expectations that exacerbated their subjugation (Adichie, 2006).

The female protagonists dealt with the obstacles they faced in their lives such as the irresponsibility and transgressions of their male significant others with strength. Olanna's betrayal of Odenigbo when she cheated with Richard in retaliation to his affair is described as having made her feel the freedom to be and liberated that:

“It made her feel like she was throwing shackles off her wrists, extracting pins from her skin, freeing herself...Afterwards, she felt filled with a sense of well-being, with something close to grace” (Adichie, 2006, p. 234).

Women live in societies that enforce gender trauma and oppression, marriage being the primary oppressive structure that hinders progress and encourages the domination of women and the environment. Olanna tied her identity to Odenigbo and other aspects of her life like Baby, her family and his postcolonial theories on tribes.

Olanna later ties her identity to motherhood, she feels insecure in her identity as an Igbo woman due to her upbringing that is peppered with western ways. Her attachment to Odenigbo worried her to a point where “She wished she could love him without needing him. Need gave power without his trying: need was the choicelessness she often felt around him” (p. 101). His infidelity with Amala, Mama’s helper, helps her come to the realisation that she has the potential to regain her individuality and “taking charge of her own life” (Adichie, p. 228).

Kainene on the other hand has less of a struggle with her identity as she ties her value to work and running her father’s businesses successfully. Her identity is not tied to Richard and she has no inclinations towards marriage, his presence in her life is not permanent. Richard cheated on Kainene with Olanna and in retaliation, she states that: “I took your manuscript from the study this morning and I burned it” (Adichie, 2006, p. 324). Kainene is not a victim of the ‘new slavery’ of Nigerian women who are sexually used and exploited by white men who do not see them as an equal (Adichie, p. 81).

The war dissolves the class barriers and relationships arise and are created in a non-hierarchical community in which they all gain from sharing goods that are scarce during the war. Biafran unites the nation and creates a community and women gain collective and individual strength as noted by Pape (2011).

4.3.2.1 Women as sex objects

Women were referred to as “food” (p.458), and were raped by both the Biafran soldiers as well as the mercenaries. The commander of the Biafran war, a white mercenary man assisted in the

domination of young girls as “He throws girls on their backs in the open where the men can see him and does and does them, all the time holding his bag of money in one hand” (Adichie, 2006, p. 406) as an exercise of power and intimidation. Colonialism and patriarchy leave the female characters vulnerable to figures of authority who are positioned to protect but in turn violate the characters.

Rape in wartime is then depicted as a male bonding exercise of war Norridge (2012). This kind of exploitation of women by men in power when they are most vulnerable is characteristic of a masculine society where women are viewed as sexual objects. This action was an extension of the sexuality of the young boys because in normal circumstances, they would have found the young girl attractive nonetheless. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) rape and violation of women is experienced and young girls were gang-raped with no remorse by soldiers during the course of the war as evidenced in the excerpt below.

The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulder held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing, please please, biko. (Adichie, p. 365)

Ugwu’s character participated in the violation of the young girl, the war having changed his values and belief system aiding in making him an exploitation and oppression tool against women. “He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down...he moved quickly and felt his own climax...He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped” (Adichie, 2006, p. 365). His refusal to look at the woman he was violating was synonymous with the refusal of the coloniser to acknowledge their hand in the destruction of the environment.

Father Marcel, a priest at the refugee camp run by Kainene to feed the hungry, violated the young women in exchange for food and impregnated them. The priest abuses his position of power and Olanna reacts to the knowledge with anger, confronting the Priest for being “*Amosu! You devil!*”(Adichie, 2006, p. 499). Eventually both priests are dismissed from their positions at the refugee camp and showing that colonialism takes different facets in its operations and the social lives of its victims.

The sexual exploitation of women in Biafra is a reflection of the state of Nigeria and the environment during the Biafran War. The individual’s vulnerability relates to a wider social problem taking place in the environment and the violence to the body becomes a metaphor for the concerns with the body of the nation (da Silva, 2012). The two priests, Father Marcel and Father Jude are representative of the coloniser who is stationed within society and continues to exploit the women and environment under the pretext of helping and under the cloak of religion. The religious figures are placed in society to exploit the African people as religion is one of the tools of colonisation. In *The God of Small Things* (1997), religion leads to the exploitation of women and the loss of lives due to religious persecution. The Paravans adopted Christianity and continued to face persecution from the Syrian Christians and Muslims due to their dark skin (Roy, 1997).

4.3.3 Colonial education in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The postcolonial approach aims to explain and analyse the legacy of colonialism and the effects thereafter. The role of identity and politics in postcolonial was evidenced in the gathering at

Odenigbo's house. The regular meetings by the young group to discuss politics and the future of Nigeria were symbolic to the unity that colonialism and independence brought to the future leaders. Odenigbo and friends, the educated minority represented the majority placing much emphasis on Pan-Africanism which is one of the African systems of government discussed.

Nigerian politics post-independence remains unstable due to the Igbo conflict with Northerners in government positions. "It is mostly Northerners who were in government, Professor Ezeka whispered" (Adichie, 2006, p. 125). The main conflict stems from the majority of influential positions in government being occupied by corrupt Northerners, who continually fuel the moral decay of Nigeria exacerbating feelings of displacement in the Igbo tribe. In *The God of Small Things* (1997), colonial education places Syrian Christians above Paravans and Velutha despite being a skilled craftsman, is paid less (Roy, p. 77) to avoid conflict amongst the factory workers.

The influence of exposure to colonial education post-independence appears strongly in characters such as Harrison, Richard's houseboy who remains colonised post-independence. "He bowed extravagantly at the beginning of each conversation. He told Richard with unconcealed pride that he had formerly worked for the Irish priest and the American professor Land" (Adichie, 2006, p. 91). Furthermore, "I make making very good beet salad," he said that first day, and later Richard realised he was proud not only of his salad but also of cooking with beets, which he had to buy in the "speciality vegetable" stall because most Nigerians did not eat them" (Adichie, 2006, p. 91). Baby Kochamma ends up addicted to television programs and forgets her passion for gardening and the outdoors due to exposure to globalisation. In Chapter 3 of *The God of Small Things* (1997), Rahel visits the Ayemenem House and it is engulfed in dirt and neglect (p. 88).

Education or lack thereof does not allow Harrison to mentally emancipate himself from the coloniser's representation, Richard and his predecessors. This reflects a selective alienation from one's identity and culture generated by colonialism.

Hrituleac (2011) and Mart (2011) argue that colonial education was put in place to isolate Africans from their identity and families. Ugwu and Harrison's characters fail to identify and adjust back to their previous identities and ways after exposure to the western ways. "But sah, I am cooking the food of your country; all the food you are eating as children I cook. In fact, I am not cooking Nigerian foods, only foreign recipe" (Adichie, 2006, p. 91). Colonial education isolates the above mentioned characters and leads them to dislike the ways of their culture and societies.

"His visit home suddenly seemed longer than a week, perhaps because of the endless churning in his stomach from eating only fruit and nuts" (Adichie, 2006, p. 151). Ugwu was failing to eat the food that his mother prepared on his week-long visit home and "he could not wait to get back to Nsukka and finally eat a real meal" (Adichie, 2006, p. 151). This symbolizes a rift naissance between Ugwu, his identity and his family. Anulika became aware of the distance that was sprouting between herself and Ugwu, his behaviour, an indicator of the colonial education now manifesting its power. "She looked at him from the corners of her eyes, up and down. You have forgotten where you come from, and now you have become so foolish you think you are a Big Man" (Adichie, 2006, p. 154).

Colonial education aims to isolate and alienate its victims from their support systems and Woolman (2001) suggests that western education in African conditions was a process of psychological deruralisation. Shame and disassociation experienced by Ugwu and Harrison

render them deformed elements of the colonised. Baby Kochamma coaches the twins in *The God of Small Things* (1997) to speak English well in anticipation of Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma's visit. They watch *The Sound of Music* countless times and they know the words to the songs effortlessly. Knowledge of English is viewed as superior and a reflection of a higher social class. British colonists used language as a tool to enslave the Indian masses according to Chopra et al. (2003).

Richard's character assisted the cause of Biafra by using his writing skills to communicate with the Western press. Major Madu asked Richard to write a letter to the British to garner support and voice their concerns and suffering (Adichie, 2006). Reflecting back to colonial education, Biafrans believed Western acknowledgement and support was essential and the conflict would end thus the coloniser remained superior. Cultural hegemony dictates that westerners are superior to easterners and Africans (Saidi, 1978), Richard's voice would be heard over that of the colonised.

Richard became increasingly displeased with his own efforts at writing as he felt that the story was not for him to tell. Richard's character, by virtue of being western is symbolic of the coloniser. Richard's intentions were clear, his character symbolizes the purity of some westerners. This highlights the inherent superiority of Westerners over Africans in postcolonial texts Adichie (2006, p. 141). His fascination with Igbo culture was one of the significant reasons he came to Nigeria as stated below:

I'm very interested in Igbo-Ukwu art, and I want to make that a central part of the book,
he said.

“How so?”

I’ve been utterly fascinated by the bronzes since I first read about them. The details are stunning. It’s quite incredible that these people had perfected the complicated art of lost-wax casting during the time of the Viking raids. There is such marvellous complexity in the bronzes, just marvellous. (Adichie, 2006, p. 140)

Richard sounded surprised by the skills of the artists as if he had never imagined them capable of such skills. This amplified his ‘whiteness’ and he immediately changed the subject. He then asks if he could take Ugwu to the village with him (Adichie, 2006, p. 141). Richard’s character has genuine interest in Igbo culture, writes on behalf of Biafra in the later stages of the texts and is symbolic of some westerners’ good intentions, comparable to Father Mulligan’s character in *The God of Small Things* (1997). Richard references the artists as ‘these people’ and Kainene points out that “it’s possible to love something and still condescend to it” (Adichie, p.111-114) this is metaphoric of their relationship whereby Richard could love her and still be a coloniser who has the potential to oppress her.

The British colonisers set in place a system that manipulates the education of the people on their behalf in their absence. There is clear domination by the British in the school curriculum. The colonised were not educated on how to effectively utilize their land upon colonisation and reference to Richard as Master implies slavery, victimization of the colonised and a result of colonial education Adichie (2006). “Did you go to school?” (Adichie, p. 13), Odenigbo inquired on the level of education Ugwu had attained. Ugwu had only reached standard two level and claimed to learn very fast. “Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don’t have the tools to understand exploitation?” (Adichie, 2006, p. 13). The limited exposure to

education that Ugwu had received rendered him eager to amend everything that linked him to his roots which is clear reflection of the isolation that colonial education brings about.

Odenigbo has clear understanding of colonial education used as an exploitation tool, by noting that the answer given to pass and the truth were divided. “There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass” (Adichie, 2006, p. 14). Literary representation of the past may foreground and give a philosophical rationalization of the reality on the ground, meaning what is taught and how it is used may differ.

Susan’s character attempts to draw a clear understanding of how the westerners view the colonised. The Africans were described as ‘savages and uncivilized’ and Richard receives warnings of the Nigerians being “...bloody beggars , be prepared for their body odours and the way they will stand and stare at you on the roads, never believe a hard-luck story, never show weakness to domestic staff” (Adichie, 2006, p. 67). Richard attempts to uncritically be part of a cause that is not his, a cultural space that does not belong to him.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented an analysis of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) which provided a better understanding of the correlation of women and nature in male dominated societies in a postcolonial era. The two novels, *The God of Small Things* (1997) represent life in an Indian community where class divisions and oppression of women were prevalent due to colonisation by the British and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) where the Biafra

War breaks out in Nigeria and affects the lives of all involved. The main denominator is colonialism in both texts. The next chapter, Chapter 5, addresses the conclusions and recommendations based on this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 4), was a comparative analysis and discussion of the chosen texts *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). In this Chapter 5, the focus is on the conclusions and recommendations. It was through the combination of ecofeminist and postcolonial theories that the discussions were conceived and brought nuanced means of thinking in the analysing of the chosen literary novels, *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

The study pursued ecofeminist and postcolonial literary theories in analysing the depiction of women characters through content analysis in war fiction. This perspective necessitated the need to explore and consider the history of the place and time in question as determined by the setting of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). As well as, how the environment influences women characters and vice versa in a post-colonial setting in literary texts, the focus of the highlighted ecofeminist issues on the larger socio-political and cultural concerns of the specified milieu of their setting. This chapter gives a summary of the conclusions and recommendations that are based on this research.

5.1 Conclusions and findings

The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between women and the environment in selected literary works in postcolonial Eastern and African societies. The study interrogated a number of interconnections between the oppression of women and the environment as presented in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Adichie and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy (1997).

Reading *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) as contemporaries can be testament to some comprehensive and wealthy accounts of both sides of the coin, providing probably a coherent shape of the realistic operation of colonialism in totality. The main argument was that parallels can be drawn between the domination of nature and the environment and the exploitation of women in a wartime postcolonial era in the novels *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

The two texts maybe viewed as contemporary texts that dare expose the unique struggles of women characters in patriarchal societies, in relation to the environment. On reading *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) readers may conclude that women characters suffered a great deal in their portrayal in the African text and that men were living celebrated lives. But upon reading further, *The God of Small Things* (1997) readers may further conclude that these were forms of feminist issues because they contribute to an understanding of the exploitation and oppression of women and the environment. Warren (2000) asserts that all forms of oppression including classism, ageism and sexism, intersect to show that the oppression of women parallels the domination of nature.

The God of Small Things (1997) as an equivalent text, both sides of the coin were given equal chances as *The God of Small Things* (1997) details the lives of an Indian community in the small town of Kerala and the effects of British colonization on the environment and women. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) details Nigeria's battles during the Biafra Civil War and the effects on the women and environment. The two texts read together give a detailed account of the impact of war on the environment and humanity mostly relating to women as the two texts are compatible.

The God of Small Things (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) include adequately powerful references sanctioning literary texts' ability in establishing the relationship between women and the environment. Women are symbolically associated with the environment, explaining their second-class status in comparison to men who were identified with culture.

Culture transcends nature, implying that men dominate women therefore subjugation is an inevitable product of such practices (Mallor, 1997). Women characters in *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) have an association with nature and were subordinated by patriarchal societies in the same vein that nature is tamed by culture.

Roy (1997) explains the 'small things' as small creatures and their activities, characters like Ammu, Velutha and Baby Kochamma may be considered small and full of secrets, sins and promises. The 'Big Things' in society which include the caste system, political affiliations and marriages, cannot coexist with the small things. They overpower and keep oppressed the small things that they do not wish to acknowledge. The two novels demonstrate how colonialism may lamentably be responsible for the land degradation in the areas it operated.

The study was based on the postcolonial and ecofeminist theories. Ecofeminism thrives to explain women's relationship to nature and the environment while postcolonialism concerns itself with the past and present impact of colonialism and addresses all aspects of the colonial process on societies. Ecofeminism also explores the "interconnection between the domination of women and the domination of nature" (Ruether 1992, Birkeland 1993), hence using the postcolonial and ecofeminism lens, the study explored the links between domination of nature, patriarchy and the different forms of oppression of women.

Ecofeminism addresses the fact that human beings rely on the ecosystem for their basic needs such as water, food and other natural resources and as such, the study examined how women conserve and sustain nature. Thus, using the lens of postcolonialism and ecofeminism, this study set out to explore the representations of nature and the relationship between literature and the environment in selected Eastern and African writers' literary works.

5.2 Restatement of objectives

The findings from the study were able to satisfy the objectives below as the two novels were successfully analysed and discussed using the objectives as the guideline.

- explore the unique presentation of environmental and women concerns in war-torn societies from a postcolonial ecofeminist perspective in the selected texts;
- assess how the two novelists present the relationships between human beings and their environment as explored through the ecofeminist tenets; and

- explore how environmental issues are comparatively presented to reflect socio-cultural problems addressed in the selected novels.

5.3 Contribution to knowledge

The contribution to the literary studies world by researchers, studies in postcolonialism- rank high on the list of acclaimed topics while ecofeminism – focusing mainly on the relationship between women nature and their inferiorisation especially in patriarchal societies, connecting women to the epistemological understanding of nature- is a fairly new phenomenon. This present study strived by deviating from common topics and focused on merging postcolonialism and ecofeminism in the analysis of *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).

By merging postcolonialism and ecofeminism, it is possible to have two theories functioning simultaneously and be able to establish links that may exist between the theories used. In this case, it was concluded that colonialism was the primary cause of the oppression of women characters and the exploitation of nature in patriarchal societies. It is within the discussion of these major theories in the analysis of the novels *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *The God of Small Things* (1997).

Furthermore, even though women in the two novels were presented as victims, the analyses of the texts reveal that women not only bear the burden of environmental degradation and exploitation but also play an important part in environmental management. Hence, the study

calls for an expansion of ecofeminism focus in order to include the non-Western point of view and recognise the double-bind of being female and colonised.

The narratives examined in the study drew attention to issues such as gender issues, racism, environmental degradation, ecological, class and social injustice issues as experienced by women characters. The trust of the study was to draw interconnections between male domination of nature/environment and the oppression of women and children as depicted in the selected war fiction.

The study also realised that to understand that environmental issues are human issues, there is necessity to transcend the traditional Western perspective on nature and create novice ways to perceive the world in biocentric ways.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

The study confirms that a relationship exists between women, nature and their inferiorisation. Through literary texts such as *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), there is great understanding that colonialism is detrimental to humanity and patriarchal paradigms exploit women and women were in actuality, the feminine principle that signifies a natural unity with nature from which men developed. This highlights the importance of respecting the relationship between humankind and nature and their interdependence. Texts such as *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) provide a detailed background on how the forces of colonisation were lethal to societies and leave behind a trail of trauma. The researcher recommends the following:

- use of postcolonial ecofeminism as a theory in the comparative study of novels from different countries across all genres to add to the existing body of knowledge.
- using postcolonial ecofeminism in poetry, drama and other forms of literature as a consciousness raising platform on social transformation required to preserve and conserve life on earth in meaningful ways and to identify relationships between humans and the environment.
- Writers should move beyond the limiting conceptions of the feminine and masculine to construct a holistic ethic that encompasses ecological realities and conduct comparative studies on how African and European authors portray characters in postcolonial literary works.

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