Prologue: A First-Year Writing Journal

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Front Matter

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Editorial Policy:

Prologue is an annual journal of academic essays created to showcase first-year writing at Denison. The journal provides many of these students with the opportunity to have their works published for the first time. The selection process began with many first-year students submitting their essays anonymously during this spring semester. Next, the editorial board carefully reviewed the collection of pieces submitted and selected ten pieces for publication. Decisions were difficult because the board received many quality essays. Then each of the ten current Writing Center consultants reviewed one of the selected essays and wrote a commentary to accompany the piece. These commentaries highlight the strengths of each essay.

Editorial Board:

Natalie Gross  
Allison Kranek  
Claire Navarro  
Shayla Poling  
Leigh Raynor

We would like to express our thanks to the following people:

- Dr. Brenda Boyle, for her role as Staff Adviser of the journal
- Dr. Susan B. Kanter, for her technological assistance with the online publication of the journal
- Laurie Mackenzie-Crane, for her creative journal advertisements and Prologue cover
- Anneliese Davis, for her assistance with the essay submission process
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver and Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are both postcolonial novels that follow the lives of two families in Africa. Kingsolver and Adichie use the Price and Acheke families to illustrate microcosms of colonialism. Both families are led by dominant male figures at the beginning of the stories, but by the end of each book, two daughters, Leah and Kambili, have both defied their fathers and grown from their suppressed selves into independent beings. Kingsolver and Adichie show how the love found in new formed relationships opens the minds of Leah and Kambili to new perspectives, freeing them from their imperial fathers.

Both novels are set in a postcolonial time period. The Congo gains official independence in The Poisonwood Bible, and in Purple Hibiscus, Nigeria is a newly independent state. African countries struggled for years under western colonialism. White imperial powers controlled Africa’s governments, trade and commerce, and the livelihoods of the natives. The lives of the African people were completely controlled by the white imperialist, even whole countries were divided and formed by white men with pens and a map. The basic civil right of living one’s own life was stripped from the African people as the power hungry white leaders acted like puppeteers over Africa. Starting in the 1960s, African countries began to rebel against western imperial rule, and independence was slowly gained (Fletcher 196). African rebellion against colonialism serves as a backdrop for the stories told in The Poisonwood Bible and in Purple Hibiscus. Like colonized Africans, Leah and Kambili were under the complete control of imperial forces, their fathers. And, like colonized Africans, these two daughters stage a slow, steady rebellion to gair their freedom from the dominance of the oppressor.