



SILENCE AND SPEECH IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S PURPLE *HIBISCUS*

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ABSTRACT:

The present article focuses on the first novel of contemporary Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). It presents a reading of Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus* as a quintessential African feminist novel, negating female aesthetics of suffering and sustaining the aesthetics of women empowerment, Kambili's, the young protagonist's life illustrates a coherent retaliation to the challenges of life in a postcolonial African nation as the novel pays attention to the different forms of persecution in the lives of women in postcolonial Nigerian society. Adichie's approach to overthrow male oppression confirms that despite the struggles, women declare themselves in a world dominated by men through education and female unanimity. Her novel suggests women empowerment through social transformation by which the different forms of oppression, exploitation, exculsion and silencing are challenging by women promoting gender equality. The title of the novel, "*Purple Hibiscus*" may refer to a particular sort of flower, but is also highlight the triumph of the innovative suggesting that the curious is not necessarily bad as the sub version of genders aims to bring equality among the sexes promoting new awakening.

KEYWORDS:

Oppression, freedom, feminism, violence, patriarchy.

INTRODUCTION:

Fifteen-year-old Kambili lives in fear of her father, a charismatic yet violent Catholic patriarch who, although generous and well respected in the community, is repressive and fanatically religious at home. Escape and the discovery of a new, liberated way of life come when Nigeria is shaken by a military coup, forcing Kambili and her brother to live at their aunt's home, a noisy place full of laughter. The visit will lift the silence from her world and, in time, unlock a terrible, bruising secret at the heart of her family life.

Turning to Auntie Ifeoma, her place is where the purple Hibiscus, linked with freedom, grows her home is a place where Jaja and Kambili would remove its stocks and take them back to Enugu, like priced diamonds, to plant them in their garden. Papa Eugene, ignorant of these symbolic goods of freedom, safely stored them in his fridge, anticioate summer to be planted. Unknown to him, the winds of change had come upon his house, blasting from Auntie tommy's place.

The novel makes no secret about it as the narrator tells us “Nssuka started it all, Auntie licoma’s little garden next to the balcony of her flat in Nssuka began to life the silence”. Silence is more often than not a sign of persecution, for the defeated are denied the right to speak and to be heard. Kambili, Jaja and Mama Beatrice were silenced by Papa Eugene and his imposed religious practice, his wounded self that released violence upon them and employed material power to silence even potential voices of sufficient, namely: the Priests and the church.

Religious leaders surely knew about the terror that Papa Eugene worked upon his family, for each time after beating and injuring his kids and wife, he would run out crying as he took them to the Catholic hospital, asserting that an accident happened. Kambili, who was severely kicked for her grandfather’s painting, is notably offer by a white sister back to health, thus designating the church’s conformity in the covenant of violence, However, as reported, Papa Eugene single handedly supported St.Agnes, its hospital and always signed a big check for the Daughters of Immaculate Heart Secondary school. Nowhere, do we ever find a priest instruct him about his violence as an evil-founded practice.

Auntie Ifeoma nails the function of his giving pointing out that the members of Umunna, in fact everybody in Abba, will tell Eugene only what he wants to hear Do our people not have any sense? Will you pinch the finger that feeds you?” (96), However, Auntie ifeoma, like her Daddy, Papa Nnukwu, refuses to be bought out by her nice comparative as she reminds Mama Beatrice.

Have you forgotten that Eugene extend to buy me a car, ever before Ifediora, my husband, died? But first he desired us to join the Knights of St John He wanted us to send Amaka to a convent school. He even wanted me to stop strenuous make up! I want a new car, mwenyem, and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new cooler and I want money so that I will not have to disentangle the seams of China’s trousers when he mature them. ?but I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his haunches to get these things.

Similarly, Papa Nnukwu was offered all good things, as long as he converted to Christianity and he too refused, desiring to remain with his freedom than to be bought out. For years, Auntie Ifeoma did not talk to her brother. For protest to let their father come into his house due to his primordial religious beliefs., but then she distinct that this too was Papa Eugene’s way of silencing her and disparaging Jaja Kambili and Mama Beatrice from any other contradict voices. She returns to talking to Papa Eugene and to visiting his house bringing her own kids. She perseveres on Jaja and Kambili visiting her and spending time with their cousins. In so doing, she reveal them to another view of attending, another view of Catholicism, another view of African Indigenous belief system, another view of life.

She takes them out to see the masquerade, she teaches them that Papa Nnukwu is not a infidel, as Eugene has taught them, but rather that he is a traditionalist , who worships the same God, but in a different method. It is to Nissuku that their grandfather comes for medical attention and they got to live under the same roof with him for days, instead of the 15 minutes visit thrust on them. They also get to have an opportunity to listen to him praying in his African way of worshipping. In Nssuka, in Auntie Ifeoma house, they discover that Catholic order of prayers can be said in Igbo and they can be punctuated with many Igbo songs.

Jaja and Kambili discover, in Nssuka that there is another way of parenting-where children are not silenced but are allowed to think and speak freely, while their parent acts more like a instructor. It is to Nssuka that the violated Mama Beatrice runs-there she is informed to leave the burning house of violence before it engrave in on her.

Nssuka, as represented by Auntie Ifeoma’s house and beliefs, is a constitution feminist space of rescue. And so Kambili and Jaja return to their home carrying stocks of purple hibiscus to plant it in their garden. Although Papa Eugene meets them with blistering acts scalding their feet in the bath with boiling

water, for sleeping under the same roof with their heathen grandfather without telling him although he takes them to the priest to reveal having watched the heathen pretence festival and although he kicks Kambili to almost death for bringing a painting of their grandfather into his house it is too late. Purple hibiscus is growing in his garden, planted by Jaja from Auntie Ifeoma's garden.

Auntie Ifeoma is not only a containment figure, she is also depatriarchalizing figure. This is clearly stated by her attitude to her widowhood status. When she received questions about her widowhood, she stated that, "sometimes life begins she marriage and thereby emphasizing that woman need not see their lives as insubstantial outside marriage.

Similarly, when her father mentions that he is praying for her to find another husband, she asks him to pray moderately, that her application to the position of senior reproach should succeed Ifeoma speaks acutely to Mama Beatrice regarding child bearing and violence in her marriage Mama Beatrice is worried that she has given birth to only two kids to Eugene and that his community will feel that it is deficient and might try to find another wife for him. Auntie ifeoma discourage her from measuring her worth by the number of children she has borne for her husband. Regarding Eugene's violence, she informs Beatrice that when the house is on fire one must run out before the roof falls in receiving the victim.

Beatrice's attempt to leave is aborted, since she seemingly chooses to return to her home yet. Mama Beatrice begins to slowly poison Papa Eugene to death after a violent incident which led to the death of tier awaited child Mama Beatrice was assisted by Sist, their housekeeper, to find the poison that would fully banish Eugene Indeed Kambili, who was the most obedient and in a petrified awe of her father, also began to show acts of resistance.

First, she fell in love with Father Amadi, a Roman Catholic Priest who called himself with his Igbo name, preached in Igbo and sang Igbo hymns-thereby representing everything that Kambili's father abominate. Second, Kambili protest to hand the painting of her grandfather to her father and ended up being severely kicked. Purple Hibiscus thus indicated various forms of resistance to kindly by women of different status.

While Auntie coma is an openly persuasive and fearless intellectual, one begins to realize that woman such as Mama Beatrice, Kambili and Sisi also had different ways of enduring. In deed, Kambili, being the narrator of the whole book, is no longer silenced. She has found her voice and names the persecution that occurred in her family and how they found their way to freedom. In so doing, Purple Hibiscus models various forms of feminist agency.

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