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Silence in *Purple Hibiscus*
by Chimamanda Nguzi Adichie

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

- ✚ My dear supervisor, **Soumia MOUMENE**, for inspiring me to choose literature. I consider her a source of inspiration and I wish to hold some of her qualities in the future as both a person and a teacher. She represents perfection and tenderness for me and I hope that she continues enlightening her students' days with knowledge, wisdom and love. May Allah bless her and preserve her from any harm.
- ✚ My dear father, **Ismail SALHI**, the man who overwhelmed me with love, care, and support in all the moments. He is a source for inspiration and wisdom in my life. I really hope that I will make him proud of me one day.
- ✚ My dear mother, **Yamina GHOUDZLANI**, the woman warrior in my family. The candle of our darkest days and the hope that keeps me and my family alive. She is also my close friend and counselor to whom I resort in my tough moments. I feel so blessed to be her daughter. Words cannot express how much I appreciate her and I look forward to please her and make her proud of me one day.
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Abstract

This thesis examines the theme of silence in familial space in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The study seeks to address how the political strife which characterizes the Nigerian post colonial era has affected the Nigerian family. The aim of this study is twofold. First it investigates how violence silences the familial space. Second it attempts to throw light on the crucial role the physical environment plays in the psychological awakening of human beings enabling them to find their individual freedom and voice. The attachment with the different natural elements creates a force of defiance and rebellion which destroys the supreme authority responsible for silencing individuals. Through the use of a psychoanalytic approach, this paper seeks to analyze the individual attitudes inside the one family based on the mental structure which is strongly linked to human beings' behavior. The implementation of an Ecocritical approach is necessary to demonstrate that mother nature can serve as a source of originality and directly links individuals to a certain culture or heritage that form the whole part of the society. To conclude, Adichie uses her voice to glorify and preserve the African identity which is imbedded in the legacy of ancestors to whom nature symbolized rootedness and purification.

Key Terms: silence, violence, voice, political strife, the physical environment, the psychological awakening, individual freedom.

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgements	II
Abstract	III
Table of Contents	IV
Introduction	1
Chapter one: An Overview of Contemporary African Literature	5
I.1. Challenging the Single Story about Africa.....	5
I.2. Nigerian Literature in English.....	8
I.3. Theoretical Framework	15
Chapter two: Religious Hypocrisy and Psychological Anarchy	21
II.1. <i>Purple Hibiscus</i> : A Synopsis.....	21
II.2. Adherence to Catholicism: Influence and Authority.....	22
II. 3. Power Manipulation: Violence and Chauvinism.....	27
II.4. Silence and Emptiness.....	30
II.5. Language Conflict: The Igbo Language VS the English Language.....	36
Chapter three: A Different Silence: Embracing Nature	40
III.1. The Smell of Flowers: On the Representation of Nature in <i>Purple Hibiscus</i>	40
III.2. From Silence to Voice: Defiance and Freedom	46
III.3. A Different Silence	54
Conclusion	59
Works Cited	63

Introduction

Many African countries were subject to European Imperialism which intended to use force and violence to dominate the native people and deprive them from their lands. These lands certainly stimulated the greediness of the colonizer for its large spaces and diverse natural sources. Likewise, the Nigerian land was targeted by the British colonizer which sustained its control over it for over hundred and fifty years. At that time, Nigerians were forced to abandon their mother culture and to embrace the legacy of the colonizer which claimed to enlighten the Nigerian tribes with civilization and modernity.

European Missionaries were aiming at converting the Nigerians into Christianity and relied on the clan rulers to achieve this goal. Through establishing new schools, foreign education was also imposed on Nigerians who had to learn the English language at the expense of their mother tongue. Nigerians who resisted the colonizer and refused to submit to its conditions were brutally tortured by all violent manners to silence them and oblige them to surrender. After huge struggle and defiance, Nigeria took independence in 1960. However, the new political system was shaped by corruption and dictatorship and any voice which attempted to criticize it was going to be silenced by means of violence. Thus, the cycle of oppression continued to draw the Nigerian people's destiny even in the post colonial era.

Nigerian Literature plays a crucial role in elevating the standards of African Literature and in transmitting the African voice around the globe. This was possible due to the Nigerian writers' efforts in exposing the realities behind the colonial occupation and the sufferings of Nigerians before and after independence. Following their path, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie published her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* in 2003 to shed the light on the embodiment of silence within the familial grounds in post colonial Nigeria. The family stands as a microcosm for the whole Nigeria. In her narrative, Adichie juxtaposes tradition and modernity to depict

the defiance and rebellion which crowns the family's life at the end and brings along voice and identity.

The selection of this theme amongst a variety of subjects that the novel is charged with is due to the fact that silence is crucial to comprehend the overall message behind the novel's story. Whereas many works and critics deal with silence as a secondary theme or as being a motif, *Purple Hibiscus* puts it in the front making it perfect in describing the different settings and drawing the atmosphere to the reader. For this, the writer compares and contrasts between some characters and as well some elements to give an insight about silenced spheres in comparison to voiced spheres. In this vein, elements of the physical world (nature) meet elements related to spirituality (religion) to inspire human beings to meditate and think about the surrounding environment as a source for originality and belonging. In addition, the fact that the word silence is mentioned forty seven times in the novel is very stimulating for its examination especially because the novel starts with silence and ends with a different kind of it. most importantly, the story of Adichie is given through the voice of a mute, shy teenager who delivers Adichie's point of view and narrates the details in mature voice.

The study aims to investigate the different forms of silence and how individuals use it as a powerful weapon to achieve their goals . The impact of human's connection with the natural environment will be emphasised. In this regard, the current study will attempt to answer the following questions: What are the different implications, instances and forms of silence ? How important is silence in transferring the message of Adichie? what is the relationship between silence, violence and religion? What are the repercussions of using one's voice to express the self ? Is nature challenging and what are the factors that contribute in the psychological development of individuals? what ties human beings to nature?

In analysing the novel, two literary approaches are incorporated as central ones for the examination of our theme. The first one is the psychoanalytic approach which can serve as the bridge that links one's behavior to his way of thinking. For this, Freud's contributions in psychology are appropriate in giving mental representations to familiar attitudes. The second one is the ecocritical approach which is used to shed the light on the role of the natural world in the life of human beings and how the biotic components link with the abiotic components. The importance of the natural environment is emphasised through comparing the atmosphere of the village to its counterpart in the city.

The thesis is structured into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the development of Nigerian literature through exposing the stages and the African writers who contributed in its blooming and its recognition around the globe. In particular, Chinua Achebe is given much attention as an African literary leader who influenced Adichie to write *Purple Hibiscus*. It passes by the themes that overwhelmed the past Nigerian writings and highlights the theme of silence as central for our study by revealing how the critics define it and how it can be related to the novel. Finally, it shows how psychoanalysis and ecocriticism provide the necessary concepts and tools for analysing the novel.

The second chapter deals with the series of silence and violence which resulted in silencing the members of the Achikee Family. It starts by giving the summary of the narrative. Then, it explains how Catholicism is being manipulated by the father and used as a tool for oppression and punishment. After this displays the sufferings of the family members caused by the father and the repercussions of his extremism. Next, it describes the silent atmosphere in the family and how each character embraces silence differently. Lastly, it identifies the two languages which challenge the Nigerian society in the present time.

The third chapter represents the fruitful outcome of this study. Its significance lies in the glorification of the natural environment and presenting it as a source for originality and

purification. It initiates by describing the Auntie Ifeoma's garden and how Jaja attaches himself to the purple hibiscus flower. Subsequently, it transfers Jaja's rebellion against his father by detailing the events which led to the metamorphosis of Jaja and his sister after experiencing the life of Nsukka. The chapter concludes by describing the new silence emerging at the Achikee family and how each member reacts to the murder of the father afterwards.

Through *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie uses her voice to display the dangers of the colonial past on the present generations, and how politics influences culture and religion in post colonial Nigeria. In addition, the conducted study seeks to explore the real motives that lead to silencing individuals in the familial spaces in which silence takes multiple forms and occasions. Furthermore, the research attempts to foreground the impact of the natural world on the psychology of individuals through demonstrating that nature is all encompassing and also necessary for the mental development of human beings in general.

Chapter One: An Overview of Contemporary African Literature

The first chapter gives a brief overview of Nigerian literature, its background and development into a contemporary literature. It starts by describing the writers' inspirations and personal tendencies. Then, the chapter introduces some selected characteristics of Nigerian Literature in English, and its recurring themes with special attention to the theme of silence. After this, the chapter concludes by introducing the two approaches that shape further analysis: these are the psychoanalytic approach and the ecocritical approach. No doubt, the first chapter reflects upon the coming chapters by clarifying the basic terms used in each approach to fit for the analysis of our theme.

I.1. Challenging the Single Story about Africa

Inspired by a great figure of the African literature, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie wrote her masterpiece *Purple Hibiscus*. Actually, it was her first novel, yet it paved the way for her to be recognized as one of the most influential female Nigerian writers. At first, Adichie did not believe that a black woman like her can express her mind and be part of literature. However, as she stayed in the same house visited earlier by Achebe, she was contaminated by his thoughts and highly encouraged to indulge in the world of literature ("The Danger of a Single Story"). Indeed, Chinua Achebe contributed in introducing what would be considered later as a fundamental background for African Literature. In "How Things Could Fall Apart For Whom They Were Not Together", H.L.B Moody, Edward Fennigan, and Elizabeth Gunner note that *Things Fall Apart* exists "to mark the beginning of modern Africa"(qtd. in Stratton 22) . Not only this, but in the view of C .L. Innes, Chinua Achebe may 'be deemed "father of the African novel in English"' (qtd. in Stratton 22). Louis Nkosi also comments that Achebe "blazed a trail large enough to be followed by other writers" (qtd. in Stratton 22). No doubt, Achebe has gained the attention of many young writers who were

mainly influenced by his stylistic language and thematic choices. Adichie is among these young writers who strongly admired Achebe's works to the point that she used the title of *Things Fall Apart* as the start line of her first novel *Purple Hibiscus*. By joining her voice to a writer like Achebe, and at the same time creating her own identity and style, Adichie is able to draw her name as a contemporary Nigerian writer who is highly esteemed by many critics and writers throughout the globe. Besides shedding the light on real postcolonial African issues in Nigeria, Adichie uses her radical voice to regain women's identity and power.

In her speech "The Danger of a Single Story", Adichie reveals how people affect our views on a particular issue by exposing one single angle about it. Thus, our concern about that issue would be merely centered on that angle, which is sometimes, negatively portrayed. Adichie explains this in reference to her childhood experience where she learned from her parents that her friend's family is poor. One day, however, she discovers that her friend has produced an amazing basket. From then, she realizes that there is a hidden fact about the poor family's talent, and understands that forming a view necessitates examining the possible faces a thing may have in order to have a full picture. Similarly, Adichie tells us about her experience in America where her roommate "felt sorry for [her] before even knowing [her] ". In fact, this roommate held a preconceived idea about Africa, believing that Adichie must have suffered in it, did not know the English Language for sure and only had a list of Igbo songs to listen to it. All these stereotypes were no doubt heavy on Adichie. Yet, they taught her how easy it is to instill an idea in people's minds and drive them to believe in it for the rest of their lives. Likewise, In *Arrows of God*, Chinua Achebe tackles what Adichie calls, The Danger of a Single Story, by hinting that we should not look at the world as being black or white when making a particular judgment, but instead we should consider the different possibilities and views in order to understand an event or a story. The similarity between Adichie's idea and Achebe's perspective can be proved through Achebe's paroles as he notes

that “The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place ” (qtd. in Tunca 121-131).

Just like any other individual, the Nigerian writers are going to express their minds in a way that suits well their purpose. This purpose can be developed from the writers’ environment which greatly influences their thoughts and their behavior. However, each writer will be affected in his own way and will produce also a certain form of writing to express his voice “it could take the form of revolt, adaptation or even a synthesis of ideas of his environment and that found elsewhere” (qtd. in Awoyemi 30). Nigerian writers are no different because their writings seem to echo the situation of post colonial Nigeria where the natives are torn apart between two cultures, the original culture represented by the Igbo tradition, and the colonizer’s culture symbolized by civilization, enlightenment, and prestige, and aspects which aim to silence the Nigerian people and suppress their identity and voice (qtd. in Awoyemi30).

Colonialism which marks an essential part of the Nigerian history has affected everyone including the writers. Thus, their literary performance is a kind of reflection to certain societal and individual experiences of the Nigerian society. Many native people of Nigeria were seduced by the Church missionaries to adapt the British culture of the colonizer. Some of the natives who were in contact with those missionaries were eager to learn the English Language and Christianity and with time they have abandoned their native traditions and melted into the culture of the “other” (qtd. in Arayela 30). Absurdly, the colonizer was claiming to use the English Language as a way of “civilizing” Africans who belonged to “the dark continent”. According to those imperialists, Africa blocked African people’s lives in all manners and made them nothing but “beasts”. Ironically, the colonizers’ goals took the opposite direction, for the use of the English Language in producing literary works enlightened African’s souls and brought about Nigerian literature into the facade of world

Literature. Through the writings of Achebe, Adichie...etc, the English language was only used as a tool to attract the world's attention towards Nigerian Literature and to regain the chattered pieces of the Nigerian voice and identity which were formerly imbedded by the colonizer by means of violence and oppression.

I.2. Nigerian Literature in English

What really led to the emergence of a Nigerian Literature in English (NLE) can be summarized into two important factors: the first one is rooted in history and the second one is rooted in politics. First, shortly after the Second World War, Nigeria was one of those countries fighting for their freedom. The call for Nationalism was welcomed by the Nigerians, and Nationalists like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dennis Osadebeye, and Herbert Macaulay were very interested and concerned about a brighter future for a new, powerful and self-determinant Nigeria. Literature was considered as the best tool for writers to awaken the feelings of people towards the real values of the Nigerian society inviting them to embrace it and celebrate its uniqueness. Indeed, those Nationalist fighters resolved to writing to express their voice and gain people's attention towards the situation of Nigeria. Hence, the period of (1950-1960) witnessed the publication of books, journals, and pamphlets as a fruitful result to authors' call of Nationalism (qtd. in Awoyemi 30). Second, the first Nigerian University was established in Ibadan in 1948, and writers like Chinua Achebe were able to develop their literary skills there and become more aware about the literary culture in general (qtd. in Awoyemi 31).

In *Nigerian literature In English: The Journey So Far?* Taye Awoyemi states that Nigerian Literature in English can be divided into three different types. Each type signifies a particular genre of Literature and refers to a certain period of time.

First, there is *The Literary Path-Finders: The Apostiles*. Such kind of literature, which is the oldest one, reflects how writers have attempted to combine two cultures in one piece of literature; while one culture belongs to indigenous Nigerians, and holds peoples' traditions mainly the oral tradition which is a major characteristic of African Literature, the other culture is definitely inspired from the British Imperialists. The perfect example of this genre is Amos Tutuola's novel *The palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952). Despite the fact that this novel has nothing to do with logic, it includes the oral tradition which is a strong marker of African Literature (3). All the writings of this era reflect the writers' sense of pride towards the African heritage which is strongly manifested as a spiritual entity in their works.

Second, there is *The Trail-Blazers: The First Generation Writers*. Due to Nationalists' efforts in developing Nigerian education, the first University in Nigeria *Ibaden* was established in 1948. Actually, Chinua Achebe was a student of this university and a trail-blazer whose novel *Things Fall Apart* was written for two main reasons; it came first to show to the world that pre-colonial Nigerian had its own history, one that was already culturally rich before the coming of the colonizer, and second it came as a response to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The least thing to say about this novel is that Achebe was not in favor with Conrad's negative portrayal of Africa. *The Trail Blazers* tended to overestimate the hero by making him the only one responsible for liberating Nigeria, and were criticized for being less optimistic about future Nigeria; however, they were against the idea of being westernized and predicted that Nigeria will have a corrupt political leaders in the future (32-3).

The third literary type is called *The Experimentalists: The Second Generation Writers*. They believed that Nigeria is not really facing a total independence but rather there is a shift of power from colonial rulers to new Nigerian rulers. Writers who participated in the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) believed that improving the situation of Nigeria should be on behalf of the collective rather than the individual to accomplish the change. Also, the writers' interest in

politics is evident as they targeted political issues in their writings. Moreover, women writers were given enough attention and Zula Sofola stands as an example because she is considered the first female playwright in Nigeria. No doubt, female writers were encouraged by men to speak in this period and the female contribution in literature started to be important and equal to that of male writers (33).

The Fourth literary genre is called *The Contemporaries: The Third Generation*. There are many questions about whether it is appropriate to call them so, since their works are merely a continuation of the previous periods. Yet, discussing contemporary issues can be used as a proof to defend their name. In addition, women's status as writers reached its peak with them being the voice that talks on behalf of their nation. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo included many poems in *Waiting For Dawn* (34). Not only did Ezeigbo point out to female issue in her writings but she also dealt with issues related to human beings in general. Thus, it is worthwhile to give an example of a poem of hers that seems to be humanistic in the first degree. Not female voiced nor male voiced, but it is human exclusive. In part two of "Another Miscarriage" Akachi writes, I am the sum total// Of the pain of my people// The anguish stomached// In the womb of a nation// The poems I write// Are pain killers// I take them in doses// And overdose// Numbing the pain // That may never go away (qtd. in Awoyemi 35). Indeed, this level represents the coming of age of female voices which used to hide under male voices in the past. Women finally could prove that they are talented enough to voice their interests and even to challenge other men through their stories (qtd. in Awoyemi 73).

The crystallization of Nigerian Literature in English in 1980 was significant in introducing writers like Achebe, later Adichie, and others who sought the need to use their voice as a weapon to target the sensitive issues and obstacles faced by people in Nigeria after independence. Therefore, the authors' choice of themes came from the heart of the Nigerian society where individuals resemble Nigeria in its search for identity and power after a violent

colonial history. For this purpose, major themes were brought by writers into light such as politics, morality, religion, love, marriage and traditions. All these themes are interrelated and highly linked to the larger situation of Nigeria.

In Adetuyi's article "Thematic preoccupation of Nigerian Literature: A Critical Approach", politics was and still is shown to be a major concern for Nigerian writers. Thus, through their works, writers demonstrate a direct exposure of political issues and conflicts of post colonial Nigeria. Among these concerns are the role of individuals in society, the new corrupt system in the country, and the misuse of power by politicians to dominate people. Interestingly, contemporary Nigerian Literature stresses women's desire to be part of the political system as a way of proclaiming gender equality and overcoming men chauvinism, an essential step in lifting the silence which hampered woman's voice for decades (23).

Another important theme of Nigerian literature is morality, a theme highly related to the society's beliefs and customs. To illustrate this, it is worthy to use *Things Fall Apart* in which Achebe reflects an aspect of morality in the Igbo society. According to the novel, the protagonist's body, Okonkwo, should only be buried by strangers for the evil power he possesses. In more simple words, Okonkwo is regarded as a sinner in his society. Thus, people are forbidden from getting close to his body when he is dead. The Igbo society in this case sets a moral code by which people are to avoid "touching" the sinner person's dead body. As a result, the commissioner and other strange men are invited to bury Okonkwo "[whose] body is evil, and only strangers may touch it. That is why we ask your people to bring him down because you are strangers" (*Things Fall Apart* 147). The same morale code which prevents the community from touching Okonkwo's body allows other men to touch and bury him.

Anti-Colonialism is not less important than the above mentioned themes. The aim of the writers here is to signify the remarkable distinction that lay between two different cultures. Whereas The Nigerian culture is portrayed as unique, entertaining, and belonging to Nigerians' tribes, the Western culture is underestimated and regarded as an alien. The Nigerian poet Okara uses her poem *Piano and Drums* to draw this view; hence Okara manifests a deep appreciation and a sense of pride towards her culture which is symbolized in the word "Drums", and similarly shows the "piano" as a plain instrument with no particular significance or meaning, symbolizing the Western culture. Indeed, the writer describes the piano in a pathetic way as she hears "... a washing piano solo peaks of complex ways in tear-furrowed concerto" the word "complex" stands for the complexity of the foreign culture which has no charm comparing to the writer's culture (qtd. in Adetuyi 25).

In order to show how people relate to God and spirituality, Nigerian writers address the themes of *religion*, *mortality*, and as well *re-incarnation*. In religion, people attribute the divine power either to nature or their ancestors. This is the case for Igbo people who depend heavily on nature, mainly in agriculture, and thus they could not repudiate its impact on them. Moreover, they believe in the wisdom of their ancestors to whom they resolve whenever necessary, even if they are dead and have to listen only to their spirits. This belief that human soul returns after death is central to writers who put it under the theme of re-incarnation. Moreover, writers were interested in the way individuals deal with others in the same society and how they are affected differently with traditions, and societal norms (qtd. in Adetuyi 23-4).

All the above mentioned themes mark the beginning of Nigerian Literature as to be recognized for its historical and as well cultural specifications. However, these themes are not the drawing line or the limit for many writers whose goal is to transmit the Nigerian voice all over the world through the micro examination of individuals. Indeed, the choice of the themes

started to shift to fit into the requirements of a contemporary genre of literature. This investigation, which is deep right into the individual's minds, aims to show that individuals cannot be identified away from the basics of their society. Respectively, the writers stress that embracing one's own unique culture is crucial in connecting people to their origins through stirring in them the special beliefs, traditions, and values, which give them a strong sense of belonging in life. In this wise, writers tend to portray the Igbo tradition as a unique marker of the Nigerian's rich history and identity. Thus, Nigerians will have their unique voice and identity as long as their families bond with the past represented in and inspired by the Igbo tradition (Adetuyi 24).

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie shows how individuals can be either voiced or silenced in their familial spaces depending on each family's view towards culture and traditions. Actually, two families are brought into comparison in the narrative in terms of their adherence to the Nigerian culture of Igbonism or their tendency to adopt the colonizer's culture. Whereas the first family is conditioned to adopt the principles of the British colonizer, the second family is encouraged to maintain the original beliefs of Igbo people whereby old people are respected and admired. Consequently, the atmosphere in the first family is characterized by silence, fear, and violence as opposed to the other family where the atmosphere is crowded by laughter, songs, and people's never ending conversations. People in the silenced spaces are driven by force to remain in the circle of oppression and submission, and thus they have empty souls and shrink personalities. It is only after the family breaks the silence that its members actually learn a new freedom of thought and action which crowns them by strong, independent voices at the end.

Actually, the concept of silence holds different significations for different scholars. Amy Kmainisky, for instance, links silence to absence making it the opposite of speech. In her book *Reading the Body Politic: Feminism Criticism and Latin American Women Writers*,

Kaminsky contrasts between silence and voice and relates them to the notion of “self expression” while voice indicates a positive “self expression” and a strong personal awareness, silence indicates a negative “self expression” that characterizes a weak personality surrounded by fear. Wrefrod Miller also defines silence as an “intrinsic part of any acoustic or communication system” and hence it forms a “basic part of any culture”. However, he links it to violence in another definition where he considers it “a strategy or a response to “unreasonable behavior” (qtd.in Lavania 5). By relating it to violence, Miller considers silence as a burden to be carried within the person’s feelings, and later on it leads to an assembling of emotions that needs to be blurred outside through revenge. As if the person handles silence for a particular time and then it comes the time when it becomes unbearable. According to Miller, silence is a temporary behavior which results from an existing violence (qtd, in Lavania 5).

In a similar vein, Deidre Lashgari examines silence as being a result of violence, describing the person who tries to control another one’s life through violence, regardless of their gender, as being psychologically disturbed. The feminist poet Adrienne Rich supports this idea by stressing on the violence of men towards women that is used to dominate them. Rich notes that by “denying his own feminine aspects, always associating his manhood with his ability to possess and dominate women, man would slowly, imperceptibly, over time, achieved a degree of self-estrangement, self –hatred, and self-mutilation” (qtd. in Lavania6). At the end, women will no longer keep respecting those violent husbands and will instead develop a negative feeling of dislike and anguish which might bloom at the men’s face at anytime in the form of revenge (qtd. in Lavania 6).

In fact, women in Nigeria, particularly in the Igbo society, have always been silenced through the roles attributed to them by their patriarchal society which made them responsible for the house chores and for caring and nurturing the children they give birth to. The first

female novelist in Nigeria, Flora Nwapa, used her pen to speak about Igbo women's sufferings from the early ages of their lives by emphasizing that women contributed to this role through their blind acceptance to the conditions of the Igbo community. Clearly, Nwapa is against the idea that women should only marry and have children and be supported instead and she argues that women's education is necessary for their self awareness and self dignity. Thus, Nwapa's writing advocates women to rebel against the tradition, and to defeat the fear which holds them from enjoying their roles as real women who are strong and voiced by themselves. The feminist touch is present in Nwapa's writings as noticed by Chida Ikonne who remarks that "... Flora Nwapa is only trying to document...The rebellion of woman who dare go against the norms of society is not meant to be a feminist ploy. It is merely used to highlight the impact of socialization on woman's selfhoods" (qtd. in Wilson 31-2). Indeed, Nigerian women writers has started gradually challenging the egocentrism of men in their societies towards achieving the female recognition and transforming them from silent creators to voiced, creative individuals (Wilson 31-2).

I.3. Theoretical Framework

In the discussion of our theme, two approaches will be used to analyze the novel according to the details dictated in both theories. Firstly, we will rely on the psychoanalytic approach notably through the principles of Sigmund Freud which can be used to understand the characters' behavior. Significantly, Freud's notions of the *conscious* and the *unconscious* mind along with the *id* and the *ego* are very crucial in approaching the theme of silence. Secondly, we will rely on the ecocritical approach to exhibit the effect of nature on the characters' lives. The natural environment plays a vital role in breaking the silence of some characters; thus, it is worthy to pass by the different images of the physical environment encountered in the narrative and how natural elements help in enlightening the minds and souls of individuals.

In the book *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, Freud sheds the light on the notions conscious and unconscious which relate to the mind. His classifications are till now significant and his contributions in the study of psychology can be conceptualized into four periods, each one represents an idea developed by Freud, mainly through the examination of his patients. The first period (1880s-1900s) was dedicated to the study of conscious and unconscious mind. The second period (mid 1890s-before WWI) Freud tried to explore the different sexual tendencies a person could have including super teenagers and children. The third period (early of 1890s) was the time of focusing on the mind. That is to say, it was Freud's attempt to figure out the structure of the mind according to humans' behavior. In the last period (early 1920s), Freud's ideas bloomed with the three parts of human personality which highly represent Freud as a psychologist. These are called the id, the ego, and the -ego (30).

Freud aimed to bring more details about the conscious and the unconscious mind, the thing that made his studies more interesting for critics and writers. For this, each person's mind constitutes of two parts, a conscious one where the rational thoughts lay in, and an unconscious one where all the repressed wishes, thoughts, and meanings set in. This is simply because the conscious mind refuses them or regards them as inappropriate to be publicly revealed. Accordingly, two principles can stimulate a person into hiding his own desires within the unconscious mind. The first principle is called the 'pleasure principle' and it exists from birth, it is one's personal need to fulfill his desires immediately. However, grownups are able to understand the limits imposed by society on people and thus would control their desires in order to fit into larger group by doing only what is acceptable for their groups and societies. In this case, these thoughts will be placed in the unconscious mind since the person cannot reveal it to other people. The Second principle is called the 'reality principle'. The mental health of a person can be in danger if he ever misses controlling his sexual desire, the one that Freud called 'the libido'. Actually, people need to delay its pleasing considering that

it directly affects their attitude. Hence, this idea will be automatically positioned in the unconscious state of mind (30-31).

In the same vein, the unconscious mind is also the room in which human mistakes reside in. A repressed thought would always try to emerge on the surface. Yet, it can be manifested in multiple forms. For example, people sometimes make mistakes in their speech; these are often called slips of the tongue. Other times, people tend to forget some events they have experienced or omit parts of their speech. Only the person knows the meaning of these actions. The latter somehow expresses that meaning unconsciously as he makes a mistake, forgets an issue, or even omits some word. The other manifestation of repressions finds its way through jokes. While some view that all jokes are made spontaneously, jokes can actually be the result of a truly significant meaning for the individual. The fact that some subjects such as family relations and sexuality seem to be sensitive in nature, and hold the person back from expressing his point directly, motivates the process of telling jokes as a kind of a smooth way to reveal ideas (32-33).

Another element which is of great importance to Freud is 'Dreams'. The latter can occur as a way of fulfilling peoples' wishes when a person is asleep. This is another process that takes place within the unconscious mind (32). In *The interpretation of Dreams*, which is also Freud's well known book, dreams are explained as the final result coming out of the struggle between the unconscious mind, as it strives to let go those hidden ideas outside and the conscious mind that represses that in real life. Hence, the unconscious violates the limitations of the conscious by fulfilling one's wishes (44).

In *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, Freud also shows that while civilization implies security, good behavior, and makes people's life easier in all ways, it is also the one to make people suffer emotionally as it deprives them from pleasing themselves, a thing that is instinct and

described by Freud as “the id”. This can also mean that being civilized means being fake, and unhappy. Moreover, Freud applied psychoanalysis on religion. The latter was regarded important only for children whom they seek protection from the natural powers that exceed them. Mature people, however, are able to make their decisions without fear or reliance on others, thus, the need for religion can become questionable to them, religion can. As a consequence, religion is something temporary for Freud (41-42).

Nature can play a major role in determining people’s fate. For this, the impact of nature on characters’ life is highly stressed by Adichie. Actually, the title itself *Purple Hibiscus* which is the name of a flower stimulates the inclusion of an ecocritical approach to show how humans are attached to their physical environment. In the book *Beginning Ecocritical Theory*, the emergence of ecocriticism as a field is gradually discussed. Though it first appeared in 1970s, the term ecocriticism, which was before known as “the study of nature writing”, was adopted by Cheryl Glotfelty in 1989 to signify a distinct field in literature or a critical field of literary theory. Glotfelty states that ‘Simply defined, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment’ (qtd. in Barry 253-4).

Actually, Ecocriticism traced itself in the earlier works of transcendentalists, mainly in the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau’s *Walden* for instance outlines the journey made by Walden who decides to take personal moments with the natural world of the forests or a ‘return to nature’, abandoning his life in the city (qtd. in Barry 255).

The idea that “everything is socially and /or linguistically constructed” is not accepted by ecocritics who believe that “nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within knowing inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it”

(Tosic 44). The new trend of ecocriticism is also taken into account in Jelica Tosic's book entitled *Ecocriticism—Interdisciplinary Study Of Literature And Environment*. Here, Tosic explains the reason for the growing interest in this field by linking the physical environment to the identity of humans. Man is constantly searching for his origins, and the way to answer this question would be his mother nature (44)

In the same book mentioned above, some terminological terms are given as part of the field of ecocriticism. While “biotic component” refers to the living creatures, “abiotic component” refers to the natural world. The relationship between the two can be studied within the science of ecology. In fact, deep ecology is the one concerned with this specific bonding, and it acknowledges that man is a single component of the large environment. Hence, his role in the first place is to preserve it and use it correctly. Interestingly, “Deep” is used by the philosopher Arne Naess to signify reality or originality. Not only this, Naess's purpose is “to go beyond the factual level of ecology as a science to deeper level of self-awareness and ‘Earth wisdom’” (qtd. in Tosic 45).

What constitutes the physical environment has been the center of attention for many writers and critics. As for the *Collins Dictionary of Environmental Science*, physical environment represents “the combination of external conditions that influence the life of individual organisms”. Another definition for space is that it “comprises the non-living, abiotic components (physical and chemical) and the inter-relationships with other living, biotic components”. However, Alan Gilpin goes deeper in his definition through mentioning the real elements that shape the natural space as he identifies them as “the built environment, the natural environment, and all natural resources including air, land, and water” (qtd. in Tosic 46).

Actually, Gilpin provides another definition which takes nature to another level, where human feelings are to be directed towards the elements that surround them. Three points can be streamed out of this definition. The first one is that human beings are in need of the elements that comprise their space in the same way that this space depends on humans to be like it is supposed to be. The second one, is that people are ought to give attention to what surrounds them, by wandering through it albeit one does not use them in his life. The third one is that feelings of the person can be quite integrated in his evaluation of the natural world, for mixing the emotional level with the physical one can bring something new ultimately. Moreover, environmental imagination is a term used by Lawrence Buell to signify another influence of the environment upon its wanderers. The person can form a particular imagination once attached with or gets enclosed with those influential biotic components. This impact is well summarized in the sentence “The *where* influences the *is in* the spiritual way” (qtd. in Tosic 46-7).

Indeed, the first chapter serves as an introducing chapter for the whole thesis. Things related to Nigerian literature such as the legacy of the writer, different works of Nigerian writers and the important themes are highlighted in this chapter. The theme of silence is given special attention by relation to other works and as well to Adichie’s selected novel. Finally, this chapter sheds the light on the theories of psychoanalysis and ecocriticism which are significant for the study.

Chapter Two: Religious Hypocrisy and Psychological Anarchy

The second chapter focuses on the relationships which govern the family at the deep level and which fit into the political context of post colonial Nigeria. First, a short summary of the narrative is given to clarify the details of further analysis. Second, we shed the light on the importance of religion mainly Catholicism in approaching the psychologies of our characters and as well in increasing influence and power in the society. The impact of religion inside the family is displayed through highlighting the consequences behind its use such as violence and oppression. Third, silence is also one of the implications of religion which is crucial in understanding the attitudes of individuals through comparison and contrast by stressing on its forms, instances and why it was used as a central theme. Fourth, the chapter ends by discussing the language conflict Nigerians are brought into after independence and the tendencies of families to either preserve the Igbo language or to embrace the English language of the British Colonizer.

II. 1. *Purple Hibiscus*: A Synopsis

The narrator of the story is a girl teenager named Kambili who lives in Enugu with her father, Eugene, her mother, Beatrice, and her older brother, Jaja. The Achikee family is forced to fall under Eugene's authority whereby he sets rules, and orders for them and uses his religious devotion as a way to control them and to punish them violently. Eugene is wealthy due to the factories he owns and to the public Journal, the *Standard*, he uses to criticize the system of Nigeria. Eugene despises his father, Papa-Nnukwu, because he follows the Igbo traditions unlike his son who favors Catholicism; thus, he allows his children to see their grandfather only at Christmas. Eugene's sister, a university professor at Nsukka, is also a traditionalist and a fearless critic of the system and of Eugene's ideals. In a visit to Nsukka, Kambili and Jaja enjoy their stay with their cousins at Ifeoma's modest compound.

There, Kambili learns to laugh, speak, and act freely. Jaja too blossoms and admires his aunty's garden particularly the purple hibiscus flower which his aunt describes as original and delicate. Kambili falls in love with a priest, and watches the innocence prayer of her grandfather. Later on, Eugene punishes his daughter for staying with his "heathen" father by pouring hot water on her feet.

Meanwhile, Ade Coker, Eugene's editor is assassinated by the government for his critical article published in the *Standard*. Eugene finds papa-Nunkwu's painting in the children's hands and he beats Kambili to the point that she is hospitalized. Kambili and Jaja return to Nsukka and witness the riot of students in front of their aunt's house, and Kambili's affection towards father Amadi is further increased. In her visit to Nsukka, Beatrice is bleeding; she is beaten by Eugene and this leads to her miscarriage. The next day is Palm Sunday where Jaja misses communion, and the Achikee children start to be gradually voiced and fearless. Jaja and Kambili return to Nsukka again after their aunty informs them about leaving to America. Weeks later, Eugene is found dead and she is Beatrice who poisons him. Jaja chooses to be in prison instead of his mother. At the end, Kambili dreams of planting purple hibiscuses to welcome Jaja's return.

II.2. Adherence to Catholicism: Influence and Authority

In post colonial Nigeria, the government which has control over the state, was yet to become near to the expectations of its people. A military coup turned things around causing a Civil War and a series of violence and disorder which haunted people's life for the years to come. Politics was at the stake, and Nigerians' hope to enjoy a peaceful life after a horrible colonial history was not to be fulfilled. Instead, the Nigerian people had to experience another gloomy phase, one that seems at the surface to be new but in fact, it is just similar to

the colonial period. Actually, the Nigerian society's suffering went beyond politics to reach economy and religion. This brought trauma and ambivalence to Nigerians.

In fact, *Purple Hibiscus* streams its events out of real historical events that Nigeria had witnessed during the period of 1990's. Back then, Ibrahim Babangida, the one who urged the military coup of August 27, 1985 to replace the ex-general Muhammadu, was also the one who promised to bring a democratic rule to the country. Unfortunately, this leader was more dictator than his predecessors were. People's split ideologies in politics resulted in a Civil War. In addition, the crumbling of politics spread its poison to individual houses as people's life inside was also influenced. For example, the Achikee family's house was similar to Nigeria, full of stress, violence and dictatorship (Ouma 1).

According to Christopher Ernest Werimo Ouma, the two characters that are concerned with politics in the story of *Purple Hibiscus* are Ade Coker and Eugene Achikee. The former is Eugene's editor who writes about Eugene's political opinions which entail a direct criticism of the system and which always take a large space of his journal called the *Standard*. Eugene is responsible for what appears in that journal for he is its owner. Certainly, the *Standard* gives him the reputation of a courageous, truthful man. This is at least in the eyes of Father Benedict the priest who preaches "look at brother Eugene. He could have chosen to be like other Big Men in this country, he could have decided to sit at home and do nothing after the coup... But no, he used the *Standard* to speak the truth..." (*Purple Hibiscus* 3). Ironically speaking, the truth is not for granted because Ade Coker is arrested for exposing the government's lack of democracy in that journal. Besides owning the *Standard*, Eugene is a Catholic believer and practitioner. Thus, this further elevates his status in the society as both a rich and religious man (Ouma 3).

Actually, in Ganyi's article "Tragic Heroes and Unholy Alliances: A Reading Of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* And Mariama Ba's *So Long A Letter*", Eugene is portrayed as a totally staunch Catholic father who imposes his thoughts and beliefs on his family via rules and schedules. Albeit belonging to a traditional Igbo society, Eugene cherishes Western values of the British colonialism. No doubt, Eugene repudiates any aspect which belongs to the Igbo culture. Evidently, he has no appreciation for the older people of the community nor does he care about their wisdom as it is inherited in the Nigerian tradition.

Ironically, Eugene disrespects his own father whom he constantly refers to as a "heathen, pagan", According to him, it is sinful to keep the sublimines with papa- Nunukwu who is unlike him full of sins. This is evident in his speech to the children "I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but god will protect you" (*Purple Hibiscus* 62). In addition to this, he sets conditions for the children's visit to their grandfather. A typical speech before the visit would be "papa closed the Bible. Kambili and Jaja, you will go this afternoon to your grandfather's house and greet him. Kevin will take you. Remember, don't touch any food, don't drink anything. And, as usual, you will stay no longer than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes" (*Purple Hibiscus* 61). Surprisingly, Eugene misses his father's funeral which in his opinion does not match to the standards of Catholicism, and thus it is unworthy to attend it.

Religious devotion certainly contributes in empowering Eugene who is unanimously respected within his surroundings. Whether for the priest or for the congregation of the Catholic church of St. Agens, Eugene is perceived as a man of manners, one to be honored and followed by others. Therefore, Eugene always occupies a special place in the church: "Papa always sat in the front pew for Mass, at the end beside the middle aisle, with mama, jaja, and me sitting next to him. He was first to receive communion at the marble altar..." (*Purple Hibiscus* 4). Not only this, this man's name is mentioned before Jesus in the church, as if he is greater than Jesus himself in the eyes of his people. Thus, the priest places his name

directly after the pope “father Benedict usually referred to the pope, Papa, and Jesus in— that order. He used Papa to illustrate the gospels” (*Purple Hibiscus* 4). Consequently, Eugene seems a man who cares about other people’s needs. In addition to being committed to the church rituals and religious sermons, he is depicted also a devout charitable person, serving the church and helping other people in need.

Due to the detailed description given by the narrator from the very first page, the reader can easily develop an almost utopian picture about Eugene, and how he is very delicate in his practice of those Catholic rituals. Accordingly, Eugene’s “line moved the slowest because he pressed hard on each forehead to a perfect cross until his ash-covered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of “dust and unto dust you shall return” (*Purple Hibiscus* 3). In addition, it is very important for Eugene that people do not miss church on Sunday. Actually, for him “...nothing but mortal sin would keep a person away from communion two Sundays in a row” (*Purple Hibiscus* 6). All these acts if it has to show something it will be Eugene’s total adherence to a solid religious background where fear from God is his biggest motivator and perquisite (Foreman 7).

Certainly, Eugene’s attachment to Christianity seems to always find a way to be manifested publicly. In this instance, Eugene once passes beside some hawkers along with his family in the car where he offers some money to the children. In his daughter’s words “Papa gave them each ten naira from a wad of notes he pulled out of his hold-hall” (*Purple Hibiscus* 54). So far, it sounds a good behavior. However, when the rich man finishes the sentence by “Greet your parents, make sure you show them this money” (*Purple Hibiscus* 54), the intention of Eugene is brought into question. At first, one might understand it as a concern from Eugene, as he tries to make sure that his money will reach the children’s parents. However, it is not the case, the second sentence builds the fact that Eugene is only showing off in front of his society. In so doing, Eugene contradicts a major principle in the bible which

says “so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (qtd. in Foreman 7). What really confirms Eugene’s hypocrisy is his acceptance to the public praise given by father Benedict who forgets no detail in telling people about Eugene’s large donations to the church and community (Foreman 8-9).

Undoubtedly, Eugene, in the view of the ex- colonizer power and people sharing his perspective, is a hero who revives the Western culture on behalf of them. However, in the eyes of those who are committed to the Igbo tradition like his father papa-Nunkwu, the man is not a hero and a typical traitor of the Nigerian native culture and elders’ legacy as a whole. For ordinary readers, he is a perfect hypocrite, who is absolutely far from being a hero (Ganyi 2).

The use of Religion in *Purple Hibiscus* is significant in comprehending Adichie’s personal tendencies and goals as a feminist writer. Actually, the Catholic religion adopted by Eugene aims at excluding women from the powerful positions occupied by men. This is obvious through the use of the character of Beatrice who remained under Eugene’s domination. However, this is against Adichie’s expectations that longs for female freedom and gender equality. The kind of freedom that Adichie supports is symbolized in Ifeoma’s character who perfectly balances her role as an independent female but still religious too. Through religion, Adichie does not manifest her willingness to challenge a particular type of religion, and to advocate another type at the same time. On the one hand, Adichie uses the character of Eugene to symbolize extremism in Catholicism wherein religion is used to oppress Beatrice and to suppress her voice. On the other hand, Adichie uses the character of Ifeoma to symbolize balanced Catholicism that allows her to establish a powerful selfhood and to voice fearlessly her opinions and interests. Both Eugene and Ifeoma support different types of priests who resemble their way of perceiving religion. Therefore, Eugene’s religion

is undesirable according to Adichie who favors that of Auntie Ifeoma which shall protect women's self freedom and self expression in the future (Nboya 111).

II.3-Power Manipulation: Violence and Chauvinism

In *Purple Hibiscus*, religion is used by Eugene as a justification for his violent acts inflicted towards his wife Beatrice, and as well the children Kambili and Jaja. Indeed, Ruth Nzugenuka reveals that Eugene at his homestead drops away all of his gentleness and sophistication. Instead, violent monster emerges and directs his anger towards any Achikee member who does not please his demands or expectations, which are at most religious ones. Actually, the first sentence of the story hints to a soon approached catastrophe in the house of Eugene as his daughter Kambili initiates it as follows "Things Started to Fall Apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère" (*Purple Hibiscus* 3). Ironically, Eugene's violence does not only led to "the falling apart" of his family but it also brings Eugene's downfall at the end (qtd.in Nzugenuka 21).

Although the fact that Kambili is only fifteen years old, and two younger than her brother Jaja, Adichie's narrative is purposefully given through Kambili's point of view. Strangely enough, this is what makes the story more interesting and believable for the reader. Interestingly, shy Kambili transmits every single moment in the story carefully and skillfully.

Despite the different settings and methods of Eugene's violence, one thing for sure is that the inflicted pain is both physical and emotional on the target. Usually, Eugene gathers the family to drink tea in his attempt to strengthen family bonds .Yet, the tea that Kambili and Jaja are ordered to drink is very hot, and thus, burns their tongues. However, the way that Kambili portrays herself amidst drinking the tea in the table is just abnormal for the reader. In this regard, the teenager narrates: "have a love sip, he would say, and Jaja would go first.

Then I would hold the cup with both hands and raise it to my lips. One sip. The tea was always too hot, always burned my tongue, and if lunch was something peppery, my raw tongue suffered. But it didn't matter because I knew that when the tea burned my tongue, it burned papa's love into me" (*Purple Hibiscus* 8). Poor Kambili associates the "love" of her father to her tongue being "burned" ignoring the pain caused on her mouth. Obviously, Kambili blindly obeys her demanding father and unconsciously supports his authoritarian rule through her constant support and appraisal (qtd. in Nzugenuka 22-3).

Patriarchal oppression is evident in *Purple Hibiscus* in which Eugene treats violently his family members. When Kambili stays in her aunt's house with her supposedly "hethan" grandfather, she is unable to avoid the brutal punishment of her extremist father. This time it is not her mouth which is burned but it is her legs which are subjected to the hot water spilled on her by Eugene. According to Kambili, "[Eugene] poured the hot water on [her] feet as if he was conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen" (*Purple Hibiscus* 194). In fact, Eugene goes further in torturing Kambili, who has to take the blame for keeping the painting of papa-Nunukwu. For Eugene, it does not matter if her cousin, Amaka, has given it as a souvenir to Jaja and Kambili, all what mattered is that it is "sinful" to hold such thing. Indeed, Kambili's body is too young to bear the vicious beatings. Her words are like "...the metal landed on open skin on my side, my back, my legs...More stings. More slaps...and slept away into quite" (*Purple Hibiscus* 210-211). Kambili is a victim to a cruel father. Nevertheless, she seems to approve on everything he does or says, a thing that she shares with her mother Beatrice.

In the Achikee household, the children Kambili and Jaja are programmed to do everything according to Eugenes' schedule. Not only do they have a time for church, and school, but they also have a specific time for eating and sleeping. Henceforth, Kambili feels "suffocated" inside her house which she describes as a jail "the compound walls trooped by

coiled electric wires, were so high I could not see the cars driving by on our street” (*Purple Hibiscus* 9). In addition to this, Kambili’s father pushes her to the limits as nothing pleases him but a first grade in her class. This is why Eugene is outraged when she comes second in her term. Indeed, Eugene stirs fear in his daughter to the point that she cannot befriend her classmates who call her a “backyard snob”. In this context, Kambili narrates “...I remained a backyard snob to most my class girls until the end of the term. But I did not worry too much about that because I carried a bigger load- the worry of making sure I came first this term...” (*Purple Hibiscus* 49). Ironically, each time Kambili focuses on her study, she recalls the loud sounds of the beatings Eugene directs towards her mother.

In fact, no one has suffered from Eugene’s inhuman acts more than his wife Beatrice who merely cares for her children and tries her best to satisfy her selfish husband. However, Beatrice’s pain as an African woman is manifold into different places which all burdened her simultaneously. Accordingly, Kolawole in “Womanism and African Consciousness” (1997) rightly observes that African women are the products of multiple subjugation such as, “Patriarchy, tradition, colonialism, racism, and gender imperialism, all combine to act against the African women’s self assertion”(25). One of the instances of patriarchy is triggered by her husband who behind the locked doors of their room beats his wife severely causing her multiple miscarriages. It is only after Beatrice polishes her precious figurines that she could forget a bit about her pain. This is Beatrice’s way to heal her tormented emotions. The children are conscious about the physical violence inflicted towards their mother. Yet, they are powerless in front of their authoritarian father (31- 33). In order to lessen her psychological stress, Kambili resorts to counting as she describes one of the scenes:

I sat down, closed my eyes, and started to count, counting made it seem not that long, made it seem not that bad. Sometimes it was over before I even got to twenty. “There’s blood on the floor,” Jaja said. “I’ll get the

brush from the bathroom. We cleaned up the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red water color all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped. (*Purple Hibiscus* 32-3).

Each individual in The Achikee family is subjugated, to a different extent, to some of Eugene's brutality, and thus holds a different scar in the memory. Actually Jaja's scar is so apparent in his left finger to remind him of the day he was not classified the first in the Holy Communion contest, or more harshly to remind him of his father's cruelty that made him lose a finger. Moreover, Jaja and Kambili's pain started very early, right from their childhood. Kambili recites how she and Jaja were obliged to collect the sticks used later for their punishment. Indeed, Jaja, as an innocent child, used to soak the sticks thinking that it would reduce the physical pain on their body. No doubt, Eugene is a selfish heartless father whose ego resides above his children's needs and concerns. Inyama, N, F asserts "childhood is an experience soured by extreme parental authority, that of the father; more concerned with the enhancement or projection of his own ego and images victimizes the child in the pursuit of such an objective" (qtd. in Ruth 22). Eugene's ultimate control of his children's lives firmly has affected their psychology and has created a barrier which held back their real personality from shining.

II.4. Silence and Emptiness

In order to avoid Eugene's brutality and its harsh consequences over them, Jaja and Kambili choose both to remain silent and calm the whole time unless ordered by Eugene or captured by his schedule. Hence, silence pervades the Achikee house regardless the time or ritual being practiced by this family. Indeed, Kambili reveals how silence overlaps with family lunch, Sunday church, and even regular times of the family. She uses the word silence to describe many events of the day:

Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as our Sundays: the silence of the waiting until papa was done with his siesta so we could have lunch; the silence of reflection time, when papa gave us a scripture passage or a book by one of the early church fathers to read and meditate on; the silence of evening rosary; the silence of driving to the church for benediction afterward. Even our family time on Sunday was quite, without chess games or newspaper discussions, more in tune with the day of rest” (*Purple Hibiscus* 31).

Silence characterizes every sermon and every angle of the Achikee family. Yet, the only voice to be heard and followed inside the family is that of Eugene Achikee.

From the beginning of the story, the reader can sense a palpable stress surrounding the Achikee family. This stress is always evident in the silent characters that tend to be quite even in the difficult moments. Moreover, silence turns around the physical elements and as well around the psychology of people. Kambili perfectly transfers the atmosphere to the reader when she reveals that “[she] felt suffocated”. Actually, the silence is unbearable for poor Kambili who expresses her desire for breaking it and desperately waits for any sound to cut it off (Ouma 27). This is evident when she points out: “The silence was only broken by the whir of the ceiling as it sliced through the still air. Although our spacious dining room gave way to an even wider living room, I felt suffocated. The off white walls with the framed photos of grandfather were narrowing, bearing down on me. Even the glass dining table was moving towards me” (*Purple Hibiscus* 7).

Interestingly, silence takes different forms in the Achikee household. While Jaja and Kambili rely on the language of eyes when speaking, their mother, who rarely speaks, produces single words and utterances. Actually, the second chapter entitled “Speaking with Our Spirits” shows how the three can communicate in silence and understand each other along that. In many times, Jaja and Kambili sympathize with their helpless mother. However,

they have no courage to confront their father with words nor do they have the capacity to protect poor Beatrice from his brutality. Thereby, the two use their eyes to release their thoughts and express their concern about their mother. Likewise, Jaja communicates telepathically with his sister “Jaja spoke to me with his eyes: what if she vomits? I would hold up my dress hems so mama could throw up into it. So we wouldn’t make a big mess in father Benedict’s house” (*Purple Hibiscus*). Similarly, Jaja and Kambili transmit their mutual anxiety concerning Mama’s baby who might join the family if their mother would not suffer another miscarriage. Here, Jaja expresses his willingness to protect his brother addressing Kambili with his eyes “we will protect him” (*Purple Hibiscus* 23).

Ironically, Kambili who is also the voice of the narrative has no voice with her surroundings in the town she lives in “Enugu”. Eugene’s repetitive violence has inflicted physical wounds as well as silenced the victims in the Achikee family. Kambili is no different, she is voiceless too. Actually, each time someone speaks to her, she tries to reply back and speak normally; however, something prevents her from doing so. Subsequently, Kambili is either stuttering or coughing whenever she tries to produce a speech (Ouma 52). In a similar vein, Kambili’s reaction to Jaja’s disobedience is quite abnormal as she could not hide her fear which took over all her body “But the only thing happened was [her] choking. [Her] body shook from the coughing” (*Purple Hibiscus* 14). Clearly, Kambili is unconsciously trapped by the picture of her cruel father and the silence she is accustomed to in her house becomes part of her personality outside. It is true that Jaja is also silent like Kambili in their home at Enugu town, but Jaja does not seem to face the obstacles that his sister suffers from because he talks fluently and communicates freely with others at school or elsewhere.

In fact, Jaja and Kambili are very calm when they accompany their father. This is remarked by Eugene’s Editor who is surprised to witness that both Jaja and Kambili are too

quite comparing to his children. Indeed, Ade Coker communicates with his guests Kambili and Jaja and asks them regular questions; when he notices their quietness he addresses Eugene “They are always so quiet” (*Purple Hibiscus*). This sentence is not welcomed by papa Eugene who seems irritated by his editor’s remark and has the same look he has when his family stands out of his ideals. However, Ade coker’s sentence sounds more of a disdain than a remark because he finished his sentence with a big laughter. While Papa Eugene silences his wife and children through the use of violence, Ade Coker, the one who exposes the government on behalf of Eugene, is silenced by the government once and forever as he is murdered for the article that denounces the government’s dictatorship.

Eugene s’ fortune is countless; he owns factories and a journal that afford him with significant earnings important enough to make him one of the wealthiest men in Nigeria. The house that Kambili lives in is very spacious and full of luxuries. Therefore, the Achikee family is categorized within the aristocratic class in their community. Yet, all that materiality could not fill the psychological gaps of Kambili who seriously struggles to identify within her society as she alienates herself from them. Not only this, Kambili is unconscious that she cherishes her father’s ideals as if they are written in the bible along with her unquestioning nature which holds her from searching the rationality behind her father’s thoughts. Kambili is further disturbed by other people who try to oppose Eugene’s way of thinking or those who even mock him indirectly. Indeed, the silence that characterized Jaja and Kambili at first can be misunderstood by the reader who may think of it as the house’s “philosophy” instead of being a harsh choice imposed on them (qtd. in Okuyade 156).

Furthermore, silence seems like a ghost chasing out Kambili wherever she goes. For this, school is just another jail for the teenager who remains shy and mute there unable to see the school as a different setting where she can rest away from her father’s commands. Actually, Kambili distances herself from her classmates and cannot socialize with any group

of her class. Simply, Kambili has in her mind only success and how to achieve it; she does not really have the time or the guts to think about social relations. The wall that Kambili puts in front of her surroundings make her live inside a shell. In the few times where Kambili speaks, she is stuttering, this is why her classmates nicknamed her a “backyard snob”. The gravity of Kambili’s isolation is visible to them as she daily runs out to the chauffeur car at the end of the class. In truth, Kambili’s act of running is solely out of fear. Indeed, Eugene also decides the exact time that his children arrive at home and in between that he calculates the minutes seriously. Ironically enough, Kambili’s classmates interpret Kambili’s hurry as a symptom of personal pride since Kambili’s family is the wealthiest comparing to them.

According to Eugene’s principles, a strict school would make his children work hard to shine and thereby their success would spot the light on the good reputation the Achikee family has. Hence, he has enrolled them in a school with a rigorous system in exchange that they will be always classified the first in their class. Nothing but the first grade will please Eugene who puts his siblings under a massive pressure to achieve that goal. Kambili triggers her father’s anger when she is classified the second in her class. Instead of being proud of his daughter and supporting her to continue through her success, Eugene feels ashamed by his daughter’s grade and considers it a failure that she deserves to be punished for. Eugene goes further as he intends to intimidate his daughter in front of her school classmates; thus, Kambili is obliged to listen to her father’s assault when he points to the head of the girl who comes first in her class and loudly shouts at his daughter’s face “how many heads has Chinwe Jidze?” (*Purple Hibiscus*). Furthermore, he embarrasses his daughter by giving her a mirror to look at her head to confirm his previous question.

Certainly, Kambili feels distressed even at school, only torture and fear shapes her days after her father’s ruthless way of shaming her in the public scandal. It is not weird that her desire of study is only stimulated by the panic of not being the first. No doubt, Eugene has

robotized his daughter and given her one perspective to see things through, the perspective of one plus one equals two. For this, Kambili works desperately to retain the first grade in order to avoid the punishment and be in the safe spot again. Consequently, Kambili resorts to cramming and counting to live no space for the chance. In so doing, Kambili "...memorized what the teacher said because [she] knew [her] textbooks would not make sense if [she] tried to study later. After every test a tough lump like poorly made fufu formed in [her] throat and stayed there until there exercise books come back" (*Purple Hibiscus* 52).

Definitely, Eugene Achikee has a psychological complex. His extremism has no limits concerning his views about people around him. Kambili and Jaja are not the only ones who are forced to endure his fanatic rule, but even his wife Beatrice is subject to his brutality. Although Beatrice is totally obedient and submissive to her husband's commands, he treats her in an intolerable manner and exaggerates in torturing her. Usually, after Sunday Church, the Achikee family visits father Benedict's house. One day, however, when the family arrives to the priest's house, pregnant Beatrice is not able to stand of her seat due to her dizziness, a thing that it is totally expected from a pregnant woman. Heartless Eugene does not really care about his wife's pain and in a threatening voice insists on her to land out of the car. In this instance, Kambili recounts how her father was talking in a violent tone "Are you sure you want to stay in the car?" (*Purple Hibiscus* 29) Here, Beatrice mumbled in a vulnerable tone "my body does not feel right". This is not acceptable for authoritative Eugene who instantly bursts out his violence saying "I asked if you were sure you wanted to stay in the car" (*Purple Hibiscus* 29). Commanded by her fear, Beatrice answered "I will come with you. It is really not that bad". Clearly, Beatrice is lying about her pain because she could not land out first, but as she notices Eugene's facial expressions and thinks about the result of not listening to him, she retreats back and changes her decision (Ouma 46-47).

Even though Beatrice changes her mind and risks her health when she obeys her husband's order, she still has to be punished later and pay for her previous reluctance. Not only does Eugene beat his pregnant wife, but he also asks forgiveness for her during his prayers in the table at family meal. Indeed, Eugene decides who is sinful and when they should pray to ask for his forgiveness (Ouma 47). As Kambili narrates, "When papa started the prayer, his voice quavered more than usual. His voice quavered more than usual. He prayed for the food first, then asked god to forgive those who had tried to thwart his Will. Who had put selfish desires first and had not wanted to visit his servant after Mass. Mama's amine resounded throughout the room" (*Purple Hibiscus* 32). While Eugene acts selfishly and does not give any importance to his wife's health, he makes prayers to ask for her forgiveness and calls her selfish in the same prayers.

Another shocking fact about Eugene's violent behavior towards Beatrice is that he regards her sinful since she had sex and became pregnant. In his logic, sex itself is unclean; this is why he beats her several times when he looks to her pregnancy. According to Joyce Nyairo, this is called "tormented sexuality". This point is also confirmed by Lucidly Nyairo who asserts that "But also in his tormented sexuality we realize that Catholicism may also be responsible for sexual inhibition, a tendency to regard sex as unclean and debasing which results in Eugene reacting so violently to the sight of his pregnant wife" (qtd. in Ouma 47). Indeed, besides suppressing her voice and taking over her life decisions, Eugene also wants to oppress Beatrice's sexuality just because he deems sex as a dirty behavior. By this, Eugene only proves his psychological disorder and the religious anarchy he has in mind. Elliot Ziwira perfectly describes Eugene when he states, "The religious have the audacity to think that everyone must see the world as they see it themselves" (qtd. in Forman 1).

II.5. Language Conflict: The Igbo language VS the English Language

The Igbo language is totally rejected by Eugene who considers the colonizer's language as the language of civilization and enlightenment. Due to his contact with the missionaries and his visit to Britain, he becomes modeled with every aspect of the British culture as if he has been brainwashed. Language is a crucial part of any culture; this is why Eugene values the English language and aims at teaching it to his family. Not only this, Eugene banishes the use of Igbo Language, the language of his parents, to his children and wife. The man is totally obsessed with being "civilized" and urges his children to maintain a prestigious look outside through the use of the English language in public. This can be easily proven via the talk he directs to his children "[they] had to sound civilized, he told [them], [they] had to speak English" (*Purple Hibiscus* 21). Hence, Eugene appreciates the missionaries who enlightened his soul by their culture and removed the ridiculous traditions and beliefs of his Igbo community. Beside that this culture has opened his mind on the uselessness of the Igbo culture as a whole; it is also the reason for his richness and Catholicism, the elements which has elevated his status in the society (Baharvand 2). This point is stressed by Eugene as he talks to Kambili "I didn't have father who sent me to the best schools ...I would be nothing today but for the priest and sisters at the mission. I was a house boy for the parish priest for two years" (*Purple Hibiscus* 47).

In addition, Eugene does not tolerate with people who are still adopting the Igbo tradition in the community including his own father. The latter is totally underestimated by his son who calls him a "pagan" and prays for him to be forgiven for being a sinful man. What is unbelievable though is that Eugene allows his children to visit Papa Nunkwu only once a year for fifteen minute no more. As usual, he controls his children from distance as he tells them that "touching" a pagan would lead one to hellfire. In contrast to Papa-Nunukwu, there is Kambili's maternal father who supports the colonial ideology and welcomes the culture of the

Europeans so hastily. Eugene is impressed by Kambili's maternal father's adaption and the way he opens himself to modernity as opposed to Papa-Nunkwu who remains traditional.

Certainly, Nigeria has witnessed many changes after the missionaries came to the country. These changes are at the personal and as well the societal level in which the structure of the coming generations is going to be modified. Eugene, for instance cannot hide his pride towards the Colonizers' culture and beliefs and is keen to transfer his ideals to the children. Thus, Kambili and her brother Jaja are stuck between a traditional past symbolized by their grandfather who wishes to revive it and between their father who subverts to the Missionaries' civilization, and shows a serious need to leave the past behind. While Eugene is a Christian Catholic, his father is an Igbo Traditionalist. Jaja and Kambili are no doubt drowning in a cultural mess and a serious identity crisis. However, they resemble Nigeria in their search for identity and equivalence. The leftovers of the British colonizers are gold to some people and a burden for others. Similarly, Kambili and Jaja have a father who has burdened them with concepts, customs, and rituals; and a grandfather who represents a golden past and a unique identity. Both the colonizer and Eugene are violent. While the Colonizer used violence to deprive the Nigerians from their land by force, Eugene resorts to violence to impose his beliefs on the family and be the only voice in the Achikee house (Singh 3).

Truly, the opposites are many in postcolonial Nigeria, yet the conflict is one, reclaiming identity and freedom. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the micro level of the family is used by Adichie to echo the macro level of the whole Nigeria. For this purpose, the Achikee family which is overwhelmed by violence is perfectly foreshadowing the colonial powers which intended to use violence also to suppress Nigerians in the past. Logically, Eugene Achikee symbolizes the Imperialists in terms of the cruelty and extremism they used to silence Nigerians and eradicate their existence. This point can be confirmed by Corrine Sandwith as she argues:

Of a particular interest in the novel's use of this reciprocal structure is the treatment of temporality not as linear chronicle but as merging and entanglement, one that asserts the simultaneous existence of the present and the past. As such the novel can be said to embrace a reading of the authoritarian postcolonial imaginary as the inheritance of colonialism, of an understanding of the past and present as overlapping and intricately entangled. In Mbembe's terms, what is suggested are the ways in which the institutions of the colonial autocracy provide "the cement of [contemporary] postcolonial African regimes (105).

To a great degree, the character of Eugene is used to criticize and satirize the present situation of Nigeria. Through the ambivalent roles Eugene takes in the story as both a pro-democracy advocate, and as a family controller, we can easily understand that what appears in the surface is not necessarily evident in the private spheres. Furthermore, the notion of democracy is strongly attacked by Adichie who intends to show the other face of the imperialists and the essence behind their policies. Africans therefore should be aware about the dangers of the colonial past and think critically about their roles in life and how they can challenge the present to ameliorate the future.

The second chapter provides an attempt to explain how the Achikee family is silenced. Eugene, the father, relies on several tools to silence the family members. Religion, violence, and pain are used to impose order, and maintain Eugene's tyrannical rule over his wife and two children. Beatrice, Jaja, and Kambili are unable to voice their needs, concerns, or even complaints; they cannot utter a single word in the face of Eugene's orders, punishments, or decisions.

Chapter Three: A Different Silence: Embracing Nature

The third chapter provides the major outcomes of this study. It stresses the importance of the natural environment in identifying individuals within their societies and culture. Nature is viewed as a source of originality and purification for the privileges it offers to people who connect and interact with its components. The chapter deals with Jaja and Kambili's experience in the countryside by demonstrating how the two mature and grow at all levels due to their interaction with the physical world. Most importantly, it describes the influence of the purple hibiscus flower on Jaja's character which stimulated his rebellion against the sovereign rule of his father. The positive depiction of the rural life confirms the significance of nature in our life. The chapter concludes by describing the events that followed Jaja's rebellion revealing that a new silence starts to blossom in the Achikee household.

III.1. The Smell of Flowers: On The Representation of Nature in *Purple Hibiscus*

Many societies hold nature as an important part of their life with which they try to connect and interact reciprocally. Similarly, Igbo Societies appreciated the physical environment surrounding them and intended to make strong bonds with its different constituents. Actually, nature occupies a significant part of the Nigerian people's Culture whom they respect and refuse to consider as merely a source for their survival and nurture. Accordingly, Earth is regarded as the "mother goddess" responsible for bringing into life various creatures and as well generations. Whenever it is angry, according to Nigerians, this spiritual force is capable at any moment at turning the life of human beings around by projecting its anger over them through a natural disaster or catastrophe (qtd. in Asha and Phil 170).

Certainly, the power of nature has overly attracted the Igbo Community and stimulated individuals to contemplate it and communicate with its different components. Thus, it has

become a defining element in their customs and traditions. This deep influence can be seen even with the simplest constituents such as fruits which might fascinate Igbo people and find a place into their memory and thoughts. Consequentially, the cleanness and properness of this environment is a major concern for this Nigerian society where people devote much of their time to maintain its beauty and preserve its natural charm from any possible harm. For this, many flowers are planted, adjusted, and watered around the Igbo houses to decorate the setting. In this regard, Olajubu asserts that “Traditional ways of life permeate every culture as shown by attitudes towards nature among different people in different times” (qtd.in Asha and Phil 169-70).

Unlike the Achikee’s house in Enugu, where Eugene Achikee’s bigotry takes over the family’s life which is shaped by orders, and a series of violence and oppression, Eugene’s sister, aunty Ifeoma, lives in Nsukka village in her simple house with her three children Amaka, Obiora, and Chima. Although Kambili’s aunt is a widow struggling to feed her children because she earns a low salary from her work at a University, she offers them with unconditional love and care. Ifeoma’s peaceful nature comes from her strong sense of freedom, one that allows her children to speak freely and express themselves without any obstacle or fear. In fact, when this aunt comes to the Achikee household for a visit, Kambili is impressed by her courageous behavior and the way she glaringly opposes her fathers’ ideals without any fear or hesitation. Kambili’s admiration to her aunt is evident as she observes “she walked fast like one who knew just where she was going and what she was going to do there. And she spoke the way she walked, as if to get as many words out of her mouth as she could...” (*Purple Hibiscus* 71). In another description, Kambili attributes some heroic characteristics to her aunt: “I imagined an ancient forbear walking miles to fetch water... Fighting wars with machetes...” (*Purple Hibiscus* 71). While aunty Ifeoma seems to be an

audacious woman, challenging her brother Eugene whenever she desires to, his wife Beatrice is totally the opposite; mute, submissive, and never questions her husband's authority.

After discerning the unbearable pressure undergoing the Achikee Family, Ifeoma proposes to her brother Eugene a visit to Nsukka whereby Kambili and Jaja can escape from the unbearable atmosphere and spend few peaceful days in their aunt's house. Unexpectedly, Eugene agrees on this trip nevertheless he provides the siblings with a schedule to follow during the whole week of their stay. Actually, Nsukka shapes Kambili and Jaja's life afterwards and leaves a huge impact which leads to a new era to begin where dictatorship and tyranny will no longer exist in the Achikee household (qtd. in Okuyade 250).

In Nsukka, Kambili and Jaja discover that their mechanical life and planned attitudes are not at all part of their Aunt Ifeoma's family where her children act spontaneously and enjoy their time. No doubt, Amaka and Obiora are acting like real teenagers who are able to speak, laugh, and even sing in their mother Ifeoma's cozy little house creating a pleasant atmosphere and bringing joy into the hearts of Kambili and Jaja. Inevitably, Kambili is astonished by this familial intimacy especially because her aunt has financial difficulties and each day represents a new challenge for her to feed the children. The modesty of her Aunt's house and the simple conditions of her cousins' lives makes Kambili astonished and surprised at the same time. Definitely, Nsukka is the best place for moderating Kambili and Jaja's psychology where they can finally be surrounded by people who laugh all the time and by a place where nature is all encompassing (*Purple Hibiscus* 140).

As opposed to Kambili's house where silence covers every inch of the rooms, aunt Ifeoma's compound is vivid and laughter inevitably overwhelms the family members. In this respect, Kambili describes the overwhelming joy in her aunt's house:

Laughter rang out in aunty Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter came from it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms...Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, Igbo praise songs that usually called for hand clapping. Food had little meat. Each person's piece the width of two fingers pressed close together and the length of half a finger. The flat always sparkled. (*Purple Hibiscus* 140).

Undoubtedly, Kambili's aunt values her ancestors' traditions and remains faithful to the Igbo tradition as a whole. This is why her children memorize the Igbo songs and sing them as part of their daily routines. By following her father Papa- Nunukwu and refusing to be "civilized" or affected by anything belonging to the British Colonialism, Ifeoma is contradicting her brother Eugene whom she has always considered a "Colonial Product" as he favored the British culture over the culture of his ancestors (qtd. in Amartey 49).

Additionally, as a part of respecting her children's natural desire to have a personal pleasure, Ifeoma's children are allowed to listen to music. Particularly, Amaka listens to the indigenous music flavored by the African touch which she no doubt inherits from her liberal Catholic mother. In her conversation with Kambili, Amaka points out that "[she] listen[s] mostly to indigenous musicians. They are culturally conscious; they have something real to say" (*Purple Hibiscus* 118). Clearly, Amaka is mature enough to realize that the meaning of music is also important as the traditional type helps her to be real and to understand real issues. Furthermore, Amaka seems to underestimate the foreign music by addressing Kambili sarcastically supposing that she is "into American pop like other teenagers" (*Purple Hibiscus* 118). Indeed, Amaka is a strong cheerful teenager who questions a lot before making her final judgments; this sense of freedom and openness is part of her identity seeking where her mother influences her in a good way (qtd. in Amartey 51).

Ifeoma's joyful compound is decorated by a garden where all kinds of flowers are growing "Roses and hibiscuses and lilies and ixora and croton grew side by side like a hand painted wreath" (*Purple Hibiscus* 112). In fact, Jaja could not hide his excitement when he sees his aunt's garden especially because it is his first time that his eyes set on a purple hibiscus flower. Usually, hibiscuses are red, but it can be in other colors such as pink, yellow, white, reddish orange, and purple. Although there are many "bright colors" of the hibiscus flower, Jaja is startled only by the purple one. This is evident in his talk with aunty Ifeoma; "That's a hibiscus, isn't it, aunty?" Jaja asked, staring at a plant close to the barbed wire fencing. 'I didn't know that there were purple hibiscuses'. Aunty Ifeoma laughed and touched the flower, colored a deep shade of purple that was almost blue" (*Purple Hibiscus* 128). His aunt is generous in explaining the meaning of purple hibiscus to Jaja as she states that "it means 'delicate beauty, relating to the flower sunny and delicate conditions under which it will bloom and to the fragility and beauty of its flower'" (*Purple Hibiscus* 7).

Furthermore, aunty Ifeoma is a real Igbo woman who cares about her garden and devotes much of her time to protect it. No doubt, the beautifully shaped flowers in her garden are not made by coincidence, but it is the result of Ifeoma's effort in polishing it and as well protecting it from any possible harm. Accordingly, Ifeoma informs Jaja "I had to fence my garden because the neighborhood children came in and plucked many of the unusual flowers. Now I only let in the altar girls from our church or the protestant church" (*Purple Hibiscus* 129). Not only does Ifeoma care about her flowers which she describes as "unusual", but she also knows the right way of doing that. Indeed, Ifeoma waters the flowers in a balanced way for the "Hibiscuses [do] not like too much water, but they [do] not like to be dry, either" (*Purple Hibiscus* 197). Certainly, Ifeoma's intricate way of dealing with her garden is also apparent in the way she raises her children. Unlike her brother who only draws schedules for his children, Ifeoma perfectly balances the life of her offspring. She is able to influence them

to adopt the indigenous culture and stir in them the love of Igbonism. Yet, this is not by force, it is exclusively their personal choice in which the children are consciously aware about their life decisions and tendencies and most importantly they are able to rationalize things around them and express their voice while doing so (qtd. in Kabore 35).

As a matter of fact, throughout her narrative, Adichie features many events via the use of images of nature which corresponds to a particular meaning significant for that event. Respectively, elements such as rain, harmattan winds, clouds, sun, and mud to mention but a few, are used either to describe the atmosphere encircling the characters or to indicate that a change will occur afterwards. In this regard, David Lodge explains that, “we all know that the weather affects our moods. The novelist is in the happy position of being able to invent whatever weather is appropriate to the mood he or she wants to evoke” (85). For this, the reader can easily infer whether he should expect a positive or a negative result according to the way Adichie portrays the previously mentioned elements. For example, when Ade Coker, Eugene’s editor, is about to be killed, the writer paves the way to this by mentioning before that it rained heavily the day before his murder.

While the natural world is used in a pejorative manner by Adichie in order to describe the Achikee family at Enugu in their house of the city, a sense of positivity is attributed to nature as Kambili and Jaja move to Nsukka, their aunty’s house in the countryside. After being with her cousins and experiencing a different temper with them, Kambili certainly starts to think in a positive way about herself in her way to approach a complete metamorphosis. Hence, the air and clouds are both special for Kambili at Nsukka. While the air is described as “fresh”, the clouds are compared to the “died cotton wools” (*Purple Hibiscus* 307). Moreover, the animals of Nsukka play a vital role in the spiritual transcendence of Kambili. For instance, the crawling snake stimulates Kambili to think about crawling out of her life in Enugu.

Indeed, the nature of Nsukka plays a major role in determining the fate of Kambili and her family in general.

III.2. From Silence to Voice: Defiance and Freedom

For Kambili and Jaja, love is a feeling that occurs only around the table where they take “love sips” so they taste their father’s “burned love” into them. Apart from this, they have never felt that they are experiencing love or at least sharing things that they love with their family. However, at Nsukka, this is reversed for Kambili and Jaja have grasped all the love they needed in their life with an aunt who has freed their souls and cousins whom they helped to discover their real selves. Indeed, Nsukka has opened Jaja and Kambili’s eyes towards a world where love and creativity fill their company after being accompanied the whole time by fear and silence. There, Kambili cooks and spends a pleasant time in the kitchen with Amaka as she teaches her to peel potatoes along with other entertaining house chores. Jaja develops another interest; he becomes fascinated by his aunt’s garden and is amazed by the beauty of the flowers especially the purple hibiscuses (qtd. in Oha 202).

Many factors have contributed in the evolving of Kambili both physically and as well psychologically. Besides having Amaka, the outspoken cousin who since the beginning comments about how Kambili whispers instead of speaking out loudly, Kambili befriends a priest called Father Amadi and she certainly falls in his love. Before, Kambili has never admired a person except her father who is “perfect” in her eyes. Later on, during her visit to Nsukka, she is able to extend her thoughts and be out of her daddy’s customized shell; thus, she starts gradually longing for Father Amadi’s invitation by which he takes her outside her aunt’s homestead to enjoy his company. Actually there is a mutual affection between Kambili and Father Amadi though the two has never expressed it to each other. As for Amadi, his admiration is clear when he tells Amaka that “[Kambili] does not waste her energy in

picking never-ending arguments. But there is a lot going on in her mind. I can tell” (*Purple Hibiscus* 173). Father Amadi thinks of Kambili as an intelligent, sage girl who hides a lot between her silent lips (qtd. in Oha 203). As for Kambili, it is evident through her neat descriptions as she points out to “the way his hair lay in wavy curls on his head, like the ripples in a stream” (*Purple Hibiscus* 170). Definitely, the feelings shared by Kambili and the priest reciprocally are something challenging. If Kambili is going to challenge her father only with this hidden love, the priest is going to challenge the Church, his community and a whole dogma dictated and preserved by Christianity. No doubt, the visit to Nsukka helps Kambili to mature emotionally.

Eventually, it is Jaja who breaks his father’s long term dominance over the Achikee victims after he gains the courage and confidence and challenges Eugene’s authority. Simply put, after his second visit to Nsukka he returns home at Enugu with a new spirit and a willingness to act where he is able to fearlessly refuse to attend Communion. Sunday Church Communion is a family routine and one of Eugene’s musts he expects his family to attend. Therefore, this audaciousness is exceptional in the Achikee household and is certainly brought from Nsukka where Jaja is fascinated by a unique flower represented solely in the purple hibiscus species. Interestingly, Jaja’s aunt describes the flowers in a favorable manner and represents it as different from any other flower in her garden (qtd.in Kabore 36). Significantly, aunty Ifeoma strengthens Jaja psychologically and changes his way of thinking especially when she informs him about the defiant king who is put in jail for challenging the colonizer. According to his aunty, that king was also named Jaja of Opobo and he successfully defended his territory against the British Colonizer. Respectively, she lectures Jaja that “defiance is like marijuana, it is not a bad thing when it is used right” (*Purple Hibiscus* 144). Just like the “Unusual” purple hibiscuses in his aunty s’ garden, Jaja is too unique and beyond the usual.

His sudden rejection to the family's schedule symbolizes that he gained a steady power and a new voice which surely ought to silence that of Eugene Achikee afterwards.

Indeed, Jaja's visit to Nsukka has a great impact on his psychology and changes his life perspectives to a great extent. At his aunty's compound he is literally touched by two things, first he admires his cousins' life style which is shaped by freedom, simplicity, and delight; and second he is fascinated by the beautiful garden full of multi shaped flowers where Jaja feels more connected with the Purple Hibiscus flower.

Therefore, challenging his father the next day he returns home from Nsukka in Palm Sunday is not a haphazard act, but rather it is Jaja's way of rebelling against Eugene's rule. Jaja has a voice now. In other words, Jaja understands the originality of the purple hibiscus and the sense of freedom shared by his aunty's children and transfers those emotions into an action at his home. Hence, Jaja turns out to be defiant like the king he heard about from his aunty and more importantly he finds his identity. The relationship between Jaja's defiance and his aunty's garden is point out by Kambili when she comments:

Nsukka started it all, aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah in her flat in Nsukka began to lift the silence. Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant, with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at government square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do (*Purple Hibiscus* 15- 16).

The hibiscus, for sure, stands as a symbol for freedom, and it's a direct personification of Jaja who searches for his personal freedom and voice (qtd.in Kabore 35).

In the section before the last, the writer traces the mood for the coming events in which she describes how everything is going to change after Jaja has missed communion and challenged his father. Actually, the writer relies in her description on the natural elements

which are pictured in an angry manner to show that when nature is mad, something bad will happen soon (Ouma 74). Henceforth, the winds, the rains and the trees all come along as follows:

Everything came tumbling down after Palm Sunday. Howling winds came with an angry rain, uprooting frangipani trees in the front yard. They lay in the lawn, their pink and white flowers grazing the grass, their roots waving lumpy soil in the air. The satellite on the top of the garage came crushing down, and lounged down on the space way like a driving alien spaceship. (*Purple Hibiscus* 257).

Indeed, it is just after Palm Sunday that the rebellion of the Achikee's against Eugene, the head of the family, takes a gradual rhythm which results in Eugene's death at the end. In addition, the children and their mother are able to transcend profoundly as they find their real voice which used to hide inside each member by force of Eugene's authority over them.

Jaja is "blooming" gradually at his home in Enugu just like the newly brought hibiscus from his aunty's garden. Actually, at the same day he refuses to go to communion, the purple hibiscuses are just "blooming". As Kambili recounts "the purple hibiscuses are about to bloom" (*Purple Hibiscus* 254). Actually, the change that occurs in the flowers which changed from "startling red" to purple is simultaneous with Jaja's change. The color red can stand as a symbol of violence which formerly pervaded Jaja's family; however when it changes to purple it can be seen as the destruction of violence by Jaja and its replacement by a new established liberty represented in the color purple of the hibiscuses (qtd. in Kabore 36). Hence, Jaja's courageous behavior paves the way for a new life for the Achikee family where people's destinies are about to change. Kambili perfectly summarizes the impact of Nsukka on her Family by admitting that "[everything] changed after Nsukka...and things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order" (*Purple Hibiscus* 209).

Actually, Jaja maintains his defiance and further provokes his father by similar rebellious actions through which he fully retains his voice and establishes a new identity. No doubt, each behavior Jaja advocated is more intense than its preceding and seriously threatened Eugene's authority at his house. First, Jaja starts by displaying his unwillingness to attend Palm Sunday under the claim that "wafer gives [him] bad breath" (*Purple Hibiscus* 4); the thing which results in Eugene throwing the Missal on Jaja and breaking his wife's precious figurine. Later on, when Eugene threatens Jaja "You cannot stop receiving the body of our lord, It's death, you know that" (*Purple Hibiscus* 4), Jaja carelessly responds in a mocking manner "Then I will die Papa" (*Purple Hibiscus* 4). After this, Jaja decides to deliberately avoid family dinner which is scheduled by his father among the unquestionable routines of the family. Then, Jaja again rejects to visit the church in order to receive communion, this time it is on Easter Sunday. Kambili is able to read Jaja's new behavior as she "saw it in his long silences, in the set of his lips, in his eyes that seemed focused on invisible objects for a long time" (*Purple Hibiscus* 260). All these attitudes definitely mark the creation of a new Jaja, one who becomes ready to be responsible and is free minded.

Eventually, Jaja is able to take a whole decision by himself instead of asking the permission from his father. After enduring the physical and psychological pain inflicted by Eugene upon them, Jaja and Kambili are desperately in need to be healed, and to forget about the horrible pain for a while. No doubt, Nsukka is the suitable place for the children to smell the "fresh air" and sense the freedom of the place where there is aunty Ifeoma instead of Papa Eugene. That it is why Jaja announces to his father without any kind of hesitation that "we are going to Nukka today, not tomorrow. If Kevin will not take us, we will still go. We will walk if we have to" (*Purple Hibiscus* 261). The pronoun "we" refers to Kambili and Jaja, which signifies that Jaja is mature enough to talk for himself and also on behalf of his sister. The last action is no doubt the heaviest on Eugene who is not able to stand against his son's wish to

visit Nsukka. Ultimately, the silent Jaja before becomes the most voiced individual in the Achikee household.

Meanwhile, rebellion spreads quickly in the Achikee family where Jaja and Kambili finally reach a level of self freedom and growth by which they can challenge back Eugene and put a limit to his tyrannical rule in the house. Like Jaja, Kambili is capable of developing a personal opinion away from her fathers' dogmatic tendencies and views and thus, she is able to move off her silent character and welcome a new self that is autonomous and defiant whenever she believes it as a necessity. In a similar vein, after her visit to Nsukka, Kambili does something she has never dared to do before, which is holding the picture of her grandfather and protecting it so dearly by her arms under the threat of her father who thinks of the painting as something sinful since it represents the "heathenism" of his father. By refusing to let go the painting, Kambili certainly views her grandfather in a good light and this is both threatening and shocking to her father. For this, Eugene furiously screams on Kambili who narrates: "Get up!" Papa said again. I still did not move. He started to kick....and I thought of Amaka's music, her culturally conscious music, I curled around myself tighter, around the pieces of the painting..." (*Purple Hibiscus* 210-211). Although Kambili is beaten unmercifully by her father, she keeps holding the painting tightly, which represents something precious enough for Kambili that she endures all the pain inflicted on her body to the extent of being hospitalized later on (Ouma 71).

Interestingly, Kambili's resilience and growth is motivated by many factors which makes Papa Nunukwu a good person in her view and also makes Nsukka the place she dreams to live in. At a particular time of her visit to Nsukka, she is able to see papa Nunukwu practicing his prayers. Unexpectedly, Kambili witnesses that the same old man is praying for his son to be protected by God and Kambili is sure that Eugene despises his father and prays for him to be saved from Gods' hellfire. At that moment, Kambili can understand that Papa

Nunukw is not a “pagan” like her father tells her but he is only a “traditionalist” as her aunty informs her. From then, Kambili starts to think differently about her grandfather especially because his presence in the compound brings joy and entertainment to Aunty Ifeoma’s family due to the sense of humor he has and the folk stories he tells to Amaka. Papa Nunukwu stands for the past of Nigeria and old people’s wisdom and by holding the painting of his picture, Kambili is returning to that past and relating herself to a different culture shaped by Igbo tradition and moderate Catholicism (Ouma 67-68).

Music too had a major impact on Kambili’s self development and consciousness. Indeed, poor Kambili thinks of her cousin s’ culturally conscious music while being beaten severely. No doubt, Kambili becomes culturally and politically conscious due to Amaka’s music which opened Kambili’s eyes on real life issues of politics and the society, aspects that Kambili has never been aware of in the past. In Enugu, Eugene, who is urging his editor Ade Coker to speak fearlessly about dictatorship of the government, is silencing his children at home and allowing no space for them to be interested in politics as they have no means to be politically updated. Ade Coker notices that Eugene’s children are always mute and taunts him indirectly through a joke saying “Imagine what would the standard be if we were all silent” (*Purple Hibiscus* 57). The joke is an edgy slap to Eugene who does not even bother to laugh.

Music is not the only thing that Kambili feels nostalgic to in Nsukka, because laughter has characterized each moment she has spent in her aunty’s house, even during the prayers where the family has prayed for the laughter to bring into everyday routine. Actually, Kambili dreams herself laughing the first day she is in Nsukka as recalls “that night, I dreamed that I was laughing, but it did not sound like my laughter, although I was not sure what my laughter sounded like, it was cackling and throaty and enthusiastic, like Aunty Ifeoma’s” (*Purple Hibiscus* 88). Kambili’s dream signifies that she is unconsciously striving to laugh and that

through the dream she fulfills her wish to laugh loudly just like her aunt does. Indeed, Kambili learns how to be free and opens up to the world around her in Nsukka .

In addition, she also lifts the silence off her body because her body has too been under Eugene's control. It is only when Kambili is physically attracted to the priest that she can think freely about her body and respond to her instinctual desire. Unlike the other priest in her town who seems totally catholic and parallel to extremist Eugene in his perception of religion and his hatred to Igbonism, Father Amadi is a balanced priest in terms of the way he uses Catholicism and how he consciously blends it with some Igbo songs as a way to moderate it to suit post colonial Nigeria. Thereby, he is totally admired by Kambili who cannot be fully mature without his contact. Besides freeing her mind and thoughts, Kambili also freed her body to be in her complete maturation and emotional growth (Ouma 62).

Silence is also Kambili's new weapon which launches its bullet on Eugene right after visiting Nsukka and smelling the freedom of its people and embracing the positive vibes of its nature. Kambili's metamorphosis is at all the levels be it psychological, physical, or even emotional through which the teenager gains a strong voice that put an end to her long term passiveness and silence. From listening to music, to laughing, to loving a priest, to appreciating her grandfather, Kambili is now fully independent and mature and most importantly conscious about herself and as well about her surroundings' identity and personal tendencies(Ouma 72). Through making Kambili the voice of the story, Adichie is able to strengthen this teenager by giving her a unique voice by which she successfully transfers every single detail in the narrative. This choice is perfect and well planned, the fact that Kambili is shy and sensitive can work as an advantage for her growth and healing and it has many dimensions. It can manifest how can silence be used as a powerful weapon to challenge individuals and larger societies because Kambili's voice represents Africa's voice in her

search for identity and balance vis-a-vis the cruel colonial past it witnessed, and the challenges it brought along (Ouma 74).

III.3. A Different Silence

Ironically, Eugene Achikee's downfall is caused by his wife Beatrice whose behavior used to be characterized by obedience and quietness towards anything Eugene subjects on her positioning herself as the weakest member in the Achikee family. Thus, by killing her husband, Beatrice finally puts an end to Eugene's obsessive control and further demolishes the series of violence and struggle she and her children had to experience when he was alive. In fact, Beatrice uses a special weapon to murder her husband and double his pain as she gives him a poisoned tea to drink during the tea ritual which Eugene considers as a family bonding routine where he can share "love sips" with the children. The "love sips", however, are adjusted by Beatrice who directs her hatred feelings towards the cup of tea which shall bring Eugene's collapse and ultimate disappearance from her life. Indeed, Beatrice's action of poisoning is magical in the sense that she punishes her husband while doing his own dictated ritual at a time when Jaja and Kambili are visiting their aunt at Nsukka. Thus, Beatrice's silence is eventually broken by destroying the supreme power that suppressed her voice and identity for a long period. This kind of revenge is not expected especially from a character like Beatrice and it definitely creates a new challenge for the next stage of her life as the children's upbringing is going to fall on her shoulders.

As for Kambili's reaction, she is stunned by her father's tragic death because for her he is way different than normal people who die. In this regard, young Kambili explains "[she] had never considered the possibility that Papa would die, that Papa could die, he was different from Ade Coker, from all the other people they had killed. He had seemed immortal" (*Purple Hibiscus* 287). In her next visit to Nsukka, Kambili blossoms with an extreme transition and

she transcends from a timid, girlish, alienated individual to an outgoing, mature, sociable teenager. On the one hand, her physical growth is linked to the times she is spending time with the priest as she is able to release her thoughts and think about sharing love and intimacy with him in her way to approach a complete sexual awareness about herself. On the other hand, her psychological growth is linked to her ability to speak without coughing or stuttering nor whispering due to her contact with her cousins. At all the levels, Kambili's metamorphosis is deeply rooted in her aunty's house at Nsukka (Ouma 74).

As for Jaja's reaction, it is more intense than that of Kambili as he sees that his father should not die because he is God's servant, and thus Jaja starts questioning the wisdom of God and how can God punish his own son. Provoked by his father's death, Jaja suddenly asks "look what he did to his faithful servant Job... Why did he have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't he just go ahead and save us?" (*Purple Hibiscus* 289). These questions are not subtle ones resulted from Jaja's pitiful stance but it goes beyond that to his suspect in the rationality behind Christianity as a whole, the religion which his father has tried harshly to make it fundamental in *The Achikee Family* before. As a result, Jaja gives up his belief in Christianity and chooses to be neutral concerning his religious choice by which he deems religion as unnecessary for the rest of his life. Yet, in order to save his mother from punishment, Jaja decides to take the blame for Eugene's murder and the police take him to jail instead of his mother. Jaja's brave action shows the extent to which he has become a mature person and the degree of responsibility he wants to assume in order to make up for his fathers' previous mistakes (Ouma 75).

At the end of the narrative, Kambili describes the atmosphere in her house where the change has touched every single individual of the Achikke family including her mother Beatrice. Therefore, a "different silence" emerges in the house where people are seriously traumatized but they are no longer suppressed. Kambili comments: "Even the silence that

descended on the house was sudden as though the old silence had broken and left us with the sharp pieces. When mama asked Sisi to whip the floor...she did not lower her voice to a whisper. She did not hide the tiny smile that drew lines at the end of her mouth” (*Purple Hibiscus* 287). Yet, Beatrice feels guilty for not being in jail in the place of Jaja, and Kambili has to endure her silence for quite a long time where she seems too traumatized to reply or even to understand the paroles of Kambili and others (Ouma 74).

Towards the end of the narrative, the reader is put in touch with a “different silence” that is embraced by Kambili and her mother while Jaja is still punished in jail. Truly, Kambili’s mother is the whole time thinking about her son who has scarified himself for the sake of saving his mother from being jailed. Yet, Kambili, who becomes more indulgent in talking and overcomes her previous shyness, describes this silence as “different” and thinks of it as being intermingled with new vibes whereby silence is collided with growth, with dialogue, and most importantly with freedom (Ouma 74).

At the very end, a new hope rises for Kambili and her mother as they are comforted by Jaja’ s lawyer that the latter will be soon released. Jaja is thrilled to hear this news, and Kambili too is overwhelmed to have Jaja back again to her life. For this, Kambili excitedly tells her mother about her future plan and Beatrice hugs her along: “we will plant new orange trees in Aba when we come back, and Jaja will plant purple hibiscus too, and I will plant ixora so we can suck juices of the flowers”. I am laughing. I reach out and place my arm around mama’s shoulder and she leans toward me and smiles” (*Purple Hibiscus* 306-307). Kambili knows that Jaja is attracted to the purple hibiscuses, and that it is the reason for Jaja’s freedom and audaciousness. So, through expressing her desire in planting the same flowers by Jaja, she indirectly manifests her appreciation to the effect of freedom the flowers bring on Jaja’s spirit, a feeling that Kambili certainly longs for when Jaja will be out of Jail in the near future. This is evident when she ends her speech laughing.

Kambili's emotions at that moment is something which she cannot control because her hope is so big that it takes her high to the sky where "Above, clouds like died cotton wool hang low, so low [she] felt [she] can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them. The new rains will come down soon" (*Purple Hibiscus* 307). Undoubtedly, the rain is used by Adichie as a motif in the story; this time, however, it can be seen as a prediction for a better future for the Achikee family where Jaja will be reunited with Kambili and his mother in his home at Enugu.

Unquestionably, Nature is a crucial element in drawing the destiny of the Achikee family. In fact, a flower, which is the purple hibiscus, is the reason for turning around Kambili and Jaja's lives in Enugu thanks to the breezes of nature and the spiritual power of the atmosphere full of positive vibes in Nsukka. The purple hibiscus brings along laughter, freedom, love, self awareness, courage, and openness into the souls of Kambili and Jaja. As opposed to the materialistic life the children used to have in Enugu, they enjoy another life in Nsukka around their aunty's garden though they lack all the luxuries and as well the prestige of their father's homestead. No doubt, Nature spirituality is the key for happiness.

The third chapter summarizes the impact of the natural environment on human beings' behavior and the extent to which individuals need to contemplate the different natural creatures in order to understand and appreciate their roots. Also, it suggests that the life of the countryside depicted as simple and original can offer peace and happiness to the families and communities. Moreover, it draws the fact that preserving the natural creatures and protecting its beauty signifies people's desire in maintaining their identities and celebrating its uniqueness. The chapter comes to a conclusion that the unbearable silence of the past is replaced by a new, soft silence at the present where Jaja's father is dead. It is also the silence of the African countries whose successive leaders continue their rule under the foreign

countries' command misleading the African people with peace and democracy and silencing them day after day.

Conclusion

In post colonial Nigeria, many complexities joined together to foreshadow the ambivalent situation that traumatized Nigerians are facing and struggling to identify within its conditions. Certainly, the colonizer's culture was not going to be easily forgotten after independence for it was sharply imposed on Nigerians at a certain time in the past where the British missionaries tended to urge the natives to convert modern Christianity and to learn the English language as part of the missionary campaigns of the colonizer. The latter, under the claim of bringing civilization and enlightenment intended to use force to punish severely the natives who refused to abandon their mother culture which was represented in the Igbo tradition. Furthermore, the independence brought along corrupt Nigerian leaders in the political system whose goals can be summarized in a total dictatorship where they favored their personal interests over the interests of the Nigerian society as a whole. Their corrupt roles are simply a continuation for the past corruption of the British colonialism as both of them resorted to violence in order to remain in power and to silence the Nigerian people and place them on the margin. Just like the Nigerian government, individuals were suppressed inside the one family and the violence which took over the top of the hierarchy seemed also prevailing the smallest unit of the society which is the basic structure of the larger pyramid.

No doubt, in *Purple Hibiscus* Adichie is criticizing the political foundation in post colonial Nigeria and hitting that the notion of democracy has nothing to do with what the political leaders claim to do in reality. Respectively, the leaders are falsifying the Nigerian citizens by their fake democratic tendencies and instead seeking to fulfill their personal desires whereby power and wealth are their only and ultimate concern. Adichie used *Purple Hibiscus* to alert the African citizens about the new challenges existing at the present for the hope that

their nationalism will be awakened and their minds would be freed from all the falsifications and superficials.

The present study tackles the theme of silence. The first chapter is flavored with the African voice of writers whose literary works contributed in the emergence of Nigeria literature in English. Five essential points can be deduced from this chapter. First, it reflects the personal influence and interests of Adichie as both Nigerian and African female writer. Here, Chinua Achebe's writings had a major impact on Adichie's literary performance. Second, it provides the essential factors that helped in the evolving of Nigerian literature and its blooming into a contemporary African literature in 1980. These factors include the writers' concerns about nationalism, politics, the female voice, and the glorification of the African heritage. Third, it tackles the major themes occupied in the former writings of Nigerian Literature. Fourth, it highlights the theme of silence which is under discussion, providing the different meanings attributed to the concept by different critics and showing how it can be linked to the story of Adichie. Five, it clarifies some of the concepts used in the theoretical framework which is appropriate for our analysis.

The second chapter details the sequence of events which resulted in silencing individuals within the familial ground. It depicts religion as a tool used to oppress people and to control them in a manner which absorbs their voices. This chapter comprises four major points which are gradually related to each other. First, it gives a brief summary of the narrative. Second, it displays the religious tendencies of individuals where the adaptation of modern Catholicism brings power and influence and also deletes the Igbo tradition of the ancestors. Third, it mirrors the physical damage that violence causes to people who disobey the authoritarian ruler and its repercussions over the victims. Fourth, silence is portrayed as a direct consequence stemming from people's internal fear and struggle. Each victim deals with silence differently. Five, it demonstrates that Nigeria's colonial past brings about a language

conflict whereby the language of the colonizer stands as competitive for the Igbo Language of the natives.

The third chapter is the most important one as it takes us to the climax of the story where the *Mother Nature* affects the life choices of the characters and strongly influences them to change their destiny. It deals with three main points. First, it exhibits Jaja's attachment to a unique flower "purple hibiscus" found in his aunty's garden in the countryside. According to Jaja's aunty, the flower symbolizes the sense of originality and freedom. Second, it mirrors the strong effect of the flowers which motivates Jaja to act and rebel against his father's extremist rule. The courageous behavior of Jaja is linked to the sense of freedom he gains from his aunty's experimental flowers. Jaja's sister also finds her voice due to the pleasant feelings she experiences at her aunty's compound. At this level, a differentiation between two distinct lifestyles is reflected upon in the story. On the one hand, the life of the city is portrayed as materialistic, superficial, and suffocating. On the other hand, the life of the country side is seen as refreshing, simple, and unique. The chapter closes with the Achikee family confronting a different type of silence after murdering the father who brought sorrow and depression to them. This silence is described by Kambili as a silence of liberation and self autonomy unlike the previous silence which was seen as harmful and damaging to the identity and well being of the Achikee members.

Purple Hibiscus was written by Adichie to give voice to the silenced individuals in the familial grounds whose situation was parallel to the situation of post colonial Nigeria. Both the Nigerian family and government work as settings which tend to oppress and control people's minds. Through her voice, Adichie enables her characters to rebel against the status quo in order to attain human beings' needed freedom for expression and dignity.

All in all, Adichie's strong narrative can serve as a savor for the African people who are in the middle of an ambivalent culture searching their voices and identities. For Adichie, contemplating the natural world and preserving its parts is a crucial part of the Igbo culture and thus such connection should be revived especially in the present time and it should be celebrated as one of the precious treasures of the ancestors. As long as the natives return to their origins and glorify the nature surrounding them, they can have their unique identity and selfhood, one that is free and delicate just like the purple hibiscus flower.

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Résumé

Ce mémoire traite le thème du silence dans un contexte familial dans l'œuvre « L'hibiscus pourpre » de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. L'étude cherche à examiner comment la lutte politique qui caractérise l'ère post-coloniale nigérienne a influencé la famille nigérienne. Le but de cette analyse est doublé. D'une part, il étudie comment la violence fait taire l'espace familial. D'autre part, il tente de mettre en lumière le rôle crucial de l'environnement physique dans l'éveil psychologique des êtres humains, en leur permettant de trouver leur liberté et leur voix individuelles. L'attachement aux différents éléments naturels crée une force de défiance et de rébellion qui détruit l'autorité suprême responsable de faire taire les individus. En utilisant une approche psychanalytique, cette analyse cherche à analyser les attitudes individuelles au sein d'une même famille en fonction de la structure mentale qui est fortement liée au comportement des êtres humains. La mise en œuvre d'une approche écocritique est nécessaire pour démontrer que la nature mère peut servir de source d'originalité et relie directement les individus à une culture ou à un patrimoine particulier qui forme la totalité de la société. La conclusion générale qui est l'essence de notre analyse est qu'Adichie utilise sa voix pour glorifier et préserver l'identité africaine qui est inscrite dans l'héritage des ancêtres dans lequel la nature a symbolisé l'enracinement et la purification.

Mots clés : silence, violence, voix, conflit politique, environnement physique, l'éveil psychologique, liberté individuelle.

ملخص

تناقش هذه الأطروحة موضوع الصمت في الفضاء العائلي من خلال رواية خبايا البنفسج للروائية شيماماندا نفوزي اديشي . تسعى هذه الدراسة لمعالجة تأثير النزاع السياسي على العائلة النيجيرية في فترة ما بعد الاستعمار . لهذه الدراسة بعدان . أولاً تهدف إلى استكشاف دور العنف في جلب الصمت على المستوى العائلي . ثانياً تهدف إلى إلقاء الضوء على الدور الحاسم الذي تلعبه الطبيعة في توعية الأفراد نفسياً من خلال تحفيزهم على تحقيق حرياتهم وهوياتهم الشخصية . تعلق الإنسان بعناصر الطبيعة على اختلافها يخلق في ذاته قوة داخلية تبعث فيه روح التحدي و التمرد مما يمكنه من الوقوف في وجه أي قوة تمنعه من التعبير عن نفسه وتكبح قدراته الذاتية . من خلال استعانة بنظرية التحليل النفسي تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى فهم سلوكيات الأفراد داخل العائلة الواحدة بالاعتماد على التركيبية العقلية التي ترتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً بسلوك البشر . الاستعانة بالنظرية الايكولوجية يعتبر أمراً ضرورياً لتبيان أن الطبيعة الأم يمكن أن ترمز للأصالة و النسب حيث تربط الأفراد بثقافة معينة أو تراث معين لمجتمع ما . الاستنتاج العام الذي يمثل جوهره هذا التحليل هو أن الكاتبة اديشي تحث الشعوب الإفريقية على تمجيد الطبيعة و الحفاظ عليها كوسيلة للمحافظة على الهوية و اراث الأجداد الذين طالما احتفلوا بالطبيعة و اعتبروها رمزا للأصالة و النقاء .