

Dominance of Male Over Female in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Purple Hibiscus"

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Abstract - Adichie's Purple Hibiscus is a feminist work in which dominance of Eugene Achike is shown over Kambili Achike who the central character in Purple Hibiscus is and also the narrator of the story, Beatrice Achike, mother and wife in the Achike family, Chukwuka Achike, nicknamed "Jaja" by his family. Kambili, her brother and mother became the victim of domestic violence. They are often beaten by her father, Eugene Achike He was conditioned to believe that punishment is the natural answer to any behavior that could be perceived to be against God's will. The violence that follows a military coup, also affects Kambili's life. She observes and is horrified by scenes of strikes and violent altercations between civilians and soldiers and feels desperate for being helpless. Purple Hibiscus is in summary, a powerful tale of oppression and liberation at many levels. The most horrifying experiences are told with the candid and smooth voice of Kambili, thus making them almost bearable or at least, giving hope that things will get better. There are three symbols of oppression and liberation that strike the most: the figurines, the love sip of Papa's tea and the Purple Hibiscus.

Index Terms - Domestic violence, Oppression, Struggle, Violation ,the figurines.

INTRODUCTION

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was one of Nigeria's more prominent new generation female writers. In 2007, she was winner of the prestigious Orange Prize for fiction for her second novel, Half of a Yellow Sun. Her novels, Purple Hibiscus (2003) and Half of a Yellow Sun (2006) were about the traditional constructs of the woman. In this aspect, author insisted the women to realize their self-esteem, self-respect and come out of the blind traditions and superstitions. she advised the women not to endure the violence anymore and raise her voice against it. She should not become victim and slave of male dominated society.

Adichie's Purple Hibiscus adopts the issues of male violence dominate over the weaker sex.

The novel opens with Jaja was rebelled against his devout Catholic father by not attending the communion on Palm Sunday, an important religious holiday. The following story was about the events of Jaja's defiance. This was narrated by Kambili three years after this incident. Since she had been shocked by the severe punishments of her father. Her descriptive was interesting that it can be concluded that she trace her own identity throughout this ordeal. Both Kambili and Jaja take steps towards adulthood by overcoming their suffering and being exposed to new thoughts.

Every human being has a right to freedom. And if freedom is not given to them, they will choose a path of revolt against it. Kambili is facing different forms of oppression. She and her family members becomes the victim of the domestic violence. Her father Eugene is a tyrant who rules his home with draconian measures. Members of his household are petrified of him that 'laughter never rings out in the home.' The children are equally dumbfounded by their father's hardheartedness.

Eugene had cut off his son's finger, thereby deforming the little boy's left hand. Jaja was only ten years old at the time! As for Beatrice, his wife of many years, Eugene's brutal beatings and sexual abuse have caused her to abort her pregnancy on a number of occasions; leaving her body constantly sapped of energy. Eugene Achike seems very humble and kind hearted person in public who attend all catholic events and also speaks for freedom. But in reality he is totally different kind of personality. He makes schedules for his family members and they have to follow his schedule. And if they didn't follow anything, then they should be ready for punishment. He frequently whips Kambili and her brother Jaja, pours boiling water on them when they

“sin” and beats his wife. Eugene believed that punishment was the answer for any behavior against God’s will. There are two different viewpoints are shown here. Eugene believes in white priests and refuses his family to speak igbo while Auntie Ifeoma, Grandfather Nnukwu and Father Amadi believes in traditional beliefs.

In the beginning chapter, Eugene breaks his wife’s figurines. This is the example of violence. Manytimes Kambili hears sounds from her parents’ room, after that she sees her mother with swollen eyes and polishing figurines. But last time when Eugene broke her figurine, she refused to exchange it as if she was saying that she will no longer bear all this. Eugene always invites his children to take a sip of his burning tea before he tastes it. He calls it a “Love sip”. Kambili always looks forward to it as it is the only moment of affection she frequently shares with her father. This can also be interpreted as a way of expressing Kambili’s approval of her father’s violence. The fact that she gladly sips the tea although she knows it will hurt her, means she even accepts her father’s passive acts of violence simply because she considers it as signs of affection that she cannot refuse. Kambili is fifteen years old shy girl who can not speak against the violence and injustice done by her father. She has become victim many times. She remains silent most the time. Her silence shows that she is victim of domestic violence and she does not have courage to speak against it. She experiences freedom only when she goes to her aunt’s home. There she understands the meaning of freedom and enjoys it.

The Purple Hibiscus was novel deals with the issues of male domination and how these issues, in turn challenges of nation-ness in Nigeria. In this novel, the author brings about the women’s struggles to overcome marginalisation in a sexist and patriarchal society. This was undoubtedly to fight with its own dangers but a woman needs to explode the system and set up her own identity instead of being treated as a doormat for life.

In the end of the novel, jail scene is described. Jaja took the blame of his Papa’s murder on him and went to the jail. Her mother was tired of constant beating, domestic violence and humiliation. So she started giving him poison in tea. Which caused the death of Eugene. But Jaja didn’t want to make his mother suffer for that so he took the blame on him and accepts

punishment. But Kambili’s efforts he comes out of jail in three years.

Jaja no longer speaks with his eyes. Mama tried to expose the truth to everyone about the cause for that murder, but it had fallen on deaf ears. She gave Papa’s money in the form of bribes with prison guard and lawyers who involved in the corrupt system. In this new silence, Kambili compares with the old silence, when Papa was alive. But she longs to meet him in her dreams. When they leave the prison, there was a ray of hope. Kambili told Mama that they had chance to release Jaja to Nsukka and to America to see Auntie Ifeoma, then to Abba to plant new orange trees, and he would plant purple hibiscus again.

CONCLUSION

Purple Hibiscus novel was about the violence of Christian religion, colonial forces, and patriarchal domination. This paper analysis the psychological abuse suffered by the family and also the torture of different strategy adopted by Papa Eugene to stay in control. Moreover, it was evidently proved that power can be lost if there was too much control and it shows how such actions ultimately lead to rebellion. The author tried to reveals the negative side of Papa who was responsible for the cause of what that happened in his family and as with many other rebellions and uprisings, the lack of humility and compromise eventually became his downfall.

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