



CONSTRUCTION OF SELF IDENTITY IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

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ABSTRACT

Purple Hibiscus is a post colonial novel written by Adichie. She uses first person narration in the novel. The protagonist narrates the whole story. Kambili is fifteen years old girl. She has an elder brother Jaja. Their father Eugene Achike also known as Papa is a strict authoritarian. Their mother Beatrice Achike also known as Mama is a silent character in their family. Papa is dominant character and he always punishes his children and wife when they fail to live high standards life as him. Self identity is defines as a sense of self built. It emphasizes a sense of individual autonomy rather than communal involvement. Self identity is important issue when a person becomes matured one. Ultimately, human beings grow up to find the answer for the question "Who am I?"

Key words: Post Colonial, Silent, Dominant, Self identity, Self built, Individual autonomy.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has inseparable relationship with human life; it portraits the consistent life of human beings. All the writers from early to present days take themes from real life. The beauty of language gives pleasure to the readers.

African language literatures receive a little scholarly attention. European languages are known by all Africans than their languages. Yoruba and Hausa are well known languages and literatures in Africa. African literature has gradual growth; the riddle, the proverb, the tale, heroic poetry, and the epic. Oral artists entertain their audience, provide relaxation and they teach moral values to young generation. Western influences affect African literature. Though

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numerous writers are against western culture, some writers accept it. Later it brings out the various genres such as poetry, play, prose, and novel. Oral and written storytelling methods are parallelly developed. The effects of colonialism and Arabic, French, English, and Portuguese literary traditions play a vital role in the development of African literature.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on September 15, 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria. She is the fifth of six children in her family. She completes her master degree in creative writing at John Hopkins University, Baltimore. Her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* is published in October, 2003. It receives many awards including Commonwealth Writer's Prize for first book in 2005. Biafra War is the major concept in her second novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* which is published in August, 2006. Her third novel *Americanah* is published in 2013. She is married and has a daughter.

Self identity in *Purple Hibiscus*:

The novel starts on Palm Sunday. The family goes to church except Jaja. He has refused to go church so Papa throws his missal at Jaja. Fortunately it hits a shelf. It contains Mama's favorite figurines. Papa is a revered member in Enugu, Nigeria; a successful and wealthy business man. He is a kind human to society whereas a strict authoritarian in home. Every day he offers love sip of his tea to his children. Kambili always burns her tongue when she drinks tea. She has no way to refuse the tea.

Kambili looks her daily schedule which is prepared by Papa. He allots time for studying, eating, family time and sleeping to both children. They are directed to read Bible on every Sunday. They eat food after a long prayer. Kambili hears loudest noise from her parent's room. Papa and Mama leave their room and Mama slings on Papa's shoulder. Jaja sees the blood on the floor.

Kambili becomes second in her class. The school appreciates her good obedience and mark. Papa does not proud of her rank. He visits Jaja's room as usual he comes first in the class. Then he enters into Kambili's room. Papa's father did not spend a cent for his studies but he is always first rank in his class. He criticizes Kambili. Papa takes Kambili to school. Sister thanks Papa for his donation to renew the library. While speaking Papa changes his accent. It sounds like British speaker. He compares Kambili with Chinwe Yideze who has come first in last exam. Each of them has single head so no excuse to come second. Kambili's classmates call her as backyard snob because she does not mingle with girls. Chinwe is also a wealthy family girl. She socializes and offers biscuits to her friends. Kambili is not ready to face the punishments so she never does any activities in school campus.



Papa Nnukwu, who is the father of Eugene Achike and Ifeoma, arrives to their native place, Nsukka. He stays with them. Kambili blurts that she sleeps in the same room with her grandfather. He is a heathen and it is a sin in Papa's principle. Papa calls Kambili to his room and pours boiling water on her feet because she has walked into sin. She cries and says sorry.

He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it toward my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. (Adichie194)

Mama appears and lifts Kambili to her room. Jaja receives the same punishment. He has brought some Purple Hibiscus seeds from Ifeoma's home and he fears to plant in his garden. They open the painting of their grandfather. They gaze at the painting. Unfortunately Papa finds the painting and asks them whether they convert as heathen. He snatches the painting and starts to tear it. Kambili screams and lay on the painting in curl position. Papa continuously kicks her and Mama begs him to leave Kambili. She is admitted in hospital. She wishes to meet her aunty. Ifeoma arrives and advices Mama to put a full stop for Papa's atrocities. Kambili and Jaja again go to Nsukka. Ifeoma's family cares Kambili. Ifeoma's family plans to move to America. Jaja wishes to go with them.

They go to final trip around Nsukka. The day night Mama informs that Papa is died. Ifeoma and Kambili scream and could not believe the news. Mama poisons her husband. She has been giving slow poison in his tea. Jaja accepts the blame for crime and he is arrested. Mama and Kambili meet Jaja in prison after three years. Their lawyer announces that he will be released soon. They are waiting to live their life with Jaja.

Identity is an essential part in every human life. It gives confidence and authority. One is entirely an individual and has personal feelings and thoughts. Personal identity formation centers on the process of developing an individual identity within one's cultural community.

The importance of individualism or self choice has resulted in a transformation of individual identity. It is more difficult task for individuals to construct their identity and find their place in society. In the traditional societies identity formation is an easy task. Colonialist countries have the problems in forming identities.



Self Identity makes them unique as an individual from others. It is the way they see or define themselves. Denial of identity leads to alienation. Identity is a very complex issue. It contains many inner qualities as well as outer representations of an individual. An individual's identity includes personality, fear, look and belief. Self identity is influenced by how individuals live and carry themselves. Second person or third person should not enter in the personal life of an individual. People around a person have different opinions about an individual. They also affect the individual. Finally the family have built their identities.

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