

Postcolonial Philosophy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's Purple Hibiscus

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ENG-2022-11015320

Volume: 11

Issue: 1

Month: December

Year: 2022

P-ISSN: 2320-2645

E-ISSN: 2582-3531

Received: 18.09.2022

Accepted: 23.11.2022

Published: 01.12.2022

Citation:

Santhosh Yedidiah, N., and Adappatu Ancy Antony. "Postcolonial Philosophy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's Purple Hibiscus." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2022, pp. 82–85.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/english.v11i1.5320>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

N. Santhosh Yedidiah

II MA English

Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8672-1375>

Adappatu Ancy Antony

Assistant Professor

Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1707-8993>

Abstract

Post-colonialism is a useful tool for educating the West about the need of not undermining any culture because of racial differences. The post-colonial discourse criteria of appropriation, abrogation, untranslated terms, hybridity, and affiliation served as the foundation for this study's text criticism. Since this is the fundamental theme of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writings in Purple Hibiscus, it implies that African people's heritage and identity are valued by everyone, particularly those who are quasi, and that the colonial process can be truly ended on the African continent. There must be a different culture to replace the lost indigenous culture.

Keywords: Hybridity, Culture, Race, Diaspora, Alienate, Destabilization.

Introduction

Postcolonial philosophy frequently overestimated the advantages of diaspora, downplayed its drawbacks, and overstated its capacity to produce cultural hybridities and transnational perspectives. Postcolonial theory has too easily and frequently affirmed the exile's prospects for cosmopolitan liberation and the social transformation politics of what Homi Bhabha calls 'unhomeliness', despite the fact that it emerged from a social constructionist acknowledgment of the destabilisation of connotation and individuality and it was built on a critique of the nation state as inherently essentialist and individualist. Bhabha views diasporic subjects as role models for postcolonial thinking because they are "wandering peoples who will not be contained within the Heim of the national culture and its unisonant discourse" (236). The postcolonial intellectual strives to develop a historical and literary agenda from this hybrid location of cultural worth, which combines the transnational and the translational, according to him. A postcolonial perspective of migration must also keep in mind its frequently terrible costs, even as it does not ignore the transformative potential of unreliable and border checks or the need for alternative community building strategies outside of nation states in our global age. These costs frequently fall on subaltern victims rather than on the artists and thinkers who document their losses of home, family, safety, and homeland in regions where lack of development, government malfeasance, and ethnic conflicts precede decolonization. The dual awareness that otherness persons feel could be more crippling than illuminating, and their longing for what has been lost might alienate them in the long run.

Postcolonial philosophy frequently overestimated the advantages of diaspora, downplayed its drawbacks, and overstated its capacity to produce cultural hybridities and transnational perspectives. Postcolonial theory has too easily and frequently affirmed the exile's prospects for cosmopolitan liberation and the social transformation politics of what Homi Bhabha calls 'unhomeliness' (13), despite the fact that it emerged from a social constructionist acknowledgment of the destabilisation of connotation and individuality and it was built on a critique of the nation state as inherently essentialist and individualist. Bhabha views diasporic subjects as role models for postcolonial thinking because they are "wandering peoples who will not be contained within the Heim of the national culture and its unisonant discourse" (236). The postcolonial intellectual strives to develop a historical and literary agenda from this hybrid location of cultural worth, which combines the transnational and the translational, according to him (248).

Background

The first and possibly most important element of *Purple Hibiscus* that contributes to the development of the Nigerian novel is voice. Then, we'll start by asking, "What is voice?" According to current theories of storytelling, particularly those influenced by Gerard Genette's writings, the use of voice is limited to how we might respond to two important questions. Who is speaking is the first query. This is the issue of who is the text's narrator, or if it has a narration or imagery voice. Here, the term 'diegetic' is employed to separate the distinctive quality of story from, say, drama. The act of narrating distinguishes narrative in this way in contrast to the mimetic aspect of drama, which dominates. Who sees is the next query. This speaks to the issue of whose viewpoint the story text's diegesis is based.

The relevance of *Purple Hibiscus* is that it is driven by a conflict between these two characteristics of voice, which exposes it to concerns of philosophy. Although Kambili assumes the role of the narration's voice, the story is actually told from the perspectives of three separate people. Genette refers to Kambili as a homodiegetic voice. She serves as both the speaker and a central character in the story, in other words.

She takes part in the activities that she describes to the reader. She simultaneously catches the various perspectives implied in the scene she is depicting. She gains the benefit of empathy and distance by intervening between information and viewpoint. She can participate in the activity because of her empathy, while from a distance she can become cynical and recognise the irony of the circumstance.

The reality that colonialism in Africa came and went does not mean that all of its horrific impacts on the region were carried over. African writers have therefore chosen to explore for methods and approaches towards a rehabilitation and reassertion of a past that was deformed by such consequences in order to escape the jam position that colonialism has imposed on the Africa continent. One of these methods is employing the post-colonialist lens to look inwards making use of the characteristics that specifically define them as Africans in their literary works.

Postcolonial Perspective in Chimamanda Ngozi's *Purple Hibiscus*

Post-colonialism is a useful tool for educating the West about the need of not undermining any culture because of racial differences. The post-colonial discourse criteria of appropriation, abrogation, untranslated terms, hybridity, and affiliation served as the foundation for this study's text criticism. Since this is the fundamental theme of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writings in *Purple Hibiscus*, it implies that African people's heritage and identity are valued by everyone, particularly those who are quasi, and that the colonial process can be truly ended on the African continent. There must be a different culture to replace the lost indigenous culture. Eugene Achike, Papa-son, Nnukwu's appropriately assumes responsibility of re-defining Nigeria by substituting the colonial culture that hijacked the indigenous culture. Eugene is the epitome of a coloniser, trying to impose the order he perceives on his family. He adheres to Occidental ideals, European faith, and consumerism, and he tries to instil these ideals in his wife and kids as well.

Eugene makes the mistake of assuming that his children's needs are comparable to his own, just as any colonising nation would do with the people it has

colonised. He doesn't take into account the possibility that their needs are particular and best suited to their situation. Eugene, at the very minimum, believes that his needs come before everyone else's, even his children. Eugene decides his children's destiny because he manages every aspect of their lives, arranging them for every moment of every day.

Understanding Nigeria's cultural heritage and present-day government is only one factor to consider when talking about the country's prospective identities. A person's identity is also moulded by their ambitions and objectives for the future, and it changes as these prospective futures materialise or do not. Nigeria might see two different futures when we characterise Father Amadi and Auntie Ifeoma. Both characters eventually quit Nigeria, signalling that the futures they represent cannot come to pass. Kambili and Jaja are both personalities who serve as surrogate father figures whose influence grows further away Kambili and Jaja are from Eugene.

Father Amadi comes from imagined futures of Nigeria, embodying the dream of Nigerian amalgamation, in contrast to Eugene, who represents Nigeria as it is and the failed colonial objectives of Europe. He has successfully merged the colonising and indigenous cultures because he is more concerned with people than with power. Father Amadi is the perfect Nigerian Catholic; the majority people lived in Igboland. Amadi follows the European Catholic tradition than Eugene, and his hymns of praise are chanted both in English and Igbo.

She falls in love with Amadi because he elicits some type of fantasy reaction, acting as if the life Father Amadi represents is the one, she actually lives. In terms of power, Father Amadi outranks the existing administration, which is embodied by the church's top officials. Father Amadi is a figure of power like the other church figures, but he is a person who governs via love rather than force. Amadi stands for the Nigeria that ought to exist the Nigeria that would exist if its superior were more morally upright and compassionate toward the populace.

Kambili and Jaja should decide between several possible futures because their decision will shape their developing personalities. Jaja is confused and a little intrigued by life in a liberal home in Nsukka. The purple hibiscus blossoms in Ifeoma's yard,

which serve as the book's namesake, symbolise her parenting and hence, form of rule. Jaja is curiously captivated to the flowers when she first perceives:

That's a hibiscus, isn't it, Auntie? Jaja asked, staring at a plant close to the barbed wire fence. I didn't know there were purple hibiscuses. Auntie Ifeoma laughed and touched the flower, colored a deep shade of purple that was almost blue. Everybody has that reaction the first time. (Adichie 128)

Democracy appears to be a lovely myth, similar to the purple hibiscus, a flower that is so uncommon that few people have ever seen it. The purple hibiscus is similar to democracy in that it must be deliberately sought out and grown; it cannot be discovered without both fertile ground and ready caretakers. A peaceful democratic system is not the political reality for the Nigeria in novel *Purple Hibiscus*, a country that has endured colonisation first and then a brutal autocracy.

Conclusion

Thus it demonstrates the inherent uncertainty of dictatorial administrations. In the same way that those who live by the sword and take swords will also die by the sword, these tools topple administrations that rule by instilling fear and repression. The ultimate emblem of colonisation, tea, brings down Eugene, the colonialist. Nigeria, a country founded on British economic ambitions, collapses due to the shared economic worries of all the tribal players. Adichie depicts migration in *Purple Hibiscus* through Auntie Ifeoma's migration to America, showing both the positive and negative aspects of migration. First, it looks to be a remedy for societal instability from its positive perspective. Ifeoma, as portrayed by Adichie, represents the many Nigerians who believe that leaving their unstable country would improve their living circumstances more than remaining. She demonstrates how Ifeoma and her kids are doing well in America. Together with her mother and her brother Jaja, Kambili intends to go see them. In this sense, migration seems successful.

References

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. Algonquin Books, April 2012.
---"African Authenticity and the Biafran Experience."

-
- Transition 99. Project
Muse. Web. 9 Oct. 2009. Accessed on 12 October 2022.
- Bhabha. Homi K. The Location of Culture. Psychology Press, 2004.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John Comaroff. "Naturing the Nation: Aliens, Apocalypse, and the Post-Colonial State." JSTOR. Web. 26 July 2010. Accessed on 09 September 2022.
- Fanon, F. Black Skin, White Masks. Pluto Press, 1996.

Author Details

N. Santhosh Yedidiah, *II MA English, Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India,*
Email ID: santhoshyedidiah@gmail.com

Adappatu Ancy Antony, *Assistant Professor, Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India,*
Email ID: adappatuancy.a@stc.ac.in