



Strands of Jingoism in *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Abstract

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's maiden novel is a piece that explores the patriarchal attitude within the familial construction, due to the Western influence, in postcolonial Nigeria. Adichie combines the political situation of society with traces of the European attitude blended in the Nigerian society after independence. The paper attempts to highlight the patriarchal attitude of the central character Eugene Achike, which soundly affects the mental health of his family members. The paper further focuses on the Western mindset of Eugene, disguised in the name of culture and knowledge.

Keywords: Jingoism, Violence, Domestic Life, Religion.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explicitly portrays the attainment of jingoism and chauvinism at different level in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Adichie also expresses how being a jingoist affects the people around them to a longer radius. Lack of assiduousness and care for a longing heart is also expressed by Adichie in the novel. The very start of jingoism begins in the house of Kambili, a fifteen years old girl, who is the narrator and Jaja who is the brother of Kambili. Jaja refuses to receive Holy Communion on a Palm Sunday. Being an extravagant Catholic, Eugene, the papa, beats Jaja for not receiving communion on a holy day. As Najeeb Washaly opines, "all these utter abuses and maltreatments are due to wrong, and often false, perception and interpretations" (2044). Everyone is supposed to be unique but Eugene suppresses once preference towards his understanding. During the quarrel Eugene throws a figurine towards Jaja in anger. Beatrice, being the wife Eugene, always wants to tolerate whatever her husband does. An individual's love towards something is being messed by others without any concern is hard and that's what mom felt here. There is no privacy given to either Jaja or Kambili, Eugene always have the key to their rooms. He always want his children to be in a scheduled routine. They are not owed to spend their time on anything other than the schedule.

Jaja and Kambili never liked the schedule but they are under the pressure of chauvinism. Even, Jaja and Kambili carry their schedule when they went to Aunty Ifeoma's house for holidays. Aunty Ifeoma is irritated by how Eugene restricts his children in whatever way he can. Aunty Ifeoma stared at the paper in Jaja's hand. Then she started to laugh so hard that she staggered, her tall body bending like a whistling pine tree on a windy day. "Eugene gave you a



schedule to follow when you're here? *Nekwanu anya*, what does that mean?" Aunty Ifeoma laughed some more before she held out her hand and asked for the sheet of paper (124).

Papa Eugene is the one who is mainly targeted as a Jingoist. Even inside the house no one is allowed to speak in their mother language. Eugene is greatly affected and influenced by the Western ideologies. Refusing the freedom of speech in mother tongue by Eugene highlights his jingoistic attitude in the domestic framework. Even Adichie portrays some bloodshed resulting from Eugene's ruthless behaviour. Once mom is pregnant, Jaja and Kambili are in extreme elation for the arrival of their new sibling. Kambili used to close her eyes and count the thuds from papa's room to understand the seriousness of the fight. One day Kambili finds unusual sound from her parents' and also the footsteps of papa which is unusual. Jaja and Kambili go out to see what happened and notice their mom is lying unconscious on papa's shoulder. They also find some bloodstains on the floor. Jaja and Kambili tend to know about the unnatural abortion of mom. This horrifying behaviour of a dad inside the house will infect a child's goodwill inside their hearts. This substandard deportment originates only because of being a man and also because of having a chauvinistic mind. Even Eugene is an active socialist; he is always authoritative towards his family. Adichie also effectively expresses how a child's mind struggles under a jingoistic crisis. Jaja is the one who always gets first in all his academic exams and Kambili fails to get first sometimes. Once Kambili gets second rank in her academic exams, Eugene takes Kambili to the school and shows the girl, Chinwe Jideze, who got first rank in that academic exam. This really insults Kambili and created a bad notion over her father.

Where is Chinwe Jideze?" Papa asked, when we got to the front of my class. A group of girls stood at the door, talking. I looked around, feeling a weight around by temples. What would Papa do?... "She is the girl in the middle," I said..."Look at her," Papa said. "How many heads does she have? (46)

Fallacy of Eugene greatly stresses the mind and body of his children. It even affected the papa Nnukwa, father of Eugene. He is an old man living in his native and also following his old traditions. As papa Nnukwu is not a Catholic, Eugene never wants to talk to him and also he won't allow his children to visit him. After some long arguments, for all Christmas he allowed his children to visit their grandfather for fifteen minutes without any physical contact or dine. He instructs that his grandfather is a devil as he follows a different religion. This breaks a great grandparent bond of love and also creates a misapprehension in the minds of the children. On that day they spent an extra five minutes with their grandfather. Once, Kambili is ruthlessly beaten by Eugene which visibly creates mental stress in Kambili.

Aunt Ifeoma's house is completely filled with laughter and happiness, even her children are always happy and they have no schedule to take care of. Within a short time papa Nnukwa is dead and both Jaja and Kambili is downhearted as they failed to share the love for the right person only because of his papa's misinterpretation. Eugene arrived only after the burial of his father and behaved like what a son shouldnt be. He just gave some money for the burial and traditional practices. Even after that Eugene was in terrible rage on Kambili and Jaja for staying with papa Nnukwu without informing him. He showed his fury by pouring hot water on their legs.



Adichie also articulates some unconscious behaviour of Eugene as a jingoistic person. Amaka, son of Ifeoma, once painted the picture of papa Nnukwu to express his painting skills. Kambili is emotionally touched by the painting and she takes the picture along with her to Enugu. One day she is filled with the thoughts of her grandfather and calls Jaja to have a look at the painting of papa Nnukwu. Unexpectedly, Eugene sees Kambili and Jaja holding the picture of the person whom he hates the most. Eugene's arrogance pumps when Kambili tries to hide the painting. He unbuckles his belt and gives her a kick with his metal buckle. Kambili feels an extreme affliction and turned unconscious.

Adichie expresses the controversial dispute between the minds of a jingoist and the typical mainstream usual people around them. She also shoots out the diverse ways, how a habitual mind around a jingoist is influenced and also the amount of struggles a teenage mind faces. Jingoism in this novel mainly becomes a stumbling block for the mind of the children. It even impacts their personal love towards anything. Adichie also shows how misinterpretation of an individual affects the people for a long radius. He is not only influenced by the tradition of the colonizer, but also the language, clothing and the culture. The mental trauma encounters by the children without any clear observation make it hard for them to survive inside the house As a colonial product Eugene is greatly influenced by the beliefs and practices of the British, as Cheryl Stobie says, "Kambili's father Eugene is the emblematic colonised masculine subject" (424). Kambili and Jaja take new steps towards adulthood by overcoming the fear and stress caused by their father. Adichie clearly shows abundant episodes where chauvinism grasps its superfluous notion and overdone the existential crisis.

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