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**EXAMINING THE REPERCUSSIONS OF
CATHOLIC DISCREPANCY IN CHIMAMANDA
NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*(2003)**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

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Dedication

To the wretched of the earth...

AYA²

Abbreviations

ATR: African Traditional Religion

Abstract

The present research focuses on the Catholic discrepancy and its effects in influencing the formation of the African character's hybrid identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). The main purpose of this research is to shed light on the two versions of Catholicism that are employed by Adichie and how they influenced the characters' lives and identities. These two versions differ in terms of their tolerance to indigenous religion and culture. Accordingly, the strict Catholic father neglects his native culture whereas his sister tolerates it. Hence, the study attempts to develop a deep understanding of the outcomes of Catholic discrepancy that is employed by Adichie. The research analyzes Adichie's work in the light of Bhabha's postcolonial theory of Hybridity. Throughout the novel, the author portrayed how religious extremism can lead to violence and silence within the family and the society. Therefore, she provided an alternative by encouraging the integration of African culture within the Catholic Church i.e. inculturated Catholicism. Thus, African cultures will be able to coexist with the Catholic faith and the African character will be able to find a middle ground for his hybrid identity.

Keywords: Catholic discrepancy, religious extremism, inculturated Catholicism, silence, violence, postcolonialism, hybridity.

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General Introduction

Ever since the heyday of colonization, literature has been considered as the fundamental bridge that links readers with the religious, social, cultural and historical realities of a specific group of people during a specific era. It is about the deep connection that links a piece of a literary work with the historical and cultural actualities. The encounter between Africans and the colonizers produced pieces of writing that tackle religious, political and social issues in postcolonial Africa. Therefore, many African writers have tackled the theme of religion in their writings, particularly Christianity and African Traditional Religion. Hence, Their attention has been attracted by the relationship between Christianity and African culture. The content of contemporary postcolonial African works has dealt extravagantly with the issues pertaining to this relationship. They sought to show how the encounter of Africans with the new faith led to several issues that are worth the consideration. Within this context, postcolonial African literature is a crucial initiative that contributed in the development of the African literary criticism. It provides a wide entrance into different realities concerning the being of postcolonial African characters.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a third-generation Nigerian writer whose works tackle issues like gender, race, religion, and most importantly the Nigerian Civil War or also called the Biafran war. They deal explicitly with the ravages of colonialism and religious extremism. Her first published novel *Purple Hibiscus* is a coming of age story that centers on an Igbo Catholic family in Nigeria. Adichie throughout the novel criticizes the authoritative father and the Catholic Church. She demonstrates how religious fanaticism can have devastating effects on people's lives. Thus, Adichie calls for the middle ground by providing alternatives to this extremism through adopting hybridization.

Individuals' lives, identities and perspectives have been shaped by the experience of being colonized. Literature provides remarkable ways through which colonized people's realities are expressed. Accordingly, their experiences concerning religious, political and

cultural issues have been powerfully encoded by postcolonial literature. In her novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie includes aspects of hybridity, tolerance, and freedom of speech. She reveals the life of the Achike siblings before their visit to Nsukka, where their aunt lives. Thus, she shows how they were indoctrinated that everything native is pagan and this has resulted in their absolute ignorance and rejection of their ancestral heritage. However, after their encounter with their aunty, they come to realise the misperception they had. Indeed, this process of disillusionment enables Adichie to reveal the necessity of tolerating African cultures within the church, or the so-called inculturation of Catholicism.

The widespread of the new faith in the Dark Continent has always been the interest of many African writers to discuss. Since religion is a fundamental aspect that shaped and still shaping people's lives in Africa, the transition from African Traditional Religion to Christianity and its repercussions is a critical issue to be discussed. Like many African countries, Nigeria is a ground of multiple cultures. These cultures are the result of the large number of tribes which have different beliefs and rituals i.e., African Traditional Religion. The Igbo people are one of the most dominant ethnicity in Nigeria who were exposed later to the new faith that came in Africa.

Contemporary African writers start questioning Christianity effects since it was imposed on African nations including Nigeria. Christianity causes conflicts within one's family, tribe, and nation. Hence, there must be a way for the new faith to coexist with the African traditional beliefs. Serious discrepancies emerge in a form of the two versions of Catholicism i.e extremism and inculturation. These versions are the result of choosing whether to be an extremist or a hybrid. Adichie in her novel *Purple Hibiscus* introduces different types of characters according to their identities' shape.

This research strives to shed light on Adichie's use of Catholic disparity in her work, particularly with her characters 'Eugene Achike' and 'Ifeoma Achike', and thus

explores how this discrepancy differs in terms of influencing the protagonist and her brother. Through the use of such discrepancy, Adichie seeks to display the aftermath of religious overzealousness, and hence she urges for the hybridization of Catholicism with the native African cultures.

The motive behind our choice of this topic for academic research can be summed up into three main reasons. First, since the novel *Purple Hibiscus* belongs to the contemporary era, it is naturally one that has not been dealt with heavily. The second reason is related to our desire to know more about how African writers perceive Christianity as it was something imposed on them from the outside of their continent, and consequently we will be able to see the influence of African cultures on Christianity. Finally, through this research we hope to unravel the repercussions of following the Catholic faith to the extremes or choosing a middle ground in shaping the African character identity.

The current research endeavors to explore the history of Christianity in the African continent, mainly in Nigeria. It also aims to demonstrate how African writers depict the themes of Christianity, silence, and violence in their works. The main purpose of this research is to shed light on the two versions of Catholicism that are employed by Adichie. Therefore, it seeks to examine the effects of these two versions on the personalities and identities of the protagonist and her brother. Accordingly the outcomes of religious extremism and hybridization in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* will be examined in the present research.

Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, as a contemporary novel in African literature, has been studied extensively as it attracted the attention of many students and scholars. One study is the article of Cheryl Stobie entitled "Dethroning the Infallible Father: Religion, Patriarchy and Politics in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*". Stobie in her article explores the patriarchy of the protagonist's father and links it to his extremist devotion to the Catholic faith. Her article further shows that throughout the novel, Kambili has started to question the infallibility of her father when she came to realize his hypocrisy

and abuse.

Another researcher is Susan Vanzanten, a Professor of English at Seattle Pacific University. She analyses the novel in a chapter entitled “World Christianity” which is published in Susan M. Felch’s book *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Religion* (2016). Vanzanten in her chapter analyzes the novel in terms of hybridity, proselytism, and conversion. She maintains that Adichie is criticizing the Roman Catholicism that is imposed on the characters; therefore, Vanzaten calls for the hybridization of African culture and the Catholic faith.

Moreover, Anthony Chennells is another researcher from the University of Pretoria department of English in South Africa who conducted a research on this novel. In his critical article “Incultured Catholicism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*”, Chennells talks about inculturating the African culture within the practices of the Catholic Church as it has been employed by Adichie in her novel. To further illustrate this, he includes the novels *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1971) by Mongo Beti and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) by Wa Thiong’o as other examples. Accordingly, Chennells concludes that Adichie has succeeded in showing the importance of inculturation in African societies.

Another significant study about the novel is a thesis by Audrey D. Peters which is entitled “Fatherhood and Fatherland in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*”. In her research, Peters explores the father figures in the novel who are mainly: Eugene, Papa-Nnukwu, Father Amadi, and Ifeoma, and how each of these characters has a role in shaping the identity of the two siblings. Peters comes to conclude that, to some extent, all the father figures have failed to create a future for the children as this future relies mainly in the hand of the new generation. Therefore, Jaja and Kambili must negotiate their own identity based on what they have noticed and saw throughout the encounter with the father figures.

The present research serves as an addition to the previous works. In this research we will examine the relationship between religious fanaticism, violence and silence and how

the Catholic discrepancy effects the African character's identity. Therefore, our research attempts mainly to answer one fundamental question that is:

- How do the Catholic discrepancies that are illustrated in this novel, affect the main characters', Jaja and Kambili, identities and lives?

Accordingly, this research will be guided by the following sub-questions:

- How was Christianity initiated in the black continent and how did Africans respond to it?
- How was Christianity perceived by African writers?
- To what extent did the Catholic extremism affect Kambili and Jaja?
- What impact did the second version of Catholicism, i.e. Ifeome's Catholicism, have on the development of the protagonist and her brother?

For the purpose of answering the previous questions, this work hypothesizes some provisional answers among which is that Christianity was first introduced by colonialism to Africa, and Africans, at least initially, did not show their willingness to convert to this new faith. Moreover, African writers, in their works, have attempted to show the resistance of Africans to keep their original religion. In addition, this study assumes that the Catholic extremism in *Purple Hibiscus* had devastating effects on reshaping Kambili's personality. Accordingly, the encounter with the second version helped Kambili and her brother to develop more hybrid identities and independent personalities.

This novel will be examined from Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory of Hybridity lens since it is the appropriate theory to elucidate the consequences of Catholic discrepancies. Furthermore, our study discusses the main themes of "*Purple Hibiscus* " which are religion, silence, and violence from an analytical descriptive standpoint.

In the light of this theory, the novel will be put under examination to explore concepts such as "extremism", "unculturation" and "fanaticism" along with "silence" and

“violence” as the story is full of images of oppressed characters that suffer from domestic violence as well as oppressed society that suffer from dictatorship and power greedy authoritarians. Henceforth, the concept of silencing and muting people through violence will be strongly present. In her work *Purple Hibiscus* Adichie portrayed how Catholicism has two different versions and that violence and oppression are the result of being an extremist in practicing religion. The two versions of Catholicism differ in terms of their tolerance to indigenous religion and culture.

Accordingly, the strict Catholic father neglects his native culture whereas his sister tolerates it. Furthermore, Adichie throughout the novel portrayed how religious extremism can lead to violence and silence within the family. Thus, she provided an alternative to it by encouraging hybridization through integrating the African culture within the Catholic Church i.e. inculturated Catholicism. Consequently, African cultures will be able to coexist with the Catholic faith.

Structurally speaking, our dissertation is divided into two main chapters. The first one is entitled “**Socio-Historical Context and Theoretical Framework**”. The first part of this chapter explores the shift from the African Traditional Religion towards the New Faith, Christianity. It tackles different writers’ perspectives of Christianity mainly Catholicism with focus on Adichie’s views. It is also concerned with some of the major themes dealt with in our study along with the relationship between postcolonialism and literary productions. The second part of this chapter sheds light on the Postcolonial Theory along with its main concepts. Adichie is obviously influenced by the theorizations of Bhabha; therefore, applying Hybridity is highly recommended for a better examination of our corpus. The second chapter entitled “**Repercussions of Catholic Discrepancy and Hybridization**”; however, is devoted to the analysis of the novel from a postcolonial perspective. It sheds light on the different versions of Catholicism that are treated in the novel i.e. the extremist and the inculturated Catholicism. Moreover, it explains the effects of religious extremism on the protagonist Kambili and her

brother Jaja, and hence explores how the second version helped them in developing their personalities, reshaping their identities and gave them a voice to speak their minds.

Chapter One: Socio-Historical Context and Theoretical Framework

Along the African history, ethnic and religious diversity have characterized most of the African countries; especially Nigeria. The latter had a large number of tribes with various systems of belief known as the African Traditional Religion, which will be referred to as ATR from now on. Among the most prominent groups in the Nigerian multicultural society were the Igbo people who had their own faith and tribal traditions. Their religion; however, changed gradually due to the exposure to a new religion, Christianity. As from 1850 onwards, not only the Igbo group but the whole Nigerian society witnessed an important change in religion because of the interaction with British colonialism. The colonial intruders spread Christianity through their missionaries in the country.

This chapter will examine the transition from African Traditional Religion to Christianity. It will also include a bird's eye view of the ATR with a brief overview of Odinani (Igbo's religion). Furthermore, it will clarify how Christianity was introduced to Nigeria and how African people and leaders responded to it. Moreover, we will discuss Adichie's and other writers' perspectives and views on the novel's major themes. Finally, Bhabha's postcolonial theory of Hybridity will be explored in this chapter.

1. African Traditional Religion

Before defining what the ATR is, it is important to note that referring to religion in plural or singular form is debatable. The philosopher John Samuel Mbiti presumed that religions should be used in plural due to the fact that Africans belong to around a thousand ethnic groups which have different beliefs. Hence there are many traditional

religions according to the number of ethnic groups (Mbiti 3-4). Nevertheless, the theologian Bolaji Idowu debated that it should be used in the singular form for the reason that all Africans share the same race, same traditions, and the same beliefs. Therefore, African Religion is the right term (qtd. in Adamo 4). Shorter (1975) also supports this claim by saying that despite the fact that the religious systems were separate, they indeed affect each other to various extents, and this is why the use of the term African Traditional Religion in singular is justified “even if we are, in fact, dealing with multiplicity of theologies” (qtd. in Adamo 4).

Based on the previous agreements and claims, it is suitable to refer to the traditional beliefs of Africans as African Traditional Religion in the singular form owing to the fact that they all share the same religious pattern: Supreme Being, divinities, and ancestors. They only deviate in the ways in which they honor the Supreme Being.

The African Traditional Religion is defined according to the Nigerian scholar Joseph Awolalu as the native religious practices that Africans inherited from their ancestors. He clarified that the word ‘traditional’ indicates ‘aboriginal’. It is the heritage transmitted from the early fathers to the following generations. It is not just a thing of the past but it survived until the present as it still has many followers today including some of those who converted to other religions but still perform some of the indigenous practices (Awolulu).

Furthermore, African Traditional Religion is something deeper than just being a religion. It is more like a lifestyle for Africans. According to A.G. Leonard “...the religion of these natives ...is their existence and existence is their religion” (429). That is, for Africans their religion is part of who they are. It is incarnated in their lives. ATR is embodied within people’s lives to the point that there are no distinct boundaries or cuts between religious practices and daily activities. For instance, there is no defined time or place for prayers (Lugira 17). This belief is also supported by Mbiti in his book *African Religion and Philosophy* (1969) where he states that in the African context, religion

permeates in every portion of life to the point that Africans take their religion with them wherever they go. It follows them in all of the footsteps of their existence. Moreover, this traditional religion is for the community as a whole, and not basically for the individual. Africans belonging to the same community have to participate in the community's beliefs, festivals, and rituals (3-4).

ATR has many characteristics that make it distinct from any other faith. For instance, it stands out from the other immigrant religions, Christianity and Islam, by the fact that it is exclusive to the African continent i.e. it originated in Africa for Africans. Foreign religions, on the other hand, have their roots in other parts of the world and reached Africa via trade or missions while ATR is basically limited to the African continent only. In the sense that there are no mentioned efforts for propagating it to other parts outside the African context. In addition, ATR has no explicit and acknowledged founder. Thus, it cannot be traced back to a particular place, person, or a specific period of time (Lugira 15).

Another criterion of the ATR is its orality. Africans, particularly, Nigerians, had no written religious records or the so-called "Holy books". Their lore was passed put from one generation to the other depending on trained individuals whose role is to memorize the rules and principles of their faith and to transmit them orally to the following generations (ibid).

Furthermore, Africans did not have sacred places parallel to churches or mosques. Although they were the first to build temples in order to house God, this attempt was later dropped when they realized that God cannot be contained in one place. Once, a priest of Benin was asked where the house of their God was. He simply argued that God was all around them and that he cannot live in an exclusive house made by humans (Asante and Mazama 333).

Igbo tribe is one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria which is located mainly in the southeastern part of Nigeria, but the Igbos could also be found in other neighboring areas

such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Benin. However, it is still unknown for sure where they came from originally, and it is only suggested that they migrated from Egypt to settle in West Africa (Asante and Mazama 333).

Igbo's traditional religion is known as Odinani and, just like all other African Traditional Religions, it involves three types of supernatural beings: God, spirits, and ancestors. Practitioners of Odinani believe that there is only one God or Supreme Being who created everything and he is known also as *Chukwu*, *Chineke*, or *Ezechitoke* ("Igbo Religion").

God is believed to sustain the world from above, and he is usually praised as "the one who is known but not fully known" (ibid). In other words, their knowledge of God is limited. He is responsible for wealth, rain, children...etc., but not responsible for minor human details. Instead, his messengers (spirits and ancestors) take care of such things (ibid).

According to Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, Igbo cosmology consists of two worlds: human and spirit world which are related to each other. The spirit world is believed to involve four types of supernatural beings who live in the spirit world. The first type is ancestors or what is known as *Ndichie* which are the spirits of the dead people. They assert that after death, some spirits reach the spirit world successfully and become good spirits while others fail to do so they became evil spirits. The second type is guardian spirits or *Chi*. Every individual has his own personal *Chi* that is responsible for his destiny and it may be good or bad. The third type is *Alusi* or deities that are responsible for nature such as earth, sky ...etc. The final type is evil spirits; the ones that did not succeed in reaching the spirit world. They are either called *Ula Chi* or *Aka Logli*. These evil spirits are said to be humans who found pleasure in hurting other humans (Asante 333).

2. Christianity as a New Faith

In the 19th century, a new faith namely Christianity began to gain an increasing popularity among the contemporary Nigerians to eventually become one of the most prominent religions in Nigeria with over 40% of the whole population belonging to the church, mainly in the southern and middle areas. This was basically because of the efforts of the British missionaries, although Christianity was introduced earlier by the Portuguese, and the help of the influx of “recaptives” or former African slaves who returned to Africa after their salvation carrying with them the teachings of this new religion which they worked on sharing and spreading among their people to replace the traditional ones (Falola and Heaton 5).

Debunking the myth that Christianity came with the British missionaries for the first time to Nigeria, Nigerians, in fact, were introduced to this religion long before that as there were many attempts to establish Christianity in the country starting in the 15th century with the Portuguese who were the first to try to transform the region’s religion. However, none of these missions actually succeeded. An example of those early endeavors was that of Portugal’s Prince Henry the Navigator. Despite the fact that He was never a part of any of the exploration voyages that he financed or organized, he was known as the Navigator because of establishing a navigational school of exploration. The Portuguese prince wished to discover the area beyond the Atlantic so he set an exploration for Africa whose purpose was summed in the “3Gs: for God, for Gold, and for Glory” (Ngbea and Achunkie 159). He sent his ship along with Roman Catholic Missionaries to Nigeria. Benin and Warri near the Niger River were the first lands to come in contact with this exploration. But still, regardless the Portuguese attempts, the establishment of Christianity in the 15th century failed, and this was mainly because of the slave trade that was popular at that time on which most Kings paid more focus. Moreover, they were more interested in the Portuguese guns rather than their faith (ibid).

In the 18th century, some of the most remarkable Englishmen, known as Evangelicals, such as the abolitionist William Wilberforce, the lawyer Thomas Clarkson, and the director of East India Company Charles Grant were bound by their shared economic and humanitarian interests in both of Africa and Asia. They also had a common position towards the slave trade as they were all against it and they called for its abolishment (Vaughan 24). Thanks to their notable efforts, these Englishmen were able to play a very significant role in condemning the enslavement of Africans. An example of such efforts is that of Zachary Macaulay who portrayed the horrible and the non-humanitarian treatment of African slaves in the slave ships. Another example is that of Granville Sharp lawyer of John Somerset who was asking for his right to be a free man in the British isle. Granville successfully won this case (Ngbea and Achunike 161- 162).

The contributions of such men helped in gaining freedom to African slaves. However, getting their freedom was not the end of the struggle for the freed slaves, and the new life was not any easier as they were now out of jobs and living in slums. Therefore, to better these conditions, a committee was formed in 1786 called 'Relieving the Black Poor' which decided that the best solution for such ex-slaves is to repatriate them to Africa (ibid).

After the abolishment of the slave trade, most of the freed slaves, spread around places such as Britain and Canada, were suffering from hard living conditions and facing difficulties in fitting in European societies. Therefore, it was decided to send the former slaves back to their home continent, and for that purpose Sierra Leone colony was established by the British. Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, was selected as the new home for the ex-slaves with a promise of protection by the British crown. This first wave was followed by ongoing groups of slave influx who continued to arrive at Sierra Leone. Moreover, the aim of the British was not only to gather the previously enslaved individuals back again in Africa, but rather to reshape this new society by bringing western education and religion in which the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had a significant role. Both the

government and CMS agreed to build churches and schools to convert the ex-slaves into Christianity. Additionally, in 1827, the British government established the Fourah Bay College in order to produce African teachers and missionaries to help in achieving its goal (“Sierra Leone History Background”).

In addition to the efforts of some Europeans, the "recaptives" had an important role in converting western and eastern Nigeria. It was due to the failure of the Niger Expedition of 1841 that Britain decided to use Africans as agents of the gospel as the need for them to spread the new faith was then clear since many of the European members of the expedition were not able to cope with the climate difficulties that were nothing like climate conditions of their distant home, and they lost their lives out of fever, as a result. The Niger Expedition included 150 Europeans and Africans. It sought to put in action the words of Thomas Buxton who believed that the right way for transforming Africa was by abolishing the slave trade. It included members such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Simon Jones, both former slaves. However, it ended in a fiasco and the Europeans had no alternative solution but to depend on Africans themselves to spread Christianity among themselves (Sundkler and Steed 244).

An example of Africans who had a very important role in converting their own people is Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He is originally from Yoruba land born in 1809. He was enslaved and sold to the Portuguese from whom he was rescued by the British and was sent to the Freetown of Sierra Leone. Ajayi got a Christian education when he was sent back to Africa and was baptised in 1825. He was considered as a very successful missionary. In 1841, he participated in establishing Christian presence in the interior of Nigeria, but the mission failed. He; however, continued his work in Badagry and Abeokuta to eventually succeed to be labeled as the first African Bishop in the Anglican Church in 1861. Crowther was against using Christ and missionary works for colonial purposes. Later, Samuel Ajayi died in 1891 (Falola xxiii).

After the failure of the mission in Sierra Leone, the attempts to spread Christianity moved from Sierra Leone to Dahomey in 1860. Father Borghero, a Catholic Roman, who was put on duty in Dahomey paid Lagos and Abeokuta a visit twice. On his journey there, he came upon former Nigerian slaves alongside Brazilians living in Lagos. He was inspired by the fact that both Nigerians and Brazilians are Christians living side by side in Nigeria. In this wise, he set up a mission station at Lagos, and in 1862 sent an ex-slave Padre Antonio to be its Catechist. Padre had a significant role in spreading the new faith among Nigerians by baptizing children and teaching Lagos' inhabitants the Catholic faith (Owolabi et al. 6-7-8). In 1868, Father Pierre Bouche was assigned a residential priest of Nigeria. In 1896, a Chapel was built for the proponent of the Catholic faith. The Roman Catholic Faith started to spread out from the city of Lagos. It reached the city of Onitsha with Father Lutz, and then Ilorin and Ondo through Fathers Chaused and Holley. At Onitsha, a Mission house was built by Father Bishop Shanahan. Father Shanahan also had a role in wide spreading Catholicism to Oghuli by building a primary school and learning the Igbo language. These efforts helped in converting many Igbos into Catholicism. By 1924, native Igbos were working as priests throughout most of the churches in Nigeria (ibid).

Leaders of African communities welcomed and encouraged the Christian missionaries because they thought that it would be of great spiritual, commercial, and military use. They believed that having good relations with the Christians will help them in "inviting the Christian god"; therefore, gaining the support of the British military which will strengthen them against their neighboring rivals. Furthermore, they aimed to enhance their legitimate commercial exchanges with the British as a consequence of their acceptance and support to the missionaries. Another significant factor that led to the positive attitude of the local leaders was the Christian missionaries' efforts that were of great importance to the leaders. As an example of those efforts was their noticeable attempts to learn the local language and to teach the English language to the Africans in order to facilitate communication which was the key to deliver their message (Falola 87-88).

After the inception of Christianity in the Igbo land, the original religion – Odinani – was threatened and it had to face the new adversary or opponent that seemed to attract, gradually, increasing numbers of converters. Although at first, the Igbo people did not show much interest or willingness to convert to the new faith nor, apparently, did they consider the possibility of being Christians because they felt that this would anger their god which filled them with dread. Their attitude; however, did not remain the same as Christianity managed to find its way successfully onto them by affecting the youth's view of their fathers' traditions using education. It was an easy task for the Christian teachers, or the so-called agents, since they acted as social revolutionists to convince the youth that anything that is traditional is necessarily evil. Being influenced by these Christian ideas, the Igbos, and especially the youth, began to doubt everything that was traditional which led, consequently, to conflicts with those who kept standing for their beliefs or who may be called traditionalists (Okeke et al.4).

The clash between the African indigenous cultures and the new faith .i.e., Christianity gave birth to Inculturation. The latter can be defined as the process through which a given culture adopts the gospel and makes it its own and, simultaneously, the gospel attempts to get integrated within that culture (Udeani 136). It is also defined by Gerald Arbuckle in his book: *Culture, Inculturation, Theologians* (2010) as: "... the dialectical interaction between Christian faith and cultures in which these cultures are challenged, affirmed, and transformed toward the reign of God, and in which Christian faith is likewise challenged, affirmed, and enhanced by their experience" (52).

In other words, according to Arbuckle, Inculturation is the dialogue between the Christian faith and the local culture (the African culture in our research case) in which it is to be planted. Thus the ways in which they interact in order to reach a common ground that, on one hand, keep the basic principles of each of them and allows the necessary adjustments that are needed to enable the individuals to be members in the Christian Church without

being obliged to give up their beliefs, on the other. That is, through inculturation, some of the components of the hosting culture such as traditions, customs, beliefs ceremonies ...etc may be altered or modified in order not to contrast with the teachings of Christianity. In return, the Christian teachings need to suit the cultural context in which they occur since religion is practiced by people who live in societies with particular life habits and traditions that affect the ways in which they practice and interpret religion. Therefore we may simply say that inculturation is the mutual influence of the Christian faith and a non-Christian culture “Inculturation” because God must adapt itself to any culture (Udeani 134).

In order to better understand the term inculturation, it is necessary to be aware of the difference between it and the term ‘acculturation’ with which it is often confused. Acculturation may be defined as the process in which a person adopts a distinct culture from his original one without dropping his own traditions and values. It is a two-way process that results from cultural contact due to immigrating to a foreign country, the impacts of social media, or from colonization or having contacts with foreigners for any reason. This process can be at the individual or the group level, and it usually involves minorities adopting traits of majorities’ cultures such as language, food, dressing style, traditional celebrations and so on(Cole).

3. Religion, Silence, and Violence in Literature

Many African writers have tackled the theme of religion in their writings, particularly Christianity and Indigenous religions, they tried to portray the western colonizers’ persistent endeavor to diminish and erode the native religions of Africans by forcing them to adopt a new one: Christianity. Thus, the conflict between the ATR and Christianity has been the core theme of most African writings including, to cite few, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964), Mongo Beti’s *The Poor*

Christ of Bomba (1965), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). These writers have contributed to the development of African Literature by taking it up to another level to be able to compete with Western literature. Chinua Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* has attempted to prove that Africans had a culture, values, religion and hence a thriving history long before the arrival of westerners unlike what has been portrayed in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, on the other hand, centers on Catholicism which is the religion of most characters. This shows that most Nigerians, years after *Things Fall Apart*, indeed converted to the new faith brought by white missionaries, and Christianity is now undoubtedly their religion.

Despite the fact that Christianity is a foreign religion in the African continent, many Africans have converted to this new faith. It brought a lot of changes with it and also sought to change the native cultures that it was encountered with. Since Christianity was deeply rooted in westernization, African writers could not deal with the issue of colonization without tackling Christianity in their works (Ojaide 20-21). It is stated that Christianity had more influence in African literature than the other major religion: Islam, and traditional religions; therefore, it became the major theme for them and writers reacted to it in different ways. For writers like Ngugi WaThiang'o, Okotp'Bitek, Ferdinand Oyono, and Mongo Beti, Christianity is linked to the imperial colonialism, thus it is a reason for African's alienation, self-hate, mimicry, and most importantly violence. Other writers like Thomas Mofolo and Sol Plaatje; however, considered it as a route for civilization (Gikandi150). Some African poets on the other hand, including Tchicaya U'Tamsi, Christopher Okigbo, Syl Cheney-Coker, used symbols and motifs from the Catholic Church extravagantly in their writings like the use of Christ as a hero who sacrificed his life for others to praise this faith. Although Christianity may seem foreign; however, it is indeed the religion of most African writers whom many of them tend to criticize it due to its past with slave trade and colonization (Ojaide 20-21). This claim is further asserted by Dr. Afe Adogame in where he stated that the

relationship between Christianity and African culture has been the prominent theme in most African narratives and discourses ever since decolonization. African plays, novel, and poems are rich with religious and cultural symbols. Adogame compared literature to religion by saying that they both are trying to enlighten the imagination and make life more appealing. Their themes are similar and essential. He quoted Detweiler and Jasper in the following: “Religious experience and reflection have always engendered poetry and literature, prompting the imagination and moving beyond speculative thought” (qtd in 3). Therefore it is worthy to note that religion has been rooted in African literature to the point that they became inseparable and thus can coexist together (Adogame 2-3).

However, one cannot deny the fact that the encounter of Christianity and the African culture resulted in several conflicts to which African writers attempt to find solutions. This is asserted by Professor André Kaboré where he stated that a lot of African writers provided a solution to this clash between the African Traditional Religion and Christianity by creating a mixed style of orality and literacy; therefore, introducing inculturation in their writing. Among these writers who address the theme of religion are Chinua Achebe, T. M. Aluko, Onuora Nzekwu, Kenjo Jumbam, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; however, Kaboré focuses on his article *Literatures of Inculturation* on Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Jumbam’s *The White Man of God* (1980), and Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). He made it clear that the works of these writers share two things. First, they all deal with the conflicts between Christianity and indigenous religions in their narratives in the sense whether Christianity should make a room for the native cultures or should it make a *tabula rasa* of them i.e. it modifies those culture so they can coexist within Christianity. The second common thing among the previously mentioned novels is that in all of them the children tend to rebel against the authoritative parents by refusing to follow their instructions (1-2).

Kaboré further states that inculturation is “dormant in *Things Fall Apart*,

requested in *The White Man of God*, and improvable in *Purple Hibiscus*” (6). He claims that inculturation is absent in *Things Fall Apart* because Achebe was too occupied by addressing the issue of destroying Igbo traditions to open the space for Christianity. Jumbam, on the other hand, sought to include the traditional values in Christianity and tried to get rid of old values by keeping the fruitful ones only. Jumbam indeed thought that Christianity could be good for the people if they can relate to it; therefore, he thinks that inculturation is necessary. However, Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* explores issues related to inculturation like the way to treat indigenous culture and people. Thus inculturation in this novel is already in operation through Anuty Ifoema and Father Amadi (Kaboré6).

The twentieth century has been characterized by the appearance of a new generation of Nigerian writers known as the Contemporaries or simply “third generation” writers. These writers live in an African Diaspora mostly in United States or France. The third-generation writers are considered the literary grandchildren of the previous generations like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. They explore cultural and social issues related to Nigeria; however, they convey a new style which is related to the emotional development of their characters. Among these writers are Chris Abani, Chika Unigwe, Sefi Atta, Helon Habila, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Tunca, “Stylistic Issues”).

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a third generation writer who is, according to Professor Anthony Chennells, the heir of both Ngugi and Beti in terms of her literary writing. Both Ngugi and Beti employed ‘acculturation’ in their novels: *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1971). Chennells made it clear that acculturation was not the purpose of Adichie’s novels for she “...belongs to a generation for whom Christianity in its manifestations is as much a part of African cultures as traditional religion are or perhaps were” (17). Therefore, for Adichie, Christianity is indeed now part of the African family. It is now the religion of most Africans. She instead seeks to employ inculturation in her narrative i.e. opening space in Christianity for native cultures.

In an interview with Dr. Ike Anya, Adichie expressed her admiration of religion's power that is able to make so much change within societies. She adds "...I grew up Catholic, still am although I am what may be called a Liberal Catholic..." (Anya). This indicated that she believes that Catholicism needs some change in its doctrines. She sees herself more as 'Liberal Catholic' that is a Catholicism which gives much space for the freedom of speech, the intellectual and religious freedom, and the individual conscience. In the same interview, Adichie showed interest in colonized religion and "...how people like [her] can profess and preach a respect of their indigenous culture and yet cling so tenaciously to a religion that considers most of that indigenous culture evil ..." by stating this, she is showing how African Catholics are loyal to a religion that was once new to their hometown (ibid). Professor Cheryl Stobi comments on the previous interview that Adichie is being a "progressive and reformist in her viewpoint towards her religion" (422) i.e. Adichie is showing interest in the juxtaposition between the Igbo culture and the religion that had a history in eroding that particular culture (ibid). Anthony Chennells further asserts that Adichie is indeed loyal to Catholicism; however, she respects indigenous culture as well but with some detachment (17).

Adichie despises the fact that Christianity is linked only to western people. In an interview with Professor Susan Vanzanten, Adichie commented on the claim that Christianity is a triumph of colonialism. She thinks that Jesus can be black since no one has an idea of how he really looks like. In the same interview, Adichie claims that since Africans already believe in spirits, they can be better Christians because Christianity is about cultural ideas more than religious ones (Vanzaten, "A Conversation with Chimamanda").

Concerning indigenous religions, Adichie stated that "[she] was among people who viewed indigenous religion with disdain mostly" (ibid). She had been raised into thinking that it was sinful to eat the food offered by pagans. However, since offering food to anyone who would visit was part of the Igbo culture, Adichie started to question the

credibility of this claim. In fact, she started to question a lot of issues in the Catholic faith like the credibility of the priest. She did not like the idea that a single man was given the ultimate power. Adichie manifested this doubt in her novel *Purple Hibiscus*. She stated that: “I didn’t intend for *Purple Hibiscus* to be an anti-Catholic book, and I think that there are alternatives to Eugene in the book” (ibid). She believes in the possibility of harmony in terms of religion and that religion and culture can coexist. She calls for the “middle ground” (ibid). The character ‘Eugene’ was inspired from the stories her father told her of Igbo catechists who used violence as a pretext for their ignorance. However, the character Ifeoma, on the other hand, “represents the possibility of the middle ground” that is the mixture of culture and religion (ibid).

Adichie’s interest in religion manifests itself in her works. Besides *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie’s collection of poems *Decisions* also tackles the theme of religion. The research of Daria Tunca, professor of postcolonial studies, on the works of Adichie indicates that this theme is apparent during her period of fifteen years of writing. From her poems to her recent collection of short stories *Miracle* (2011). Tunca stated that Adichie in her works shows her interest in religions including Catholicism, Islam, Pentecostalism, and indigenous religions. Throughout her works, Adichie attempted to condemn religious extremism in all its forms (Tunca, “Religion in the Works of Adichie” 52).

Adichie’s interest in religion is linked to her faith that: “change occurs through ideas. Literature is an essential respiratory of ideas. Literature can lead to change”(qtd in Tunca 52). This interest is caused by the position of religion in her hometown Nigeria. Nigeria witnessed different periods of chaos where religion was the center of each period. From the colonialism and people converting to Christianity to the appearance of Pentecostal churches , and from the violence in the Biafran war due to the crisis between ethnic and religious groups to the tensions between Muslims and Christians in contemporary Nigeria. Hence religion was present in all these periods of chaos. Therefore, Adichie attempts to

provide solutions through literature by portraying these issues in her works (ibid).

Silence has various shapes; it can be forced, intended, or resulted from a trauma. It is distinguishable according to situations. For instance, it can be a result from oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. That is to say, the oppressor use it to control the oppressed or it can be used when the latter wants to rebel against the former. The most common kind of silence is the forced one, and it is common in colonial contexts where the weak subjects are silenced by a strong, in most cases, a white master (Al-Dhamari, “The Theme of Silence” 1). Therefore, Silence is a powerful phenomenon that holds immense power like oppressing people, uniting them, or hiding what is really going on their minds. It can be used by monks to achieve divinity or by rulers to hold political power. However, silence is not always a good thing because it can be used by colonial forces to silent the other people (Mullins 1).

In literature, when one speaks of silence it is, in most cases, linked to the works of J.M. Coetzee. By creating a unique strategy of “sharply-nuanced silence” (Al- Dhamari, “Discourse of Silence” 36), Coetzee was able to criticize the colonial powers. He used various shades of silence in his novels in order to show that his characters are being pushed into voicelessness and submissiveness due to the use of continuous violence (43). The works of Coetzee portrays different shades of silence. It does not have to be always forced silence. For instance it can be traumatic silence like in his works *Age of Iron* (1990), *Disgrace* (1999), and *The Master of Petersburg* (1994). In these works, Coetzee showed that silence can be a kind of refugee where the writer meets his characters (134). The other shade of silence that is seen in Coetzee’s fiction is deliberate silence. In other words, this kind of silence is done on purpose, by the oppressed subject, to achieve a particular goal. It can be seen in Coetzee’s novels *Foe* (1996), *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980). The characters, on the previously mentioned books, tend to use silence as a way to rebel against the authoritative masters; therefore, this makes it a powerful way to deliver

their messages to the oppressors and consequently they change the harsh situations they are in (87).

Violence is commonly seen throughout the world. It is a result of the conflict between an oppressed subject and oppressing master (Ogunyemi 3). It is used when a group wants power, holds power, or wants to keep the power hence this group tends to protect their power by using threat and violence (Anifowose 1). Violence has many forms and the most commonly known is domestic violence. This domestic violence or also known as spouse abuse, domestic abuse, marital beating, woman abuse ...etc is the abuse caused by a person to his partner, wife, or child. It can take the form of threat, injury, or damage...etc. But in most cases, it is the harm caused by men on women (McCue 2-3).

In literature; however, writers tend to use violence in their works to call for a change in the current system. It can be used by artists also to point to issues like the quest for identity, problems in environment, and problems in economy (Ogunyemi1). In African literature, violence has been a prominent theme ever since the heyday of colonization. The interest of these writers in the issue of violence is similar to Professor Françoise Lionnet's claim where she stated that literature is the best useful way to understand the processes employed by writers to portray the subject studied perfectly through their characters who are "agents of transformation and hybridization" (Lionnet 8). This claim is further asserted by Pr. Lucskay Zsuzsanna who pointed to the issue of the violence in South African novels. He provided two examples of fictions where violence was the center of each. The two examples are *The Shadow Follows* (2006) by David Medalie and *Disgrace* (1999) by J.M. Coetzee. Zsuzsanna linked the violence examined in the two novels to the fights of South Africans for liberation against the apartheid (Zsuzsanna 1).

In an interview, Adichie was asked about violence and silence in her novel *Purple Hibiscus*. She stated that silence and violence mostly are linked to each other in the sense

that violence usually leads to silence. In the political system of Nigeria, people are not allowed to speak because of the strict military system they have. The dictatorship in Nigeria does not allow individuals to speak and therefore it leads to voicelessness. Adichie wanted to illustrate something that is more complicated than not being allowed to speak because of the system or a stranger. It is the fact that someone is being socialised and forced to be silent when he is being harmed by the persons he loves. So Adichie wanted to write about this particular idea i.e. being oppressed and harmed to the extent that this person is resorting to silence as a solution.

4. Postcolonialism and Literature

The origins of postcolonialism goes back to the first encounter between the imperial powers and the colonized nations. This term has caused controversies between scholars due to the ambiguity of the prefix “post”. The use of the latter in semantics portrays a chronological indication that means “after”. Hence, postcolonialism reflects the meaning after colonialism i.e., independence. However, literary theory critics claim that the prefix “beyond” is the adequate substitution to the word “post” in the term “postcolonialism”. Ashcroft in his book *The Empire Writes Back (1989)* elucidates the divergence between the two meanings as follows: the “post” in the term refers to ‘after colonialism began’ rather than ‘after colonialism ended’.

Moreover, postcolonialism is defined as the critical, political, intellectual and artistic formulations that are concerned with the impacts of colonialism and its manifestations on the cultures of both colonized peoples, and the changes and reprocessing of colonial relations, representations, and actual practices in the present. (Johnston 613)

The first literary works produced in the colonies were written by Europeans who

indirectly represented their imperial thoughts. One cannot deny the excellence of their descriptions of the indigenous customs, rituals and lifestyle; however, they still privilege the whites. They claimed to be objective in transmitting the realities of the natives; nevertheless, they could not avoid being subjective. European authors perfectly described the clash between cultures, religions, and beliefs but unfortunately they reported the colonized peoples and lands in such a superficial manner. Critics could not rely only on scripts written from an imperial perspective as original sources. Thus, the need to clarify and clean up the image of colonized countries led to the rise of native indigenous productions that were traced by realistic prints, and written via pristine lens.

The representations of colonized peoples in literature had been ‘under imperial licence’. Despite the fact that the elite of the indigenous society had the ability to write about their matters, they were really producing under a colonial control. An example of that were the African missionaries, upper classes and educated groups who were able to develop sorts of literature about their native culture, yet they couldn’t portray the real and clear image of their indigenous people. Those writers were unconsciously influenced by the Eurocentric ideologies. Even though they produced masterpieces in literature, their inferiority complex is clearly noticed in their scripts. They simply could not go beyond or deny the fact of being oppressed colonized societies.

An example of the influential writers who writes back to clarify the images of their occupied oppressed countries is the African writer Chinua Achebe. He is convinced that no one can defend and write about your land, culture, religion and tradition better than you do, as he said, “If you don’t like someone’s story, write your own”. The authenticity and reliability of postcolonial writings produced by native authors strengthen their productions and confirm that one must write about his own history otherwise the credibility of the discourse will be questionable and suspicious.

In his book “*Beginning Theory, an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*”, Barry claims that postcolonial writers evoke or create a pre-colonial version of their own nation ... which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries (Barry,128). Unquestionably, most postcolonial critics analyze literary texts and seek to know whether are colonialist or anticolonialist pieces of writing regardless of the topics tackled. Besides, they examine the sorts in which the literary work supports or opposes the oppressive ideology of colonialism and imperialism. Likewise, postcolonial criticism seeks to address the problem of cultural identity and recognize the close relationship between psychology and ideology or, more specifically, between individual identity and cultural and religious beliefs. Similarly, a successful postcolonial reader must understand the colonialist ideology along with the different reactions of colonized peoples and how the aftermaths of colonialism lead strongly to the constitution and formation of the reshaped postcolonial identity.

In spite the fact that postcolonial criticism was not considered as a major force in literary studies until 1990’s, analyzing colonialism from a cultural perspective contributed greatly in anticolonial political movements all over the world. It started to emerge as a field of intellectual inquiry when imperial powers began to vanish. Tyson argues that postcolonial criticism defines formerly colonized peoples as any population that has been subjected to the political domination of another population.(Tyson 417)

Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth (1961)* could make a good stepping stone to the emergence of postcolonial literary criticism. Fanon who is a Martiniquais psychiatrist claimed that the colonized peoples should embrace their own past so that to find a ground where they can speak their voices and shape their pasts and identities. The development of Postcolonial criticism goes back only to the nineteenth century thanks to the influence of books such as Gayatri Spivak’s *In Other Worlds (1987)*, Bill Ashcroft’s *The Empire Writes Back (1989)*, Homi Bhabha’s *Nation and Naration (1990)* and Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism (1993)*.

5. Homi Bhabha's Hybridity

Hybridity is a post-colonial term that refers to the creation of a “new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Ashcroft et al. 118). It is the result of the integration of various aspects of the colonizing and the colonized cultures that generate a new one which is a mixture of both. Thus it involves hybrid members with linguistic and behavioral manners that are combinations of those distinct cultures. This new cross-cultural context is referred to by the critic Homi K. Bhabha, the works of whom the term hybridity is mostly associated with, as the “Third space of enunciation” which is the result of the mutual influence of the colonizing and the colonized culture to produce a space that is between the two (ibid). Accordingly, another definition is given by Bhabha to the term hybridity:

All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge [...] the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (qtd. in Sharif 4).

In other words, according to Bhabha, the cultures of the different nations are not stable. They are rather continually influencing each other and what matters the most is the new cultural product instead of the original combined aspects. For a better understanding, the conation hybridity can be illustrated through samples from the African continent where many countries suffered from colonization expansions and therefore their cultural identities were affected. For instance, this concept could be seen in Nigeria that experienced the British invasion which gave birth to cultural diversity and hybridity.

The term “Hybridity” is first introduced by the Indian scholar Homi Bhabha. It refers to the creation of a “new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Ashcroft et al. 118). Basically, hybridity is when the colonial master attempts to modify the identity of the colonial subject but fails. Thus, this results in an identity that belongs neither to the colonizer nor to the colonized. Instead, it is a blurred and hybrid version of the two (Vanzanten, “World Christianity” 277).

Postcolonial writings shed light on postcolonial terms such as identity, mimicry and hybridity. “Many postcolonial theorists argue that postcolonial identity is necessarily a dynamic, constantly evolving hybrid of native and colonial cultures” (Tyson 422). A postcolonial character is a creature that is influenced by his origins, beliefs, and native culture, as well as affected by the colonial ideas, heritage, and religion. Hence, the loss of some features that form the original cultural identity of the African character along with his conscious or unconscious affection by the cultural, social and religious colonial heritage give absolutely birth to a hybrid identity.

However, mimicry is a postcolonial term that characterizes the colonizer-colonized relationship. It occurs in colonial contexts when the colonized people tend to resemble the colonizers in different aspects such as life habits, ways of talking and dressing and so on. The process of mimicry results in producing members who resemble the Europeans to a great extent i.e. “almost the same but not quite” (Ashcroft et al. 139). According to Homi Bhabha, that is individuals of the local, colonized, culture becomes almost similar copies of the Europeans in their appearance and behavior.

Likewise, Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today (2006)* points out that the plan was extremely successful and resulted in the creation of colonial subjects, colonized persons who did not resist colonial subjugation because they were taught to believe in British superiority and, therefore, in their own inferiority. Many of these individuals tried to imitate their colonizers, as much as possible, in dress, speech, behavior, and lifestyle. Postcolonial critics refer to this phenomenon as mimicry, and it reflects both the desire of

colonized individuals to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were programmed to see as inferior.(Tyson 421).

Mimicry is a method used by the colonial powers to control people who they govern; however, it can be a threat to the colonial authority since the extent to which the colonized mimics the colonizers may not be controlled. Thus, it leads to the increase in liberal thinking and the desire to become free (ibid). That is, European imperial powers tend to implement their culture among the people whom they govern through, for instance, applying their educational systems in the colonized countries and planting their ideological values instead of the original ones which they, simultaneously, try to make disappear; however, their attempts coincided with fear of the reactions of people who copy them to the point that they realize their needs for independence and reflect a revolutionary tendency.

Chapter Two: Repercussions of Catholic Discrepancy and Hybridization

In her novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie employed two versions of Catholicism that are extremely contradictory to each other. The first version is extremist Catholicism represented by the character “Papa” or “Eugene Achike”, the protagonist’s father, who follows the steps of “Father Benedict”, a white priest, by showing much interest in the colonial culture. The other version of Catholicism provided by Adichie is a hybrid, tolerant, and more understanding version that is represented by the characters “Aunt Ifeoma” and “Father Amadi”.

This chapter tries to portray the religious discrepancy between the two previously mentioned versions of Catholicism. It further attempts to shed light on how this discrepancy affected the personalities of both Kambili and her brother. Moreover, it seeks to clarify how religious extremism can have devastating effects. Finally, it attempts to see to what extent Adichie employed inculturated Catholicism in her novel.

1. An Extremist Catholicism

In most contemporary Nigerian families, Catholicism is an essential component of their living and so is the case for the Achike family in *Purple Hibiscus*. The novel is a coming of age anecdote told from the perspective of a fifteen-years-old autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, who lives with her Catholic Igbo family in Enugu, Nigeria. Adichie, in this novel, seeks to show how religious fanaticism can lead to violence, abuse, fear and silence. She presented this by the character of a fanatical father Eugene Achike who mimics the white priest Father Benedict.

Eugene Achike, Kambili's father, is one of the main characters in this novel. He is a wealthy manufacturer and zeal Igbo Catholic who overuses religion as a way to control his family. In public, Eugene is a generous man who gives a lot of donations to his church St. Agnes. He owns a newspaper *The Standard* that is the only newspaper that consistently criticizes the corrupt Nigerian government and its political system. In private; however, Eugene refuses to help his father financially because he is, what he considers him as, 'heathen' that is to say a follower of traditional religion. And when it comes to his household, Eugene is a tyrant who does not allow his children nor his wife Beatrice to swerve from his severe rules. According to Professor Peiman Baharvand, Eugene serves the British missionaries by disparaging the Nigerian culture and keeping his children away from the backwardness of native people (Baharvand 43). Therefore, Eugene symbolizes the first version of Catholicism employed by Adichie that is too extreme.

The professor of psychology Rachel Bailey Jones pointed to the issue of colonial education. She stated that colonial education leads to individuals' rejection of their indigenous religion, culture and tradition. Thus it replaces those aspects with the colonizer's knowledge and values. She added that not only that, but the colonial education contributes to one's renunciation of his local fellow people as well (69-70). Eugene Achike fits this description. He was educated by British missionaries, thus he considers everything indigenous as 'pagan' including his father, Papa-Nnukwu, whom he repeatedly refers to as 'heathen'. His children were allowed to visit him only once a year for fifteen minutes and during that visit they were not allowed to touch him nor any food he offers because Eugene thinks that it is sinful to eat food offered by an 'ungodly' person. On Christmas when Kambili and Jaja were at their grandfather's compound, she kept searching with her eyes for any signs of paganism or "godlessness" within Papa- Nnwukwu. Any signs that would make him different from all the other Catholics yet she was brainwashed that her father is right to the point that she was sure that there were signs of heathenism even if she did not see them.

Kambili said “I had examined him that day, too, looking away when his eyes met mine, for signs of difference, of Godlessness. I didn’t see any, but I was sure they were there somewhere. They had to be” (Adichie 48). All what Kambili was sure of is that people like Papa-Nnukwu will be burnt in hellfire unless they convert to Catholicism which is their sole salvation. According to professor Audrey D. Peters, Papa-Nnukwu, on the other hand, symbolizes the real history of indigenous religion and culture (14). He blames the white missionaries for his son’s actions: “Still, I say it was the missionaries that misled my son,” he said (Adichie 62). Then he continues narrating when the first time the missionaries came to his home town Abba where they used to gather children and teach them their religion. He said:

One day I said to them, where is this god you worship? They said he was like *Chukwu*, that he was in the sky. I asked then, who is the person that was killed, the person that hangs on the wood outside the mission? They said he was the son, but that the son and the father are equal. It was then that I knew that the white man was mad. The father and the son are equal? *Tufia!* Do you not see? That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal (62).

This shows how the first generation of Nigerians, including Papa-Nnwuku, rejected and refused to have anything to do with the missionaries whom they considered as mad. Papa-Nnwuku thinks that the missionaries had bad effects on his children when they taught them things that were unacceptable like the way how they considered the father and son equal. He takes to believe that this is the reason his son behaves that way.

Unlike the way Eugene treats his own father, he shows great respect to his father-in-law because he is an English-speaking Catholic who highly respects to the

British missionaries. Moreover, he contributed to the conversion of so many people.

Therefore Eugene admires him for this, and he always shows much pride when speaking of him as if he wishes that he was his father and not Papa-Nnukwu. Kambili narrates the way Eugene spoke about her grandfather:

Papa still talked about him often, his eyes proud, as if Grandfather were his own father. He opened his eyes before many of our people did, Papa would say; he was one of the few who welcomed the missionaries. Do you know how quickly he learned English? When he became an interpreter, do you know how many converts he helped win? Why, he converted most of Abba himself! He did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now! (51).

In this manner, both Eugene and his father-in-law are among the people who neglected their indigenous culture in order to serve the British missionaries who consistently reminded them of the superiority of the white race. They did a lot of profit in the favor of the missionaries by converting a lot of local people.

As stated earlier, Eugene is mostly a replica of Father Benedict, the priest in St. Agnes where Eugene and his family go to. Father Benedict brought many changes in the church including the use of Latin instead of Igbo in the recitation of Masses and “hand clapping was to be kept at a minimum, lest the solemnity of Mass be compromised” (6). Despite the long period that he spent in St. Agnes, seven years, he is still considered as “new priest” to many people there. Kambili reasoned that to the color of his skin: “Perhaps they would not have if he had not been white. He still looked new. The colors of his face... had not tanned at all in the fierce heat of seven Nigerian harmattans” (ibid). This indicates that he did not change while he was in Enugu and all that he has

been doing is changing things instead. He showed proud in his race and refused to be influenced by the environment that he was in.

Father Benedict, like Eugene, loathes and detests the Igbo culture. On a conversation with Kambili while she was confessing her sins, Father benedicts warns her of the dangers of taking joy in Igbo festivals because they are condemned by the Catholic Church in the Ten Commandments. He says: “Pagan rituals are misinformed superstition, and they are the gateway to Hell. Do you understand that, then?” (78). It could be understood that Father Benedict is a strict Catholic who considers his Catholic faith superior to traditional religion and thus he calls for the abolishment of the Igbo culture including language and traditional festivals. Eugene works hard to satisfy people like Father Benedict. He neglects his history, religion, and his fellow people to the point that he, consequently, neglects his pride in favor of the white colonizers. His religious hypocrisy manifests itself when Eugene refused to make his confessions in Igbo when the family was in Abba. So instead they had to wait until they return to Enugu to make their confessions in front of Father Benedict. And his excuse for that was that black people were “not spiritual enough” and “that was the problem with our people, [Eugene said], our priorities were wrong; we cared too much about huge church buildings and mighty statues. You would never see white people doing that” (76).

Further incident that shows Eugene’s preference of white people over black people is when Beatrice bended over to greet Igwe, the local chief, which was the traditional way that women used to greet him. Later, Eugene told her that “it was sinful. You did not bow to another human bein .It was an ungodly tradition, bowing to an Igwe” (69). However, when Kambili saw this she refused to kiss the Bishop’s ring in order to please her father, he punished her and told her that she “ did not have the spirit of discernment: the bishop was a man of God; the Igwe was merely a traditional ruler” (ibid) , taking the fact that even Igwe was Catholic.

This confirms to what extent Eugene had neglected his history for the benefit of white missionaries. In Professor Bill Ashcroft's words: "When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening" (Ashcroft 125). Therefore, one cannot control the behavior of the colonized subject, in this case Eugene's behavior. Eugene was blinded by the fact that everything colonial was true including the values and culture.

2. Repercussions of Religious Extremism

Papa's extremist and rigid rules lead to violence most of times. An Example of this is an incident when Kambili had to eat corn flakes in order to have something in her stomach before taking Panadol; therefore, breaking her Eucharistic fast before Mass. This infuriated Eugene and made him punish the whole family by beating them with his belt because they were present when she broke her fast. She describes this as the following: "...he swung his belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win. We did not move more than two steps away from the leather belt that swished through the air" (75). Other examples of Eugene's abuse is when he poured hot water on Kambili's feet because she did not inform him that her 'heathen' grandfather was going to stay with her in Ifeoma's house when they were there. Furthermore, an example is when he beat his wife Beatrice several times causing her to miscarry twice. In fact, even the first sentences of the novel show the father's abuse against his son Jaja when he refused to go to communion: "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*" (6). This indicates that violence is present all the time in the Achike's household.

However, Eugene's violence and abuse come from his narcissist belief that he is doing the right thing to himself and to his family. It is a result of imitating the British colonizers who used the same ways to punish Eugene whenever he committed a sin when he was young. He said to Kambili once explaining why he had poured her feet with hot water: "Everything I do for you, I do for your own good" (141). And he continued telling her about how priests used to punish him before whenever he commits a sin. He said: "I never sinned against my own body again. The good father did that for my own good" (141). As stated previously, Eugene's mimicry of the colonial master explains his abuse. Professor Cheryl Stobie notes that "Eugene is the emblematic colonized masculine subject" who had been educated by British masters and thus he echoes the white priests by emphasizing sin, hell, and punishment in his speech (424). Thus this makes Eugene a blurred copy of the priests whom he consistently thinks that they are superior and always right.

Not only physical outcomes, but Eugene's tyranny had some mental effects on Kambili. She had always feared her father to the point that she did not dare speak her thoughts, and when she tries to, she only whispers or mutters. "I...I..." I stopped to take a breath because I knew I would stutter even more if I didn't" Kambili said (37) and "I wanted to say I was sorry that I did not smile or laugh, but my words would not come... I muttered a word I knew was nonsense and stood up and walked into the bedroom" (101). Consequently, she grew up as a timid, self-closed, and silent child. Kambili, Jaja, and their mother developed a language of eyes to communicate with each other. Kambili narrated that they "...spoke more with [their] spirits than with [their] lips" (14). Kambili's silence is seen as snobbish by her classmates and her cousin thus she had socializing issues when it comes to making new friends.

However, Eugene linked his children's silence to their fear of God. In a conversation with his editor Ade Coker, Eugene showed pride of his children when

Coker made a remark about their quietness:

They are not like those loud children people are raising these days, with no home training and no fear of God,” Papa said, and I was certain that it was pride that stretched Papa’s lips and lightened his eyes. “Imagine what the *Standard* would be if we were all quiet.” It was a joke. Ade Coker was laughing; so was his wife, Yewanda. But Papa did not laugh. Jaja and I turned and went back upstairs, silently (43-44).

Even though Eugene supports quietness in his household, he contradictorily encourages the freedom of speech through his newspaper the *Standard*. He always calls for truth and democracy by criticizing the state and the corrupted government. According to Cheryl Stobie, Adichie “does not portray Eugene simply as a hypocritical villain, but reveals complexities and contradictions in his character, showing ways in which he is principled, courageous and justly honored” (425).

In the Catholic household, generally, women do not have the right to speak and they are always submissive to their husbands. This claim is asserted by professor Jane Nkechi Ifechelobi where she stated that in Africa women’s role is basically to take care of the family and even the Holy Bible states that women are not equal to men where they must have no authority and should “remain in quietness and keep silence” (*Amplified Bible*, 1Timothy. 2, 11-12). Ifechelobi further showed that the members of Achike family live in constant fear of their patriarch father Eugene which led to a life dominant by a “deafening silence” (23).

3. A Different Catholicism: Inculturated Catholicism

Despite all the doom and gloom presented in the household of Eugene, Adichie gave a sense of hope by providing “the spirit of survival, (the) power of humor and intelligent criticism and the possibility of social reform” (Stobie 428). She presented an alternative to Eugene’s absolutism, violence and religious extremism through a hybrid version of Catholicism that tolerates the Igbo culture.

The second version of Catholicism employed by Adichie which had contributed in changing things within Kambili and Jaja by redirecting their points of view towards indigenous culture and people is the hybrid Catholicism represented by their aunt Ifeoma and her family in Nsukka. Musa W. Dube published a chapter in a book entitled *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious Discourse* (2002) where she showed the importance of creating a culture that is hybrid by taking into consideration the past generations and the culture they represent. Musa stated: “Since no culture is absolutely negative or wholly pure, room should always be made for reinterpreting the old, promoting the good, and imagining the new in the hybrid spaces of the native culture” (116).

Ifeoma, Eugene’s sister, is a widowed teacher in the University of Nigeria in Nsukka. She is an independent woman who is not wealthy as her brother yet she succeeded in raising her three children, Amaka, Obiora, and Chima. Although Eugene and Ifeoma had the same nurture and education, they disagree on a number of issues like the way they treat indigenous culture and people and the way they raise their children. Ifeoma is a Catholic Nigerian who, unlike Eugene, is proud of her African heritage and is sincere to her ancestors’ culture. She believes in hybridity in terms of religion and encourages her children to be critical thinkers.

She disagrees most of the time with the way her brother thinks. She thinks that he is “too much of a colonial product” (13). She thinks that judging people or punishing them is not Eugene’s job, just because their father is not Catholic does not justify Eugene’s

attitude towards him. She said: “Eugene has to stop doing God’s job. God is big enough to do his own job. If God will judge our father for choosing to follow the way of our ancestors, then let God do the judging, not Eugene” (70). Her attitude towards indigenous religion and culture contradicts Eugene’s attitude. She tolerates her father despite his religious beliefs. Ifeoma does not mind letting her children visit him or spending Christmas day with him. When Eugene invited her to spend Christmas with him and his family, Ifeoma reminded him that she always used to spend Christmases with Papa-Nnuwku. Eugene replied, “What do idol worshipers know about Christmas?” (57). What Eugene does not realize is that family bonds are beyond religious commitment. Further incident that shows this is when he proposed a toast for “the Glory of God”, Ifeoma insisted on family first “And to us, and to the spirit of family” she said (72).

Eugene’s prejudgments on his father have been transformed into his children as well. On a conversation with Kambili and Jaja, Ifeoma tried to correct Kambili’s misconception about indigenous religion. She refers to her father as ‘traditionalist’ and not ‘heathen’. This made Kambili wonders about what she meant by traditionalist. Kambili said: “I stared at her. Pagan, traditionalist, what did it matter? He was not Catholic that was all; he was not of the faith. He was one of the people whose conversion we prayed for so that they did not end in the everlasting torment of hell fire” (60). After seeing the way in which Eugene’s children have been indoctrinated and biased about indigenous religion, Ifeoma tried her best to correct these misconceptions that were implemented by their father. She tried to explain the difference to Kambili between being Catholic and being a traditionalist. Kambili said : “[Aunty Ifeoma] said Papa-Nnukwu was not a heathen but a traditionalist, that sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar, that when Papa-Nnukwu did his *itu-nzu*, his declaration of innocence, in the morning, it was the same as our saying the rosary” (119). When Papa-Nnuwku was making his morning prayers, Ifeoma asked Kambili to go and watch him silently. Pana-Nnuwku thanked his ‘Chineke’ -god or ancestor- and then he prayed for his children and their children like the following:

Chineke! Bless me. Let me find enough to fill my stomach. Bless my daughter, Ifeoma. Give her enough for her family.” He shifted on the stool. His navel had once jutted out, I could tell, but now it looked like a wrinkled eggplant, drooping. “Chineke! Bless my son, Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him.” Papa- Nnukwu leaned over and drew one more line (121).

Kambili was surprised that Papa-Nnwuku prayed for her father with enthusiasm, the same way he prayed for himself and his daughter whereas Eugene only prayed for his conversion and not his health. Baharvand asserted that in order to confirm the validity of white priests’ claims it is worthy to take a deep look into Papa-Nnwuku’s beliefs. From the previous prayers of Papa-Nnwuku, Kambili notices that it is far from paganism and it is full of love. This made Kambili question the colonial discourse she has been exposed to. Baharvand stated that “She finds love and benevolence in the prayer of a pagan” (46).

Ifeoma does not only show a tolerant attitude towards her ‘traditionalist’ father, but she does not mind indigenous festivals as well. She insisted that she should ask Eugene to let her take Kambili and Jaja to see the Aro Festival but their mother Beatrice claimed that “Eugene will not let the children go to a heathen festival” (54). Eugene asserted this by ordering Ifeoma to keep her windows up if they pass anything ungodly (57).

Eugene always refers to those festivals as Devilish Folklore, whereas Ifeoma does not see any barrier from taking her children to see them. This indicated the discrepancy between Ifeoma and Eugene’s Catholicism. Cheryl maintains that Ifeoma is the opposite of Eugene’s pessimism because she presents set of practices that “center around indigeneity rather than fawning adoption of colonial and fanatically purist mind- sets, around the multiplicity of debate and around the possibilities of autonomous femininity, hybridity and

creative change” (428). All the previous practices contributed in creating a hybrid version of Catholicism that takes into consideration native cultures, the role of debates and critical thinking; therefore, it had enormous effects on making things better for both Kambili and Jaja.

Adichie attempted to employ what is called inculturated Catholicism, in her novel *Purple Hibiscus*, through the characters of Ifeoma and Father Amadi, a young black priest in Nsukka (Kabore, “Literatures of Inculturation” 5). As stated in chapter one, inculturation is the mutual contact and influence of the church and African cultures (Gerald 52). This can be seen through Aunt Ifeoma and her family in Nsukka where they included the Igbo language in their prayers which contradicts Eugene’s principle of using only Latin or English. According to Chennells, both the Church and Eugene highly disregarded and refused to include the Igbo language in the practices of Catholicism, however, the encounter of other people - Ifeoma and Father Amadi- helped in replacing those beliefs with a tolerance of native language. Thus the use of vernacular languages was from the first steps of inculturated Catholicism (19).

Not only Ifeoma, but Father Amadi also tolerates the indigenous language and people. Unlike Father Benedict, he uses Igbo in his masses. Kambili narrates that there was a visiting priest in Enugu who used the Igbo language during Mass. This act was disregarded by Eugene who described him as “Godless leader” he continued “People like him bring trouble to the church. We must remember to pray for him” (Adichie 23).

Cheryl Stobie stated that “Father Amadi alters various church practices to make the spiritual experience more appealing to Africans, such as allowing Igbo songs to be sung” (429). According to Kambili’s narration, Father Amadi did things that seemed ungodly to her because she was only acquainted with white priests in her hometown. She said: “I did not know a priest could play football. It seemed so ungodly, so common” (107) as if priests were not allowed to participate in the things that common people would do. This claim is also asserted by how she was surprised of the way Father Amadi dressed: “Father Amadi came

early the next morning, looking even more unpriestly than before, in khaki shorts that stopped just below his knees. He had not shaved, and in the clear morning sunlight, his stubble looked like tiny dots drawn on his jaw” (108-109). Therefore, Father Amadi is considered a good example of Catholics who take into consideration native cultures and serve the process of inculturated Catholicism.

Inculturated Catholicism is symbolized in the novel by “Hibiscus” which is the name of a flower that usually comes in red as it appears in many places in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Red Hibiscuses were planted in the Achike family’s house and they were beautiful roses admired by everyone who visited the family’s household. Yet they were ordinary and typical flowers which represented the life of Kambili, Jaja, and their mother who lived according to the rules and to the schedules determined by the father Eugene. *Purple hibiscus*; however, was unique and unusual. It was a result of experimental work of mixing two species. This flower is a representation of the hybrid society illustrated by aunt Ifeoma and her family in Nsukka (Meher 18).

Jaja and Kambili only saw that kind of plants at their aunt’s garden and it grabbed their attention from the first sight. It was different and attractive as it bravely broke the rules and flourished; therefore, it changed the expected normal appearance of hibiscus. It represented something that they have not known before which was the freedom that they only dared to start seeking for after their visit to Nsukka. As the narrator stated that all started in Nsukka and Jaja loved it to the extent that he wanted to take with him the flower and the sense of freedom that it carried. He wanted to plant that exceptional thing in the garden of his home. Influenced by what he saw in Nsukka, Jaja no longer accepted to be a typical red hibiscus but rather a purple one. He realized that it was the time, for him too, to break the rules and indeed he started disobeying his father's orders and making his own decisions. The purple hibiscus grew gradually when Jaja planted it; just like how his courage to speak up and to get freed from his father’s violence and control grew. He was the first

amongst his family to get rid of the fear in which he lived his whole life. It all started by refusing to go to the communion on Palm Sunday and that was his first brave step towards freedom which coincided with the beginning of the purple hibiscuses blooming. The growing of the purple hibiscuses further symbolizes the development of Kambili's character all along the novel (Kabore, "The Symbolic Use of Palm" 35). *Purple Hibiscus* is the title of the novel and it indeed symbolizes freedom that the family members eventually got. Although Jaja was not actually free at the end but he was able to speak up and to do what he wants.

4. Silence, Violence No More

Life within Nsukka changed a lot in Kambili and her brother. Their aunt Ifeoma was trying to change them to the better. This can be illustrated when she told the children the story of the defiant king; she made it clear that it was okay to be defiant sometimes. She said that: "Defiance is like marijuana—it is not a bad thing when it is used right" (Adichie 105). As Kambili narrates, Jaja was the first one to show signs of change and rebellion when he refused to take communion on Palm Sunday. Baharvand made it clear that Jaja loathed the version of Catholicism practiced by his father which was described as "staunch and Eurocentric" (Baharvand 48). Eugene's constant violence and insistence on being pious made Jaja reluctant of this Catholicism. However, after the encounter with Aunt Ifeoma's hybrid Catholicism, Jaja became fearless of attacking and criticizing this religion frankly in front of his father. This can be illustrated through his behavior when he told Eugene that he did not go to communion because the priest nauseates him. Eugene was shocked and told him that "You cannot stop receiving the body of our Lord. It is death, you know that" (Adichie 8). Yet Jaja made it clear that he was ready to die. Therefore this was the first step towards a Catholicism free from Eugene's strict rules. In Baharvand's words "Jaja reacts against the hypocrisy of colonial education that utilizes Christianity to subdue native people

and uproot Igbo religion and culture” (48). Therefore he grew into an independent person who stands for what he thinks is appropriate rather than just receiving the instructions of his father.

This defiance against the father is seen in Kambili too. The aunt Ifeoma had positive effects in changing the personality of Kambili. She found what Orié Prince referred to as “swift liberation” (qtd in Ifechelobi 9). Therefore she was able, for the first time in her life, to actually communicate with people. Kambili described the household of her aunt as a place full of laughter where her cousins talk all the time and her aunt did not seem to mind that. Kambili said that her aunt “looked like a football coach who had done a good job with her team and was satisfied to stand next to the eighteen-yard box and watch” (Adichie 88). Unlike Eugene, Ifeoma encouraged freedom of speech. She tried to make Kambili defend herself when her cousin Amaka mocked her by saying “Kambili, have you no mouth? Talk back to her!” (122) and when Kambili spoke out for the first time, Amaka’s view on her started to change to the better.

Kambili throughout out the novel was “longing for something [she] knew [she] would never have” (119) which was the ability to actually speak like her cousins used to do. She narrates that: “I had felt as if I were not there, that I was just observing a table where you could say anything at any time to anyone, where the air was free for you to breathe as you wished” (88). She was mesmerized by the atmosphere in her aunt’s flat which was full of basic things she had never seen before namely laughter and speech. She linked these two elements which she was deprived from to the free air; the one that fills the house of Ifeoma. According to Chennells, Ifeoma’s flat can be interpreted as a sign of inculturation because, unlike Eugene’s Eurocentric Catholicism, Ifeoma’s flat provides an Igbo Catholic culture. In Chennells’s words “ The flat in Nsukka lifts the silence not in order to allow the voices of Papa-Nnuwku’s spirits to be heard, but to allow Eugene’s children first to experience the practices and expectations of a more open and indigenous Catholicism, and then to act out of their newly matured consciences” (Chennells 21). In other words, aunt Ifeoma does not

attempt to reclaim the Igbo religion represented by the spirits of ancestors but rather to introduce the children into a Catholicism that takes indigeneity in its practices. Therefore, they would be able to develop into independent persons.

Kambili also revolted against her father in her own way by trying to keep a painting of Papa-Nnuwku although she knew that this would irritate Eugene. Not only that but she also tried to protect the picture when her father caught her and she got punished badly because of that. Baharvand linked this to her attempt to detach from the colonial ties implemented by her father. He stated that “the painting symbolizes her intellectual growth” (50) because she realized that she was deprived from her native culture. This claim is further asserted by Audrey Peters when she stated that “the painting represents her final link to a departed past, one which she had only begun to find” (19). Peters further states that when Kambili grew into an independent adolescent, she started taking the responsibility of shaping her own identity based on what she believes is true (ibid).

At the end of the novel, Kambili refers to the new changes after her father’s death. He was poisoned by his wife Beatrice but Jaja took the blame and got into jail. Kambili described the changes that happened afterwards. That she was finally able to laugh and live as she wants. She links those changes to Nsukka as she narrates: “Nsukka could free something deep inside your belly that would rise up to your throat and come out as a freedom song. As laughter” (Adichie 209). She already knew that her family changed a lot because of the life in Nsukka when she said: “Perhaps we all changed after Nsukka - even Papa - and things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order” (149). She was aware that things were not like they used to be. She admitted that the life after Nsukka was different and that the silence in their home was no longer the same. She said: “[the life now] was too new, too foreign, and I did not know what to be or how to be” (181). However, she seems to be satisfied with that as she claims that the new silence was better: “it is a different kind of silence, one that lets me breathe. I have nightmares about the other kind, the silence of when Papa was alive” (213-214). Baharvand asserts that Eugene’s death is a

turning point in Jaja and Kambili's lives where they are now finally free to retain their African culture that was robbed from them by worshipping God in Igbo and even attending festivals that they have never been to (50).

An event that symbolizes breaking the silence of muted voices and end up the characters' voicelessness in *Purple Hibiscus* is the breaking of the ceramic figurines of ballet dancers. They were cleaned by Beatrice every time she was beaten by her husband. The figurines were beautiful and fragile artistic creations just like her; however, all of them were broken by papa when he threw his heavy missal in an attempt to hit his son Jaja but it headed towards the étagère where they were put on. The incident happened on a Palm Sunday and it was a turning point in the family's life as stated in the novel: "Things started to fall apart 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" (Adichie 6).

It was clear for all the members of the family that things will not be the same anymore. For mama, she decided that she will not make new ones which means she had decided that she will not be beaten again. It was indeed a beginning of the change within the family. The figurines; therefore, represent many things. They represent Beatrice in her weak status and her standing still while she was suffering from the harsh treatment. They further reflect the silence and the fear in which Beatrice and the children lived. Thus the crushing of the figurines symbolizes the breaking of that silence. It was a sign of an end to a life the Achike family knew (Kabore 34).

Another manifestation of the protagonists' revolt against the domestic violence is Palm Sunday. It symbolizes their will to give an end to the silence imposed on them. Palm Sunday is an important celebration in the Christian faith. It is an occasion where they celebrate Christ's coming back to life after being crucified. In addition to its religious significance, Palm Sunday occurs in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* that is contextualized in a Christian setting, with an important symbolic role as it represents liberation and victory. It

was on a Palm Sunday when Jaja first rebelled against his severe and harsh father Eugene and it was on a Palm Sunday also that the freedom journey of Jaja, Kambili, and Beatrice began when Jaja refused to go to the communion declaring the beginning of a new birth and start of a different life. It further represents the victory of Beatrice over her violent husband Eugene in the sense that at the beginning of the novel Beatrice was carrying palm and the father was carrying ashes which reflect how the story ends. Beatrice eventually gains her freedom by putting Eugene to death through poisoning him. Palm is also an important symbol in the traditional religion to which the grandfather Papa-Nnkwu still belongs to. It represents fertility (Meher 19).

General Conclusion

The present research used Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* as a case study aiming at portraying the repercussions of Catholic discrepancy in influencing the African character's identity mainly the protagonist and her brother. The results of this humble work asserted that the hypotheses established before indeed are valid. The catholic discrepancy employed by Adichie in her first published novel shed light on the danger of following one religion to the extreme. By providing an alternative to Eugene's Catholicism, Adichie successfully demonstrated the importance of hybridization within the Catholic Church.

Throughout the present research, we tried to provide the necessary historical background and theoretical framework for this study along with analyzing the hybridization and repercussions of catholic discrepancy. Firstly, we explored how Christianity, as a new faith, reached the African culture, particularly the Nigerian society. We found that although there were initial attempts by the Portuguese to spread Christianity, the British were the ones who succeeded in implementing the new faith in Africa.

Moreover, we discovered that some Africans had a significant role in spreading this faith among their societies. In addition, we examined how Christianity was perceived by African writers. We found that some writers praised Christianity as they considered it their path to a new civilized world, while others neglected it and associated it to colonialism. We focused also on Adichie's view on Christianity. Adichie is indeed a proud-Catholic yet she sees that this faith needs modification in some of its doctrines in order to coexist with the African culture. Thus, this study revealed Adichie's view on religion where she thinks that Catholicism needs some changes in its doctrines. We also sought to examine how religion manifested itself in the works of Adichie with focusing on *Purple Hibiscus* that is mainly contextualized in a Catholic setting. Adichie employed several symbols in the novel to

heighten the importance of religion and to call for the urge of freedom from religious extremism. Moreover, we attempted to shed the light on two main consequences of religious extremism that are violence and silence. We deeply examined the two versions of Catholicism employed by Adichie. One neglects and disregards the Igbo native culture and religion, and the other version tolerates it. Moreover, the study discovered that Eugene's Catholicism had both mental and physical consequences whereas Ifeoma's Catholicism sought to fix the issues implemented by the previous version. It also revealed Adichie's use of inculturated Catholicism in *Purple Hibiscus* mainly through the characters 'Aunty Ifeoma' and 'Father Amadi'.

Furthermore, studying and analyzing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel from Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory of Hybridity brought insight into many aspects. It shed light on the factors that played a major role in the development of the postcolonial African Character's hybrid identity. Hence, it elucidated how Catholic discrepancy influenced the formation of the African characters' lives and identities in the family as well as the society that were exposed to violence and an imposed silence. Additionally, Adichie clarified how religious extremism can lead to unbearable outcomes and explained the importance of providing an alternative to it by encouraging the integration of African culture within the Catholic Church i.e., inculturated Catholicism. Indeed, all the previous factors influenced the development of the postcolonial African Character's hybrid identity.

In a nutshell, we tried specifically to dig deep in the repercussions of Catholic discrepancy thus we tackled silence and violence as outcomes of religious extremism. We explained how the latter affects the characters' reactions and their identities' formation. Moreover, we tried to shed light on how Adichie focuses on the importance of tolerating African cultures within the Catholic Church and how inculturation can create a comfort zone for the reshaped African characters' hybrid identities. We provided a brief analysis of the main notions in the novel, which are religion, silence, and violence along with the most

highlighted symbols used by the author. Finally, we came to the conclusion that Eugene's strict and rigid Catholic rules had devastating repercussions on his children's lives and identities. However, when they were introduced to a more tolerant version, they started to develop more independent and strong hybrid personalities which are appropriate to their reshaped identities.

At last, we would like to encourage others to carry out further researches on Adichie's novel in particular, and in African literature in general. At the meantime, we hope that our humble research would be of good resource for those are interested in African studies.

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Résumé

La présente thèse se concentre sur la divergence catholique et ses effets en influençant la formation de l'identité hybride du personnage africain dans *L'Purple Hibiscus* de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'éclairer les deux versions du catholicisme employées par Adichie et la manière dont elles ont influencé la vie et l'identité des personnages. Ces deux versions diffèrent par leur tolérance à la religion et à la culture autochtones. En conséquence, le père catholique strict néglige sa culture natale alors que sa sœur la tolère. En outre, l'étude tente de développer une compréhension profonde des résultats de la discordance catholique utilisée par Adichie. . La recherche analyse le travail d'Adichie à la lumière de la théorie postcoloniale de l'hybridité de Bhabha. Tout au long du roman, l'auteur a décrit comment l'extrémisme religieux peut conduire à la violence et au silence au sein de la famille et de la société. Par conséquent, elle a fourni une alternative en encourageant l'intégration de la culture africaine au sein de l'Église catholique, c'est-à-dire le catholicisme inculturé. Ainsi, les cultures africaines pourront coexister avec la foi catholique.

Mots clés: discordance catholique, extrémisme religieux, catholicisme inculturé, silence, violence, postcolonialisme, hybridité.

ملخص

تركز هذه الأطروحة على دراسة كيفية تأثير التناقض الكاثوليكي في تشكيل الهوية الهجينة للشخصية الأفريقية في رواية الزهرة الكركدية الأرجوانية لشيماماندا نغوزي أديشي. تركز الرواية على عائلة كاثوليكية من الإيغبو تعيش في إينوجو ، نيجيريا. الغرض الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو إلقاء الضوء على نسختين من الكاثوليكية التي تستخدمها أديشي وكيف أثرت في حياة الشخصيات وهوياتهم. تختلف هاتان النسختان من حيث تسامح دين وثقافة السكان الأصليين. وفقاً لذلك ، يتجاهل الأب الكاثوليكي الصارم ثقافته الأصلية بينما تحبذها أخته . في جميع فصول الرواية ، صورت أديشي كيف يمكن أن يؤدي التطرف الديني إلى العنف والصمت داخل الأسرة والمجتمع و لذلك قدمت بديلاً من خلال تشجيع اندماج الثقافة الأفريقية داخل الكنيسة الكاثوليكية وهكذا ، ستكون الثقافات الأفريقية قادرة على التعايش مع الإيمان الكاثوليكي. تحاول هذه الدراسة تطوير فهم عميق لنتائج التناقض الكاثوليكي الذي تستخدمه أديشي حيث يُحلّل عملها في ضوء نظرية التهجين ما بعد الكولونيالية للهندي هومي بهابها. وفقاً لذلك ، يقدم الفصل الأول إطاراً نظرياً وسياقاً اجتماعياً تاريخياً للعمل. الفصل الثاني هو محاولة لاستكشاف تمثيل شيماماندا نغوزي أديشي لشخصيات أفريقية تعاني من التطرف الديني والصمت والعنف ورحلتها لإيجاد حل وسط لهوياتهم المختلطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناقض الكاثوليكي ، التطرف الديني ، الكاثوليكية المثقفة ، الصمت ، العنف ، ما بعد الاستعمار (ما بعد الكولونيالية) ، التهجين.

المخلص

تركز هذه الأطروحة على دراسة كيفية تأثير التناقض الكاثوليكي في تشكيل الهوية الهجينة للشخصية الأفريقية في رواية الزهرة الكركدية الأرجوانية لشيماماندا نغوزي أديشي. تركز الرواية على عائلة كاثوليكية من الإيغبو تعيش في إينوجو ، نيجيريا. الغرض الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو إلقاء الضوء على نسختين من الكاثوليكية التي تستخدمها أديشي وكيف أثرت في حياة الشخصيات وهوياتهم. تختلف هاتان النسختان من حيث تسامح دين وثقافة السكان الأصليين. وفقاً لذلك ، يتجاهل الأب الكاثوليكي الصارم ثقافته الأصلية بينما تحبذها أخته . في جميع فصول الرواية ، صورت أديشي كيف يمكن أن يؤدي التطرف الديني إلى العنف والصمت داخل الأسرة والمجتمع و لذلك قدمت بديلاً من خلال تشجيع اندماج الثقافة الأفريقية داخل الكنيسة الكاثوليكية وهكذا ، ستكون الثقافات الأفريقية قادرة على التعايش مع الإيمان الكاثوليكي. تحاول هذه الدراسة تطوير فهم عميق لنتائج التناقض الكاثوليكي الذي تستخدمه أديشي حيث يُحلَّل عملها في ضوء نظرية التهجين ما بعد الكولونيالية للهندي هومي بهابها. وفقاً لذلك ، يقدم الفصل الأول إطاراً نظرياً وسياقاً اجتماعياً تاريخياً للعمل. الفصل الثاني هو محاولة لاستكشاف تمثيل شيماماندا نغوزي أديشي لشخصيات أفريقية تعاني من التطرف الديني والصمت والعنف ورحلتها لإيجاد حل وسط لهوياتهم المختلطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناقض الكاثوليكي ، التطرف الديني ، الكاثوليكية المثقفة ، الصمت ، العنف ، ما بعد الاستعمار (ما بعد الكولونيالية) ، التهجين.

Appendix A

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Biography

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria. Her father James Nwoye Adichie was a Professor at the University of Nigeria while her mother Grace Ifeoma worked as a registrar in the same University. When the Adichie family moved in Nsukka they lived in the former house of Chinua Achebe.

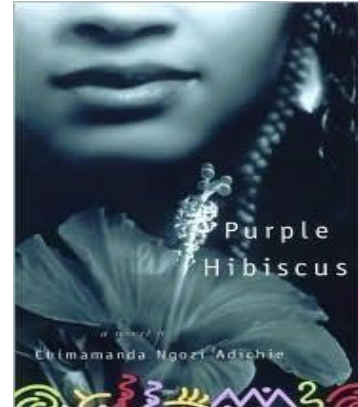


Adichie studied medicine at the University of Nsukka for a year and a half then at the age of nineteen she moved to the United State to study communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia and continued her studies later at the University of Eastern Connecticut. During her years in the latter university, she published her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* in 2003. The novel received the Commonwealth award and was shortlisted for the Orange prize. Besides this novel, Adichie also published two other novels *Half of Yellow Sun* in 2006 and *Americanah* in 2013. Adichie has also a collection of short stories with the same name *Half of Yellow Sun* and a collection of poems entitled *Decisions* (1997). Her works tackled issues like gender, race, religion, and most importantly the Nigerian Civil War or also called the Biafran war. Adichie is also a feminist activist. Adichie now divides her time between the United States and Nigeria.

Appendix B

Plot Summary of *Purple Hibiscus* (2003)

Purple Hibiscus is a novel by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie that takes place in Nigeria during the 1990s. The events of the novel are narrated by a fifteen-year-old Kambili Achike, the protagonist of the story, who belongs to a wealthy Igbo family. Despite the political problems that the country is going through, the



Achike family, composed of Kambili, her older Brother Jaja, the father Eugene and his wife Beatrice, apparently live a beautiful life due to their financial situation and their sophisticated social status. The reality; however, is not quite as it is seen from outside. Beatrice and her children, in fact, suffer from the violence of Eugene who constantly beats them and treats them in a harsh way in an attempt to make them fit his Catholic norms. Eugene is an important figure in society and is considered as an influencing character at the religious and the political level. Yet, in contrast to what he calls for in public, freedom of speech, he severely rules his family and prevents them from expressing themselves. As a result of this, Kambili and Jaja grew up as silent teenagers who are unable to socialize. However, the family's life changed entirely when Kambili and her brother visited their aunt Ifeoma who is herself a Catholic but not as severe as Eugene is. By observing the freedom that their aunt and her children enjoy and the happy life they are living despite their poverty, the Achike children realized that they can actually have a happy life themselves. That visit was a turning point that made them find their voices and discover that being a Catholic does not necessarily mean disconnecting from your culture to adopt the European one as they used to believe. Beatrice also could not accept that life anymore and she was brave enough to put an end

her husband's life yet Jaja took the blame and was imprisoned instead. The family, at the end, was finally free to live and to think the way they want.