



## Exploring the Nigerian Women's Psychological Trauma: APsychoanalytic Feminist Reading on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aims to explore how physical violence affects the psychology of Nigerian Women, which reflects in their self-care and self-image. Women in every society have their own way of taking care of themselves and expressing themselves, but, these natural ways of expressing themselves have been tampered with by the physical and psychological trauma executed by patriarchy. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores the narrow nuances of Nigerian Women's trauma in her maiden novel Purple Hibiscus. The female characters in the novel subconsciously repress their interests. Further, this research paper analyses how Nigerian Women tackle the defaced 'self'.*

*Keywords: Psychological; Trauma; Repression; Self-image; Intersectionality; gender*

Psychological trauma is the enduring psychological and emotional distress that is caused by a traumatic event. It can be triggered by physical or sexual violence, natural disasters, wars, serious accidents, or any other life-threatening experiences that overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope. The consequences of psychological trauma can extend far beyond the initial event and may include flashbacks or nightmares, avoidance of reminders of the trauma, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, detachment from others, and difficulty trusting people. In some cases, these signs and symptoms can last for years after the traumatic event occurred. People who have experienced a traumatic event are prone to developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder characterized by intrusive memories of the trauma, avoidance of reminders of the trauma, and changes in mood and behavior. Although psychological trauma can have a deep and lasting impact on an individual's mental health, it is possible to recover with the help of therapy, support groups, and other forms of treatment.

Psychoanalytic feminism is an approach to feminist theory that applies psychoanalytic concepts and approaches to study gender. It seeks to explore how unconscious desires, fantasies, and anxieties shape gender identity and behavior. This type of feminism arose in the 1970s as a response to traditional Freudian psychoanalysis, which was seen as not taking into account how sexism affects women's mental health. The main idea behind psychoanalytic feminism is that the way we think about ourselves has been shaped by oppressive patriarchal structures throughout history. These structures have created a culture where women are expected to conform to certain standards of femininity, while men are given more freedom from such expectations. As such, many women experience feelings of shame or guilt over their own thoughts and desires, which can lead them down paths they would not otherwise choose if these expectations were absent. Psychoanalytic feminists argue that this leads many women to internalize negative messages about themselves, which then manifest in various forms like depression or anxiety disorders.

Psychoanalytic feminism, as articulated in the work of Jacques Lacan, is a type of feminism that draws heavily on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan. He states, "speaking against 'mastery,' Lacan not only masters Woman/women but renders them as the Other or the always-already Other which exists for the masculine subject" (Willette). Lacan's theory of the unconscious, which is based on Freudian psychoanalysis, is used to explain the ways in which gender and power operate in society. Lacan argued that gender identity is formed and maintained through language and the symbolic order, and that the structure of language (and thus the structure of the unconscious) is patriarchal and hierarchical. This has implications for the way that women are viewed, treated, and understood in society. In particular, Lacan argued that the traditional family structure is damaging to women and reinforces gender inequality. He also suggests that the traditional notion of femininity is based on a false conception of the "ideal" woman and that women should reject this ideal in order to resist patriarchy and reclaim their autonomy.

Sigmund Freud's repression theory appears in his book "The Interpretation of Dreams," first published in 1899. The repression theory holds that psychological distress is caused by the inability of an individual to consciously acknowledge and express desires, wishes, and impulses that are seen as unacceptable. Freud argued that these desires and impulses were pushed down into the unconscious mind, where they were repressed. This repression then caused psychological distress and led to the development of neuroses.

Repression theory is a psychological term used to describe the process of repressing negative or unwanted thoughts, feelings, and memories. It is based on the idea that humans have an unconscious mind that stores these repressed emotions and experiences, preventing them from coming into conscious awareness. The concept of repression was first developed by Sigmund Freud in his psychoanalytic theories, although it has since been adapted by other psychologists such as Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. Repression theory suggests that individuals can be unaware of certain elements of their own experience due to this repressed material being outside of conscious awareness. This means that they may not be aware of how their behavior is shaped by past experiences or even how those experiences are impacting current behavior. According to this theory, when someone attempts to access these suppressed thoughts or memories, they will often experience anxiety as the material comes back into consciousness.

Psychological trauma is a form of mental distress that can occur when someone experiences or witnesses an event that causes them to feel fear, helplessness, and horror. This type of trauma is especially prevalent in Nigerian women due to the unique challenges they face living in a society where gender inequality and discrimination are pervasive. Women in Nigeria experience high levels of violence, poverty, lack of access to education and health care services, as well as limited economic opportunities. These issues can lead to long-term psychological trauma for many women. Common signs of psychological trauma among Nigerian women include depression, anxiety, intrusive thoughts/memories related to traumatic events (such as abuse), nightmares or flashbacks from traumatic events, avoidance behaviors (avoiding people or places associated with the traumatic event), difficulty concentrating/focusing on tasks at hand, irritability or anger outbursts over seemingly minor things. In addition to these symptoms there may be physical manifestations such as headaches and chest pains which can further complicate the individual's ability to cope with their emotional distress.

Nigeria is a nation with a complicated past, and its female population has been commonly subjected to psychological distress. From gender-based violence to poverty, the women of Nigeria have endured a great deal of hardship and suffering. Nevertheless, their resilience and

strength have not been taken away from them, yet they are still facing discrimination that leaves them feeling powerless and exposed. This has had a detrimental effect on their mental health, both in urban and rural areas, as women are typically in a less privileged position in Nigeria's patriarchal society. This oppression and subjugation of women is particularly prominent in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

The term Intersectionality is coined by Kimberley Crenshaw, she states that "... 'the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.' By adding the idea of intersectionality to feminism, the movement becomes truly inclusive, and allows women of all races, economic standings, religions, identities, and orientations for their voices to be heard." (*What is "Intersectional feminism?"*: Article). Intersectionality studies the multiple angles of subjugation experienced by a single person. Adichie brings in intersectional feminism through her female characters in the novel.

A paper by Oluwatoyin Y. Okuyade titled "Voicelessness in African Women's Writing: An Overview", says the concept of voicelessness is rooted in the idea that women's voices have been traditionally excluded from historical and literary narratives. This has had a profound effect on the way women are seen and represented in literature. This silence has meant that women have not been able to contribute to the discussion of major issues, and have been denied a platform to express their thoughts and opinions. The lack of female voices in literature has also contributed to the portrayal of women as silent and submissive, a representation that has been damaging to the progress of gender equality. This has meant that women's stories and perspectives have not been sufficiently represented in the literary canon, which perpetuates the idea that women's voices and experiences are not as valid as those of men.

By voiceless, we mean the historical absence of the woman writer's text: the absence of a specifically female position on major issues such as slavery, colonialism, decolonization, women's rights and more direct social and cultural issues. By voicelessness we also mean silence: the inability to express a position in the language of the "master" as well as the textual construction of woman as silent. Voicelessness also denotes articulation that goes unheard (Okuyade, 2009).

Nigerian women writers have had a major impact on the development of Nigerian literature. Their works have explored a range of issues, from gender roles and relationships to colonialism and the struggles of the Igbo people. Their works have also highlighted the importance of female empowerment and the need for equality in a male-dominated society. Nigerian women writers have played a major role in shaping the literary landscape of Nigeria, and their works continue to inspire and influence writers today. In the 1990s, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie emerged as a major voice in Nigerian literature. Her works often explore the struggles of being a woman in a male-dominated society, as well as the complexities of race and gender. Adichie's works are often seen as feminist in nature and have had a major impact on contemporary Nigerian literature.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has established herself as a renowned Nigerian female writer. She is the recipient of numerous awards, such as the 2006 Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction for her second novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the 2008 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, and the 2005 Commonwealth Writers Prize for her debut novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Her other works include a short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), *Americanah* (2013), the book-length essay *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014), *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), *Zikora* (2020) and *Notes on Grief* (2021), her work has been translated into 30 languages. Adichie's works typically focus on women and their experiences in life, such as their unconditional love for their family, respect for their husbands even when they

are mistreated, and their bravery in standing up against any form of violence and oppression from men.

*Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is widely considered a feminist novel. Adichie examines the struggles and trials of a young Nigerian girl, Kambili, as she navigates the oppressive patriarchal society of her family and community. Kambili's father, Eugene, is an abusive man who expects his children to be perfect in order to reflect his own high standards. Adichie highlights the importance of female autonomy and education, which she believes are the key to allowing women to break free of oppressive constraints. By exploring the intersection of religion, culture, and gender, Adichie sheds light on the ways that traditional gender roles can hinder the growth and development of both men and women. Ultimately, Adichie's novel is an exploration of the power of feminism and its ability to liberate and empower individuals. Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* uses psychoanalytic theory and feminist theory to explore the repression of women in Nigerian society. Adichie uses psychoanalytic concepts to illustrate how the oppressive rule of Kambili's father has caused her to repress her own identity. She also uses psychoanalytic theory to critique the patriarchal structures that oppress women in Nigeria.

The main character, Kambili, lives in a cruel household under her father, who frequently inflicts physical and psychological abuse upon her, her brother, Jaja, and her mother, Beatrice. Kambili's psychological trauma is further exacerbated by the fact that she is constantly trying to balance her emotions and thoughts with the expectations of her father and society. This result in her feeling a constant sense of guilt and shame, which leadsher to have difficulty forming relationships with other people. Kambili's self-image is largely shaped by her oppressive father, Eugene. She is constantly striving to please him and earn his approval, and in his presence, she is often too afraid to speak up or express her own opinions. The psychological repercussions of the oppressive environment include the internalization of the patriarch's values, the development of a false self, and the repression of her true self.

Adichie's book examines the various systems of oppression that women face. She pinpoints domestic violence, religious customs, family dynamics, and passivity as the sources of gender discrimination and subjugation of females. Her work encourages women to speak up and break free from the shackles of their suffering, as seen in the case of Beatrice and her children in *Purple Hibiscus*, who are victims of silent complicity.

Physical violence has a devastating effect on the women in *Purple Hibiscus*. Eugene is an abusive man who physically and emotionally abuses his wife and children. Papa Eugene's abuse causes not only physical pain and suffering but also causes deep psychological trauma, creating a sense of fear and insecurity. As a result, the women in the novel are unable to express themselves fully and live their lives to the fullest. The psychological violence experienced by Kambili in the novel is a powerful example of how psychological abuse can shape a person's relationships and sense of self. Kambili is unable to trust or form meaningful relationships, unable to express her feelings or stand up for herself, and unable to understand her own worth.

Kambili tells us the events as they unfold, and the opening of the novel through her voice makes us to know the kind of father she has "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'".(3)The breaking of the figurine is notable in the novel. It serves as a source of consolation whenever mother Beatrice is devastated; Beatrice cleans it every time Papa Eugene beats her.

I meant to say I am sorry Papa broke our figurines, but the words came out were, "I'm sorry your figurines broke, Mama". She nodded quickly, and then shook her head to show that the figurines did not matter. They did, though. Years ago, before I understood, I used to wonder why she polished them each time I heard sounds from their room, like something banged against their door. Her rubber slippers never made a sound on the stairs, but I knew she went downstairs when I heard the dining room door open. I would go down to see her standing by the étagère with a towel soaked in soapy water. She spent at least a quarter of an hour on each ballet-dancing figurine. There were never tears on her face. The last time, only two weeks ago, when her swollen eye was still the black-purple colour of an overripe avocado, she had rearranged them after she polished them. (10-11)

Beatrice is put in a difficult situation when the figurine is broken at the beginning of the novel. She has to find ways to cope with the hurt and humiliation inflicted upon her by her husband. Adichie uses this as a way to illustrate Beatrice's need to stand up for her rights and not simply accept all forms of mistreatment. When her daughter asked if she would replace the figurine, Beatrice said no, symbolizing her refusal to put up with her situation. Despite all the pain she has to endure, Beatrice remains in her marriage with Eugene Achike, feeling that he is a source of strength for her. Even when her husband is encouraged to take another wife due to her inability to give birth to more children, he stayed with her.

God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our "umunna" even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr. Ezendu's second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us... "Yes" I said. Papa deserved praise for not choosing to have more sons with another woman, of course, for not choosing to take a second wife. But then, Papa was different. I wished that Mama would not compare him with Mr. Ezendu, with anybody; it lowered him, soiled him. (20)

When Kambili told Jaja their mother was expecting a baby, it was reasonable to expect him to be joyous, as any child would be upon learning about a new addition to the family. However, Jaja's response was strange; he said they would have to protect the baby, which seemed nonsensical.

Kambili said "Mama is pregnant...and will be due in October". Jaja closed his eyes for a while and then opened them. "We will take care of the baby; we will protect him. I knew that Jaja meant from Papa, but I did not say anything about protecting the baby. Instead, I asked, "How do you know it will be a he?" (23)

De Beauvoir (1989: 134) suggests that women's capacity to bear children is what ultimately results in their subjugation. She states that "The fact that women bear children has been used to confine them to their role as mothers, a role that is often considered to be the basis for their inferiority." She argues that maternity causes women to be oppressed: biologically during pregnancy and socially when they are limited to being mainly caretakers in the home. The need for children in society is used to take advantage of and subjugate women. Women are only seen as worthy of respect if they can fulfill their traditional role as a mother. Mama worries that Papa may take another wife who could give him more sons, potentially taking away Mama's place in the family. To ensure a stable and secure position, it is important for a woman to have numerous children, particularly boys.

It is commonly thought that pregnant women should be treated gently, but due to the type of husband Mama had, she was not given a choice in her decisions. This is highlighted in the novel when she wants to remain in the car due to her condition; however, her husband refuses. It is a tradition for them to pay a visit to Fr. Benedict after attending mass.

"Let me stay in the car and wait, biko," Mama said, leaning against the Mercedes. "I feel vomit in my throat." Papa turned to stare at her. I held my breath. It seemed a long moment, but it might have been only seconds. Mama was looking down; her hands were placed on her belly, to hold the wrapper from untying itself or to keep her bread and tea breakfast down. "My body does not feel right," she mumbled. "I asked if you were sure you wanted to stay in the car."

Mama looked up. "I'll come with you. It's really not that bad." Papa's face did not change. He waited for her to walk towards him, and then he turned and they started to walk to the priest's house. Jaja and I followed. I watched Mama as she walked. Till then I had not noticed how drawn she looked. Her skin, usually the smooth brown of groundnut paste, looked like the liquid had been sucked out of it, ashen, like the colour of cracked harmattan soil. Jaja spoke to me with his eyes: what if she vomits? I would hold up my dress hems so Mama could throw up into it, so we wouldn't make a big mess in Father Benedict's house. (29-30)

I heard the door open. Papa's gait on the stairs sounded heavier, more awkward, than usual. I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. He opened the dining room door. Then we heard the front door open, heard him say something to the gate man, Adamu. "There's blood on the floor," Jaja said. "I'll get the brush from the bathroom." We cleaned up the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red water colour all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped. Mama did not come home that night, and Jaja and I had dinner alone. We did not talk about Mama. (33).

Eugene's violent behavior toward his wife goes against his religious beliefs. He has inflicted physical harm to the point of killing their unborn child, which is a violation of both humanity and the God he claims to worship. This kind of situation is in direct opposition to what his Catholic faith instructs. Despite this, she returned from the hospital with no visible signs of distress, and, has not let their children know what has happened, in order to protect her husband's image.

"There was an accident, the baby is gone," she said. I moved back a little, stared at her belly. It still looked big, still pushed at her wrapper in a gentle arc. Was Mama sure the baby was gone? I was still staring at her belly when Sisi came in". (34-35)

In African culture, it is widely accepted that a woman's worth is limited to domestic responsibilities. Additionally, in faith-based contexts, women are expected to obey their husbands without question. The Holy Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 11-12, "Let a woman learn in quietness, in entire submissiveness. I allow no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to remain in quietness and keep silence [in religious assemblies] (Amplified Bible). Mama, a representation of subjugated African females, is subjected to such oppressive restriction. She is voiceless and does not converse with Papa. Papa believes it is his duty as a father to give out punishment to his family when they have done wrong, viewing himself as righteous and sinless. He believes that by using force, he can remove the power of the devil in their lives and absolve them of their sins. Patriarchy is known to employ silence as a weapon of control over its members. People who are not allowed to speak become voiceless and powerless, and are often relegated to positions of servitude. In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, the characters are constantly surrounded by a stillness that overwhelms them, where the words "silence" and "silent" are used frequently. Eugene Achike's family lives in a state of quietness, and practice silence whenever they go out.

"Has the devil asked you all to go on errands for him?" The Igbo words burst out of Papa's mouth. "Has the devil built a tent in my house?" He turned to Mama. "You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, maka nndi?" He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back (102).

This episode presents the attack of Papa on Mama as a symbol of the violence that is often targeted towards women, thus highlighting the oppressive nature of patriarchy. Mama is depicted with swollen eyes, a jagged scar, or tears as a result of her husband's cruelty, while Papa is seen as a dominating figure. The family is always tense because of Papa's brutality, and no one dares to speak up due to the fear of his wrath. Mama's mistreatment serves to illustrate the devastating effects of domestic violence.

"Kambili, you are precious." His voice quavered now, like someone speaking at a funeral, choked with emotion. "You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it." He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it toward my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. "That is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet," he said (194).

This passage depicts an emotionally traumatic event for the narrator, Kambili. Papa is scalding her feet in a ritual of punishment in order to try to teach her a lesson about the consequences of sin. The physical pain serves as a representation of the emotional and psychological damage inflicted by his harsh words and actions. The scene is a powerful example of psychological trauma and the lasting effects it can have. Kambili's father's words are an example of emotional abuse, and the physical pain of the scalding water serves as a metaphor for the psychological trauma of the experience. This scene illustrates how psychological trauma can be experienced not only through physical pain, but also through emotional pain as well.

"Get up! Get away from that painting!" I lay there, did nothing. "Get up!" Papa said again. I still did not move. He started to kick me. The metal buckles on his slippers stung like bites from giant mosquitoes. He talked nonstop, out of control, in a mix of Igbo and English, like soft meat and thorny bones. Godlessness. Heathen worship. Hellfire. The kicking increased in tempo.... The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal landed on open skin on my side, my back, my legs. Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. Because I could hear a swoosh in the air. A low voice was saying, "Please, biko, please." More stings. More slaps. A salty wetness warmed my mouth. I closed my eyes and slipped away into quiet. When I opened my eyes, I knew at once that I was not in my bed. The mattress was firmer than mine. I made to get up, but pain shot through my whole body in exquisite little packets. I collapsed back. "Nne, Kambili. Thank God!" Mama stood up and pressed her hand to my forehead, then her face to mine. "Thank God. Thank God you are awake." Her face felt clammy with tears. Her touch was light, yet it sent needles of pain all over me, starting from my head. It was like the hot water Papa had poured on my feet, except now it was my entire body that burned. Each movement was too painful to even think about. "My whole body is on fire," I said. "Shhh," she said. "Just rest. Thank God you are awake." I did not want to be awake. I did not want to feel the breathing pain at my side. I did not want to feel the heavy hammer knocking in my head. Even taking a breath was agony (210 - 211).

Papa Eugene's passing due to being poisoned by his wife with the aid of Sisi, the housekeeper. Jaja acknowledges his part in his father's death and is sent to prison. The people hold the government responsible for his demise, given his outspokenness in the paper. Mama Beatrice still insists that she was the one who poisoned Eugene, though no one believes her. It is revealed that the reason she started to slowly murder Eugene was due to a violent incident that caused her to lose her unborn baby. With Sisi's help, she found the poison that finally did him in. Mama Beatrice is oppressed by her husband due to her gender. Sisi is oppressed by her socioeconomic status and race. Jaja is oppressed by the government due to his father's outspokenness. All of these characters are oppressed in different ways, and their stories come together to create a tragic tale of intersectionality.

Mama's low voice floated across the phone line and quickly quelled my shaking hand. "Kambili, it's your father. They called me from the factory, they found him lying dead on his desk." I pressed the phone tighter to my ear. "Eh?" "It's your father. They called me from the factory, they found him lying dead on his desk." Mama sounded like a recording. I imagined her saying the same thing to Jaja, in the same exact tone. My ears filled with liquid. Although I had heard her right, heard her say he was found dead on his office desk, I asked, "Did he get a letter bomb? Was it a letter bomb?" (286).

"They did an autopsy," she said. "They have found the poison in your father's body." Her movements were calm and slow. When she spoke, her voice was just as calm and slow. "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor (290).

Nigerian women's psychological trauma is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed. Through a psychoanalytic feminist reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, we were able to gain a greater understanding of the psychological trauma experienced by Nigerian

women. We saw how Kambili's trauma was a result of the oppressive patriarchal systems, which were further compounded by religious and cultural influences. Furthermore, we were able to explore how Kambili eventually finds her voice and reclaims her identity by rejecting these oppressive systems. Ultimately, this study has revealed the importance of understanding Nigerian women's psychological trauma and the need to create more social, political, and cultural spaces where Nigerian women can be empowered and their individual voices respected.

Beatrice's and Kambili's struggles speak about the intersectional struggle experienced by women in society. "Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage" (*Intersectionality*). The novel narrates the intersectional struggle endured by women in Nigerian society. The female characters portray how religion, colonialism, political affairs, patriarchy, and gender create an intersectional struggle. These intersectional traumas create a complex psychological trauma. Beatrice finally murders her husband, Eugene. A nice, kind, and adorable woman transformed into a murderer at the end of the novel. When it is analysed what causes a normal, happy, Nigerian woman into a murderer means an unbearable level of psychological trauma. "... the experience is so powerful it has the potential to change their brain structure. (Bremner) Research suggests that traumatic experiences are so unhealthy that it can affect brain function in a negative way, causing permanent behavioral and psychological effects in the individual into adulthood" (Smithwick). So, psychological trauma can impact a person in numerous ways. The psychological trauma caused by intersectionality is so intense and it defaces the identity of the self-image.

In conclusion, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus offers a unique and significant insight into the psychological trauma experienced by Nigerian women. Through a psychoanalytic feminist reading of the novel, this paper has revealed that Nigerian women experience a range of intersectional psychological traumas rooted in patriarchy and colonialism, etc. These traumas manifest in a variety of ways, such as feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, and depression. However, Adichie's novel also conveys a message of hope in that women can ultimately find their own paths to healing and empowerment. Ultimately, Purple Hibiscus provides a lens for viewing the psychological traumas of Nigerian women and offers a valuable contribution to the discussion of gender-based intersectional trauma.

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