

Weaving Pain in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus

Aouatef SLIMANI

University of Tebessa Sheikh Al-Arabi Al-Tebssi, Algeria
aouatef.slimani@univ-tebessa.dz

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Abstract: Nigerian and, more broadly, African literature is regarded as one of the most complex global narratives in creative writing. Emerging from the womb of hieroglyphic writing alongside the primitive customs and traditions of the Black continent, this literature evolved under successive waves of colonialism. It has been composed in various dialects and languages and formulated in numerous genres, forms, and literary registers both oral and written. Consequently, it has been designated by a host of names, including ethnic literature, negro literature, black literature, literature of the margins, and others. Its common preoccupation lies in consolidating the spirit of the community, establishing the principle of resistance, and reviving African identity within a framework that unites diaspora and pain. And since man is, in essence, the child of pain, the novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie undertakes the task of weaving a dramatic narrative where the hues of pain both harmonize and clash, producing an artistic tableau that calls for the liberation and unity of peoples. Has Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie truly mastered the art of weaving pain in her novel? Has she succeeded in unveiling the hidden intricacies of the human soul in an authentic manner? In her work, do the pain of writing and the writing of pain stand on equal footing?

Keywords: Weaving – Pain - Nigerian Literature - The Purple Hibiscus

Résumé: La littérature nigériane et africaine en général est considérée comme l'un des récits mondiaux les plus complexes dans le domaine de l'écriture créative, car c'est une littérature née du ventre de l'écriture hiéroglyphique, des coutumes et des traditions primitives du continent noir, et elle a grandi dans l'ombre de la marée coloniale successive. Il a été écrit dans plusieurs dialectes et langues, et a été formulé dans plusieurs genres, formes et contenus littéraires, y compris oraux et écrits. On lui a donné plusieurs noms, dont : littérature ethnique, littérature noire, littérature noire, littérature marginale, et d'autres noms... Son souci commun est de consolider l'esprit du groupe, d'enraciner le principe de résistance et de raviver l'identité africaine dans une structure qui combine diaspora et douleur. Parce que l'homme est le fils de la douleur, la romancière « Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie » est allée tisser une scène narrative dans laquelle les couleurs de la douleur sont harmonieuses et dissonantes, pour produire un tableau artistique qui appelle à la libération et à l'unité des peuples. « Chimamanda » a-t-il réussi ? Njozi Adichie tisse-t-elle la douleur dans son roman ? Avez-vous réussi à vraiment révéler les secrets de la psyché humaine ? La douleur d'écrire et la douleur d'écrire sont-elles égales dans sa narration ?

Mots-clés : tissage, douleur, littérature nigériane, fleur d'hibiscus

Introduction

Few are those who can articulate their pain as eloquently as they express their joy. To achieve this, it is incumbent upon the critics and creative recipients of such expressions to undertake the deconstruction of their society's cultural frameworks. They must begin from the fringes of embodiment—drawing from those parts that do not outwardly cry out in agony—and move toward the thoughtful center, all with the aim of producing a critical vantage point on these communal cultural patterns. In this process, the creative spirit positions itself at a distance from the core, the very epicenter of pain, carefully delineating its dimensions as well as the span that separates it from the furthest point it can reach. In so doing, a rupture is wrought at the zenith of pain, thereby erasing its very sensation. This is exactly why the artist turns their attention to all that is marginal at the expense of the central; what was once peripheral becomes paramount through the creation of gaps in the text—gaps in which the tension points of the center, hovering around peripheries violently interwoven with pain, oppression, and subjugation in those regions where the body fails to articulate, are firmly grasped. Such a process compels the formation of an ideology in which writing stands as an act of defiance against established principles—since the struggle against pain means contesting the very mechanism that distinguishes the truly suffering from those who merely claim to suffer. And who, indeed, does not feel pain? It is found in the space between silence and speech. Thus, the retranslation of a people's anguish—with all its primordial and popular connotations—encompasses everything that is historically and narratively painful.

The inscription of pain demands a body into which it can dissolve; this is precisely what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes about when addressing her own pain and that of her Nigerian people. In her novel, she unburdens herself by pouring her anguish into the characters, leaving behind marks that correspond to the intensity of the suffering. By laying bare the body for the inscription of pain, she transforms it into a fertile and aspirational field for all that is agonizing—where everything is propelled by desire and radiates in delight. Just as writing is a multifaceted act of embodiment, so too is weaving an art of manifold designs and colors. Indeed, weaving is a continuous and diverse act of creation that intermingles signification and various linguistic registers within the creative text. It creates lines, drawings, and inscriptions whose symbolic power confounds the reader, leaving an effect that lingers like magic in the minds of its audience. Hence, every act of weaving is a unique system of text-crafting through which its techniques are discharged, varying from line to line—rising and falling, deep and superficial—whilst channeling a migration from pain and abandonment to serenity and calm in a quest for the body's repose. Although weaving has come to

encompass all that the human hand and mind have produced within the cultural realm, it is as though the tailor or the rug weaver, conversant in the language of threads reconstructs and rewrites his artistic canvas among the ranks of creative expression. As Michel Foucault once put it: "Writing, in its productive function, cannot be merely representational to the extent that it produces its own reality. Writing begets the imagination and is inextricably bound to it. It presupposes a distance that does not belong to the world or the unconscious a distance that is offered in its state of abstraction, in forms of bewildering lines. Writing is not an indication of truth nor a medium for its manifestation; rather, it is a critical space in which the text appears as the sum of the relationships established between writing and speech. Writing does not center on the self or history; it carries the writer and directs him, not vice versa." (Azam, 1996, p. 61)

1. The Weaving of Pain

The linguistic definitions of pain are manifold in lexicons and dictionaries. For instance, in *Lisān al-‘Arab*, pain is rendered as “the ache”—when a man suffers an ache, he is in pain; the term is collected as “*Alamā*” with *al-‘alīm* meaning “the one who causes pain” and *al-‘adhāb al-‘alīm* referring to that which reaches the zenith of torment. I have even stated that “*al-‘alīm*” signifies painful (Ibn Manzour, 1988, p. 22). In contrast, Merski defines it as “an experience of physical affliction expressed in psychological terms such as a sense of unease, misery, sorrow, discomfort, and distress. Pain is an individual sensation that varies from person to person, influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors that determine the level of response” (Ibtisam Heddani, 2014, pp. 49–50).

Meanwhile, many philosophers and artists consider weaving as an act that institutionalizes the discourse of woman regarding her as the most sensitive and affected being by the events she endures because the fabric becomes the medium through which we highlight the most pressing problems raised by various interrelations. It encapsulates the idea that both body and soul are exposed to experiences that induce nearly unbearable sensations (Dider, 1998, pp. 174–175). Moreover, the purpose of deciphering the act of weaving in narrative writing is not to unmask the dilemmas or psychological maladies that burden the novel’s characters; rather, the aim is to interrogate these personalities through their linguistic behaviors accompanied by rhythm, tone, emotional frenzy, and responsive gestures. On the paper’s expanse, weaving consolidates the act of writing, serving both a tangible and a symbolic function, the latter of which allows for boundless interpretations. This is fundamental to narrative writing. Yet if we ask how the physical act of weaving can transform into a painfully narrative act, we find that the reality of pain in the novel is echoed explicitly in the fabric, concealed within its very threads.

The irrational act of weaving on blank pages renders it subject to descriptions of disgrace and shame a confinement within the dark annals of human history, where its pain festers in silence after having been violated by a relentless cascade of lines. Consequently, the myriad hues of pain have led the pristine whiteness of writing to forget the act of weaving, treating it as a feminine prop a lever employed to dismantle the edifice of tragedies furtively hidden behind the mirth of masculinity. Thus, the body emerged as the foundational subject of narrative weaving, a canvas for description and the evolution of time a time that transforms pain from one form to another. In a primitive tribal society, the suffering self exemplified by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie chose to evoke memories, voices, dialects, and languages that had tethered Her to all that she had lost in her homeland. In truth, this invocation is nothing other than a process of reawakening the meaning of humanity above all else.

In the novel, weaving is activated through pain so that it becomes the incentive that impels the narrating self to bolster its resistant self-assurance (the inner ego) in the face of an impending tyranny and planned despotism one that the characters face if they fail to unearth a way to articulate and reveal their own essence. Thus, the narrative self expends every effort to preserve the collective memory this memory, scarred by every conceivable form of torment and anguish, cannot be forgiven those who have branded it so until after the novel's emergence and the certifying inscription of words hitherto unuttered. Works such as **Half of a Yellow Sun** and similar narratives do more than merely retrieve memories in a harsh narrative language; they evoke them in the voices of the grandfather, the father, the son, the wife, the daughter, the aunt, and other intertwined figures measuring the magnitude of loss among them in a fabric that cannot be erased or nullified. This fabric embodies the unconscious memory, where discourse, phrases, the sequencing of events, and degrees of pain are meticulously arranged; there is no incidental pain nor any accidental occurrence of events.

The act of weaving is further underscored in the very numbering of the novel's chapters, harmoniously arranged from beginning to end into four parts:

Chapter One: Breaking Gods

Chapter Two: Speaking With Our Spirits

Chapter Three: The Pieces of Gods

Chapter Four: A Distinct Silence

This singular scheme signifies that these chapters imbued with the signifiers of power and all that is negative, such as the pain evident in the characters' traits and behaviors reflect exactly what the novelist intended. All is subject to the rules of narrative documentation emanating from the realm of the all-knowing woman.

Moreover, the manner in which the pages are numbered on the blank paper is intimately linked to a style of psychological correspondence in the sequence of

events, even though it does not mirror the varied psychological styles of the characters. When we read the novel, we deliberately set aside the grammatical connotations and linguistic styles even as the critics remain aware of them. For, despite the multiple and varied levels of style, the narrative gradually takes shape and elevates us to heights of pleasure and delight. As we journey through its enchanting realms, we overlook those incidental features which simultaneously invigorate every type of pain in its palpable form. The universe of narrative weaving is not estranged from that of the fine arts painting, music, sculpture, or textile art all of which abide by strict principles in structural architecture, arranged in stations, intersections, and phrases much as the cosmos organizes itself in its course.

2. Nigerian Literature

Nigerian literature has remained closely linked to Black African literature—indeed, it is an integral part of it. This literature, which arose in resistance to the racism of the white colonial man, endeavored to study racial, religious, social, and political issues, striving to transcend ruling powers and all forms of despotism while clinging to a Black African identity and the mantra “Africa for Africans.” The Nigerian novel forms part of this literary corpus; written in local languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) as well as in English and Arabic over the span of a century, its works in English have enjoyed wide circulation since the 1930s—with titles such as **Daniel Fagunwa, the Brave Hunter** and **In the Forest of Demons**, the latter of which revolves around myths in Hausa lands steeped in African customs of magic and sorcery. By the early fifties, a sensation in the form of the novelist “Yemas Tutu Awala” had emerged, only for a qualitative shift to occur after the Biafran War in the early seventies, marked by the advent of the modern novel composed in multiple languages.

3. Pain in Critical Perspective

It is claimed that the spontaneity emerging from suffering is the foremost characteristic of modern writing; yet, despite its significance, critics have not afforded it the comprehensive study it merits, their primary focus having been on formal methodologies at the expense of the cultural framework and the text’s uniqueness. As one scholar notes: “The wide-ranging changes in cultural literary theory have fostered a renewed attention to narrative, culture, and narrative historiography. These complex theoretical shifts in the prevailing intellectual climate have come to be known as ‘cultural transformation’—a development that has heightened the importance of historical, anthropological, and moral shifts in narrative, thereby necessitating a focus on the ‘narrative construction of reality.’” Whereas abstract methodologies and the formal analysis of stories once formed

the nucleus of narrative studies, they no longer hold that centrality; narrative theorists have now begun to direct their attention toward cultural analysis

4. Pain in “The Purple Hibiscus”

4.1 The Pleasure of Pain

Pain is constituted in the novel “The Purple Hibiscus” from the very onset of its narrative introduction. The events revolve around the Biafran War (1967–1970) in Nigeria—a civil conflict that devastated both lush and barren lands, evoking in the novelist an atmosphere of exile, imprisonment, violence, and suffering. This was a war that claimed the lives of one million Nigerian citizens. And yet, the title bears the imprint of a rebirth after death—as if to ask, “How can trees blossom when they are dead?” Despite this, the novelist adopted a melancholy stance when she told Britain’s *The Guardian* that she relished the painful ecstasy of winning the Commonwealth Prize for Best Book in 2003: “I draw characters who have motives without always being fully aware of them—a truth I believe resonates with us humans. Moreover, I do not wish to provoke the displeasure of my peers by disclosing every thought of my novel’s characters.” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 10). She even dedicated her novel to the spirit of her ancestors, declaring, “Tears filled my eyes as I informed my father of my winning the award...” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 11).

This very pain impelled the novelist to articulate her father’s voice through the written word, revealing a state of grief and suffering marked by the loss of freedom and the alienation of being away from her homeland. In her performance of the inner, anguished self, she asserts her existence and ensures that the collective memory does not obliterate the plight of the Nigerian people. Instead, she rebuilds memory by forgetting the pain without surrendering the right to live with dignity. At the beginning of her novel, we are presented with a scene of the father, “Eugene,” who is anguished for his family. In a fit of fury he hurls the eucharistic book and its accoutrements because his son “Jaja” failed to attend Sunday mass at the city church. According to his daughter “Kambili,” the novelist recounts: “The moment Papa forcefully threw the eucharistic book toward ‘Jaja’ in the dining room—and shattered the small figurines inside the wooden cabinet—it was as if everything in the house began to collapse...” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 15).

Despite Eugene’s authoritarian dominance and his strict, ideal Christian method of raising his children, behind his grim, stern façade lies a tender heart. This is revealed the moment he saw his wife “Beatrice” bleeding while pregnant. Then we hear the sound of the front door opening and Papa calling out to the doorman, “Adamu, there is blood on the floor—I will fetch the broom.” Jaja hurriedly wiped away the thin, erratic trail of blood—as if someone were carrying

a jar leaking red water down every step of the staircase—while I proceeded to clean and dry every trace of it. Mama did not return home that very night. Later, Papa appeared at my room, his eyes swollen and red, and he struck me as even more surly and affected. These are two contrasting depictions of Eugene: the first, an assertion of a desire for control and the very sensation of pain as he harshly disciplines his son “Jaja”; the second, a moment of tenderness over the loss suffered by his wife Beatrice—losing her unborn child, which, while grievous, was a less corrosive loss than that of the woman herself. (Chimamanda, 2013, pp. 15; 56–57)

4.2 Illusory Pain

The self convinces itself that it sees a world exclusively its own; in this delusion, the line between the describer and the described becomes blurred, and the affected character loses control over their emotions—propelling them into rashness. He lives the pain of others in a past that haunts him and a present that confines him to what must be done. Thus, Eugene endeavors to perfect his role as a strict, devout man in a kind of temporal displacement within the novel, delighting us with the reordering of events and the sketching of his contradictory character. Simultaneously, he urges his sons, “Jaja” and “Kambili,” to practice humility despite his eminent social standing in the city. As the congregation of worshippers exclaims in unison, “Yes, God bless him...” I, with my legs tightly crossed, sat beside Jaja—who strove arduously to appear utterly devoid of any trace of vanity—while Papa constantly reiterated the profound importance of the virtue of humility. (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 18)

Moreover, Eugene prefers to recite the Bible in English rather than in his mother tongue—the Igbo language—because he deems it a language of backwardness, as if God would only accept prayers in English. “In an instant, he scanned every corner of the room, as though searching for evidence that something would fall from the high ceiling or that the unexpected would drop from above. Then he seized the Bible and hurled it forcefully in the direction of ‘Jaja,’ missing him and striking the marble shelves of the cabinet that Mama used to polish.” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 20). Eugene does not believe in national identity or unity; he lacks the will to affirm his own self and to have faith in his own abilities as well as those of the free resisters. At the same time, he refrains from bribing the police whenever they solicit him. Later, Jaja confided in me that government officials visited solely to offer a bribe to Papa—and he even overheard them remark that their lorry was packed with US dollars. Rather, Eugene instills in his two children—Jaja and Kambili—the notion that “we cannot become part of that which we resist,” a maxim that is constantly reiterated. (Chimamanda, 2013, pp. 24; 166).

Let us not assume that Eugene alone is deluded into feeling the pain of having his ideas rejected or contradicted. For the austere churchman Father "Benedict" merges issues of faith, money, and power, no longer distinguishing between the teachings of Christ and those of Mr. Eugene and his peers—men of business who donate to the church. The more their donations increase, the higher their status ascends, as though they were competing in a game where everyone scrambles to shift from one role to another in order to win the prize. As Father Benedict always cites, first the words of the Pope, then those of Papa, then of Jesus Christ—and even calls upon Papa to offer biblical examples, such as on one Sunday when he declared, "When we bestow our radiance upon the people, we mirror the triumph of Jesus Christ," and on another day he proclaimed: "Look at brother Eugene; he could have chosen the very same histrionics as the leading businessmen in our country," boldly proclaiming the truth in **The Standard** even if it cost his paper its advertisements. (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 17)

4.3 Psychological and Physical Pain

One might imagine experimenting with tasting the pain of others on two levels. On a psychological level, for instance, by abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive days to grasp the true meaning of famine; and on a physical level, by deliberately instigating a fight with a wayward individual—thereby receiving a potentially incapacitating beating to understand the value of oppression and the physical torture inflicted upon the subjugated and exploited. The Nigerian woman, more than anyone, is acquainted with these forms of pain due to her skin color, customs, traditions, and religion. She has endured domestic violence at the hands of her husband to such an extent that she is reduced to the status of a servant; and the commonplace nature of her rape is justified under the umbrella of patriarchal authority sanctioned by law—"for violence is a real phenomenon that afflicts both individuals and nations... and the most significant studies on this subject are connected to the field of psychology and sociology."

Thus, the realms in which the act of weaving pain is expressed—both physically and symbolically as a testimonial discourse—appear in Chimamanda Ngozi's epistemic system in multiple forms with endless purposes, driven by pain throughout the narrative fabric. Beatrice, the mother of Kambili, declares her own suffering after enduring several miscarriages. The villagers and countrymen encircled her husband, Eugene, urging him to leave her and marry another woman who could bear him many children. Beatrice wove her pain with threads of sorrow, tears, and oppression: "The villagers began to whisper to your father and sent people to him, urging him to father children with another woman." (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 39)

Chimamanda Ngozi does not stop at recounting scenes that depict Beatrice's psychological anguish. "I swear, I do not know how Afidiura emerged from such

a family... The members of this family always utter things that cause pain,” said Mama. (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 114)

Somewhere, contempt for others escalates into bullying, insults, and vilification—tearing apart familial bonds in one of the most devastating forms of pain for the human soul. This is exactly what Eugene, with his contradictory behaviors, enacted. After attempting to bribe his own father for the sake of entering Christianity—and being rebuffed—he began to despise, scold, and expel him from his home without regard for the sacredness of their relationship, despite his knowledge of Christian teachings and the inherent dignity of fatherhood. He repeated these behaviors when Mr. “Anikwenwa” visited to consult him. Through Kambili’s voice the novelist recounts:

“What is Anikwenwa doing in my house? What is this idolater Abed doing in my home? Leave my house. Do you know that I am as old as your father?”

“Do you know that I nursed from my mother at the same time that your father nursed from his mother?”

He pointed at the gate and said, “Leave my house.”

After a while, two men accompanied Anikwenwa outside without any resistance, though he kept looking back, muttering to Papa:

“You are like a blind fly recklessly following a corpse to the grave.”

The man continued, his eyes dragging his feet in an erratic gait until he finally exited through the gate. (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 108).

Psychological suffering spans vast distances—tracing the migratory routes of one’s homeland. Such was the experience of Ifeoma, the university professor and sister of Eugene, following the collapse of the regime. She strove to persuade her children to emigrate to America in search of a peaceful life, yet that peace was invariably wrapped in the agony of separation from family and native soil. But was this truly the remedy? In the words of her friend Chimamanda Ngozi, “It is the truth... Throughout my years residing in Cambridge, I was like an ape that had honed its capacity for argument... Every day our doctors would go there, only to end up washing dishes; in America, they cannot believe that a Nigerian can study medicine in the same manner as an American, and our lawyers travel there and end up working as taxi drivers—America simply does not trust the Nigerian lawyer in legal matters.”(Chimamanda, 2013, pp. 329–330)

Chimamanda Ngozi’s narrative writing is at once self-contained and yet transcendent. In its very act of surpassing itself, it contributes to the weaving of a fabric composed of human values. It infiltrates cultural regimes—liberating them from predetermined molds and rendering them neither subordinate nor dogmatic, without constraints, without beginnings or endings. This is the essence of her refusal to confine her narrative language to the categories of color or race; rather, her language is one of solutions that—at once free in time and space—undermines

the established arrays of collective consciousness. Such continual rupture reveals the maladies and frailties of peoples, for it is an unending tapestry of human existence on this earth. This idea is starkly rendered in the physical agony endured by the Nigerian woman depicted in the market scene featuring Kambili and Jaja with their mother Beatrice. There, all were startled by the assault of armed militants upon the market women—women who were brutally violated in broad daylight: “As we departed the market with our purchases, we witnessed some gathering around the vegetable vendors—sprawled upon the ground—encircled by soldiers, while women cried out and pounded their heads and faces with their hands—a clear sign of overwhelming panic and despair. One woman lay on the ground, wailing and shedding tears, her outer garment slipping away from her underclothes. ‘Hurry up...’ cried Mama as she approached us; I sensed that she did not wish for us to witness the soldiers’ treatment of the women.” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 70). And so, lest the reader sense an exclusive sympathy in the novelist’s portrayal of women’s pain, note that men, too, receive their share—especially when they venture into the realm of politics. The tragic end of the journalist Ade Coker serves as a case in point. Seated at the breakfast table with his family on one unusually mournful morning, he received a booby - trapped mail package that ultimately cost him his life: “On the day that witnessed the demise of Ade Coker, torrents of rain fell—strange, clamorous rains that battered intensely amid the dry, dusty gusts. Ade Coker was sitting at the breakfast table with his family when he received a mail package delivered by one of the postal carriers... His wife had risen to place a spoonful of wheat paste into the mouth of their small child—and it was at that moment, as he began to open the package, that the explosion struck.” (Chimamanda, 2013, p. 287).

4.4 The Poetics of Pain

In this novel, everything is steeped in suffering—the utensils and the furnishings, the characters and the beings, even the very title, “The Purple Hibiscus Flower,” resonates with a meaning laden with pain. Although the hibiscus in African culture traditionally symbolizes the warm welcome of a guest—being revered as a sacred tree with medicinal virtues for ailments such as high blood pressure and nervous tension (especially when it appears in a rich, feminine purple hue reminiscent of violet, signifying loyalty and the desire to build trust)—in psychological symbolism it represents the essence of insight, wisdom, and the balance between body and spirit, the latter bearing both joy and pain. In Chimamanda Ngozi’s narrative, this pain is inextricably linked with death and torture, and it intermingles with various foods and beverages, as well as with a range of descriptions and conditions—most notably, those pertaining to the rituals of formal dress. Here, the irony does not merely rest in uniting opposites in one single tone but in merging contradictory hues within a single human being, as

exemplified in the character Eugene. As one writer remarks: “A person cannot be represented by a single term without also embodying its unique color, or the color that one imagines for them, or the color that their soul and psyche (be it sorrow or joy) bestow upon them; we thus color things even that which is inherently colorless for life, for instance, has a color, and so does sorrow.” (Khater, 2001, p. 275)

The spectrum of pain in the novel is vast most conspicuously rendered through colors such as gray, black, white, dark green, purple, earthy tones, and yellow. These are the hues of a beleaguered earth. The novelist extends an invitation—a call to share and supplicate as a means to challenge and confront injustice—presenting her narrative in vividly descriptive segments that meticulously attend to every detail of each scene. Although the color white is generally emblematic of peace and serenity, for Chimamanda Ngozi it comes to signify disorientation and loss in an ambiguous, unnamed world, underpinned solely by a belief in the unity of the Creator and absolute surrender. For example, consider the passages: “She was wearing the same white t-shirt, emblazoned on the front with the inscription ‘God is Love’...” (p. 58) > “White wine with a taste of fruit???” (p. 29) In contrast, yellow appears agitated a hue that conveys tension, distrust, and a sense of betrayal: “He grasped his glass cup, stared at the yellow juice with an unpleasant flavor, and gulped it down in one go...” (p. 31) “Heading to his bedroom painted in a pale yellow...” (p. 66) Without a clear vision of liberty’s markers—and amid a haze—Chimamanda Ngozi portrays the unknown fate that befell every citizen of her homeland in a pallid tint lacking any distinct color. On the exterior of two bottles, the brand label had been stripped of color (p. 28). Even as the first signs of revolution and change emerged, fear still governed the masses; only a few dared to take a resolute stand, and those few who spoke were met with torture and execution—a stance reflected in the oscillation of gray between peace and war. Consider these evocative images: “Dad was accustomed to wearing a gray robe...” (p. 15) > “She said, running her hand along her school uniform—a gray blouse coupled with a skirt of gray-black that extended to cover the lower leg...” (p. 38) > “And when the doors closed and oppression intensified, submission became inevitable—captured in a scene dyed entirely in black. The church’s black shawl was drawn in tightly...” (p. 22) > “Yet one would choose white, for black exudes despair—especially a shade akin to charred wood, often worn at funerals...” (p. 284) > “Even the earth seemed to borrow its sorrow from black: a biscuit taken from a green container...” (p. 645) > “A thick soup made from the dark green leaves of the Onjibu plant...” (p. 27) > (Chimamanda, 2013, pp. 22, 28, 645, 27)

4.5 The Pain of Silence

This is not an ordinary silence. As conveyed in the novel's final chapter, everyone ponders the inevitable yet refrains from voicing their true thoughts—a silence that is, in itself, a mortal pain. It is a suppression of emotions and ideas, establishing a state of stillness and calm that invariably precedes revolution and change. Kambili describes the oppressive quiet that enveloped her family when their father, Eugene, was conversing with Ade Coker about the coup that had upended the country: “He pushed the chessboard aside and went to speak on his office phone; we Jaja, Mama, and I waited in silence...” (p. 45). The subtle change in his demeanor, despite his outward display of fortitude and patience, betrayed an inner fragility. Aunt Ifeoma shook her head a silent message that Dad was truly eccentric... (p. 256). I found myself wondering: what if, at that very moment, she realized that I, too, longed to don white and join the dance of grandchildren at a funeral... (p. 284) (Chimamanda, 2013, pp. 45, 256, 284). Although this silence is prolonged in the narrative's descriptive passages, it is punctuated by behaviors that reveal the depth and bitterness of the characters' suffering—haunted impulses, staggered steps, the onset of terror, trembling hands, flailing limbs, and a palpable, paralyzing panic, all rendered in Chimamanda Ngozi's vivid, heart-wrenching tableaux of pain.

Conclusion

In light of the relationships woven by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel, we find that she legitimizes moments of pain through a perspective of patriarchal and ecclesiastical authority its two poles being man and woman engaged in a relationship marked by oppression and domination. Each side puts forth its own justifications for the source of its suffering. This dialectic unfolds across four chapters *Breaking Gods*, *Speaking With Our Spirits*, *The Pieces of Gods*, and *A Different Silence* wherein the man is associated with severity, control, and even the act of killing, while the woman is consigned to tears, lamentations, and pain. Yet, the truth is that for the novelist pain emerges as a suspended and deferred reality one that remains latent until the very moment of its weaving. This moment reveals its full content only in the presence of an audience that is diverse, multifaceted, and receptive. Such a condition poses a challenge to the centrality of plural authority and to the genuine presence of the suffering body and spirit. This authentic presence represents, without a doubt, the deconstruction of the very act of weaving pain. In this way, *The Purple Hibiscus* becomes a text that offers a reading of the forbidden, the central, and the marginal.

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