
Analysis of Symbolism in Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus* uses many types of symbolism to express Papa's abusive behavior towards his wife and children. Within the novel, there are many symbols being used to help develop the novel, in the text; the four major ones being Love Sip Tea, Figurines, Lipstick, and Laughter. They all played a major role in the story. The love sip tea is a tea that burns Kambili and Jaja tongue badly, ruled by her father whose power conflicts with love and pain. The Figurines is an anomaly that leads Mama, Jaja and Kambili to freedom, which ends the whole family suffering. The lipstick represents empowerment and independence for Kambili as being a woman. The laughter is another symbol, a symbol that leads Kambili of being more active in the novel. In the novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie expresses different types of symbolism that affect the daily lives of Kambili's family through Papa's abusive behavior towards them. This means that experiencing a different home and their living ways it changes their perspective of Papa. Adichie is trying to persuade the reader that as people age, they become more independent and they stand up and be more liberal for themselves.

Adichie uses the Love Sip Tea to share Papa's abusive actions towards Kambili and Jaja. Papa is in charge of the drink in the family. He named the tea, "a love sip" as it means, "giving love" or "receiving love". Jaja and Kambili takes a sip as it means for Papas love to be consumed into them. The tea would burn both of their tongues badly. Kambili stated: "The tea was always too hot, always burned my tongue, and if lunch was something peppery, my raw tongue suffered" (Adichie 8). Here, Kambili shares how the drink was always hot & the aftermath of drinking the tea. More going into the phrase, "Always too hot, always burned my tongue" revealing on how abusive Papa is, he forces Jaja and Kambili to take a sip as it's very hot.

Adichie also uses the Figurines as an example to show Papa's anger that leads him to being so violent, and as he throws Mama's figurines on Palm Sunday. The Figurines embody mama. She treated the figurines like her prize possession, as she thinks it would help her find a way to stop the abuse that Papa does to her and the kids. Kambili states: "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". Here, Papa is trying to release his anger out due to Jaja refusing to go to communion, as he said, it gave him bad breath. The start of the phrase, "things started to fall apart", revealing that the figurines was the beginning of their journey to freedom, and the ending of the family's sufferings from Papa's violent ways towards the family.

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Throughout the novel, Adichie mentions Amaka's red Lipstick as it's a representation of Symbolism. The lipstick is a symbol of femininity, a woman and sexual awareness. Throughout the novel, Kambili notices that Amaka and Auntie Ifeoma wears shiny bronze lipstick, while Kambili and her mother have cracked lips with peeling skin. "I took Amaka's lipstick from the top of the dresser and ran it over my lips. It looked strange, not as glamorous as it did on Amaka; it did not even have the same bronze shimmer. I wiped it off. My lips looked pale, a dour brown. I ran the lipstick over my lips again and my hands shook". Here shows how Kambili has always wanted to wear lipstick just like Auntie Ifeoma and Amaka, but due to Papa's violence, she has always been afraid to do so. As she was out visiting Auntie Ifeoma's house, she committed a sin. Even after she commits this sin, she never began to ask for forgiveness. Kambili didn't really care about it or less to even think about what her consequences could be. Not only she tried the lipstick on once, but she tried it on again. "I looked down at my hand, at the smudge of hastily wiped lipstick that still clung to the sweaty back of my hands. I had not realized how much i had put on. It's ... a stain". Here, also goes back to the first quote, Kambili is showing how clueless she is with the lipstick. She doesn't know how to put it on the right way. Kambili has never worn lipstick because she was never able to wear it due to her father's violent action. Kambili also comes to notice that the lipstick comes to represent her awareness of self as a woman.

The laughter symbolizes Kambili's development and growth. The laughter comes throughout Auntie Ifeoma's house during the week that Papa let her visit. She notices how Auntie Ifeoma's household always have laughter and hers didn't. "We always spoke with a purpose back home, especially at the table, but my cousins seemed to simply speak and speak and speak". Here Kambili notices that during meals over Auntie Ifeoma's house there's always talking and laughing, in and out, throughout the house, even during lunch. The phrase, "we always spoke with a purpose back home" reveals that under Papa's roof, there was barely any movements nor talking. It wasn't normal for anyone to speak under Papa's roof on a daily basis.

Within the novel, there were many symbols that help develop the ideas throughout the novel. Adichie mentioned a numerous amount of symbols, the important ones being Love Sip Tea, Figurines, Amaka's Lipstick, and Laughter. As Kambili and her family experience these symbols, it developed the theme of the family's growing defiance towards Papa. Facing these different types of Symbolism led the family to an ending of their sufferings. Each of these symbols creates a meaning. Love Sip Tea is an example of Papa's abusive actions, The Figurines leading them freedom, The lipstick and the laughter leading Kambili to becoming more independent and being of herself more. Throughout the whole novel, these symbols help Kambili, Jaja and Mama prepare themselves for a new life, free from Papa's violence that occurs often.

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