

CHRISTIANISM AND COLONIZATION PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK  
IN NGOZIE ADICHIE CHIMANDA'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS* AND  
CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*.

Dr. Jean-Baptiste  
ADOUMNGAR  
[adoumngar2013@gmail.com](mailto:adoumngar2013@gmail.com)

Jean-Bruno TOZAI, PhD  
[jbtozai@yahoo.fr](mailto:jbtozai@yahoo.fr)

Florent ZAINE, PhD  
[florentbertrandzaine@yahoo.fr](mailto:florentbertrandzaine@yahoo.fr)

English Departement  
University of Bangui

Submitted: 2025-03-18

valued: 2025-04-22

validated: 2025-05-16

**Abstract:** Christianity was brought in Africa by the missionaries before the independances. Prior to its arrival, Africa had its religions and culture. Africans had their own way of life which was guided by traditional and cultural laws. After the coming of christianism on the continent, it psychologically strikes Africa and brought an unprecedented shock in the midst of Africans. Christianity and Colonization psychological shock in *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) by Ngozi Adichie Chimanda and *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe is the substance of this paper.

**Key Words:** Christianity, psychology, Africa, tradition, religion, shock.

**Resumé :** Le Christianisme est arrivé en Afrique par le biais des missionnaires avant les independances. Avant son arrivée, l'Afrique avait ses religions et cultures. Les Africains avaient leur propre mode de vie qui est dirrigé par les lois traditionnelles et culturelles. Après l'arrivée du christianisme sur le continent, celui-ci a frappé psychologiquement l'Afrique et a apporté un shock sans précédent parmi les Africains. Le shock psychologique du Christianisme et de la colonisation dans *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) de Ngozi Adichie Chimanda et *Things Fall Apart* (1958) de Chinua Achebe est la substance de cet article.

**Mots Clés :** Christianisme, Psychologie, Afrique, Tadtition, Religion.

## INTRODUCTION

In the history of Africa and its people, two significant events, slavery and colonization, have left traumatic and indelible impacts on the continent and its peoples. These two catastrophic

situations, therefore, have been reflected in Nigerian literary works. It is the case of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Things Fall Apart* respectively by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Chinua Achebe both Nigerian novelists.

However, before the white man's advent, African people had their cultures, religions and traditions. Their societies were not mindless. They had their philosophy, their ways of educating and transmitting knowledge through proverbs, riddles and tales. All this constituted the African value and identity. It is what contemporary authors such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngozi Chimanda Adichie, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Elisabeth Isichei, Ayi Kwei Armah to cite but a few, advocated and upgraded in their literary works.

According to the works of the above cited authors, life in Africa was well-structured due to a defined order, rules and laws. Within those established orders, we can find polygamy which constituted the bedrock of the African society and economy. Achebe illustrated the role of polygamy in the African society in his novel *Things Fall Apart*: He wrote:

*There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children. His name was Nwakibie and he had taken the highest but one title which a man could take in the clan. It was for this man that okonkwo worked to earn his first seed of yams. (Achebe, 1958:18).*

This quotation explains how polygamy plays important role and function in the African society, economy and family. Religion and tradition were the socle on which the traditional life is built. In this paper, both family, society and christianism psychological shock in the midst of African people have retained our attention, because those structures will allow us to demonstrate the decline caused by the wind of change that blew over Africa and disturbed its values.

Parents constituted the first elements in children's environment. What they teach their children from the upbringing, if not, the cultural background would impact their lives in their ways of behaving in the society. Most of the time, African parents raise their offsprings according to the way they have been themselves brought up. It is what we notice with the way Eugene (in Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus*) breeds his children, when comparing it with the manner he himself was directed among the missionaries. In the same order of idea, Akunna and Ezeulu respectively in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964), send their children the white man's religion to learn his religion and to be their ears there, but unfortunately things had not been as they wanted.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, it seems that the way Eugene breeds his children has something to do with the colonial period. That is why we would like to deal with that change and transitional period that marks a great turn in the individual's life in particular, and African society in general. We have adopted such an approach because from a psychoanalytical point of view, it is known that most of a person psychological troubles has its origin in their past, especially in childhood period. Unlike Eugene, Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* raised his children according to the tradition. He does not want his children to practice or to be brought up by the Whiteman's religious rules because according to him it is an abomination. To shed light on Okonkwo's thought about the new religion, when his son Nwoye abandons his ancestors' religion to join the missionaries, Chinua Achebe opines:

*You have seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If anyone of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye not while I am alive so that I can curse him. If you turn against me when i am dead, i will visit you and break your neck (Achebe 1958: 172).*

This quotation clearly shows the shock christianism disseminated during the traditional Igbo families. The shock which was spread by christianism split not only families but also the whole clan. With respect to this, Chinua Achebe again writes:

*But i fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong the bond of kinship is. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you, i fear for the clan (Achebe 1958: 167).*

Here, Achebe points out the psychological shock christianism sowed amid Africans which degenerates in an emotional disturbance among them and impacted them a great deal till today.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, we have seen in Eugene's attitude towards his children a lot of abuses, at the same time we notice in *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo's harsh attitude toward his son Nwoye because he joins christianism. It is what made us to ask ourselves the following questions: is Eugene and Okonkwo authoritarian attitude due to the missionaries' environment their children have grown up in? Was the missionaries' education of their children responsible

for their rejection of the traditional values? In the lines below, we will firstly explore christianism and tradition encounter. Secondly we will talk about christianism as the source of the traditional societal system decline and at last the shock brought about by christianism in Africa. It is in those above cited subtitles that the questions will be answered.

### **Christianism and Tradition encounter**

Missionaries arrived in Africa in the late 15th and early 16th century before any other western religion, and continued for hundreds of years. This made christianism one of the most common, propagated and popular religion Africa has ever known. The missionaries and their missions have been considered by many African writers as the forunner of the African tradition downfall. They were considered as mischief-makers, dividers and supporters of the colonizers. Ali Yigit in *The Conflictual Image of Christian missionaries in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* (2014) reports that the missionaries play heads or tails to come to Africa. He says: "Missionaries sometimes identifies themselves to the colonists and help them to enter Africa" (Yigit 2014: 136). It is for this reason that they are considered as the ones that show the way to colonizers to enter the continent. In the same order of idea, Ngugi wa Thingo'o describes the relationship between missionaries and colonists in his book entitled *Petal of Blood* published in 1977 as strongly united to accomplish the same and one goal which are among other things: cultural, political and economic control of African indigenous societies. He then enlightens:

*The missionary had traversed the seas, the forests, armed with the desire for profit that was his faith and light and the gun that was his protection. He carried the Bible; the soldier carried the gun; the administrator and the settler carried the coin. Christianity, commerce, civilisation: The Bible, the Coin, the Gun and the Holy Trinity (Ngugi 1977:88).*

The encounter of Christianity and Tradition in the Igboland caused a terrible shock in the midst of the local people for the first time. The shock was psychologic as well as moral because according to the Igbo, the white man's religion is the foreign one and it is for the first time that they saw such a thing among them. With respect to this, Achebe remarks: "The arrival of the missionaries had caused a considerable stir in the village of Mbanta". (Achebe 1958: 144). Oherieka in *Things Fall Apart* also sheds light on the psychological shock the Western religion had on the Igbo community, He says: "The Whiteman has put a knife on what held us together and we have fallen apart". (Achebe, 1958:176)

Here, Achebe explains that the struggle between christianism and tradition starts as soon as missionaries landed in the Igbo land. At the beginning of their coming, the missionaries humbled themselves and pretend to give the « word of God » to the natives. With respect to this, Achebe reports a saying of a missionary to the people of Mbanta in an evangelical gathering. He says: “We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your weaked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die” (Achebe 1958:145).

The missionaries talk to their audience (local people) smoothly to bring them to accept their religion. This made controversies among the Igbo people because they too had their gods. Telling or convincing them to accept a foreign god is a difficult task. So in order to know what will be the future of their traditions and/or religions, the elders consulted their oracle about the first appearance of the white man in the clan. The narrator states:

*The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them (...) I forgot to tell you another thing which the oracle said. It said that other white men were on their way. They were locusts, it said, and that first man was their harbinger sent to explore the terrain (Achebe 1958: 138).*

The intrusion of the missionaries in the Igbo land was predicted by the Oracle as we just see above. Its prediction happened exactly as it is said. They were indeed they were indeed locusts invading the land, propagating that the tradition and religion of the Igbo are false. The propaganda consists of convincing the Igbo to believe that the gods of their ancestors are false, and that they are worhiping idols. With respect to this Achebe rightly puts: “There are no other gods” said Mr Brown. “Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. You carve a piece of wood like that one” (he pointed at the rafters from which Akunna’s carved Ikenga hung), “and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood.” (Achebe, 1958:179).

Like Achebe, Emecheta in *The Rape of Shavi* (1983), mentioned the prediction of the Chief Priest Anoku about the arrival of the Whiteman in the Shavi Kingdom. He said: “I see the Ogene River with blood instead of clear water. Those people will bring us destruction” (Emecheta, 1983: 177). What happened after the coming of the missionaries made the Prediction of the Chief priest becomes true because the culture of the people of Shavi was despoiled and desacreted by the European missionaries.

All this is meant to neglect the African divinities and deities. Ugwu criticizes the behaviour of

missionaries toward the traditional religion as follows: « The powers of most of the divinities and deities are thereby undermined and consequently treated with contempt and levity » (Ugwu 2002: 21). According to Ugwu, Christianity desecrated traditional religion of the Africans, the missionaries encouraged local converts to destroy all signs of idolatry to come to their God, and it is what happened. With respect to this, Achebe in *Arrow of God* reports a saying of Goodcountry the colonizer to the new converts of Umuaro. He says:

*If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for faith. He added you must be ready to kill the python as the people of the rivers killed the iguana. You address the python as Father. It is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian* (Achebe, 1964: 47).

The encounter of Tradition and Christianity is like the collision of two pieces of metals, when they meet each other, it sounds with brightness and each of them wants to disintegrate the doctrine of the other. With the intense advertisement of Christianity and with the support of the new Igbo converts against the tradition, Christianity finally gets the upper hand.

### **Christianism and Colonisation as the Source of the Traditional Societal System Decline**

Perhaps there has been no more effective agent in the destabilization of the African culture than Christianity, whose frontal and total war on the African traditional religions has led to the downfall of a well structured system of Africans' beliefs, and the support of an entire culture. As the missionaries claimed and persuaded the natives that only Christianity was true. Consequently, this propaganda against African tradition has discredited and desecrated traditional gods, religions and, made tradition itself ill-founded. About the propaganda against the traditional religion. According to this, Achebe writes:

*All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us* (Achebe 1958: 146).

The misinterpretation of the African traditional religion by missionaries brought a division among the local people. This propaganda against the African religions and beliefs leads to their decline and downfall. The shock caused by the appearance of the Europeans' religion in Africa, destroyed it in all domains. The undermining of the belief in traditional gods was a devastating route that led to the collapse of a whole social system. Furthermore, the white

men made people know that they detain the key to knowledge that gave access to power and respect. This in mind, Papa-Nnukwu, Eugene's father explains in *Purple Hibiscus* that "they gathered the children under the ukwa tree (...) and taught them their religion". He goes on saying:

*One day I said to them, where is the god you worship? They said he was like Chukwu, that he was in the sky. I asked them, who is the person that was killed, the person that hangs outside the mission? They said he was the son, but that the father and the son are equal. Then I knew the white man was mad. The father and the son are equal? That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal (Adichie 2004:84).*

This quotation shows how the new religion has contributed to the upsetting of the traditional order in which old age was synonymous of wisdom and intelligence, and youth to ignorance. That reversal order and loss of authority and prestige corrupted and ended the very idea of tradition as queen Soshovi stresses, in *The Rape of Shavi*, when she says: "we have lost all, our privacy and way of life" (p.177).

As we mentioned above, when introducing this paper, we said that Africa had its own values and rules. Both were carefully wrought and moulded according to the natives' environment and outlook. Their everyday life followed a certain rhythm and laws that have been disturbed by the advent of Christianity and Colonisation in the land. From that very moment on, Africa has known dislocations, division, humiliation, and death at every social level.

In fact, the western education added to the pressure and influence from the new commercial system, Christianity and colonization dealt a lethal blow to the African traditional society. Thus, Christianity and its new ways engendered rivalries and hates among the local people. In order to understand it well, let us examine the traditional family before discovering what befell it.

The traditional family was constituted with brothers, parents and grandparents living in the same compound. With respect to this Adichie states: "They need to know their father's homestead and the members of their father's Umunna" (p.74). There was never a distinction between biological and non biological kins. At the top of the family was the father whose role was to distribute the goods produced by the family. Let us point out that the family wealth was indivisible, according to the tradition. Now the coming of Christianity and Colonisation, alongside with capitalism, has altered all that. It has completely transformed the ways of the

traditional family and that of the whole society to a larger extent. Thus the traditional family that held people together has gradually been replaced by the nuclear one.

Born under the pressure of modernity, the nuclear family has ended the notion of the extended traditional family. In this regard, to sustain our view point, Papa-Nnukwu observes: “my son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba, and yet many times i have nothing to put on my plate” (P.74).

In the traditional family such things could not happen. A son could not bear seeing his father starving. And it was shameful for him and all the family when people outside the compound heard such things. Such situations were evaded by the community. But nowadays, with the coming of modernity, nobody cares anymore. A son can deliberately refuse to feed his parents, and parents also can argue that above the age of eighteen, they can no longer feed their children because they are grown up enough to feed themselves. All these, is the consequences of the intrusion of christianism in Africa. Therefore, our quotation here shows the way the notion of the extended family started to disappear among African people due to the heavy impact and shock moderniy holds on it.

The members of the same “Umunna” (family), henceforth, are divided and each one now goes and settles apart with his children and wife. Away from traditional solidarity, the nuclear family is bound to earn its daily bread by its own means. And naturally, this has strengthened the division and the falling apart of the African societal cohesion. Certain forces such as those of the white man, once set in motion, are impossible to reverse. Such is the case with colonization. Its aftermath will forever last, because even time itself could not suppress them. Any person wishing a complete reversion to pre-colonial society will discover that those values and norms no longer exist, they have been replaced by the European values in the detriment of the African values. That is why, we can find a set of hybrid values in Africa.

### **The shock brought about by Christianity and Colonisation in Africa**

Any individual or nation attempting to navigate a new identity must first come to terms with its past. For nations, this means recognizing the roles that all cultural groups (as well as colonizing groups) have played in developing a national culture. For children, this means evaluating experiences and attempting to make sense of situations that may be beyond their understanding.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Papa-Nnukwu represents the indigenous culture, specifically that of Igboland (he is like Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*). Papa-

Nnukwu is the father of Eugene and Ifeoma. He is not from Roman Catholic, as are his children, but instead follows the traditional Igbo religion. He is the metaphorical embodiment of indigenous peoples, for Papa-Nnukwu represents native culture. It is this culture, combined with the Western culture that has created the sibling futures of Nigeria that Eugene and Ifeoma represent autocracy and democracy.

Hence, for the indigenous culture, giving way to the colonizer culture is not possible. Papa-Nnukwu is a father who must let his children become their own individuals, informed by, but not clones of Papa-Nnukwu himself. Although Eugene is not threatened by Ifeoma, perceiving her as of no threat to his rule (perhaps because of her gender), Eugene does feel threatened by Papa-Nnukwu.

Where the native culture remains, the usurping culture is threatened, in the eyes of the colonizer. For this reason, Kambili and Jaja are forbidden from visiting their grandfather without the express permission from Eugene, and this for only fifteen minutes at a time. When they do visit, they are forbidden from eating or drinking in his home, lest they ingest something unholy or idolatrous, in other words, lest they imbibe thoughts or ideas contradictory to Eugene's own.

Kambili and Jaja are left to grow up with a terribly imbalanced worldview, informed only by the limited and somewhat tyrannical way of life represented by their father; they have no comprehension of cultural heritage. As grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu should hold the role of the ultimate patriarch, but like Cronus dethroned by Zeus, Papa-Nnukwu is usurped by Eugene and relegated to having no authority. This is the fate of indigenous cultures under a colonizing power. Papa-Nnukwu is a metonymy for pure cultural past. This past cannot remain pure when colonizing forces invade its sphere. Similarly, the Igbo cannot remain as they were before the entrance of external forces. They must either assimilate or they are treated at best with suspicion and at worst as enemies.

Eugene sees the cultural past of the Igbo as pagan and therefore a threat to his church. Papa-Nnukwu, however, also views the usurping Anglo-Catholic culture with a certain skepticism, for it is overthrowing the religion he knows and replaces it with a mystery religion that makes little sense to his experiences. Papa-Nnukwu looks upon Christianity with incredulity, questioning "who is the person that was killed, the person that was hang 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 Papa-Nnukwu knew that the white man was mad" (Chimanda, 2004:84).

For a person unacquainted with Christianity, a person who identifies Christianity with usurpers, the image of Christ on the cross is violent and certain to fill the outside observer with some sense of trepidation. Christianity, to Papa-Nnukwu, is a culture that embraces the ruthless sacrifice of an innocent being.

Those who are on the path of conquest deem the lives and cultures of the indigenous peoples as collateral damage, whose sacrifice is balanced by the benefit the occupiers receive or perceive to be securing for the colonized. Imperialist regimes often consider the spread of their empires to be just, as they are spreading the light of culture and enlightenment to “savages.” Of course, this might be a widely divergent opinion than that held by the colonized people themselves.

Despite Eugene’s proscription, Kambili and Jaja are able to be with their grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, as he lies dying in Nsukka. His death is a pivotal event, allowing both Kambili and Jaja to approach adulthood with a greater understanding of themselves and a wider appreciation for familial and cultural context.

It is not an easy transition, however Kambili first begins to make the journey when she witnesses Ifeoma praying for the healing of PapaNnukwu. Kambili listens to Ifeoma petition God for Papa-Nnukwu’s recovery with prayers that are orthodox referencing the apostle Peter and the blessed Virgin; Kambili’s “Amen”, given at the end of Ifeoma’s prayers, is “a little delayed, a little surprised. When Papa prayed for PapaNnukwu, he asked only that God converted him and saved him from the raging fires of hell” (p.154).

Kambili, who has heretofore only been exposed to a religion and a worldview that is very limited, somewhat frightening, and does not allow for variation, sees in Ifeoma’s prayers a new way of living. She begins to see that there is more than one way to live a successful and Godly life.

Whereas Eugene’s prayers are doled and focused on eternal damnation, Ifeoma’s prayers for her father are full of love and hope. Papa-Nnukwu’s own prayers are full of the joy of living. This way of praying makes Ifeoma’s a more comfortable place than Eugene’s one. Being exposed to a different ways of interacting with God and the world, Kambili begins to understand that she will have a choice concerning her own future. Unfortunately, Ifeoma’s prayers for her father’s recovery go unanswered. Papa-Nnukwu, in his representation of the pure indigenous culture, necessarily cannot survive after a colonizing culture moves in.

Unlike Father Amadi and Ifeoma, who are able to leave Nigeria for other cultures that are more open to the types of government that they represent, Papa-Nnukwu cannot leave. As the traditionalist, he has been tainted by exposure to the colonizer; even should the colonial forces of Britain or Catholicism leave Nigeria, they have still left a mark. Kappor Ilan states on that score that:

*A subaltern agent cannot harken back to precolonial, pre-orientalist discourse in search of an authentic identity or out of nostalgia for lost origins. Colonial discourse has forever marked colonized and excolonised societies and for that matter colonial and ex-colonial powers, so that it is impossible to recuperate any identity un-contaminated by it (Ilan 2010:652).*

This culture clearly has no place in a modern world where the violence between groups is not for mere tribal dominance or for defense but is state-sponsored. Papa-Nnukwu is as much as a product of this idea of primal justice as he is a product of ancestor worship. Papa-Nnukwu represents all of the traditions, culture, and religion embodied in the Igbo people. However, as Baker further asserts, “emancipation from colonial domination never entails, or even suggests, fulfillment of the beautiful poetic dream implied by Aime Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*” (The Return to one’s Native Land) is a paradigmatic impossibility. Simply put, the move to post-colonialism creates much of a paradigm shift for a culture as did the initial colonial takeover, but this does not imply a simple return to the precolonial life.

It is not simply a matter of removing something which has been superficially attached, for the tenets and culture of the colonial society have been assimilated, however shallowly, into the existing paradigm. For children who were born into colonial life, there is no memory of life before that time, except as it exists in the collective cultural history of indigenous peoples. This is made clear in the way Kambili and Jaja relate to their grandfather. The children are fascinated by it and a little bit afraid of Papa-Nnukwu, but they find his rituals and beliefs to be something alien.

The incorporation of colonial values (Christianism, English language and Western ideas of luxury) precludes any ability to sink back into an indigenous paradigm. Papa-Nnukwu, more than any other father figure in the novel, is unable to continue existing as a potential future. He cannot simply leave to find a culture more welcoming to his beliefs, for there is none following the destruction of his own. As his culture dies, so to Papa-Nnukwu, as an agent of

that culture, must die. The respective ways Ifeoma and Eugene handle the death of their father represent different ways of dealing with the past.

After Papa-Nnukwu's death, the first question Eugene asks of Ifeoma is not whether there was any pain or any final words of wisdom, but whether Ifeoma had called a priest to perform extreme unction. Further, Eugene refuses to have any part in a traditional burial. Although it is later discovered that Eugene does, in fact, supplying funds for such a Pagan burial, his motivations are suspect, Eugene's dealings with traditional, non-Catholic society generally provide him with some sort of benefit, usually by way of status or power.

Eugene's method is to completely eradicate the indigenous identity of his father, even in death, where Papa- Nnukwu cannot refuse him. By forcing Catholic ceremony onto Papa-Nnukwu's death, Eugene is attempting to remove cultural memory as well as the culture itself. However, Ifeoma refuses to comply with Eugene's wishes. She puts:

*Aunty Ifeoma got up and started to shout. Her voice was unsteady. I will put my dead husband's grave up for sale, Eugene, before I give our father a Catholic funeral. Do you hear me? I said I will sell Ifediora's grave first! Was our father a Catholic? I ask you, Eugene, was he a Catholic? Uchu gbadi! Aunty Ifeoma snapped her fingers at Papa; she was throwing a curse at him. Tears rolled down her cheeks (pp.188-189).*

Ifeoma feels that the greatest dishonor that can be done to her father is to deny him his traditional funeral. When a culture passes, it can be kept alive in cultural memory. To do otherwise is not only to lose the memory of the culture but also to lose the lessons gained and maintained in ethnic heritage. Papa-Nnukwu's portrait is the embodiment of his cultural memory: upon the painting's destruction it becomes something that lives apart from the physical realm, never to be retrieved but in memory. Memory fades with time, as does native wholeness. Just as indigenous society cannot be recovered once a colonizer moves in, Papa-Nnukwu dies under colonialism. The painting that Amaka makes of Papa-Nnukwu becomes something much more than a piece of art when it is bequeathed to Kambili.

For Kambili, the painting represents her final link to a departed past, one which she had only begun to find. While Kambili was a child, she was bound only to the history and the culture that her father allowed her to see; she was the newly colonized land, the infant nation of emerging Nigeria, and her father shaped her entire outlook. However, as Kambili enters her adolescence and incipient womanhood, she begins to shape her own identity. She has begun

to explore her history and that which has shaped her (Papa-Nnukwu and the Igbo culture, although indelibly changed by English colonization, have certainly shaped Kambili through their impact on Nigerian history) yet, with Papa-Nnukwu's death, Kambili loses first-person contact with this history and must navigate only through her memory of it.

This history, then, behaves toward futures in the same way that Papa-Nnukwu's grandfather behaves toward Kambili: they become frozen and static. Eugene feels threatened by Papa-Nnukwu and his potential impact on the development of Kambili and Jaja, even as colonizers fear the history and legends of the overtaken peoples. Where these legends remain in the public consciousness, they can serve as rallying points for dissention. Therefore, when Eugene discovers the painting, he behaves predictably and then, destroys it, the same way conquerors often attempt to destroy local things like temples.

After Eugene's attempts to exert his authority, "the painting was gone. It already represented something lost, something [Kambili] had never had, would never have. Now even that reminder was gone, and at Papa's feet lay pieces of paper streaked with earth-tone colors" (p.210). Kambili never had access to her own history, and now that history, in its "earth-tone colors," was going the way of the earth itself, in an ironic echo of the Biblical passage "(....) to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3: 19).

## **CONCLUSION**

Nigeria's history, the history of the people of Igboland, is now enmeshed with the desires of outside Western forces. Rather than producing fruit itself, the native culture becomes the soil in which the future is cultivated. Native wholeness has passed, but there remains in the upcoming generation cultural memory which must integrate with the forces still active in the country. It falls to the multiple versions of Nigeria that remain to determine the course of Nigeria's future. The psychological shock brought in by colonizers in Africa in general and in the Igbo land in particular, the colonization period has devastating consequences in Africa as a whole. African Families, communities, villages have been split up because of the presence of Western colonizers. Traditions, customs and ways of life in Africa have been completely changed due to the intrusion of christianism in Africa. The two works of the Nigerian novelists under study, underlined clearly how Africans have suffered from the shock brought by the western colonization and christianism.

### References

- Adichie, Ngozi Chimamanda (2004). *Purple Hibiscus*. Lagos: Farafina.
- Achebe Chinua (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann.
- Achebe Chinua (1964). *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann.
- Ngugi wa Thiogo'o (1977). *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann.
- Ugwu (2002). "Man and His Religion in Contemporary Society". Nsukka: MCK Social Press and Jobus International Press.
- Yigit, Ali (2014). "The Conflictual Image of Christian Missionaries in Achebe's Things Fall Apart". *Asian journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* Vol. 3 (3) August 2014.