

INTERTEXTUALITY AS A VITAL ASPECT OF LITERARY CREATIVITY: A STUDY OF CHIMAMANDA'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

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ABSTRACT: *Some critical theories have evolved over the years following Plato's inauguration of enquiries into the nature and value of literature. Some of them are mimesis, pragmatism, autobiography, and so on. Each theory covers a certain province in the universe of literary creativity and criticism. Mimetic theory for instance is concerned with literature as imitation; and pragmatic theory seeks to ascertain the effect of literature on individuals and society. Autobiographical theory dwells on the creative writer and their inspiration; and Reader Response theory describes the position of the reader in the creative process; while formalism designates and treats the text as an autonomous entity. One aspect of literary creativity and criticism, intertextuality, has however not been given so much attention despite its enormous presence in the arena of modern literary practicum. Foregrounded by German Julia Kristeva as a vital aspect of literary creativity, intertextuality designates a literary text as a field for the display of influences by some other texts written before it. This study undertakes a critical validation of Kristeva's postulation with an intertextual survey of the world of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. It was discovered that *Purple Hibiscus* shows evidences of her having read innumerable literary texts prior to her writing it, so that the novel demonstrates identifiable inter-textual relationship with a lot of other literary works written before it.*

KEY WORDS: Chimamanda Adichie, Chinua Achebe, intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, *Purple Hibiscus*

INTRODUCTION

It has been affirmed in numberless occasions that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's profound creative energy is hugely reinforced by diverse influences from the literary works of her predecessors. Chinyere Egbuta accentuates this view in her journal article on *Purple Hibiscus* by designating Adichie as one of "the most intellectual and research-minded world novelists of the present time" (Nig Lit Today, 95). Brenda Cooper's erudite piece on the same novel alludes to great literary oaks like Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong' O, and Alice Walker, as some of Adichie's iconic model's patterns and images of whose works are replicated in her novel (*New Novels in African Lit.*, 1). Both comments highlight Adichie's extensive and sustained research outlook when writing

her works. They signify her knack of looking beyond her painting canvas to get from external sources splashes of colours for the fringe adornment of the beauty of her work.

It is, however, not out of place to remark that *research* should not be considered as the right word in reference to Adichie's creativity. It does translate into such a more discriminatory and precise term as inter-textuality, which rhymes more appropriately with the central concern of this paper. In that case, Adichie may more precisely be regarded as an avid and voracious reader than a researcher, despite that some of her works show evidences of being partly rooted in extensive research.

The critical phenomenon in focus here is inter-textuality. It is a modern critical term traceable to German Julia Kristeva who coined it in reference to the relationship shared by any one text with some other texts written before it. Kristeva however did not invent the phenomenon, she only gave it a fresh name and a more discriminatory meaning than what it signified earlier on. The concept was muted first by the neo-classical critics, who regarded model classical works as touchstones providing artistic templates to be adopted by the writers of their period. This signifies that it was in the neo-classical period that the idea was muted for the first time that a text should have a traditional kinship with its predecessors. With his "Tradition and the Individual Talent", T.S. Eliot ushered the concept on to the critical arena of the modern period. He enunciated with it the intersection between a writer's distinctive style as the peculiar manifestation of their talent and the established traditional mode of their chosen genre of expression. And for this vision of his, he postulated that "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (Oxford Anthology, 2014).

Julia Kristeva gave the phenomenon, as has been stated, a more specific meaning than Eliot's postulation. Abrams explains in *A glossary of Literary Terms* Kristeva's concept by postulating that inter-textuality is used as a modern critical approach "to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text is in fact made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts" (364). Abram further states that Kristeva believes indeed that any single text is the "site for an interaction of numberless other texts." (364).

Purple Hibiscus shows evidences of Adichie having read innumerable literary texts prior to her writing it, so that the novel demonstrates identifiable inter-textual relationship with a lot of other literary works written before it. Rather than define Adichie as a copyist, however, it shows her total subscription to the artistic tradition established and sustained by her predecessors. It also illustrates a notable skill revealed in her ability to invest her work with impressions from other texts without jeopardizing the resonance of her peculiar voice as a distinctive writer. This paper examines Adichie's exploration of the concept of intertextuality in *Purple Hibiscus*.

Inter-textuality in *Purple Hibiscus*

Aspects of intertextual relations can be detected between Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and some other preceding works, among which Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* comes perhaps most readily to

mind. The clue to the inter-textual relation between the two novels consists in the title of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which echoes in the first phrase of the first sentence of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*: "Things started to fall apart" (11). It is noticeable while reading Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* that she wishes to foster a relationship of continuity with Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* by highlighting in her novel a more recent historical dimension of the same phenomenon depicted in *Things Fall Apart*. *Things Fall Apart* displays the dreadful exploitation, suppression and cultural conflict that characterised the initial periods of colonialism. The mainstream Umuofia community fought hard to reject it, but the Whiteman was simply too invincible for them, and so they were compelled to carry the burden of colonialism as an unsavoury yoke of foreign intrusion. It should therefore be expected that Africans would cast off the banes of Whiteman's hegemony as soon as colonialism was over. This was the vision behind the frantic drive for independence and the reason for the erection of certain structures meant to annihilate all forms of imperialism. One of those structures was the University of Nigeria Nsukka, as depicted in Adichie's *Half of A Yellow Sun* (32). Adichie reveals in *Purple Hibiscus* that, decades after independence, the white man's hegemony still rages unabated.

The inter textual continuity between the two novels consists in the irony of the situation in which a great man like Okonkwo dies a shameful death trying to ward off Whiteman's alien influence on his culture, while Eugene Achike in *Purple Hibiscus*, another great tribes man in a latter era, dies equally shamefully at the peak of his efforts to firmly entrench the same influences which his tribesman has earlier rejected at the cost of his own life. Both novels depict aspects of the chaos, disorder and disaster that characterise the global modern period, each concerned with an aspect of the same set of problems manifesting in a different historical period and milieu. There is no reason to believe that Achebe went beyond the vision of exploring this reality by fostering an intertextual correlation between his novel and the source of its title. Adichie is vastly different in her extensive and deep exploration of the source and full meaning of "Things Fall Apart" as a phrase. Clues exist in her novel to reveal that she read very well certain lines of W.B. Yeats' "The second coming" from which the phrase was adapted. She recreates in her novel images gleaned from the poem with the end of clarifying and intensifying their meanings. The technical result is the amazing fostering of an inter-textual relationship between *Purple Hibiscus* and Yeats' "The second coming". A certain line in Yeats' poem alludes to "the blood-dimmed tide (which) is let loose" (1700). Adichie reflects this image of blood severally in her novel, and particularly in the episode when Eugene slugs his wife for hesitating to join in visiting Fr. Benedict after a mass. Kambili renders a grisly account of what she witnesses, the ugly sight of blood everywhere, consequent upon which is the loss of the unborn baby in her mother's womb.

The image of blood is also associated with the red hibiscus petals dotting the different parts of the novel, bringing to mind, as Brenda cooper observes, Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*.

It also brings to mind the wastage of Adisa's blood by the agents of imperialism in Festus Iyayi's *Violence*. Adichie is therefore not the first African writer to employ the image of blood in the artistic depiction of the menace of the forces of imperialism. She is merely drawing on the traditional pool of creative connectivity initiated and sustained by her forebears.

Those red hibiscus petals in *Purple Hibiscus*, and indeed in any other African post-colonial text, are reminiscent of “the worst” in Yeats’ poem which “are full of passionate intensity” (1700). The purple hibiscuses represent Yeats’ “the best” which now “lack all conviction” (1700). What makes the image of blood most poignant in *Purple Hibiscus* is that it signifies the destruction of the future, the killing of Africa’s pristine innocence. In his *God’s Beauty and Truth*, Ejike Aneke (I) explains the core spiritual aspect of the human foetus. In his parlance, the very moment the foetus is conceived into existence, is the moment it mostly resembles God on account of its pristine quality of divine innocence. It is for this reason, somewhat ironically, considered more heinous to kill a foetus than to commit plain regicide. This also explains the ruefulness of Yeats’ tone in his lamentation that “the ceremony of innocence is drowned” (Oxford Anthology ii 1700).

Kambili and Jaja should be regarded as existing within the purview of adolescent innocence. Of the two, Kambili is attuned to people and grows in consciousness by observing actions and utterances. Jaja differs vastly in his own orientation, being often attuned to nature. The purple hibiscuses in aunty Ifeoma’s garden so much holds his attention that he shares with them a bonding fellowship from which he acquires a vital lesson of life, a lesson he would scarcely have so effectively learnt by any dint of human interaction. He learns mysteriously that the red hibiscuses denote the untoward influences antagonising his existence, while the purple denote his position as an endangered protagonist who must surmount all prevailing odds to overcome his predicaments. It so happens that the efflorescence of the purple hibiscuses over the red correspond in time and intensity with the waxing of Kambili and Jaja’s innate resources of revolutionary spirit.

It is noteworthy that Adichie takes the two youngsters to UNN for them to learn the crucial lessons of life, but she ironically never exposes them to the orthodox classroom scenario for the vital lessons to be taught and learnt. What is also puzzling is her notion that Jaja’s own school of lesson and experience consists in the experimental garden of hibiscuses, as though nature alone can serve as such an effective mode of instruction, in which case nature serves as Jaja’s veritable school of revolutionary vision. It is a wonder to imagine how Adichie came about such an insight that inspired her to create such an arcane scenario, in which a young lad receives life’s education through his interaction with the non-human aspect of nature. The scenario signifies Adichie’s unreserved subscription to certain aspects of Romanticism as veritable access to unknown modes of experience. It is perhaps also pertinent to infer that she is merely expressing certain Romantic sentiments as underlying vision to the creation of certain instructional aspects of *Purple Hibiscus*. Her vision corresponds with that of Wordsworth in “The Prelude”, wherein Wordsworth considers nature as a more effective instructor than any human agent, the notion of which underpins his concept of the natural world as a veritable school. In that part of the poem entitled “School Time”, Wordsworth undertakes a journey to the physical environs of an orthodox school at Hawks head. Rather than recount in the poem his experiences in the grammar school there, he accounts for his deeply experiential brand of education received outside of the classroom at the hands of nature, in the surrounding bushes and forests (Oxford Anthology ii 196). It takes this experience to place a stamp of certitude on the notion of an inter-textual relationship between *Purple Hibiscus* and Wordsworth’s “The Prelude”. Jaja’s attunement to the flowers compares to the attunement of Wordsworth’s persona to the daffodils in Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”. In both

cases, two young lads are depicted each to enjoy a more fulfilling and exhilarating intercourse with nature than with any human company or teacher. Wordsworth's persona actually considers the daffodils as "Jocund company" (Oxford Anthology ii 174).

From the romantic movement, a rather jerky leap is warranted here for the discussion to land on the African American literary landscape, in search of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The aim of such a journey is to ascertain the degree, if there is any, to which that novel can be said to have influenced Adichie while writing *Purple Hibiscus*. It is pertinent to start by recognising that Adichie's work is a sustained diatribe on religious fanaticism. In that case she should rightly be expected to reflect the problem as it really is in the society, in order to constitute her work into a veritable mirror of its society, and also to underline the view that the essence of fiction is its truth value. It is however a fact that the aspect of catholic fanatical fundamentalism reflected in *Purple Hibiscus* is not an actual issue in any part of the Nigerian society, as it is depicted in the character of Eugene Achike. Saying too-long a grace before meal for instance, is not at all an issue in the theatre of Nigerian religious problems. Yet, despite its total absence in the reality of Nigerian socio-religious situation, Adichie still considers it appropriate to problematize it in her novel (104). So long as over-stretched pre-meal grace is not part of Nigerian religious predicament, its being highlighted as a veritable problem in Adichie's novel suggests that Adichie must have looked beyond any specific Nigerian situation in order to universalise her themes and motifs. The picture of obnoxiously long pre-meal graces, which recurs more than twice in *Purple Hibiscus*, is engrafted from Maya Angelou's *I know why the Caged Bird Sings*. In that novel, Marguerite recounts the pastoral shenanigans of a certain greedy Revered Thomas who, when allowed to partake of their meals, strives to obscure his ungodly greed by saying each time a long grace "on and on and on to a God who I thought must be bored to hear the same things over and over again"(41). Hell is another motif in Adichie's novel whose origin is traceable to Angelou's novel. Kambili narrates in one occasion her father's attitude to the ilk of Papa Nnuku. "He was one of those whose conversion we prayed for so that they did not end up in the everlasting torment of hellfire" (85). That piece of religious bugaboo takes its origin from Marguerites comment in Angelou's novel, *I know why the Caged Bird Sings*, "I knew if a person truly wanted to avoid hell and brimstone, and being roasted forever in the devil's fire, all she had to do was memorize Deuteronomy and follow its teaching, word for word (42).

Deuteronomy is the book of the law, such as accentuates the centrality of punishment as deterrent to wrong doing. That outlook is the product of a tunnel vision antithetical to Christ's dispensation of love. Deuteronomy foregrounds the myth of hellfire as the inescapable destiny of even the least transgressors. The problem with that perspective is its obliteration of the importance of God's love as the necessary grace for salvation. It also portrays God as a merciless potentate more interested in punishment and torture than in forgiveness and reconciliation. Eugene views God not as love but as the embodiment of unforgiveness and this view of his underscores his cruelty to the members of his family. Adichie seeks to propose that Eugene's mind-set produces an aspect of religiosity antithetical to love. In the bid to protect his family from the threat of hellfire, Eugene subjects them to inconceivable degree of physical cruelty. It is, however, inescapable from the mimetic point of view to wonder if such inhumanity is an authentic reality in the actual face of imperialism as a

Nigerian experience. This doubt opens up another page to reveal yet more evidences of Adichie's knack of fostering inter-textuality between her novel and the preceding works of other writers.

The doctrine that people must be subjected to extreme physical torture as atonement for transgression is a concept exhaustively treated in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, in which work the doctrine is aptly defined as "the arcane ritual of corporal mortification" (201).

Another link in the chain of inter-textuality between Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is recognizable in the high regard and laudation placed on teachers by both writers. Teachers are designated in both works as the repositories of historical, intellectual and theoretical knowledge. They are also portrayed as heroes and mascots as embodied in Langdon of *The Da Vinci Code* and Auntie Ifeoma of *Purple Hibiscus*. Both Langdon and Auntie Ifeoma are circumstanced to each explain to their listeners the crucial notion that paganism is not satanic and only seems to be so on account of its having been over the years deliberately and systematically defamed by Christians. Besides that, Langdon serves in Brown's novel as the light of the way to the realisation of Sophie's destiny, while Auntie Ifeoma of Adichie's novel serves the same purpose for Kambili and Jaja. If the above is not enough to establish an inter-textual link between both novels, it may be helpful to muse over the fact that in both novels the Holy Communion is referred to profanely as wafers, despite that the catholic's would like it to be called "the host" (14) in order to respect its sacrosanct ritualistic mystique.

Both novels also show some affinity in their using foreign words for objects that otherwise have English names, exploiting the effect of those words to bring into their narrative a sense of beauty in sound aimed more at entrancing than persuading the reader. Adichie no doubt borrowed that leaf from Dan Brown. *The Da Vinci Code* parades such foreign words as *oculus* and *gnome* (67,147,160) and *Purple Hibiscus* parades such as *etagere* (1, 15, 290) and *oblade* (1). Such quaint and exotic words, as has been hinted, serve more as verbal ornaments in the narrative than meaning signifiers.

The French word *etagere* used in *Purple Hibiscus* can actually be replaced with its English equivalent to make more immediate meaning to the English speaking readers who are her primary audience, but Adichie refrains from doing that on account of her aesthetic agenda. Adichie Certainly did not adopt the word from Dan Brown's novel; it is there on the first page of Ibsen's *A Doll House*, used by Ibsen to denote a prop on his stage, designating it as "An etagere with China figures and other small art objects" (43). It is amazing that the object named *etagere* in *Purple Hibiscus* is also the platform for the display of foreign art objects, also small in size, described as "finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers" (15). A great deal of wonder is elicited by the fact that the same object in each of the texts serves as display platform for miniature foreign artefacts. It is a clue to the reality of a coalition between the two texts. Further probing discloses that both works employ those artefacts as symbols to reflect the sham lives of their characters with regard to the husband-wife relationship. Both Helmer (of *A Doll's House*) and Eugene (of *Purple Hibiscus*) have been respectively brainwashed by society and religion into trifling with their wives,

totally unaware of the welter of power innate in them as women. The end reversals of both works depict each woman asserting her unsuspected feminine faculties to deal with her errant husband.

It is also noteworthy that Beatrice of *Purple Hibiscus* wallows in the initial delusion that her husband's imperious attitude towards her is a brand of God's love. Nora of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is also deluded about Helmer's veiled chauvinistic attitude towards her. Both women attain the same type and level of insight towards the end of the texts and take each a definite step that turn the table around to liberate them from imperious and poignant male dominance. The reader may be deceived into believing that both cases differ for the fact that Helmer's hectoring over his wife does not closely resemble Eugene's plain violence and physical cruelty. A closer scrutiny however reveals that both cases translate each into a form of violence, to the effect that while Helmer's is structural violence, Eugene's is purely physical. Eugene's physical violence to his wife has always irked Jaja, on account of his mother's suffering in the hands of his father. For this reason, Jaja later regrets that he has not even for once, confronted his father in the bid to protect his mother. He seems to learn this from Obiora, whom he adjudges as playing a manly role in aunty Ifeoma's family (84).

Further probing into the basis of Jaja's sentiment reveals that his model is actually not Obiora, because Obiora is not shown anywhere in the novel defending his mother against paternal brutality. Logic and reason propose therefore that Obiora is not Adichie's real model while creating that regret in Jaja's mind. The model in question can be found in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, in a picturesque description of how the deadly albino Monk named Silas has been circumstanced in his adolescent days to defend his mother against his father's demoniacal brutality (110). Whereas violence is totally absent in aunty Ifeoma's family, the *Purple Hibiscus* episode in which Eugene beats the members of his family compares precisely to how Silas' father slugs his own family members in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*.

Angels and Demons is another novel by Dan Brown which seems to have left its imprints in the universe of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. This becomes obvious at the realization that both novels are each a sustained diatribe on certain aspects of the catholic doctrine. Priesthood celibacy is an aspect of the catholic doctrine deplored in Brown's *Angels and Demons*, as highlighted in the dialogue between Mortati and the Camerlengo. The theme of the dialogue is that the Pope has had a son with a Nun, which seems to have tarnished the covenant between God and the catholic clergy. The Camerlengo's pious indignation over the information is not mitigated by Mortati's explanation that nothing but helpless love was the basis of their union. He is not even placated by the further explanation that Pope and Nun achieved their unremitting dream of having their own baby by means of artificial insemination, thereby avoiding the taboo sexual act. All through the explanation, the Camerlengo's mother's indignant voice from her grave rings stridently in his ears: "A promise to God is the most important promise of all. Never break a promise to God." (679) The Camerlengo still keeps up his indignation until he receives the bewildering knowledge that he is the very son in question of the Pope and the Nun.

Brown's postulation in this dramatic dialogue is that celibacy denies the catholic clergy the chances of participating in "God's ultimate miracle of creation" (679). Adichie constructs Fr. Amadi-Kambili scenes to reproduce the Pope-and-Nun love drama. It would be absurd to attempt a negation of the high-scale of love between them, so deep that Amaka and Obiora suspect their indulging in sex or doing something akin to that. Amaka even expects that Fr. Amadi will abandon his Priesthood for his love of Kambili. And a market stall hair stylist regrets that Fr. Amadi's splendid maleness will be wasted by his priesthood celibacy (242). At a certain high point in Kambili's love for Fr. Amadi, her statements are reminiscent of the Nun's sentiment in Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*, wondering how Fr. Amadi's smooth skin would not be passed on to his own biological offspring (187).

Part of the effect of imperialism on Eugene Achike is his obsessive Europeanism for which Brenda Cooper considers him as "a psychopathic anglophile slavishly mimicking white ways" (New Novels 2). This is illustrated in the scene where Eugene alters his accent when speaking with white people. "Papa changed his accent when he spoke, sounding British..." (54). One should wonder how this image crops up in Adichie's creative consciousness. Going through African works of literature concerned with post-colonial experience, it is discovered that the ilk of Eugene Achike can be found in the world of Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Armah creates in his novel a space in which he delineates the pastime of some black men who strive to be white men in black skin, mimicking the white men's manner of articulation. Armah depicts a black man in his novel trying to speak like a white man "and the sound that came out of his mouth reminded the listener of a constipated man, straining in his first minute on top of the lavatory seat." (125). It is incontestable that this scenario establishes an inter-textual relation between Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Armah's novel.

Adichie does not stop there, but also leaves in her works evidences of her having creatively adopted images from other African texts. At the stall to which Fr. Amadi takes Kambili to have her hair plaited, the seemingly insignificant incidence happens of a cockroach running across the floor and being crushed under foot by the hair stylist. The cockroach is meant to be viewed as a symbol, and its sudden annihilation signifies the death of a certain menace in Kambili's life. This menace is no other than that posed by her father, which consigns her to an insurmountable existential prison. Adichie calls upon Kambili to mock at her adversary by seeing in the death of the cockroach the easy elimination of all the predicaments posed for her by imperial forces. It is a kind of prediction of what will happen and also a link in the chain of the structural causality among the different episodes in the novel.

It is, however, intriguing that Adichie considers it artistically appropriate to designate a cockroach and its circumstances as the symbols of imperial forces and their defeat. What gave her the confidence that a cockroach would be accepted by her readers as a metaphor for the white man's menace, and why should she expect any reader to invest such a meaning on the object? That is because Adichie is not the first to create such a symbol in signifying the same phenomenon. She is simply harvesting from an artistic tradition created by her forebears, among whom Athol Fugard and Ferdinand Oyono come most readily to mind.

Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* is a play on South African apartheid experience, which is an aspect of the white man's menace against Africa. In that play, Styles' photographic studio is used to symbolise the South African geopolitical space, then in the racist atmosphere of segregation laws created by the whites to victimise the blacks. These laws and their allied influences are symbolised by the cockroaches that Style comes up against in his bid to take possession of the shop (11). The war he wages against the cockroaches is an allegory of the war that blacks were waging against the white supremacists, against apartheid and the allied segregation pass laws. When the insecticide doom fails to work for Styles, he applies on the cockroaches a live cat that eats them all up before the next dawn. It is pertinent to state that the total elimination of the cockroaches in that scenario is Fugard's allegorical prediction of the eventual demise of the Whiteman's apartheid regime. Ferdinand Oyono's *The Old Man and The Medal* deploys cockroaches in signifying the eventual end of the white man's menace. At the very moment Meka realises that the white man's claim of friendship is a lie, cockroaches emerge everywhere around him and begin to fly in a drone out of his world. Their exile allegorises the exile from Meka's mind of all sentiments rendering him a victim of the white man's colonial tricks. "Laughter came gushing out of the hut, spreading panic among the poultry, peacefully chasing the cockroaches and driving them across the cemetery of the Catholic Church." (*The Old Man*, 166)

Readers of this paper may wonder why Tewfik al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach* receives no mention here despite the fact that it employs more elaborate symbolic use of the cockroach than any of the mentioned texts. It is true that the predicament of the cockroach in the al-Hakim's play symbolizes a problematic human condition, and that the predicament takes up the entire plot of the play for which it should have been considered major enough to be given a place here. Yet, the play is not as appropriate in this paper as the other texts. While in the other texts the cockroaches constitute the menace that render the human condition problematic, the cockroach in al-Hakim's play is the victim of the problematic human condition and does not constitute the problem itself. And its predicament does not signify imperialism as is the case in each of the other texts.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion examines intertextuality as a vital aspect of literary creativity using Chimamnda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* for analysis. This paper points out that Adichie's profound creative energy is hugely reinforced by diverse influences from the literary works of her predecessors. However, she does not indiscriminately choose works to intertext hers with. She does so with discretionary selectivity that lends emphasis to whatever theme she presents to her readers. This is because she achieves the aim of making her readers see that other writers have in advance of her work observed the necessity of reflecting in their works certain aspects of the human condition reflected in her own. This gives her work a broad universal scope without jeopardizing her intention to reflect her local conditions.

Purple Hibiscus demonstrates identifiable inter-textual relationship with a lot of other literary works written before it. This Adichie explores through the depiction of cockroaches, images of

blood, hell, etc used in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, *Old Man and the Medal*; *Petals of Blood*, *Violence*; and *I Know Why the Caged Birds Sing* respectively. Other links in the chain of intertextuality between Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and other texts include Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons*, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, to mention a few. By intertexting her work with others like *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels and Demons*, *A Doll House*, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, Adichie has succeeded in making her readers to realise that human societies are the same everywhere and pass through similar experiences. Adichie has thus joined some of her predecessors in revealing to young creative writers that there is in intertextuality a rich source of insight and inspiration.

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