

The Recepteur and the Emetteur: A Case Study of Paternity in the Works of Chinua Achebe, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

by

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Abstract

This study examines the literary relationship between Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Influence study is an important area of study in African literature. It helps to set the scope of especially African literature. In this the plot and characters of three texts are juxtaposed against each other and conclusions drawn on the influence of one on the other. It is herein argued that in *Purple Hibiscus*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie creates originality for her debut novel though traces of influence from the two precursors are somewhat obvious in her work. The qualitative method of research analysis was used.

Keywords: Influence study, intertextuality, paternity, allusion, recepture, emitture

Epigraph

Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration, no single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures.... (Matthew Arnold,1857)

Introduction

Paternity or filiation refers to the relationship that exists between works of art, like a form of blood relationship that exists among kin. With manuscripts such as this, it relates to transmission from version to version as discoursed and reconstructed by scholars. By this, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Nervous Conditions* (1988), and *Purple Hibiscus* (2006) may be said to belong to the same genre with the same properties of a novel, in other words, they have filial relations. Closely related to filiation is an affiliation, which deals with the situation whereby there are no direct inferences but only parallels and resemblances, thus one text seen in the light of another text. Filiation and affiliation both fall under influence study.

Influence study refers to the ability to directly or indirectly control or affect the actions of other people or things. It also applies to external factors found in an author's work. The meaning extends to who or what is being affected and to what end. It pays keen attention to the one who emits the influence, referred to as the emitter. Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga are the emitters in this instance.

Closely related to influence study is source study. This deals specifically with the one being influenced, thus the recepture. The aim is to ascertain an author's development in relation to other authors. Plato's idea of imitation differs from that of Horace. Plato admonishes imitation from the source which is far beyond the reach of the ordinary poet while Horace advocates for imitation from nature; nature here symbolizing former poets. In this work, we assess Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's imitation of Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga. By comparing the texts aforementioned, we shall be engaging in an intertextual study of these texts.

Given the just stated which is in sync with the epigraph, intertextuality argues out that no text exists in isolation, every text is under the influence of another text but later becomes transformed into a new text. With this background, literary parallels, echoes, adaptation, derivatives and parodying shall, where possible, be traced in this research. As usual with the intertextual study, the plots, characters, themes and some aspect of time shall be appropriately studied to ascertain areas of convergence and divergence. For easy reference, the texts understudy here, *Things Fall Apart*, *Nervous Condition* and *Purple Hibiscus* will henceforth be referred to as TFA, NC, and PH for easy referencing.

Influence study such as this is a very crucial area of literature and most especially in African literature. Among other things, it enables us to accept the fact that no art or literature is wholly independent or self-sufficient; this is because each work is influenced by the conventions of the genre, the style of the period, culture and practices of other writers.

Despite its importance, it is an unpopular subject area in, especially most African universities. Sackey explains that difficulty of taking up comparative study is because the one studying it must master one subject to trace the influence of the other in it (4). Influence study when it involves more than two texts, such as this paper, deserves keen scholarly attention.

Heather attributes the influence of several writers: Tsitsi Dangarembga, Yvonne Vera, and Edwidge Danticat on Adichie's PH, however, a close reading of Heather's article reveals parallels mostly between Achebe and Adichie (2). Andrade examines what she refers to as "points of conversation as well as potential or visible differences" between the Adichie, Achebe and Dangarembga texts (8). However, her analysis, like Heather's is skewed, as it dwells largely on the parallels between the Adichie and Dangarembga texts. This work, however, focuses on a balanced analysis of the Achebe and Dangarembga's influence on Adichie. Adichie's creative prowess as a young African writer is comparable to that of Achebe's debut TFA. Critics are intrigued by the realistic representation in her texts (see Manieson 2012, Andrade 2011, and Heather 2005). What are these skills that set Adichie apart from present-day contemporary African writers? Elsewhere, I have argued that a driving force of Adichie is her conscious creativity coupled with a solid knowledge of narratology. Heather's argument that "writers do influence each other" is a statement of fact extensively argued by Denkyi (p.8), in which the critic found seams of Conrad's influence on Ngugi in his third novel, *A Grain of Wheat* (1958). In that work, Denkyi reiterates Heather's argument that apart from God, no one can create anything out of nothing, referred to by Harold Broom as "the anxiety of influence" (11). Thus, the need for one writer's influence on another. However, what makes one a creative writer is the ability of the one influenced to "transcend his precursors" (Denkyi, 8); anything short of that becomes something else. In lieu of the ongoing arguments, this work aims at tracing the influence of two prominent African writers: Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Chinua Achebe, born and raised in Nigeria, is the author of *Things Fall Apart* and many other books. He studied medicine for one year and changed to English literature. He was a novelist, poet, professor and a critic. Born in Rhodesia now Zimbabwe, Tsitsi Dangarembga, had part of her education in England and ended at Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. She studied medicine and later psychology. Finally, born in Nigeria, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also studied medicine for a year and then changed to communication studies. Incidentally, all authors studied medicine at some point in their lives. More interesting is the knowledge that the very house Chinua Achebe lived in while staff at Nsukka is same house Chimamanda Adichie lived in with her family while her parents were staff of the same University.

***Purple Hibiscus* and its precursors - Plot and Character Analysis**

We begin with short a synopsis of the texts for this study. Achebe's TFA is the story of Okonkwo's rise to fame and eventual destruction. As a young boy, the poverty of his father Unoka, propels him to work hard to earn respect for himself at a relatively young age. Unfortunately, he killed a man at a funeral and had to be exiled to his mother's hometown for seven years. It is during his absence that the euro Christian missionaries entrench themselves in his hometown, Umuofia. Upon his return, he tries to rouse his people to resist the infiltration of the missionaries, but that was unsuccessful. Later when provoked, he kills a messenger of the missionaries and to avoid punishment from the missionaries, he ends up committing suicide. This clash of cultures between the indigenes and the missionaries ends up with the latter having to cower, hence the falling apart of traditional norms and belief systems.

In Dangarembga's NC, a young girl narrates the circumstances leading to her education. Upon the death of her elder brother Nhamo, Tambu, who doubles as the main character and narrator takes the brother's place in attending the mission school. She stays with her uncle Babamukuru and is soon very close with her cousin, Nyasha. She excels at her school and secures scholarship to attend a well-known school where she is introduced to a variety of cultures. Mindful of effects of foreign culture on her cousins, she is resolute not to be affected by the influence of the cultures around her.

Adichie's PH also told by sixteen-year-old Kambili is the narrative of the Achieke family, who were once united but later disrupted by violence. It is a family of four, made up of their father Eugene, mother; Mama Beatrice and children, Kambili and Jaja. Eugene, the head of the family is very religious and generous towards the church and his family, yet physically maltreats them. Once the children, Kambili and Jaja had the opportunity to visit their paternal Aunty. Aunt Ifeoma a widow, mother of three and lecturer, at the University of Nsukka, host Kambili and Jaja in her tiny university apartment for the holidays. This visit accords them the opportunity to experience freedom and inner satisfaction for the first time. Upon returning to their household in Enugu, Jaja exhibits rebellious attitude towards his father. Eugene is later poisoned to death by his wife with the help of the househelp. Jaja takes the blame and spends some three years in prison.

We now begin an intertextual analysis of the texts to determine seams of influence between the texts under consideration.

To begin with, the opening word of PH gives an indication of the author's lineage with Achebe's TFA. Adichie begins her text with: Things started to fall apart..."(3, emphasis mine). This is about the disruption that takes place in the Achieke family home when Jaja refuse to attend communion at church.

For the very first time in his life, Jaja, Eugene's son, challenges and contradicts his father. As a result of that, Eugene flung the family's glass etagere at Jaja; it misses him and spatters on the floor. This to the narrator, Kambili has never happened in her entire life. Thus its occurrence being the things falling apart in her family.

Again, Adichie's title, 'Purple Hibiscus,' shows echoes from NC, where Tambu, the main character had her fingernails painted "bright purple in spite of Babamukuru frowns" (95, emphasis mine). Manieson cited early on, explains that two types of 'hibiscus' are mentioned in PH. The first is the one at Eugene's house, Enugu, described "red" which comes to symbolize the hybridity of Eugene or the subjectivity and masochism of Mama Beatrice. The second is the hibiscus at Nsukka described as 'purple' in color, which symbolizes the originality and steadfastness of Auntie Ifeoma and her father, Papa Nnukwu. Obviously then, the "bright purple" mentioned in NC, is that from which Adichie derive her title: Purple Hibiscus. It comes to symbolize the steadfastness and originality of Kambili which is what Adichie's narrator, also the main character becomes. With the above preamble in mind, the fact that Achebe and Dangarembga influenced Adichie is obvious. This notwithstanding, the following discourse contends that indeed, Adichie adapted plotlines, theme, characterization and many more, from Achebe and Dangaraemba, yet, transcends her precursors. The creativity and originality of Adichie stem from what Adesokan refers to as "Adichie's exceptional narratives skills...mobilized by a narrative procedure that is particular, realist, and invested in the representation of surface tensions" (2012, 8).

First of all, present in each text is a strong male figure. He is Okonkwo in TFA, Babamukuru in NC and Eugene in PH. From a poor background and with the intent to succeed unlike his father, Okonkwo works harder to achieve a feat above his contemporaries. Okonkwo is driven to hard work to escape the poverty and disgrace his father wallowed in. In effect, he works hard and achieves an unprecedented feat. Unoka, we read had been a "failure" (4) "coward" (5) died with no title and "...heavily in debt" (6). In NC, Babamukuru's motivation for success is his low-income family background. He, from a peasant family, works extremely hard to lift the family out of the dungeons of poverty to the status of a college headmaster, well respected in the community (17-19). In PH, Eugene's motivation for success is his poor family background and the treatment he receives as a young man at the missionary house. He tells Kambili how he had worked as a houseboy at the mission house for two years, walked to school eight miles until completing elementary school. Even while in secondary school he had worked as a gardener for the priest because he did not have a father who sent him to school (47,55). The fact is all these three male figures in TFA, NC and PH respectively had a past which propels them to work harder and to succeed. That these male characters obviously have filial relations, might lead one to a considered position that they can all be placed on the same pedestal; in other words, Adichie in creating Eugene does not in any way transcend Achebe and Dangarembga.

However, closer scrutiny may reveal that Okonkwo and Babamukuru's psychological mentee for success is mainly to better their lives and those of their dependents. Eugene on the other hand, in addition to improving his own life and those of his dependents, comes to see himself as perhaps a pseudo-Moses cum Joshua whose responsibility it is to redeem his people from religious bigotry. This self-imposed mission clouds his sanity and judgment. He thinks all his dependants should exhibit his understanding of piety.

Further, Okonkwo appears a good father and husband; he works hard to provide for his family's needs, yet, we read he ruled his household with a heavy hand. In effect, his wives, especially, the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper and so did his little children (TFA.9). As much as possible, Babamukuru provides for his wife and children to the admiration of onlookers and even extends this generosity to his extended family members. Despite this show of kindness, he appears a sort of a demi-god in his household. He is rigid and had "a volcanic temper" which led to a brief separation between the couple (NC.88, 173-177). Eugene in PH is strict, principled and yet loving. Of him, Mama Beatrice, his wife, says "...the members of our Umunna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else...many of them were University graduates...but your father stayed with me...". Eugene has deep love for his children. (PH.20). Despite this show of love for his family, Eugene treats his family with iron fits. This affects his children to the extent that others view his dependants to be abnormal. For instance, Kambili's classmates call her a backyard snob and her cousin, unable to restrain herself; asked if Jaja and Kambili were normal (PH.141). Indeed Okonkwo may have a fiery temper, Babamukuru a volcanic one but Eugene transcends these two in the sense that his problem, seems to be a combination of the two and more. Apart from physically abusing his wife and children as would Okonkwo or Babamukuru, he destabilizes them psychologically.

Again, that Okonkwo is religiously inclined is exhibited in how he treats the gods of the land and accords them due respect. Behind his household, Okonkwo had symbols of his personal gods and ancestors and made sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm wine along with prayers on behalf of himself, his wives and children (10). From committing the slightest to the most incriminating of crimes, Okonkwo obeys the judgments of the gods without any challenge. Babamukuru is described as "a rigid, an imposing perfectionist, steely enough in character to function in the puritanical way that he expected, or rather insisted, that the rest of the world should function...stoically he accepted his divinity (88). He is mission trained both home and abroad and doesn't fail to exhibit his religiosity whenever the need arose. Eugene is described as an "oblate" whose line during Ash Wednesday moves slowest because he would press hard on each forehead to ensure that a perfect cross is imprinted on each forehead (1). He willfully makes the most significant donation to Peter's Pence and St. Vincent de Paul. He pays for the cartons of wine, purchases new oven at the convent and even helps in providing for a new wing at the St. Agnes Hospital (PH.5). Despite Okonkwo's strong attachment to the traditional religion, he does not interfere with the new religion until he is troubled by them. Babamukuru, although missionary trained like Eugene, is accommodating and non-judgmental, somewhat tolerant to the religious inclinations of others, especially his unbaptized brother.

The parallels between these characters notwithstanding, Eugene's behavior suggests a deviation from the Okonkwo-Babamukuru trait. Eugene's religious inclination becomes an affront to his dependants. He strictly forbade others with different religious preferences to come to anywhere around him; this surprisingly includes his father. His disregard for the reverend father Amadi suggest that even those of the same faith are treated with contempt should they deviate from his estimation of piety.

The parallels between the fathers and their children are worth attention in this study. In TFA, though Okonkwo had other children, the focus is on Nwoye and Ezinma. In NC Babamukuru has two children; Chido and Nyasha. Then, we have Eugene with his children; Jaja and Kambili in PH. At certain times, Okonkwo wished his daughter instead were the boy since she showed insight as a male son would, while Nwoye behaves cowardly. Quite surprising, Nwoye's experience with Ikemefuna and later contact with the missionaries change him to the extent of defying and denying his father. Babamukuru seems to be at ease with his son, yet, on-loggerheads with his daughter. This reaches its peak when Nyasha returns late after a ball. After minutes of exchanges, the two; father and daughter were locked up in the physical bout for minutes (NC. 114-120). On his part, Eugene is not at ease with any of his children and deals with them ruthlessly. When Jaja failed two questions on his catechism test, he cuts off his left forefinger; when Kambili takes light breakfast during her menstrual cycle to prevent stomach crumbs he beats her together with Jaja and Mama Beatrice mercilessly (144, 102). To crown it all when Eugene is told his children had, while at Nsukka, stayed in the same apartment with his father, Eugene burns their feet with boiling water out of which Kambili faints (192). It is evident that in their relationships with their children, Eugene is crueller than Okonkwo and Babamukuru. Again each wished his children succeed, but Eugene's desire to see his children succeed is near madness or can be described as a psychopathic or extreme obsession. For instance, he takes time off his busy schedule to prepare minute by minute programs for his children. He says to Kambili "...I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best" (47). This is very unlike neither Okonkwo or Babamukuru.

Also, allusions to festive celebrations are active in all three texts. In TFA, the new-year is marked by the grand celebration of the yam festival. In Okonkwo's compound, it is characterized by severe preparation by the family. For example, we read; all cooking-pots, calabashes and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, ...Okonkwo's wives had scrubbed the walls and the huts with red earth until they reflected light. Also, they painted themselves with camwood and drawing beautiful black patterns on their stomachs and on their back. The children were not left out as their hairs were shaved in beautiful patterns. As though not enough, relations journey from far and near villages to celebrate with their families in Umuofia. The occasion is also marked by generosity, as yam fufu and vegetable soup are always in abundance (26-27). For the Christmas celebrations in NC, Babamukuru, and family, except his son, Chido, journey to their hometown to celebrate.

On their preparations, we read:

The back of the car and the boot were packed with food and necessities - a side of an ox chopped into limbs to make it fit, pounds of mealie-meal, dozens of loaves of bread and buns, much margarine, sugar, and tea. There were packets of powdered milk, bottle of cooking oil and orange juice and peanut butter, tins of jams, cans of paraffin, soap, and detergents. In fact, there was everything we needed for the two week's stay and more besides, because Babamukuru always provided not only the Christmas meal but Christmas itself for as many of the clan that gathered for as long as they gathered. We did not have father Christmas, but we had Babamukuru (.123-124).

In PH, Eugene's family travels from Enugu to Abba for the Christmas occasions. For the celebrations, there were yams, cases of Remy Martini, cartons of juice, stacks of Okporoko, bags of rice and garri and beans and plantains. The aim of the Achieke's during the occasion is to feed the whole village so that none of the people who came in would leave without eating or drinking to a reasonable satisfaction (.56). This celebration is however limited to only Christians as such, Eugene's immediate kinsman, Papa Nnukwu is barred from partaking (.61-2). So while in TFA, family and friends travel from nearby villages to Umuofia for the celebrations, in NC Babamukuru and family travel from their mission house in the city to the village and feast with both Christians and non-Christians. However, in PH Eugene and the family journey from Enugu to the Abba, their village, but only Christians are fed.

Transformation as a theory of rebellion is yet another technique adapted in PH. In TFA, the change that starts in Nwoye when Ikemefuna comes to Okonkwo's homestead is truncated when Ikemefuna is suddenly removed. Ikemefuna had to be killed to appease the gods of the land since he was brought in from his hometown to replace a maiden of Umuofia who had been murdered by Ikemefuna's townsmen. His death creates a void which is later filled when Nwoye meets with another stronger force - the missionaries. This transformation is taken to another level when it takes the absence of Okonkwo for the missions to be established in Umuofia. As a result, he is unable to fit in when he returns from Mbanta. This leads to his demise. Babamukuru's mission house is a place of transformation for Tambu and her brother Nhamo. The narrator, having been confined only to her village home with her parents undergoes extreme change, what she calls reincarnation at the home of her uncle. She refers to that period at her uncle's house as a time during which her life "...progressed very much," and she felt free from the constraints and the squalid that defined and delimited her former home. Her reaction is a response to them all, in effect, she sums it up as "...a time of sublimation with me as the sublimate" (94). Kambili and Jaja's visit to Nsukka; a place with the inscription, 'to restore the dignity of man,' begins the period of their transformation. Kambili out of awe remarks; "I was not sure I had ever heard myself laugh" (120,177).

Kambili's association with Amaka, and Jaja's association with Obiora had a profound effect on them so much so that the fear, robot-like life they had known all their life diminishes. This transformation is what Heather refers to as "Kambili's internal growth that parallels that of Tambu" (87). It needs to be accentuated that in TFA, Ikemefuna comes to transform Nwoye in Okonkwo's household. In NC, Tambu goes to Babamukuru's house and is changed by Nyasha. These two are direct opposites. However, in PH, Kambili and Jaja travel out of their house to that of their Aunt, and both are molded. Though the allusion to characters moving and being transforming are evident in all texts, Adichie does something completely different from that of her emetteurs as shown above.

Moreover, on language use, Achebe in his desire to maintain his affinity to his Igbo roots spices his narrative with Ibo words some of which are explained while others are to be inferred. For instance, we read words and expression like:

"...because their dreaded Ogadi-nwayi would never fight... The elders, or ndichie, met to hear a report of Okonkwo's mission. He even remembered how he had laughed when Ikemefuna told him that the proper name for a corn-cob with only a few scattered grains was Eze-agadi-nwayi, or the teeth of an old woman" (9, 25).

Dangarembga too spices her text with local words and expressions. However, most of these are not explained. For instance, we read: "He was very good at it by that time. "Vakomana, vakomana," he may have said, holding his head in his hands and shaking it, ..." They were playing nhodo. (8, 31) Adichie follows the trend, for example, we read:

"ke kwanu?" I asked although I did not need to ask how he was doing. I had only to look at him. The first time I heard Aunt Ifeoma call mama "nwunye m," years ago, I was aghast that a woman called another woman "my wife" (11, 73, underlined for emphasis).

Dawson and Larrivee in analyzing the sequence of language use in TFA and PH, concludes that "the social distribution of languages in the two novels is thus quite different" (2010; 929). The difference stems from the fact that while TFA has a more Anglo-centric language use in the sense that Ibo is circumscribed to terms of address, greeting, and address, PH presents us with Ibo that is a part of the repertoire of the characters that are not always signaled typographically and not always translated as in TFA.

Again, echoes between the relationship among the male figures and their wives are worth commenting on. In TFA when Okonkwo beats his wife Ojiugo, during the week of peace, we read the neighbors heard of it and “came over to see for themselves” (21). In NC, when Babamukuru and his wife, Maiguru quarrel, she leaves to the house of her brother for a while and is brought back days later by her husband (175). In PH, when Eugene beat his wife, mama Beatrice as a result of which she miscarries a six-weeks-old pregnancy, she leaves for the house of her sister-in-law and is brought back by her husband (253-257). The fact is while Maiguru finds solace in the house of her brother, mama Beatrice finds hers in the home of her sister-in-law. Again, Maiguru returns to her matrimonial home to live in peace with her husband and children, but mama Beatrice returns to her matrimonial home only to poison her husband to death.

Furthermore, the plight of Babamukuru’s wife, Maiguru; a second-degree holder and a mother of two can be likened to Mama Beatrice yet in other ways to Aunty Ifeoma. After carefully scrutinizing her aunt, Tambu notices signs of sour discontent in Maiguru’ demeanor which she tried to hide. She reveals to the shock of Tambu that all her salaries go to her husband and her reason for doing so is that she could have security for her marriage and her children. The echoes within these characters are a clear case of what Horace refers to as originality; where the latter writer improves upon the work of the former. That Maiguru, one character in NC transforms into two characters in PH; Mama Beatrice and Ifeoma is indeed very remarkable. Adichie endows two characters with the traits of one in Dangarembga's and unearths a probable representation. Mama Beatrice, a mother of two, married to a wealthy businessman will continue to stay in a marriage irrespective of the odds. On the flip side, Aunty Ifeoma, a second-degree holder, a University lecturer and a mother of three, who had the sort of education Maiguru has should be able to take care of her household in the absence of her husband.

Finally, it must be stated that in some instances, the echoes tilts between TFA and PH. The end of Okonkwo and Eugene is one such instance. In TFA, Okonkwo, unable to face the change and challenge that comes with the stay of the foreigners hangs himself (146). Eugene, on the other hand, can withstand the change and the challenge posed by his children especially, Jaja and yet, fails to predict what could happen to him and therefore is poisoned by his wife in connivance with their house help (283). The fact is while Okonkwo takes his own life, Eugene’s life is taken from him by no other than his wife. In any case, the allusion to death is evident, however, in TFA, it is the death of the protagonist, while in PH, it is the death of the villain. This diversity of roles is apparently not a coincidence but deliberate to achieve a deviation, one which brings out the Adichie’s voice.

Themes

In a comparative study of this nature, it is essential to analyze the issues in these works. Evident in all three texts is the subject of colonization. Interestingly, the colonization in these texts is presented in a continuum. In TFA we see the lives of the indigenes before the advent of the euro Christian missionaries. The missionaries came to Igboland on the premise of peace yet had the aim of introducing a monotheistic religion to a people who already had their form of worship. Though initially difficult, gradually, they settled and made progress. We read;

And at last, the locusts did descend. They settled on every tree and on every blade of grass; they settled on the roofs and covered the bare ground”(97-98)

This is the symbolic settlement of the missionaries in Umuofia. It is evident that the settlement of the missionaries was the beginning of formal colonialism. More converts are won each day, the customs and tradition which had hitherto been respected are thrown away. Okonkwo bemoans;

The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart (124-5)

Apart from religion; the missionaries also brought governance, built courts where the district commissioner “judges cases in ignorance”(123). Along with these came schools, that trained people like Nwoye as teachers and also built hospitals. All these developments empowered the ordinary person so that they could denounce and disrespect those whom hitherto, they could not accost. For Instance, Nwoye, Okonkwo’s son boldly tells Obierika that Okonkwo is not his father; also Enock, a mere messenger, dared to disrespect and even maltreat titled men in the society. In NC, Tambu’s mother, Mainini, diagnosed the cause of Babamukuru’s children’s problems. She says, “its the Englishness... it’ll kill them all if they aren’t careful”(207). Apparently, the Englishness being mentioned here refers to the effects of colonialism on the family. As stated earlier, the theme of colonization in these texts is presented in a continuum. In TFA, Nwoye was to be taken to a more prominent school to be trained as a teacher. In NC, he metamorphose into Babamukuru the mission trained teacher who heads a school. Later he travels abroad to pursue a masters degree with his wife and children. The effect of the colonial encounter for him is manifested in his children. His son, Chido, had forgotten how to speak the native Shona language (52-53).

His daughter too in her attempt to blend the culture of the colonizers and the indigenous culture develops bulimic and then anorexia. In PH, every facet of the main character's life is ruled by the effects of colonialism. Again, it is a probable representation to have Nwoye transform to Eugene in PH. Eugene mentioned that he was trained by the missionaries and had to work hard to take care of himself. That is what Nwoye was as Okonkwo would not have paid for his education. Again, Nwoye turned Eugene would have strong avarice for the tradition of his father as we see in PH. It has already been established that Babamukuru and Eugene has several traits in common. It needs be said that both characters are presented as adults in their respective texts who share a single childhood represented in Nwoye. From the uncompromising posture of the missionaries in TFA, it is no wonder that father Benedict in PH insisted on reciting the credo and the Kyrie only in Latin, because any other language would compromise the solemnity of the mass.

Also prevalent in all texts is the theme of religion. That the first activity introduced by the missionaries is religion tells of the place of religion in the lives of people. In TFA, Umuofia was a unified community because the people had common religious beliefs. Their customs and beliefs were all determined by their belief system. We read, Umuofia "... never went to war unless its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its oracle - the oracle of the hills and the caves..." (9) . Each person was believed to have a personal god or chi, which guarded the life of the individual throughout his journey on earth. At certain times in the year, the gods are celebrated for their goddess, for instance, Ani, the earth goddess and source of all fertility is celebrated (.26). Babamukuru achieves his feat because of the benevolence of the missionaries. We read:

"...Babamukuru was appreciative of the opportunity that had been offered, and further to decline would have been a form of suicide. The missionaries would have been annoyed by his ingratitude...."(14)

Babamukuru had joined the missionaries at a tender age of nine. He worked on their farm during the day and went to school at night. It is for all these that he is appointed to run the mission school.

In PH, religion dictates the activities of the main character, Eugene. He had a formal education because of the of the missionaries (55). He is an oblate; these are those especially in the Catholic church who are obsessed and are overzealous with their faith. This obsession causes him to lose touch with reality. Eugene feels that pain should be used to coerce people to convert to Christianity and to live a life worthy of emulation. This is why he does the following; one, he makes the most significant donation to Peter's Pence and St. Vincent de Paul, pays for various cartons of communion wine, new ovens and even pays for the new wing at St. Agnes hospital.

Two, he gives his wife almost twenty strokes of beatings for suggesting that she stays in the car while the rest of the family visit the reverend father after church at his house (40-41). Three, he forbids his father and all non christians from coming anywhere near him because they are idol worshippers. He refused to care for his aged father and occasionally sent him slim wads of naira, thinner than he gave his driver for Christmas bonus (70). He promised to buy his father a car with a driver, built him a house and take good care of him if only he converts to Christianity. And when the old man dies, he refuses to attend the funeral because to him “ pagan funerals are expensive...death... is just an excuse for heathens to feast (204). Four, he cuts off the forefinger of Jaja because he missed few lines in a catechism class (153). Five, when Kambili takes in cereal with panadol to prevent menstrual cramps, he uses his belt to beat mother, daughter and son together, because by taking in the flakes, they have “desecrate the Eucharistic fast,” (110). Six, when he learns his children had while in Nsukka stayed in the same apartment with his pagan father, he burns their feet with boiling water (201). Seven, when Eugene sees Kamili in possession of a portrait painting of his father, he beats up so much so that Kambili faints and is hospitalized for days (215-221). Eight, he wished his only son dead, instead of refusing to accept the communion at mass (14-15). All the above reinforces the theme of religion in PH.

The theme of gender also played a vital role in all three texts. In TFA the part of males and are defined. The fat Okonkwo wished Ezinma were a boy tells a lot about the general perception of boys in Igboland. The woman is supposed to be submissive and have the ability to bear many children for her husband. Also, specific jobs are for men. For instance, when Ezinma suggests bringing his father a chair, Okonkwo replies “no, that is a boy’s job” (32). Crime is classified as either male or female based on their severity. For instance, crimes committed deliberately are group male crimes whereas those accidental ones are called female crimes. Example, the killing of a clansman by Okonkwo was grouped as he haven "committed the female [crime] because it had been inadvertent."(87). The women also had the sacred duty of clearing the house of the Egwugwu, but again, they had to do so without ever peeping in to see what was inside.

The first sentence in NC gives a glimpse of the gender relations in this text. We read; “ I was not sorry when my brother died” (1). Earlier Nhamo, Tambu’s brother had asked her, “Why are you jealous anyway? Did you ever hear of a girl being taken away to school? This is so because per the tradition of the society they lived in, her brother, is invested with so many resources and given the best education so that he would grow to shoulder family responsibilities.

Set in modern Nigeria, a time when gender equality and roles are very well defined, the division that is evident in TFA or NC is somehow blurred in PH. Both children are treated equally. However in PH, the gender restrictions are not imposed by the society as the conversation between aunty Ifeoma and mama Beatrice shows, the individual imposes the restrictions. When Ifeoma tries to educate mama Beatrice on issues of gender, mama Beatrice prefers to call them, “your university talk” (83). The lives of these two women present two contrasting yet critical gender issues worthy of analyzing.

Mama Beatrice, the wife of Eugene, is a housewife, one who lives in a well-resourced house with everything at her disposal, yet has no say in anything that is decided upon in her home. The final decision rests with her husband. To her marriage crowns a woman's life so no matter what, a woman must stay with her husband. Her sister in law, aunty Ifeoma on the other hand, is a well educated and liberated woman. Though a widow, she works to cater for her three children. To her with or without marriage, a woman should be able to live a fulfilled life. What are the impact of these two women on their dependents? As already indicated, the children of mama Beatrice are bullied continuously by their autocratic father and so are timid. Those of aunty Ifeoma are bold, confident and independent. The conclusion is that female education and liberation is essential to development in general and a healthy family in particular. It empowers the woman to contribute to the progress and sustainability of humanity efficiently.

Narrative Sequence

In this section, the first paragraph of each text is extracted to establish the narrative sequence in each text. It is worthy of note that the point of view of narrative in TFA is third person omniscient narrator, NC is first person and PH is also first person.

The first paragraph in TFA reads;

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen, he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old man (sic) agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights” (3).

The first paragraph of NC reads:

I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologising for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all. I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young, and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age. Therefore I shall not apologise but begin by recalling the facts as I remember them that led up to my brother's death, the events that put me in a position to write this account. For though the event of my father's passing and the events of my story cannot be separated, my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about nyasha's rebellion - Nyasha, fairminded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not have been successful" (1).

PH reads:

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 etagere. We had just returned from church. Mama placed the fresh palm fronds, which were wet with holy water, on the dining table and then went upstairs to change. Later, she would knot the palm fronds into sagging cross shapes and hang them on the wall beside our gold-framed family photo. They would stay there until next ash Wednesday, when we would take the fronds to church, to have them burned for ash. Papa, wearing a long, gray robe like the rest of the Oblates, helped distribute ash every year. His line moved the slowest because he pressed hard on each forehead to make a perfect cross with his ash-covered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of "dust and unto dust you shall return" (11)

An examination of these extracts is vital to the overall comprehension of the arguments raised herein. In the first place, the first paragraph of TFA is made up of six (6) sentences. Of these six sentences, two forms the story time and four are the narrative time. The narrative time being exterior analepsis, thus they are about events that does not fall within the main storyline. In other words, the story could be told without them. NC is made up of some five (5) sentences; four of which are story time and one in which the scene slows down. PH is made up of seven (7) sentences; these seven sentences can be broken into, one story time, two interior analepses, two interior prolepsis and two exterior prolepses. This indicates that within the first paragraph of PH the narrative moves back and forth which is very unlike that of the first two. Also, the first sentence in both TFA and NC are both simple sentences. But the first sentence in PH is a complex-compound sentence.

The sentence structure exhibited in PH indicates the complexity of Adichie's tale very unlike that presented by Achebe and Dangarembga. These pointers give a glimpse of the narrative technique in the texts under study. Moreover, the fact that the first paragraph of PH has seven sentences is symbolic. In all spheres of life; science, religion, philosophy, and many others., the number seven (7) has numerous symbolic connotations. For instance; the creation story mentions seven as the day God rested; the rainbow has seven colors, there are seven days in a week, seven wonders of the world, seven are mentioned some 507 times in the bible and some 32 times in the Koran, el cetera, therefore by pegging the number of sentences in her first paragraph at seven, Adichie's PH assumes peak position in this trilogy.

Conclusion

This work set out to examine Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's imitation of two writers, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga. It has been established that TFA and NC influence the total made up of the PH. These plot lines, themes and character el cetera adapted in PH are so crafted that though it's easy to trace lines of influence, the voice of the later writer strongly emerges. A close reading of the trilogy, reveals twists, deviations, and additions that are nowhere in the earlier texts. All these are attempts by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to create originality in her work. Given all the above, we conclude on the note that Purple Hibiscus is an original text, and with it, the author earns her place in the canon of African literature.

Notes

In this work, Denkyi (2009) drew several parallels between Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* and Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*. To the effect that Ngugi though greatly influenced by Conrad, does not acknowledge the source. Again, she commented on the parallels between Awoonor's *This Earth My Brother* (1971) and James Joyce's *Portrait of a Young Man* (2004). Furthermore, she mentions Yambo Oluoguem who had to retrieve all his books from stalls when some three pages were traced to Alex Harley's *Roots* (1974).

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