

**THE WRITER AND BURDEN OF POSTERITY: INTERTEXTUALITY
BETWEEN SELECTED FICTIVE AND NON-FICTIVE NARRATIVES OF
CHINUA ACHEBE**

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Abstract

This study, a critical-qualitative analysis, is aimed at x-raying the intersections between Chinua Achebe's fictive and non-fictive narratives. From his oeuvre, four texts are purposively selected for this study to represent his earlier and later creative vigor. Through the analytical tool of postcolonialism, the findings revealed that Achebe's writings, both fictive and non-fictive, are direct representations of Nigeria's history, a courageous, brilliant and a formidable engagement of his country home, Nigeria. His works emphasize the need to ponder on the dysfunctional tendencies in Nigeria as well as chart a new course for development and advancement in line with global best practices. The paper concludes that the points of intersections between his fictive and non-fictive narratives are thus that they are his burden of posterity, fulfilling his role as a nationalist and in demonstration of his yearnings for utopianism in Nigeria.

Key Words: Writer, Burdens, Posterity, Intertextuality, Achebe's Writings.

Introduction

In *There Was a Country*, his last written seminal piece, Chinua Achebe tells the reader his belief, pursuit and primary preoccupation as a postcolonial writer. He writes that;

I believe it is impossible to write anything in Africa without a sense of commitment, some kind of message, some kind of protest. In my own definition I am a protest writer, with restraint. Even those early novels that look like very gentle recreations of the past – what they were saying, in effect, was that we had a past. That was protest [...] (Achebe, 2012, p. 58).

This Protestantism is not just evident in *There Was a Country*, but cuts across his oeuvre both fictive and non-fictive.

Regarded as the patriarch of the African novel, Chinua Achebe has no doubt been outstanding for his involvement in the postcolonial discourse of Nigeria. As a nationalist and a postcolonial writer, Achebe never shied away from the prevailing unpleasant political atmosphere in Nigeria. He bears the burdens of engaging the nation to engender nation building for posterity and utopianism in postcolonial Nigeria. His works are not only rooted in politics but they also engage critically, the dysfunctional and despotic nature of politics in postcolonial Nigeria. It is in the light of the above that Ogunbesan (1974) argues that;

The African writer has been very much influenced by politics, probably because the African intellectual is a part of the political elite. The writer is a sensitive point within his society. Thus, African literature has tended to reflect the political phases on the continent. Chinua Achebe is a very suitable example. Beginning during the colonial days, his writing spans the succession of political crises which has beset Nigeria (p. 43).

Consequently, Achebe has been reckoned with by all and sundry as a politico-literati beacon of Nigerian literature. His dissatisfaction and subsequent engagement of the numerous crises that bedevil Nigeria, coupled with his approach as a dissident are all in the fulfillment of his roles as a nationalist. No doubt, he was on a mission. His perceived mission is in an attempt to overhaul the prevailing negativities that have engulfed postcolonial Nigeria and to champion the discourse for an eventual realization of the much desired egalitarian Nigerian state. He can therefore be described as a political missionary in a postcolonial state with all its attendant disillusionment. Okolo (2007) writes in this respect that 'Achebe sees his writing career predominantly as a political mission [...] [and his] works provoke a critical re-evaluation of ideas and beliefs that might have been overlooked, in an effort to understand basic social facts and institute enduring national policies for their societies' (p. 53).

Throughout his literary career that spanned over five decades, Achebe both in his fictive and non-fictive narratives championed the postcolonial discourse of nation and nationalism in postcolonial Nigeria and until he took his final bow, these aspirations and yearnings remains the platform and foothold for his critical dissensions with politicians, leaders and the Nigerian populace. Douglas (1969) buttresses this point when he avers in *The Writings of Chinua Achebe* that;

Achebe recognizes his obligation to his society and has said himself that he must participate in the task of re-education and re-generation which must be done [...] he lives in his society and expresses its aspirations; they appear by and large in revolt against their society [...] expresses their hopes and fears, sum up their experiences and establish (or re-establish) the uniqueness and dignity of their communities (p. 127).

It is on this premise that this research selects from Achebe's oeuvre fictive and non-fictive narratives to demonstrate his engagement of history to advance nationalism and engender posterity in postcolonial Nigeria. This will be done through a critical-qualitative analysis of the selected texts.

Statement of the Problem

As a postcolonial writer, Chinua Achebe no doubt is reckoned with and revered for his fictive narratives. The fact that as a writer, he made his debut with a fiction, *Things Fall Apart*, reinforces this. This fictive reverence of Achebe is what scholars and critics of Nigerian cum African literature have largely demonstrated over the years. It is in this light that Izevbaye (2009) submits that 'Achebe's most

important influence given his goal as a writer, is his contribution to the advancement of a new postcolonial consciousness, [...] It is in the novel form that Achebe has made his most enduring contribution as a postcolonial writer' (p. 33). However, a critical study of Achebe's oeuvre will reveal that both his fictive and non-fictive narratives have critically engaged the prevailing socio-political atmosphere in Nigeria with the sole aim of fostering and engendering nationalism and nation building in Nigeria to enable the country transform beyond her colonial pedigree. Even his last memoir reinforces this. These intersections, between his fictive and non-fictive narratives are what this research will attempt to demonstrate.

Objectives of the Study

This study is objectively aimed at showing the intertextuality between Chinua Achebe's fictive and non-fictive narratives. It locates Achebe in the postcolonial discourse of Nigeria and ultimately brings to the fore, the intersections between the erudite author's fictive and non-fictive narratives. This is to demonstrate that the erudite author shares similar focus both in his fictive and non-fictive narratives and this focus is aimed at a reorientation of the ideas, wills, skills and purposes of nation building.

Data and Method

This study is a critical qualitative analysis. It involves a critical dissection of the contents of the selected books from Achebe's oeuvre (*No Longer at Ease*, *A Man of the People*, *The Trouble with Nigeria* and *There Was a Country*). These four from his oeuvre were purposively selected to represent his earlier and later creative vigor. They in the view of this researcher demonstrate his informed interest on national issues which switches between history and concerns for posterity in Nigeria. Selected fictive narratives will be considered first before the non-fictive narratives. This will be done, taking insights from the literary analytical tool of postcolonialism.

Theoretical Insight

The theory on which this study is anchored is postcolonial theory or postcolonialism. In its widest sense, 'postcolonial theory involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the level of ex-colonial societies as well as the level of more general global developments thought to be the aftereffects of empire' (Quayson 2000, p. 2). However, in this context, the adoption of postcolonialism is not from the perspective of African scholars, theorists and critics reacting to the views of Europe which addresses the encounter between the colonized subjects and the imperialist powers. Rather, it is adopted from the perspective of African scholars, theorists and critics engaging the theory for a home-critique paradigm.

Postcolonialism has been adopted by scholars of literature and other related disciplines in Africa to explore and examine the links and relations between history and posterity and to account for prevailing contemporary neo-

colonial tendencies in Africa. Under this aegis, they look at issues of despotism, dictatorship, political and economic instability, failure of the elite, failure of the state, and corruption, in postcolonial African states. These scholars advocates for and practically engage in the critique of the prevailing socio-political atmosphere and on-goings in their immediate society. In this case, the empire does not write back. The empire - or rather the postcolony - interrogates herself to engender nationalism and national development. It is in the light of the above that Fanon (1995) posits that the postcolonial writer now '[...] progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people' (p. 154). Thus, postcolonial writers, with the belief that a work of art will illuminate the culture that produces and consumes it, make literature a reflection of the disillusionments in the postcolonial society.

In the case of Nigeria, what Bill Ashcroft *et al* (1989) put forward as 'the development of new elites within independent societies' (p. 150) after colonialism has not only sustained the imperialist's tendencies but also birthed neo-colonial tendencies in postcolonial Nigeria. This has resulted into cracks in the national edifice which has manifested through retrogressions that are harmful and prejudicial to national effort and nation building. Hence, the purpose of the discourse of post-colonial studies or postcolonialism, with regards to the challenges most postcolonial societies like Nigeria experience, is to advocate for a change in what seems to have become the *modus operandi* of state affairs in Nigeria. This is what Achebe seeks to achieve in his oeuvre.

Chinua Achebe and the Nigerian State

Although some of his earlier works (*Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*) centers on the intrusion of Eurocentric cultures, values and tradition on an already organized Nigerian culture, thereby destabilizing and throwing Nigeria off-balance, his later works adequately and critically engage the disillusionments bedeviling Nigeria as a postcolonial state.

Radically, Achebe engages Nigeria, particularly the political and ruling elite that took over the mantle of piloting the affairs of the country after the departure of the colonial imperialists but have failed in their responsibilities because of their lack of commitment to the state. His strong, resilient, uncommon commitment, fervor, fortitude, and forthrightness in engaging the political elite and the postcolonial disillusionments in Nigeria can visibly be perceived all through his opus. He based his creative treatise on the failure of the ruling elite to transform the country beyond her colonial pedigree which has resulted to the geometric multiplicity of different social ills (which include political corruption, thuggery, nepotism, tribalism, ethnic tendencies and bigotries) that have not only threatened the corporate existence of the nation as a political and geographical entity but have also hampered meaningful socio-economic development since independence. Emphatically, Achebe's radical standpoint on different socio-political issues in Nigeria is directed at an eventual re-orientation and reorganization of the values, norms and traditions of the Nigerian society.

Ugwanyi (2014) in 'Achebe's Novels as a Historical Documentation of Nigeria' opines that through his works, Achebe captures the 'critical periods in

Nigeria's history since the advent of colonialism to the current period of great imbalances in Nigeria's political, social and economic system [...] his novels thus reflect the phases of the Nigerian life before and after colonialism and continuing crises and contradictions of the Nigerian state' (p. 253). Through his novels, Achebe does not only reflect, but also responds to the series of the trying and critical periods in Nigeria's checkered history. He engages the paradoxical contradictions of [corruption, failure of the state and political dysfunction] that have become identical with the Nigerian polity. In both his earlier novels that portray the incursion of imperialism into Nigeria, thus destabilizing Nigeria's essential culture, values and traditions, and the later novels that captures the failure of postcolonial Nigeria, characterized with its inability to realize the expectations of its political independence, Achebe's novels give a comprehensive rundown of how Nigeria has fared since the colonial era to the present postcolonial era. This is a demonstration of the author's engagement with his society to deal with the intricacies and the contradictions of his society.

In furtherance of Achebe's engagement of the prevailing situations and circumstances in Nigeria, some of his works which include his fictive and non-fictive narratives will be examined to demonstrate his Protestantism albeit with restraint.

The Uneasiness in *No Longer at Ease*

The uneasiness that became prevalent and characterized the sociopolitical atmosphere in Nigeria immediately after the political independence in October 1960 no doubt has remained overwhelming. As a point in fact, the situation has geometrically grown worst. This uneasiness *ipso facto* has survived many political administrations and defied all antidotes.

Chinua Achebe himself felt this uneasiness and he fictively demonstrates this in *No Longer at Ease*. The uneasiness is such that a nation barely weaned from the breast of the colonialists became the abode of numerous postcolonial disillusionments heralded by the failure of the elite to keep the state in focus. In *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe's second novel, which came at the dawn of Nigeria's independence in 1960, he tells the story of a country which is no longer at ease occasioned by the failure of the elite to reform and transform the society. After things fell apart as a result of colonialism and its attendant negative effects, the elite fail to put the country at ease. Rather, their lack of integrity and commitment to statecraft compounded the problems in the country. Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist, represents the new elite in Nigeria after independence. In this novel which in the view of this research initiates Achebe's critical engagement of the Nigerian society, Obi Okonkwo returns to a corrupt society after studying abroad. Upon his return home, his resolution is to overhaul and change the disposition of his immediate family and the entire society. However, the expectation of the clan, having been responsible for his training abroad, that he pays back so as to allow other members of the clan benefit as he has done is a major challenge that he must surmount. The expectations of personal gifts and the advancement of the interests of his clan eventually become his undoing in the novel. Summarily,

Achebe portrays the failure of the elite to make any impact on the society, thus failing in their calling.

Izevbaye (2009) writes that

The real conflict in *No Longer at Ease* is between the demands of clan loyalty in the fierce economic conditions of a modern capital city, and the making of an educated middle class entrusted with building a modern independent nation. The tragedy is that Obi fails both causes: He has not been able to remain loyal to the clan that trained him, or to the nation he was trained to serve. The tragedy is national [...] (p. 42).

The nation is thus affected by the failure of the elite. This failure has bred different social ills such as corruption, regression, recession, disunity, strives, sentiments, political animosities, as well as ethnic claims to different national resources in their disposal. Contrary to the argument of Ugwuanyi (2014), that '*No Longer At Ease* is not a novel about the moral problems facing an educated Nigerian who has just come back from abroad after his studies but an attempt to show the corrupting and destructive influence of colonialism on the people' (p. 263), it is instructive to state here that after independence, the direction and course that the society takes becomes the prerogative of the elite and no longer that of the colonial masters. Again, since agitations for independence were based on the presumed ability of the colony to handle her own affairs, the elite were also presumed to be ready for the task of governing the state. Had they been uncomfortable with the corruptive legacies and destructive influences of colonialism on the people, the elite would have simply overhaul the entire system and save the nation from that national tragedy.

Corroborating the above stand point, Nwagbara (2009) posits that Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* adroitly refracts postcolonial Nigerian state buckling under the pressures and inanities of the new-fangled administrative class (the elite). This class cannot chart the course of history in order to showcase the strength of their intellectual leadership, which is capable of rescuing the nation from prebendal pillage as well as corruption (p. 249).

Consequently, as much as Ugwuanyi's claim that *No Longer at Ease* is 'an attempt to show the corrupting and destructive influence of colonialism on the people' might hold water, this research submits that the real interest of Achebe in *No Longer at Ease* is to challenge the reality that the elite who took over the reins of political power and administration after the departure of the colonial master failed to put the country at ease. The essence of independence which is expected to be the easiness that should follow the brutal experiences of the colonial intrusion was truncated. The effervescent euphoria did not last long until the nation under the watchful eyes of the elite slid into the mire of military despotism and enduring postcolonial disillusionment.

It is as such deducible that the yearning of Achebe no doubt is for a better posterity in Nigeria. However, the falling trend, coupled with the attitude of

contemporary leaders to statecraft in Nigeria has not help matters in any respect. Posterity will suffer a great deal unless there is a radical change in the status quo and in the modus operandi of the state. This is because the uneasiness prosaically presented by Achebe in 1960 has not only continued but has multiplied geometrically in contemporary Nigeria. This is as Ojimah (1991) observes that 'In *No Longer at Ease*, therefore, Achebe through Obi Okonkwo illustrates the lack of responsibility, among other things, exhibited by the inheritors of the new nations of Africa, whose primary functions should have been to lay the concrete foundations for postcolonial developments [...]' (p. 60). This lack of concrete foundation is what has negatively haunted Nigeria and militated against any meaningful development since independence. With this wrong start, the nation among her contemporaries has not fared very well. Disappointedly, contemporary manifestations in Nigeria, considering that there have been over five decades to correct these anomalies, reveal that since independence, successive ruling administrations are yet to come to terms with the task of governance and piloting the affairs of the state. Until, as advocated by Achebe the status-quo changes, Nigeria will know no ease and she might be heading for her moribundity. This will be her greatest undoing. *No Longer at Ease* is Achebe's advocacy against this.

The Man, Himself, the People and the Society in *A Man of the People*

In *A Man of the People*, his fourth novel published in 1966, Achebe continues his engagement with the post-Independent Nigeria. Here, Achebe acquaints the reader with the crisis of governance and the lack of direction of the state as well as the trivial and simplistic approach to statecraft. No doubt, Obi Okonkwo's attitude in *No Longer at Ease* laid the foundation for these. All these are occasioned by all sorts of corruption at different levels of the state. This corruption which became a characteristic hallmark of Nigeria's social and political life barely six years after the country's political independence has continued unabated till today. The reader encounters political corruption, bribery, sexual corruption and disappointment in the opposition in Nigeria, a country where 'a common saying, in the country after independence was that it didn't matter what you know but who you knew' (Achebe, 1966, p. 17). Faniran (2006) observes that *A Man of the People* 'is, perhaps, Achebe's most classical treatise on [the] political corruption [in Nigeria]. The novel is the most bilious indictment of the Nigeria ruling class shortly after independence' (p. 25).

In *A Man of the People*, Achebe extends his indictment of political and ruling elite who took over the reins of power after the departure of the colonizers. He critically engages the myopic, despotic and the simplistic nature of the Nigerian political atmosphere where politicians are simpletons who only get to political office by chance. Eventually, the political office is bastardized for self-enrichment and personal gains. Chief M. P. Nanga, the man, represents this mediocre, myopic and corrupt class. Because of his opportunity to clinch a political office, Nanga soon forgets his background as a school teacher and he uses his political office to his personal advantage at the expense of the

electorates. The society of *A Man of the People* represents contemporary Nigeria in which the elite have failed in their responsibilities and have thus thrown society into the social upheavals of insurgency, militancy and terrorism. Achebe (1966) writes that;

No, the people had nothing to do with the fall of our Government. What happened was simply that unruly mobs and private armies having tasted blood and power during election had got out of hand and ruined their masters and employers. And they had no public reason whatever for doing it. Let's make no mistake about that (p. 144)

Similarly, Max, the leader of the opposition undermines the importance of a formidable opposition in a democratic administration by secretly dining with the ruling party and openly condemning them. This singular act puts his professed ideological inclinations into jeopardy. This is a reflection of Nigeria. A state in which ideological differences among political parties are only matters of the media. As a way of destabilizing the opposition, Max is eventually killed by chief Koko's jeep and the elections are rigged in favor of the ruling party before the takeover by the military officers. Summarily, *A Man of the People* is no doubt Achebe's fictional representative of a failed state where the political class' self-interest, pursuit of power, wealth and ego are the order of the day. Both the leaders and the led are collaborators in this estate of a failed state. In his final appraisal, Achebe (1966) writes that;

Overnight everyone began to shake their heads at the excesses of the last regime [as we now have in contemporary Nigeria], at its graft, oppression and corrupt government [...] everybody said what a terrible lot; and it became public opinion the next morning. And these were the same people that only the other day had owned a thousand names of adulation, whom praise-singers followed with song and talking drum wherever they went. (p. 148)

All these issues – corruption, nepotism, and the excesses of the civilian administration of the first republic in Nigeria – laid the foundation for the military coup that followed in 1966. Achebe presents this in *The Anthills of Savannah*, a build up on *A Man of the People*.

The novel that begins after a military coup has taken place to seize power from the civilian rulers and ended with another coup berates the excesses of the civilian political leaders that prepared the fertile ground for military take over. Achebe (2012) explains that 'Corruption was widespread, and those in power were using every means at their disposal, including bribery, intimidation and blackmail to cling power (p. 72). Madiebo (1980) writes that the aim of the coup was to '[...] get rid of the corrupt and incorrigible politicians and have them replace with true nationalists' (p. 19). This military incursion into government heralded and has made political administrations in Nigeria a ding dong affair between the military and the civilian. Dugga (2003) avers in this regards that '[...] the henchmen of yesteryears have smoothly re-packaged and transited to being

the democrats of today, beating the chameleon at its natural best' (p. viii). This negative trend (i.e. the continued influx of the ex-service men into politics) which has become the order of the day in Nigeria will certainly militarize Nigeria's democracy and this definitely will not be in the interest of the masses and posterity. This in the words of Madiebo (1980) is because 'military men (both serving and retired) are unqualified for the task of government and either lean too heavily on advice which may not always be in the interest of their people or worst still, attempt to rule without it' (p. 386).

Engaging the trouble with Nigeria in *The Trouble with Nigeria*

In his essays, Achebe remains sensitive and committed to his engagement. Most of his essays apart from the ones that seek to counter the Eurocentric views and perception about Africa and Nigeria are directed at a valuation and re-evaluation of the state and the disposition of politicians and citizens alike towards statecraft in Nigeria. Among his essays, *The Trouble with Nigeria* strongly demonstrates this commitment. Published in 1983, *The Trouble with Nigeria* demonstrates Chinua Achebe's discontentment with the prevailing situations in Nigeria. In this collection, he demonstrates his commitment to his society which is aimed at engaging the society and ensuring that matters of state are handled and treated with utmost priorities with the sole intention of advancing statecraft in line with global best practices. In the ten-chapter book, Achebe radically engages anti-state issues of corruption, leadership failure, indiscipline, social injustice, cult of mediocrity, among others.

The book is a strong indication that the author is committed to the idea of political and social revamping of Nigeria. This idea (i.e. the idea of political and social revamping) has been the preoccupation of writers in Nigeria few years after independence. Ogunbesan (1974) writes that

Political commitment did not become a controversial issue in Nigerian writing until the middle of sixties [...] Ten years later almost all of them had come to believe that a writer worked within the context of contemporary human affairs and should be personally concerned in their quality; that objectivity was less important than truth; and that the writer who is not committed to socio-political programs lacked an important dimension. (p. 20)

The understanding that a writer only becomes relevant when he engages issues that affect the well-being of the populace and the society drives Achebe's engagement in *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

The book, which from the perspective of the author critically examines some of the social problems facing the country and their inherent danger towards nation building efforts, acknowledges that these problems did not start with the turn of the 21st century. They have been there ever since the beginning of Nigeria. Nigeria got it all wrong from her genesis. Achebe laments the situation that these issues have continually remained trending in Nigeria. He writes that;

Now this is not a new phenomenon; it certainly was not created by the post-military civilian administration. It might even be called one of the legacies of colonialism. If so we have had more than two decades to correct it; we have failed to do so but rather chosen to multiply the evil ten-fold. We have no excuse whatsoever. (1983, p. 23)

All these he blames largely on the despotic and mediocre attributes of Nigerian leaders. The failure of the ruling elite to harness the numerous human and natural resources available to the nation and translate her to her rightful place in the comity of nations is the crux of Achebe's message in *The Trouble with Nigeria*. The highpoint of the collection is in the optimism that he expresses, with the hope that Nigeria will be better. His deliberate choice and refusal not to give up on a nation that has continually failed its citizenry, Achebe inclusive, demonstrate that he is posterity minded not minding the history and this further concretizes his role as a righter in Nigeria. His hopes as a nationalist that things will get better are now shattered. This sadly is because there seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel as some of the issues raised by Achebe which include tribalism, false imaging, leadership failure, corruption, social injustice, indiscipline among others have remained trending in Nigeria.

There Was a Country: the Final Appraisal

The commitment to engage Nigeria by Chinua Achebe is further demonstrated in his last seminal piece, a memoir, *There Was a Country*. Here, Achebe reviews the past historical events, the present prevailing situations and the future that awaits the country if the negative trend of events continues. This emphasizes that *There Was a Country* like his earlier texts captures and reviews the history, engages the contemporary situation and hypothesize for posterity as they relate to the Nigerian situation. According to him, his engagement of the Nigerian society is aimed at

[...] a desire to make our experience in the world better, to make our passage through life easier. Once you talk about making things better, you're talking about politics. [...] The whole pattern of life demanded that one should protest, that you should put in a word for your history, your traditions, your religion, and so on. (2012, p. 58)

In 'From Cultural Nationalism to a National Democratic Culture: Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*', Tsaaior (2014) submits that Chinua Achebe, through his creative vigor doubles as a vanguard of resistance and a cultural revisionist. This is because his novels have centered on the re-enforcement and the re-evaluation of the Nigerian culture as well as a critical engagement of the national democratic culture in Nigeria. He opines that 'Achebe has increasingly demonstrated his growing acquaintance and intimacy with Nigeria's complex political and cultural environment and the inherent contradictions which have perennially occasioned arrested development' (p. 56). Accordingly, his last memoir *There Was a Country* is a testimony to this. In this

memoir, Achebe furthers his ongoing dialogue of discontent with his nation Nigeria. Through his committed patriotism, he has strongly demonstrated his dutiful commitment to his native home, Nigeria. Achebe's strong, resilient, and an uncommon commitment, fervor, fortitude, and forthrightness in engaging the postcolonial disillusionments in Nigeria can visibly be perceived all through his oeuvre including *There Was a Country* in which he frontally engages the crises bewildering Nigeria.

The segmentation of the book into four parts, the first three on the past and the last on contemporary situations in the country appears to be a deliberate attempt. As if Achebe knew that would be his last, he did not leave any stone unturned in reappraising the present state of the nation. He laments the ceaseless pool of corruption and indiscipline that has ravaged the country, the failure of the state and the contemporary terrorist and insurgent activities occasioned by violent extremism by a group. Emily (2015) corroborates this view that;

Achebe ends with a lament for the state of affairs in present day Nigeria, for what he perceives to be rampant corruption, poor governance and ultimate descent into state failure. Ending the book on this note is important because it allows Achebe to provide his own perception of Nigeria's ills and ends the book on a note of hope that Nigeria can overcome its difficulty in the future. (p. 182)

There Was a Country thus appeared to be the last installment of the debt that the erudite author owes history and posterity. In his own words, 'It is for the sake of the future of Nigeria, for our children and grand-children, that I feel it is important to tell Nigeria's story, Biafra's story, our story, my story' (Achebe 2012, p. 3). Subsequently, contrary to claims by some critics that *There Was a Country* is in a bid of the author to reawaken the Biafran agitation, it is clear that his ultimate aim is to represent Nigeria's history to avoid similar historical pitfalls that have hampered the development of the country as a postcolonial state. Tagging the book a personal history of Biafra has got nothing to do with this. This is because a critical discussion and engagement of Nigeria's socio-political history will remain incomplete without a mention of the Biafra civil struggle that later resulted in to a war between 1967 and 1970. *There Was a Country* is thus to continue the struggle for a utopian and an egalitarian society in Nigeria as the author takes his final bow.

Conclusion

From the foregoing argument in this endeavour, it is deducible that Chinua Achebe has a deep sense of history, and this burdens him for posterity in postcolonial Nigeria. Thus, the points of intersections between his fictive and non-fictive narratives are that they are his understanding of history, fulfilling his role as a writer and they demonstrate his yearnings for utopianism in Nigeria. These points of intertextuality in Achebe's oeuvre is so strong and resolute to such an extent that in the event of a misreading of his oeuvre (as this has been the clamor in some quarters), these three will remain consequential and indisputably

ipso facto to his writings. He is renowned for his strong and an undisputable preoccupation of engaging the Nigerian state. It is clear that in his oeuvre (fictive and non-fictive narratives), he has inspired a strong, reformist, resilient, and a dissident debate, and a revolution at different times and on different issues in Nigeria. He has successfully championed a discourse of critique and engagement of the prevalent situations in his home country. He has no doubt been reputed for this. The perceived aim in his essays and novels makes it explicitly clear that he is interested in using his creativity to play a central role in a positive reconstruction of his society. He institutes this inter-textualexchange in both his fictive and non-fictive narratives with a bid to provoke a critical re-evaluation of the past and save Nigeria from the differentperennial crisis rocking her as a postcolonial state. This intertextuality is continued in works of contemporary Nigerian authors in fulfillment of the yearnings and aspirations for a utopia society.

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