

Vol. 4, N°15, pp. 957– 975, SEPTEMBRE 2025

Copy©right 2024 / licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Author(s) retain the copyright of this article

ISSN : 1987-1465

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.62197/LLEH4885>

Indexation : Copernicus, CrossRef, Mir@bel, Sudoc, ASCI, Zenodo

Email : RevueKurukanFuga2021@gmail.com

Site : <https://revue-kurukanfuga.net>

*La Revue Africaine des
Lettres, des Sciences
Humaines et Sociales
KURUKAN FUGA*

EXPOSING TEXTUAL INNOVATION IN AMA ATA AIDOO AND IFEOMA CHINWUBA SELECTED NOVELS

Haidara Moctar- Université de KABALA-E-mail : moctarhaidara35@gmail.com

Abstract: This article deals with the analysis of the typographical disorder and inter-textual aesthetic as telling instances of textual innovation in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* and Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless*. The paper deciphers the form of writing adopted by Aidoo and Ifeoma as textual innovation vis a vis the orthodox conventional literary norms. Thus, the paper uses a qualitative approach with data collected through documents and archival research. It argues that the presence of graphs: capital and lower letters, italic words, hyphenated words and inter-textual dimension perceived as textual innovation when referring to canonical forms.

Key-words: innovation, intertextuality, novel, textual typographical.

Résumé : Cet article analyse le désordre typographique et l'esthétique intertextuelle en tant que signe révélateur de l'innovation textuelle dans « Our Sister Killjoy » d'Ama Ata Aidoo et « Fearless » d'Ifeoma Chinwuba. Cette recherche met en exergue la forme scripturale adoptée par Aidoo et Ifeoma en tant qu'innovation textuelle vis-à-vis des normes littéraires conventionnelles orthodoxes. Ainsi, cet article utilise une approche qualitative avec les données collectées à travers les documents et archive de recherche. Ca argumente que la présence graphique : lettres majuscules et minuscules, mots en italiques, mots avec tait d'union et la dimension intertextuelle perçus en tant que l'innovation textuelle quant on réfère sur les formes canoniques.

Mots clés: innovation, intertextualité, Roman, textuel ,typographique.

Introduction

This paper explores the concept of textual innovation in Ama Ata Aidoo and Ifeoma Chinwuba novels under consideration. Thus, in Aidoo and Ifeoma novels namely *Fearless* and *Our Sister Killjoy*, textual innovation is manifested through the disharmony of different graphs within the novels and the aesthetic of intertextuality. As the focal word of the topic involves around “innovation” hence, it is essential to define it. Therein, in Merriam Webster the online

dictionary defines innovation as: the act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods. Furthermore, for *Oxford Advanced Learner's* the online Dictionary, innovation is: the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something. Hence, in the context of this paper, the selected postcolonial writers in their literary outputs perceive innovation through the refusal of imitating western classical writing styles.

Thus, innovation is just a strategy of putting into question the western canonical writing styles; by promoting the writing of rupture through typographical disharmony and inter-textual aesthetic. This innovative writing praises the decentralisation of European classical writing techniques and claims a writing of no rules. Hence, textual innovation refers to the disorder writing in the aim at pushing the boundaries of conventional writing norms. This writing style can manifest in various ways, but the case of the current study is limited to the analysis of typographical disharmony and inter-textual dimension.

Therefore, Aidoo and Ifeoma texts under analysis are the relevant tools to decipher this paper. From then on, what is the manifestation of textual innovation in Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* and Ifeoma's *Fearless*? Choosing postmodernism as critical approach of this paper has been relevant. Thus, the analysis is divided into two major parts such as: typographical disharmony and the intertextuality dimension.

1. Typographical Disharmony As a Form of Textual Innovation

Textual subversion is also manifested through typographical disharmony in the corpus under consideration. This process is perceived through the heteroclit dimension of the different texts. In the selected novels, graphical disharmony deploys in different ways. The story is interrupted by its multiplicity of graphs: capital letters, vertical spaced words, horizontal hyphenated words, italic words and some words in bold character. Thus, the selected postcolonial writers, to emerge a new form of writing which violate the traditional norm, transgress homogeneity typography. In fact, the typographical changing from page to page or on the same is analysed as the specific writing of the different authors to question the orthodox conventional literary norms. As regards graphical heterogeneity, *Our Sister Killjoy* and *Fearless* serve as an example of heteroclit texts. So, first of all, the analysis deals with Aidoo's multifarious novel *Our Sister Killjoy*. The choice of this novel is a good example to analyse this technique of writing.

The presence of hyphenated words, capital letters, words in bold, italic words in the texts of Ama Ata Aidoo and Ifeoma Chinwuba are examined as a new systematic writing to put into crisis the canonical form. Therefore, how did Aidoo tackle the typographical norm in her text? To answer this question, the typography of the novel *Our Sister Killjoy* serves us as answer of this question. The term 'typography' is the art of arranging letters and text in coherence, in a way that makes the copy legible, clear for the reader. However, Aidoo gave herself the freedom to create her own text. Aidoo's innovative form has link with the postmodernists' perspectives of creating literary text. Sewanou Dabla tackled this issue in a way that most of African writers in their prosaic works produce with a typography different from the established

editorial form. As Sewanou pointed out “literary prose, in its majority and maybe for easiness (like reading) has adopted the uniform typography of administrative and library writings.” (Sewanou, 1986, 74, translation mine). Aidoo’s text is a good example of this writing form. Indeed, we first examine the presence of expression in bold character.

2. The Presence of Bold and Upper Letter Characters in the Texts

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, at the very beginning of the novel, Aidoo infused in her text a full sentence in bold. This insertion of sentence in bold in the novel is a kind of rebellion to the western established textual norms. That is perceived on page twelve, where the protagonist first encountered the racial prejudice in Germany. The narrator pointed out ‘suddenly, she realised a woman was telling a young girl who must have been her daughter: **‘Ja das schwartz madchen’** (Aidoo, 1977, p. 12). Aidoo highlighted this sentence to capture the attention of the readers about the postcolonial concept ‘othering’. The racial prejudice has always been the western construction. Aidoo has put this expression in bold to revisit the concept coined by Gayatri Spivak who defined:

For the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’. Whereas the other corresponds to the focus of desire or power ... in relation to which the subject produced, the other is the excluded or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power. Othering describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects. In Spivak’s explanation, othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing other is established at the same time as its colonized others are produced as subjects. (Ashcroft, et al, 2007, p. 156).

This quotation highlights that the ‘othering’ is a discourse construction of west to maintain their power on the colonized by inculcating in their minds the idea of inferiority in term of race, culture and identity. This is what Aidoo revisited this racial difference in her novel through her protagonist Sissie.

After the examination of the expression in bold character, we also have the presence of several sentences in capital letters which destabilises the uniformity of textual typography. The text *Our Sister Killjoy* is full of complete sentences and words in capital letter. Here are some of them:

IT CANNOT BE NORMAL (23), ADOLF (23), SAVED (25), ONCE UPON A TIME (29), SPROUT (37), SOMEONE MUST TELL HER HUSBAND (44), SOUTH AFRICA and RHODESIA (51), WAR (53), JUST LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE (56), EDUCATION HAS BECOME TOO EXPENSIVE. THE COUNTRY CONNOT AFFORD IT FOR EVERYBODY (57), LONELINESS (65), SCIENCE (96), THE DONOR’S (101), THOSE LETTERS FROM HOME.

Capitalisation in grammar has its specific rules. In English grammar, capital letters or upper case are letters used at the beginning of a sentence and for a proper noun. They are also possible to be used at the beginning of the important words in a title or sign. According to

English grammar rule of capitalisation, a sentence is always started with the first word in capital letter and the remaining letter in lower case. The acronyms are also put in capital letter. These are the least that can be enumerated about the use of capital letter in Standard English. However, Aidoo in her hybrid text, has subverted the English grammar by adopting a writing with no rule. Any grammatical rule has been respected in terms of the use of capital letters within the novel. As we can perceive the above examples about capitalisation, a full sentence is written in upper case. In Sidiki DIARASSOUBA's article entitled 'Dérégulation de l'écriture en Milieu Universitaire: Le Cas de la Majuscule' (2016) the issue of Capital letter has been discussed:

The use of capital letter, especially in Latin, Roman and German languages, is controlled and supported by orthographic and typological conventions. Like any rule, its wrong use makes a grammatical mistake, or specifically an orthographic, typological mistake, or a graphical mistake."(AST, 2000; ESEN, 2006, translation mine).

If we try to analyse this quotation about the use of capital letter, we can say that Aidoo has transgressed the rule of English grammar as far as the use of capitalisation is concerned. The presence of capital letters in *Our Sister Killjoy* is a technique of writing which confuses the reader's mind to have an insight idea about the novel. Moreover, the typographical innovation adopted by Aidoo echoes what Sewanou Dabla (1986) examined about the typographical variation in African novels. Where he pointed out:

The readers and the critic seldom deal with the brute materiality of the text. However, it composes for sure one of the essential compounds of written art use like a painting such as colours and their harmony, 'l'objet-lettre' in its forms and its different thickness." (Sewanou, 1986, p. 73, translation mine).

The point here is that, the literary text is most of the time judged by the message of the content; whereas, the typography of the text is another form of rebellion that the writers use to deconstruct the tradition of graphical homogeneity. Aidoo deals with an abnormal writing by mixing upper cases with lower ones. The capitalisation adopted by Aidoo is intentional, and the different capitalised expressions are meaningful. For instance, the term 'IT CANNOT BE NORMAL' (23) refers to the sexual desire of the German woman (Marija). The protagonist, Sissie was so amazed to perceive the fact that the German woman's affection to two Indians at the same time. This practical of sexual desire is not common in Africa. Aidoo is portraying the ugly image of European civilisation through the protagonist's company with the German woman. Moreover, Aidoo capitalised another important historical name for the European civilisation: 'ADOLF' (23). Marija, the German woman introduced her husband to Sissie as Adolf. It is not a vacuum to mention this historical name. Aidoo wants here to draw the attention of the public to remember to the remote past, the atrocities caused by the German dictator, Adolf Hitler. The use of these terms in graphic by the author is not neutral; firstly, ADOLF refers to Adolf Hitler who exterminated many people during the world war; he discriminated other races by considering 'German' as the superior race. Thus, racial discrimination has always been the focal point for postcolonial writers. Aidoo in her turn, questioned this racial supremacy the German

dictator exterminated other races by promoting German as the best race. Furthermore, in the novel, another capitalised word illustrated the German dictator as an oppressor during the First World War. Aidoo capitalised 'OPPRESSION' (93) to give more credibility about the use of Adolf to refer to Hitler as oppressor. The narrator pointed out:

Ja, our people have been oppressed for many many years, since the First World War, he said. Our Sister's own mouth caught so rigidly open with surprise, and wide enough for a million flies to swarm in and out, how she could ask him:

Germans?

Oppressed?

By whom?'

Yes, so frozen was her mind [...] she could not ask him whether after the Germans, the Irish and Africans ... there are or could have been some other oppressed peoples on the earth like Afro-Americans or Amerindians or Jews.

She forgot to ask

Her most learned Guest

If he had heard of

Buchenwald

Or come across

Dachau

Even in his reading? (Aidoo, 1977, pp. 93-94).

The presence of capital letters in Aidoo's text is not for nothing. So, the notice can be on two reasons. The first purpose is the deconstruction of western narrative homogeneity and the intention deals with the subversion of historical falsification of the west about their culture and civilisation as the best over the colonized culture and civilisation. Throughout Aidoo's novel, the Eurocentric discourses of western culture, civilisation and history as the centre of the universe is rewritten and challenged. Now, the use of African countries like SOUTH AFRICA and RHODESIA (p.51) in graphic also emphasizes the western barbaric racial discrimination in South Africa and the pitiful colonization in Rhodesia, current Zimbabwe. So, the capitalisation of some names within her text is not neutral, it deconstructs the form of the grand narrative. It then depicts the western civilisation as savage and barbaric.

In the same vein of typographical disorder within the text as telling instances of textual innovation, Ifeoma Chinwuba in her novel *Fearless* has dealt with the same strategy to

deconstruct the harmony of textual form. Ifeoma has innovated the textual structure with the infusion of capitalised letters within her text. The abuse use of graphical writing in the novel cannot be understood by the reader, because those characters are not sometimes complete sentences; it is even noticeable that some characters are abbreviated. The narrator presents the abuse use of disordered graphs in the novel:

EYES RIGHT! (p. 6), NO CONDITION IS PERMANENT (p. 7), TWO TIMES ZERO, ZERO; TWO TIMES ONE, TWO; TWO TIMES TWO, FOUR; TWO TIMES THREE, SIX; TWO TIMES FOUR, EIGHT; (p. 32), AT THE SAME TIME (p. 105), TO BECOME A MAN IS NOT A DAY'S JOB (p. 185), TWO SEATS RSVD FLT WT 234 LOS-GATWICK THURSDAY 15TH (p. 220), SON IN DANGER STOP RQST IMMEDIATE EVACUATION STOP he had changed the RQST to DEMAND (p. 222).

The use of upper cases breaks the established norms. Instead of writing the full sentence in capital letter or lower case, Ifeoma blinded the two forms on page (222), the sentence started with upper case and in the middle of the same sentence part of a sentence is in lower case and ended with upper case. The point is that Ifeoma has mixed upper and lower case in the same sentence. According to the grammatical rule of capital letter use in English grammar, the norms have been subverted by Ifeoma. To be more sure about it, Sidiky DIARASSOUBA in his article entitled 'Deregulation de L'écriture en Milieu Universitaire: Le Cas de la Majuscule' (2016). DIARASSOUBA deciphered in his work the different cases in which capital letters are used. He argued:

¹Any character except numeric characters and those of particulars are written in capital letter in initial position. That means that in the beginning of sentence in producing graphical or typographical of manuscript of established standard. The initial character of the first word after the full stop of sentence takes capital letter too. Moreover, the orthographical rules also devote a capital letter in initial character of the word in the following situations: a- proper nouns and geographical nouns – a country, an area or agglomeration and gentiles, resident of a country or an area; b- those nouns designating major historical events and religious feasts; c- The first letter of the first word in the title of a book; d- nouns of planets main stars and luminaries or zodiac signs ;

Grevisse, 2001 cité par DIARASSOUBA

¹ « Tout caractère à l'exception des numériques et ceux dits particuliers s'écrit en majuscule en position initiale. C'est-à-dire à l'entame d'une phrase dans la réalisation graphique ou typographique d'un manuscrit aux normes standard. Aussi le caractère initial du premier mot après un point indiquant la fin d'un énoncé prend –il majuscule. En outre les règles d'orthographe consacrent également une majuscule au caractère initial du mot dans les situations qui suivent. a- les noms propres et géographiques – un pays, une région ou agglomération et gentils, ceux afférant aux natifs ou habitants d'un pays, d'une région ; b- ceux désignant de moments historiques majeurs et les fêtes religieuses ; c- la première lettre du premier mot dans un titre d'œuvre ; d- les noms des planètes, principaux astres et Etoiles ou encore des signes du zodiaque ; e- les noms de grands événements qui ont marqué la conscience collective de l'humanité, pour ne citer que ces cas-ci ».

e- the nouns of great events which recorded human history. (2016, p.149, translation mine)

According to the standard of Latin, Roman and Germany languages, the capital letter is subdued to the established norms that have been cited in the above quotation enumerated by Diarassouba. However, Ifeoma did not subdue her text to the norms of the orthodox. She writes this text with postcolonial vision of writing back to the west through textual rebellion.

3. Aidoo and Ifeoma Innovative Writings

The presence of hyphenated and italic words is also part of graphical heterogeneity in Aidoo and Ifeoma novels. Thus in *Our Sister Killjoy*, Aidoo violated the classical way of writing by inserting the hyphenated and italic words in the body of her text. This is evident on the different pages of the text. Especially, at the second and the third section of the novel 'Plums', and 'From *Our Sister Killjoy*,' Aidoo dealt with the graphical disharmony. This is the part of the novel where the protagonist travelled to an alien place to subvert Eurocentric discourses constructions. Moreover, with the same objective of deconstruction, Aidoo has deconstructed the form of the text with the introduction of hyphenated and italic words. Indeed, those innovated words are perceivable on pages: M-m-m (46), Ah-h-h (47), R-E-D (48), A-C-H-T-U-N-G (49), Nee-ge-ria (52), b-u-s-h (67), c-r-i-m-e (67), s-o-d-o-m-y (67), B-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l-l-e-r (91), p-aa-r-ty (93). The position of the numbers of words with hyphen is meaningful, because, it is noticeable in the novel, this writing of chaos happened when Sissie, the protagonist travelled to the ex-colonized lands, Germany and England. The hidden message that can be kept about the attitude of Aidoo is her postcolonial perspectives of deconstruction through the form of the text. For an illustrative argument, this is evident when Ashcroft argues:

The operation of post-colonial counter-discourse is dynamic, not static: It does not seek to subvert the dominant with a view to taking its place, but to evolve textual strategies which consume their own biases at the time as they expose and erode those of the dominant discourse. (Ashcroft, 2012, p.9).

So, the postcolonial text with its objective of going against the foundation of colonial discourse in order to emerge a new discourse. Therefore, Aidoo innovated her text to undermine the western textual organisation by inserting hyphenated words and italic words. Aidoo has taken another innovated strategy to subvert the form of the text under analysis. This innovation concerns the infusion of italic words in the text. This can be seen on pages like: 'D'accord, D'accord' (p.29), 'die schonenkinder' (p. 36), mon ami (p. 53). Thus, Aidoo has dealt with italicization with linguistic dimension. In the text, the words in italic praise linguistic hybridity. Because, the text contains two French words and an expression in German language. The insertion of these expressions in French and German can be examined in two objectives for the author. The first strategy deals with linguistic plurality within the text to undermine the western linguistic universalism. And the second objective of the writer of italic insertion intends to deconstruct the orthodox narrative structure. So, graphical examination in Aidoo's 'Our Sister

Killjoy' has concerned the analysis of capital letters, hyphenated words, and words in italic as graphical disharmony.

Now, what about Ifeoma Chinwuba's novel 'Fearless (2004)'? How did Ifeoma disrupt with western narrative structural homogeneity? The point is, the examination will be done in 'Fearless' to dismantle the graphical heterogeneity. Like Aidoo, Ifeoma did not imitate the western textual organization by writing her story. The form of Ifeoma's text (Fearless) rebels against the canonical form as far as graphical coherence is concerned. The Nigerian postcolonial writer has deconstructed the form of her story with the infusion of abnormal graphs within the text. The textual analysis we intend to decipher in 'Fearless' of Ifeoma concerns the presence of italic, and hyphenated words

Ifeoma has also dealt with stylistic writing in terms of the typography of the novel. The style of the text is a pure innovation. This is then observable on different pages with the presence of words with hyphen which transgresses the grammatical norms of western language. In English grammar, most often a word is hyphenated according to the grammatical rule. According to Nichole Held (2010), the most common of hyphenation are the following:

The first rule concerns when two or more adjectives come before a noun and act as a single idea. The second deals with adverb not ending with 'ly' are used compound words in front of a noun, we need to hyphen the words. However, we do not hyphen the words when the combination of words is used after the noun. It is needed to check in a dictionary a compound noun if it is two or one word or hyphenated if you can't find it in the dictionary treat the word as a separate word. Compound verbs are either hyphenated or separate word. Moreover, all compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine. Finally, all spelled-out fractions are hyphenated. (The write place, 2010, translation mine).

Thus, Ifeoma systematic hyphenation disrupts the rules cited above as far as English grammatical hyphenation is concerned. Instead of hyphenating words according to the grammatical norms, Ifeoma refused to subdue to the rules by adopting a new systematic hyphenation. Those examples are visible on pages: 'O-P-H-T-H-A-L-M-O-L-O-G-Y' (38), 'P-S-Y-C-H-O-S-O-M-A-T-I-C' (39), I-N-F-A-M-Y (72), 'O- DOUBLE P-R-O-B-R-I-U-M' (72). Indeed, the Nigerian writer has dealt with a letter by letter hyphenation, that is to say each letter is separated with a hyphen. Ifeoma has inserted these letters hyphenated words in the body of the text to make the novel unstable in form and reading. Hence, this graphical disorder has been raised by Sélom Komlan Gbanou (2004) in his article "Le Fragmentaire dans le roman francophone africain" views the combination of graphs in the novel as:

²A game of mutation in the morphology of literary text which interchanges between several graphs and events. Thus fragmentation does not only concern a manipulation of the story but as research of visual effects which lead a reader to a discontinuous movement of reciprocation through the text [...] the reader can, if he wants to choose a movement of zapping like a in front of a television to choose which channels or rubrics interested him and ignore those for him represent unnecessary... the writing system also induces a fragment reading with graphical game which combines italic, normal character, bold character and insertion of new papers strategies which push the reader to abide by the heteroclite of textual form.” (2004, p. 88, translation mine).

In fact, the variation of different graphs in the literary text gives the reader the choice of which part to read. The reader in front of such a text is given freedom to select the part within the text which seems easy and where the normative structure is respected. Besides, the infusion of hyphen letters, Ifeoma deconstructed the narrative harmony with the combination of italic characters. The historicity of western narrative homogeneity is subverted when Ifeoma Chinwuba mixed the italic version of writing in her text under consideration. The italicization is proceeded in different parts of the text through the songs. The songs are written in italic and those songs are sung by children at school and during the game. Some sentences are written in italic and inserted within the text. Sometimes, many lines of song are italicised. Here is the evidence in the novel:

My great school, I thee salute,	the day is bright, is bright and fair
Dearest you will remain to me,	A happy day, a day of joy
Prepare me with,	the day is bright, is bright and fair,
Great love and care,	oh happy day of joy
Teach me the truths,	Mission school is marching on,
Impart wisdom,	is marching on,
Uphold disciplines,	to the future ...

² Selon Sélom komlan Gbanou « Par un jeu de mutations dans la morphologie du texte qui alterne plusieurs niveaux graphiques et évènementiels. Ainsi, la fragmentation ne se donne pas seulement a lire comme une manipulation du récit , mais comme une recherche d’effets visuels devant conduire le lecteur a un mouvement discontinu de va –et- vient a travers le texte, suivant les ressemblances graphiques entre les différents segments. Le lecteur peut, s’il le veut , se laisser aller à un mouvement de zapping, comme devant le téléviseur pour choisir les chaines ou les rubriques qui l’intéressent et passer outre ce qui, pour lui , relèverait du superfétatoire. Aussi, non seulement l’écriture procède –t-elle d’une dissémination de bris, mais elle induit encore une lecture fragmentaire par le jeu graphique qui combine italique, caractère normal, gras et encarts de journaux stratégies qui mènent le lecteur à se soumettre à la bigarrure du tissu textuel ».

To face the world,
And serve mankind,
In honour bound,
Be true and good,
Great Mission school,
I thee revere. (p.65)

big success,
marching on, (p. 66-67)

In other part of the novel, italic sentences are inserted within the text instead of writing in lines. “quoi de neuf” (p. 138), “Le serpent n’a pas de pieds mais il marche, psi, psi, psipsi, sans pieds, mais ça marche, psi, psi, psipsi” (p. 139), qu’est ce na fo? (p.224), encore merci (224), Eké pardon, pardon (p.224), prends garde, oyibo monsieur, prends garde, (p.225), Ikuku nefefe, bulum fepu (p. 250). Those sentences in local language or English are italicized. Furthermore, sometimes, religious songs are also italicized in poetry form, song like:

People dey ask me say,
Wetin dey make me fine,
I just dey tell them say,
Na jesus dey make me fine,
I dey fine, I dey fine I dey fine... (p. 153)

Even the vernacular language is often italicized in the novel. The sentences in line are the following:

‘Umudo kwenu!’
‘Hem!’
‘kwenu’!
‘kwezuenu’!
‘Hem’! (p.176)

Thus, Ifeoma’s textual deconstruction has been examined through the infusion of different graphs in her text. Besides, the typography of the text from page to page is not identic. The pages are written with different graphs. For instance, the first page is written in normal style while the next page is bold style which authorised Michel NAUMANN in his critical essay ‘Les Nouvelles Voies de la Littérature Africaine et de la Libération: Une Littérature de Voyoue’ (2001) to consider this strategy of writing adopted by most African postcolonial writers in

general, and Ifeoma in particular as: ³“*violent, cynical, amoral, this new movement constitutes what we name, through a faithful neologism in spirit a literature of “voyou”*” (P.7, translation mine). NAUMANN considers all the new elements adopted by African postcolonial writers such as graphical infusion, intertextuality, generic mixture, narrative plurality and so forth. Therefore, what about the intertextuality dimension manifested in the corpus under analysis?

4. Intertextual Aesthetic

Intertextuality as a concept of postmodernism, is generally described as the interrelationship of texts. Intertextuality is characterized by the terms like parody, satire, and pastiche. This concept of postmodernism is used by most African postcolonial writing in their literary texts to destabilise time and space relation of textual narrative. Because, the writer tries to link the historical facts of present and past in the literary text through parody, irony or satire. That is why Linda Hutcheon in ‘A Poetics of Postmodernism (2004)’ did not take time to describe and contextualise how intertextuality is viewed through postmodernist lens:

Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context [...] it is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead it directly confronts the past of literature and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts (document). It uses and abuses those intertextual echoes, inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony. (Hutcheon, 2004, p.118).

The process of intertextuality is operated in postcolonial writers’ texts through the references of some texts from past or present in their texts aiming at subverting or criticizing a system. Most African postcolonial writers write back many western adventure novels written during colonialism and post-colonialism in which the colonized is represented as savage and brutal. Therefore, in the corpus under analysis, intertextuality can be operated within narrative voice, characters names, epigraphs, history, setting, and themes. With intertextuality perspective, a literary text is just a composition of many discourses where the original ideas derived from other texts.

So, any text is an imitation of another one. Moreover, clarified this in her critical book ‘Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and art’ (1980), by theorizing that “*Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.*” (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). For Kristeva views point, no text is new. Any text written as a new one derived from some other texts in implicit or explicit manner.

In fact, Gerard Genette decides to theorize this concept and calls it as transtextuality or the transcendence of text. From Gerard analysis there are three types of intertextuality. It can be internal, external or historical. The internal intertextuality deals with the use of references of

³ Selon Michel NAUMANN : « ce que nous nommons, à l’aide d’un néologisme fidèle a son esprit, une littérature de voyou » p. 7

his or her text in one of his or her own text. In case, we notice the repetition of some elements of his own text in a new production. As regards, the external intertextuality, the writer quotes other texts references in his or her text. As far as the historical dimension is concerned, the writer in the literary output, tries to create a link between the fact and fiction. In this kind of text, the historical events or facts are revisited in fictive work. Sometimes real characters, historical discourses and real events to create an intertextual rapport between them.

5. Historical Version of Intertextuality in Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*

Indeed, our analysis focuses on the historical dimension of intertextuality to decipher Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Aidoo revisited the historical discourse of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in *The Philosophy of History* (1956). He pointed out: «The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality- all that we call feeling if we would rightly comprehend him, there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character». (Hegel, 2001, p.111). However, Aidoo came in opposition by raising the interrogative sentence: “is Egypt in Africa?” (Aidoo, 1977, p.111) to make the link between the German philosopher historical fact about Africa and her fictive work. According to the conception of Hegel, Egypt which represents the backbone of western civilisation is said to be a part of Asia not Africa. Aidoo has taken a satiric position to voice colonial misconceptions about the colonized people emerged from the historical falsification of western philosophers, historians and anthropologists. Those western thinkers made many African people doubt their history. The historical misconception has inculcated into the minds of colonized people.

That is the reason why, the Afro-American student wonders if “is Egypt in Africa [...] but did the Egyptians who built the pyramids, you know, the pharaohs and all, were they African?” (Aidoo, 1977, p.111). Aidoo answered back Hegel through the architectural artefact of Africans people. The Afro-American is alienated by the stereotypical discourse about the civilisation of African people. Aidoo refers per purpose on the pyramid to make sure African people in general and the Afro-American case in particular that Africa has embraced knowledge in many fields before the colonialist contact between Africa and the west. It is even evident that, in Ancient Egypt, the most knowledgeable western philosophers, anthropologists and scientists have sojourned in Egypt for knowledge acquisition. Aidoo only selected the pyramid among many others, to subvert the influences of stereotypical discourses on the colonized people.

However, Hegel, with his misconception vision about the history of Africa, decided to divide Africa into three major parts: Africa proper, European Africa, and Egypt. Moreover, intertextuality is also operated in the setting of the story. The choice of Germany as one of the settings of the story proves the intertextual dimension. Allusion as one of the devices of intertextuality is used by the author for the choice of her setting. Because, Germany as the setting of Aidoo's story alludes to the country of the German born Hegel. The space correlation

between periphery and centre is meaningful. Because, Aidoo is criticizing the German philosopher through the nation he belongs (Germany).

6. External References in Ifeoma's *Fearless*

Ifeoma Chinwuba in her turn did not stay in margin as far as intertextuality dimension is concerned in her novel under study. Ifeoma has adopted the postmodernists' textual strategy by inserting other texts references in her text. For postmodernists perspectives there is no original literary text, any new text derives from other texts. That is why Linda Hutcheon has mentioned in her critical book: "A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance" (Hutcheon, 2004, p. 126). Thus, the meaning of any text is linked to the existence of other discourses within it.

The Fearless of Ifeoma Chinwuba is a good example of this intertextuality in the sense that the reader realised that the author disrupts with traditional novelist norms by mixing several texts. Therefore, from the very beginning of the story, the author has inserted the reference of the English well known writer's book in her text: "There were tomes of Encyclopaedia Britannica, The complete works of William Shakespeare and other classics" (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 21). Ifeoma has inserted this reference in the narrative to draw the attention of the reader about the identity of Matt Wilson and his son Ralph Wilson. From this reference, the reader is already informed about the nationality and the culture of Matt Wilson and his family.

Moreover, the presence of this reference in Ifeoma's text intends to reveal the brief summary of the supervisor and his son identity through William Shakespeare. Because, for any good reader, William Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest writer in the English language. So, the Wilson's family has been identically described through the world's pre-eminent dramatist.

Furthermore, in the same context of intertextual resource, the biblical references in some parts of the novel. By so doing, Ifeoma invites a biblical verse in her novel to promote the indigenous cultural practice of circumcision. It has been argued: "Even the Holy Book says give to Caesar what Caesar's is and to God what is God's" (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 148). The author has inserted this biblical verse to convince Matt Wilson that Christianity and customs go together. The use of biblical verse is meaningful in the sense that the supervisor belongs to Christianity and he believes in the Holy Book.

Therefore, what is mentioned in the Bible must be sacred. For the natives, circumcision is a harmless custom, so Christianity should not debar this indigenous practice. Another implicit message for the use of biblical verse by Ifeoma is the promotion of male circumcision practice in African societies as cultural value which does not affect the religious faith. The second biblical reference in Ifeoma's text deals with the indirect reference of bible summarized by the supervisor. The author gives the reference of the 'Holy Book' but with summarized version through the explanation of Matt Wilson of a given chapter in the bible 'the Book Genesis'. The

real verse of the bible is appeared in the narrative but the summary of chapter has been advocated by Matt Wilson. As the narrator points out:

Today, they had started the Book of Genesis. Matt had explained creation and the need to rest on the seventh day. Then, he had discussed the creation of woman. Several feet shuffled, mouths yawned [...] in summary, therefore, God created one woman from Adam, and for him, not three. Because, in the wisdom of God, one woman is enough for a man. You must retain this message and take it back to your kith and kin. The practice of having more than one wife is not acceptable to God. It must stop. Those involved in this sin, must keep one and let the others go (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 153).

Here, the reference is not from text to text insertion, but it has been infused through summary version of a chapter of the 'Holy Book'. In fact, the supervisor has focused on the biblical chapter to summarise what has been said by God. The unsaid message of this biblical reference can lead a careful reader to detect the religious faith of the author and her combat for monogamous regime. The author has implicitly conveyed a message through the supervisor her combat for monogamy in African societies by supporting this source with the explanation of the Holy Book about this issue. As a woman, Ifeoma intends to defend the causes of modern African women specifically those belong to Christianity faith.

Moreover, Ifeoma still interested in infusing other references in the novel under consideration. The author implicitly portrays the prayer of Christian brethren in church. If we try to analyse the step of this prayer description, it seems to be organized like the one is taking place in church. In the narrative, the prayer starts with reading and explanation of biblical verses of chapter and the class is ended with a biblical song like in church. Reading this part of Ifeoma's 'Fearless' it is as if we are taking to a mess or watching it. So, after the closing prayer, a biblical song has been sung:

People dey ask me say,
Wetin dey make me fine
I just dey tell them say,
Na Jesus dey make me fine,
I dey fine, fine, fine, fine, fine,
I just dey tell them say,
Na Jesus dey make me fine... (Ifeoma, 2004, pp. 153-154).

Indeed, the song alludes to evangelism in Christianity. For Christian faith, song represents the easiest way to worship God. For this regard, it has been argued in the story: "If

the Old and New Testaments could be reduced to song and dance, evangelism here would be as simple as do-re-mi” (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 154). Thus, all the intertextual references used in Ifeoma’s ‘Fearless’ violate the norms of western traditional literary texts and then inscribes as an innovation.

7. Textual Relationship Between Ifeoma’s *Fearless* and *Things Fall Apart*

As far as intertextuality analysis is concerned, we have noticed some distinctive features of textual relationship between Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Ifeoma Chinwuba’s *Fearless*. In fact, some similarities can be noticed between the two texts. Starting with the perspectives of the novel, both authors dealt with the promotion and quest of cultural or national identity. Especially, Igbo traditional culture has been praised in both novels. Among the two novels, Achebe’s novel is the first to be published and have been one of the most influential African subversive novels. Moreover, Achebe also was the prominent African postcolonial writer whom many African writers dream to inspire on him. It is crystal clear that, Ifeoma used some technical writings from her predecessor. Ifeoma Chinwuba adopts the technical writing of Achebe in terms of lexical creation; that is to say Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* uses some literary translated expressions within his narrative. Those literary translated expressions are also used in Ifeoma Chinwuba’s *Fearless*. For more specification, in *Things Fall Apart*, there are expressions like: three or four markets (p.4) are used by Achebe to refer to weeks in Standard English. Even when referring to money, the author uses ‘cowries’ (p.136) as it was called during pre-colonial period. As regards, musical instruments, Achebe infused in his some of them like ‘flutes’ (p. 3), ‘drums’ (p.3) to show the originality of his novel as African novel. Similarly, in Ifeoma Chinwuba’s *Fearless*, those expressions have been revisited in the narrative. For instance, Ifeoma uses the same musical expressions in her text under study: ‘flute’ (p. 5), drums (p. 5). The similar expressions like: ‘one market week’ (p. 100), ‘three money’ (p.131) are the inspired expressions from *Things Fall Apart*.

Ifeoma has indirectly inserted in her story those literary translated lexis to make her novel more hybrid. Moreover, what is more pertinent as far as this intertextual rapport between the two texts, is the beginning of both novels. Ifeoma has inspired on *Things Fall Apart* to write her story. In fact, the beginning of *Things Fall Apart* we can notice the festive mood of the natives. It can be perceived the beating of drums and the song of flutes as it is mentioned in the novel: “the drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was a slippery as a fish in water” (Achebe, 1959, p. 3). The novel starts with the festivity of African traditional fight. In her turn, Ifeoma inspired on her iconic writer by starting her story with the festive mode of the natives who were beating drums and flutes sang to welcome a guest from the west. The narrator gives an insight:

The whole village was in a festive mood. After so many weeks of preparation, D Day had finally come, when the new supervisor of Mission School, Umudo would arrive. The various age-groups had practiced their dance steps [...] the sound of the drums and the gong could be heard from far away. The flute was not as loud (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 5).

This intertextual rapport is also indirectly manifested in Ifeoma's *Fearless* through a passage of the novel. Ifeoma Chinwuba has indirectly used in her novel a similar passage from Achebe 'Things Fall Apart' to make her narrative more multifarious form which disrupts with the established norms of the west. To be more illustrative, it is important to mention the two passages. Generally speaking, in Igbo traditional belief, some individuals are not buried in the same way like the others due to cultural belief. For instance, in 'Things Fall Apart' Unoka, the father of Okonkwo is believed to be 'ogbanje', meaning a child who dies and reincarnates several times to make his family miserable. As it has been mentioned in the story:

Unoka was an ill-fated man. He had a bad chi or personal god, and evil fortune followed him to the grave, or rather to the death, for he had no grave. He died of the swelling which was an abomination to the earth goddess. When a man was afflicted with swelling in the stomach and the limbs he was not allowed to die in the house. He was carried to the Evil Forest and left there to die (Achebe, 1959, p. 18).

This cultural belief influences the burial practices in Igbo communities, therefore a similar passage has been revisited in Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless*. In *Fearless* of Ifeoma, some individuals are thrown in the Evil Forest if they are believed to bring bad luck or misfortune to the community. For instance, the sages have been thrown into the Evil Forest when they were born because; they were believed to be Ogbanje children. Furthermore, those who have been also died in shameful death are also thrown in the Evil Forest. Like in *Things Fall Apart*, this cultural practice and belief of Igbo people has been also revisited in Ifeoma Chinwuba's 'Fearless'. Indeed, Ifeoma has indirectly inserted this cultural practice from Achebe's novel into her own text. For this regards, the sage urges: "*It is only people who have died shameful death that are thrown into the evil forest, far from their homesteads. There was silence. Everyone knew that the sages had been thrown into this Evil Forest when they were born, before the coming of the white missionaries*" (Ifeoma, 2004, p. 212). Thus, the author deals with hybrid writing through intertextual dimension, Ifeoma's novel does not care of the concept of linearity or coherence as basic elements of traditional norms. For intertextual dimension, what Ifeoma Chinwuba has dealt with is external intertextuality, meaning inserting allusive passages into her novel from other author text. This is what Francois Koffi KONAN (2015) in his article entitled "L'écriture du chaos dans le roman de Thierno Monémbo refers to as: "textual democracy", (p. 150). To conclude this part, intertextuality has been examined as one of the bedrocks of innovation.

CONCLUSION

This article has shed light on the innovative writing in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* and Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless* through graphical disharmony and intertextuality aesthetic. Regarding graphical disharmony, the analysis has focused on bold and upper letters presence as the feature of innovation. Indeed, the infusion of italic and hyphenated words has also been dismantled and analysed to certify the innovation undertaken by Aidoo and Ifeoma in their selected novels. Moreover, an illustration has been given on the aesthetic of intertextuality as telling instances of innovation. For intertextuality, external and historical dimension has been analysed.

BIBLIOGRAPGY

- ACHEBE, Chunia , 1959, *Things Fall Apart*, 1540 Broadway, New York
- AIDOO, Ama Ata,1997, *Our Sister Killjoy*, England, Longman African Classic,
- ASHCROFT, Bill, et al,2002, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and practice in Postcolonial literatures*, second edition, London and New York: Routledge,
- ASHCROFT, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin,2007, *Post-Colonial Studies, The Key Concepts* Second edition, Taylor and Francis e-Library.
- CHINWUBA, Ifeoma,2004, *Fearless*, Nigeria G-Delog Nigeria Company.
- HUTCHEON, Linda, 1988, *A Poetics of Postmodernism, History, Theory, Fiction*, First Published by Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE.
- KOUADIO Germain N'GUESSAN,2016,*Writing abnormality: Ecriture de l'Anormalité*, PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRE DE LOME. BP 1515LOME-TOGO
- KRISTEVA JULIA,1980, *Desire in Language, A semiotics Approach to Literature and Art*, Colombia University Press New York

- NAUMANN, Michel, 2001, *Les nouvelles voies de la Littérature Africaine et de la Libération (Une littérature voyoue)*, 5-7, rue de l'école-Polytechnique, 75005 Paris-France, L'Harmattan
- TCHASSIM, Koutchoukalo, 2025, *Fictions Africaines et Ecriture de Démesure*, PYRAMIDE PLUS, Lomé –Togo,

