

HARNESSING LITERATURE'S POTENTIAL TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN LIFE BEYOND OUR BORDERS

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LEANING INTO DISCOMFORT:
WORKING WITH PURPLE HIBISCUS

PEDAGOGY OF DISCOMFORT

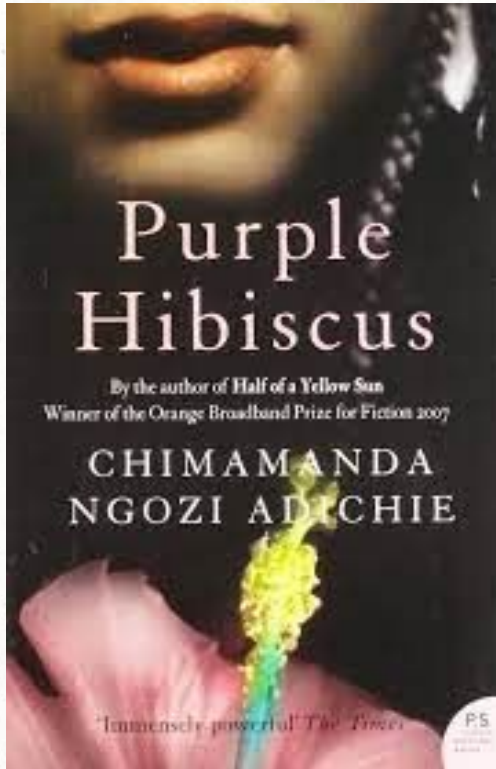
a teaching practice that can encourage students to move outside their 'comfort zones' and question their 'cherished beliefs and assumptions' (Boler 1999, 176).

if a major purpose of social justice education is to unsettle cherished beliefs about the world, then some discomfort is not only unavoidable but may also be necessary (Berlak 2004 quoted in Zemylas 2015).

“emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see” (Boler 2003).

“For understandable reasons, students may not welcome the invitation to rethink their worldviews in ways that disrupt and shatter their comfortable status quo”. (Boler 2013)

SELECTING A NEW NOVEL: TEACHER DISCOMFORT



Questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about canonical texts (“inscribed habits of inattention”)

Moving outside the comfort zone of teacher-as-expert

Moving from “learning about” to “learning from” the world of the text

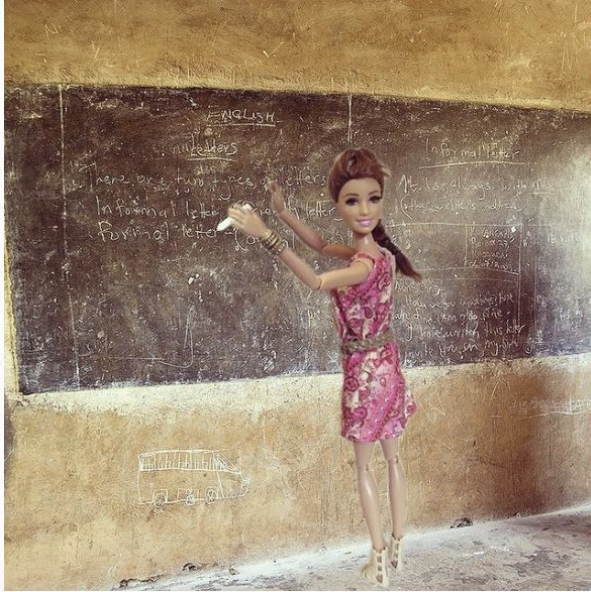
CHALLENGING THE SINGLE STORY



Nkali - To be greater than another (roughly translated from Igbo)

“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”

UNSETTLING BELIEFS



Barbie Savior

Article on Voluntourism

CROCODILE TAILS

CHIEDZA MUSEN GEZI?

as a teacher in Zimbabwe, is that not your job to an extent?

THEY SPARE THE ROD and spoiled the child.

is it ethical to BEAT children because of cultural?

"she had expected to be posted to a rural school where she would have had to carry a bucket or a borehole a smoky wait for a bus

"I want to be hardened by pain and experience, like you."

WHAT'S YOUR SINGLE STORY?

“...I’m Punjabi, but one single story that has been told about Indians is that we’re all the same” (I.J, 2021)

“I try to educate people about my stereotypes as so that they don’t go ahead and ask somebody else who may not be as willing to teach as me.” (M.P, 2021)

“...if I were to add, I am also queer and non-binary; I am female, and all of those have single stories” (S.L, 2021)

CRITICAL LENSES: FEMINISM



“Flawless” by Beyoncé



**“We Should All Be Feminists” by
Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche**

**“A Disobedient
Woman” - NY Times**

CRITICAL LENSES: POST-COLONIAL

“You cannot continue to victimize someone else just because you yourself were a victim once—there has to be a limit”

— Edward W. Said

‘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.’ *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What events or circumstances help or prevent from finding their voice or being heard?

How is power divided within our society?
Within the novel?

How do people with less power resist oppression from those with more?

What are the legacies of colonialism?

What happens when a system of belief is imposed on a group of people?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS



“It is obscene”

Considerations for teaching the novel:

- Domestic Abuse
- Treatment of Religion

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

How much discomfort is too much to bear?

How do complex class compositions change approaches to a pedagogy of discomfort?

How do we use these productively and move beyond discomfort to critical hope?