

Reconceptualising Home, Migratory Impulse and Disenchantment in Helon Habila's *Travellers* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

Akinsete, Charles Tolulope

Department of English, University of Ibadan

tolu304@gmail.com. +2347030274905

and

Ojo, Iyanuoluwa

Department of English, University of Ibadan

ojoianuoluwa30@gmail.com. +2348130266239

Abstract

*The problematisation of home in the twenty-first century is relatable to the discourse of migration. Existing studies have conceptualised the notion of home and migration from different socio-political perspectives. This paper, while attempting a contrastive of two salient texts, Helon Habila's *Travellers* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*, extends on these studies by re-examining the concept, place and essence of home as well as the migratory impulse as the negative force for fuelling the condition of disenchantment. Habila's *Travellers* (2019) is a novel that envisions the motifs of home and migration as a double-barrel gun which aggravates immigrants' traumatic condition. Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) strongly foregrounds the subject matter of home, and migratory impulse, while further projecting double disenchantment as a reality of migration. This study adopts Homi Bhabha's concept of *Unhomely* and Edward Said's *Orientalism* as pivotal postcolonial tenets, while the literary texts are subjected to critical interpretations, with the view to extending the narrative of migration as a key concept in the twenty-first century.*

Keywords: *Home, Migratory Impulse, Disenchantment, Postcolonialism, Nigerian Literature in Twenty-first Century*

Introduction

Nigerian literature, no doubt, remains one of many active grounds for the proliferation of African ideologies. Contemporary writers such as Taye Selasi, Helen Oyeyemi, Helon Habila, Chris

Abani, Sefi Atta, Chimamanda Adichie, Teju Cole, Brian Chikwa, and a host of others have successfully crafted their art and today, are considered extraordinary writers, who have in one way contributed and reflected salient thematic preoccupations through their writings. They have defined their artistic works as products of societal imaginations and occurrences which further encapsulate the complex notion of modern discourse in contemporary African society.

Among other issues, Nigerian writers today, through their dense imagination and creativity, underscore the significance of societal regeneration. Ndebele (1994:4) avers that “clearly, if the society has to be recreated, then no aspect of the society is deemed irrelevant to the progress of liberation”. Therefore, writers are seen as not just relevant to society but remain progenitors of societal change and liberation. Specifically speaking, several scholars such as Foster (2015), Kabore (2016), Ladele & Omotayo (2017) and Sabe (2021) have, one way or the other, described these sets of writers as migrant writers. First, these writers have been said to oscillate between Nigeria their home country, and the Western world. Based on this notion, it is often argued that their writing captures the description of two different worlds – home and abroad, and as a result, there is a rebirth of new stylistic writing, which explores the concept of home and migration, that Feldner (2019) describes as “Transnational/transcultural hybridity and national identity”.

The literary reflections of Nigerian writers are largely influenced by their exilic experience, as several intellectuals and artists have been said to have left their homes, either willingly or by force, to another place of dwelling. Ngugi 'wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, and Chinua Achebe, among others, have been able to put into writing different perspectives on the issue of migration and displacement, which dovetail with what is often referred to as exilic or migrant literature. For instance, Chinua Achebe's *Essay on Home and Exile* (2001) explores the narration of forced internal migration in his homeland. Therefore, the notion of migration in African literature is not exactly new-fangled.

Nevertheless, present-day critics and writers have continually responded to the question of home and migration, with a focus essentially on the root cause and consequential. Many of these studies have examined individual writers or individual texts while pontificating towards the socio-political factors revolving around the notion of migration. Authors such as Chimamanda Adichie, Amma Darko, Helon Habila and Chika Unigwe have engaged the issue of home and how that migration affects Africans who travel in pursuit of some motives and other relevant matters. This paper however extends on these previous studies, by attempting a contrastive analysis of two

texts, *Travellers* by Habila and *Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie. This study weighs heavily on the notions of home, migratory impulse and the disenchantment foregrounded in the texts as a result of prevailing problems such as hybridity, racial anomalies and so on.

The concept of home in African studies connotes several distributive factors. Home is an integral part of a person; it is a place where a person builds a sense of belongingness and confirms his or her acceptance. The unique concept of home in African literature has naturally conditioned the author's desire to unveil the context of their experience and psychological makeup as always revealed through the face of characters in a literary text. The phenomenon of home is often associated with immigration, thereby validating Homi Bhabha's concept of "unhomely" (1992:5), where he states that home cannot only be seen as the physical residence where a person lives but is equally perceived as a place where someone can identify with "the world-in-the home" and "the home-in-the-world". Therefore, the idea of home is complex and goes beyond an ordinary edifice. Migration as a concept further questions the definition of home. When one leaves one's home, either voluntarily or otherwise, there is generally a feeling of loss, and at this point, the whole definition of home is reconceptualized as a psychological concept. The new environment brings about permanent behavioural changes and reactions. People migrate in search of a very familiar setting in comparison to where they left, whereas, the bond of home is missing because of instant disentanglement. Maxwell (1963) avers that a "valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation or voluntary removal for indentured labour". Hence, home, therefore, has both physical and psychological bonds that human beings mostly associate with their immediate environment.

It is, therefore, argued that home is essentially intertwined with the tropes of migration and disillusionment. And this is predominantly witnessed by African writers whose messages expose different societal ills and deformities connected with the problem of home and migration. Migration, therefore, has always been a familiar term in which African writers have deliberately engaged in telling stories of how and why people migrate vis-à-vis the consequences of their actions. At times, these writers, armed with the privilege of anonymity that the novel possesses, tell the story of themselves. Sabe (2018) submits that African writers have had occasions to "seek refuge in neighbouring countries or distant lands like Britain and America," abandoning their homes as a result of political reasons with life-threatening factors. These writers, therefore, have

placed it upon themselves to write about migration and its adverse effect. Omotayo and Ladele (2017) states that,

African writers have themselves for long caught in the flux and flows of migration. Particularly in the period of the ferment of patriotic and nationalist calls for self-rule and independence, many writers had to seek safe havens in neighbouring countries or distant lands in Britain, Europe and America...characterizing their literary productions were motifs and tropes of alienation, isolation and aloneness.

But African writers constitute a meagre percentile of other Africans who have had reasons to travel relentlessly around the globe away from their traditional homes. Thus, migration has now become a subject of literary debate, economic debate, cultural debate and political debate. It has been assumed that people migrate from African countries to other developed countries mainly as a result of poverty, violence, and lack of opportunities (Sabe, 2018). After the end of colonialism, the West was taken to be the domain of attraction and a better offer of opportunities. Therefore, African migrants yearn for more pleasurable moments in the West. But the question remains if these migrants ever reach their preconceived Eldorado. Do these migrants ever get to enjoy the privileges that tempted them out of their initial homes? Are their individual or collective dreams of a better life ever achieved?

There is no doubt that migratory impulse is quite strong and almost unstoppable. That is why it is a discourse that must continually be interrogated. There are several factors responsible. However, one point to stress is the survival instinct. Forster (2015) submits that “migrations do not simply happen. They are produced. And migrations do not involve just any possible combination of countries. They are patterned.” Drawing from this inference, it could be deduced that migration is constructed based on the purposeful act to move out. Nigeria, vis-à-vis Africa, is dominantly affected by crisis or conflict which ultimately leads to migration. Nonetheless, attention is being shifted from the causes of post-migratory crises. Nigerian literature is predicated upon the social life and realities of the African people. Migration is on the increase and it is more of concern to Nigerian (African) writers who deem it fit to put it into writing, since migration has invoked new societal challenges and threats, making it a compelling force for debate in contemporary African literature.

Engaging Postcolonialism as Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts postcolonialism as a pivotal theory that has relatable to the discourse of home, migratory impulse and disenchantment, such as home, hybridity, and double consciousness to more dense concepts ranging around social, political and cultural narratives. Migratory discourses still challenge the dominant culture of oppression subtly or openly enlisted by Western narratives. Bhabha (1994:11) rightly posits;

Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of “minorities” within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic “normality” to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, and peoples.

The articulation of postcolonial literature (which the selected texts for this study squarely identify with) in which postcolonial (African) texts now debunk the strong view of the colonisers as the centre of the world foregrounds the relevance of this theory (Ashcroft et al, 2007). The theory in furtherance is predicated on issues affecting the notions of home and migration such as gender, race, racism, ethnicity, disenchantment, coupled with the challenges of identity. The consciousness of migrants still regarding the West as the Centre affirms the need for a continuum of the postcolonial debate, either as a literary writer or as a critic. Adichie (2009), in an interview, rightly states that; “This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature...When we reject the single story, we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.” Hence, the reconstruction of Western realities must continually be interrogated especially in the face of migration and its ever-complex narratives.

Writers of postcolonial literature have indeed established that there is never a ‘single story’, thereby deconstructing the colonial discourse of cultural, social, and political imperial powers often perceived by unsuspecting migrants. The colonial effect, no matter what, is still strong and active and this study underscores the imperial power of the West over the migrants, left with no form of ‘cultural resistance’ against the West (Barry, 2009:38).

Therefore, migrant literature is a form of postcolonial literature in which there is usually an exposition of “unequal relations of power based on binary opposition” (Kehinde, 2006). Al-Saidi (2014) also asserts that the conceived relationship between the West and the (rest) is that of “Self and other, Powerful and powerless, Torturer and tortured, Master and slave, Civilised and savage,

Superior and inferior, Human and subhuman”. These are not uncommon in the readings of migrant literatures, whereby there is a negative projection of the *other* (migrants), in addition to other related concepts such as Orientalism attributed to the writings of Edward Said (1978) and hybridity in connection with Bhabha’s (1994) postcolonial debate.

African countries remain victims of colonialism despite political independence. The fact remains that colonialism still lingers on and metamorphoses into hidden social or political cracks as long as the umbilical cords of African countries are still connected to the Western world. Migration among other factors or experiences serves as that bridge between the two uneven worlds. As recorded in several migratory texts, the process of colonialism resurfaces with the practice of oppression, suppression, subjugation, exploitation and injustice. Having established the link between postcolonialism and the concepts of home and migration, there is a need to critically examine the key concepts of home, migration and disenchantment in *Travellers* and *Americanah*.

Migratory Impulse and Home Disillusionment as Critical Motifs in *Americanah*

The concept of home is a critical discourse in Helon Habila’s *Travellers*, a text that revolves around several stories. The word “Travellers” means the movement of people from one place to the other for a targeted purpose. The theme of home is prevalent in the novel as depicted in the novel. Portia, who has come to Berlin in search of Katharina, an ex-wife of her late brother, David, unfolds some information about her family. Speaking through the voice of an anonymous character, Portia unveils to the audience how her father is being forced to leave his homeland. Ironically, Portia’s father is a writer and a poet and he is an advocate of pan Africanism which relates to the ideology of African writers as representations of home and migratory impulse.

Portia’s father is described by the author as a “nationalist era in African politics” (*Travellers*, 2013:99) and he accuses the government of many atrocities through his writings concerning the terrible system of things in Zambia. For this reason, he is being captured in prison for “two years” (*Travellers*, 2013:99). Zambia is their homeland and it is no longer safe again after the family members have suffered. Meanwhile, to keep safe, Portia's mother advises the father to leave for another continent since the job is not forthcoming as he has been relieved of his university job. The author explores the essence of one’s homeland here as the father, James Kariku does not see the reason to leave for another country. Portia states;

He was offered fellowships and visiting lecturer positions in England and America, but he didn’t want to go. He wanted to stay in Zambia. Yet, despite numerous appeals and pleas,

he never got his job back. My mother persuaded him to leave the country. She had just given birth to my brother and all she wanted was to be somewhere safe. They left in 1980, with the help of my father's foreign friends. (Travellers, 2013:99)

The above underscores the essence of home in the family of the narrator, Portia. At first, Zambia seems the best place to be for her father because he feels a sense of belonging and connection with his family and his job. After going through a series of persecutions from his place of work coupled with the challenge from the government, his wife convinces him of accepting the "offered fellowships and visiting positions in England and America." (Travellers, 2013:99). He takes it up with the family, trying to adjust to a new home. Meanwhile, while Portia's father begins to accustom to England, the mother "was pining for home" (Travellers, 2013:99). Here, this statement describes that Portia's mother does not feel the presence of England in comparison to Zambia again. The author explains;

It wasn't a bad life, he had a job at the University of Leeds, teaching African literature, but while he was becoming more and more settled in exile, she was pining for home...So, when she got pregnant with me she decided to come back to Zambia. My father told her to go on ahead, he'd join her in a few months. She returned home and managed to make a life for herself. She started an elementary school. But my father didn't go back. By then he had developed a taste for exile." (Travellers, 2013:99)

Even though, Portia mentions that "my mother said it was the best years of their marriage", (Travellers, 2013:99), she feels empty and nostalgic. This feeling is psychological such that at that time of homesickness, she can't see Zambia physically, but internally, she longs for the country as home. While the mother feels obsessed with her homeland, the father is "becoming more and more settled in exile" as he takes it as his second home (Travellers, 2013:99). To Portia's mother, home is equally essential as a place of belonging where she can freely get along. She needs a sense of belonging and it is only in Zambia she could get attached and established. Also, home is portrayed as not just a mere physical setting but a psychological experience. James Kariku does not find himself in African society again. It becomes a thug of war for him to be finally persuaded to heed his wife's persuasion. Eventually, he discovers it is worth it to come back home after a long time but would not still get connected because he feels he is not getting fulfilled any longer. Africa does not seem to settle down well with him and he feels perplexed. In the end, he tries to migrate back to England. The narrator articulates;

Then one day, they came back from work at her mother's school, and he was gone...When Portia got there, she saw him through the glass door, dressed in his best suit and white shirt, his carry-on bag in his hand, ranting as he paced up and down, waving his passport, and when she entered she heard him, in his careful professorial British English, asking them if they knew who he was. "James Kariku. (*Travellers*, 2013:102)

In a bid to explore the reasons for migration, Habila also attempts to describe a neo-colonial African country that frustrates her citizens' efforts and inhibits their progress. James Kariku states; "You can look me up. Google my name. I am a poet. This country doesn't appreciate talent. In Europe, they will roll out the red carpet for me. You think I am lying, go ahead, google my name!" (*Travellers*, 2019:102). In an attempt to return to London after being embarrassed at the airport, Portia comes to his rescue, and she needs to know her father's reason which has informed his action. She asks; "Why don't you want to stay with us, Baba? Why do you want to leave?" (103). One other thing that contributes to his disenchantment is that of the government of his country which puts him off his homeland. He dies in Zambia because he loses a sense of real home. The narrator expresses below;

He kept to his room, and from behind the door they could hear the sound of his typewriter, banging furiously. When he died two months later, they found a pile of paper covered in gibberish, only one line was clear, repeated over and over again, "Down with the dictatorship." He was a resistance poet, it was all he knew, just like exile was all he knew...Her mother said, "I made a mistake. I shouldn't have pressed him to return. Exile was his life. The return killed him. (*Travellers*, 2019:103)

Several of the characters' stories are hinged around the story of migration which helps to develop the progression of the story. Using the first-person narrative technique, the narrator follows a stream of consciousness to describe events and characters. The audience is presented with Mark's lifestyle and his friends; Stan, Eric and Uta. Mark unveils to the audience his migration story and how he migrates from Africa. Mark is a pastor's child in "Pentecostal ministry" back in Malawi (*Travellers*, 2019:39). He declares; "When I finished secondary school, I naturally wanted to study theatre at the university, but my father would have none of that." (*Travellers*, 2019:40). Since Mark's dad is a pastor, his dad sees his child ambition as unwholesome to his ministry. Mark gradually leaves home and begins to fend for himself as life at home is abstract and contrary to the one he wishes for. His migration is also encouraged by his uncle who counsels him to go

elsewhere for further studies in Germany. He moves to Europe to fulfil the desire of his heart. Berlin is found as the most appropriate place for him to run to. Mark tells the audience his reason for running away from home. Mark informs the audience how he successfully migrates;

When I graduated, I moved to South Africa to stay with my uncle Stanley. He is my father's youngest brother. He linked me up with his friend at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg. I registered for German-language classes and applied for a scholarship to come here to study. Just like that, everything came together. (*Travellers*, 2019:40).

From the above inscription, the author portrays the suitable lifestyle he and his wife live before things turn the opposite way in a strange land. Thereafter, migration is a factor in their separation and isolated life. The narrator begins to feel lonely and takes delight in streams of consciousness of things that happen to other immigrants in Berlin. The wife is busy with her artistry work, and he gets no attention from her, better still, she only gets fulfilment in her career. Also, Mark associates with some other students who are also seeking shelter while they run their studentship in Europe. They live a frustrating life as they are sought after by the police while running from place to place since they don't, have a permanent apartment. This is proven when asked about his place of abode by the central character; the unnamed character says; "This is a church," I said when he pushed open the little gate and waved me in. My comment was half question, half statement. "We live here for the moment, yes. Temporarily" (*Travellers*, 2019:17).

With all the change in view, the narrator announces a new life that they now live in Berlin after their migration. He reveals to the audience something about his wife; "Today she looked happy as she guided visitors from painting to painting, answering questions about colour, technique, concept" (*Travellers*, 2019:43). Coupled with the tiredness of what Berlin is throwing at him and how abnormal the city is, the narrator describes what the life of an immigrant can turn out to be. Through this, the reader could realise that migration can change people's behaviour towards one another. He narrates his ordeals as an immigrant himself and how lonely his life has been for him which has been a shift of focus and an intense effect of migration on them;

When we first came to Berlin everything seemed to be working out fine...I wanted to hold her and just sit quietly like we used to do a long time ago, but it required so much energy to do that, more energy than I possessed. Instead, I would put on my jacket and walk the lonely Berlin back streets, and there is no loneliness like the loneliness of a stranger in a strange city (*Travellers*, 2019:38-39).

Another case of migration is that of Manu, a doctor whose family has been forcefully separated from him because of a crisis. Manu, his wife, Basma and the children unexpectedly leave their house at the sight of danger in their country. Escaping through the sea, both husband and wife agree to re-unite in Berlin which is the “Checkpoint Charlie” (*Travellers*, 2019:167). Afterwards, the family becomes disaggregated as each person tells his or her story differently and in a different location. The reader’s gaze is shifted to where Manu begins to work as a bouncer in order to fend for himself and his daughter, Rachida. She is left in the care of her father since she is a little older than her younger brother. The crisis has left an indelible mark on them as his migration takes another turn in his life and he resolves to smoking and forgets about his country as he responds to someone, “I have no country” (*Travellers*, 2019:66).

Manu accepts a new life and resolves to start afresh, expectantly. The narrator asserts; “They are here for a new start, not to re-create or hold on to the past. The water they all crossed to come here has dissolved the past. But he can’t give up on Checkpoint Charlie. Because she is alive. He knows. If she isn’t he’d know, and if she is alive, she’d never rest until she finds them.” (*Travellers*, 2019:63). His migratory experience is unprepared for and so, the family become distressed and unstable. Even though Rachida feels the terrible effect of Migration because she misses her mother, he tries to feel the motherly void. A forceful migration gives the family a lopsided life. Before he migrates with his wife, everything has been fine until later. The below quotation best sums up his migration experiences;

Every day I woke up, I took the kids to school, I went to work, I pretended that things would soon get back to normal... Then one day, I took the kids to school as usual and the gate was closed, not even the guard was there, that was when I knew it was time to go. We decided to come to Berlin, that’s where everybody was going. Also, I had an old-school friend here, Abdul Gani. We had no plan, nothing. The most important plan was to get out of Tripoli alive. (*Travellers*, 2019: 68)

The above quotation explains different reasons an African person can migrate and find themselves on the shore of another continent even if it is against their intention. Manu migration is an involuntary one in which his hands are handcuffed. He is left with no option rather than to save his family from oppression in an African country. Manu, one of the characters, needs to recount his experiences while in his homeland before the crisis evicts all of them. They suddenly become strangers in a strange land.

Migratory Experience, Home and Disenchantment in *Americanah*

The concept of home in *Americanah* is critically defined. The author, Adichie intensely details the essence of home in her novel through the life of the protagonist cum central character Ifemelu, as well as other characters. Here, the aspect of home will be explored as a separate entity. Adichie discloses that someone can be in a supposed greener land and not still enjoy it. Ifemelu's state of mind shows that she is eager to go home because of what is on the ground; as she "felt the dull ache of loss" (*Americanah*, 2013:6). Ifemelu has been in America for a few years, and she has even mingled with both white and black America. She understands the protocols of things, meaning, how things are working there. Yet, she feels sick and tired of the American setting because she no longer perceives it as her original home.

She is fulfilled and she feels someone else is living for her because she is not in her rightful place of abode. Yet, she finds a void in her heart to fill because nothing is satisfying her again, not even Blaine who has been her lover for three years in America. For Ifemelu, home should be a place she can identify with, a place of comfort, and serenity. Caught in-between two homes Nigeria and America, she is distant from Nigeria but psychologically connected. The access to high technological gadgets allows Ifemelu to stay glued to Nigeria. She gets to check the news and see how several people move back home from abroad after some acquisition of wealth and knowledge, which often leads to their quest for financial independence in their home country. By and large, homesickness is strongly depicted in the novel.

Although Ifemelu gains ground in America with her blog business, there is something inexplicable about her relationship and lifestyle that trigger her quest for home. The author articulates; "and yet there was cement in her soul. ...it brought with it amorphous longings, shapeless desire, brief imaginary glints of other lives she could be living, that over the months melded into a piercing homesickness." (*Americanah*, 2013:6). The author employs the choice of word, "cement" to best describe how hard or difficult America has been for her. Then, all of these helpless situations cause her to want to identify with her homeland. Here, her state of mind is psychological.

Americanah foregrounds the custom of a typical immigrant lifestyle where there is no room for an optional life in America. Here, Ifemelu accepts and desires to relocate home just by her choice. Hence, immigrants are pushed to compare their current situation with the one they left behind in their homeland. On this note, what glaringly plays out is that the Americans see themselves as

superior as explored by the author. Also, African characters experience less discrimination because they have come to register their identity in the USA. Then, they all represent all various home countries as they share similar views. On the part of Ifemelu, her desire to return to Nigeria is indeed questionable despite all successes achieved. Everyone aware of her plans to return is inquisitive enough to know the reason behind her decision.

“But I am going back home to Nigeria,” Ifemelu added, suddenly remorseful. “I ‘m going next week”.

To see the family.”

“No, I’m moving back. To live in Nigeria.”

“Why?”

“What do you mean, why? Why not”

“Better you send money back. Unless your father is big man? You have connections?”

“I have found a job there, “she said.

“You stay in America fifteen years and you just go back to work?”

Aisha smirked. “You can stay there?” (*Americanah*, 2013:18)

The phenomenon of migration to America in *Americanah* depicts the aftermath effect of the colonial era as a key subject in Chimamanda Adichie’s novel, *Americanah*. The characters, Ifemelu, as well as the other immigrants, are faced with controversial and conflicting challenges of migration, trying to acculturate their lifestyle into a new system of Western opportunities. Weighing down on this, racism also takes its shape on the American immigrants as it is visibly portrayed through the blog of Ifemelu. Most times, when migrants are unable to achieve their expectations, they return home and this in turn results in feeling disillusioned.

Here, one could see that Adichie explores the characterization of the experiences of Ifemelu who is already confused about America. The author explores the issues of another migration which Kabore, (2016:5) identifies as “return migration”. Of course, the writer attempts to explore the negativity that is attached to living in a homeland and finding another means of survival. In the case of Ifemelu, she loses her interest in America and finds some psychological solace in the socio-media. Adichie infuses the idea of homesickness to make the reader understand that America has not satisfied him like where he comes from.

She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, and Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees. Nigeria became where she was supposed

to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil. And, of course, there was also Obinze. Her first love, the only person with whom she had never felt the need to explain herself. He was a husband and father, and they had not been in touch for years, yet she could not pretend that he was not a part of her homesickness. (*Americanah*, 2013:7)

It is strongly established in the novel that with migration comes a lot of burdens and challenges. Ifemelu as the central character exposes the challenges of racial oppression which informs a consciousness of double identity. Aside from this fact, her life also revolves around the development of romantic bonds. She seems to have been shocked by culture, racism and challenges of a different sort which have left her dazed and bewildered. Initially, she leaves Nigeria based on academic scholarship whose opportunity makes provision for other things she achieves like her blog which is first named “Raceteenth or Various Observation by a Non-American Black on the Subject of Blackness in America” (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black” (Adichie, 2013:321).

Ifemelu’s migratory experiences offer a certain level of conformity for her and other African immigrants. In a conversation with Dike, her cousin, she decides to start up a conversation in the Igbo language, but Auntie Uju blatantly stops her; “two languages will confuse him” (*Americanah*, 2013:116). On the other hand, Dike has been described as “a first grader with a seamless American accent. This description paints Dike as an African child who has conformed to the American standard such that his classmates accept him as an African American). On Ifemelu’s part, she becomes bewildered and utters “What are you talking about Auntie? We spoke two languages growing up.” (*Americanah* 2013:116). Auntie Uju is aware of their upbringing but must conform to societal regulations. Being careful of American standards, she answers Ifemelu; “this is America, it’s different” (*Americanah*, 2013:116).

Conclusion

Travellers and *Americanah* can be categorised as postcolonial literature as well as migrant literature based on different migratory experiences of fictional characters in the texts. *Travellers* is more of a traumatic experience as it has been captured in the fictional characters. The lives of the characters are mostly threatened by insecurity issues in their African state which makes them migrate. On the other hand, in *Americanah*, the fictional characters principally migrate because they want to better their lots and because of the poor educational system in Nigeria. African

countries are not presented as places of home, but where insecurity and threats are major challenges, hence the need for migration. On the other hand, the quest for home is equally missing for most characters in the novels, whose experiences are heavily characterised by severe enchantment and longingness for home.

Both writers tell their stories using relevant literary techniques such as parody, omniscient narrative techniques, stream of consciousness, and first-person narrative, among others. The omniscient narrative technique is employed throughout *Americanah* to capture the thought of the writer. With this, among other arguments, Adichie rightly falls under the category of a migrant writer. Habila also creates an exhilarating narrative with both omniscient and first-person narrative techniques which is fascinating. Largely, characters are deployed to articulate the mindset of the writers or perhaps their migratory experiences and their challenges.

In summary, the concept of home, migratory impulse and disenchantment are prevalent motifs in Habila's *Travellers* and Adichie's *Americanah*. As postcolonial literatures, the narrative of migration has been deconstructed as a single story. Rather, there is an articulation of multiple voices and definitions of the notion of home and the impulses of migration. It is sacrosanct that African writers continue to explore the migratory realities which expose the colonial voice of the West as the ultimate viewpoint of a utopian home. The motif of disenchantment is well captured by several characters, who, despite the challenges on the African continent, still develop a strong sense of nostalgia for their homelands.

Work Cited

Achebe, Chinua. *Morning yet on creation day*. New York: Doubleday, 1973. Print

Aderanti, Adepoju. "Migration in West African". Retrieved from www.gcim.org on June 6, 2021. 1-23, 2005. Print

Adichie, Chimamanda. "The danger of a single story". Web. 2009.
http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/engchimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single-story/.

Adichie, Chimamanda. *Americanah*. Nigeria: Kachifo Ltd., 2013. Print

- Al-Saidi, Afaf. "Post-colonialism Literature the Concept of Self and the Other in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. An Analytical Approach". *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 5.1: 2014, 95-105. Print
- Amaral, Ernesto. 2018. *Theories of Migration*. Texas University, 2007. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. "Introduction. A Convivial Critical Democracy: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-First Century". *Literature for our Times: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-first Century*. Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2012. Pp. xv-xxxv. Print
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. eds. *The Empire writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge. 2002. Print
- Ashcroft, Bill. Key concepts in postcolonial studies. Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. ed. London: Routledge, 2004. Print
- Barry, Peter. Ed. *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. UK: Manchester UP, 2009. Print
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print
- Boehmer, Elleke. Eds. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. New York: Oxford UP. 2005. Print
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1961. Print
- Fanon, Frantz. *On National Culture. Colonial Discourse Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Williams, P. and Chrisman, L. ed. New York: Columbia UP, 1994, 28-36. Print
- Feldner, Maximilian. *Narrating the New African Diaspora. 21st century Nigerian Literature in Context*. Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019. 1-211. Print
- Foster, Ian. Black Migrant literature, New African Diasporas and the Phenomenology of Movement. 2015 Web. worksttp://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc-etc/928. Print
- Gikandi, Simon. "African Literature and the Colonial Factor". *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean literature*. Eds. A. Irele and S. Gikandi Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2004, 1: 379-397. Print
- Habila, Helon. *Travellers*. New York: Independent Publishers. 2019. Print
- Kabore, Andre. 2016. Migration in African literature: a case study of adichie's works. 1.4.: 1-17. Retrieved from <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJEL> on July 1, 2021,
- Kehinde, Ayo. "Post-independence disillusionment in contemporary African fiction: the example of Meja Mwangi's *Kill me Quick*." *Nordic Journal of African studies*, 2004. 13: 228-241. Print
- Kehinde, Ayo. Post-colonial African literature as counter-discourse: J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and the reworking of the canon. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 2006. 32.3: 92-122. Print

- Koser, Khalid. *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP. 1-125, 2007. Print
- Ladele, Omolola and Omotayo, Adesunmbo. 2017. "Migration and Identities in Chika Unigwe's Novels". *Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture* Retrieved, from <http://www.cscanada.net> on March 20, 2021. Vol. 14:52-57. Print
- Maxwell, D.E.S. *American Fiction: The intellectual background*. Kegan Paul: Routledge, 1963. Print
- Ndebele, Njabulo. "Re-defining relevance". *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Eds .T. Olaniyan, & A. Quason. USA: Blackwell, 1994.
- Ngugi Wa, Thiong'o. *Homecoming: Towards a National Culture*. London: HEB, 1972. Print
- Sabe, Bashir, A. 2021. "Migration in African Literature: A Study From Selected Hausa Novels." *Bulletin of the Faculty of Languages & Translation*. Issue No: 20. pp 22-37
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. USA: Vintage Books. 1-40, 1978. Print
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Book, 1993. Print