REPRESENTATIONS OF TRAUMA IN AFRICAN MIGRANT FICTION

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research was carried out by Opeyemi Omowumi AJIBOLA in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Triune God, the Author of the Word and Fountain of wisdom.

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ABSTRACT

African migrant fiction, which recreates characters' experiences at home and abroad, is increasingly preoccupied with the representation of dystopian realities. Critical appraisals of the fiction have largely focused on the representation of varied mobilities – migration, exile, transnationalism and afropolitanism – without adequate attention to the depiction of migrant characters' experiences of traumatic stress, despite its ample representation in the fiction. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the recreation of trauma and characters' responses to traumatic stress in selected African migrant fiction with a view to establishing that traumatic experiences are not limited to characters' natal homes.

Homi Bhabha's model of the Postcolonial Theory and Cathy Caruth's and Judith Herman's models of Trauma Theory, served as the framework. The interpretative design was used. Ali Farah's *Little Mother* (*LM*), Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (*HODP*), Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* (*LT*), Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (*OBSS*), Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red* (*BWR*), Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (*HN*), Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* (*TBA*), and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (*WNNN*) were purposively selected for their depiction of loss, trauma and suffering. The novels were subjected to critical analysis.

Trauma in the novels is doubled-edged, aligning with the dominant estimation of trauma as a double wound. Traumatogenic contexts and events in the postcolony as well as in the diaspora dominate the novels. Pre-migration stressors such as unemployment, poverty and sexual assault characterise the postcolony in *LT*, *OBSS*, *HODP* and *TBA*; while displacement, deprivation and violence abound in *WNNN*, *HN*, *LM* and *BWR*, all leading to characters' experience of Continuous Traumatic Stress. Characters' response to pre-migration stressors in all the novels is flight. Repetitively traumatised by oppressive poverty, displacement and the inconsistencies that define life in the postcolony, the characters fled their fatherland for the West through legitimate and illegitimate routes. In the diaspora, post-migration stressors are activated by characters' experiences of disillusionment, racism, joblessness, physical and mental assaults, unhomeliness, the trauma of a paperless existence and the perpetual fear of police brutality. Characters' responses to post-migration stressors range from developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to committing suicide. Azel in *LT* and the nameless protagonist in *HN* experience dissolution of self and suffer from PTSD. In *WNNN* and *LM*, Tshaka Zulu, Uncle Kojo and Axad suffer from mental illnesses, while Moussa in *TBA* commits suicide. However, characters like Massala-Massala in BWR, Aunt Fostalina and Darling in *WNNN*, Faten in *HODP* and Efe, Ama and Joyce in *OBSS* largely display resilience in the face of trauma. There is recurring adoption of multiple narrative voices, symbolism and journey motif in *OBSS*, *LM*, *HODP* and *HN*, while irony and traumatic realism are employed in *LT*, *WNNN*, *TBA* and *BWR*.

Migrant characters' precarious, liminal and subaltern existence, both at home and abroad, bears witness to trauma's mobility across space and time in African migrant fiction. This destabilises the hegemonic conception of the West as the Promised Land.

Keywords: African migrant fiction, Traumatic stress, Pre-migration stressor, Post-migration stressor

Word Count: 485

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Literature is as old as humanity. It engages and seeks to respond to happenings in the society, including traumatic events. The experiences of a people find representations in their literatures. African literatures have been true to the recreations of the experiences of the African people. African literature is one that has emerged in the crucible of trauma. The African continent has witnessed certain events of traumatic proportions, all which have found representations in its literature. There was the trauma of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the trauma of colonialism and recently, the trauma of postcoloniality. The earliest African writings in English were by African slaves, ex-slaves and their descendants. The likes of Olaudah Equiano, Francis Williams, Phillis Wheatley, Ignatius Sancho, Ottobah Cugoano and James Albert alias Ukawsaw Gronniosaw produced texts that bear testament to their intellectual prowess in spite of their limited opportunities. Of these, Ottobah Cugoano's *The Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Hyman Species* (1787) and Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1789) bear witness to the horrible experiences of slavery and deprivation. These texts also conveniently serve as foundational texts in the protest tradition in African literature. Writing on the origins of African literature in English, Steve Ogude (1983:.3) asserts that the history of the Slave Trade and the brutalities which accompanied it is the history of black writing in European languages.

Colonisation and the effects of colonialism on the African people and the land, has been one of the most recurrent themes in African literature. Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy*, Sembene

Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*, Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, Ngugi wa Thiong' o's *Petals of Blood*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy* and *The Old Man and the Medal*, Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* and Camara Laye's *The African Child*, Nozipo Maraire's *Zenzele: A Letter for my Daughter* are a few of the texts that document the impact of the colonial enterprise on Africa and Africans. The texts bear witness to the dissolution of African communities, the social dislocation and the pain suffered by nations forced into becoming one as a result of the "divide and rule" ploys of Britain, France, Portugal and Spain. Frantz Fanon in the seminal text, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) asserts that the gravest injustice done by the colonial masters was the colonisation of the minds of the blacks. In the colonisation of the psyche of the natives, in the affirmation of the natives' inferiority and the subjugation of the natives' identity lies the trauma of colonisation.

The trauma of postcoloniality finds ample expression in contemporary writings. Several African texts are preoccupied with representing the fractures, dislocations, losses and disillusionment that mark life in many African countries of the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of colonisation, many African countries have had to grapple with wars, coups and counter coups, environmental despoliation, terrorism and economic backwardness. Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War*, Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset in Biafra, Say You are One of Them* by Uwem Akpan, Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation* all recreate the civil war in Nigeria, between 1967-1970, *Country of My Skull* written by Antjie Krog, Veronique Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imana* thematise the Rwandan genocide; Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* and *Effortless Tears*, Chenjerai Hove's *Bones and shadows* and Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* from Zimbabwe, and Ethiopian Nurrudin Farah's *Maps, Beneath the Lion's Gaze* by Maaza Mengiste and *Notes From the Hyena's Belly* written by Nega Mezlekia, are a few of African war literature. The apartheid regime and its traumatic imprints continue to colour fictional and non-fictional narratives from South Africa. The trauma brought about by apartheid finds earliest records in Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* (1916) and a contemporary representation in texts like Achmat Dangor's *Bitter fruit*, Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story* and Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf*.

Isidore Diala (2011:11) made a valid assertion in "Migrating bards: writers' burdens and a writers' body in Nigeria at the turn of the century" when he stated that "every generation recreates its defining experiences in its literature" (Diala, 2011:11). While the pioneers of African literature concerned themselves with issues of nationalism, culture clash, the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism, many contemporary African writers thematise migration, exile and transnationalism, since these are largely the foremost issues especially in the era post-2000. Salman Rushdie (1991:277) had once remarked that the migrant is perhaps the central defining figure of the twentieth century; much more, the migrant is the protagonist of the twenty-first century discourse. Across Africa and beyond, in literary and critical landscapes, in print and soft media, the preoccupation with migrancy is enormous. Migration from time immemorial has been part and parcel of humanity but at no point in history has 'nomadism' and transnationalism informed the existence of man as it does in contemporary times. Wanderers, refugees, migrants and the exiled populate African literature as well as world literature. Writers as varied as Neel Mukherjee, Zia Haider Rahman, Segun Afolabi, Dinaw Megenstu, Laila Lalami, Chimamanda Adichie, Sunjeev Sahota, Valeria Luiselli, NoViolet Bulawayo, Teju Cole, and others have all woven narratives of and about migration on the world's literary canvas.

At diverse times, African writers have had to write while living outside their homeland. They were those who went on forced exile, captured by Nnadozie Inyama (2000:44) as the writers-in-exile: Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Bessie Head, Camara Laye, Lewis Nkosi, Serote Mongana, Nawal El Saadawi, Mongo Beti, Dennis Brutus and others. The socio-political realities in post-independence Africa did not favour many committed writers; often times, the African writer was at loggerheads with the governors of the African destiny after the exit of the colonial masters. In Nigeria, for instance, the military era was intolerant of creative writers' satirical and often protest writings. The likes of Wole Soyinka, Chris Abani and Olu Oguibe had to leave the country to preserve their lives. Wole Soyinka (1990:112) satirically refers to the professionals who fled the country in search of better realities as the "lucky drainees" whose lives would be preserved while those of their colleagues at home will be found "as grisly sediments on the riverbed of the Nile…or in the stomach linings of African crocodiles and vultures". Ngugi wa Thiong'o like Wole Soyinka, Dennis Brutus, Breyten Breytenbach, was imprisoned for his dissident activities when he

staged *I will marry when I want*. In Nawal El Sadaawi's case, due to the controversy that surrounded the publication of her *Women and Sex* and such subsequent titles as *God Dies by the Nile*, *The Fall of the Imam*, *Woman at Point Zero* and others, she was imprisoned, had her books banned and was served death threats until she left Egypt for America. The impact of exile on African writing is ambivalent: there is the pain of displacement; there are however the gains of exile. The narratives from exile enrich African literature in general.

There is also the group of writers who could be better captured as migrants and not necessarily writers-in-exile. This includes writers such as Buchi Emecheta, Fawzia Zouari, Tess Onwueme, Niyi Osundare, Nuruddin Farah, Zakes Mda, Biyi Bamidele Tsitsi Dangeremgba, Femi Fatoba, Nega Mezlekia, Tanure Ojaide who can be loosely classified as the first generation of African migrant writers. They do not necessarily thematise exile; they thematise a somewhat different kind of pain which can be captured as trauma, in diverse shades and forms: racism, identity crisis, the politics of exclusion, rootlessness, homelessness, disillusionment with both homeland and the host country, gender injustices and so on. Tracing the impact of migration and globalisation on the literary production by some of the writers mentioned above, Tanure Ojaide (2008:43), a migrant writer himself, relates the impact of migration, transnationalism, transnationality and multilocality have their bearing on the cultural identity, aesthetics, content, and form of the literary piece. While comparing the works by earlier migrant writers with the latter migrant writers, Ojaide (2008:44) notes that because the older migrant writers had had more connection with Africa, usually more than the younger migrant writers who are sometimes children of migrants or those who left Africa as children or teenagers, their texts often bear imprints of nostalgia, African identity and traditions, folkloric allusions and myths. The reality portrayed in their texts often resonates with historic and cultural significance because of the close affinity that they had maintained with Africa.

The latter African migrant writers, captured by Ali Waberi (1998) as the children of the postcolony, and many of whom belong to the third generation (Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunto, 2005:14) are migrants and their thematic preoccupation with migration is unmistakable. They are those whose "writings are informed by a sense of flexible mobility between worlds and a recognition that 'the road' is always hungry for human flesh'' (Ana Maria Sanchez Arce, 2000:76). Some of those belonging to this group include Ben Okri,

Calixthe Beyala, Doreen Baingana, Fatou Diome, Helen Oyeyemi, Marie NDiaye, Chimamanda Adichie, Maaza Mengiste and many other migrant writers. There are at the moment so many migrant African writers so much so that Richard Priebe (2005:57) posits that African writers arguably constitute the most transcultural and transnational group of individuals anywhere in the world. In fact, many of the most prolific writers from Francophone Africa such as Fatou Diome from Senegal, Ali Waberi from Djibouti, Marie Ndiaye from Senegal, Salim Bachi from Algeria, Abdelaziz Belkhodja from Tunisia and Tierno Monénembo from Guinea, live and write in France, thousands of miles away from their motherland. Lila Zanganeh (2005) calls them the phantom writers; they are the writers of a literature that does not exist, a literature that "takes root far from the emigrant's native land" (Lila Zanganeh, 2005:1). The overwhelming volume of Africans creative writings from the diaspora makes one question if African literature in contemporary times does not reside in the African diaspora.

What this study designates as migrant fiction goes by different names, terms and labels. Some scholars tag the writings of those in the African diaspora as Diasporic fiction, some as exilic, some as nomadic, and others as migrant. The term diaspora is highly polysemous, especially with regard to its usage in the present century. Khachig Tololyan (1996:8) decries the use of the term "diaspora" to mean different things to different people, thereby endangering the term and possibly making it a "promiscuously capacious category". "Diaspora" has its roots in "diasperein" a Greek word that means "to scatter and to sow". Ember et al. elucidate in the preface to *Encyclopaedia of Diasporas* (2005:11) that "diaspora" originally referred to the dispersal and settlement of Jews outside of Palestine following the Babylonian exile (586B.C.) but the term has subsequently come to be associated with the whole catastrophic history of the Jews and their multiple expulsions from different European countries over the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust of World War II. They note that in recent times "diaspora" is used to refer to other major historical dispersals, many of them involuntary. While there are a number of migrant writers who could be said to have been forcefully ejected from their homelands, most of the writers that make up African writers in the diaspora are voluntary migrants. The likes of Chika Unigwe, Bulawayo NoViolet, Chimamanda Adichie, Imbolo Mbue, Miral al-ahawy's, Leila

Abouela, Ali Farah, Aminata Forna and the writers chosen for this study cannot be said to have been forcefully uprooted from their homelands.

Asiwaju and Crowther (1980:ix) assert that as a result of the twenty-first century immigration into Europe, the black race is now second only to the European race in its dispersal across the world. While it was once correct to refer to Africans in the diaspora as blacks on exile, it is perhaps no longer appropriate to do so. This would especially be so in a case where the dispersed persons left the homeland of their volition. Carine Mardorossian (2002:15) notes that over the last decade, such writers as Salman Rushdie and Bharati Mukherjee have reconfigured their identity by rejecting the status of exile for that of a migrant. She further contends that the "shift from exile to migrant challenges this binary logic by emphasizing movement, rootlessness, and the mixing of cultures, races, and languages" (Mardorossian, 2002:16). Of a truth, there is a gradual shift away from the practice of referring to people living outside their homelands as exiles; they are now often identified as migrants. While the term "exile" instantly presents a pitiable backdrop to any discourse on the writers in exile, or their works; the term "diasporic" places a needless emphasis on dispersal and the objection and resistance to it; hence, the choice of the term "migrant" to modify the creative works of the African writers being examined in this study.

The creative texts produced by African writers who live in the diaspora are captured in this study as migrant narratives; this is to say that migrant narratives are texts that thematise migration: the complexity that attends migration, the intricacies of migrancy, migrant crisis and a representation of migrant characters' experiences. This study examines migrant narratives with the conviction that the writers who reside in the diaspora write differently from those that reside in Africa. Akin Adesokan (2012:655), the author of *Roots in the Sky* explains that his location has a definite impact on what he writes, as he now sees through the eyes of expatriation. The effects of a change in location definitely impacts on the writers' subject matter, narrative techniques, setting and sometimes the language of expression. For instance, Chika Unigwe, a migrant writer from Nigeria, who had lived in Belgium but now resides in the United States of America, wrote her debut novel *De Feniks* in Dutch, which was later translated as *The Phoenix*. The language as well as the subject matter of the novel bears the imprints of the author's migration from Nigeria to Belgium. Unigwe's second novel, *Fata Morgana* (2008), which recreates African female migrants' experience of

prostitution and sex slavery in Antwerp, was also first published in Dutch, before it was released in English in 2009. Unigwe speaks of the power politics at work in diasporic spaces in an interview granted to Femke van Zeijl (2013), who had also spent some time in Nigeria:

> When a white person migrates to Africa, he is going from a position of power, to power. An African coming to Europe lands from power into powerlessness. We Africans cannot do much with our diplomas here. Once I had learned Dutch and went to the job centre, they offered me a position as a cleaning lady. And in the shop it happens regularly that someone follows me around to check that I am not stealing anything. In expensive boutiques I might not even get served. The sales personnel assume I cannot afford to buy anything anyway. Whereas a white person in Nigeria, even if he has no skills whatsoever, always gets opportunities. No Nigerian would dream of offering you a job as a cleaning lady (Zeijl, 2013:1).

The migrant writer, just like the African counterpart, is influenced by his environment; the realities within his space gives shape and direction to whatever he or she writes.

Indisputably, the condition of the diaspora impacts upon the creative impetus and output of the migrant writer. African migrant fiction is replete with the representation of the migrant writers' experiences of migration and a fictionalised presentation of migrant characters' experiences and encounters in diasporic spaces. Migrant writers as well as migrant characters "grapple with history through their alternating experiences of space and place" (Christopher Ouma, 2011:28). They are ultimately performers in what Iain Chambers (1994) describes as "the drama of the stranger":

> To come from elsewhere, from "there" and not "here," and hence to be simultaneously "inside" and "outside" the situation at hand, is to live at the intersection of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements along emerging routes. It is simultaneously to encounter the languages of powerlessness and the potential intimations of heterotopic futures (Chambers, 1994:14).

Migrant writers and migrant characters become defined by migrancy and not exile, as could be claimed by the first emigrants who were also writers. The fact that in recent times, movements are relatively voluntary, shifts the emphasis from exile to migrancy. The shift

in focus from exile to migration in turn challenges the binary logic "by emphasizing movement, rootlessness, and the mixing of cultures, races, and languages" (Mardorossian 2000:16). This is so much so since migrant aesthetics "offers a transnational, cosmopolitan, multilingual and hybrid map of the world that redraws boundaries by building bridges between Third and First Worlds" (Mardorossian 2000:17) as much as it strives to recreate realist representations of the push-and-pull factors that expel Africans from their homelands. What Pius Adesanmi (2005) designates as migritude writing, Tanure Ojaide (2008) refers to writings by émigré writer and Kristen Stern (2014) calls immigrant literature is captured as migrant writing in this study.

A defining characteristic feature of the African migrant narrative is the representation of migrant characters' experiences in Africa- more often than not, choicelessness, joblessness, disillusionment and the hope of a greener pasture; the movement proper on ships, planes, trains and sometimes uncharted routes; the reconfiguration of the character's identity in the host country; and sometimes a physical or physiological return to the native land. Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*, Teju Cole's *Open City,* Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*, Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names*, Nneoma Azuah's *Edible Bones* for example, feature characters that migrate at all costs only to become disillusioned in Europe and America. This affirms McLeod's (2000:211) assertion that the migrant often occupies a displaced position. While Edward Said (1984:1) speaks of the crippling sorrow of displacement, Salman Rushdie (1991:10) avers that migrants are "haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt…". King *et al* (2002) corroborates this when they assert that migration transcends "a mere interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but a wide mode of being in the world- "migrancy" (King *et al*, 2002:xv). He elucidates that the migrant voice tells what it is like to feel a stranger and yet at home, what it means to live simultaneously inside and outside one's immediate situation, to "…think of returning but realise at the same time the impossibility of doing so, since the past is not only another country but another time, out of the present. It tells us what it is like to transverse borders" and experience what it means to be "an illegal person", an "other" ((King *et al*, 2002:16). In the disillusionment, dis(place)ment, dislocation, disruptions, subjectivities,

identity crisis, ruptures and double consciousness often encountered in diasporic contexts lies migrant traumas.

Trauma studies is gaining ground worldwide. In the same vein, African literature bears imprints of traumatic experiences in all genres and across all regions. Diverse forms of traumatic experiences have been represented in narratives by migrant writers of African descent. There is a preponderance of short stories, autobiographical texts, novellas and novels on what constitutes trauma on the African continent and in the African diaspora. Right from the earliest migrant texts produced by Africans — the slave narratives — to the most recent works by migrant writers, the traumatic finds a dominant representation. Trauma, a term derived from the Greek word for a wound, a bodily wound, has overtime come to describe psychological as well as physical wounds, assaults, abuses and experiences that are overwhelming, shocking and disruptive. The explosion of the knowledge domain and critical investigations that shape contemporary trauma studies is traceable to studies on the holocaust and holocaust's veterans' experiences of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and the entry of other such fields as literary studies, cultural studies, religious studies, sociology, history and so on, into the trauma discourse. In the nineteenth century, trauma studies was dominated by clinical and psychological research, with the term "trauma" used in reference to patients suffering from "traumatic neurosis" caused by railroad accidents (Erichsen 1867). The term metamorphosed into "Shell shock" and then "combat fatigue" used in reference to veterans of World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War, and then more recently PTSD.

Prominent theorists and scholars in trauma studies include Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman and Shoshana Felman of the Yale School at a time, Judith Herman, Bessel van der Kolk, Dori Laub, and Dominick LaCapra. Foundational texts such as Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), Judith Herman, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testinmony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992), Shoshana Felman's *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (2002), Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), Geoffrey Hartman's "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" (1995) are critical texts in Trauma theory. Sigmund Freud

is however the primal source for the theorisations and negotiations in trauma studies. To Freud (1920:301), a traumatic event is one that is powerful, intrusive and overwhelming so much so that the protective shield is broken and there is "a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy" such that the mental apparatus is flooded with large amount of stimulus. Trauma is generally understood as an event that overwhelms the victim, witness(es) and sometimes the perpetrator(s). For the purposes of this study, "trauma", is used not in the restrictive sense, as found in medical and psychiatric fields; it is employed to mean an overwhelming life event. This study employs a broad understanding of trauma to mean emotional injuries, psychological wounds, pain, suffering, losses, and all the shades of the agonising modernity— dispossession, dislocation, forced migration, undocumented migration and racism, as experienced by migrant characters in African literature. The narratives chosen for critical engagement in this study abound with the representation of African characters' experiences of pain and suffering in migrant contexts.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The present century has been rightly adjudged a century of trauma. Monica Casper and Eric Wertheimer (2016) in the introduction to *Critical Trauma Studies: Understanding Violence, Conflict and Memory in Everyday Life*, paint the picture of a trauma-century:

> Earthquakes strike, buildings fall, and people die; bodies are devastated by bullets and bombs; famine, drought, and genocide decimate entire populations; planes crash (and disappear), trains derail, and cars smash into each other, twisting metal and limbs; loved ones become sick and die, or they are brutally murdered; sexual assault is pandemic; tornados and hurricanes rip houses off their foundations and children from their parent's arm; wars shred lives, communities, and landscapes and send soldiers home in body bags (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016:3).

While contemporary trauma studies in the humanities attempts to account for and engage the representations of the traumas encountered across the globe, the holocaust, had long been at the centre of research in trauma studies. Leading scholars in trauma studies, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992:xiv) described the holocaust as "the watershed of our times… whose traumatic consequences are still actively evolving". The domineering emphasis on the holocaust and other European cases of suffering has met with criticism

from many postcolonial scholars. Stef Craps, in the seminal text *Postcolonial Witnessing* (2013), asserts that classical trauma studies failed to live up to its promise of a cross-cultural ethical engagement because of its overriding devotion to European traumas, thereby marginalising non-Western and minority cultures' traumatic experiences. He also critiques trauma studies' general disregard for the connections between the First World's and Third World's traumatic encounters and experiences. On these counts, in his view, canonical trauma studies risks "assisting in the perpetuation of the very beliefs, practices, and structures that maintain existing injustices and inequalities" (Craps, 2013:2) rather than "promoting cross-cultural solidarity" (Craps, 2013:2).

Roger Luckhurst in *The Trauma Question* (2008), Michael Rothberg in "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response" (2008) and Irene Visser (2015) amongst others, have also appraised trauma studies' Eurocentric and sometimes myopic stance. Luckhurst faults Cathy Caruth's Freudian assertions, restrictions and complications. He refutes the deductions made from *Moses and Monotheism*, decries trauma studies' inherent contradictions and deemphasises dominant trauma theory's reliance on the crippling effects of traumatic events. In Rothberg's view, trauma studies' along Cathy Caruth's postulations presents a narrow Eurocentric framework that distorts the histories it addresses and runs the risk of reproducing "the very Eurocentrism that lies behind those histories" (Rothberg, 2008:277). Visser notes that there is the need for a redirection, reworking and decolonizing of trauma studies in order to "achieve a more thorough, global, and responsible paradigm" (Visser, 2015:252). In an effort to appraise trauma studies potential operations in the postcolonial contexts, Stef Craps and Gert Buelens edited a special issue of *Studies in the Novel* (2008), entitled "Postcolonial Trauma Novel", while Sonya Andermahr edited "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Postcolonialism" (2015), both dedicated to the possibility of trauma studies' sustained critical engagements with Postcolonial texts.

In spite of these invaluable critical interventions and efforts at highlighting traumatic experiences in postcolonial and non-western contexts, trauma as experienced by African migrant characters has not enjoyed significant critical engagements. It is as Anne Goarzin (2011) points out that trauma studies then, and even at the moment, still appears to locate itself "in the rather exclusive field of major-scale traumatic events from which "smaller" traumas are excluded and collective traumas dominate over 'individual' narratives"

(Goarzin, 2011:252). There is the neglect of a critical engagement with representations of migrant characters' experiences of pain and trauma. This lacuna is even more glaring with the constant projections of the migrant crises that seek to drown other global concerns in every possible media. Many African writers continue to emigrate and write about the experiences of migrant characters, who are often recreations of the writers themselves. Statistics continue to show an increase in migration from African countries, especially from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, North America and other continents. In recent times, the image of Africa in the media is one of mass exodus; Africans flee the continent due to war, violence, economic downturn and the general psyche of helplessness, hopelessness and choicelessness that pervade life on the continent. It is what Chimamanda Adichie brilliantly captures as "the oppressive lethargy of choicelessness" (Adichie, 2013:202).

While not all migrant experiences could be deemed traumatic, there are however traumatising experiences and encounters experienced by African migrants and represented in migrant writings. African migrant writings echo the deep stirrings of the "unhomely", in Bhabha's parlance (1992:141). There is a need to examine the representations of the stirrings as well as immigrant suffering, pain and trauma, as amply represented in creative texts by the like of Mengestu, Adichie, Mabanckou, Ndiaye and so on. This study examines the depiction of migrant experiences where travelling outside the motherland has grave consequences and the choice to stay back is perilous. Madelaine Hron, in recognising the need to look beyond the successes of immigrant narratives, asserts that there has been inadequate scholarship on the hardship of immigration depicted in immigrant narratives. Madelaine Hron's *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* (2010), fills this gap by examining the representation of pain in recent immigrant narratives. In spite of the invaluable contributions presented in *Translating Pain*, the text does not adequately engage the representation of immigrant suffering in African migrant narratives, besides the discussion of Maghreb immigrant texts. Immigrant texts from other parts of Africa do not feature in this seminal text. Zoe Norridge's *Perceiving Pain in African Literature* (2013) is another brilliant attempt at capturing the representations of pain and suffering in African narratives. However, it also only engages works that depict sufferings of the past and the present in texts by the likes of Bessie Head, JM Coetzee, Antjie Krog, Aminata Forna and

especially Rwandan writers; it does not take the African migrant narratives' depiction of pain into consideration, expectedly because it is outside of the author's purview.

In examining the representation of trauma in narratives by African migrant writers, this study attempts to fill the gaps created by the exclusion of African migrants' experiences in mainstream trauma discourse. Recent studies that employ trauma theory have often examined the representation of the "big" traumatic events: the Rwandan genocide (Nick Tembo's *Trauma in Selected Eastern African Fiction and Life Writing on Civil Wars 2000-2014* (2017), Catherine Gilbert's *Writing Trauma: the Voice of the Witness In Rwandan Women's Testimonial Literature* (2013); apartheid *(*Denise Greenfield's *Violent Southern Spaces: Myth, Memory, and the Body in Literatures of South Africa and the American South* (2013), Faith Kent's *Troubled Writing: Cultural Responses to Trauma in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2010); colonial traumas and the memory of colonisation (Laura Murphy's *Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature* (2012); Rosanne Kennedy's "Mortgaged Futures: Trauma, Subjectivity, and the Legacies of Colonialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*". All these studies do not engage the experiences of African migrants or do not take such as their focus.

War, violence and terrorism take the center stage in previous studies, while insidious traumas or what Greg Forter (2007) captures as the "mundanely catastrophic" have largely been ignored. Forter asserts that beyond the big traumatic events, there is a need to consider what mainstream trauma studies does not take or had not yet taken into account:

> I am speaking here of the trauma induced by patriarchal identity formation rather, say, than the trauma of rape, the violence not of lynching but of everyday racism. These phenomena are indeed traumas in the sense of having decisive and deforming effects on the psyche that give rise to compulsively repeated and highly rigidified social relations. But such traumas are also chronic and cumulative, so woven into the fabric of our societies, that they cannot count as "shocks" in the way that Nazi persecution and genocide do in the accounts of Caruth and others (Greg Forter, 2007:260).

Forter's serves to highlight racism as traumatic; this study underscores traumatising psychic wounds inflicted upon migrant characters before, during and sometimes after emigration. The study relates that contemporary African migrant narratives provides us with multiple

instances of suffering, loss, violence, violation, deprivation, pain and crises, of traumatic proportions, that are yet to be accounted for in critical trauma studies. African migrant characters' traumas represented in diverse media— film, literature and art— had been largely ignored largely because of the power politics at work in dominant trauma discourse. This research examines migrant narratives' representations of traumas — such traumas that are largely outside the frame of reference of most works in the field. The study thus strives to point attention to migration as a "normatively traumatogenic institution" (Forter, 2007:261), evidenced by the migrant narratives chosen for in-depth analysis and many others that would be referred to.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

This study aims to examine the literary representation of suffering, crises, pain and trauma in narratives by African migrant writers, in order to determine the intersection(s)/interplay of migration and trauma in African fiction. The objectives of the study are:

i. To examine the traumatic impulse, that is the representation, conceptualisation of trauma, the traumatic and the traumatised in African migrant narratives;
ii. To examine the texture of trauma and its constituent, that is, what constitutes trauma and pain for African migrant characters;
iii. To examine the impact of trauma on the psyche of migrant characters, the coping strategies developed and the effectiveness of the strategies in effecting a working through;
iv. To examine the aesthetic of trauma: tropes, motifs, symbols, styles and narrative structures employed in the representation of pain and suffering in migrant contexts;
v. To determine trauma's mobility and the extent to which migrancy colours traumatic experiences;
vi. To determine the end to which the representation of trauma in migrant contexts are constructed by the migrant writers;
vii. To interrogate the complicity of the diasporic space, as witness, victim or agent, in the traumatisation of migrant characters; and
viii. To demonstrate that migrant narratives can contribute profitably to the trauma discourse in African literature.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In examining trauma in its broad, multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary manifestations in African migrant narratives and in putting creative texts from different African regions in conversation with one another, this study draws particular attention to the Others' pains, an answer to fervent calls made on the need to decolonise critical trauma studies. Laura Brown (1995), Stef Craps (2013), Sonya Andermahr (2015) have pointed out the need for a more robust and thriving trauma studies that "attends to and accounts for the suffering of minority groups and non-Western cultures, broadly defined as cultures beyond Western Europe and North America" (Sonya Andermahr, 2015:1). In order for trauma studies to fulfil its acclaimed ethical injunction and possibly provide "the link between cultures" (Cathy Caruth, 1995:11), the infusion and accommodation of studies on the cultural representation of traumatic histories and psychic sufferings in Other contexts is not negotiable. Laura Brown (1995) had argued that the traumatic experiences of the people on the margins (blacks, lower-class people, people with disabilities, and so on), "often fly under the trauma-theoretical radar because of the fact that current definitions of trauma have been constructed from the experiences of dominant groups in Western society"(Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, 2008:3), as if there was an authentic traumatic experience or a standard traumatic experience that should be common to every man across the globe.

Brown highlights the need for an expansion of trauma discourse to accommodate traumatic experiences that do not usually count as "real trauma"— the "traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily wellbeing at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Denise Greenfield, 2013:41). The results of which would be "a revitalized focus on what surrounds suffering: politics, communities, institutions, experiences, and environments". Thereby this would mark "a movement away from a problematic politics in which certain types of pain are privileged" (Lisa Hinrichsen, 2017:640). This study intervenes in not just trauma studies but also migration studies by embracing trauma in its broad context by taking into consideration psychological trauma, cultural trauma and historical trauma represented in the chosen narratives, as well as such insidious traumas of racism, choicelessness and the everyday trauma of oppressive subjectivity. Thus, this study largely addresses a critical neglect in African literary criticism and mainstream trauma studies by highlighting African modes of

cultural expression of psychic suffering around migration and thereby creating a shift in conceptual, critical, methodological as well as theoretical perspectives on African characters' experience of trauma.

Much previous research on the applicability of trauma theory in African and postcolonial contexts have often focused on narratives of war and violence. While trauma occasioned by war, coups, genocides, apartheid and colonialism have gained increased visibility, migrant traumas and the representations of migrant characters' experiences of pain, suffering and crises as represented in African narratives have not been the subject of critical engagements. There is therefore the arching need to engage in an interpretation of migrant writers' depiction of migrant characters' unpleasant experiences through the rhetoric of pain afforded by the trauma theoretical lens. Hence, this study intervenes in migration studies, trauma studies and African literary studies by focusing attention on the representation of trauma, pain and suffering in African migrant writings and the means by which the representations are made, through trauma theory, which provides an invaluable multidisciplinary theoretical approach.

The study of African writers' depiction of pain and suffering in migrant contexts, especially through the theoretical framework provided by trauma theory, foregrounds and unveils a discourse that has not received appropriate and commensurate attention in trauma studies as well as African literature. This thesis contributes to and expands the knowledge bank on trauma and migration discourse, a discourse which is increasingly crucial to the survival of humanity, especially in an age where psychological trauma as well as migrant crisis are becoming "the contemporary condition" (Tanya Allport, 2009:7) across the globe. Engaging the chosen texts through the lens provided by trauma theory will provide new, unique and exciting insights into the selected texts, and also help delineate the intersection of trauma and migration in contemporary African literature. Moreover, the prevalence of African traumatising migrant experiences in fiction and non-fictional contexts begs for a studied engagement with the representation of immigrant suffering in African literature. Additionally, the multidisciplinary nature of this research as well as its topicality serve to extend the frontiers of literary criticism on migrant narratives. In sum, the study contributes to scholarship on trauma in postcolonial contexts and trauma as it relates to African migrant characters.

1.5 Research Methods and Scope

In order to critically examine the diverse manifestations of trauma in African migrant fiction, eight novels have been purposively chosen for in-depth analysis. The study employs a qualitative approach through a close reading of and analysis of the selected texts. The novels are Ali Farah's *Little Mother* (2011), translated from Italian to English by Giovanna Bellesia-Contuzzi and Victoria Offredi Poletto, published in 2007; *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* written by Laila Lalami (2005), Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* (2009) translated from French to English by Linda Coverdale, published in 2006; Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009) first published in Dutch in 2007; Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red* (2013), translated by Alison Dundy, was originally published in 1998; Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* published in 2009; Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* (2006), translated from French to English by Lulu Norman and Ros Schwartz, it was originally published in 2003, and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names* published in 2013. The selection of the texts was informed by the fact that texts bear witness to sufferings, distresses, dislocation and displacement occasioned by migration. Additionally, the chosen writers are from different parts of Africa (Unigwe is from Nigeria, Lalami and Jelloun are from Morocco, Farah is from Somalia, Chikwava and Bulawayo are from Zimbabwe, Mabanckou is from Congo-Brazzaville and Diome is from Senegal), and they live in different parts of the world. The choice of writers who are "positioned at the 'in-between' spaces of nations and identities, the product of several interconnecting histories and cultures" (Sharmani Gabriel, 1999:ii), will afford the research a plethora of exciting perspectives on African migrant characters' experience of diasporic subjectivities and migrant traumas. By having a representative list of primary texts, the study foregrounds the differences as well as the similarities, the originality and the sense in which literary creativity on the continent is a continuum as the artistic affinities displayed in the text would reveal.

While there are a number of creative texts on intra-continental movements and the experience of migrants within other nations in Africa (examples include Yewande Omotoso's *Bom Boy*, Patricia Schonstein Pinnock's *Skyline*, Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, Andrew Brown's *Refuge,* Alex Agyei-Agyiri's *Unexpected Joy at Dawn*, Kgebetli Moele's *Room 207*, Simão Kikamba's *Going Home*, Heinrich Troost's *Plot Loss*,

Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* and Niq Mhlongo's *After Tears*), this study examines texts that recreate inter-continental migrations. The study focuses on texts that largely recreate migration to Europe and America; these are often the dream locations that many would-be migrants aspire towards. For instance, Chimamanda Adichie brilliantly recreates several African youth's obsession with Westward migration in *Americanah*: "Sister Ibinabo started the Student Visa Miracle Vigil on Fridays, a gathering of young people, each one holding out an envelope with a visa application form, on which Sister Ibinabo laid a hand of blessing" (2013:75). Still on the scope of the study, the research focuses only on creative texts published post-2000, with the exception of Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red* which was published in 1998 and translated to English in 2013. All but one of the texts chosen were published less than two decades ago and they all present a wide range of African migrants' traumatic experiences.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In examining African narratives' representation of diverse shades of trauma in and around migration, this study draws upon two important and topical critical approaches to literary studies: trauma theory and postcolonial theory. The eight novels chosen for critical analysis are examined in dialogue with the theoretical underpinnings of trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman, Judith Herman, Dominick LaCapra, Kali Tal and Shoshana Felman, together with the postulations on postcolonial trauma made by Stef Craps, Gert Buelens and Michael Rothberg, and Homi Bhabha's insights into postcolonial texts and contexts. The emergence of trauma studies in latent capacities in the early twentieth century and actively in the last decades of the century, is traceable to some "unrest" in scholarly circles in the 1980s and early 1990s and the need for "a new mode of reading" and a field of critical inquiry that affords an "ethical resuscitation of the allegedly textualist, ahistorical, and apolitical theoretical discourse of deconstruction" (T. Toremans, 2018). Such concepts as the crisis of representation, repetition compulsion, narrative rupture, theory of subjectivity, transference of trauma, dissociation, working through and so on, from the mainstream critical studies are employed. Also useful to the study are the postcolonial detours- the extension of the trauma's connotations, contexts, and manifestations; and the shift from conception of trauma as an event-based, individual experience of extraordinary suffering to a possibly collective and continuous experience

which may lack the possibility of a working through, in order to accommodate non-western contexts of suffering and "a greater consideration of the social and cultural contexts of traumatic experience" (Rothberg, 2008: 228), as advanced by the decolonisers of trauma theory, all aid in reading the chosen narratives' representation of "subjectivity and experience" especially in migrant contexts.

Moreover, the theoretical contributions of Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists' conceptions of unhomeliness, Othering and difference are especially useful in this study's examination of the effects of the diasporic space on the characters and the power politics at work in migrant characters' past, present and future. Postcolonial theory enables the study to trace historical trauma represented in the texts and situate it together with psychological trauma in the quilt of migrant traumas. Postcolonial theoretical concepts and insights also enable a discussion of migration and the push-and-pull factors often responsible for emigration as postcolonial realities. Hence, while postcolonial theory is central to the study of postcolonial entanglements, realities and engagements within the diasporic space and the experiences of Africans at home and away, trauma theory, with its privileged footing in Freud's psychoanalysis and other psychological approaches, would cater for the research's examination of identity negotiations, psychological distress, feelings of displacement and ultimately, migrant characters' experience of and reaction to migrant traumas. Ultimately, the employment of trauma theory and postcolonial theory as interpretative tools serves to locate the study in Postcolonial trauma studies and contributes to the advancement and expansion in the field. Additionally, the chosen theoretical approaches allow for an engaging negotiation, an example of the interplay of migrancy and trauma in African narratives.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The first chapter introduces the study, presents a general introduction of the research, the statement of the problem, significance of the research as well as the aim and objectives of the study. The texts chosen for analysis, as well as the justification for the choice, and the theoretical underpinning for the study are also presented in the first chapter. Chapter two focuses on a review of relevant literatures around African literature, trauma studies, the postcolonial turn in trauma studies and the representative writers that have been chosen for

critical study. The third and fourth chapters are devoted to critical analyses of the primary texts to be closely read in the light of trauma theory and postcolonial theory. The final chapter, the fifth chapter, presents the summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

While the first chapter presented an introduction to the research, its goals, methods and organisation, this chapter reviews relevant literature on trauma, migration and African literature. African literature, present in oral and written forms, in Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and the thousands of indigenous languages, was, is and remains a "witness" to African people's realities, encounters and experiences. In order to holistically interrogate the literary perspectives on trauma in African migrant writings, this chapter traces and reviews the knowledge domain on the emergence of African migrant writings, the emergence and prominence of critical trauma studies, the representation of trauma in African literature, the depiction of trauma in migrant contexts, and the critical reception and engagements with the literary trauma theory in African literature.

2.2 A Literature of and in transit: African Migrant Literature

The emergence of African Migrant Literature cannot be divorced from the African people's experience of migration. Migration on the continent cannot but be traced to primordial times, hence it is almost impossible to have the precise dates when Africans began to move outside the continent or even within the nations that make up the continent. The ability to move from place to place is considered by scientists as one of the basic features of *homo sapiens*, hence, migration from one place to another had always been part and parcel of human existence. However, no civilization through all the ages has witnessed such great migration, nomadism and dispersal defining the realities of humanity as it does in

contemporary times, thanks to a world populated by "perpetually voyaging species" (Kwame Appiah 2006:xviii). It is believed that humanity spread across the entire globe from Africa. This assertion is often backed up by the large deposits of archaeological artefacts and fossils in diverse places all over the continent. Prior to the Age of Exploration, there was African presence in other places outside the boundaries of what constitutes the continent today. They were traders, sailors, slaves and emissaries to other lands and shores. Clarence Wilbur (1943) asserts that there was the presence of enslaved Africans in China during the Former Han Dynasty, 206 BC-AD 25. There was also acceleration in migration, albeit, forced migration of Africans from Africa to the Americas, during the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the sixteenth century. There are representations of the gory experiences of African slaves during the Middle Passage and in the Americas in a genre now known as Slave Narratives. Renowned examples include Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1789), Ottobah Cugoano's *The Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Hyman Species* (1787), Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert "Ukawsaw Gronniosaw", an African Prince* (1772), and so on.

During the World Wars, Africans were also taken from their homelands to fight on the sides of their colonial masters. Biyi Bandele's Ali Banana in *Burma Boy* and Buchi Emecheta's Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* participated in the World War II. However, before and after the World Wars, travelling for education purposes from the colonies to the Mother country was quite common. A significant number of African writers Africans travelled as students, researchers, emissaries and advocates during the struggle for of the independence of many African states. Of particular importance, especially early in the twentieth century was the example of the Negritude writers. Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor and Leon-Gontran Damas met in Paris as students, in the same way that some other writers after them journeyed to Paris, primarily for study. Such writers include the Senegalese Ousmane Socé, the Ivorian Gérard Ake Loba, Mongo Beti and Ferdinand Oyono from Cameroun, Ahmadou Kourouma from Côte d'Ivoire, Camara Laye from Guinea and the Senegalese Cheikh Hamidou Kane, amidst others. Ferdinand Oyono's *Chemin d'Europe* (*Road to Europe*), Ake Loba's *Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir* (*Kocoumbo: the Black Student*) and Ousmane Socé's

Mirages de Paris (*Mirages of Paris*), Bernard Binlin Dadié's *Un Nègre à Paris* (*A Negro in Paris*) and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* are early creative representations of emigration to France from the colonies. With regard to the place of and the achievements of these texts and many like them, Pius Adesanmi (2005) argues that the texts through their heroes remarkably "reverse the gaze of modernity by moving, albeit problematically, to the subject position, occupying spaces of enunciation, and subjecting Paris to the representational modalities of the native/outsider gaze". These texts are then deemed worthy ancestors "of the postcolonial, transnational, diasporic subject of contemporary cultural theorizing" (Adesanmi, 2005:962).

In Anglophone Africa, writers migrated to the United States and Europe for diverse reasons: to study, to seek political asylum, to escape arrest and assault, to canvass for military support for their states, to reside in and so on. Wole Soyinka, Es'kia Mphahlele, Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Bessie Head, Tess Onwueme, Lewis Nkosi, Serote Mongana, Sénouco Agbota Zinsou, Breyten Breytenbach, Kole Omotoso, Nawal El Saadawi, Bloke Modisane and Dennis Brutus are examples of writers of the earlier generation who have had to spend considerable time in the diaspora for one of the reasons previously advanced. Wole Soyinka's "The Immigrant", "The telephone conversation", *Childe Internationale*; Simon Njami's *African Gigolo*, Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy or Reflections from a Black-Eyed Squint*, Buchi Emecheta's *In the Ditch*, *Second Class Citizen*, *Kehinde* and *The New Tribe*; Grace Ogot's *The Graduate*, Naiwu Osahon *Sex is a Nigger*?, Tess Onwueme's *Riot in Heaven: Drama for the Voices of color* and Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me by My Rightful Name*, all depict immigrant's experiences. The depictions found in many of the texts affirm that the flows of migration from Africa to the West, especially in the twenty-first century, differed from migratory patterns towards the end of the twentieth century, and especially from the 1960s onwards. The earlier migratory movements were primarily intended to be temporary. In the wake of the latter class of immigrants who took their families and left their homeland to conquer a new world (with examples found in Adichie's *Americanah*, Francophone examples of recent migrations, especially with family), the immigrants of the 1960s scarcely entertained the idea of settling in the host country on a permanent basis (Thomas and Wihtol de Wenden, 1985:33). Thus, the earlier

texts that recreate the experiences of African migrants, especially in America and Europe, are forerunners of the contemporary migrant literature.

The surge in the interest in migrant literature is traceable to a proportionate surge in west ward migrations especially in the twentieth century. Sam Roberts, a journalist writing in *The New York Times* of February 21, 2005 asserts based on immigration statistics that more Africans have trooped into the United States than during the all the years of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Thanks to the two World Wars, civil unrest, wars and coups in diverse places in Africa, and the delibitating processes of decolonisation and neo-colonialism, many Africans became migrants, refugees and exiles. Additionally, globalisation, cosmopolitanism and advancements in the technologies connected to movement and transportation foster faster, safer and more comfortable means of crisscrossing nations, regions and spaces. Increasingly, publishers, critics as well as readers are profoundly interested in migrant writers and writings. In the United States for example, migrant writers constantly make up the bestselling lists and win most prizes. Speaking of prizes, Chimamanda Adichie, Dinaw Mengestu, Helen Oyeyemi, and Brian Chikwava have all won notable prizes. NoViolet Bulawayo was shortlisted for the 2013 Man Booker prize. Bulawayo is the first African woman to be shortlisted for the Man Booker prize. Additionally, all these writers have had their novels published in the diaspora. The prizes that they have won have called the attention of the world to African writers, especially those of the younger generation, thereby granting them a privileged class and enabling them to gain "legitimacy in the international media" (Krishnaswamy, 1995:126).

While the earliest African literature in English was produced by exiles, people who were forced to leave their motherland for an uncertain future, contemporary African literature is largely being shaped by migrants, a mixed group of willing and unwilling migrants, some forced by the forces of poverty, choicelessness and helplessness and others in search of greener pastures and the Promised Land. Unlike many of the latter migrants, the enslaved Africans witnessed migration as trauma first-hand. They are those for whom migration was a curse, they were "captured, shackled, wrenched from their families, branded, sold, packed into the holds of ships, sold once more, and put to work in American mines and fields; enslavement meant pain and horror. For them, slavery was an unmitigated and terrible curse" (Toyin Falola et al, 2008:xi). While the earlier group of migrants were compelled to

write with a purpose, one that was initially determined and directed by the white man (Ogude 1983:149), the latter group have varying degrees of political and social commitment to art, to the African continent and to recreating the African story. In Girma Negash's study of migrant postcolonial writers' commitment to their nation's resistance politics, with a focus on Biyi Bandele's works, he asserts that there are degrees of political engagements in the texts; he also demonstrates that Biyi Bandele's texts are "nationally rooted, historically situated and, even if hybrid, linguistically distinct" (1999:80); however, this cannot be said of all migrant writers. Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton (2005), in a study of a class of Nigerian writers designated as belonging to the third generation, aver that the writers are less concerned about the colonial enterprise; they produce texts that are born into "the scopic regime of the postcolonial and the postmodern" (Adesanmi and Dunton, 2005:15)- an order of knowledge in which questions of subjecthood and agency are determined by the politics of identity in a multicultural and transnational frame and "the tropes of Otherness and subalternity are being remapped by questioning erstwhile totalities such as history, nation, gender, and their representative symbologies" (Adesanmi and Dunton, 2005:15). For the contemporary migrant writer, transnational realities and the politics of identity define the master narrative, rather than colonialism. Hence, there are varying degrees of nationalism and political commitment depicted in their texts.

Additionally, migrant writing is typically characterised by thematic, cultural and linguistic pluralism, all of which serve to mask, if not occlude, migrant writers' political commitment. The writers are geographically removed from the realities on the continent. In fact, some left the continent when they had barely known their right hand from the left (a good example is Helen Oyeyemi and Chinelo Okparanta), and hence they write based on the memories (real and conjured) of the continent that they had had and heard. Sometimes migrant writings are categorised as literature devoid of roots, affinities or loyalties. While this may be true of the aspiring assimilationist writers, it cannot be said of the entire group of migrant writers. Migrant writers belonging to the first group fit suitably into Revathi Krishnaswamy's description:

> a migrant who, having dispensed with territorial affiliations, travels unencumbered through the cultures of the world, bearing only the burden of a unique yet representative sensibility that refracts the fragmented and contingent

> condition of both postmodernity and postcoloniality. Journeying from the "peripheries" to the metropolitan "centre," this itinerant intellectual becomes an international figure who at once feels at home nowhere and everywhere (Krishnaswamy, 1995:125).

Chinua Achebe in *Home and Exile* (2000) criticises Buchi Emecheta's tendency to mask or "reduce" the *Africanness* depicted in her novels to suit British audience. VS Naipaul is another migrant writer who displays what he calls "an erosion of self-esteem", the commonest symptom of dispossession. In recent times, Naipaul appears to find possible disciples in a group of contemporary writers- the Afropolitans, all out to celebrate the "universal civilization" (Achebe, 2000:85).

Migrant writers and writings inevitably paddle identity politics. The Afropolitans (a term popularised by Taiye Selaise, a migrant writer) choose to embrace a multiracial identity that fits into and finds a sense of belonging anywhere in the world, with little or no natal ties to a particular homeland. Afropolitans are citizens of the world and they are at home anywhere across the globe. Nzewi (2015:65) elucidates that Afropolitanism "articulates a social identity and identification for Africans who are at home in the world…Africans devoid of Afropessimist mindset". Selasi (2005) asserts that Afropolitans are:

> … the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem. lab/jazz lounge near you. You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue and speak a few urban vernaculars [….] There is at least one place on the African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands. We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world (Selasi, 2005:1).

In essence though, afropolitanism only celebrates an illusionary identity, in as much as it entails "a transgressive attitude that disrupts static and essentialist notion of identity" (Eze, 2014:240). A popular proverb asserts that the dog that belongs to the entire community

usually suffers starvation the most. Essentially, that Afropolitans belong to all and sundry is testament to a sense of rootlessness and *unbelonging*. To belong to everyone and everywhere is to belong to no one and nowhere.

Much more than ever before, the definition of and what constitutes African literature in contemporary times is even more fluid than it was adjudged to be during the Makerere Conference of 1962. In a review of Elizabeth Zandile Tshele's debut novel *We Need New Names* (her pen name being NoViolet's Bulawayo), Helon Habila (2013) accuses Bulawayo of performing Africa to the world because of the range of negatives issues that are covered in *We Need New Names*. To him, the text displays "a palpable anxiety to cover every "African" topic; almost as if the writer had a checklist made from the morning's news on Africa". But a close look at all of Habila's narratives (*Waiting for an Angel* (2002), *Measuring Time* (2007), *Oil on Water* (2010), *The Chibok Girls* (2017)), makes him complicit, if not guilty, of what he criticises Bulawayo's narrative of. Novelists who believe in the esteemed role of the writer as a righter and teacher, those of Achebe's class as unambiguously elucidated in Achebe's classic essay "The Novelist as a Teacher" (1965), have existed side by side with those like Elechi Amadi (2016) who believe that the traditional role of the novel is to entertain, and that to make the narrative a tool for activism and education is to burden it with other duties. African literature is too broad, mature and refined to be restricted to a neat class of themes, techniques, aesthetics and intentions, as long as literature remains a malleable vessel for representing reality- social, political, cultural, psychological and even cosmic. In essence, African literature is what it is; African literature is literature by Africans, for Africans or of Africa. A literary piece that scores two out of the three points can be read as African literature. By the same token, the African writer can no more be defined by his geographical location any more than a Briton could be said to be one who lives in Britain.

African migrant writers and their writings have been diversely labelled by readers, critics, reviewers and publishers. For instance, renowned Buchi Emecheta and the younger Irenosen Okojie, are described as Nigerian British writers, Nadifa Mohamed is a Somali-British, while a writer like Johannes Anyuru whose father hails from Uganda, is often just referred to as Swedish writer, with no reference to his African nativity. The writers' hyphenated identities leave indelible imprints on their creative impetus and products. They

could reside outside Africa but can hardly make Gertrude Stein's declaration: "I am an American and Paris is my hometown". Neither Emecheta nor Adichie, arguably the most popular of the contemporary migrant writers can assert "I am a Briton and Nigeria is my hometown". There is the politics of difference at work across the globe, especially because blackness, is almost always negatively associated with "multiple marginalities and heavily discounted futures" (Grace Musila, 2016:110). The question of the migrant writer's identity also leads to the unavoidable question of the audience for whom he or she writes. Adichie in *Americanah*, for instance, appears to write with a Western audience in mind. While that is not unexpected given the global appeal of her narratives, the transgression is in her slips and narrative manipulations that are not consistent with the Nigerian context of the 1980s that she attempts to describe at the beginning of the narrative. For instance, she is dismissive of the unusual African mother's intolerance for sexual perversion, especially amidst teenagers. For instance, in *Americanah*, Obinze's mother after catching Ifemelu and Obinze in compromising circumstances speaks to Ifemelu patronisingly. On more than an instance, the reader is forced to ask whose Africa Adichie represents in *Americanah*, and whose Lagos Taiye Selasi likens to a "dirty Hong Kong" in *Ghana Must Go*. Chinua Achebe in *Home and Exile* (2000:82), posits that a writer must strive for a balance of stories, a balanced portraiture as much as possible. There are a number of other instances where in a migrant text, one finds a skewed depiction, done deliberately or inadvertently, to attract, suit or soothe a western audience. Unoma Azuah's *Edible Bones* is a good example of this, complete with an appendix for her primary audience.

On the possibility of having politicised writings from writers writing about Africa and African realities by those who are domiciled in the diaspora, Akeh (2006) asserts that there is no sense of an indifferent attitude to the nation in African migrant writings. Later, he concedes that "there are distortions in the memory of many of these writers abroad, depending on the extent of their alienation"(1). He notes that some feature "early indications of a cosmopolitan taste or sensibility, but the loyalty is still to a purist construct- the nation, two nations in some cases, the nation of residence and also the remembered, and now increasingly mythic, nation of origin"(1). In critiquing African writers in the diaspora for their tendency for the representation of ambiguities that are inconsistent with the past or present realities on the continent, Seyhan (2001)'s explication is noteworthy:

> Narratives that originate at border crossings cannot be bound by national borders, languages, and literary and critical traditions. Born of crisis and change, suffering alternately from amnesia and too much remembering, and precariously positioned at the interstices of different spaces, histories, and languages, they speak to name and configure cultural and literary production in their own terms and to enter novel forms of inter/transcultural dialogue (Seyhan, 2001:4).

Molara Ogundipe-Leslie (1998:31) asserts that while a writer has the right to define his or her tasks and audiences, the decision to write in a certain way or dance to some certain tunes as a writer must be taken cautiously, if writers will continue to uphold the inherited aesthetic of being the voice of vision of their time and if they are by any means concerned with literature and development.

Beyond the question of the audience(s) for whom the migrant writer writes, African migrant literature displays an exciting and distinctive range of themes, settings, forms and languages. While migrant narratives are often imagined to be stereotypic narratives of and around migration, in reality, the thematic preoccupations in African migrant texts are as diverse as the shades of migrant experiences and encounters that they recreate. Innumerable stories and perspectives come across from diverse points of views and style. For instance, Tola Okogwu, a Nigerian blogger and writer in London has published a series of children's books with humorous titles preoccupied with the hair- Daddy Do My Hair series – *Beth's Twists*, *Hope's Braids* and *Kechi's Hair Goes Every Which Way*. Okey Ndibe has *Never Look an American in the Eye*, Helene Cooper has *The House at the Sugar Beach: In Search of a Lost African Childhood*, Binyavanga Wainaina wrote *One Day I Will Write about this Place*, Alain Mabanckou has *The Lights of Pointe-Noire: A Memoir*, on their experiences of and around migration. There is Sade Adeniran's *Imagine This*- a memoir, albeit fictional narrative of Omolola and Adebola's migration from London to Nigeria; Noo Wiwa has a travelogue by the title *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*. The likes of Helen Oyeyemi and Chibundu Onuzo, for instance, employ a mix of magical realism, realism, African folklore in their narratives.

There is much vitality and vibrancy reflected in these writings so much that African migrant literature could be adjudged a genre or sub-genre of African literature. The distinct literary tradition of this emergent corpus by African migrant writers cannot but be placed in a class

of its own. To ignore or belittle the transnational turn in African literature is to do a great disservice to African literature as well as world literature. African literature is increasingly on the move, with writers and critics moving out of the continent almost on a daily basis. Several conferences on African literature and African studies in general are hosted, housed and operated from diasporic spaces and contexts. Migration is not only transforming "national borders, cultures, identities of migrants and those of their host nations" as Pauline Uwakweh, Jerono Rotich and Comfort Okpala (2014:2) assert, migration is also transforming African literature- both the creative and the critical enterprises. African literature at present is mobile, global and topical.

2.3 Migrancy and African Literature: Critical Perspectives

African migrant writers have been categorised and studied as exiled writers, migrants, immigrants, nomads, Afro diasporic writers, migritude writers and so on. The rise of migrant writers— African writers who have made their home in the diaspora— led to the emergence of African migrant literature. S.E. Ogude's *Genius in Bondage: A Study of the Origin of African Literature in English* (1983) represents an early attempt to study African writers who have had to write from outside the continent. Ogude traces the beginnings of African literature in English to the slave narratives; drawing parallels between what the foremost African exiled writers wrote and the writings of earlier African writers like Achebe, Ngugi and even the Negritude poets. He claims that there is a sense in which Equiano leads logically and directly to Achebe and the poetic lines of Phillis Wheatley have been re-echoed by the likes of Claude Mckay, Aime Cesaire and Lawrence Dunbar. In a sense, African literature bears imprints of and intersects with, in a cyclic manner, the influences of migrancy, first in the transatlantic slave trade, then colonialism and now, transnational mobilities. In an attempt to account for some modern African writers' literary output produced in the diaspora while many writers took up temporary residence outside Africa, especially during the second half of the twentieth century, critics classified some African writers as the writers-in-exile.

The twenty second volume of *African Literature Today*, edited by Eldred Durosimi Jones was dedicated to critical engagements with the depiction of exile and return in the writings of Ayi Kwei Armah, Bessie Head, Buchi Emecheta, Dambudzo Marechera and the like.

Eldred Jones (2000) relates in the editorial note that the condition of exile, which is often disorientating, has proven to be a mentally productive state. Olu Oguibe (2005) however clarifies that the productiveness that the condition of exile engenders is not a pleasure but a trauma. He maintains that "exile is a fertile ground for the creative imagination not because it offers a choice but precisely because it does not" (Oguibe, 2005:3). Majority of the writers of some two or three decades after the independence of many African states, who fled their countries together with those who were made to leave due to economic and social deprivation, had their works critiqued as testaments to the condition of exile. The definition of "exile" was expanded to accommodate African writers belonging to Achebe's generation who wrote from the diaspora.

In recent times however, there are attempts made to distinguish the writings of Africans who were forced to leave (as political exiles, émigrés, refugees, wanderers) from those who migrated to other lands out of their own volition. Scholars make attempts to delineate one group of nomads from the other, based on the degree of voluntariness involved in the movement, the circumstances that surround emigration, the means through which migration is done, the duration of the stay in a foreign place, the extent to which the migrant is willing to get involved in the affairs of the homeland after emigration and the racial constitution, in the case of a group of people leaving their homeland, and so on. Kim Butler's (2000:127) schema provides a good summation for the different strands and shades of factors that influence the configurations and definitions of the terms diaspora, exile and migrants: the reason(s) for, and conditions of, the dispersal; relationship with homeland; relationship with hostlands; interrelationships within diasporan groups; and comparative study of different diaspora, overtime. Sheffer (1986), Gilroy (1993), Tololyan (1996), Cohen (1997), (2008), Arndt (2006), Okpewho (2009), and many others have studied the possible classifications to be made in reference to people's movements, dispersals, settlements and resettlements. With regards to the African diaspora, Zeleza (2008:7) contends that not all movements and migrations between and within countries can be said to produce a diasporic community without adequate attention paid to the historical conditions and experiences of the migrating people, a diasporic identity and the differences in the lived experiences of the people journeying between "here" and "there".

Cohen (2008) is however of the view that various types of diaspora exist, with each enabled by the process of migration. He delineates victim Diaspora (this captures Jewish Diaspora, African Diaspora and Armenian Diaspora), trade Diaspora (with examples like the Lebanese and Chinese networks), labour Diaspora (the Indian indentured labourers), Imperial diasporas and Deterritorialised diasporas. While Cohen's classification is useful in theory, it has been criticised for its inability to account for the complex and dynamic nature of modern-day migration and Diaspora realities. Cohen's classificatory paradigm tends to freeze the history of African diaspora, homogenise African diasporas, and racialise them exclusively as black (Zeleza, 2008:9), and it is therefore unable to reflect the changes in migratory patterns and complexities, thereby shifting attention away from some of the important questions raised by the new diaspora discourse (Pnina Werbner, 2011:474).

Ali Mazrui's (1996) has attempted to differentiate the Africans that left the continent during the Slave Trade and those leaving en masse in recent times. He categorises the earlier group of migrants as constituting the "Diaspora of enslavement" and the recent migrants as making up the "Diaspora of imperialism". The Diaspora of enslavement is captured by Isidore Okpewho (2009:5) as the precolonial Diaspora, consisting of Africans who were forced out of their societies in bondage; and the Diaspora of imperialism as postcolonial Diaspora, consisting of Africans propelled and forced out by the postcolonial condition- "the state of disequilibrium in African societies brought about by the intervention of European Colonisation" (Isidore Okpewho, 2009:6). Many African narratives, especially those published post 2000, feature migrant characters who strive to leave the continent at all costs, to escape the postcolonial condition, facilitated by the tumultuous socio-political space, a dwarfed economy and the general atmosphere of helplessness that pervades many African countries. While Africans and African leaders cannot be totally absolved of the quagmire into which the continent has been plunged, the seeds sown by the colonial enterprise continue to blossom year after year. The postcolonial condition has produced external exiles and internal exiles. In the years succeeding the fight for independence, when disillusionment, the size of the sky, had driven out many, nationalist claims and talks dwindled and their proponents' faith in nationhood became "displaced or replaced by years of suspicion from political uncertainty, personal insecurity and emotional isolation" (Afam Akeh, 2006:1). Many African writers "were on internal exile, were already sawn apart from

their country of origin by circumstances, even before their exit to new lives abroad" (Akeh, 2006:1).

Brenda Cooper's *A New Generation of African Writers* (2008), Dan Ojwang's *Reading Migration and Culture: The World of East African Indian Literature* (2013) and Cajetan Iheka and Jack Taylor's edited volume *African Migration Narratives: Politics, Race, and Space* (2018), present remarkable efforts at accounting for and exploring the writings of Africa's contemporary migrant writers and writings. Cooper's *A New Generation of African Writers* in eight chapters examines the works of five African writers who have spent some time outside the continent: Biyi Bandele's *The Street*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*, Jamal Mahjoub's *The Carrier* and Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles*. Cooper's inclusion of Sudanese Aboulela and Mahjoub is remarkable. In an interesting way, Cooper highlights the solid objects, virtual objects, everyday objects and the possessions that populate the texts, which are reflexive of the material realities of the protagonists as well as the writers' multiple postcolonial worlds.

While Cooper's text makes a fantastic contribution to postcolonial and migration studies, her focus on just a few out of so many African migrant writers is limiting. Moreover, the choice of writers and texts is largely unrepresentative. In *Reading Migration and Culture: The World of East African Indian Literature*, Ojwang critically analyses Asian East African writers' engagements with alienation, migration, memories, modernity and diaspora experiences. Ojwang's study is expectedly limited in its scope, since it focuses on East African Indians. However, the text presents a comprehensive and comparative discourse on renowned writers, such as M. G. Vassanji, Peter Nazareth, Kuldip Sondhi and Bahadur Tejani, and the newer ones like Shailja Patel, Jameela Siddiqi and Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla. Similarly, Maximilian Feldner's *Narrating the New African Diaspora: 21st Century Nigerian Literature in Context* (2019), focuses on the Adichie's generation of Nigerian migrant writers- Chika Unigwe, Teju Cole, Sefi Atta, Helon Habila, as well as older writers like Ike Oguine and Chris Abani. Her study also included younger writers like Helen Oyeyemi, situating what he captures as Nigerian diaspora literature in the context of Nigerian literary traditions.

The thirty-fourth volume of Research in *African Literature Today*, a foremost journal of African literature, titled *Diaspora and Returns in Fiction* (2016) is especially dedicated to the representation of return migration in African fiction. The works of earlier writers like Ayi Kwei Armah, Syl Cheney-Coker, Nuruddin Farah, who are not necessarily migrant writers, are examined alongside contemporary migrant writers like Benjamin Kwakye, Dinaw Mengestu, Chimamanda Adichie, Pede Hollist and Helen Oyeyemi. In a wider scope than what was covered in the journal entries, *Ìrìnkèrindò: A Journal of African Migration*, is able to accommodate more nuanced perspectives and researches on migration, immigration and realities around migration as these concern Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora. Besides literary critics and artists, demographers, policy makers and even migrants make submissions to the journal. Although domiciled outside the continent, the journal presents a commendable effort at accounting for and adjudging Africans migratory patterns and experiences within and outside the continent. The latest issue, the ninth issue, edited by Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome, for instance, presents intellectually engaging articles on African migrants' adaptation and integration in Post-Soviet Moscow, the socio-cultural factors influencing the Ebola Virus disease-related stigma among African immigrants in the United States, the complications and complexities that surround Africans' migration to Europe and an exploration of the experiences of Zimbabwean female migrants in the Greater Cincinnati Area. The journal, since its creation in September, 2002, remarkably continues to presents a platform for documenting and exploring the migratory experiences of Africans— regular migrants and irregular migrants— a mix of refugees, asylees, documented and undocumented migrants (Mojúbàolú Okome, 2017:4).

Transcultural Modernities: Narrating Africa in Europe (2009), the thirty-sixth number of *Matatu: Journal of African Culture and Society*, edited by Elisabeth Bekers, Sissy Helff and Daniela Merolla presents a vast critique and exploration of African migrant's artistic productions, the modes of narration and the manner which the narrative strategies are expressions of the artists' transcultural realities. Outstandingly, the text also caters for visual and cinematographic representations of the experience of migration, modernity and African cultural production and negotiation. In five thematic sessions, spanning literary perspectives on the representations of Africa outside Africa, life stories and creative writing, *Transcultural Modernities: Narrating Africa in Europe*, conveniently presents multiple

disciplinary approaches and perspectives in a critical and topical interrogation of African transcultural modernities in Europe. The text captures African migrant writers and writings in Europe as 'Euro-African' in a brilliant reversal of the term 'Afro-European', thereby fostering a critical engagement with and a challenge of the Eurocentric understanding of identity formation, European identity politics as they relate to Africans living in Europe and their creative outputs.

Similarly, albeit in a less expansive way, *Africa Writing Europe: Opposition, Juxtaposition, Entanglement* (2009) edited by Maria Olaussen and Christina Angelfors explores the image of Europe represented in African literature, the complex relationship between the two continents and the possibility of having an "othered" gaze focused on Europe, as African literature becomes the transformative site for articulating new subject-positions. Organised in an order that draws attention to the Cape-to-Cairo sweep in colonial history, that is projecting critical analysis of texts from South Africa, to West Africa and then to North Africa, *Africa Writing Europe: Opposition, Juxtaposition, Entanglement* retracts the politics of exclusion and identity politicking that parades a historicist and exceptionalist notion and definition of Africa. The Cape-to-Cairo order also allows for a radical reinterpretation of genealogies, such that Africa is allowed to sometimes merge with Europe and is defined both within and in opposition to historical traces of exchange (Olaussen and Angelfors, 2009:xiii).

In an exclusive dedication to the Francophone scene, Bennetta Jules-Rosette's *Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape* (1998) and *Afrique Sur Seine: A New Generation of African Writers in Paris* (2005) by Odile Cazenave and Dominic Thomas's *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism* (2007) are notable texts amongst critical efforts at exploring the African writer's place and contributions in France. *Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape* examines the writings of three generations of African writers in France. Jules-Rosette adjudges "Parisianism" as "a cosmopolitan style of Franco-African writing." The text has a broader span when compared to Cazenave's; it examines the works and worlds of the African writers and writings in France from the 1940s through the early 1990s, driven by Jules-Rosette's ambition "to disclose the social and cultural conditions under which African works in France have been produced and received" (Jules-Rosette, 1998:2). *Afrique Sur Seine: A New Generation of African Writers in Paris* fills in the gaps

in *Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape* by its light treatment of the generation of African writers in France post-1980; it traces the development of a 'new' generation of Francophone Africa writers in France who emerged around the 1980s. Odile Cazenave observes that the notion of identity (a search for a difficult balance between African values and traditions and those of the West) which is doubly linked to bilingualism and biculturalism is at the root of the French-language African novel from the colonial era to the 1980s. She contends that the nature of literature produced by the writers she studied is different from that of the previous generation(s), since the writer's gaze in her opinion, is turned towards himself or herself, rather than towards Africa. Hence, there is a 'personal' discoverable in the works of the post-1980s African writers in France. Cazenave's assertions are in consonance with those of Abdourahman Waberi's.

Knox Katelyn in a study of Francophone twentieth and twenty-first century cultural artefacts, captured as *Display on Display: Migrating Identities in Contemporary Francophone Literature and Music* (2013), presents a noteworthy examination of African cultural products' constructions of the sub-Saharan African immigrant identity in France by bringing in perspectives drawn from different media- literary texts, music, dance and visual arts. Knox Katelyn observes that the texts examined "lay bare the ways in which articulations of alterity, paradoxically, helped to solidify images of Frenchness" (Katelyn, 2013:210), and thereby foreground the frameworks by which African immigrants and other racial minorities have been classified and stereotyped in French history; thus, further extending the discourse on "how identities are mediated and circulate as narratives within transnational spaces" (Katelyn, 2013:210). In another dissertation focused on African migrant writers, *Intra- and Inter- Continental Migrations and Diaspora in Contemporary African Fiction*, Sydoine Moudouma examines the relationship between space and identity in contemporary narratives of migration. Moudouma examined novels by Jude Dibia, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Brian Chikwava, Buchi Emecheta, Phaswane Mpe, Marie Beatrice Umutesi and Simão Kikamba, Alex Agyei-Agyiri, and Binyavanga Wainaina, as narratives that describe border and boundary situations of national, international, and inter-continental dimensions. He also submits that the physical features of borders, boundaries or borderlands have definite consequences on the processes of identity formation and translation, and can thus reveal the social and historical characteristics of diasporic formations. He also notes

that boundaries and borderlands need to be considered as being naturally inclusive, even though borders as differences are purposely put up to prevent this permeability. According to him, when boundaries in identity and space become "unfenced, differences meet and interact" (Moudouma, 2013:176), hence, "Africanity- characterised by ethnic, racial, and individual plurality— becomes the quintessential boundary, the space of conversation" (Moudouma, 2013:176). The thesis remarkably contributes to the understanding of the forces that shape outward and inward migrations and their inescapable consequences. In an excellent blend of perspectives on migration and return migration in African literature, scholars have examined the representations of the experience of migration, return migration and what these realities portend for African literature.

2.4 The Trauma Question in African Literature

In a sense, the average African novel is a trauma novel. Tracing the representation of trauma in the African imaginary would necessitate an attestation to the traumatic imprints, in foremost African literary outputs, right from the slave narratives to literary works published during the pre-colonial and colonial era. The most notable African novel, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* bears witness to the disintegration of a primal Igbo society; Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child*; Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*; Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy*, Ayi Kwei and Armah's *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born*, all bear witness to colonial oppression, postcolonial disillusionment and deprivation. Furthermore, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah, Surviving the Slaughter* by Marie Béatrice Umutesi, *The Last Duty* written by Isidore Okpewho, Doreen Baingana's *Trophical Fish*, Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* and *The Orchard of Lost Souls* written by Nadifa Mohamed bear witness to the horrors of the wars, coups and violence on the continent. Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved* Country, Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy*, Andre Brink's *A Dry White Season*, and contemporary narratives like all Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story*, Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf* and Achmat Dangor's *Bitter fruit* all attest to the trauma orchestrated by the apartheid regime. These all present characters' traumatic experiences. In the introduction to *Encyclopedia of African Literature*, Simon Gikandi (2003:xi) relates that the most powerful and compelling literary texts are associated with some of the most catastrophic events in the history of the continent, most notably slavery and colonialism, and in addition, their impoverished legacies in recent times.

In tracing the emergence and prominence of the field of trauma studies, it is noteworthy that "trauma" defies easy definitions and neat genealogies. Trauma is often captured by its nature and impacts. The dilemma of arriving at an appropriate definition of trauma is furthered heightened by the fact that trauma presents the cause as well as the effect of a terrible event, experience or encounter. Beata Piątek in *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* (2014) relates the difficulty encountered in using the term "trauma" as it captures "an event so extreme that it leaves the subject wounded psychologically, and that psychological wound [itself]" (Piątek, 2014:32). Hence the event is a traumatic one just as the impact or effect. Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) elucidate that the term trauma or "wound", as employed in psychoanalysis, implies a violent shock, a wound (which would relate to castration anxiety or narcissistic injury), and consequences which affect the whole organisation of the psychic system.

The complex configurations of the term "trauma" is for instance responsible for why Nancy Miller and Jason Tougaw (2002) would assert that trauma has become a "portmanteau term that covers a variety of disparate experiences [where] [s]tories that would seem to belong to different orders of experience enjoy troubling intimacies" (Tougaw, 2002:2), so much so that "narratives of illness, sexual abuse, torture or the death of loved ones have come to rival the classic, heroic adventure as a test of limits that offers the reader the suspicious thrill of borrowed emotion" ((Tougaw, 2002:2). In as much as the effects of trauma and actual traumatising events continue to persist in societies across the globe, the term trauma would remain subject to assertive speculations, factual deductions and subjective opinions from disciplines as diverse as Law, Theology, Literature, Medicine, Anthropology, Psychology and so on. Trauma studies would remain a breaching of disciplines (Luckhurst, 2008:4), with none able to lay possessive claims on it. No genre or discipline would own trauma, just as none will be able to provide definitive boundaries for it (Dominick LaCapra, 2001:96).

Through the years, trauma has been named and known by its effects on the traumatised. Fischer-Homberger (1975) relates that the effect of trauma on people has been called such names as railroad spine, traumatic neurosis, cardiac neurosis, shell shock, war neurosis and combat neurosis and most recently post-traumatic stress disorder. Through the years, scholars especially those concerned with psychological trauma have built upon the

foundational podia provided by Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer's *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), Sigmund Freud's "The Aetiology of Hysteria" (1896), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1938). Cathy Caruth, the author of *Empirical Truths and Critical Fictions: Locke, Wordsworth, Kant, Freud* (1991), *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), *Literature in the ashes of History* (2013), *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders of the Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience* (2014), and editor of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), is perhaps the most influential and the most widely cited of the Yale School of critics associated with the emergence and prominence of trauma studies, as is conceptualised at present.

To Caruth, trauma inflicts a severe and overwhelming psychic injury (sometimes also a physical wound) upon a victim, after which it again orchestrates the onset of a chain of symptoms in a belated manner. The traumatic impact is not always immediately perceptible, and this leads to Caruth's submissions on the belatedness of the experience of trauma and its impacts. She maintains that the traumatic event is not fully assimilated and experienced as at the time of the event; it only becomes prominent in the repeated possession of the victim and the insistent reliving of the event through nightmares, flashbacks, hallucinations and so on. Moreover, there is the failure or the inability to fully represent, capture or relate the traumatic event, such that this significant failure of representation (Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnbock, 2008:230) becomes equally traumatic. The presentation of the traumatic impact as unrepresentable, unknowable and untrackable, stems from trauma theory as evinced by Caruth, being a child of Psychoanalysis and Deconstruction (essentially fathered by Freud and 'mothered' Paul de Man, so to speak, evidenced in Caruth's relentless references to both scholars cum theorists).

Trauma as captured by Caruth thus parades a paradox in that it demands a representation, a narrativisation and a communication but in actual fact, it declines and defies representation. In traumatic situations, there is the desire to proclaim the event and a wish to be silent about it. There is then an ensuing conflict between the will to make it known and the wish to deny the traumatic event (Judith Herman, 2001:1). Caruth's stance over the years has remained the same; she maintains that trauma is unrepresentable. Geoffrey Hartman (1995:537) similarly submits that trauma often comprises a two-part system. The first is the traumatic

event, which is registered, not experienced after which is the onset of the memory of the traumatic event, one which bypasses perception and consciousness, in a journey into the subconscious, where it falls directly to the psyche, from where intrusive memories emerge. Hence, trauma overwhelms just as it disrupts. Susan Brison (2002:ix) who has witnessed trauma and had its impacts shape her realities asserts in *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self*, a book that presents her journey into recovering from the traumatic effects of rape and attempted murder, that things stopped to make sense as soon as she was traumatised. The devastating, disrupting and destructive impact of trauma is such that it has the capacity to unleash the death (Todestrieb in Freudian usage), kill the pulsing of desire as well as language, and foster a disintegration of body, soul and spirit (Dominick LaCapra (2001:41), Dori Laub and Susanna Lee (2003:437), Gabriele Schwab (2006:95), Susana Onega, Susana Jaén and Jean-Michael Ganteau (2011:19), Ulrike Tancke (2011:2) Roger Luckhurst, 2008:3)).

Susanne Radstone (2007) explicates that the issue of representation, along with other issues that surround the location of trauma, the impenetrability of traumatic experiences, the complexity that surrounds traumatic memory and the allegations of a Eurocentric stance, and what Ruth Leys (2010:659) describes as the trauma theorists' oscillation between the mimetic and the anti-mimetic models, have always been at the heart of the disparate and divergent opinions and studies on cultural trauma. Irene Visser (2014:4) also alludes to the debates that surround critical trauma studies: opposing debates about definitions and conceptions of trauma as either event-based or phylogenetic; arguments on the nature of trauma as knowable or unknowable, curable or incurable, static or dynamic and the like. Of the debates and contestations within dominant trauma studies, the Postcolonial theorists' angst against the trauma studies' Eurocentric stance and postmodernist bias have been prominent. Roger Kurtz (2014:423) highlights the limitations that trauma theory's European origins and its reliance on the postulations of Freudian psychoanalysis, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and the Holocaust as the quintessential trauma event, bestow upon trauma theory's application in non-Western contexts. He draws comparison between trauma theory's universalising claims and the alien religion that Achebe's Okonkwo encounters on his return from Mbanta. Roger Luckhurst (2008) alleges that trauma theory's shocking

failure lies in its inability to address "which Luckhurst calls "its shocking failure" to "address atrocity, genocide and war" (Luckhurst, 2008:213).

Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, editors of *Studies in the Novel* (2008), draw attention to dominant trauma studies' almost exclusive focus on the traumatic experiences of whites and Westerners, through critical models that are entirely Euro-American. These studies then ironically produce the very opposite of trauma studies' potential: to connect cultures and foster solidarity, as survivors from one culture effectively communicate with survivors from another culture (Caruth, 1995:11). Craps and Buelens emphasise the place that must accorded colonial traumas orchestrated by such Eurocentric and myopic views and biases that trauma studies may blindly help to perpetuate. The contributors to the volume (one dedicated to the exploring trauma theory's capacity to read postcolonial narratives that testify to suffering) point out trauma studies' limited facility to adequate account for the specificity of colonial traumas and other postcolonial cases of suffering. Studies point out such events as the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Laura Murphy's "The Curse of Constant Remembrance: The Belated Trauma of the Slave Trade in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments*"), the colonial enterprise (Rosanne Kennedy's "Mortgaged Futures: Trauma, Subjectivity, and the Legacies of Colonialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*"), and war and genocide (Amy Novak's "Who Speaks? Who Listens? The Problem of Address in Two Nigerian Trauma Novels" and Robert Eaglestone's '"You would not add to my suffering if you knew what I have seen': Holocaust Testimony and Contemporary African Trauma Literature"), as trauma. Similarly, cultural trauma (Anne Whitehead's "Journeying through Hell: Wole Soyinka, Trauma, and Postcolonial Nigeria") and apartheid (Shane Graham's "'This text deletes itself': Traumatic Memory and Space-Time in Zoë Wicomb's David's Story" and Mairi Emma Neeves' "Apartheid Haunts: Postcolonial Trauma in Lisa Fugard's *Skinner's Drift*") are read as trauma, as well as the stressors of trauma in postcolonial contexts.

In a research quite similar edited volume, *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time* (2003), edited by Jill Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy, borne out of a conference that explored the cross-cultural perspectives on trauma and memory, also sought viable means to postcolonialise trauma studies. *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time* features a larger volume of essays and a wider scope, with research on the traumas of the

Holocaust, the World Trade Centre 9/11, apartheid, dispossession and migration, personal experiences of trauma and what is captured as the Stolen Generations. The contributors to the volume examined the diverse intersections of the artistic, the psychoanalytic, the modern, the realist and the nature of traumatic representation, recollection and remembrance across cultures and contexts. While the volume features an essay on Antje Krog's *Country of My Skull* and Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* (Bearing Witness to Ripples of Pain by Fiona Ross) and a reference to the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, not much attention is accorded African realities. *Postcolonial Traumas: Memory, Narrative, Resistance* (2015), edited by Abigail Ward presents a robust discourse on what constitutes postcolonial traumas in Australian, African, African American, Caribbean as well as Asian contexts. In the introduction to the collection, Abigail Ward asserts that the world is yet to fully grasp and account for all the postponed effects of colonisation, not to talk of coming to terms with more recent colonial and postcolonial traumas of the previous and present centuries: apartheid in South Africa, the Algerian war, genocides in Rwanda and Cambodia, Israeli- Palestinian conflict, and the asylum and displacement of vast numbers of people around the world (Ward, 2015:8).

Middle East- Topics& Arguments META's dedicated volume to trauma published in 2018 represents a path finding insiders' serving on the reality and the experience of trauma and PTSD amongst the populace of the Middle East and North Africa, traumatised in varying degrees by wars and violence in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Palestine. In the editorial by Stephan Milich and Lamia Moghnieh, there is the assertion that the writings and cultural productions of the many current MENA artists and writers are proof that "remembering and suffering are crucial positions against state violence and patriarchy that seek to erase and hide the traces of violence they committed" (Milich and Moghnieh, 2018:6). In the same volume, Nora Parr's essay, one that is directly relevant to the focus of this study, "No More "Eloquent Silence": Narratives of Occupation, Civil War, and Intifada Write Everyday Violence and Challenge Trauma Theory", presents an insightful reading of two Arabic trauma texts, Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Taḥta shams al-ḍuḥā* and Iman Humaydan's *Bāʾ mithl Baīt… mthl Baīrūt*. She highlights how the texts under consideration do not neatly fit into the dominant trauma studies' terminologies and methodologies. She submits that trauma has the capacity to transcend silences and speechlessness, penetrate the walls that surround

silence, so much that silence could form a part of the trauma narrative in all its ugly and undesirable eloquence. In a similar way, O. Ishaq Tijani examines representation of trauma in the novels of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti Writer, Ismaʿil Fahd Ismaʿil, and the place of the traumatic in the writers' oeuvre and personal life. He relates that trauma makes, marks and shapes Ismaʿil's creative outputs, as a result of his own traumatic experiences, having witnessed torture and arrest, repression and identity crisis. Tijani concludes that Ismaʿil's works, especially *al-Ḥabl*, which he reads as an autobiographical piece, display the power of the narrative in achieving some cure from a traumatic past. Ismaʿil's employment of the satirical is presented as his means of getting back at the oppressors.

Fassin Didier and Richard Rechtman's *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood* (2009) insightfully traces how the victim's status has come to be acceptable and respectable in the present century; they relate that trauma has become a prominent signifier of this age. The present age is then presented as one of "humanitarian reason" (Fassin Didier, 2012), where claims over the past and present and even the future have "political implications, and the construction of a cultural or historical trauma can influence public opinion and politics" (Milich and Moghnieh, 2008:6). While all around the globe, laws, policies and politics are shifting and coming to terms with the traumatic impulses and imprints of the millennium, African literary artists and critical also grapple with the cosmology and constituent of the traumatic in Africa and in the African Diaspora. While the Holocaust, the Vietnam War and the more recent, the September 11 attacks on the Twin Tower in 2001, have largely dominated trauma studies in most of the West, colonialism and the Postcolonial condition take the centre stage in denoting what constitutes trauma for postcolonial subjects.

As much as a lot of insight is being drawn from critical trauma studies, a lot of revisions are also being projected into the trauma discourse. Recent years have seen efforts by postcolonial critics to inject suitable modalities and terminologies into trauma studies, to rebrand it in order that trauma theory may take cognizance of postcolonial contexts and realities. There is the shift of the understanding of trauma as wholly event-based, individualistic, belated, unspeakable (Cathy Caruth, Dori Laub, Van der Kolk, etc) to its possible accommodation of the everyday traumatic reality of violence, deprivation and oppression, as well as such collective trauma like that of Colonisation. There is the emphasis

on the possibility of trauma being narratable, continuous, and mutable. Furthermore, the postmodernist aesthetics which define the trauma text is engaged to accommodate even realist depictions of suffering, pain and violence, as well as context-specific and even alternative modes of representations. As Visser (2015) remarks, in scholarly circles at the present, trauma is recognized as a very complex phenomenon, as more scholar attempt to delineate and reconstruct trauma to bear witness with its "specific cultural, political, and historical contexts" (Visser, 2015:263).

2.5 Migration: The Mass Fantasy, The Postcolonial and The Traumatic

Warsan Shire's "Conversations about Home" (2011) is a beautiful poem, painful but gorgeous for its depiction of the traumatic, the postcolonial and the mass fantasy that surrounds outward migrations from Africa:

> no one leaves home unless
> home is the mouth of a shark
> you only run for the border
> when you see the whole city running as well…
>
> i want to go home,
> but home is the mouth of a shark
> home is the barrel of the gun
> and no one would leave home
> unless home chased you to the shore…(Shire, 2011:55)

Africa was at a time captured as the Motherland, the waiting home, especially during the heyday of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In recent times, however, Africa is depicted as the homeless home, the paradise that has lost its allure and militant stench that ejects her own. Africa in recent decades has witnessed migrant crisis, the Arab Spring, insurgencies, wars, environment despoliation and a host of other calamities, all of which have made the continent an undesirable "home". The ecstasy that welcomed the independence era in many African countries was largely replaced by postcolonial disillusionment amidst abject poverty, senseless deprivation and insecurity of life and property in most, if not all the newly independent states in Africa:

> The rhetoric of migrancy, exile, and diaspora in contemporary postcolonial discourse owes much of its credibility to the massive and uneven uprooting of "Third World" peoples in recent decades, particularly after large-

> scale deColonisation in the 1960s. As the euphoria of independence and the great expectations of nationalism gave way to disillusionment and oppression, emigration increasingly became the supreme reward for citizens of impoverished or repressive ex-colonies. Millions of people dream of becoming exiles at any cost, and many government officials make a living helping or hindering the fulfilment of this mass fantasy (Krishnaswamy, 1995:131).

Harsha Walia, in *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013), adjudges capitalist neoglobalisation responsible for the massive displacements and mass fantasy around migration in diverse places across the globe. She contends that migrants are not so much to be blamed and tagged "illegal" since the violence of border imperialism is seen to be "a direct result of the violence of colonial displacements, capital circulations, labor stratifications in the global economy, and structural hierarchies of race, class, gender, ability, and citizenship status" (Walia, 2013:16). In a foremost study of the pervasive effects of the everlasting evils perpetrated while the colonial enterprise lasted, Frant Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) emphasised the place of mimicry, the epidermalisation of inferiority, stereotype and difference, which could be deemed to be largely responsible for the untold lies that adults believe and the risks they are willing to take in order to live in Europe. Fanon alludes to the conflict, a crushing objecthood that largely governs the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Colonialism instituted a system of difference. It is the reason why the colonised would silently desire all that the coloniser has: power, affluence and subjecthood. Fanon elucidates in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) that the coloniser who is the settler and the native occupy two very different zones. In fact, he asserts that the two zones are opposed. Fanon's juxtaposition of the two zones occupied by the coloniser and the colonised rings true of the Third World nations where the people strive to depart by all means, and the First world countries of the migrants' dreams. Hence, when the Negro, the native, the colonised then has the lifetime privilege of visiting the coloniser's nation, he suddenly on return becomes a demigod. He looks on everything he has known with contempt and the mother country is regarded and presented as a paradise. In a sense, this mentality still thrives in the present century and it is partly responsible for the mass fantasy around west-ward migrations.

Several postcolonial writers recreate many Africans desperate attempts to emigrate by all means and at whatever cost. Chimamanda Adichie presents a funny but pathetic depiction in *Purple Hibiscus*, where Aunty Uju, aunt to the protagonist, rejoices that she was given a visa to travel to America:

> Oh, nna m, I am. Do you know how many people they refuse? A woman next to me cried until I thought that blood would run down her cheeks. She asked them, 'How can you refuse me a visa? I have shown you the money in the bank. How can you say I will not come back? I have property here'… if they are in a good mood, they will give you a visa, if not, they refuse you. It is what happens when you are worthless in somebody's eyes. We are like football that they can kick in any direction they want (Adiche, 2003:272)

Similarly, in Adichie's *Americanah*, the protagonist's friends make attempts to leave through legal and clandestine means. There is the presentation of a funny episode where a character, Sister Ibinabo organises a miracle vigil for every potential emigrant.

In an equally humorous yet perplexing representation, Unoma Azuah's *Edible Bones* presents Kaito's desperate plots to realise the American dream. He quits his job at the Embassy for a life of uncertainty, degradation and deprivation in America. He expectedly soon realises that the America of his dreams only exist in his dreams. *Edible Bones*'s description of a typical day at the American Embassy in Nigeria is as realistic as it is feverish: "It was not yet 4a.m. Still, like a trail of ants, a large and eager crowd was lined up outside the American Embassy in Lagos. Each morning, while it was still dark, three hundred plus visa applicants arrive at the embassy…Kaito closed his eyes, opened them, unlatched his long leather belt from his waist and charged at the crowd" (Azuah, 2013:5). In yet another recreation of the migrant's tales, Congolese JJ Bola, in *No place to call home* depicts the double consciousness, lack of belonging, homelessness and identity crisis that often mark the lives of many immigrants in Britain. Through depictions of the unpleasant, gory and the despicable aspects of westward migration, postcolonial writers strive to deconstruct the West as Eden and Africa as hell- a view that had long been circulated through every media since the colonisers set foot on the African soil.

The narratives chosen for in-depth analysis in this study bear witness to the reality that migratory practices are largely taking a tragic turn and wearing a traumatic cyclone in recent

times. In Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* as well Ali Farah's *Little Mother, Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* written by Laila Lalami, Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*, Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street,* Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*, *The Belly of the Atlantic* written by Fatou Diome and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names*, all the characters experience the traumatising reality of homelessness, hopelessness and the death of the American dream. For the characters, Europe and America unfortunately was not the Promised Land. In choosing to read the chosen narratives' depiction of character's experiences through the lens of trauma theory and postcolonial theory, the study emphasizes the postcolonial condition's complicity in the traumatization of African migrant characters, which is reflective of African migrants in reality. The submissions of Frantz Fanon, in two of his seminal texts (*Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)), all which have served as foundational texts in the Postcolonial discourse provide useful constructs in this study's interrogation of the power politics and power relations at work among the hostland and the homeland; the push-and-pull factors instigated during the colonial enterprise which necessitates the mass emigration of people especially from the developing countries; the illusion that largely drives emigration to the West (the supposed land of bliss and only happiness); Negrophobia and racism, and the lingering repercussion of colonialism on the psyche of African migrant characters, as represented in the texts under study.

In line with the assertions of Frantz Fanon on the evils and the effects of colonialism and its ever-present negative effects on the colonised, Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) attests to the exploitative and destructive influence of the colonial enterprise on the land, people and space. Since Africa, as Rodney submitted, was deliberately underdeveloped by the coloniser, it is then only logical that peoples from the erstwhile colonised regions gravitate towards the coloniser's land and resources, as visible in the present century's migratory practices. The emigrants are then "Columbuses in reverse" (George Lamming, 1960:155) not just from the Caribbean Islands, but from all over Africa and every place that has witnessed colonialism, in search of the remnants of the green pastures and whatever spoils are left from the exploitation of these places. The mass migration of the previously colonised into Europe is not quite the trap of history as the former French Prime Minister, Pierre Mesmer (1973) once adjudged it to be, rather, it is the

penitence of history, a restitution and an act of balancing out a history of injustice, oppression and sabotage.

Leo Lucassen in *The Immigrant Threat* (2005) examines the fears that surround immigration into Europe and the threat that the massive arrival of non-Western immigrants poses to Europe. He notes the fear of social disorder and underclass formation was swiftly overtaken by the threat that conflicting cultural and ideological values brought by the immigrant posed to the cultural and philosophical landscapes of the host nations. There is then the overarching fear that immigrants, because of their ever-increasing population, thanks to immigration and procreation, would ultimately destabilise Western societies and will eventually alter the demographic outlook of such countries as Germany, Britain, France and the Netherlands. The fears are as genuine as they are justifiable, since the unequal and inequitable relations between the poor and the rich, the South and the North, and Others and Self are implicated in the migratory patterns across the globe (Walia 2013:38).

Postcolonial theory serves to underscore the lingering legacies of the colonial enterprise, effects of which are still very visible in the lived realities of the people that occupy the colonies. All the eight narratives under study depict the searing poverty and choicelessness that force the people to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In an article accounting for the reasons migrants risk everything to start a new life elsewhere, Doug Saunders (2018) relates that illegal migration has steadily been on the increase for many decades, but it has never been as high as it is at the moment and just as precarious:

> The Mediterranean boat people have been coming for more than a decade, paying small fortunes to enter the continent aboard disturbingly overpacked vessels. They began arriving after Europe's legal migration routes shut down in the 1990s, but never have their numbers been so large – or the death toll so high. When an estimated 850 people died in a single capsizing incident last weekend, driving this year's toll to over 1,600 – 30 times higher than the toll for the same period last year – their fate became a continent-wide crisis, provoking an emergency European Union meeting on Thursday and an outraged response from across the political spectrum (Saunders, 2018:1).

What is lucid from the studies on what motivates migrants to flee by all means is that migrants pay dearly and are willing to risk everything because leaving seems to be the only option left. No one leaves home unless home has ceased to be home.

Homelessness and Unhomeliness of home constitutes a traumatising reality for migrant characters. Cho (2007) elucidates that to be "unhomed" is to feel out of place. He further notes that to live outside of one's native land is "to be haunted by histories that sit uncomfortably out of joint, ambivalently ahead of their time and yet behind it too". It is clear that migrants are sometimes doubly unhomed. The new place is unhomely and the previous one left behind cannot be returned to. Cho describes the feeling: "it is to feel a small tingle on the skin at the back of your neck and know that something is not quite right about where you are now, but to know also that you cannot leave. To be un-homed is a process. To be unhomely is a state of diasporic consciousness" (Cho, 2007:19).

The unmaking of the home reflects abysmal living conditions, thanks largely to the dysfunctional leadership in many African states. Home has ceased to be home; home has become a trap. The unhomeliness and disintegration of home project one of the push factors that drive African characters away from their motherland. Push-factors, elucidated by Dirk Kohnert (2007:7) as poverty, insecurity and terrorism, human rights violations, degradation and despoliation of the environment and population pressure and such pull-factors such as economic opportunities in the West, social security and educational opportunities, all serve to strip the home of its homeliness and display the West as the only available choice. However, much of what migrants envision to be greener grasses are soon found out, pathetically, to be the same grey grasses that dominated the places they fled from. African creative texts present a plethora of disillusioned migrant characters who realise after their emigration that the West was not a land of bliss, the only Eldorado on earth, after all. Rootlessness, ruthlessness and double consciousness are some common motifs in migrant narratives. Segun Afolabi's *Goodbye Lucille* (2007), for instance, depicts the deplorable living condition of many African migrants in Kreuzberg, West Berlin, Germany, where their rooms are airless and overcrowded:

> Inside was a kind of makeshift dormitory with five or six interspersed bunk beds. Even though the window had been flung wide open, the atmosphere inside was stifling. On the

> lower half of some of the beds were several African men – in sitting positions, some lying down. They were all, without exception smoking (Afolabi, 2007:128).

In another recreation, Tanure Ojaide, a migrant poet, depicts America as a photo trick, the disillusioned poetic persona in "Immigrant Voice" (1998) laments in pidgin that "America na big photo-trick to me/ If say big thief no boku for home/And they no give man chance to live softly/America no be place to live for one whole day" (Ojaide, 1998:105).

Homi Bhaba's postulations on unhomeliness, mimicry, ambivalence, difference and hybridity are useful concepts in Postcolonial studies that would aid study's exploration of migrant characters' experiences of homelessness, rootlessness and double consciousness. In Bhabha's parlance, as elucidated by Lois Tyson (2006:421), to be unhomed is to feel displaced in one's home; it is to not feel at home even in one's home. For all the protagonists in the eight representative texts chosen for analysis in this study, home has ceased to be home. This is in tune with Alexandra Porumbescu (2013)'s assertion that those who leave home and migrate to other nations are not necessarily the poorest in the society. He states that they are the ones who are aware of the inconsistencies that plague their everyday reality: inconsistencies between their needs, expectations, dreams and their actualisation. For instance, the migrant characters in such migrant narratives as Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah, Sefi Atta's *A bit of Difference*, Doreen Baingana's *Trophical Fish* and Unoma Azuah's *Edible Bones* are not necessarily the poorest in their societies; however, they are unsettled because of the conflict in their desires and the possibility of attaining them in their present locale. Home for the characters, as well as many Africans, has ceased to be homely; home has become unappealing, discomfiting, and even monstrous.

Another of Bhabha's conceptions, in the Postcolonial studies, closely linked to unhomeliness and mimicry, which will further aid this study's engagement with the intersections of home, space and trauma is the notion of ambivalence, a concept closely related to "double consciousness", a concept which first appeared in WEB Dubois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, where Dubois explores the nature of the psychological conflicts (that manifests in unreconciled strivings and warrings) that often plagues the African Americans. Tyson (2006) describes double consciousness as:

> This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives (Tyson, 2006:421).

Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, explicates the uncanny and precarious realities that define the colonial condition. He underscores how colonial powers serve to split the world along the trajectory of self and the other, all of which manifest in the host land's relationship with migrant characters. The West pulls the migrant with one hand and at the same time pushes the migrant away with the other hand. The migrant then becomes like the proverbial Noah's dove which has found no resting place for her feet.

Hodge and Mishra (1994:276) relate that the postcolonial discourse presents a politics of opposition and struggle; it essentially problematises the key relationship between the centre and the periphery. In this study, the postcolonial theory serves as a tool to interrogate the complexities that attend the relationship between African migrant characters and Westerners. The protagonist, Oge Nti, a migrant from Nigeria to Belgium in Chika Unigwe's *The Phoenix* for instance relates of her white neighbour, with whom she had shared tea on countless occasions continues to refer to her as a foreigner after she had stayed in Belgium for seven years and obtained her Belgian passport. She also must ignore the whites who revel in their single story of Africa: the dark and poor continent. Oge speaks of a fellow traveller who has been to Africa only once and who thinks she knows Africa like the back of her hand. She forgets that Africa is a continent like Europe with several countries and not just a single state. Oge says:

> I do not bother to tell her that Africa is not as small as she makes it seem. I do not tell her that Africa is a continent, like Europe is. I assume she knows. She must know that she went to a country or some countries in Africa, not an amorphous Africa, with no distinctions; nothing to distinguish one part from another (Unigwe, 2007:17).

Her single story of Africa is that Africans are poor but they always singing and dancing. She is like many Europeans who choose to believe the worst about Africa, in order for them to secure their superior stance. She chooses to believe that everyone in Africa lives in huts

with straw roofs and everyone sleeps on hay. She doubts Oge when Oge tells her that the people sleep on mattresses; she maintains that if they do not sleep on hay, then they must sleep on slits. Migrant writings are replete with the distortions that entrench the disparate perspectives and categorisations on poor Africans and rich Westerners and sustain the polarisation of the globe into prejudiced binaries: "we versus them", "Centre and the periphery", and "Self and the Other". In reading the selected migrant narratives as postcolonial witnesses to the trauma occasioned by or during migration, using the interpretative grids of Postcolonial theory and trauma theory, the study underscores the place of the postcolonial condition as a stressor and a source of trauma for postcolonial subjects.

2.6 Situating Immigrant Suffering as Trauma in Selected African Migrant Literature

Madelaine Hron's *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* published in 2009, represents a ground breaking effort at delineating the place of the traumatic in migrant contexts, narratives and engagements. In the text, she strives to account for immigrants' feelings of loss, isolation, alienation, displacement, nostalgia, fear and frustration. Hron traces the gaps in contemporary literary and cultural discourse on power, agency, subjectivity and resistance. In her research, she finds migrant writings replete with the representation of pain, suffering and tragedy, all of which then constitutes what she captures as immigrant suffering. Hron's seminal text underscores the need to draw scholarly attention to the representations of the sufferings of immigration in contemporary literature and culture. In a brilliant and unique way, she strives throughout the text to demystify myopic conceptions and misconceptions about the immigrant in fictional texts, which in turn shape society's understanding of the immigrant experience. She explores the representation of immigration and immigrant suffering in various cultural contexts with a view to underscoring their "real-life sociopolitical ramifications", while noting "contemporary sociocultural assumptions and literary conventions" around the immigrant fiction (Hron, 2009:xiv). While Hron's spectrum covers a vast array of creative texts and writers from Francophone North Africa, Czech and Haiti, not much however was accounted for as regards African migrant characters, narratives and writers, besides such Maghrebi Ahmed Zitouni, Mehdi Charef, Kassa Houari, Leila Sebbar, Ben Jelloun, Sakinna

Boukhedenna, Fawzia Zouari, Malika Mokeddem and others. Hron's *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* importantly attests to the other sides of the immigrant story not often popularised in the media.

The image of the immigrant popularised by the mass media and the social media, especially in Africa, over time, has been that of a success story, until very recently. What was often projected was the image of the successful immigrant, who now possesses all that had eluded him or her in the homeland. Almost immediately the African migrates to the West, he takes to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to update pictures of himself or herself in front of big malls and fanciful restaurants. In the popular film, *Coming to America* (1988) or even the more recent *Osuofia in London* (2004) and *30 Days in Atlanta* (2014), migration is humorously presented as the much awaited solution to all of life's travails and a journey into wonderland. A notable exception in the filmic genre, however is an early film directed by Ousmane Sembène's *Black Girl* (1966) which represents the travails of Diouana, a Senegalese nanny in France. The popular culture's projection of emigration as the remedy for unemployment, lack of fulfilment and choicelessness continues to give many Africans illusions of the West as the Promised Land. In a recent survey conducted by Pew Research Centre, a fact tank interested in gathering information on social concerns, public opinions and demographic trends that relate to the United States and the world, it was discovered that many Africans, especially Nigerians, Kenyans and Tunisians plan to leave their countries within five years. The study gathered that about half of the population in Nigeria are making plans on emigrating. Many Africans' fantasy around emigration is closely connected to immigrant success stories that abound in popular culture and more recently, on the social media.

In pioneer migrant writings, an apposite example been the works of Buchi Emecheta, the figure of the migrant is neither than of a fulfilled character nor the disillusioned migrant, since most of her writings, especially the early ones, were largely influenced by her experiences in London. The migrant character oscillates between planes of joy and ecstasy and sorrow and trauma. In *In the Ditch* (1972), *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), *Gwendolen* (1989), *Kehinde* (1994) and *The New Tribe* (2000), texts which recreate the immigrant's experience in Britain, racism, alienation, dislocation and lack of acceptance and belonging run deep. Emecheta's migrants lived in the ditch, experienced life as second-class citizens

but also recorded some measure of success as immigrants in London. In the works of the Tanzanian novelist, Abdulrazak Gurnah, another prominent migrant writer of the earlier generation, the image of the migrant is fluid— the migrant is often the displaced, disgruntled fellow for whom the world often presents a stage. In almost all of Gurnah's nine novels and one short story: *Memories of Departure* (1987), *Pilgrim's Way* (1988), *Dottie* (1990), *Paradise*, published in 1994 which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, *Admiring Silence* published in 1996, *By the Sea*, his 2001 novel, for which he won the RFI Temoin du monde, *Desertion* (2005) which was shortlisted for the Caine Prize, *The Last Gift* (2011) and his latest novel, *Gravel Heart* published in 2018, the politics of inclusion and exclusion, displacement and dislocation, lack of belonging and identity issues are diversely explored. In Ahdaf Soueif's depiction of migrants in the *Map of Love*, and *The Eye of the Sun*, issues of love, intimacy and identity take the centre stage. Similarly, in Scottish-Sierra Leonean Aminatta Forna's *Happiness*, migration, love, identity and belonging are thematised.

In contemporary narratives by younger African migrants, examples being Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, Benjamin Kwakye's *The Other Crucifix*, Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*, Doreen Baingana's *Trophical Fish*, Noviolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names* and Chris Abani's *Becoming Abigail*, the topos and texture of the migrant experience is still quite similar to what was obtainable in the works of Emecheta, Gurnah and others. Disillusionment, racial discrimination and trauma still mark the migrant experience in many texts, dwarfing the narratives that present a success story out of migration. The texts recreate the experiences of undocumented immigrants, the trauma of namelessness, rootlessness and the trauma of a *san-papiers* existence continue to abound. Additionally, in recent times also, thanks to the migrant crisis and massive internal and external displacement of people, there is the burgeoning discourse around refugee narratives. Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*, for instance, relates the experience of fourteen-year-old Alem Keto whose father first flees Eritrea for Ethiopia in early days of the war in Badme, and then flees Ethiopia for London because of tensions in Ethiopia-Eritrea relations. In a skilfully handled narration, the text underscores the impact of belonging and the lack of it, stability and the lack of it, and the politics involved in asylum-seeking, policies on refugees and the institutions involved in granting asylum to refugees. There is the genre referred to as refugee life narratives. A good example is *Slave: The True Story of a Girl's Lost Childhood and her Fight for Survival*

written by Nazer Mende and Damien Lewis, published in 2004. It presents the account of Nazer Mende, a Sudanese woman forced into Modern day slavery in Khartoum, Sudan and later London. The text underscores the place of narratives in ordering and altering policies and politics around slavery, migration and asylum-seeking.

2.7 Conclusion

In the texts selected for critical analysis— Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, Ali Farah's *Little Mother, Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* written by Laila Lalami, Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*, Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*, Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names*, there is the abundant depiction of loss and unbelonging, displacement and disillusionment, identity politics and racial discrimination, power politics and power relations, rootlessness and rooflessness, the death of dreams and hope, unhomelinessness and double consciousness, loneliness and homesickness, violence and dispossession, in varied and skilful ways. All of these recreations and representations constitute trauma in migrant contexts. A comprehensive examination of the depiction of what constitutes trauma for migrants and what constitutes trauma in migrant contexts will be examined in the chosen texts in the succeeding chapters, in order to account for the obvious traumatic imprints in African migrant narratives. While this chapter presented a review of relevant literature on migration, migrancy and the traumatic in African literature, the next will examine the representation of the condition of the postcolony as a traumatogenic imprint in the purposively selected novels.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POSTCOLONIAL CONDITION AS TRAUMA IN AFRICAN MIGRANT NARRATIVES

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter traced the emergence of African writings in the diaspora, explored the critical perspectives on migrancy in African literature and engaged the trauma question in African fiction as presented in migrant writings. This is done in a bid to adequately review the relevant literatures on the representation of trauma in contemporary African migrant fiction. All the eight narratives chosen for in-depth analysis feature characters' experiences of trauma in the motherland as well as the host country. In this chapter, the representation of the realities that constitutes trauma for migrant characters is examined by underscoring how novelists present the postcolonial nation as a viable site for trauma. The chosen narratives are explored for their representations of suffering in the motherland, thanks to the postcolonial condition. I examine how the representation of the socio-political upheavals, instability, tragedies and deprivation that defy logical reasoning but define life in many developing countries, serve to traumatise migrant subjects, which then often results in a desperate quest to flee their nations. For each text analysed, the background to the novelist is presented, a plot of summary is presented, the narratives' preoccupation with the representation of suffering and pain in postcolonial contexts which then makes postcolonial subjects to succumb to push factors and embrace the pull factors at dangerous costs, are critically examined, all through the lens of trauma theory and the postcolonial theory. All the writers whose works have been chosen for in-depth analysis are migrant writers who

have had connections with the African continent and a host continent. Hence, their works feature the recreation of characters' experiences in both spaces.

3.2 Postcolonial Trauma in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, Lai Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* and Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*

Chika Unigwe, the author of *On Black Sisters' Street*, along with notable narratives such *The Phoenix*, *Night Dancer*, *The Black Messiah* and *Better Late than Never*, was born in Enugu State, Nigeria in 1974. Like Unigwe's protagonist, Oge, in her debut narrative, *The Phoenix* first published in Flemish as *De Feniks*, Unigwe moved to Berlin after she got married. The cultural space in Belgium, as well as her status and experiences as a migrant have had a profound impact on her writings. Belgium provides the artistic milieu for her first and third novels and some of her short stories. Unigwe's literary oeuvre largely deals with the place of women in the society. Her debut, *The Phoenix* recounts the Oge Nti's experiences of culture shock, unhomeliness, alienation, grief and recovery. Oge Nti had migrated to Belgium from Nigeria, having married Gunter, a white Belgian, and she strives to fit into "the whiteness" she sees all around her as she struggles with homesickness, the loss of a child and a failing health. *The Night Dancer* presents the uneasy mother-daughter relationship between Ezi and her daughter, Mma while *The Black Messiah* notably and deftly recreates the life of Olaudah Equiano, one of the foremost African slaves transported through the Middle Passage to the Americas. Unigwe's collection of short stories, the most recent of her creative texts, *Better Late than Never* presents a portmanteau of tales of migration, disillusionment and displacement as experienced by a number of Nigerian migrants in Belgium. Besides migrants, Unigwe's critical lens has also been largely focused on women and what women write. Her dissertation titled "In the Shadow of Ala: Igbo Women Writing as an Act of Righting" (which focused on the works of foremost African female novelists, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta, renowned dramatists, Zulu Sofola and Tess Onwueme, and a contemporary migrant writer, Nnoma Azuah), as well as her articles and reviews bespeak her feminist interests.

Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* recounts the experiences of female migrants in Brussels. All the women are Africans, Sisi, Ama and Efe are Nigerian, while Joyce is Sudanese. All four women were driven into prostitution in Europe by their harrowing experiences in Nigeria and Sudan. Joyce's experience in Sudan is especially traumatising. A fifteen-year-old Joyce, whose real name is Alek witnesses the killing of her parents and her brother in the Second Sudanese Civil War, a war that has raged for more than two decades. It has been often described as one of the longest civil wars in Africa. Alek's father with his family live in Daru, a predominantly Dinka town that had enjoyed the support and security offered by the Sudan People's Liberation Army for some time. Alek's father before his gruesome death made plans on moving his family to Khartoum and then to United Kingdom or the United States of America. He does not live to fulfil his wishes as he and his household were visited at night by the *Janjaweed* militia, sent by the government to "sniff out" SPLA members. It was clear that Alek's father did not support the SPLA, as he had planned on leaving for a refugee camp in Khartoum just hours before he is still gunned down, along with his family members. JP Clark (1970) had perceptively asserted in his renowned poem "The Casualties" that everyone indeed eventually becomes a casualty in a war situation. The innocent, is destroyed along with the guilty; the casualties are those who "started a fire and now cannot put it out" as well as the thousands that "are burning that have no say in the matter" (Clark, 1970). Alek's family along with countless others got burnt in the fire that razed Sudan from 1983 till 2005.

Narrative incoherence, verbless expressions and incomplete sentences often dominate the narration of a traumatic event. In striving to capture Alek's traumatic experience and reaction on the day the soldiers kill Nyok, Apiu and Ater, the narrator "stammers":

> The children were in the clothes cupboard. Husband and wife at the bedroom door. Locked. A sigh of relief. Maybe the soldiers would pass them by. Alek peeped through the keyhole. Dust. Darkness… Her father's voice. Talking to his wife. Everything. Will. Be. Fine. Then a boom, kaboom. The door knocked off its hinges. A gasp (her mother? probably). Loud footsteps that could only belong to soldiers. (Unigwe, 2011:161)

Alek is the only one that escapes death. Nyok, Apiu and Ater are killed and Alek is raped. As the soldiers take turns in raping her, Alek descends into darkness. She continues to descend until she feels nothing. It is not until she gets up the next day and sees the disaster in the room and on the street that it dawns on her that all was not a long dream. In presenting Alek's experience of the war, Unigwe draws attention to the continent's perennial dismal cycle of coups, counter coups, wars and mayhem. In Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman's estimation, the African postcolony has been besieged by countless tragedies over the years, all traceable to the excesses of postcolonial African state power. They elucidate that there is the "chain of upheavals and tribulations, instabilities, fluctuations and ruptures of all sorts (wars, genocide, large-scale movements of populations, sudden devaluation of currencies, natural catastrophes, brutal collapses of prices, breaches in provisioning, diverse forms of exaction, coercion and constraint)" (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995:324) over the years. Alek flees Sudan, yet the problem with and of the continent continue to dominate her life and strip her of any lasting fulfilment.

For Sisi, Ama and Efe, the everyday trauma of living in Nigeria, amidst lack, disillusionment and needless deaths led to their migration to Europe. Chisom, rechristened Sisi, the most educated of the four women, embraced prostitution in order to escape from her parent's rented apartment in Ogba which was fast becoming a prison. In fact, it was capable of her making to lose her sanity. Chisom is the only surviving child of her parents. At her birth there was the false prophecy delivered by a woman who was presumed to have spoken for the gods. The prophecy that Chisom will one day be the one to bring prosperity to her parents and her entire family will crash just like Chisom's dreams of living outside Signour Dele's vindictive reach. Chisom's parents, although poor, had ensured that she had a university education by all means, since Chisom's father is of the opinion that education presents one with a key that opens all doors. Having dropped out of school to care for his younger ones, he was resolute to give his only child the opportunity that he lacked. Upon Chisom's graduation, Chisom's parents believed that the time had finally come for them to reap the fruits of their hard labour. Every wish, dream and aspiration became punctuated by "once Chisom gets a job", a job that will never materialise. Chisom waits for two years,

fruitlessly combing every part of Lagos for the non-existent job. Her endless search for a job almost leads to a mental breakdown. Lagos to her became "a city of death" that she must escape from by all means. It is pathetic that unemployment and underemployment are everyday reality in Nigeria. With a population of more than a hundred and forty million people and the wealth of the nation in the hands of a few, countless citizens grope in the dark awaiting the light of an employment that just never emerges. Chisom's father is underemployed; Chisom, in spite of her qualifications is unemployed.

Studies reveal that unemployment and underemployment could be devastating, scarring and traumatic outright. Unemployment can lead to depression, substance abuse, suicidal tendencies and other psychological disorders. Justin Menkes (2012) relates that unemployment, underemployment and job loss can lead to traumatic mind states which could have overt as well as subtle manifestations on the unemployed person's psyche and behaviours. Chisom's dreams are shattered day after day of endless applications and rejection letters. She starts to believe that the résumés and application letters that she carefully wrote were being "swallowed up by the many potholes on Lagos roads" or they were sold to "roadside food sellers to use in wrapping food for their customers" (Unigwe, 2011:24). Chisom's relationship with Peter, an equally frustrated hardworking man does little to better her lot. Peter, in spite of his meritorious service and many useless plaques and awards that adorn his small room, does not live above the baseline. In Chisom's opinion, his life is a cul-de-sac. His salary hardly pays for the small room that he shares with five other siblings and so his promise of marriage and a good life to Chisom fall on deaf ears. All around Chisom, there is the glaring reality of what Mazrui Ali (2000:3) captures as results of Africa being at the bottom of the global heap: the highest percentage of poor people, the least developed economies, the highest number of low-income countries, the least developed economies, the lowest life expectancy, the most unstable and fragile political systems and so on. Left with no other choice, Chisom embraces Dele's offer as she deems emigration the only ticket out of the miserable life she had known in Nigeria.

Ama and Efe's traumatic experiences are of a different sort. Both are abused sexually and they are forced to remain silent, thanks to the patriarchal structures that sustain male

dominance and supremacy and enforce female servility and oppression. Ama's step father rapes her on her eighth birthday, a practice which would continue for another three years. Ama's father, a religious bigot, would always quote scriptures to demand her cooperation. He reminds Ama that she is to honour her father and mother while he continues to wound her physically, psychological and spiritually. Her mother, an accomplice in the whole narrative, fails to notice or rather pretends ignorance right until Ama speaks up and is forced to flee to Lagos. Ama starts to speak to the wall in her room after her molestation. Since trauma of necessity demands narrativization (Shoshona Felman, 1995; Irene Visser, 2015; Nick Tembo 2017), friendless Ama then has to commune with the wall. Ama's mother knowingly mistakes her agonies for mischief-making and fault-finding, when she wakes up with her eyes red, the day after the first rape, and then subsequently, Ama's mother finds various excuses for her daughter's moody personality. By way of escape, Ama longed to go abroad. She takes psychic flights to London, Monaco and Las Vegas, where her hair is long and silky. In her reveries, she lives abroad, does nothing more strenuous than carry a handbag, drink and smoke, all in defiance of her father's rules. Ultimately, Ama leaves for Lagos after she openly confronts her father. In Lagos, Ama will get bored in spite of the liberty she enjoys at Mama Eko's place. The endless ritual of waking up, cleaning and cooking for Mama Eko's customers tried her sanity. After ten months of a meaningless life of serving Mama Eko's often frustrated customers, she believes Dele's lies and travels to Belgium, in spite of Mama Eko's warnings. She reasoned that Bro Cyril, her step-father had already taken what was of value off her life and now she could make money of what is left, by servicing white men in Belgium.

Efe, the only one with a child, of the four women, leaves Nigeria for Belgium, with the sole purpose of bettering the lot of her son. Like Ama, Efe was introduced to sex by forty-five-year-old Titus, a man who took advantage of her in the days of hunger, lack and hopelessness that followed her mother's demise. At sixteen, Efe runs her family of five, with little or no support from her father, who becomes irredeemably shattered by his wife's death and would only drink and sing all day long. Titus is rumoured to be in possession of inexhaustible wealth, gotten from selling quality hair extensions, and this is what Efe

naively believed. She had shyly rebuffed Titus' advances until he shoved a "crisp thousand naira note" into her fist. Nigeria's lack of sustainable welfare schemes accentuates and worsens Efe's family's impoverishment. Efe and her three siblings feed from hand-to-mouth, with their father barely aware of his family's disintegration. It is his custom to regularly drown his grief and loneliness in glass after glass of *ogogoro* at Mariam's beer parlour. Even when Efe gets pregnant, Efe's father hardly notices the change in the way the affairs of the house was being run. It is only when Efe and Rita return with a child whom Rita had optimistically named Lucky Ikponwosa, on the hospital bed, that he reluctantly acknowledged his presence, maintaining that he will not lift a finger to support the care for a bastard, as "there is only so much trial a man can bear in this world" (Unigwe, 2011:65). In the days to come, after Titus rejects her and her child, Efe oscillates between disillusionment and hysteria, desperation and hope. She takes up many cleaning jobs just to cater for Lucky. When one of the cleaning jobs leads her to Dele, she willingly takes up the offer, leaving Rita to care for Lucky.

Efe, Ama, Joyce and Sisi are all subjects-in-crisis, the sufferers from the dismal state of the nation, with its dysfunctional systems and deficient leadership. For Ama, Sisi and Efe, especially, Dele's offer was an escape route from "the hollowness of an empty shell" (Unigwe, 2011:178) into another empty shell. The narrator tells of how everyone wants to escape the life in Nigeria; "who did not want to go abroad? People were born with the ambition, and people died trying to fulfill that ambition" (Unigwe, 2011:68). Efe had heard of the Nigerian who died at the airport because the bags of cocaine he swallowed had burst in his stomach before he got to his destination. The narrator reasons that Nigerians threw caution to the wind and took risks because of the belief that the destination was worth it. She recalls the song that captured life and living in Nigeria at the time: "Nigeria jaga jaga. Everytin' scatter scatter. Nobody wanted to stay back unless they had pots of money to survive the country. People like Titus and Dele" (Unigwe, 2011:68). The allure of other places and the belief that the life elsewhere was certainly better pulled the women to Belgium while the abysmal reality of joblessness, hopelessness and helplessness pushed them away from Nigeria, affirming Alexandra Porumbescu's (2013) assertions that those

who emigrate are not necessarily the poorest in their societies but the people who have discovered the inconsistencies, that is the inconsistencies between their needs, aspirations, expectations and the possibility of attaining it elsewhere rather than the places where they were.

Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits written by Lai Lalami also blames the untoward obsession with North-ward migration on the "miscarriages" of development and progress in Morocco. Published in 2005, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* recounts many Moroccans' desperate attempts to escape from the country by all means- legal and illegal, convenient and fatal. Besides *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Lalami has *Secret Son* set in Morocco and published in 2009, *The Moor's Account* (2013), a novel set in the early sixteenth century and for which she won the Hurston-Wright Legacy award and the American Book Award. In Lai Lalami's most recent publication, *The Other Americans*, she returns to the place of Moroccan immigrants in America and the tragedy that befell Driss Guerraoui. Short stories by Lai Lalami include "A Nice Young Man", "The Echo" and "The Lessons". *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* is sometimes referred to as a collection of nine short stories. For instance, "The Fanatic", one of the stories in the segment of the novel titled "Before", taken as an independent short story was shortlisted for the Caine Prize in African Writing in 2006, a year after the narrative was published. Lai Lalami's dexterity in intersecting the lives of four of the desperate migrants- Murad, Faten, Aziz and Halima, helps to fit the text into a whole narrative on not just clandestine migration but the dynamics that surround migrations of all sorts.

Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits presents the story of thirty desperate migrants aboard an inflatable boat owned by Rahal, crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, in a bid to flee the hopelessness and helplessness of life in Morocco. They all dare the consequences and travel on a raft, a "patera" originally constructed to convey just eight people. Murad Idrissi, the first and major narrator is featured at the beginning of the narrative, weighing his limited options- staying back in Morocco to rot, or taking his chances on the ill-fated ship. The melancholy in Murad's voice captures the helplessness of a people made to flee home. He recalls the reversal in the fortunes of the Moroccans, who had in 711 led a successful

invasion against Spaniards and established an domain that bore rule in Spain for more than seven centuries. The one-time rulers and winners have now been reduced to a nation of desperate people desperately seeking escape into Spain and other European countries:

> Little did they know that we'd be back, Murad thinks. Only instead of a fleet, here we are in an inflatable boat—not just Moors, but a motley mix of people from the ex-colonies, without guns or armor, without a charismatic leader (Lalami, 2006:6).

Murad juxtaposes the fortunes of the Morocco of the eighth century and the failure of the postcolonial nation state of the present era. Morocco, which in its Arabic rendition can be translated as the Kingdom of the West had known civilization as early as the twelfth century BC, when traders and seafarers had contact with people and places along the Mediterranean Sea. Things however gradually fell apart with the successive coming of diverse colonialists, intruders and exploiters, leaving the likes of Murad, Halima, Faten and Aziz, representatives of all classes of Moroccans, to bear the brunt of the socio-political and economic downturn in contemporary Morocco.

In four stories, Lalami catalogues the motivations of each of the main characters for embarking on the ill-fated trip. Murad's futile strife for upward economic mobility through education frustrates him into fleeing from Morocco in search of greener pastures. As the eldest son of the family, it is his responsibility to oversee the affairs of the entire household but he is heavily incapacitated by his continual lack of funds, so much so that his opinion on matters relating to his siblings do not count. When his sister is to be given in marriage to a co-worker, and his uncle takes Murad's place in the decision-making process, Murad is infuriated. When he expressed concern that his opinion was not sought, his mother asked sarcastically if he would be paying for the wedding. Murad, graduate of English and a studious one endlessly combs everywhere for a job. When it became clear that a job was not forthcoming, he becomes a tour guide. He always waits on tourists as they disembark at Tangier and strive to strike a deal with them for some dirhams. He is often unsuccessful, no matter the approach he uses and the promises he makes to the tourists. In a pathetic humourous encounter with a couple from America, he stalks the couple in a desperate

attempt to make some money. He offers to take the couple to Paul Bowles' house or Barbara Hutton's palace, give them a tour of the Medina, get them cheap hotel prices or even help them arrange some drugs- hashish at a cheap rate. He would have offered them the whole of Morocco should they give an audience, but the couple ignore him and walk away. On that day like all the days of that week, he goes home empty-handed. His mother always tells him he would have a better luck the next day but on the realisation that luck itself was against him or it was totally an unaffordable commodity in Morocco, he takes his chances on the patera.

Halima Bouhamsa is fleeing an abusive relationship. Her alcoholic husband of ten years is increasing becoming a beast. For years, she has borne the brunt of his joblessness, frustration and degeneration. Halima recalls that Maati, her husband did not start out this way. "He had been full of promise and energy and ambition, but now he was lazy and angry" (Lalami, 2006:46). Their home is a poor refuge from the weather, their meals hardly adequate and their lives simply miserable. Both work but they do not get much for all their labours. Halima works as a cleaner for Hanan Benamar, a translator who specialises in immigration documents. It is Hanan that Halima approaches to help her emigrate. She longs to leave Maati but every hope of divorcing him both legitimately and illegitimately fail. She pays fifteen hundred dirhams to a sorceress to soften Maati's hearts, but their relationship gets worse instead of getting better. She attempts to divorce Maati and gain the custody of her three children by bribing the judge with a large sum of money but there was no guarantee that the corrupt judge would keep to his words. Halima is stuck and emigration seems to be the only option out of her predicament. Hanan, her boss, makes her see the hopelessness of making attempts at emigrating: she is uneducated, she has three children and almost everyone in the country wants to also migrate. Hanan calls her to reason:

> "Have you seen the lines at the embassies?"... Maati had told her about them, though, about people queuing up for an entire night just to get a spot inside the buildings, never mind an actual application. He liked taking customers to the embassies because cab fares were higher in the evening, when the lines formed" (Lalami, 2006:52).

When Hanan insists that in order to get a visa, Halima needs a full-time job, a fat bank account, a ticket and a place to stay, Halima sees that her chances of ever leaving Morocco through a legitimate means are not just slim but completely non-existent.

The third major character in the narrative, Aziz Ammor is an unemployed repairman. He has lived for years with the frustrations of a man who has known deprivation and humiliation. His wife Zohra works at a soda factory but he has always been unlucky. His in-laws only allowed him to marry their daughter because Zohra will not date another man and neighbours were already spreading gossip about their loose daughter. Aziz is not an ambitious character by any means, all he had wanted was to make a decent earning and live a dignified life. His simple requests are denied everywhere he turns to in Morocco. His desire to move his wife "out of his parents' house, have a place of their own, and start a family" seems beyond reach (Lalami, 2006:55). Aziz, like Murad is educated. Unlike Lahcen, his best friend, he has a diploma, a diploma that has become a useless piece of paper gathering dust beside Aziz's bed. In spite of friends and relatives' warnings, Aziz decides on damning the repercussions of a flight to Spain on a boat. He is fed up with his exasperating invisibility, thanks to his joblessness. Lahcen, the most vehement of those trying to dissuade Aziz paints the picture of a gory future as an illegal migrant in Spain. He tells him that the best he would get in Spain is a farm job for slave wages and the worst, a horrible death, and everything in between- a life of inescapable delinquency. While Aziz reasons with Lahcen, he still embraces emigration, after weighing the warnings against "the prospect of years of idleness, years of asking them for money to ride the bus, years of looking down at his shoes or changing the subject whenever someone asked what he did for a living" (Lalami, 2006:57). In the end, emigration becomes not just the solution but the only and worthwhile enterprise to venture into. Aziz's primary concern is his wife, Zohra, who he is ashamed to leave behind, but he lacks the means to take her with him. He promises to come back in two or three years to fetch her, but both know that the promise is as empty as the very hope of making a decent living in Spain.

All the four major characters had received warnings not to embark on the journey. They had seen pictures of migrants who got drowned and heard stories of those turned back but for

the four, emigration by all means was the only option left in their universe of pain. Morocco for them has become a tortuous place. In the boat while on the journey, Murad ponders on the differences in the lived realities of those in Morocco and Spain; he wonders "how fourteen kilometres could separate not just two countries but two universes" (Lalami, 2006:1). All of them have had to depend on others to get the huge sum for the trip. Aziz takes a loan from a cousin, some money from his father and most of Zohra's savings from her meagre salary at the factory. Murad borrowed some money too. Halima gets the money from her brothers who slave to save, and to come to her rescue many times. Aziz, Murad, Halima and Faten leave the known for the unknown in a bid to escape social oppression, political instability and wanton maladministration. They flee to escape the failures of postcolonial Morocco, a place that turns saints into criminals. The stench arising from the rot in the society drives the characters away from their motherland.

Murad just before he leaves regrets that he took a noble path of going through school, instead of joining the smugglers who bring in tax-freee goods from Ceuta. He counts the time he spent at the university as wasted. Larbi, Noura's father, also laments his own gradual character disintegration. Larbi recalls a time when he too like Faten, Noura's new found friend, was passionate about effecting a change in the society. Larbi, together with his wife, had in the seventies had big dreams of setting the world right, he being an educator and the wife being a lawyer. At the moment, he receives and takes bribes with the excuse that "the times were different now. He didn't create the system; he was just getting by, like everyone else" (Lalami, 2006:19). When his guilty conscience pictures his mother rebuking him, he gives excuses. He sees his mother's days as the period when virtue and religion could go hand in hand. For him, the pairing is unnatural in his days. Even Faten, the fanatic, who indoctrinates Noura, teaching her to uphold virtue and patriotism, soon abandons all; she realises that having faith is a luxury she could no longer afford.

Aziz, Murad, Faten and Halima all have their stories tied to Rahal. Rahal is the one in charge of orchestrating illegal emigration, just like Dele in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. Rahal used to deal in drugs but he now smuggles people to Spain seeing that human trafficking is more profitable. Every time Rahal sees jobless people, he tempts them with

easy emigration. Like Dele who tells the girls how beautiful they are and how easily they would find jobs in Belgium, to lure them, Rahal incessantly nags Murad about the small money he makes as a guide and how in Spain, Murad is sure to get a job in no time. When Rahal sees that Murad is not convinced, he sneeringly remarks that in ten years, he would probably have saved enough to move out of his mother's apartment. The depressive underdevelopment and oppressive social immobility in Morocco aid the likes of Rahal in their indecent enterprise; his likes prosper in a community that thrive on corruption, extortion and crime. Besides the likes of Rahal and Dele, there are other motes that facilitate illegal migration. Clandestine migration thrives on a complex chain of resources, people and systems. There are the coast guards, Guardia Civil, whose job is to deport illegal immigrants who swim into Spanish shores, but some of them take bribes. In fact, one of the guards takes advantage of Faten. He promises to remove her from the cell where those to be deported were kept, in exchange for sex. There was the local police who receive bribes from the traffickers. The traffickers complete the triad. They facilitate emigration through all kinds of evil machinations. Rahal for instance, deceives Murad like the rest, that the journey was going to be in a Zodiac lifeboat and not a patera. The characters paid Rahal large sums of money, up to twenty thousand dirhams, took great risks all in order to be like the American Eileen. They all wanted a chance at life- to live freely, "free from the burden of survival" (Lalami, 2006:75).

Hispano-Moroccan relations as depicted in the narrative, is fraught with disruptions. The narrator alludes to a past, where a visionary leader, Tariq Ibn Ziyad, lead his people to capture Spanish coasts but the present presents a gory narrative. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* bears witness to a past and a present bedevilled by conflicts and unresolved agitations. Spain resists the immigrants by all means but this does not deter the likes of Murad, Aziz, Faten and Halima. It was in 1991 that Spain decided to put an end to Moroccans' privileged status of entering Spain without a visa; the implementation of the Sı´stema Integrado de Vigilencia Exterior (SIVE, Integrated System of External Vigilance), an effective surveillance apparatus belting Spanish coasts, came seven years after, in 1998 (Hakim Abderrezak, 2009). In the narrative, the Guardia Civil, in order to dissuade illegal

migrants stacked several sunken fishing boats once rowed by drown migrants, on the Spanish coast visible from the Moroccan side. There are dogs stationed around the ports. Illegal immigrants are deported without much ado, with a wicked efficiency and astute speed. However, no matter what Spain does, the people troop in. When some realise how dangerous sea journeys could be, they try other means, like a tomato truck intercepted by the Guardia Civil, in Algeciras where the bodies of three illegal migrants were found. The three men died of asphyxiation. While Moroccans desperately attempt to get into Spain to earn a living, Spaniards freely leisurely fly into Moroccan on tourist visits. *Leaving Tangier* underscores the intricate links between tourism and imperialism.

Katarzyna Pieprzak writing on clandestine migration in "Bodies on the Beach: Youssef Elalamy and Moroccan Landscapes of the Clandestine" (2007), elucidates that clandestine migration has led to the emergence of a new topography in Moroccan literature. Like Rachid Nini's memoir titled *Dairy of a Clandestine Migrant* published in Spanish as *Diario de un illegal* in 2002, Mahi Binebine's *Welcome to Paradise* published in 2003 and Youssef Elalamy's *Sea Dinkers* published in 2008, Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* focuses on Moroccans' desperate attempts to flee the nation by legal and illegal means. Having witnessed the social turmoil, upheavals and choicelessness that define daily existence in Tangier, Azel, the protagonist of *Leaving Tangier*, like many of his peers, dreams of Toutia, the illusory mermaid who would transport him across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain. *Leaving Tangier* was first published in French in 2006, as *Partir*. Tahar Ben Jelloun, author of more than twenty-four texts, is a poet, novelist, playwright and critic. He gained renown for his sixth novel, *La Nuit Sacree* (The Sacred Night) published in 1987, a sequel to L'Enfant de Sable (The Sand Child). *For La Nuit Sacree*, translated by Alan Sheridan, Jelloun was awarded the prestigious Prix Goncourt. Besides the Prix Goncourt, Jelloun has been awarded the Prix Ulysse, the IMPAC Dublin literary award, Argana International Poetry Prize, United Nations Peace Prize and many others. He has been shortlisted again and again for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Jelloun's works are studied and critiqued in many languages in many nations of the world, thanks to Jelloun's master craftsmanship in his skilful recreation of many of the humanity's challenges and struggles in works that

feature reality and surrealism, the mundane and the unusual, and the pleasant as well as the traumatic. Bernard Aresu (1998) remarks that Jelloun's works are notable for the author's artful blend of fact and fiction, East and West, past and present in such a way that the texts afford multiple interpretations, perspectives and advocacies.

Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* traces the degeneration, denigration and disintegration experienced by Azel El Arab, the novel's protagonist, all in the name of "leaving for Spain". The narrative depicts the hopelessness of seeing emigration as the one-drug-cures-all-ailments that it is currently believed to be, especially in many developing nations. *Leaving Tangier* recreates Azel's miserable life in Morocco, his escape and his subsequent "re-enslavement". Azel like many around him, is an unemployed graduate. He attended International University of Rabat and has degrees in law and international relations, but all his education fetched him are the picture frames of his certificates. Unemployment is such a stark reality in Morocco that there is an association for the unemployed graduates. L'Association Nationales des Diplomes-Chomeurs, The National Association of Unemployed Graduates of Morocco, founded in 1991, has organised demonstrations and protests. Like L'Association Nationales des Diplomes-Chomeurs, Unemployment Movement, another group of unemployed graduates staged a protest where five men shockingly set themselves ablaze in Rabat in 2012, to protest the high rate of unemployment in the country.

Leaving Tangier's protagonist, Azel joins one of such protests. When Azel realises that his future is compromised like those of many youths around him, he travels from Tangier to participate in a sit-in of unemployed graduates outside the Parliament in Rabat. He leaves after a month when nothing changed. Like the real-life example of those who immolated themselves, Azel too contemplates death, since his life had become a vacation in hell:

> He even imagined an accident that would put an end to his life and his impossible predicament. He saw himself dead, mourned by his mother and sister, missed by his friends: a victim of unemployment, of a carelessly negligent system – such a bright boy, well educated, sensitive, warmhearted… Poor Azel, he never had a chance to live, did everything he

> could to break free – just think, if he'd managed to set out for Spain, by now he'd be a brilliant lawyer or a university professor! (Jelloun, 2011:14)

Azel like many youths described on the very first page of *Leaving Tangier* sleeps and wakes up frustrated.

Azel is doubly traumatised by his unemployed status and his need to depend on his sister. In a patriarchal and capitalist society, he is incapacitated by his inability to find a job. The duty of sustaining the family then lies on Azel's sister, and Azel is greatly disturbed by this. His state of incapacity eats him up; the dependence does not only weaken him, it emasculates him. He cannot marry or do any reasonable thing with his life, and so he sits with other jobless dreamy people at the Café Hafa, a place described by the narrator as "an observatory for dreams and their aftermath" (Jelloun, 2011:6). At this café, the jobless ones can sit and contemplate their misery; they can dream of Toutia and a life in Eden, should they successfully emigrate to Spain. From the café, the customers can view the Straits of Gibraltar, and curse their pitiable lot or scheme means of safely crossing the Straits without being sent back. Driven by despair, Azel sees beyond the Straits that hinder him from becoming all he wants to be; he sees his own naked body among those others, "swollen by seawater, his face distorted by salt and longing, his skin burnt by the sun, split open across the chest as if there had been fighting before the boat went down" (Jelloun, 2011:7). Azel dreams that his dead body is borne in a fishing boat and his body has a bed of seaweed for a shroud. In his mind, he has been added to the growing number of men and women, young and old, for whom the Straits has become a cemetery. Azel's dream becomes a foreshadowing of Azel's eventual death, not on an ill-fated boat on the Straits of Gibraltar, but in Spain, the very land of his dreams. When some of Azel's companions dream of going to France, Azel's obsession is Spain. The obsession which now consumes Azel "quickly became a curse: he felt persecuted, damned, possessed by the will to survive, emerging from a tunnel only to run into a wall. Day by day, his energy, physical strength, and healthy body were deteriorating" (Jelloun, 2011:16).

In *Leaving Tangier*, Azel is not the only character who is desperate to flee Morocco, the old and young alike are thirsty for the waters of Spain or France. They all are willing to leave, to save their lives, "even at the risk of losing it" (Jelloun, 2011:16). Even young Malika wants to leave Morocco by all means. Having known poverty first-hand, Young Malika when asked what she wants to do in the future, she responds that she wants to leave. When Azel tells her that leaving is not a profession, she maintains that she would have a profession once she leaves. Malika's response is unsurprising since all she has known in Morocco is pain and hardship. Malika works at a shrimp factory as a picker, like Achoucha, her friend, Hafsa, her neighbour, Fatima, her cousin, and many young girls of her age. Malika loves learning and so she fights for a place in Ibn Batouta Secondary School, but she is hardly in school. She is to walk to school because her parents cannot afford the bus fare and many times, she lands in boulevard Pasteur and the Terrasse des Paresseux where she gets to see the harbour, with its beautiful white ships. Malika's grades expectedly are poor, since she has no proper place to study and to do her assignments. At times, she does her homework outside under the streetlight. Soon, she is pulled out of school by a father who is discouraged by the number of unemployed graduates around him and dissatisfied with sacrificing so much on a girl-child's education in a highly patriarchal society. Malika then takes her place at the Dutch shrimp factory "where small hands with slender fingers" work day and night shelling cooked shrimp caught in Thailand and shipped to Tangier through the Netherlands, "on their way to another destination to be canned before debuting at last on the European market" (Jelloun, 2011:77). Malika's dream of schooling, leaving and earning money have become dimmed by the harsh realities in the shrimp factory where pickers' fingers are eaten by eczema and many leave after six months, with pneumonia. Malika too soon suffers from pneumonia; she dies, dreaming of her dreams.

Leaving Tangier recreates the gory realities of life in a nation where so many are poor while a very few are rich. While little ones like Malika leave the stage untimely, thanks to a dismal healthcare system, patriarchy and capitalism, the older ones have learnt to survive, even when it means they have to sell whatever needs to be sold. To survive life in Morocco with the increasing social cost and high unemployment rate, women degrade themselves in order

to feed. Siham works for pittance at as a legal secretary since she was too poor to complete her studies. To escape her harsh circumstance, Siham attempts to cross the Straits. She gets on the boat only to find the Guardia Civil waiting for her and others like her. The men of the Guardia Civil were on the beach in camouflage clothing as if there was a war. Siham was caught, arrested, detained, interrogated and finally sent back to Tangier, where she was received by the Moroccan police who beat her. Siham's friends work as prostitutes for rich tourists. The tourists come to Tangier for parties and girls. "Most of the time, they took over suites in the luxury hotels of Tangier, sending out for food, alcohol, musicians, and girls." (Jelloun, 2011:63). The practice continues since those in the authorities always looked the other way.

The narrator relates that in the game of exploitation and extortion, poverty yokes the employee and employer in an unequal relationship, where the foreigner wants "everything, men and women from the common people, young ones, healthy, preferably from the countryside, who can't read or write, serving them all day, then servicing them at night" (Jelloun, 2011:36). When Siham's friend, Wafa gets impregnated by a Moroccan, she and her friends count her as unlucky to have been impregnated by a Moroccan, not a tourist. The women bear the bigger brunt of a capitalist society which is passionately patriarchal. The man who impregnated Wafa simply mocks her and tells her off: "'Don't give me any grief! A seventeen-year-old who sleeps with the first man who comes along is a whore, so you're on your own!". He then recommends she sees the woman "who oversees the hammam: she'll send you to a nice doctor, you know – you turn a few tricks for a little money, and your worries are over…'" (Jelloun, 2011:109). The patriarchal situation, coupled with overarching poverty serves to put the Moroccan woman in not just what Florence Stratton in *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* describes as a double bind (1994:17), but a triple bind.

Poverty's twin, corruption is another reason Moroccans flee the country en masse. Azel describes Morocco as a country where the entire system thrives on abnormality, injustice and lawlessness. He mourns the loss of integrity in many of the nation's ministries. The Morocco presented in *Leaving Tangier* is infested with corruption: "corruption is the very

air we breathe, yes, we stink of corruption, it's on our faces, in our heads, buried in our hearts" (Jelloun, 2011:11); it is no wonder then that everyone dreams of a life elsewhere. Azel sees the futility of his possessing a degree in law, in a country that has no respect for its laws, and the least being the law of kindness. When Malika is on admission in Hôpital Kortobi, a nurse, Bargach, admonishes Zineb to jealously guard Malika's drugs since hospital employees are often in search of expensive antibiotics like Malika's to steal. The country is depicted as a place where the people strive to survive at the expense of others, if need be. In a nation that celebrates the unrighteous rich and disdains the pious poor, Al Afia, a smuggler, who lives off everyone, is praised as a philanthropist. Mohammed Oughali, known to everyone as Al Afia is an all-time smuggler. He smuggles people and things alike. To Al Afia and his likes, everyone and everything is on sale, since all of the entire country is a marketplace. In a confrontation with Al Afia, drunken Azel insults Al Afia, calling him a thief, a faggot, a zamel and an attaye. Azel holds a permanent grudge against Al Afia, since he was the passeur that facilitated Azel's cousin, Nourredine's death. Nourredine had drowned alongside twenty-three others in an overloaded leaky boat, during a night crossing, all in an attempt to get into Spain. For the trip, Nourredine paid Al Afia all he had, only to perish with his dreams and that of Azel who had hoped that Nourredine will one day marry Kenza, his sister. Unfortunately, no one in the authority holds Al Afia for smuggling people, trafficking drugs and his other crimes; no one is willing to. Al Afia has passeurs, chauffeurs, bodyguards, burglars, informers and cops in abundance. He has connections in the prison, where his men often land; he has connections among those that matter in Morocco, as well as Europe.

Leaving Tangier underscores how people – expatriates, tourists, fanatics-cum-terrorists, the police force, and all kinds of people, profit from the dismal state of things in the country. The owners of the Dutch shrimp company where Malika works pay the pickers pittance; Zineb's husband and other fishermen accuse the Spaniards of plundering Moroccan coasts by fishing with illegal nets. There are the tourists who threat the natives like second-class citizens in their own nation. Fanatics-cum-terrorists have a field day as they take advantage of the people' s poor standard of living to further their selfish and wicked course, since

religion as Karl Max affirms is the opium of the masses. Religious fanatics lure young, poor, jobless men like Mohammed-Larbi to extremism, rebellion and terrorism. When the recruiter for a rebel Islamic organization comes for Azel, hoping to entice him with an easy job and the chance to leave Morocco, the two things he desperately wants, Azel makes mockery of the man's arguments. While Azel is able to read between the lines and see the pious, exploitative fanatics for who he is; Mohammed-Larbi is lured away until he is sent to a training camp in Pakistan, and he was never seen after then. The police force also contribute to and exploit the disheartening state of the nation's affairs. The Police force, the supposed ones to ensure law and order prevail are themselves corrupt, cruel and compromised. When Azel is rounded off alongside some real drug dealers during a disinfection ordered by the Minister of the Interior who was ordered by the King to clean up the country, Azel experiences just how corrupt the cops are. In detention, Azel is insulted, beaten, and dehumanised. Two police officer question Azel endlessly, beat him, tear his underpants and spit between his buttocks, "they spat on him some more, then shoved a kind of broomstick up his anus, which was so painful it brought him around. The men kept hitting him, spitting on him, and taking turns entering him" (Jelloun, 2011:43). This is reminiscent of what Achille Mbembe (2001) describes as the postcolony's capacity to pursue wrongdoing "to the point of shamelessness" (Mbembe (2001:115). By the time Miguel comes to rescue Azel, who was then lying in a mass of blood, urine and vomit, Azel is traumatised beyond redemption.

Nevertheless, the greatest exploiter of the Moroccan's desperate situation is Miguel, a rich Spanish gallery owner. By chance, Miguel sees Azel being beaten by Al Afia's thugs and he comes to his rescue. From the disguised philanthropist move, Miguel hunts Azel until he becomes his "mistress". It is Miguel who eventually helps Azel to leave Morocco for Spain but at a great price. Miguel and Azel's relationship is symbolic of the parasite and the plant, the trafficker and the trafficked and the coloniser and the colonised. Azel becomes a pawn, a worst form at that, a sexual pawn in the hands of Miguel. Miguel's predatory relationship with Azel will eventually lead to a chain of events that will culminate in Azel's death. Exploitation dominates the relationship between Miguel and Azel, just like it dominated the

coloniser-colonised relationship during the colonial enterprise. Frantz Fanon's submission on the nature of the coloniser suitably describes Miguel:

> The oppressor, in his own sphere, starts the process, a process of domination, of exploitation and of pillage, and in the other sphere the coiled, plundered creature which is the native provides fodder for the process as best he can, the process which moves uninterruptedly from the banks of the colonial territory to the palaces and the docks of the mother country (Fanon, 1963:51)

Miguel is the quintessential coloniser; to Miguel, Azel belongs to him, body, soul and spirit, all because he brings him to Spain. He initiates the process of having Azel come under his tutelage, He tells his guests: "'My friends, I'm delighted to present my latest conquest to you: the body of an athlete sculpted in bronze, with a piquant soupçon of femininity… Azel is simply a most beautiful object, an object to tempt every eye…" (Jelloun, 2011:89). Thus, in Barcelona, Azel finally lives in the Spain of his dreams but he loses his very essence. Azel is twice colonised, enslaved and demoralised. On both sides of the Straits, Azel experiences pain, disillusionment and systematic abuses, his body, a viable site for persistent psycho sexual abuses (Alami, 2013). Hence, even though the major migrant characters in *Leaving Tangier* enter Spain legally, their experiences are just as pitiable as those of *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*' characters who cross the Straits illegally.

3.3 Fixed Dependency as Trauma in Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* and Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*

Scholar, preachers and critics in and outside Africa have often pointed out the pressing need for Africa to take responsibility for its future and stop the untoward dependence on the West for everything, from military aid to the production of consumables. Mensa Otabil's *Buy the Future* (2002) traces Africa's perennial challenge of consuming-and-never-producing-or-saving-up to the Biblical character Esau. Esau catches game and then goes ahead to kill whatever he catches while Jacob, his twin, tills the ground, keeps a farm and then saves up. Otabil likens Africa to Esau and the European countries, on whom Africa is heavily dependent, he likens to Jacob. Just like it was with Jacob and Esau, where Esau's birth right

was dubiously taken by Jacob, many African countries battle with what is left after the colonisers dubiously exploited the people and the land. In the renowned text, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (1973), Walter Rodney with careful craft elucidates how Europe exploited Africa and Africans, and how through imperialism, the wealth of the "poor" nations were redirected to the wealthy civilising nations. The world then had two types of societies thanks to the capitalist system- the exploited and the exploiter, the ones dominated and the ones who had dominion, "one part making policy and the other being dependent" (Rodney, 1973:21). The "dependence psychology" still reflects in many Third World countries till present. The unequal power relations orchestrated by European colonialism and sustained by many African states' lack of foresight perpetuates a fixed dependence on the West, a reality that finds representations in both *The Belly of the Atlantic* by Diome and *Blue White Red* by Alain Mabanckou.

The Belly of the Atlantic by Diome was first written in French as *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* and then translated by Lulu Norman and Ros Schwartz. Before the publication of *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Diome had published a collection of short stories in French- *La Preference Nationale*. Besides *The Belly of the Atlantic*, which is Diome's debut novel, she has published four other novels- *Ketala* which was published in 2006, *Inassouvies, nos Vies* published in 2008, *Celles qui Attendent* and *Impossible de Grandir* published in 2010 and 2013, respectively. The non-fiction, *Marianne porte plainte! Identite nationale: Des passerelles, pas des barriers!*, on the need for multiculturalism in France was published in 2017. Migration, its costs and consequences and gender realities generally shape the themes and techniques of Diome's oeuvre. Diome is outspoken on the need for a distinction between artistic creation and political commitments. Diome asserts that the fact that she is a woman is a historical coincidence and that she is black is a genetic coincidence, as these do not essentially hold sway over her creative outputs (Mbaye Diouf and Fatou Diome, 2009), however, her works, the non-fiction inclusive, betray this assertion. All Diome's works display her political commitment to the cause of women and migrants. This discrepancy between Diome's assertions on the link between arts, aesthetics and politics and her arts' realist portrayal of socio-political concerns is described by Aminata Mbaye

(2019) as a reflection of the paradox of artistic creation where reality exists at a crossroad between rejection and appropriation as elucidated by Patrice Nganang (2007).

*The Belly of the Atlantic'*s narrator and protagonist, Salie hails from Niodior, an island in southern Senegal, which for centuries has "stuck to the gum of the Atlantic like bits of leftover food"; there, the people "wait resigned for the next big wave that will carry them off or leave them their lives" (Diome, 2006:2). From the very beginning of narrative, the people's passivity at shaping their destinies or seizing the day is revealed. Salie describes the island as a place where poverty reigns and rules. In the narrative, the islanders are described as people always looking outward for aid and sustenance. When sons and daughters like Salie, Moussa, the man from Barbès emigrate, their families depend on them for survival, therein lies a chronic dependence. The ones who stay back are under pressure to provide all that their extended families need. Those that return from France are mandated to bring gifts for everyone; in fact, they are expected to feed everyone that appears at their door. In reality, the abject dependence of many islanders on those who migrate to seek for greener pastures is grimmer. Von Dialika Krahe (2010) writing for Spiegel International, having interviewed a number of migrants from Niodior who now reside in Spain, reports that most of the migrants live together and slave for pittance, all in an effort to send money home to parents and dependents in faraway Senegal. He reports the hilarious cases of the likes of Moussa Thaire slaving and sending almost every penny home to support his father, his father's two wives and his father's nine children. There is also Mamadou Ndour who works hard to send most of what he gets to support his sister and her ten children, together with his mother, who has three children besides he and his sister, his grandmother and his uncle. Mamadou Ndour tells Dialika Krahe that life on the island of Niodior would simply come to a standstill without the money that comes from those who had left the island. In contrast to the sleepy island of Salie's childhood, where a dependence-mentality and an entitlement-mentality hold sway, at Strasbourg, France, Salie's new abode, people "walk down the long tunnel of efficiency that leads to well-defined goals. Here, chance plays no part; every step leads to an anticipated result and hope is measured by appetite for the fight" (Diome, 2006:3).

The inhabitants of Niodior as depicted in the text are conditioned by debt and poverty. Aleksandra Perisic (2019) in an examination of the connection between national debt and personal debt and its link to a global debt system in Diome's representation of the indebted immigrant, elucidates that the debt of emancipation as depicted in the text takes multiple forms. The nation is indebted just as the individual is indebted; the migrant is pitiably doubly indebted to the hostland to whom he must be grateful for the opportunity afforded him to stay, and the fatherland where debts were incurred to finance his emigration. There is hence a cycle of debt that leads to more indebtedness and then more poverty, so to speak. Poverty – material, mental and spiritual, singularly funds the island's youths' endless preoccupation with westward migration, since to the islanders, France is a next-door neighbour to paradise, a myth generated by the man from Barbès' tales and sustained by what the youths see on his television. The island presents the youths with little opportunity for sustenance, let alone prosperity. The narrator relates that the island is largely forgotten by the government, except for when the elections are drawing near. Niodior lacks basic amenities. Salie tells of a dispensary that is bare, making the islanders to depend on herbal infusions and marabouts. The only school in the village is the one whose only teacher, Monsieur Ndétare, struggles to gain the trust and respect of his students as well as their parents. The only source of water for drinking, cooking and bathing comes from the spring. With this state of affairs, the youths' choices are limited. It is no wonder then that they all see migration as the only ladder for upward social mobility.

The narrator recounts the pitiable experience of Moussa- a promising youth, the only son and eldest child of his big family. Moussa like every youth around him has only "mouths to feed" for an inheritance and so he decides to obey the unwritten code of conduct on the island- "every scrap of life must serve to win dignity" which then dictates the native's next course of action – "you must work, save money and come home" (Diome, 2006:70). He strives by all mean to lift his family from the pit of poverty, even when "the future had seemed to him a ravine leading to a black hole" (Diome, 2006:63). Being an ambitious youth, he knocks on every door and explores all options for survival on the island and having found none, he decides to seek his fortunes in France. To Moussa and many like him,

prosperity answers to emigration. On the island, the few men who seem to be wealthy have all at a time or the other had some contact with France. The Man from Barbès, the only one rich enough to own a television, a Rolex (that he cannot read), four wives and countless children (only known to him by their names, not because he has any tangible father-child relationship with any of them); the teacher, Monsieur Ndétare, the window to all knowledge and repository of the language of success; Salie, the one "rich" enough to feed the islanders whenever she comes around; rich Senegalese football players, and tourists- the only ones rich enough to afford the hotels in Dakar, all have had or still have contact with France. Moussa like other youths wanted France because every good thing that he has seen comes from France. Herein lies the remnants of the psychological colonisation that many of Frantz Fanon's studies allude to. Ashis Nandi writing on the psychology of colonialism: sex, age and ideology in her seminal text, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* affirms the traumatising effects of the legacies of Colonisation on the psyche of the erstwhile colonised people. She asserts that colonialism is "a psychological state", beyond the often quoted economic and political motives and motifs of colonisation, since the "crudity and inanity of colonialism are principally expressed in the sphere of pyschology" (Nandi, 1983:2). It is clear that the youths just as well as the elders on the Island of Niordior all suffer from oppressive images of the France as the land of bliss.

Through the representations of the gory postcolonial condition in *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Fatou Diome lucidly mourns the oppressive colonisation of the minds of the youths of the island. The narrator underscores the fact that colonialism is yet to end. In fact, a worse kind of colonialism thrives on, as the minds of youths especially become the new colonies for the erstwhile colonial powers, and in this case, France. The erstwhile masters and colonisers have succeeded and continue to succeed in selling their "brand" as best and unrivalled, hence the untoward desperation in youths to leave the island by all means in favour of France and other European nations. The people not only affirm the coloniser's perceived superiority; they subscribe to it, seeking to imitate all that coloniser is and stands for. It is no wonder then that Madické, Garouwalé do all they can to migrate to France. They play football hard and practice every day because they believe football could provide them a

passport to France. In fact, they go as far as befriending Ndétare, the outcast, exiled teacher, because they reason he could teach them French- the language of success and fulfilment.

The youths are not to blame though, since all around them is poverty, deprivation and lack, and emigration seems to hold the key to light and life. They strive to leave by all means or die trying. These young ones all had dreams, but dreams needed funding, funding that had to be found elsewhere. They have come to believe, even though none on the island could tell France from Peru on a map, that France "rhymes with chance" (Diome, 2006:32). The youths' misconception about France as a place flowing with milk and honey, fuelled by the misinformation received at the feet of the Man from Barbès further accentuates their outward gaze. In order to maintain his false superiority on the island, the Man from Barbès tells fairy tales about a France that exists only in his imagination. The France he sells to the youths is a place akin to the Promised land, devoid of sickness and sorrow, an El Dorado, where all one needs to do is enjoy and have fun. Cazenave and Célérier (2011) relate that through this narrative, Diome successfully underscores the often fatal obsession with France as the solution area through the text's offering of a rereading of the "myth of France as a haven for immigrants, the path to social recognition, and the exit-door to thwarted possibilities on the continent" (Cazenave and Célérier, 2011:123).

The trauma of abject dependence also finds expression in capitalist patriarchy and its oppressive hold on the women on the island of Niordior. Thanks to a regressive patriarchal system at work on the island, Sankèle loses her child, her lover and herself; Salie loses her virginity, and many other women lose agency. The narrator elucidates that on the island, marriage is not done on the basis of love but politics, since husbands are selected for girls in accordance with "family interests and immutable alliances" (Diome, 2006:86), and hence, it is then rare for two lovers to wed but two families are always brought together anyways. In this kind of setting, the women suffer and then become objects in the scheme of communal diplomatic relations. Sankèle, the fishermen's daughter, aware of the forces at work in the community and how the "highest pyramid dedicated to traditional diplomacy comes back to the triangle between a woman's legs" (86), decides to break free of communal dictates and her father's pressures. She does not agree to marry the Man from

Barbès, who had just returned from France. The father reasoned that by giving her to the Man from Barbès, the family, to the envy of other families will have their daughter married off to a "Frenchman" which serves to benefit all of Sankèle's extended family. Sankèle's father's gullible and distasteful hopes of social mobility through marriage simply because the Man from Barbès had been to France reeks of the islanders' dependence on external aid, lack of responsibility and an indefatigable belief in help from elsewhere. When Sankèle refuses the Man from Barbès and gets pregnant for Ndétare, her heartthrob, Sankèle's father bars her from leaving her room immediately her pregnancy begins to show. Sankèle remains in confinement until she has her baby. In a tragic turn of events, Sankèle gives birth to her baby, a baby boy, which her father snatches from her mother, and throws him into the sea, firmly wrapped in a plastic bag. After this, Sankèle runs away and Sankèle's mother loses the power of speech. Her mouth loses its ability for speech forever. In a display of a show of shame, heartlessness and hypocrisy, just after Sankèle's father drowns the new born, he hears the muezzin's call, washes his body, picks up his beads and leaves for the mosque. This is what Gerry Feehily (2006) in a review of the narrative refers to as the backward Islamic patriarchy that carelessly stiffly controls mores, hampers development and stifles progress.

Like Sankèle, Salie suffers rejection in a society that enthrones religious hypocrisy, pseudo piety and male irresponsibility. Born out of wedlock, Salie is ostracised and but for her grandmother, she might have been abandoned to die, because the laws of the land demand that such an illegitimate child be put to death. With her grandmother's support, Salie attends school at Ndétare's place and excels, and then she proceeds to town to further her studies. Her grandmother, overtly protective, demands that she stays with sixty-year-old Coumba, a cousin who is to act as her guardian angel in the city, but who ironically facilitates her abuse at the hands of a devilish dubious marabout. Gullible Coumba and her daughter, Gnarelle had invited the marabout to help restore Gnarelle's new husband's waning affection. El Hadji marries Gnarelle because his first wife, Simane had borne only girls, making people to call her "the 'broken calabash', unable to contain the future, her seven children being only pieces of herself: nothing but girls!" (Diome, 2006:100). Gnarelle bears El Hadji the

son he so much wanted and he showers with all his attention, but only for a while. A farmer that owed El Hadji some money offered him his sixteen-year-old daughter, and soon El Hadji no longer notices Gnarelle. Coumba and her daughter then decide to consult marabouts to help restore Gnarelle's position as El Hadji's beloved, for as the narrator asserts, "the polygamy match is never played without marabouts" (Diome, 2006:102).

Marabouts have always played a prominent role and taken up a conspicuous space in Francophone African narratives. They are doctors, counsellors, magicians and everything that the often-naïve seeker wants them to be. Amber Gemmeke (2011) describes marabouts, especially those of West African extraction as important actors in the fast-globalising field of spiritual services. He elucidates that their services range pronouncing blessings and prayers to offering other services such as "turabu or khatīm magical quadrants in amulets and in potions, Arabic geomancy (ramalu), astrology and numerology, writing-in-sand (khatt ar-raml) divination sessions and dream interpretation (istikhāra)" (Gemmeke, 2011:686). Salie's subsequent abuse at the hands of the Peul marabout presents Diome's critique of the islander's heavy dependency on religious fanatics and religious tricksters-wolves in sheep's clothing. Ironically, the marabout defiles Salie during a purification rite done on behalf of Gnarelle, channelled towards restoring her place in her husband's heart. The marabout then goes ahead to levy Coumba and Gnarelle heavily, even after he has made Salie pay the highest price, for a trick.

Like Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic*, where the narrator preaches against clandestine migration and the warped perception that Europe supplies all needs, Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red* also recreates the dependency mentality at work in the Congo Brazzaville of the 1980s. Alain Mabanckou, alongside the likes of Tchicaya UTam'Si, Sony Labou Tansi, Sylvain Bemba, Guy Menga, Emmanuel Dongala and Daniel Biyaoula are prominent writers that hail from the Republic of Congo. Alain Mabanckou's large oeuvre presents poems, novels, essays and memoirs. *Blue White Red*, first published in French as *Blue-blanc-rouge* in 1998 is the first of Mabackou's twelve novels; his *Au jour le jour* (1993), translated as *Day to Day*, is the first of his six volumes of poetry. Mabanckou's immigrant status in France colours much of what he writes. To him, his *Verre Cassé* published in 2005,

and translated as *Broken Glass* (2009) is the novel that opened the door to the French society. In his opinion, no one knew him in France and other places until he wrote *Broken Glass*; with *Broken Glass* came the Renaudot Prize and with the Renaudot Prize came fame and the stamp of approval without which a writer is not accepted in the Parisian literary circles (Mabanckou, 2009:146). Besides *Broken Glass*, *African Psycho* (2006), *Mémoires de porc-épic* (2006), *Black Bazar* (2009), *Demain j'aurai vingt ans* (2010), *Lumières de Pointe-Noire* (2013) and *Petit Piment* (2015) have all been translated into the English language. Alain Mabanckou was once described as the prince of the absurd in *The Economist* and he is popularly regarded as the African Samuel Beckett.

Blue White Red recounts the experiences of Massala-Massala, also known as Marcel Bonaventure, a young man who travels from his homeland in Pointe-Noire in Congo Brazzaville to Paris, in search of honour, wealth and fame, all which he lacked in his fatherland. Life in post-independence Congo Brazzaville of the 1990s was far from pleasurable, in fact, poverty, disenchantment and disaffection defined the nation at the time. When deprivation becomes unbearable, emigration becomes desirable:

> Whether the consideration is connected to the absence of peace, or abundance, or economic opportunities, or propelled by persecution or natural disasters, the dispersal of people is generally tied to the search for that which is absent from home. The hope to access in the diaspora that which is absent from home is in this case a search for power, which underscores how the question of survival and success between diasporas and their hosts are closely connected to the power struggle (OlaOluwa Senayon, 2019:14)

Instinctively man gravitates towards spaces that afford convenience if not pleasure. In Massala-Massala's village, opportunities were lacking and for the youths, the future looked bleak, hence the means for upward social mobility had to be sought elsewhere. Youths exemplified by Benos, Moki, Préfet and Bolou all looked outward for economic opportunities. What was missing at home had to be found elsewhere. Moki remarks that in his days, when a youth went missing from the neighbourhood for a long time, it meant such a youth has left for France, often through clandestine means and routes. Moki relates that

no one in the neighbourhood is alarmed whenever a youth flees in pursuit of the City of Light, "on the contrary, the family is proud of it, especially when they received, a few months later, a photo of their son in winter clothing" (Mabanckou, 2013:66). It is no wonder then that the protagonist of the novel, Massala-Massala decides on France, since his mentor and model, Charles Moki "made it" in France, the same Moki who claims that Paris is in his pocket and no one from their town can make it in Paris without his help.

Massala-Massala enlists Moki's help for a successful emigration to France because in their community, Moki is the ultimate symbol of a success story that happened in France. Masala-Massala and Moki are neighbours. Previously, Moki's family was an object of ridicule and mockery in the neighbourhood because of the state of their house- "a shack made from mahogany planks topped by a corrugated sheet metal roof" which often stunned passersby who "wondered by what miracle this home had survived the storms during the rainy season" (Mabanckou, 2013:38). The shameful abode soon becomes the first to receive a touch of Moki's affluence and the first of the numerous metamorphoses that would positively change Moki's family's image in the neighbourhood. As soon as Moki returns from France, now a proud Parisian, he ensures that his father's uncompleted house is built and beautified like none in the neighbourhood. Besides the villa that became the envy of everyone, Moki installs electricity in the house and ensures that the pipes flow with water, "it stood out from far away and was taller than the nearby shacks that were nothing more than a Capernaum whose disorder was an eyesore, like a favela. There were two worlds. One belonged to the Moki family and the other to the rest of the neighbourhood" (Mabanckou, 2013:38). This creation of difference which then of course leads to the creation of power reeks of the colonial enterprise. The colonialist's hegemonic power fashioned and thrived on creation of difference. Their hegemonic power rested and still rests on "creating the binary opposition of self/other, white/black, good/evil, superior/inferior, and so on" which was how "a part of the world was able to enjoy supremacy because it convinced the rest of the world" about the benevolent white man's burden and his civilizing" mission.

Besides the physical testaments of difference, power and fame that enthralled the entire neighbourhood and made them long to have what Moki had, the transformations on Moki's

body also announced his success. Moki delights in making a distinction between his class, the Parisians, and the Paysans. He takes pride in being a sapeur. Dominic Thomas (2003) expatiates that the practitioners of la Sape are those referred to as sapeurs, a term which designates a society: "Society for Ambiancers and Persons of Elegance". In tracing the political significances of Congolese popular culture, which la Sape exemplifies, Didier Gondola (1999) relates that fashion which la Sape encapsulates and its uses among young people in Congo serves as a vehicle for borrowing new identities. He elucidates that la Sape is "an ambiguous adventure, a sort of Baudelairian voyage, that leads the Congolese youth (Sapeurs), not only from a third world city to Paris and Brussels, but also from social dereliction to psychological redemption" since it "authenticates and validates their quest for a new social identity which the African city has failed to provide" them with (Gondola, 1999:23). Being a sapeur necessitates that one makes a statement, a public one, with one's clothing as well as one's taste. To be a sapeur had been Moki's dream, so much that he was willing to sacrifice his education on its altar, "school became a handicap. It turned us away from our goal" (Mabanckou, 2013:61). In order to get close to his dream of being a sapeur, Moki along with some of his friends became pseudo-sapeurs, they saved some money and with the money saved, they went to big markets in Pointe-Noire to buy clothes that were brought in from Paris. There, they bought only clothing that was fit for aristocrats, "we didn't buy just any clothing. There was linen, alpaca, crepe. Jeans were prohibited. An Aristocrat did not wear jeans. Those things were made for mechanics and plumbers, not for people like us with a fashion aesthetic" (Mabanckou, 2013:61). Moki and his friends wanted to be different and to be regarded so. Moki's embrace of la Sape still remains an expedition in achieving a distinction, an adventure in creating difference. Being a sapeur has its benefits, responsibility and lures. It entices the innocent ones like Massala-Massala and leaves those too old to emulate it envious.

In Nicolas Estournel's (2018) estimation, la sape articulates a game, a mimetic game. Estournel reads la sape as an example of what Achille Mbembe categories as the cheap imitations of power often performed by those not of the ruling class all in a desire for a certain majesty, since fashion is both an institution and a site of power (Mbembe, 2011:132).

It is clear that Moki and his mentees aspire to possess political and social capital afforded by being sapeurs, a performance whose mimicry is a menace (Bhabha, 1994). In fact, for Moki's disciples, theirs is a double mimicry, since they strive to imitate Moki, a sapeur who is himself a mere echo of a set of Parisian codes inscribed on his body (Estournel, 2018:575). Estournel's assertion that the sapeur is first and foremost a work of art for he necessarily creates a distance from himself, thereby objectifying himself in order to better contemplate himself is in line with Bhabha's observation that "mimicry represents an ironic compromise… Mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (1994:86). It is comical, farcical even, that Moki, the quintessential sapeur decides to deny those aspects of culture that had defined him. He no longer eats the staple foods like foufou and manioc, which Thomas Dominic describes as a chief marker of cultural symbolism (2003:967); he talks down on anyone that does so. Unlike those he regards as the peasants who eat big pieces of manioc with a small piece of fish and then two litres of water, since all that mattered was that the stomach is full, he eats bread which ironically is just as starchy as the foufou he disdains. Additionally, Moki bleaches his skin and works to add weight in order to look well fed. He speaks with an accent that he strives to distinguish from those of his people, who to him have a tongue that is destined to mispronounce French words. Moki complains about the local heat; he rarely walks around and in all his dealings, he strives to be the Frenchman amongst a group of villagers, the one-eyed man in the company of the blind, thus occupying the space between Bhabhan mimicry and mockery (Bhabha, 1994:86).

The preparations for Moki's arrival, Moki's arrival from France, his "performance" as a French man and the reaction from friends and family feature mimicry at its best:

> In the morning, he read newspapers from Paris that he had brought back with him from the North: Ici Paris, Paris Match, Le Parisien . . . He stayed in his silk robe with taffeta motifs. Young men from the neighborhood, his childhood friends, came by to cut his hair. He paid for these services with things from Paris. And not just any odd thing! Moki thanked them with little Paris Métro maps. They were jubilant. Of course, they didn't understand these tangled itineraries, these

> numbered lines that were so intertwined that one would have said it was a hydrographic map of China. They surprised the Parisian himself. In fact, certain natives described the Métro lines with unequaled talent, station by station, to the point that you would have thought they had stayed in Paris… Moki also supplied them with unused Métro passes. They glued their photographs on them and wowed the more naïve girls. (Mabanckou, 2013:51).

With Moki's metamorphosis and his community's connivance, to the extent of they worshipping him as a hero, Moki becomes his community's model. Fathers want their sons to become a Parisian; mothers want their daughters to marry a Parisian. Even Massala-Massala's father, a reserved and conservative man is enticed and he begs Moki's father to persuade his son to take Massala-Massala with him to France.

Moki's ethnographic authority earns a disciple in Massala-Massala. In recent times, mobility has become distinction maker that many covet. In *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (1998) Zygmunt Bauman argues that mobility is the most powerful and the most sought-after stratifying factor. Mobility holds positive connotations; it stands as the badge of modernity (Mariangela Palladino, 2017:3) and the migrant, the central figure of modernity in Edward Said's configuration. Palladino further elucidates that "mobility essentially distinguishes the privileged from the unprivileged, since it is enmeshed with ideas of freedom, travel, leisure and socio-economic development" (Palladino, 2017:3). The successful mobile people, like Moki create the illusions of freedom, success and leisure in the minds of the villagers, and that is why his imitators must through him seek their fortunes in France, by all means. When Moki's father discourages Massala-Massala's father, they tried their luck with Moki himself who then promised to take Massala-Massala with him to France after his next vacation. Pathetically, debts are incurred to finance the trip. Massala-Massala's uncle's savings together with Massala-Massala's mother meagre savings were to bear the brunt of his emigration. When Massala-Massala finally gets his housing certificate, a major prerequisite to possessing a passport, he guarded it jealously like his life:

> I lived in permanent terror of losing it. This anguish dwelled in my unconscious to the point that it tossed the landscape of my dreams upside down. My nights no longer passed without

> nightmares. The themes of these haunted dreams did not vary. I dreamed that a big whirlwind swept through the neighborhood, taking only my document in its wake. In fact, I feared that a lout would steal it away from me. My precautions rose to the level of my anxiety: I kept this paper with me all the time. It had become a substitute for my identity card. I read it every second. I verified that it was really still there, in the little black cardboard holder I had specially purchased just to protect it (Mabanckou, 2013:74).

Massala-Massala's eventual pathetic deportation becomes more traumatic because of all that went into his emigration in the first place.

The villager's abject dependence on help from outside and luck from elsewhere aggravates their helplessness whenever any of the villagers returns home a failure. By their definition, a failure is one who has had the golden opportunity of migrating to France, who succeeds in leaving for France but returns home still penniless. Their epistemology gives no room for failure since in their view, no one goes to France and remains poor. One of the myths they hold dear is that no other country compares with France; France is the Paradise cum the Promised Land. It is this dependency mentality that allows the likes of Moki to sell his fables to them. When Massala-Massala having witnessed the harsh reality of living in Paris as an illegal migrant, decides to write home telling his people the truth about his life, Moki tells him that no one would believe him. Moki compares the people to children in love with candies: "Those people back there have never changed, and they won't take pity on the tears you will have spilled. They love the dream. You hear me, the dream. They are children. They go crazy for candy and don't understand that to buy it, you need money that you get at the cost of tremendous effort and sacrifice" (Mabanckou, 2013:89). This lack of a sense of responsibility, this outward gaze of wealth without working, of consuming without thoughts of producing is largely responsible for the postcolonial predicament in many Third World countries, which then necessitates emigration. In fact, deprivation, poverty, helplessness and "choicelessness" are chief amongst the push factors that cause many to embrace Westward migration. The same dependency mentality is responsible for why the villagers believe Moki, the Parisian's fables but shun the cautionary tales presented by the Peasants, the economic migrants; the villagers exalt the voice of pleasure over that of

reason. When the Peasant tells the people that life is difficult in Paris, the people do not believe him. They take the liar as the one telling the truth and vice versa. Mabanckou employs the dream motif to depict how the villagers would rather embrace a dream. They would rather live the illusion than embrace reality. This presentation of the fusion of the real and the imagined, the dream and the reality in the "Congolese society's obsession with the myth of France is reinforced on the novel's closing page" (Robert Nathan, 2013:344) as Massala-Massala tries to decide on whether he would go and see Moki when he returns and make an attempt to get back to France or not.

Abigail Ward (2013) in her reading of Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* alludes to Memmi's explication on the dependency complex as a complex that develops when the colonized receives an unasked-for favour from the colonizer. The positive response then encourages the colonized to make further requests, for which he shows no gratitude. *Blue White Red* illustrates the observation excellently. On Moki's return from Paris, villagers queue up to collect their share of what he must have bought for them. In a humourous show of shame and an abysmal sense of entitlement:

> Disorder in front of their villa. Crowds. The street was swarming with people. The light blazed bright all night long on their lot. The Parisian's first day back was the day for family members. Even the most distant relative quickly climbed down the branches of the genealogical tree and announced their presence that day. They feared they would miss out on the hypothetical manna Moki brought back if they weren't there. The cautious ones who could not turn up because of illness had their sons represent them. Maternal and paternal uncles, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, i.e., everyone belonging to the same villages as Moki's father and mother turned up… The family members sat in a small congregation in the courtyard, one after another, beggars for the Parisian's favors. (Mabanckou, 2013:48)

The same dependency complex is the reason Paris was, as depicted in the text, and continues to represent a mythic space for the African subject in the era of postcoloniality (Dominic Thomas 2003:965). Fixed dependency as represented in *The Belly of the Atlantic* and *Blue White Red* is symptomatic of the legacies of the colonial enterprise, one that enthroned the

superiority of the colonizer and the inferiority of the colonised. Colonialism wanted everything to come from it (Fanon, 1965:63); the colonised were wantonly willing to receive every good thing from the coloniser. True to Edward Said's description of the colonised subject as "fixed in zones of dependency and peripherally, stigmatized in the designation of underdeveloped, less-developed, developing states, ruled by a superior, developed, or metropolitan colonized who was theoretically positioned as a categorically antithetical overlord" (Said, 1984:295), many in African countries still remain fixed and are willing to remain dependent on help and the illusions of help from the global North.

3.4 Displacement as Trauma in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names,* Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* and Ali Farah's *Little Mother*

NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New* Names, Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* and Ali Farah's *Little Mother* all employ displacement as a trope to recreate the postcolonial realities that drive African subjects away from Africa, and their ultimate condition of precarity even in the diaspora. In Zimbabwe and Somalia, the countries of origin of Bulawayo and Chikwava and then Farah, respectively, displacement, dislocation and violence had been experienced by the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and by men and women alike. Zimbabwe and Somalia like many countries in Africa have had their histories dented by civil wars, military oppression and domestic violence. The three writers represent displacements in its diverse manifestations– physical, social, psychological and even political, all as a result of political instability, economic retrogression and volatile security in their nation states. The depiction of characters' experiences of displacement, dislocation and alienation finds ample representation in many postcolonial texts, since the "concepts of place and displacement demonstrate the very complex interaction of language, history and environment in the experience of colonised people" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998:177). While the colonial enterprise led to linguistic, political, spiritual, economic and social displacement on the African continent, the postcolonial era has witnessed greater displacement of citizens as a result of the abysmal leadership in many states in Africa.

What Mourid Barghouti relates of Palestinian displacement is true of the displacements experienced by the characters in the narratives been examined:

> Displacements are always multiple. Displacements that collect around you and close circle. You turn, but the circle surrounds you. When it happens you become a stranger in your places and to your places at the same time. The displaced person becomes a stranger to his memories and so he tries to cling to them. He places himself above the actual and the passing... It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever. It is like slipping on the first step of a staircase. You stumble down to the end. (2000:131)

Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Chikwava's *Harare North* and Farah's *Little Mother* all bear witness to different states of displacement- homelessness, exile, expatriation, rootlessness, immigration, emigration, refugees, and émigrés (Akram Al Deek, 2016) and the traumatising capabilities of displacement on migrant characters and those who would not or could not embrace emigration.

Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, like *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira, Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black* Demons, Eric Harrison's *Jambanja*, Petina Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly* Jim Barker's *Paradise Plundered: The Story of a Zimbabwean Farm* and Catherine Buckle's *African Tears*, all published post-2000, recreate the tragic realities of Zimbabwe's years of crisis and displacement, especially the years often captured as "the Lost Decade" (Lloyd Sachikonye, 2012). Within the Lost Decade, Zimbabweans experienced untold hardship and misery under Robert Mugabe's infamous rule, thanks to Accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Programme, also often referred to as the Fast Track Resettlement Programme which began in 2000 and Operation Murambatsvina which began in 2005. Operation Murambatsvina which means "drive out the rubbish", "discard the filth" and the government's preferred translation- "restore order", saw to the displacement of thousands of people. Zimbabweans, especially the victims of the Operation designated it "Operation Tsunami" because of the speed with which it was carried out and the ferocity with which the bulldozers employed in the demolition of what the government tagged "illegal structures and removal of all activities at undesignated areas" all in an effort

to "see to the clean-up of Harare", worked (Sekesai Makwavarara, 2005:36). Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* employs the Operation Murambatsvina as a narrative backdrop to underscore the effects of the crises resulting from the events of the Lost Decade on Darling, the protagonist of the narrative and others like her. In writing *We Need New* Names, Elizabeth Zandile Tshele (her pen name being NoViolet Bulawayo, a name which alludes to her hometown- Bulawayo and her late mother's name, Violet) joins the throng of Zimbabweans writers (Dambudzo Marechera, Chenjerai Hove, Brian Chikwava and others) who employ literature as a protest tool to effect societal change; she channels her writing towards speaking the unspoken and representing the mess that has made the world far from being perfect (Bulawayo, 2015).

In *We Need New Names*, Darling Nonkululeko Nkala's family like many around them have been forced out of their home and made to live in a shanty town ironically named Paradise. Darling's Paradise is everything but a Paradise; in their paradise, there is death, hunger, tears, crying, lack and pain all of what Revelation 21:4 says would be absent in the heavenly Jerusalem. Early in the narrative, an anonymous narrator explains that the Nkalas and others like them did not come to Paradise of their own volition. They are in Paradise because they have been displaced, deprived and dispossessed of their land. The narrator says the people came one by one and then in twos and threes and they all came broken, sad and worn. Having been forcefully ejected from their homes, the people settle where they can and pray that change comes. Besides the loss of homes, other impacts of the Operation was the loss of means of livelihood for many, family disintegration, food insecurity and health degeneration as some people could no longer assess health facilities. More so, there was disruption in the education of children, in fact, many children became vulnerable. It is this vulnerability especially of the children that Bulawayo aptly captures in *We Need New Names*.

For Darling, Chipo, Bastard, Sbho, Godknows and Stina, Paradise speaks of the robbery of their childhood. Darling recalls a time when deprivation did not define her existence but the time was in the past and she has no way of rolling back the past. In the wake of Operation

Murambatsvina, the parents are as clueless as the children, no one knows the answers to the many questions:

> The children themselves appeared baffled; they did not understand what was happening to them. And the parents held their children close to their chests and caressed their dusty, unkempt heads with hardened palms, appearing to console them, but really, they did not quite know what to say. Gradually, the children gave up and ceased asking questions and just appeared empty, almost, like their childhood had fled and left only the bones of its shadow behind (Bulawayo, 2013:53).

The parent's misery is aggravated by their inability to shield their children from witnessing the trauma that has become their daily experience. The children are not only robbed of an innocent childhood, they are robbed of everything good. In the very first story of the narrative titled "Hitting Budapest", Darling and her friends are on their way to Budapest to steal guavas to quench their hunger, since Paradise is synonymous with deprivation while Budapest is indeed the Paradise for it boasts of abundance. In Budapest, there are big houses unlike the shacks from where the children have come, there are well-kept lawns and trees with fruits that no one seems interested in. It is largely for the fruits in Budapest that the children risk crossing Mzilikazi that separates the two worlds- Budapest and Paradise.

The children's hunger becomes a metaphor for their quest for a change in their lived condition, their dissatisfaction with their realities and their willingness to do something. Dambubzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* and Nkosinathi Sithole's *Hunger eats a Man* are two other novels from Southern Africa that employ hunger as an overriding metaphor and trope. Hunger like a rushing wind necessarily demands an action. Engaging a different context, Andrew Warnes (2004) draws a connection between hunger and literary activism. He explores African American writers' literary responses to the startling existence of food shortage in America, a wealthy nation, and thereby, he underscores the writers' tendency to depict hunger as an avoidance condition imposed from above, and then protest it. Likewise, hunger is employed in *We Need New Names* to underscore the presence of inequalities – social, material, economic and political inequalities, in Zimbabwe. In the text, hunger is a

metaphor for pain and deprivation, destitution and dislocation. The children's hunger speaks to the presence of malnutrition, maladministration and other maladies, for in saner circumstances, children the age of Darling and her friends should be catered for. They should not be the ones to search out their food from the trees in a town several kilometres away from theirs. Bulawayo's adoption of hunger serves to reinstate her thematic prioritisation of the depiction of extreme poverty, adject dislocation and postcolonial trauma as it affects the displaced Zimbabweans, especially children. Thus, she draws sympathy for the children and the other sufferers of the government afflictive Operation Murambatsvina and other injustices.

The children's journey to Budapest, a liberatory displacement in Tanaka Chidora (2017)'s estimation, affords them access to food and the dreams of living elsewhere. With the assurance of food, the children are able to take on other quests. Bastard wants to leave Paradise and go to Johannesburg, Sbho dreams of living in one of the fine houses in Budapest while Darling wants to go to America to live with Aunty Fostalina. Chipo does not disclose her dreams. Darling relates that Chipo has been rendered silent since she was impregnated. Trauma silences. For eleven-year-old Chipo, impregnated by her grandfather, trauma has become flesh. Chipo's is a shame-induced silence. Darling relates that Chipo is not deaf and dumb, and that she ceased to talk after she became pregnant. By refusing to communicate, Chipo's trauma becomes unclaimed and thereby impenetrable. Chipo's underage pregnancy, malnourished body and traumatised soul bear witness to children's vulnerability in post-independence Zimbabwe. Chipo's rights as a child have been trampled upon and her pathetic society does nothing about it. Zimbabwean children literature is replete with the depiction of challenges that especially face the girl child- marginalisation, violence, prejudice and sexual abuse amongst other; the texts capture the absence of peace and progress and how they affect the children, who constitute majority of the population in Africa (Anna Chitando, 2008). Children by the reason of their limited capacities are often regarded as vulnerable members of the society who must depend on adults. In a crisis, children become even more vulnerable.

Besides the hunger pangs that drive the children to Budapest, violence and tension in Paradise push the children and others who can afford the mobility, to seek peace elsewhere. The children as well as parents witness diverse dimensions of violence. When homes are destroyed and houses are pulled down, the children watch helplessly. Darling recalls that bulldozers destroyed her previous home, which was a proper house. Darling, her mother and those around them are traumatised by the experience of the demolition. Darling continues to have nightmares and she replays the events around the demolition from time to time; she suffers from repetition compulsion:

> Even if I want to sleep I cannot because if I sleep, the dream will come, and I don't want it to come. I am afraid of the bulldozers and those men and the police, afraid that if I let the dream come, they will get out of it and become real. I dream about what happened back at our house before we came to Paradise. I try to push it away and push it away but the dream keeps coming and coming like bees, like rain, like the graves at Heavenway (Bulawayo, 2013:45).

In Freudian parlance, the repetition compulsion relates a compulsive tendency to re-enact traumatic experiences that had previously been largely repressed, in an attempt to bind their energies and reach a state of balance or even entropy. At the same time, repetitive behaviour points to a desire to compensate for a deep-seated sense of lack (Dani Cavallaro, 2002). Darling's memory of a previously witnessed traumatic event comes to haunt her night after night and yet her circumstances do not favour a working-through or reparation.

Violence again erupts during the time in Paradise when the adults make efforts to effect a change by voting in a new government, but their expectations are cut short. Darling relates that all over Paradise, people are hopeful and joyful, imagining a time in a near future when they can safely return to where they came from and build their lives afresh. The people are doubly disillusioned when they realise that the elections favoured their enemies. Bornfree is killed in an election-related violence and the children hide on trees inside Heavensway to watch the funeral procession. Darling relates that she is no longer afraid of the graveyard since she has witnessed innumerable funerals, from those who die of natural causes to those sent to untimely graves for opposing the government in power. Time and again Darling and

her friends witness sights too gory for children. In Budapest while on a guava-hunting mission, the children hiding inside guava trees observe thugs wildly drive out a white couple from their home all in the name of black power. The thugs drag the white couple away in an effort to recover what they claim is theirs, they all shout the white men must be evicted from their land or killed. Having being victims of violence and oppression, the thugs become dispensers of violence and oppression for "in a world where oppression is maintained by violence from above, it is only possible to liquidate it with violence from below" (Adolfo Gilly, 1965). Violence always begets violence, further entrenching a cycle of misery. Violence becomes so engrained in the children's subconscious that their play often re-enacts gruesome subjects and scenes. One of their plays is themed "Finding Bin Laden". At Bornfree's grave. They replay Bornfree's capture, torture and eventual murder. They imagine that they have knobkerries, matches, knives and axes. Darling narrates how all the children take up positions and torture the imaginary Bornfree: "Next, a machete catches Bornfree in the face, splits him from the eye to the chin. Then we are just all on him. Thrashing beating pounding clobbering. Axes to the head, kicks to the ribs, legs, knobkerries whacking all over" and yet the children continue to hit the victim and soon Darling says they wanted to draw out blood. Their traumatic re-enactment of Bornfree's killing underscores their vicious cycle of existential helplessness.

Faced with abject poverty, disillusionment and degradation, the people of Paradise turn to religion. There is the dubious and fetish Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro. Mother of Bones, like many others attend Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro's church located on a mountain. They sit in the sun, sing and pray while Prophet Mborro performs the "wonders" of healing the sick, collecting offering and setting free those that are possessed of demons. At a time, he shakes Darling so violently that she vomits pink things. It was widely believed that Darling's grandfather's spirit torments her since her grandfather was not properly buried. Prophet Mborro intervenes in order to send out Darling's grandfather's spirit from her spirit. When Darling's father returns sick from South Africa, Prophet Mborro is also called upon to intervene. Unfortunately, Darling's father has HIV/AIDS fearfully referred to in Paradise as "the Sickness". Mavava's daughter, the lady who commits suicide,

the same that Darling and her friend steal from also had the Sickness. It was the reason she committed suicide. Deborah Potts (2006) reports that during the peak periods of the Operation Murambatsvina, the displaced people's health was severally compromised. They were the people who died as a result of the demolitions. Darling in *We Need New Names* tells of Nomviyo whose son died in the rubble that was their previous Nomviyo's previous. Potts reports that besides the direct deaths from the demolitions and police action, there were those, especially children who lost their lives to cold. He points out the increase in the death rates from HIV/AIDS, a natural consequence of chronically ill HIV/AIDS sufferers sleeping outside or being forced to move to rural areas where they lacked access to drugs and care.

Expectedly and unsurprisingly, Prophet Mborro is unable to heal Darling's father, and when he demands two fat white virgin goats and five hundred U.S. dollars as payment and Darling's mother walks out on him, he pronounces that she is possessed by three demons. Besides Prophet Mborro, who is more of an opportunist clown than a spiritualist, there is the Vodloza, a self-ordained traditional healer who specializes in fixing all kinds of problem. His ridiculous list of problems includes those suffering from curses, childlessness, loneliness and so on. For his fees, he demands forex. By depicting that Vodloza demands forex, Bulawayo alludes the hyperinflation and rise in poverty levels that followed the government's replacement of the Rhodesian dollar with the Zimbabwean dollar. From 1980 to 2019, the Zimbabwean dollar underwent several metamorphoses thanks to devaluation and reincarnation. Darling tells of Mother of Bones' constant lamentation over the inutility of her hard-earned money. Darling describes her money as bricks of money since the money can no longer buy anything valuable, not even a grain of salt. Unwillingly to let go, Mother of Bones keeps the suitcases that contains the money. Mother of Bones' melancholia forbids her to part with the money. David Eng and David Kazanjian (2003) allude to Sigmund Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia: in contrast with mourning, Freud describes melancholia as an enduring devotion on the part of the ego to the lost object. He describes melancholia as a mourning without end. Melancholia results from the inability to resolve the grief and ambivalence precipitated by the loss of the loved object, place, or ideal.

Mother of Bones' melancholic attachment to her money makes her pat her money like one would pat a baby. The narrator in Daniel Mandishona's "Smoke and Ashes" laments that the more zeros the Zimbabwean dollar acquires, the less it buys. He goes on to call Zimbabwe the "country of poor millionaires and destitute billionaires (Mandishona, 2008:7).

Besides religion, the people of Paradise also try emigration. Darling reports that she and her friends no longer to school because all her teachers have left for Namibia, South Africa and Botswana in search of the greener pastures. South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, Malawi and Mozambique border Zimbabwe. It is then unsurprising that many flee Zimbabwe to seek their fortunes in these countries. Darling's father like most of the people go to South Africa, the wealthiest of the countries, in search of a job. Darling's cousin like her father also goes to South Africa after he returns from Madante mine with decaying hands. Everyone in Paradise speaks of leaving; even the children want to leave and escape the harsh realities of displacement:

> They are leaving in droves. When things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky. They flee their own wretched land so their hunger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands, the wounds of their despair bandaged in faraway lands, their blistered prayers muttered in the darkness of queer lands… leaving in droves, leaving their own land with bleeding wounds on their bodies and shock on their faces and blood in their hearts and hunger in their stomachs and grief in their footsteps… leaving because it is no longer possible to stay (Bulawayo, 2013:99).

The mass exodus of people, especially professionals has profound negative impact on the nation. There are no teachers in Darling's former school and there are no doctors and nurses in the hospitals. The brain drain leaves the country and its populace impoverished. Nevertheless, the people cannot be stopped and they cannot be blamed for leaving, since as the narrator relates, things have fallen apart and the center no longer holds. Bulawayo's alludes to Chinua Achebe's seminal text, *Things Fall Apart* to foreground her representation of the national crisis that mars any fruitful articulation of a postcolonial nationhood.

Zimbabwe is captured as a *kaka* country where disillusionment, extreme poverty and destitution push the citizens out in search of a new name- new identities, solace and new realities.

Bulawayo in consonance with the literary tradition in Zimbabwe employs scatological images to decry the degeneration and disintegration of place and space. Like in Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger*, Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* in Zimbabwean literature and then Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born*, the depiction of scatological images- of faeces, filth and decay is deployed to protest the abysmal state of affairs in the postcolonial nation. To Darling and the rest, Zimbabwe is a *kaka* country. *Kaka*, the Shona word for human excreta is used repetitively by the children. In the text, Darling goes to great length to describe the obscene, the filthy and scatological. The children while in Budapest get the regions they visit dirty. Chipo vomits on the street and the rest couch in nearby bushes to defecate. All over the text, there is the depiction of urine, blood, vomit, spit, sweat, rot and dirt to accentuate the repulsive degeneration of the entire nation. The description of Darling's father's return and the way the sickness alters his body is an instance of the text's employment of scatology:

> Father comes home after many years of forgetting us, of not sending us money, of not loving us, not visiting us, not anything us, and parks in the shack, unable to move, unable to talk properly, unable to anything, *vomiting and vomiting, Jesus, just vomiting and defecating on himself, and it smelling like something dead in there, dead and rotting, his body a black, terrible stick*; I come in from playing Find bin Laden and he is there (Bulawayo, 2013:62) (emphasis added).

Darling's father's body's gradual degradation symbolizes the country's also gradual disintegration and degeneration. This points to the dismantling of nationalism and the eventual falling apart of the nation. The depiction of bodily abjection and scatological images present an aesthetic strategy and a political satire (Rocío Cobo-Piñero, 2019). Joshua Esty in Excremental Postcolonialism (1999) relates the capability of excrement to function as a governing trope in postcolonial literatures and contexts. He asserts that Postcolonial scatology gives full literary expression to the predicament of the writer as it turns context

into text, thereby "transforming the external conditions of possibility into the thematic precipitate of a distinctive fictional experiment, condensing the agonizing struggle of aesthetics and politics into the figure of excrement" (Esty, 1999:56). In much the same way, excremental language, subjects and icons enable Buwalayo to unearth the rot in postcolonial Zimbabwe and the nation's ultimate need for a cleansing and a change.

While the Operation Murambatsvina does not take the centre stage as the narrative backdrop in Chikwava's *Harare North*, it features as one of the events that shaped the crises embodied and experienced by the nameless narrator of *Harare North*. *Harare North*, a debut from Chikwava, a writer, song composer and artist of sorts, depicts Zimbabwe as an abysmal nation that victimises its citizens and then pushes them away. The narrator who for aesthetic and thematic reasons, the author denies a name, is a jobless youth who gets entangled with the political quagmire of Zimbabwe in the era succeeding the elections of year 2000 and 2002. Zimbabwe, a nation that gained her independence from Britain in 1980 has witnessed crisis after crisis. From the bloody era of the guerilla fights for independence, often captured the First Chimurenga and the Second Chimurenga to the first decade of the millennium, aptly captured by the "lost decade", crisis has defined the rubric of life and reality in Zimbabwe, thereby forcing many of its citizens to flee to Johannesburg- Harare South and London, Harare North. Zimbabweans could quite easily migrate to South Africa, a border nation, and the United Kingdom, where until the end of year 2002, Zimbabweans could legally go in without visas, hence affording many the opportunity to apply for asylum. In the ten years, between 1996 and 2006, almost twenty thousand Zimbabweans sought and made applications for political asylum in the United Kingdom, according to Dominic Pasura (2012).

The protagonist-narrator in *Harare North*, a man in his twenties is a jobless son of a widow. With just a primary education, he cannot find a good job not to talk of a high-paying job. His poor background, coupled with his being an ex-convict, he finds no gainful employment. He decides to mend shoes outside the town hall, and even that is entirely unfulfilling. Hence, when he is given the opportunity to join the Green Bombers, he does not think twice about the offer. He simply kicks his stall along with his customers' shoes

and belts. He reasons that the offer to join Zimbabwe National Union Patriotic Front, ZANU–PF party's youth movement is his chance to bid a rubbish life farewell and embrace change:

> If you is back home leading rubbish life and ZANU–PF party offer you job in they youth movement to give you chance to change your life and put big purpose in your life, you don't just sniff at it and walk away when no one else want to give you graft in the country even if you is prepared to become tea boy… That's it! Me I jump onto the van as it speed off. I'm free. That's how new beginnings start. My life have found big and proper purpose (Chikwava, 2009:22).

The narrator's embrace of a life as a thug, which he describes it as life-changing and purposeful is hardly surprising in a community where the corruption of language is the norm. Chenjerai Hove in an interview with Ranka Primorac (2008) attests to the corruption of meaning as evidenced by the corruption of language in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe's rule. He relates that economic corruption, and all manners of corruption by extension, begins with the corruption of language, whereby there are new definitions and collocations arrived at and dictated by those in power. "All of a sudden there is a new definition of patriotism. Suddenly, some of us who are critical of the system are no longer patriots or nationalists… All of a sudden these words are being given a new meaning. So the corruption of language… is the beginning of a multiplicity of other corruptions" (Primorac, 2008:139). In a way, by joining the Green Bombers, the narrator is enlivened and he believes he is one of the true patriots. So, when his cousin and his wife Sekai speak ill of the Green Bombers and Mugabe's regime, he adjudged them ignorant people who paddle to propaganda.

Under Robert Mugabe, the Green Bombers recruit from youths who attend the nation's National Youth Service programme which began in 2001 and whose supposed aim was to train people, usually aged between 10 and 30 years, in the accumulation of skills and patriotism, is as depicted by the narrator's story, a prominent part of the Mugabe's government's deception. The name, "green bombers", comes from the colour of the youths' uniforms. The trainees, according to a documentary by the British Broadcasting Corporation

(2004), are taught Mugabe's own version of history as written in a manual authored by Mugabe (entitled *Inside the Third Chimurenga*). The lessons in the manual are racist and manipulative. Mugabe and his party ZANU-PF are presented as the heroes of the blacks while the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, MDC is cast in a bad light as a party backed by the whites. In the training camps, questioning is forbidden. "Green Bombers" is largely derogatory term; it refers to a common green bottle fly often captured among the Ndebele-speaking people as "impukane yothuvi" meaning "feaces fly" (Gugulethu Siziba (2017)). As to the reason for Chikwava's employment of an ex-Green Bomber as his protagonist, Tenday Mangena and Oliver Nyambi (2013) explicates that "green bombers" as depicted in *Harare North* was so represented in order to present a political commentary that would reinforce the despicability of the National Youth Service programme since "green bomber" serves to signal the dirty tactics employied by the ruling party in "creating and maintaining hegemony" (81). Additionally, Chikwava in an interview traced his representation of a Green Bomber-protagonist to his chance meeting with a Ugandan in Brixton. The Ugandan was formerly a member of the Lord's Resistance Army (The Lord's Resistance Army which belongs to The Lord's Resistance Movement led principally by Joseph Kony, is an insurgent group that operates in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Central African Republic).

In the narrative, the Green Bombers' primary tasks according to the narrator are to kill those they call the enemies of the ruling party, by giving plenty of forgiveness, the narrator's term for murder and maiming. The narrator tells of a time when he was privileged to murder a member of the opposition party. He and other thugs go to the police station where the man is, a week away from his court appearance. When at first the officer in charge was reluctant to release the man, the narrator and his team sing and then present a speech where they emphasise that they have orders from the President to deal with members of the opposition. The officer fearing for his life quickly releases the man to the thugs. The thugs drag him to the forest and the narrator kills him. To the narrator, the man is a traitor. The corruption of morals is linked to the corruption of language and perception. The thugs call peaceful people traitors while they and their leaders are the real troublers of the nation. Besides

administering “forgiveness” to Mugabe’s enemies, the Green Bombers organise forced disappearances and electoral violence. They ride through the town as those above the law and frighten the people as they go. Essentially, the Green Bombers helped foment trouble and wreak havoc. The ironic twist however is that the youths who made up the youth militias for the ruling party were used, abused and then betrayed in the end.

When the narrator is apprehended by the Force for murder, his commandant does not defend him, in fact, he betrays him and then goes ahead to exploit him. The narrator has been in the prison before and he does not want to go back there. He jumps bail and flees to London to escape a jail term and get enough money to pay off those interested in making him pay for the murder. His commandant, Cde Mhiripiri deceives him that for a thousand dollars he could bribe the police officer and make them forget about him. Shortly after, Cde Mhiripiri tells him the amount had increased by another one thousand dollars and by the time the narrator eventually flees Zimbabwe, the amount needed stood at four thousand dollars. It is later that the narrator realized that Cde Mhiripiri deceived him all along, just in the same way he deceived Angirayi. The narrator realises that Cde Mhiripiri who was also on the run is the one wanted by the Police. To escape charges for murder and treason, Cde Mhiripiri is in London working as a part-time BBC (British Bottom Cleaner). In all, the narrator gains nothing for being a Mugabe boy. He is used, duped and dumped. Through the representation of Cde Mhiripiri’s dealings with the narrator, Chikwava underscores the exploitation of the youths in the hands of the powerful people and their cohorts. Mbembe (2001) asserts that an intimate tyranny links the rulers with the ruled in the postcolony, just as obscenity is only another aspect of munificence, and vulgarity a normal condition of state power.

While Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* largely depicts the demolition of people’s properties and the effects on the people’s lives, *Harare North* presents not just the demolition of people’s property and land but the demotion of lives. The narrator, representative of the youths in the nation is enticed, trained in and for violence and then betrayed. Home for the narrator becomes a site of trauma. All the homeland has to offer him is trouble and more trouble. In jail, he realizes that life is not fair; out of jail, he cannot find peace and fulfilment. He tells of his poor mother’s dashed hopes and how she dies of

an overdose. He tells of how she was taken to the hospital in a wheelbarrow. When she was alive and even in death, his mother profits nothing from having a son. He is too poor to perform *umbuyiso* for his mother. One of the reasons he runs to London to get enough money to enable him pay up his debts, real and assumed, and then acquire funds to perform *umbuyiso*, since failure to do so would mean that his mother's spirit continues to wander in the wilderness. Yuleth Chigwedere (2017) elucidates that "umbuyiso" is an Ndebele traditional ceremony that is normally conducted a year after the funeral to welcome back to the homestead the spirit of the deceased. It is believed that the spirit of the dead person wanders in the wilderness in the meantime until *umbuyiso* is conducted. *Umbuyiso* is also organized to facilitate the transition of the spirit of the departed one into the spirit world. The failure to perform *umbuyiso* would then mean that the dead person's spirit is not brought back to the family as a spirit elder and hence, the dead person cannot employ his or her influence for the benefit of the living (Kennedy Chinyowa 2001). By incapacitating the narrator and denying him the means and the resources to perform *umbuyiso* for his late mother, the defunct society makes him guilty and vulnerable to *Ngozi* (an avenging spirit), believed among Zimbabweans to be capable of inflicting insanity and eventual death.

The narrator's traumatic pangs at his failure to perform *umbuyiso* for his mother is further heightened by the government's planned relocation of his mother's village people to another location because of the discovery of precious stones therein. The planned relocation means that the narrator will never be able to perform the traditional rites for his mother, for it is the living that could be relocated, not the dead. His mother's grave, a heap of earth, will be scattered by the bulldozers and then her spirit will wander forever. By this representation of a planned relocation, Chikwava alludes to Robert Mugabe's government's discovery of diamond fields in Marange, in eastern Zimbabwe, in 2006. The result of the discovery, Friends of the Earth International reports, as it is with the history of diamond mining everywhere, is a bloody tussle for control. The case of the Chiyadzwa diamond fields' conflicts, bloodshed and government crackdown is described in the report as a classic example of natural resources captured, controlled and diverted to meet corporations and the state's selfish aims, all at the expense of the people, their land, cultural heritage, livelihood

and wellbeing. It is no wonder then that the people refer to the diamond as blood diamond. The narrator is doubly cheated since the same militias he had worked for in the past will march upon the village where his mother is buried, to violently evict the people. He learns in a letter from his uncle that those he had worked for earlier on, the Green Bombers are beating up those from his mother's village and the police is evicting them. The narrator is helpless in stopping the forceful evictions just as he is helpless in organising a befitting *unbuyiso* for his mother.

The narrator's misery is evidenced by his reluctance to live long in the diaspora. He confesses that he never wanted to leave Zimbabwe in the first place but "things force me" (Chikwava, 2009:21). He must leave to avoid an endless jail term in Chikurubi prison which he describes as hell. He tells of his rape and how he must have been infected with HIV/AIDS while in prison:

> I don't want to leave the country because I have not visit Mother in two years. But I have to go because me I know what Chikurubi Maximum Prison is like; I have been there before and it is full of them people that carry likkle horrors such as them sharpened bicycle spokes and they want you to donate your buttocks so they can give you Aids; if you refuse then bicycle spoke go through your stomach like it is made of toilet paper and you is bleeding inside all night and have no chance of making it to the morning. No one can want to go there again. Life is not fair me I know after they hold the spoke to my heart (Chikwava, 2009:25).

In depicting the gory state of Chikurubi Maximum Prison, Chikwava casts aspersions on the government's refusal to sanitise its correctional facilities. The prison is depicted as a place where HIV/AIDS is cheaply distributed. Traumatised by his experience at Chikurubi, the narrator concludes that life itself is not fair. His time in the prison coloured his outlook on life and shaped him irrevocably into a violent distributor of violence.

Through the depiction of the narrator's and Shingi's existential futility at finding peace and fulfilment, Chikwava underscores the youth's vulnerability in the face of abject poverty, crushing inflation and an irresponsible government. While the narrator tells of his determination to make it in Harare North in spite of the difficulties, he tells of how he and

then Shingi would be the envy of Zimbabweans who stayed back, because of the inflation in the country. Furthermore, when in his hallucination, he sees his mother showing her friends his picture where he feeds pigeons at the square, MaKhumalo complains that he feeds pigeons when at home his people are starving. The Zimbabwe captured by Dambudzo Marechera as the house of hunger still largely remains a house of hunger, deprivation, depravity and violence. The people are still yearning for physiological needs (food, clean water, shelter and warmth) and safety needs (safety and then personal, emotional and financial security and wellbeing) - things Abraham Maslow captures as occupying the lowest rungs on his hierarchy of needs. With recording-breaking inflation and scarcity of basic food items, the average Zimbabwean must leave or compromise to get his basic needs met. Ironically, the fate of some who left their homeland is not any better than those who remained behind. In an attempt at deciphering what Terrence Musanga (2017) calls the political utility of emigrating from Zimbabwe during the years of the Zimbabwean crisis, Sachikonye (2012:163) asks if migrating out of an authoritarian state is the most effective response to a situation that requires collective political change and if emigration contributes to the longevity of the incumbent authoritarian regime. While emigration may do little to help the homeland solve its political problem, migrant characters are first and foremost concerned with survival; they are concerned with the economic opportunities that migration affords. The hungry man can hardly afford the luxury of political activism.

Harare North tells of characters who out of sheer frustration embraced suicide rather than hold up the government in Zimbabwe to book. The narrator's uncle, Uncle Nhamo committed suicide when he was younger. The narrator's mother also dies of an overdose. Still within the narrator's family, Sekai's brother commits suicide. His story is especially pitiful. He quarrels with Sekai probably over the latter's reluctance to send him money. Sekai tells him she does not care about his having HIV/AIDS, and that he could go ahead and jump off his balcony if he so wishes, and that was exactly what he did. Sekai's brother jumps from the eighth-floor balcony and dies. There were spiritual, psychological, economic and sociocultural repercussions of the dispossession, dislocation and dissociation experienced by the people during the years of the Zimbabwean crisis, a crisis whose most

evident characteristics are predatory politics and state-sanctioned violence (Gugulethu Siziba, 2017). The Zimbabwean crisis triggered by multiple events and factors still continues to traumatise the average citizen. The narrative bears witness to the Zimbabwean's precarious existence during the reign of President Mugabe through the representation of realities in the life of a misguided nameless narrator. Chikwava employs dark humour and a disjointed narrative voice to draw attention to a system and a nation that turns its youths to criminals, and then applauds them. In the end, the narrator suffers dissociation. His entire being falls apart just like his nation had; he then wanders the street of Brixton like *umgodoyi*, the homeless dog that features in both Bulawayo and Chikwava's texts as a dog that "roam them villages scavenging until brave villager relieve it of its misery by hit its head with rock" (Chikwava, 2009:197). With *Harare North*, Chikwava successfully depicts the connectedness of the political and the private; he displays how the public sphere- happenings in a nation can entangle, victimise, displace and dispossess the citizens at home and in the diaspora.

Driven to despair, Ali Farah's migrant characters must flee war-torn Somalia on foot, on boats, on planes and by whatever means; since for them, home has ceased to be home. Their home has taken on a monstrous attribute and they can hardly identify with its violent convulsions. Somali, Ali Farah's home nation gained its independence from Italy in 1960. Before then it had had Arabian, Portuguese, British, French and Italian masters. Nuruddin Farah, a prominent Somali writer explicates in *Links* (2004) that it is the sea, (the Somali Sea, a part of the Indian Ocean, which seems to be the Pandora box where many Somalians trying to flee the country perish and the same sea) that brought in the colonialists. Farah relates that the major invasions of the Somali peninsula came through the oceans. He cited The Arabs, the French, the Portuguese, the Italians, the Russians, as well as the Americans. All the countries mentioned by Farah's protagonist, Jeebleh, have all at one time or the other sought relevance by colonizing or dominating the polity. Jeebleh refers to America's provision of aids and support as "intravasion"- an intervention that is an invasion of a kind. Nega Mezlekia, another prominent writer also from the Horn of Africa, attributes the fragmentation suffered by the region to the European scramble for African territories. In her

view, the cruel and bloody division of Somalia into five pieces largely stemmed from "attempts to force a fiercely individualistic, clanminded people, through colonial influence, into the mold of a nation" (Mezlekia, 2000:195). Somalia's case is typical of the African country who gains independence but largely remains tied to the apron strings of its erstwhile colonial master and/or other builders of empires, who had first, in pursuit of selfish gains, drawn arbitrary imperial borders, thereby creating a network of political and economic tensions (Nuruddin Farah, 2000). The Somali Civil War resulted from such tensions.

The year 1991 was a watershed in Somalia's history. It is the year a civil war broke out in Somalia, the nation having witnessed its independence from Britain and Italy and successive dictatorial regimes. The war, generally attributed to diverse factors ranging from warlordism, clannism, colonial injustices, foreign (mis)interventions and failed attempts at self-governance, has had untold traumatizing effects on the nation and its citizens. Ali Farah traces the effects of the war and the violent dispersal of Somali people in *Little Mother*, a novel originally published in Italian as *Madre Piccola* (2007) and translated by Giovanna Bellesia-Contuzzi and Victoria Offredi Poletto in 2011. Ali Farah like other prominent Somali writers like Nuruddin Farah, Igiaba Scego, Nadifa Mohamed and Warsan Shire, resides in the Somali diaspora. Like Domenica Axad, a lady of mixed parentage, a major character in *Little Mother*, Farah left Somalia in 1991 as the civil war broke out. For Farah, as it is for her three main characters- Barni, Domenica Axad and Taageere, Somalia ceased to be the homely space they had known. The three main characters like several others in the narrative emigrate to nations as diverse as Rome, Syria, Kenya, London, Holland, Amsterdam, Germany and Canada. All through the narrative, Farah underscores the nomadism that defines the average Somali man or woman. Barni, towards the end of the narrative, relates that "The blow that devastated us is no small thing, but we have not yet touched the bottom. Therefore, what shall we do next?... We carry our home with us, our home can travel" (Farah, 2011:182). Since the homeland has ceased being one; it has then become necessary to hold on to shifting spaces and fleeting homes.

Ali Farah's commitment to Somalia and Somali migrants is discernible in the focus of her literary oeuvre. She has published short stories and poems in anthologies, and besides *Little*

Mother, she has *Il Comandante del Fiume* (The Commander of the River), a novel published in 2014. At a time, Farah was engaged in a project where she interviewed female migrants in Rome, especially migrants from Somali. From the project then came the non-fictional text– *L'Italia e i Somali Dimenticati* which appeared in *Migrantemente: Il Popolo Invisibile Prende la Parola* (2005). Often presented in fragmented and multiple voices, Farah's narratives represent migrants not as intruder or invaders but as people deserving of understanding, kindness and subjectivity. In her works of fiction and non-fiction, Farah depicts the experiences of migrants and the consequences of migration. *Little Mother*'s main characters cum narrators all tell of the impact of the condition of the diaspora on their lives and the lives of those around them. Somalians in the narrative are depicted as a people who have a history entangled with nomadism. In *Little Mother* like "Little Mother", the short story of the same title, which features four female migrants, Farah traces Somali migrants' response to the disintegration of the known and the familiar in the wake of the removal of Sarre and the civil war that ensued. The underlying question of the narrative according to Farah is what happens to a person when his or her life and world become unfamiliar. The novel depicts the characters' search for the personal and collective answer to the question (Ali Farah quoted in Claire Lavagnino, 2013). *Little Mother* represents Somali migrant characters' responses to the trauma of a shattered existence.

Domenica Axad, Taageere and Barni share an innocent childhood in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Domenica Axad like the author has a Somali father and an Italian mother and so she gets to spend some holidays in Italy. Barni recalls their growing up amongst family and friends. Theirs was a very large family with numerous children asking for ice cream and other things that they had seen only in pictures. Barni tells of how Uncle Taariik would cut out the pages of the magazine that had the ice cream and the cheeries and then present the cutout ice cream to her and Axad, all until trauma became flesh and the average Somalian became a wanderer. While the Somali people had been known for ages for their nomadism, as Ioan Lewis asserts that pastoral nomadism largely made up economic base of most of Somali people, and that nomadism manifests in almost all aspects and in all traditions of Somali life (Lewis, 2008:56), never had traumatic evictions made the Somali

people to flee their homeland the way many did at the wake of the civil war. Even amongst the wretched of the diaspora (Yuleth Chigwedere, 2017), the Somali exiles' cases seem to be the worst, for even the poor call them poor and the displaced mourn Somali people's experience of displacement. Amongst the Yemeni population recreated in Nadifa Mohamed's *Black Mamba Boy* (2010), Somali migrant children were most underprivileged: "Indian kids, Jewish kids, and Yemeni kids all lived with their parents, however poor they might be. It was only the Somali children who ran around feral, sleeping everywhere and anywhere. Many of the Somali boys were children of single mothers working in the coffee factories, too tired after twelve hours of work to chase around after boisterous, hungry boys" (Mohamed, 2010:30) whose fathers appear and disappear at will. In Tembo's (2017) view, Somali people were largely reduced to rubbish by the civil war.

Domenica Axad, Taageere and Barni are all marked by the trauma inflicted upon them by their differing experiences at the dawn of the war. It took Taageere some time to adjust to the changes in Mogadishu. The dramatic disintegration of his beloved city into a mould of blood and violence makes lasting impact on his psyche. The first person Taageere loses is Xirsi, his dearest friend. After armed militias occupied the city, Taageere, Xirsi and Maryam, Xirsi's cousin join some relatives who were about to flee Mogadishu. Their plan was to flee towards Kenya. But just before they leave, Maryam realizes that she forgot to take her dead baby's picture along. While others wondered what was in a picture in the face of war and death, "for her it was clearly the most important thing" (Farah, 2011:151), her hysteria testified of the importance of her baby's memories. Xirsi and Taageere offer to go back and get the photo but they do not return. Xirsi is hit by a stray bullet and in spite of Taageere's efforts to save his life, carrying Xirsi with Xirsi's blood flowing his own eyes and mouth, flagging down an unknown vehicle to rush him to the hospital, Xirsi dies in his arms. Taaageere recalls that the shot was fired by one of five boys, young boys who in the wake of violence have taken up arms. From then on, Taageere loses his hold on everything he had held dear. He does not leave the hospital where Xirsi dies until the doctor forces Foodcadde to take him home. When he does not seem to be in charge of his senses as to direct Foodcadde to his place, Foodcadde takes him to the Tunisian's place, from where his

escape to Kenya was arranged. From Kenya, he leaves for Rome and then the United States, from where he hopes to move back to Italy towards the end of the narrative. He is a helpless wanderer.

For Barni, the beginning of the war meant the beginning of the reign of fear. She recalls that in the chaos "criminals spread like the plague. They broke into homes. They stole, they raped, they destroyed. Broken walls and silence all around. We were so very afraid and we didn't even have the courage to go out and light a fire. Huddled together in silence" (Ali, 2011:113). Their constant companion was fear and terror. Neither Barni's hope that the liberation army would arrive, march on the capital, destroy the seat of power and distribute the wealth to the beggars nor her dream that it would be declared on the radio that the dictator had been conquered and that her parents were indeed the heroes of the past decade ever came to fruition. The unpleasant reality stared them in the face day after day and soon when the liberation army marched into the city, the president responded by pulling out dangerous weapons, leaving the populace to bear the brunt of the full-blown war. It was in the midst of the terror, when everyone stayed indoors for fear of death and harm that Barni risks death to save a life. She leaves the house, a falling shelter, to attend to courageously Saciid Saleebaan's sister, Deeqa, whose labour pangs had just begun. Knowing the times they were in and the uncertainty of a return, Barni packs a few things treasured things along with her equipment. For those that have experienced the trauma of war, any moment could be the last. Having witnessed Xirsi's on the spot killing, Taageere knew this and Barni knew this too.

Pathetically, Barni never makes it to Deeqa's place. She and Saciid Saleebaan are accosted by four gun-wielding young boys. Barni relates that in peace time, she could have put the four boys in their place with a reprimand but now she and Saciid Saleebaan are "impotent in front of those weapons, simple pieces of metal in the hands of four ignorant bushboys… who now dared to play around with our lives" (Ali, 2011:122). One of the boys fires a shot that almost hit Saciid Saleebaan, after which he orders Saciid Saleebaan to start to cry if he does not to be shot on the forehead. Eventually, Barni is abducted while Saciid Saleebaan is allowed to go. To the thugs, Barni, whom they mistook for a doctor would be useful to

them. She is taken to the makeshift headquarters of the rebel group, a large place that was formerly the headquarters of an Italian firm, now hosting militants. Shortly after President Siad Barre was ousted, disorder and disarray descended upon Somalia, with different clans laying hold to whatever power they could wield. Tribal rivalries and age-long hurts began to play out as different lords sifted through the populace to differentiate enemies from friends. Tribalism is the excuse Barni's husband gives for leaving her. Even in the diaspora, clanism and tribal loyalties still played out amongst the Somalis. Many have identified clanism as the root cause of the unending Somali civil war. While it would not be entirely correct to blame clan rivalry entirely for the war, it is an overriding factor, because as Nuruddin Farah notes, the war is the "eventual result of a historical process which began with Europe's prolonged colonisation, continued with brief independence, and was followed by Siad Barre's dictatorial rule (a regime that received backing from powerful players in the international arena) until its eventual collapse in 1991" (Farah, 2000:478).

Somalia has held little but pain and trouble for Barni's family. Barni's father, Mr Sharmaarke, is a teacher who along with his brother, Taariikh, took up teaching out of a passion to see the Somali children embrace a deColonisation of the mind, by learning "to write their own language, communicating from afar using the words of the father and the mother" which is what in their opinion would "allow us to stay solidly united, without the flow of someone else's language separating us" (Ali, 2011:11). Barni's father and Taariikh, Axad's father are both rounded up and imprisoned because of their criticism of the government's handling of the war between Somalia and Ethiopia. Taariikh especially criticized the way citizens were recruited by force to fight in Ogaden. In time, Domenica Axad gets used to seeing her father in and out of prison; Barni's father never comes back home; he is killed alongside other political detainees. Barni's mother's resultant trauma from having her husband unlawfully detained and then executed publicly like a thief eventually claims her life:

> Ardo hadn't been sleeping for a long time. She suffered from insomnia…We were too small, Axad, to understand my mother who wept every day, who didn't get out of bed and whose eyes had purple circles around them, my mother who

> didn't wash herself anymore, who didn't eat anymore, who didn't go out anymore. She stayed in bed huddled up like a fetus…Abbaayo, no one ever wanted to tell me why my mother died. We all fled from that crackling fire, everybody, absolutely everybody. Now that I am an adult, I think that what killed her was the pain she felt for those nine men shot on the beach without a trial, those nine men one of whom had a heart-shaped birthmark right in the middle of his forehead (Ali, 2011:128).

Barni's family is one of many who bore the brunt of not just the war on the outsiders, but the war on those within, citizens. Ardo, Barni's mother, despite all efforts, never recovers from the public execution of Barni's father, whose only crime was that he was patriotic enough to speak his mind.

Barni's father's public execution reeks of the Sarre's regime's crimes against humanity. Thousands of the ruled lost their lives through organized disappearances, arranged accidents and staged executions. Public executions in the postcolony present a site where the grotesque and the obscene meet; it is the site where the right to punish is cruelly abused and misappropriated (Mbembe, 2001). By organizing public executions Sarre and cohorts such as Idi Amin of Uganda, Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia dramatize their ability to (mis)appropriate lives and end it. By ensuring there is an audience to watch the "performance of death", they create fear and ingrain docility in the citizens. In the years after the independence of many African States, Africa has been transformed into "expanding graveyards and battlefields for the enactment of some of the contemporary world's worst human tragedies" (Kofi Anyidoho, 1999:76). Within the ten years of Sarre's dictatorship, Somalia had degenerated into a death-trap that must be fled. Somalia becomes for the characters a prison ravaged by war and a fire to flee from. For someone like Shamsa, leaving Somalia became her only reason for living. The much-loved Mogadishu evicted its populace: "she talked to me at length about her determination, about how, long before the war broke out, she realized that there was no future there for young people. To dream: did she also have to give up the right to dream? In Mogadishu even dreaming had become impossible. Nothing, a life of nothing" (Ali, 2011:89).

In spite of the public performance that the government made of the Lampedusa catastrophe, characters continue to leave through legal and illegal routes. They must escape the fortress of crumbling walls that Somalia had become and embrace the illusory Fortress Europe spurned by a yearning to live, to legitimate desire access a better reality. Barni speaks of "history repeating the story of poor people spurred on by yearning, such total yearning that it uproots you, it defies sea storms" (Ali, 2011:18), but in the end many of the migrants never make it to the other side of the sea:

> Boats have been coming and unloading illegal immigrants along Italian coastlines for a long time now. The tides go in and out and the beaches keep filling up with garbage: tomato cans, shards of green glass, small tubes of medicine, clumps of tar, and plastic bags, more and yet more plastic bags. And, carried by the sea, lifeless bodies, wearing tattered clothes, their purplish skin blotched with white salt. (Ali, 2011:17)

During the official funeral of the people lost in Lampedusa (in October 2013, at Lampedusa, an Italian island, more than three hundred and sixty migrants died as their overloaded fishing boat bound for Italy got drown), which Barni attends, potential illegal migrants to Italy are warned but after the burial at Prima Porta, the coffin loaded onto shoulders and lowed into the wet earth and the cypress trees amidst the clicking of cameras, Barni relates the boatloads of illegal immigrants did not stop coming, even after that solemn funeral. The people would rather emigrate to find better pastures or die trying. Like Domenica Axad, they imagine Europe to be an armored fortress that supplied "an abundance of delights and forbidden luxuries" (Ali, 2011:158), but they would be wrong. Taageere for instance would wander through continents and would yet be restless.

For the characters not lost to the sea, they continue to wander from place to place. The Somali migrants had reasoned that the final destination hardly matter since "one could exist anywhere... for all of us, it didn't matter where. You simply had to get used to a different set of store signs, different prices, and draw up a new map" (Ali, 2011:85) but they would soon realize that most of the desired harbours hardly welcome immigrant with open hands, especially immigrants with dark skin (Pap Khouma, 2010:52). In biracial Domenica Axad's dealings with Saciid Saleebaan, whom she allows to borrow her Italian passport, she affirms

that it was not easy to cross borders with Somali documents. The Somali passport was one like Souleymane Bachir Diange's Senegalese passport; a passport that hardly passes ports but which only answers the name of the nation to which bearer of the passport is to be deported to. (Presented on Eliot Ross's Africa is a Country, 2014). This is why Moroccan migrants in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* drown their papers and become "identity-less" as soon as they land on Spanish soil. Thanks to modern machinations, "the passport is where identity has been relocated, in a sense independently of its bearer. It is against the permanence of such an identity that the individual has to measure themselves; or one has to tally with what one has in the passport as oneself" (Ewa Macura-Nnamdi, 2018:123). This is the reason why an individual could easily attempt to destroy the passport and hope to destroy his or her previous identity or point of reference for identity.

As Etienne Balibar notes, (as presented in Macura-Nnamdi's "Dump It In The Toilet": On The Use(lessness) of the Passport" (2018)), unbounded and unhindered mobility is premised on the status of the migrant:

> As a matter of fact, the "ruling class" of modern society, with its internal hierarchies, is multilingual, multicultural, and migratory. It studies at Harvard, works in the airplane or with transnational data banks, and spends its vacations between Morocco and the Seychelles. The national passport has changed its meaning (at least for the dominant nationalities); *it no longer expresses (except no doubt in the United States) allegiance to an autonomous power but, rather, a conditional right of access to the "cosmopolis" of communications and modern financial transactions.* This is why there is such strong resistance to the enlargement of citizenship and to the very exploration of its modalities. *For the perpetuation of the traditional cleavages between the dominated represents a keystone in the system of new inequalities*. (Balibar, 1988:729) (emphasis added)

Macura-Nnamdi relates that that what underlies Balibar's perceptive observation that is a belief in the passport's unqualified capacity to stop some and to let others go, its halt or move logic and then its quasi-absolute dispensation of mobility to whom it wills. It is no wonder then that with an Italian passport, which she calls "pass-borders", Domenica Axad's can gain entry into any country of choice all by getting a visa and purchasing the flight

ticket. She could even like she did with Saciid Saleebaan's girlfriend, give out her passport, before the era of fingerprinting, since whites supposedly had problems telling one black person from the other, and then report a lost passport and get another.

A character like Caasha is able to escape or circumvent the restrictions placed by a passport. To escape her killers in Somalia, Caasha walked from Mogadishu all the way to Kismaayo, from there she flees to Nairobi by car, and from there she leaves for Syria and with a passport that is fake. She does not go alone, she goes to Germany with her four children. She escapes from a German refugee camp thanks to a ruse. She then lands in the Netherlands, where she works and saves pennies from her small subsidy and from the money she made preparing sweets and sambuusi for parties. Libeen too must travel with fake documents, employing a false identity. Having moved from place to place, these characters have experienced first-hand the barriers posed by passports, visas and other tools that facilitate, regulate or hinder mobility. They have come to realise that in the hierarchy of passports, the Somali passport is not one to be reckoned with. There is the "valued hierarchy in which Northern passports are the gold standard against which those from the global South become useless or even incriminating" (Foster, 2015:218). Thence, for the common people, Caasha, Libeen, Luul and others like them, the dream of independence has become a nightmare. Independence brought them only pain and dispersal. Apparently, as seen with Somalia and most African states, the end of colonialism only meant the end of the era of domination by a set of rulers; independence only meant a change of masters.

3.5 Conclusion

All eight narratives depict the postcolonial condition as a traumatizing agent as well as a stressor. They depict how the postcolony's internal problems— tribal rivalries, civil wars, coups and counter coups, recession, unemployment, insecurity and so on, and the problems without- foreign dominance, debts and imperial debris and ruins (Ann Stoler, 2013) served to evict the characters. Each text depicts the nation's intricate unending dependence on its former colonial lords and the pull that the West holds for migrants from the developing nation. The texts demonstrate how the postcolony continues to traumatise characters who

in turn embrace emigration as the ultimate panacea. The characters respond by seeking help elsewhere. Desperate attempts are made to leave the homeland. The characters flee uncertainty, hopelessness and helplessness for even a greater uncertainty— an interstitial existence in a hostile host land. While this chapter traced how the condition of the postcolony and/or the state of affairs in the postcolonial state itself serves to traumatise migrant characters, so much so that migration seems the only option, the next chapter explores the narratives' depiction of migrant characters' traumatic experiences in the diaspora, their responses and the possibility of engaging African migrant texts through lens provided by trauma theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMMIGRANT SUFFERING AS TRAUMA IN AFRICAN MIGRANT NARRATIVES

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a reading of the postcolonial predicament as trauma, since it is the abysmal state of affairs in many African states that more often than not pushes out the characters to seek sustenance, security and fortune elsewhere. The Motherland's propensity as a site of insidious trauma, is explored in each of the purposively selected text, thereby exposing African societies' complicity in the traumatisation of migrant characters. This chapter examines the selected narratives' representation of African migrant characters' traumatic experiences on the way to and/or in the diaspora. I explore how the condition of the diaspora wound African migrant characters bodily, culturally and especially psychologically. In addition, I examine the impact of what I capture as immigrant suffering on the characters and characters' strategies towards effecting a working-through. In this chapter, I read the host land as a site of trauma. I employ trauma theory to examine what Greg Forter (2007:260) captures as the "mundanely catastrophic" events that traumatise migrant characters but that have largely been ignored in mainstream trauma studies.

Essentially, I employ trauma theory mainly to engage the narratives' representations of the psychological dimension to migration cum the psychological consequences of emigration. For many migrant characters, the journey out of their nations is in itself distressing, especially for characters who take clandestine routes, travelling on boats and walking

through the desert. On arrival at the European country, migrant characters are arrested, dehumanized and then deported. For the migrants who are able to successfully enter the nation of destination, their dreams are deferred and often destroyed. For these characters, racist humiliation, identity crisis, a belated realization that the global North was not paradise after all, and the foreknowledge that there is hardly any home to return to, serve to traumatise them. Invariably, the traumatogenic contexts and events make some to lose their essence while others embrace death.

4.2 Of a Price Greater than the Prize: Existential Futility as Trauma in Lai Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*

For almost all of the migrant characters in Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* and Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, emigration comes at a cost higher than the gain. The dividend derived from the North-ward migration, for those migrants characters lucky to make it to the destination, are disproportional to the sacrifices made. For all the characters without an exception, an existential futility marks their mobility. The dream of a welcoming Europe is dashed and their expectation of a fruitful enterprise in the diaspora is ruined. The pleasures that Europe bestows for the migrant that makes it into Europe are often outweighed by the discomforts, feelings of unbelonging and the overall cost of migration; thus, the metaphoric "greener pasture" comes with unquantifiable sacrifices, so that what had seemed green, on a closer look "sometimes appear red, yellow, or even gray, depending on the state of mind", then leading to a double jeopardy (Toyin Falola et al, 2008:483). For the illegal migrants in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (*Hope*) and *On Black Sisters' Street* (*Street*) and the legal migrant characters in *Leaving Tangier* (*Tangier*), their lots are hardly different, they all experience disillusionment and dislocation.

Contemporary global migration, especially of clandestine mobilities, evokes memories of the transatlantic Middle passage. In modern times, willing and unwilling characters are forced to seek refuge and survival in other places. In Ckikwava's *Harare North*, for

instance, the protagonist says he does not want to leave Zimbabwe but things force him. Poverty, helplessness and insecurity force characters to flee African countries and embrace "Fortress Europe". The perpetually widening economic and social gap between the global South and the global North continues to push and pull migrants in such a haphazard fashion that the more restrictions are placed on illegal entry, the harder the team of migrants, smugglers and traffickers attempt to evade the very infrastructure put in place to bar them. Ironically though, the degree to which the North attempts to bar the unwanted migrants from the South is the degree to which those from the South would create loopholes in the fortified mechanisms. The border control apparatuses may be strengthened, but it would do little to curb migratory flows into Europe because "immigrants will carry on clamoring at the gates of Europe, ever poorer and even hungrier. The batons will only get harder but damned will always come faster" (Dominic Thomas, 2011:150, Laurent Gaudé, 2013:246). Amazed at why migrants would risk everything, their past, present and future, in fact, risk their very lives in order to get into Europe, Nick Schifrin (2018) discovers that migrants especially from the poorer and more volatile regions emigrate by all means because in their estimation, the perilous passage North is safer than staying at home.

In *Hope*, "The Trip", a prelude to the entire narrative tells of the characters' perilous journey across the Straits. The Straits of Gilbratar has been variously captured as a beast that consumes the young and the old, a gate that separates two worlds and a huddle that must be overcome if migrants would lay hold on their dreams. Murad and others like him on the day of departure are anxious and yet hopeful that the journey would be worth it. At 3:15am, he and twenty-nine other migrants start out on a boat that should have taken just eight people. For the journey, each migrant pays heavily to Rahal, an opportunist and a seasoned smuggler. It is the migrants' expectation that the boat would convey them all to the shore at Tarifa, but to their utter dismay, they are told move out about two hundred and fifty metres to the coast, Rahal orders everyone to get out of his boat and swim the rest of the journey. Aziz, who has once been on Rahal's boat and turned back from Spain, is the first to start to swim to shore. The others, still in shock make a fruitless attempt at making Rahal take the boat to the shore. However, as one of the passengers makes an abrupt movement to reason with Rahal, "to force him to go all the way to the shore, but the Zodiac loses balance and then it's too late" (Lalami, 2006:10). All the thirty passengers are thrown overboard and left

to wrestle with fate. Especially pathetic is the case of Halima, a woman with three children, left to save herself and her children from the monstrous Mediterranean.

Aziz, having been through the route before makes it to the shore and escapes but the others are not that lucky. Murad tries to swim like he has seen Aziz done, "the shock of the cold water all over his body makes his heart go still for a moment. He bobs, gasps for air, realizes that there's nothing left to do but swim. So he wills his limbs, heavy with the weight of his clothes, to move" (Lalami, 2006:10). When he finally begins to swim, Faten calls out to him in distress. He tries to pull away from her but she desperately holds on to him. In a pitiable humorous scene, he attempts to give swimming lessons right in the middle of the Mediterranean:

> "Use one hand to move," he yells. Her eyes open wider but her hands do not move. He forces one of her hands off him and manages to make a few strokes. Her body is heavy against his. Each time they bob in the water, she holds on tighter. There is water in his ears now and her cries are not as loud. He tries to loosen her grip but she won't let go. He yells out. Still she holds on. The next time they bob, water enters his nose and it makes him cough. They'll never make it if she doesn't loosen her grip and help him. He pushes her away. Free at last, he moves quickly out of her reach. "Beat the water with your arms," he yells. She thrashes wildly. "Slower," he tells her, but he can see that it is hopeless, she can't swim. A sob forms in his throat… He's already drifting away from her, but he keeps calling out, telling her to calm down and start swimming. His fingers and toes have gone numb, and he has to start swimming or he'll freeze to death. He faces the coast. He closes his eyes, but the image of Faten is waiting for him behind the lids (Lalami, 2006:11).

Having to leave Faten behind, a stranger he meets hours ago, is distressing for Murad but he must help himself before he can help another. Long before stepping foot on the Spanish soil, he is faced with the consequence of choosing survival over kindness. The result is Faten's image waiting behind his lids.

For the characters that make it to shore safely, the Guardia Civil and their dogs menacingly await their arrival. Just when Murad thinks he has successfully escaped from the officers, having been smart enough to have arranged for Rubio, a Spaniard appointed to drive him north to Catalonia, an officer whom he mistakes at first for Rubio arrests him. At the

Guardia Civil's post, Murad is joined by other men and women, who he does not recognize. Most of them had come on other boats. From his boat, he identifies Scarface, the Guinean woman and Faten who is to see a doctor. He then sees a body bag, the dead body of a migrant like him who had been alive a few minutes ago. The sight is traumatizing for him: "A sour taste invades his mouth. He swallows but can't contain it. He doubles over and the officer lets go of him. Murad stumbles to the side of the building and vomits. It could have been him in that body bag; it could have been Faten. Maybe it was Aziz or Halima" (Lalami, 2006:14). From the post, the characters are taken to a cell after they all signed a form affirming that they are illegal migrants awaiting deportation. Murad worries that after his deportation, he will not be able to freely walk around again. He mourns his impending deportation and examined the bleak future that lies ahead of him in spite of his struggles, "his future there stands before him, unalterable, despite his efforts, despite the risk he took and the price he paid. He will have to return to the same old apartment, to live off his mother and sister, without any prospects or opportunity" (Lalami, 2006:14). From his cell, Murad sees seagulls fly away at dawn and he envies them for their freedom, as he bemoans his failure to get to Catalonia.

Faten, who narrowly escapes death, must make a choice between deportation and gratifying the guard's lust. The Spanish guard takes advantage of Faten's desperation. Faten who has known poverty first-hand is unwilling to go back to Morocco. All through her life, she had witnessed the sharp inequality that continues to widen the gap between the always rich and the forever poor people in Morocco, she belonging to the later class. He father had left her mother and failed to send the money ordered by the court for her upkeep. She lives with her aunt in Agadir until her aunt sends her back to her mother in Rabat, having noticed how their neighbour, a single man employs the slightest excuse to see her. Back with her mother in the Douar Lhajja slum, in Rabat, and thanks to hard toil and a resilient spirit, she is able graduate from high school and go to college, where she joins the Islamic Student Organization. Unfortunately, in a wave of blind fanatism, she makes a derogatory comment about King Hassan within earshot of an informer. She miraculously escapes arrest, all thanks to a bribe. It then became glaring that she was no longer safe in Morocco. She leaves with others on the boat and so when she faces deportation right at the Spanish coast, she condescends to allowing the guard to have his way with her in exchange for entry into Spain.

Faten's days in Spain were not what she had envisaged. In three years of staying in Spain and working as a prostitute, she has only hung around the streets, in search of clients, hospitals and the stores. What she calls a normal life only exists only in her imagination. She had bidden faith farewell, having come to realize that only the rich could afford to have faith. She would later refer to her college days when she wore the hijab and preached to every woman she met as the days of foolishness. With the memories of her time in Rabat comes nostalgia and homesickness; she remembers her mother who would take off some time on Eid so she and Faten could be together. In Spain, in a bid to fend for herself, Faten has become a beast of burden. She is likened to the dromedaries that she sees on the television, a mammal that has many things in common with her: "his resistance to harsh living conditions, his nomadic patterns, and his many uses, as a beast of burden, for his meat and milk, and even for his dung, which could be burned for fuel" (Lalami, 2006:83). To survive the pain that defines her life in Spain, she resorts to taking valium and dreaming about what could have been, had she been allowed to complete her studies in Rabat.

To Martín, Faten's erstwhile favourite client, she is nothing but an object of sexual satisfaction. He is pleased when she tells him a fabricated version of her history, of having spent all her days in the harem, learning the art of pleasing men. Delighted, Martín goes on to compare her with Spanish women. In a tone reminiscent of that of a colonial Columbus, he haughtily remarks that "Women in this country…They don't know how to treat a man. Not the way you Arab girls do" (Lalami, 2006: 84). Faten's objectification in Spain where she must compete with Spanish girls for men's attention and then submit her body to be degraded for some pounds, wounds her psyche. Her pain is further heightened by Betoul's mockery at the slightest opportunity. Betoul, Faten's flat mate, another beast of burden of a different sort, derides Faten for selling her body. The verbal abuse and the maltreatment from Betoul and Martín eventually weigh Faten down. Cristián Ricci (2019) reads Martín as the modern European colonizer, "a superior-metropolitan colonizer who is positioned as a categorically antithetical overlord" who seeks to subjugate Faten. Martín strives to "conquer', define and own Faten. He finds in her "a source of fantasy, a dish to be consumed" (Ricci, 2019:145); he acting as the connoisseur likens her skin to black olives and her breasts to mangoes. He constantly tells her that she needs his help, in a bid to yoke her psychologically to himself. Martín's character is reminiscent of Ulises in Gabriel

Marquez's *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother*. In the end, Faten, like Erendira, has only succeeded in changing prisons, she moves from one prison to a better furnished one.

Like Faten and Betoul, Aziz is only useful in Barcelona for the work he does. Migrants, especially the coerced migrants, not the free-willing cosmopolitan subjects (Simon Gikandi 2010:28), largely constitute the workforce for low-skilled, low-paid jobs in Europe (Anna-Leena Toivanen, 2019:51). In the migrant narratives, the legal migrants from the global South are often the fruit pickers, construction workers and the bed warmers while the illegal ones are the cleaners, security guards and restaurant dish washers in many European countries. 3Ds- dirty, dangerous and demeaning, is usually employed to capture the precarious nature of jobs often taken up by migrants. Aziz lives to work. Having escaped the guards at the Spanish coast while the other migrants were deported, he quickly gets engrafted onto the Spanish underground labour force. Unfortunately, the fruits of his labour cannot be enjoyed with the family he slaves to serve; his dream of a grand homecoming must be altered:

> For five years Aziz had imagined the scene of his homecoming. In his carefully rehearsed fantasies, he would come home on a sunny day, dressed in a crisp white shirt and black slacks, his hair gelled back and his mustache trimmed. His new car would be stacked to the roof with gifts for everyone in the family. When he rang the doorbell, his wife and his aging parents would greet him with smiles on their faces. He would take his wife into his arms, lift her, and they would twirl, like in the movies. Within days of his arrival, he would move them from the decrepit apartment in a poor neighborhood of Casablanca to one of those modern buildings that sprang up daily in the city. But as the date of his return to Morocco approached, Aziz found that he had to alter the details of his daydreams (Lalami, 2006:87).

After five years of slaving and saving, he comes homes with his dreams deferred and his family gradually disintegrating.

Aziz's disenchantment at his homecoming is heightened by the dire circumstances he meets his family in. His father had died during his absence, his wife is barely recognizable and his mother is hypertensive. The sights and scenes that greet his homecoming are equally

unwelcoming. At the airport, he is harassed by the customs officer who prods the things in his suitcase with his baton and asks when he sees a pack of ten undershirts, still in their plastic wrapping, if he plans to resell them. Outside the airport, the road was unkempt and unwelcoming. The prize he has paid thus far was incomparable to what he has made in the five years spent in Madrid. All to be in Spain, he had travelled in an inflatable Zodiac after which "he had been caught right on the beach in Arzila by the Spanish Guardia Civil and sent back to Morocco on the ferry two days later. He had spent a few months in Tangier, hustling, and tried again to cross over, after which he was able to bypass the guards and outsmart the other apparatuses set in place to send him back to Morocco. In Catalonia, thanks to extra payment made to the smugglers he got a job at a farm. He had hoped that the pay would compensate for the hard labour but when the payday arrived, he was disappointed to say the least. He was paid pittance and he was too afraid to complain. He gets on the move again planning on getting into France, by sneaking across the border in the back of a vegetable truck, but he was afraid of failure. In the end, through the help of a friend who works at a restaurant, he gets a job as a bus boy. Now back home, his family, the very motivation for all his efforts, has been negatively affected by his migration.

Rather than arriving in his old neighbourhood in a nice car as he had dreamed, Aziz walks down the old now unfamiliar street, amidst a crowd, clutching his suitcase and handbag firmly. Within minutes of getting back, he already feels foreign and nauseous. To the returnee, home becomes strange and yet familiar. It is however while with his family that his feelings of displacement and dispossession would peak. The disintegration of his small family in his absence is paralleled against the degeneration of their one-room apartment: "the apartment was darker than he remembered. The paint on the walls was flaking. One of the panes on the French windows was missing, and in its place was a piece of carton" (Lalami, 2006:90). He must make a decision between staying back and facing all he fled from in the first place, and going back without his wife and the desired hope of starting a family. On the eve of his departure, he packs his suitcase and gives Zohra all he has saved. In the valley of decision, there was a sceptical look in Zohra's eyes, and it made Aziz feel very uncomfortable. He is unsure of what she expects him to do, considering their circumstances. He reasons that it was too late to give up an opportunity to work just so he could be at home with her. "Did she have any idea what he'd gone through to make it in

Spain? He couldn't give it all up now. *He had to go back*" (Lalami, 2006:99, emphasis added). Ultimately, he counts his cost as he is forced to make the tough decision of leaving his family behind in Casablanca while he again goes to Madrid to yet slave and save.

For Aziz as it is for the other migrant characters, the Spain of their dreams and the Spain they lived in were two completely different places. The two 'Spains' were so dissimilar that each seemed to exist on different planets. When the visitors poured in to greet Aziz, their questions about Spain bespoke their own illusion. They ask him if he has someone that cooks for him, if he has a car and if he has many friends, for in their imagination, Spain is nothing like Morocco, it must be Eden or somewhere close to it. The people's imagined Spain has been fuelled by the performance of deceit that migrants like Betoul put up to show the returnee's superiority and the native's inferiority. Betoul for instance "lived like a pauper for eleven months of the year, and then, in August, she flew home and spent whatever was left in her bank account" (Lalami, 2006:80). Year after year, she strives to keep up with her show; "her yearly trips only made people back home think that she made a lot of money, and so she always came back with long lists of requests in her hand and new worry lines etched on her forehead" (Lalami, 2006:81). Aziz too only tells his inquisitive neighbours what they wanted to hear. He is selective in the details he tells them about his life in Madrid. Aziz does not disclose his awry experience at El Corte Ingles as he shops a jacket and the guard follows him around as if he were a common thief. He does not tell him of his invisibility at grocery stores since the cashiers have learnt to decipher those that matter from those who do not. He fails to describe his anguish at the constant monitoring, identity checks by police officers during his years in Madrid and the pain he felt at cheating on his wife with other women.

For Murad, the third major character in the narrative, the pain of deportation is tangible. His dreams of making it in Spain, plans he had neatly laid out over a period of years, shatter before him like unstrung pearls. His dream of success falls apart like a pack of cards:

> It's worth it, though, Murad tells himself. Some time on this flimsy boat and then a job. It will be hard at first. He'll work in the fields like everyone else, but he'll look for something better. He isn't like the others—he has a plan…He'll find a real job, where he can use his training. He has a degree in English and, in addition, he speaks Spanish fluently, unlike

> some of the harraga… It will be all right now. He comforts himself with the familiar fantasy that sustained him back home, all those nights when he couldn't fall asleep, worrying about how he would pay rent or feed his mother and brothers. He imagines the office where he'll be working; he can see his fingers moving quickly and precisely over his keyboard; he can hear his phone ringing. He pictures himself going home to a modern, well-furnished apartment, his wife greeting him, the TV in the background (Lalami, 2006:12)

In dreaming and making these plans, and then going ahead to cross the Mediterranean on a boat, Murad has only succeeded in chasing shadows and paying gold for cotton candies. The money Murad pays Rahal was borrowed and since he does not succeed in getting into Spain, he and Halima, the fourth major character, must stay in Morocco and learn to make ends meet, by all means. While Halima gets immersed in her mundane world of making beghrir, worrying over the children and trying to make a living, Murad resigns to storytelling. For all of the characters then, fulfilment remain an unaffordable commodity, ever elusive like hope, which for them has become a dangerous pursuit.

Tangier's protagonist, Azel and Kenza, his sister, just like Murad, Faten, Halima and Aziz will existentially pursue hope and always come up with nothing. Azel's ticket out of Morocco comes in the form of a gay lover, Miguel. Miguel takes advantage of Azel's desperation to make him his lover, rather his love-object. Frustrated and out of options, Azel had longed to leave Morocco by all means. In his community, thanks to blurred, distorted and stereotypical visions of Europe, built upon false impressions, assumptions and idealizations, emigration had seemed the panacea to all problems and the ladder to social relevance, prosperity and fulfilment. Azel's opportunity for emigration through Miguel comes on what had deceitfully seemed a platter of good. His chance meeting with Miguel fulfils what, in an ironic Freudian slip during a chat with Siham, had emerged as the highest price Azel was willing to pay in order to make his dream come true on the other side of the Straits (Nicoletta Pireddu, 2009). He had claimed that he was also "hoping to marry a Frenchman or a Spaniard" (Pireddu, 2009:27) in a bid to flee his helpless circumstance in Morocco. Unfortunately, Azel pays the highest price but he gets death in return. With Azel and Samsa's death, Jelloun questions what it profits African subjects to emigrate at all costs, only to lose their lives.

Long before Azel's encounter with Miguel, he had imagined an escape route out of Morocco. He had attempted all sorts to better his lot, all to no avail. Often, he sits at café, jobless and helpless, waiting for a positive change. In spite of a degree in law and international relations from International University of Rabat, he had combed Tangier and Rabat for a non-existent job. His only chance of getting a job with an uncle who practiced law in Larache, a nearby town, crumbles shortly after he graduates. His uncle had had to close his office and stop practicing after some complicated business cost him most of his clientele. In a lawless nation, the uncle had tried to uphold justice. His clients and the potential ones abandon him because of his integrity. Having no one else to turn to, Azel takes his place with other jobless youths at Café Hafa, endlessly watching and waiting for a change in the tides at Tarifa which would hopefully herald their change. There were endless days of waiting and nothing changes, which why Azel embraces miguel's offer, cautiously at first, and later on, greedily. Greed is what is common to Azel and the bees at the café. The bees enticed by mint tea which had long grown cold mill around the glasses until they tumble in, the tea owners, lost to liquor and drugs. Soon the bees are at the bottom of the tall glasses while the men use spoons to "fish the bees out one by one, placing them on the table and exclaiming, 'Poor little drowned things, victims of their own greediness!" (Jelloun, 2011:6). The bees' fate foreshadows Azel's.

It was not only Azel that was blind to his own unfolding traumatic fate, his sister and Lalla Zohra, their mother, had hoped that their family would only exploit Miguel's generosity at a little or no cost to their overall wellbeing. Even when the mother suspects Miguel's intentions, she is silenced and enticed by his wealth. The first time Azel returns from Miguel's place after spending two weeks, he comes back with more food than Lalla Zohra had seen in a season. Miguel's driver, Khaled, brings in huge baskets of provisions, all the fruits and vegetables of the season plus half a sheep and several large sea bream. Lalla Zohra at first convinces herself that Miguel must be interested in Kenza and not Azel. Later on when Kenza tells her that Azel, not herself, is the object of Miguel's affection, Lalla Zohra comforts herself with thoughts of her family's eventual liberation from poverty. To her, Miguel, whom she mistakes for an ambassador is a stroke of good fortune, appearing just when she thinks her labour over her only son had been a waste. Azel's father who worked in a cement factory had died before Azel could recognize him. Lalla Zohra had to raise Azel

and Kenza with little help, while she worked as a smuggler. She would travel to Ceuta and buy things she could easily resell. All the while she slaved and smuggled goods from Ceuta to sell in Tangier in order to cater for her children, it was her dream that Azel would become a doctor or an important official, and then he would marry a girl from a good family. Her dreams which had been deferred must now be redefined. The dream must be edited to erase the part that featured a good girl from a good family for Azel. To her, Miguel is the magic link to the fulfilment of her age-long dream.

For Kenza, any outlet from her lowing-paying job is a welcome development, no matter the price paid for it. Leaving Morocco becomes even necessary after Noureddine, her lover drowns during an illegal crossing on a boat. Noureddine had gathered money from around and got Abdeslam, his brother, to lend him some more money to pay Al Afia for a trip into Spain by boat. The government and the media had made a show of the drowning to deter other dreamers. Kenza does not realize the full impact of the loss until Azel brings home Noureddine's bloated body, which unlike the other victims' bodies- disfigured and mangled by sharks, had been untouched. Shortly before Noureddine's departure, he and Kenza had spent their time inside the Agla's beach shack. After she gives herself to him, he tells her about his trip and his dreams– marriage to her, a reunion "in Brussels, kids, and everything else" (Jelloun, 2012:150). Soon, his body would float on the Mediterranean and his dreams would sink to the bottom of the sea. Unable to attend the burial because the customs forbade women from funeral, Kenza mourns Noureddine in her own way. Noureddine's death leaves Kenza broken and in need of redemption, a redemption she hopes to find in Spain, whenever Azel's Miguel makes good his promise of helping her family relocate to Spain.

To Azel's perceptive mind, the affair with Miguel was his last card at leaving Morocco and his final chance at accomplishing his goals. While Azel had a vague idea of what Miguel's favours would cost him, he simply goes ahead with the affair since he reasoned that it was the safest route out of Morocco. The narrator tells of how his days and nights were consumed with thoughts of leaving so much that he suffers from insomnia. He is forced to consider the "the recruiter's proposals, which he couldn't completely dismiss. Insomnia gave frightening intensity to these tortured ruminations" (Jelloun, 2011:20). Azel is conversant with the borders and boulders that gated Fortress Europe and barred easy access, and he must seek a legitimate entry if he will not end up like Noureddine and Mohammed-

Larbi. He has Noureddine, to dissuade him from illegal crossing and Mohammed-Larbi, a young man lost to a deluded Islamic terrorist group, to dissuade him from taking the recruiter's offer. At first, Azel parades Siham before Miguel as his fiancée. During their visit to Miguel's mansion, Azel tells Miguel about his obsession with Spain. During their show of shame, Siham does not mince words, she bluntly asks if Miguel could help them get visas to leave Morocco. It was however clear that Miguel had his eyes only on Azel.

In a meeting with Abdelmalek, Abdelmalek informs Azel of how his affair with Miguel is the trending news from the grapevine. Abdelmalek counsels Azel to tread with caution and at the same time make the best of the opportunity:

> … I know a lot of guys who do that in the summer, even some who end up leaving in the zamel's baggage. Once abroad, they run off with a woman, get married, and become citizens, you know, that pretty burgundy passport. Afterwards they come back here all arrogant and triumphant. There're others who flutter around old ladies, Europeans or Americans, wrinkled bags wearing too much make-up, alone, but so wealthy… I knew one guy, that was even his specialty, he'd stake out the Café de Paris to await his prey. You know he wound up marrying a Canadian who gave him her nationality, with all her inheritance as a bonus? When he got back to Tangier he was so rich he was unrecognizable. He'd dyed his hair, he wore designer clothes and talked to us in a kind of beginner English. He thought he was impressing us (Jelloun, 2011:40).

It is during this conversation with Abdelmalek that Azel weighs his options, counts the cost and decides on playing along with Miguel's demands in exchange for a chance to emigrate. Azel was well aware of the "Madness" that was slowly stalking them. He had heard of Rachid, a youth who "ended up in the psychiatric hospital in Beni Makada. No one knew what afflicted him; he could only say one word, over and over: 'Spania'" (Jelloun, 2011:57). And so Azel knows he cannot afford to remain in Tangier. He has learnt by experience that money opens all doors, and that the one with the money is to be obeyed.

In Spain, Azel suffers bouts of homesickness. His excitement at leaving Morocco and escaping police brutality soon fade away. His feelings of his heart light, his eyes "fixed on the horizon, gazing into the future" ready for "change, ready to live free, to be useful, to attempt things that will transform me into a man standing on his own two feet, no longer

afraid, no longer dependent… a man finished with odd jobs, who'll never need to show his diploma to prove he's useless" (Jelloun, 2011:55) and the joy of finally stepping into Spain begin to wane with every passing minute. Kept by Miguel in the maid's room on purpose, Azel takes to writing to document his travails in Barcelona and his disillusionment at the shattering of his illusion about Europe. In Spain, he feels like a lost child abandoned by all. He reflects on how his dreams and his present reality hardly match. He then attempts to find solace by thinking of Siham. He recounts his disappointment at his little room which smells musty and has only one window that he dares not open. He soon finds means of escaping the solitude. He steals away to Marbella to see Siham who through El Haj found a job caring for a physically challenged child. Even with the get aways with Siham, for which he lies to Miguel that he goes to see a sick uncle in Malaga, Azel feels empty. He then begins to frequent the underground world of illegal migrants, drug dealers and smugglers at Malaga.

With Azel, Kenza and Lalla Zohra, Miguel assumes the role of the Europeans that Chinua Achebe alluded to in the seminal essay "The Novelist as a Teacher" (1975:45). Miguel is the quintessential European acting on the behalf of God, rescuing the El Arab's family from their long night of savagery, poverty and hopelessness. Miguel's "civilising" mission entails the domestication of Azel while he "helps" him:

> Miguel had never considered the differences in their ages and cultures to be a problem. He saw Azel as a lost young man, destined to wind up among the dregs of Tangier in spite of his diplomas and intelligence. The boy was appealing and aggravating in equal measures, an incoherent collection of opposites with a distinct penchant for laziness, a readiness to coast along. (Jelloun, 2011:87)

From the day Azel steps into Spain, Miguel makes it clear that Azel belongs to him. Miguel as an imperialist that he is, subjugates Azel, mapping out his boundaries and responsibilities. From the start, Miguel treats Azel not as the partner as but as an object, a tool to satisfy his sexual orgies. He is quick to point out who was in charge; the colonizing Self is quick to announce to the colonized Other that the nature of the relationship is that of a subordinate to a boss, an inferior to his superior. Fanon writing in *The Fact of Blackness* relates how the coloniser conditions the colonised to see himself as the inferior. Miguel's racist attitudes engender Azel's feelings of emptiness and inferiority, since "the feeling of inferiority of the

colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority" (Fanon 1967:69). Additionally, since it was Miguel who brought Azel to Spain, he ensures that Azel exists only for him and does his bidding, just in the same way the colonial system as Nimet Karadağ (2015) relates both desired to have control over all aspects of the native's life, and developed strategies that caused disruption in the colonised's life.

Azel's psyche bears the impact of Miguel's attitudes and actions. Azel begins to fall apart psychologically, experiencing a crisis of being after the show organized by Miguel, after he suspects that Azel has been unfaithful to him. On the day chosen for the show, Miguel instructs Azel to take a shower and await further instructions. Miguel then invites about thirty people for a disguise party with the theme of 'The Orient: Think Pink!'. Miguel dresses as a vizier of the Arabian Nights while he orders Azel to wear a caftan, a wig and a gold belt. Miguel ensures his guests are all drunk before having Azel leave his waiting room to perform before the guests. The traumatic import of the show is felt by Azel even before he goes downstairs to see the guest. Immediately Carmen, Miguel's housekeeper gives Azel the clothes cum costumes, ordering him to wear them and await further instructions, Azel hallucinates. The narrator describes how in his mind's eye, Azel sees his friend Noureddine, who had drowned in the straits. Azel is terrified as he looks at himself in the mirror. Just before Azel is to witness another traumatizing event, he experiences compulsive repetition arising from his grief over the loss of Noureddine to the sea. Azel's traumatic repetition compulsion constitutes a doubling of the traumatic impact of Noureddine's death, Mohammed-Larbi's disappearance and Miguel's abuses, for as Cathy Caruth (1996:3) asserts in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* that trauma inflicts a "double wound" in its repetitive invasion of and intrusions into the victim's psyche.

Azel's traumatic compulsions are his subconscious mind's foreshadowing of what would be his torturous lot during Miguel's circus show. Anne Whitehead (2004:119) relates that the compulsion to repeat the traumatic experiences and encounters constitutes an attempt to achieve a retrospective mastery over the event. She further notes that this repetition in no way guarantees a healing. In Azel's own case, healing dwells in the realm of the impossible. Being faced with a humiliating show, Azel's present and past intersect in a traumatic trajectory. His is a traumatic past and a traumatizing present. At the show, Azel is called all sorts by Miguel's guests. Some call him "a lovely statue", some "a perfect mélange – half

woman, half man", others referred to him as the "The loveliest catamite of the Maghreb" (Jelloun, 2011:88). During the show, Miguel parades Azel as his conquest, to the abject and total humiliation of the latter:

> …Seizing Azel's hand, he addressed his guests. 'My friends, I'm delighted to present *my latest conquest* to you: the body of an athlete sculpted in bronze, with a piquant soupçon of femininity. Quite a stud! Educated, but familiar as well with the underworld of Tangier, that city of bandits and traitors. Neither bandit nor traitor, of course, Azel is simply a most beautiful object, an object to tempt every eye. Just look at his magnificent skin! You may touch it. Get in line, but don't push, he's right here, he's not going anywhere. Run your hand along his hip, for example, and do restrain your impulses. He belongs to me, and I won't have any fighting over him!' Miguel was holding Azel firmly by the hand while the guests filed past him, one after the other, pretending to caress the young man (Jelloun, 2011:89, emphasis added).

As if having the men humiliate Azel one after the other was not enough, Miguel orders Azel to dance like a whore. He is to dance like a fellow they saw at a fair in Tétouan.

In an ascending order, Miguel orders Azel to do one humiliating task after another. To cap it all up, Azel is locked out. He is forced to watch a group of musicians who arrive around two in the morning, hired by Miguel to copulate, not to sing. When Azel makes an attempt to flee upstairs, he finds the way barred a bouncer employed by Miguel. "Sensing the trap Miguel had set for him, Azel tore off his wig, scrubbed his face, and went off to hide in a far corner of the kitchen, where he fell asleep like a forgotten child amid the crates of food and the empty bottles" (Jelloun, 2011:89). After the gory show, Azel's whole being is flooded with shame. Thereafter, an overwhelming sense of shame corrodes Azel's psyche. Azel suffers racial shame, sexual shame, and class shame. Azel's whole being thereafter embodies shame- defined by Sandra Bartky (1990:85) as "the distressed apprehension of the self as inadequate or diminished". At every juncture of Azel's objectification, shame is a constant companion. The three features of psychological oppression connected to self-injury: self-loathing and intra-self fragmentation, bodily objectification and shame over acting out one's agency, as identified by Alycia LaGuardia-LoBianco play out in Azel's case. Azel seeks to flee the stressors and sites of his traumatization by leaving Miguel, the

morning after his dehumanization but he cannot, because he has nowhere to go and none to turn to.

The transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory, being one of the ways to effect the process of recovery in trauma survivors according to Pierre Janet (1925), is aborted in Azel's case as his efforts to convert the traumatic memories of the night before into narrative memories fail. As the "bitter memory of the party welled up inside him like something sour and fetid", he makes attempts at recounting his distress to his journal but even that is futile. He opens his notebook but no words come to him. All he draws on the page is a line. Andrew Barnaby (2017) asserts that the trauma of traumatic memory stays outside of narrative memory precisely because it cannot be organised within the pre-existing narrative patterns by which identity is created and sustained. Anne Whitehead (2004) relates that while traumatic memory repeats the past without consciousness, narrative memory recognises the past as past. The transformation of traumatic memory to narrative memory requires the active participation of a listener and witness. Unfortunately for Azel, he is too ashamed to speak with his mother about his experiences in Spain and Kenza to whom he tries to explain his pain, is unable to fully "read" his wounds.

Azel's physical and psychological abuse triggers an identity crisis as well as the alterations of consciousness. Judith Herman (1992) elucidates that the dialectics of trauma gives rise to complicated, sometimes uncanny alterations of consciousness. Azel tells Gabriel Lemerveilleux, a French doctor in Barcelona, that his tribulations are psychological not bodily, "'it's not physical – it's my head that's screwed up, I feel lost, my self-confidence is completely gone, I'm done for, so ashamed…'" (Jelloun, 2011:173). He exists like one who is floating through life. Trauma by its very nature transforms, almost always negatively. His sense of identity is wounded by his experiences. He writes that the version of himself in Spain is one that he is ashamed of what he has become. He recounts that whenever Miguel touches him, his body takes a temporary flight. He is so humiliated, he cannot bear to look at himself in the mirror. Azel's sense of self-worth completely crumbles after he is forced by Miguel to have sex with "a gorgeous woman who was actually a guy" in the presence of his Brazilian friends. Miguel goes on to ask Azel to piss on the transvestite and satisfy him in every way possible. Afterwards, Azel becomes too devastated. He tells Kenza, "I'm dirt, worthless, no self-respect at all" (Jelloun, 2011:153). He longs to embrace

death and thinks of throwing himself under the bus, to stop the pain in his being, that like needles prick every part of his body. Expectedly, Azel spirals down till he reaches the abyss which death is. He will eventually become depressed, flee from the house before he has got his papers, be arrested for drugs and be threatened with deportation. To escape the shame of deportation, he agrees to become an informer for the Spanish police. Soon afterwards, the police find him dead, "his throat cut, his head in a pool of blood. The Brothers had slaughtered him like a lamb sacrificed for Aïd el-Kebir" (Jelloun, 2011:210).

All in the name of migration, Azel embraces Miguel and his atrocious demands and in return, he gains death, a violent one. Azel's dream of returning to Morocco like a prince and his mother's desire to see him married and have his children play around her, never see the light of day. In Spain, the land of his obsession, he falls apart, irredeemably. His acting out when he finally leaves Miguel's house is as bizarre as it is shocking, his loss precipitating "its own modes of expression" (Judith Butler, 2003:467):

> I could have strangled that Carmen, so then I knew it was time to go, which I did in a mean way: I stole, I ripped the silk sheets, pissed on Miguel's handmade shoes, broke a crystal vase, went on a rampage; I wanted to bring a real whore, crude, drenched in cheap scent and plastered with make-up, and fuck her in Miguel's bed, but I couldn't do it. I left with my head hanging because the old woman had the last word and I couldn't speak my whole mind to Miguel, when I wanted to shout and denounce all those flush Europeans who come shopping in the poor neighbourhoods of Tangier, Marrakech, Essaouira; I can remember the plight of the shrimps – the shrimps, they're the still-fresh little adolescents whom Europeans pay with a sandwich, that's right, not only do they fuck them or get fucked but they don't even pay the shrimps fairly (Jelloun, 2011:198).

Azel likens his fate to those of the shrimps and the shrimps shellers- devalued, exploited and consumed. While as RoseMarie Foster (2001) notes in her study on immigrant traumas that the migration process is in itself unquestionably linked to some major adjustment stressors, Azel's plight dramatizes the detrimental effects of both premigration and postmigration stressors that are as variable as complex, culminating in his dissociation and eventual disintegration.

Azel and Kenza, who ironically migrated to Spain legally are not the only ones with a "bitter taste" of life on the other side of the Straits, a number of other characters also found pain in their supposed paradise. Besides Kenza, Soumaya, a lady from Oujda is another character who leaves with the hope of finding hope at the other end of the Straits. After she is betrayed by her Kuwaiti husband with whom she had travelled to Spain, she is condemned to working in a kitchen that serves Moroccan dishes. She continues to lie to her family that her Kuwaiti husband is on business trips and that they would visit whenever he is free. She tells lies to contain her shame. She is heartbroken and amazed at what her life has become in Spain; "'I would never have believed that one day I would be slaving in a bistro kitchen. If my parents ever saw me, they would lose their minds. My father is an important official in the administrative district of Tangier, and my mother teaches Arabic in a private school. They spoiled their daughter" (Jelloun, 2011:84). In the end, Soumaya's Spain is next door to hell. She is in the diaspora living at the margins. The last time Azel sees her, he relates that the beautiful Soumaya, who was once so lively and luscious, had become a shadow. He could not tell if she was sleeping or was in a coma. Unfortunately, there is no home to return to in Morocco.

Wafa is another Moroccan married to a Saudi man. She lives like a prisoner behind closed doors. Like Soumaya, she is stuck in the diaspora, with no place to call home. For the likes of Hamou, a man suffering from pneumonia caught when he "burned the straits partly by boat and partly by swimming" who "needs a doctor who won't turn him in to the police" (Jelloun, 2011:127), and Abbas, a man twice deported who still managed to get into Spain after going days without food locked up in ship's cabin "kicking and pounding on the door, famished, reduced to the condition of a hunted animal" (Jelloun, 2011:124), a life of freedom remains an illusion. As illegal migrants, they are forever condemned to a lifetime on the run. Abbas goes into hiding when he learns of the arrival of some Arabs from Afghanistan via Islamabad. He tells Azel that the police are afraid of attacks from the Afghans, who they call fanatics without any conscience at all, and in order to launch an offensive attack, the police have thrown out a dragnet and are arresting a lot of moros, instead of the Afghans. Hamou and Soumaya are terribly sick but they cannot go to any Spanish hospital. They cannot afford medical help, as they lack the financial wherewithal; they also lack medical insurance. Besides the fact that they cannot afford to pay whatever

would be required of them, they avoid the hospital because of the timeless fear of deportation. In Spain, instead of success, these characters find misery. Their dream of wealth and splendour dies with every dawn.

The representation of psycho-sexual trauma in migrant contexts also finds ample representation in Chika Unigwe's *Street*. Like *Hope's* Faten who shares the street with girls from Romania, Ukraine and even Spain, Sisi, Ama, Efe and Joyce share the Antwerp District with migrants also working as commercial sex workers. In fact, one of Jelloun's characters confidently assert:

> 'When a man burns up the straits, they say he'll find work; when it's a woman, particularly if she's pretty, right away she's going to be a whore! There are well-known networks in the Gulf states, and if you can just get to Libya, where you don't need a visa, things are all set up to move you on to Dubai or Abu Dhabi. You have to put up with being pawed by those fat slobs; some girls like that, or let's say, they like what they can get for it. (Jelloun, 2011:27)

The migrant women's bodies then become the battlefield for European men's objectification, victimization and eroticism. Migrant female characters especially the illegal ones generally work as maids, sex workers and cleaners. For the legal ones as evidenced in the three narratives been analysed in this section, the women all do one form of menial job or the other. When they are not whores, as spelt out by Jelloun's characters, they are cleaners, cooks and helps. Siham tells other characters about her sister who works for two families, in Milan, where the elderly populace live like abandoned people and so depend on women from the Maghreb. *Street*, just like *Hope* and *Tangier* bears witness to the contemporary global demands for the female migrant body.

The postcolonial condition discussed in the previous chapter, forces many women to seek their fortunes in Europe. What the editors of *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (2002), Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild describe as the wrenching global inequality occasioned by globalisation, continues to force Third World women into taking up the "women's work" of the north. They assert:

> Women from poor, developing countries are migrating to developed nations to work as maids and nannies to raise other people's children but are not able to raise their own children

> back in their home countries. Poverty pushes these women to leave their home countries. These women can either live in their home country and raise their children in very difficult conditions or live in a wealthy country and make money to provide for their own children but not get to raise them—a disheartening choice for poor women of developing countries. Also, a number of young women and girls, due to dire poverty, are, knowingly or unknowingly, forced into prostitution…Third World migrant women achieve their success only by assuming the cast-off domestic roles of middle- and high-income women in the First World—roles that have been previously rejected, of course, by men. And their "commute" entails a cost we have yet to fully comprehend. (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002:24)

Like Ehrenreich and Hochschild rightly point out, women from developing countries leave home at a cost, and that cost is yet to be fully accounted for. The four female protagonists of *Street* all pay heavily for a chance to breathe the air in Europe, and in the end the price paid is hardly worth the gain.

Ama, Efe and Sisi unlike Joyce knew that they were travelling to Europe to work as commercial sex workers. However, their willingness is a forced one; they are coerced migrants, ejected from their homeland by their despicable circumstances. They too are not the free-willing cosmopolitan subjects but coerced migrants (Gikandi 2010:28), desperate for a change in their lived reality. For Efe, her sole reason for leaving Nigeria for Belgium is to better fend for her son. Her wish is to ensure that L.I. would live a good life and attend proper schools. Even though leaving him would be hard, she wishes to sacrifice all for her son's sake. In order to mitigate her pain at leaving her son, she holds on to her son for as long as she could wanting to hold on to his smell, believing she would never forget the smell. Unfortunately, she hardly remembers it after three weeks in Belgium. By leaving L.I. in the care of Rita, she creates a care-deficit for her son. Scholars have often alluded to the brain drain created by emigration. Much more than the impact of the brain drain though is the effect of what could be captured as the care drain. Her son is left in the care of her younger sister, Rita who still needs to be cared for. Rita is saddled with the responsibility of parenting an infant all by herself. She is also to cater for two younger siblings and their alcoholic father. When she compares the loss of her mother and the pain of leaving her son behind, Efe concludes that losing her son, even if temporarily, is far worse. By the time she

meets her son again after several years, L.I. would struggle to embrace her, looking to Rita for confirmation that indeed Efe is her mother. It is Rita who would beseech L.I. to accept Efe, pleading and nudging him to smile at her and show some recognition.

The manner in which women from developing countries emigrate to take up roles ignored or abandoned by their counterparts in the developed nations, creates an arching gap in the homes they departed from. The women are often lured by the hope for a better life in Europe or America, for themselves or for a family member. Sisi emigrates beaming with the hope of fulfilling not just her dreams but also her parents'. Efe wants a better life for L.I. while Ama travels to better her lot. Inadvertently however, by agreeing to be helped by Dele to travel to Belgium, the women would only serve to make Dele and Kate, their host in Belgium, richer, while, the women, remain increasingly impoverished, body, soul and spirit. The women's objectification and impoverishment is reminiscent of the continuous exploitation of the developing nations by the developed countries. The developing countries are ever the suppliers of "raw" materials – from farm produce to women. Human trafficking booms in many developing countries thanks to the "demand and supply" hegemony involving the developed countries. Women and children are trafficked to the Global North to meet the demands for the exotic Other, one who embodies "the traditional feminine qualities of nurturance, docility, and eagerness to please…qualities" associated with a bygone way of life (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002:30). Thus, in a schema occasioned by the forces of fate and global inequality, the Third World always supplies the maids, the cleaners, the sex workers and more recently the organs (the reality of organ trafficking is captured in Stu Strumwasser's *The Organ Broker*, for instance). The Third World remains the one to be exploited, sacked and sapped.

Efe's plight like those of the other three, depicts the helplessness, gullibility and many times, "choicelessness" that define the business of prostitution especially for female migrant characters. The three women who unlike Joyce know that they are going to Belgium to service strange men yet they underestimate the price to be paid. Laura Reinares (2019) relates that even when the voluntarily trafficked women are allowed certain degrees of independence in foreign countries, their supposed agency is one that "rests on a very fragile power balance" since the dynamics of the prostitutes' job are "necessarily complicated by the illegality, criminality which heightens the vulnerability of the trafficked person"

(Reinares, 2019:57). In a discourse on sexual consent and the role of psychoanalysis and law, Judith Butler (2011) questions the capability of the consenting subject at the moment that consent is given and afterwards. She underscores the unpredictability that underlines consent and the possibilities of change, some form of transformation overtime in the subject and in the dynamics of the relationship such that consent eventually ceases to be consent, since the subject may foremost lack the full knowledge or "precisely to what they have consented to in advance" (Butler, 2011:405). Considering consent from a relational framework, she relates that:

> Although consent is often conceived as a discrete act that an individual performs and so draws upon the presumption of a stable individual, what happens to this framework if we maintain the view that the "I" who consents does not necessarily stay the same in the course of its consent? In other words, does the "I" give itself over to a certain transformation, not fully knowable in advance, through its act of consent? …Moreover, if the "I enters into a social relationship by virtue of its consent, is it also sometimes transformed precisely by what happens by virtue of its consent? How do we explain the fact that sometimes the "I" who consents undergoes a change in the course of its consenting? I. (Butler, 2011:406)

Butler's thoughts are especially illustrative of the ambivalence that marks Efe, Ama and Sisi's consent to Dele's offer. They have been destabilised by the traumatizing maladies of the failed postcolonial state and would embrace a solution, or whatever looks like it.

The journey to Belgium is a descent into invisibility and precariousness for Efe as well as the other women. On the plane, Efe had expected that flying would be heavenly since flying in the sky would be like flying on one's wings, but her seat was so uncomfortable and small to be called a seat and the entire flight fell below her expectations. Efe had imagined that Belgium would be all castles and life in a fairytale but the reality was greatly disappointing so much so that "when she thinks of it, when she talks of where she lives in Antwerp, she describes it as a botched dream" (Unigwe, 11:26). In Belgium, she would belong to Madam and Dele until she pays up her debts and buys her freedom. She flees poverty and deprivation in Nigeria, only to get to Europe and become a sex slave by night and a social slave, by day. She is dependent on another for survival and bound by another's instructions.

She must live with the knowledge that another (Madam) has the ability to terminate her life if she so deems fit. Her existence is tied to obeying Madam without questions and sending money to Dele as and when due, without fail. The knowledge that defaulting would result in her gruesome death is the worst kind of mental enslavement. Knowing that one is not worth more than a fly, a candle whose wick could be blown out at the slightest provocation is especially traumatizing. Efe's dream of making enough money to afford L.I. a comfortable life does materialize but at an unimaginable cost for Efe. In the end, mother and son are estranged. L.I. barely recognizes her when she returns to Nigeria. She would then learn that a child needs much more than what money can buy. Deprived of his mother's warmth and presence, L.I. embraces Rita as his mother. L.I. would live a good life because of the money Efe sends home, but Efe would in the end lose her son. Invariably, Efe does not have anything to return to in Nigeria. She decides to stay back in Belgium and become a madam to sex slaves that she plans to buy at an auction.

Efe's decision to stay back in Belgium after she regains freedom is a testament to the trauma's capacity to turn a victim into a perpetrator. Efe's decision presents one of the effects of trauma –revictimisation, whereby the traumatised goes on to traumatise others, the oppressed seeks to oppress others and the hurting goes ahead to hurt other people- all repetitive reenactments of the tragic past. Bessel van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane (2004) describe repetitive reenactment as a paradoxical phenomenon. They assert that repetitive reenactment, earlier conceived by Freud as the victim's attempt to gain mastery over the traumatic experience however often presents the means by victim's suffering is amplified, thereby causing "further suffering for the victims and for the people around them", with the erstwhile victimized individual playing the role of either victimizer or victim (Van der Kolk and McFarlane, 2004:493). Paradoxically, Efe stays back in Belgium while the Joyce and Ama return to Nigeria. It takes Efe a total of nine years and six weeks to completely pay off Madam and Dele. After eighteen months of regaining freedom, Efe "buys" her first of two girls from Brussels at an auction presided over by a Nigerian. The women are stripped of all dignity and agency. The narrator's description of the women's misery is moving:

> The women would be called into the room one at a time for the buyers to see and admire. They would all have numbers,

> for names were not important. Their names would be chosen by whoever bought them…"Number Three, ladies and gentlemen. Number Three is the type of woman white men like. Thin lips. Pointed nose. Sweet Ikebe." He slapped her on her bare buttocks. Number Three smiled. "Imagine her inside a window. This one is material for catching plenty white men. Look at her color." Number Three's skin was the color of honey. "She is one good investment." Efe would buy numbers Five and Seven (Unigwe, 2011:216).

The objectification of the women does not move Efe, having suffered the same fate for close to a decade.

Amongst the four women, Sisi's plight is especially pathetic. To Sisi, Lagos was what she calls a city of death, that she needed to escape from. Ironically however, it is in Europe, that she dies gruesomely. It is Antwerp in Belgium, her supposed paradise that becomes her city of death. Sisi's efforts at laying hold on what the soothsayer prophesied at her naming ceremony as a bright future capable of liberating her entire family remain futile, a Sisyphean adventure. On getting to Belgium, Sisi imagines that she could finally shed her old skin like a snake and emerge completely new and that her agelong struggles would pay off but right from when she lands, she realizes that so much deceit plagued her move to Belgium. She is soon disappointed at the house that she would share with other women, "a ground-floor flat with a grubby front door" of "five bedrooms not much bigger than telephone booths". Having stayed with her parents in their crammed one-bedroom apartment in Ogba, Lagos, Sisi's shared apartment on Zwartezusterstraat, a narrow street that "wore the look of a much-maligned childless wife in a polygamous home" (Unigwe, 2011:81), is a metaphor for her supposed upward mobility which is inadvertently a descent into paralyzing immobility. Sisi had known she was in Belgium as a sex worker, what was concealed from her was the distressing modalities that would surround her new job. As soon as she lands in Belgium, Madam seizes her passport and orders her to apply for asylum at the Ministry of External Affairs. Madam is not surprised when Sisi is denied asylum and asked to leave the country in three days. In her usual way with all newcomers, Madam takes the document from Sisi with the declaration that Sisi now belonged to her. Sisi is told that she is as good as dead: "All you need to know is that you're a persona non grata in this country. And you do not exist. Not here." (Unigwe, 2011:143).

Madam's declaration affirms Judith Butler's assertion in "Can One Lead a Good Life in a Bad Life?"(2012) in a world plagued by inequality, injustice and exploitation, that for some, as it is for Sisi, Efe, Joyce and Ama, by the reason of biopolitics, their lives are not grievable. When the biopolitical questions such as "Whose lives matter? Whose lives do not matter as lives, are not recognizable as living, or count only ambiguously as alive?" are asked, the women lives do not count, since not all living humans "bear the status of a subject who is worthy of rights and protections, with freedom and a sense of political belonging" (Butler, 2012:10). For the women, their lives are "not considered to be a life" since they live in a realm of "social death" (Butler, 2012:12). In a place where women are counted as numbers and only worth their food because of what their bodies can endure, life has been stripped of all its allure. This is why Sisi continues to seek an escape route out of her precarious existence. Her endless wanderings in Antwerp and Edegem symbolize a restless spirit in search of solace. She becomes many things and changes her identity from time to time all in search of her lost self. At a time, she poses as a tourist, she dresses as a rich woman in search of leisure. At another time, she is an expectant mother from Lagos, Nigeria, buying a pair of lace booties for her unborn child. Still at other times, she is an American travelling all around Europe. As she buys two kilograms of praline, she tells the storekeeper she still has to be in France and then London. Her performances betray her desire to be someone else, living elsewhere, far away from Schipperskwartier, living a life that excluded strange men and their silly requests.

Patricia Bastida-Rodriguez (2014) in an examination of the intersection between Unigwe's characters and their uses of the urban space explains that Sisi, by engaging in casual conversations pretending to be a rich woman who has to choose a wedding ring, a pregnant foreigner buying lace booties for her future baby, or an excited tourist speaking no Dutch and asking for photos to be taken, attempts to identify with the experiences of women from other social contexts and thereby change the way she has been perceived by European society since her arrival. In Antwerp as well as in other parts of the world, sex work and sex workers are not favourably regarded. Sex workers suffer derogatory remarks even from those who patronize them. On one occasion, Sisi's client asks her "to lie spread-eagled, while he yelled "whore" at her and jerked off to that, she felt something akin to revulsion" (Unigwe, 2011:194). Sex trafficking continues to be a global challenge because it thrives

on a very complex and organized network, fuelled mainly by white men's unbridled demand for imported sex workers, which is why Dele asserts that black women are in great demand by white men who no longer loved white women or those who wanted more from their women. Ironically, the same men dehumanise the women and call them derogatory names, in a manner reminiscent of story of the woman that the Pharisees caught in adultery in the Bible. According to the Pharisees, she was caught in the very act, yet it was only the woman that was dragged away to be judged and stoned but for Jesus' intervention. All around the globe, the shame is only the woman's, and more so, the black female migrant's, who is socially and culturally constructed through a stereotyped, exotic and erotic code of black womanhood.

After the incidence with the shameless naming-calling client, Sisi's wanderings increased in frequency and length. Her melancholic devotion to the accumulation of useless objects, from bottle openers in the shape of beer bottles to postcards of Antwerp by night, dainty coasters of delicate lace and tablecloths, is her desperate attempt at maintaining sanity. Regrets continue to assail her from the very first day at a bar where she is initiated into the job with tears:

> She baptized herself into it with tears, hot and livid, down her cheeks, salty in her mouth, feeling intense pain wherever he touched, as if he were searing her with a razor blade that had just come out of a fire. Her nose filled with the stench of the room, and the stench filled her body and turned her stomach, and she did not care whether or not she threw up. But she did not. The revulsion stayed inside and expanded, and she felt a pain, a tingling, start in her toes. The pain that could not be contained began to spread out around her and rise, taking over everything else. Even the sound of her heartbeat (Unigwe, 2011:166)

Sisi's agony makes her curse Dele and wish that she never met him. Until she leaves the job after Luc made her embrace her much desired freedom, she sponsors a split in her person. On the job, she would reassure herself, "this is not me. I am not here. I am at home, sleeping in my bed. This is not me. This is not me. This is somebody else. Another body. Not mine. This is not me" Unigwe, 2011:165), wishing it was another and not her that was being dehumanised in the name of sex. The narrator relates that day after day, a deluge of sorrow permeated Sisi's skin and "wound itself around her neck and forced her head down so that

she walked as if something shamed her", to the extent that "she could no longer bear to look at herself, not even when she was alone. When she took a bath, she sponged her body without once looking at it" (Unigwe, 2011:194). Her psyche is continuously wounded until she flees prostitution, only to embrace death.

Findings have shown that children who suffered child abuse are more likely to turn to prostitution, drugs and circumstances that engender a revictimization, as is the case with Ama, the third of the four protagonists. Van der Kolk and McFarlane describe the turn to revictimization as repetitive reenactments of the real event since traumatized people tend to lead traumatizing and traumatized lives (2004:494). Perennially abused by Brother Cyril whom she called father as soon as she turned eight, she would embrace prostitution with both hands after an initial reluctance. When Dele first mentions his expectations to Ama, she slaps him wondering how she would stoop so low as to become a prostitute. However, she goes back to Dele, apologises and takes up his offer. In a matter of time, Ama would journey from this point where her self-dignity was intact to when she would sell her body to make money and more money. At the communal mourning after Sisi's death, Ama remarks that unlike Joyce who did not get to choose, she chose to be in Belgium working as a sex slave, but in actual fact, her fate chose her. Her choice was one entangled with the internalized stereotyped notions of the West as the land of bliss and abundance and Nigeria as the land of woes and lack. Ama's summation of her gains in the diaspora after years of slaving to make Dele and Madam rich is as shocking as it is sad. When quizzed if she is happy, Ama remarks that she has food, a roof over her head and a life. One is then forced to ask which of these did she not have when she was in Nigeria?

Ama's past abuse invariably conditions her outlook on life. She is the most aggressive of the women; the other women pick their words around her. On a cheery day as Efe tells a humorous story about her aunt's polygamous husband, Ama's sudden frenzied retort that men are bastards makes Sisi to reprimand her usual manner of getting worked up over nothing. Ama's hypersensitivity results from her traumatic abuse at a young age, the agony of never getting to know her real father and the present reality of life as a sex worker. Ama's unanswered questions about her father, "What did he look like? Where was he? What was his name? How tall was he? What was his name? How short? Did he have a beard? A mustache? Did she have another family? Brothers? Sisters? What did they look like? Did

they know about her?" (Unigwe, 2011:118), create a rootlessness and a yearning for acceptance in her. She would peer into strangers' faces for signs of likeness. Ama suffers somatosensory intrusions, expatiated by Dori Laub and Nanette Auerhahn (1993) as capable of manifesting itself through intense emotions such as panic and rage, nightmares, flashbacks from the traumatic memories, somatic sensation, interpersonal reenactments and pervasive lifestyles (Van der Kolk and McFarlane, 2004). In the past, Ama embraced silence; she would talk to the walls when everyone failed to listen to her. Silence is also the women's first response to the traumatic loss of Sisi, a silence described as "huge sponge soaking up air". Nevertheless, on the journey to recovery, Ama and the other women must leave their sheltered silence and seek communion, in as much as silence perpetrates trauma and the shame and guilt that often accompany it (Marian MacCurdy, 2007).

Eighteen-year-old Joyce, the youngest of the three women has also had the most traumatic experiences before her emigration to Belgium. Repetitively traumatised by the loss of all her family members to the civil war in Somalia, and the betrayal by Polycarp and Dele, Joyce continues to suffer the "domino effect" of the memories of previous traumas. Right from the flight out of Nigeria, a flight that the narrator described as long, dark and lonely, Joyce felt uncertain, "like cargo with a tag: DESTINATION UNKNOWN" (Unigwe, 2011:181). Joyce been the only one of the four women who comes to Belgium thinking she would babysit children, her shock at Madam's callous introduction to the job, is in itself psychologically disabling. Madam laughs at Joyce's naivety and then gives her two days of grace to pull herself together and start work. On the set day, Madam bullies her out of the house, into the car and then to the Schipperskwartier. With no passport, no money and in fact, a nameless existence, she stands behind a glass in a booth, like a piece of jewellery to be admired, paid for and used. In spite of her prayers that no man would notice her, her first customer comes along and the pain of her objectification brings back the memories of her abuse at the hands of the SPLA men. The continued exposure to sexual assaults re-enacts the rape scene in Somalia. After her initial shock at being forced into prostitution, she makes futile efforts at ridding herself of the filth and guilt that comes with sexual exploitation. She would scrub her body until it bleeds but the launder did nothing to heal her psyche. Her relentless confrontation with violence and abuse invariably impaired her perspective about life, because confrontations with violence certainly "challenges one's most basic

assumptions about the self as invulnerable and intrinsically worthy, and about the world as orderly and just" (Patricia Reiker and Elaine Carmen, 1986:362).

For all four women, their supposed labour migration comes at a cost higher than what they had anticipated. They get jobs as expected but they get enslaved. Their existence is tied to obeying Madam without questions; they are to be seen, not to be heard. They are subalterns in need of salvation and agency. Sisi's attempt at regaining subjectivity leads her to Luc, another opportunist who would explore her vulnerable circumstances. On an outing as Sisi tries to free herself from Luc's grip, she feels "her wrist *manacled* in the loop his right hand made" (Unigwe, 2011:202, emphasis added). Again, Luc's doorless room symbolizes a potential entrapment should she leave the house on the Zwartezusterstraat to live with Luc. Luc is another Ulises, the exploitative European "saviour", another enslaver, who "loves" her and wants her wholly and only for himself, because of what she offers- free sex. Sisi's way out of her misery as a sex slave only leads to death. The other women also seek a way out. They considered reporting Madam and Dele to the police. They are especially appalled that Madam's only response to Sisi's death is about how her death is bad for business and the need for her to find someone to replace Sisi. The women lament their fate: "Why should Madam treat us any way she wants and we just take it like dogs?... We're not happy here. None of us is. We work hard to make somebody else rich. Madam treats us like animals" (Unigwe, 2011:224). They are however convinced that Madam has the police in her pocket. Dele confirms this after Sisi's death when he asks Madam how much she paid the police. The women realize that Antwerp may be in Europe but theirs still is not a society where justice is served. They know enough to expect a miscarriage of justice, where madam and Dele would go scot free and the women would suffer even more. It is then pathetic that the very people involved in the complex network that human trafficking entails deem it an undesirable aspiration for their own. Ironically, Dele vows to kill any man that attempts to hurt his two daughters. It is the reason Sisi goes back to Nigeria to curse Dele's daughters, because Sisi does not forgive, even while dead.

The women's journey to recovery depicts Unigwe's belief in the ultimate necessity of communication. Working-through for the women begins with their communal retelling of their past, their fears and their dreams. Efe for instance, turns to books, to regain agency and subjectivity "since the sheer literacy of writing" and by extension reading, "was the

very commodity that separated animal from human being, slave from citizen, object from subject" (Gates, 1989:25). Together, the women found the importance of communion and communication. The emancipatory impact of stories and storytelling is demonstrated through Efe, Ama and Joyce's new-found bond after they share their stories with one another. Just like in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* where Efe and Nneoma burst into laughter as they shared their stories, the three women find comfort in their shared confessions. This then effectively demonstrates one of the founding beliefs of trauma studies captured by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), as trauma studies' capacity to serve as a link between cultures, where "a new mode of seeing and of listening—a seeing and a listening from the site of trauma" offers the "very possibility, in a catastrophic era, of a link between cultures" (Caruth, 1996:75). It is noteworthy that it is the women's representation of their stories that binds them together. After listening to one another, "time stands still, and Ama says, "Now we are sisters." The women hug one another tight" (Unigwe, 2011:225). Their voicing of their stories afforded them the solidarity much desired, when in fact, earlier on in the narrative, at attempt made at cross-cultural solidarity had failed when a South African referred to Efe as his sister and she bluntly retorted she was not his sister. The testimony of the women's past and present traumas brings about their sisterhood and a shared subjectivity.

In *On Black Sisters' Street*, as it is in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* and *Leaving Tangier*, characters migrate full of expectations, and afterwards become disillusioned when they realize that life in Europe is not what they had imagined it would be. The greener pastures on a close examination have turned grey. The pleasures of the West, whereby some of the characters gain material wealth is incomparable with the sacrifices made, resulting in a double jeopardy. Chika Unigwe's foremost title for the Dutch translation of *On Black Sisters' Street*, "Fata Morgana" which means "mirage" captures all the migrant characters' illusory perception of Europe. The great expectations of a blissful sojourn in Europe heightens the traumatic impact on the characters, so much so that Efe in On Black Sisters' Street likens whatever happiness and fulfilment that the characters found in Europe to a "set of false teeth. The world sees what you show it: clean teet' wey white like Colgate. But you know for inside dat your real teet' don rot finish!" (Unigwe, 2011:94). There is an arching discrepancy between what the three narratives' characters' dreams about Europe and the

reality. In the end, in spite of all that the migrant characters do, and the prices paid, fulfilment is elusive.

4.3 Imaginary Homelands: Homelessness, Unhomeliness and Helplessness in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Ali Farah's *Little Mother*

The discourse of mobility is closely affiliated to that of privilege and marginality, uprooting and belonging, displacement and replacement, and dislocation and relocation. In *Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha explores what he terms the "unhomeliness of migrancy". He states that "to live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity" (18). With the term "unhomely", Bhabha recasts what Freud captures as unheimlich, and thereby conceptualizes the fragmentation, alienation and unbelonging-ness that beset configurations of home, nation and identity. Bhabha's mapping of the loss of home to the uncanniness of feeling out of place constructs dislocation and dispossession as both an affect and an effect. To live in diaspora is to be haunted by histories that sit uncomfortably out of joint, ambivalently ahead of their time and yet behind it too. It is to feel a small tingle on the skin at the back of your neck and know that something is not quite right about where you are now, but to know also that you cannot leave. To be un-homed is a process. To be unhomely is a state of diasporic consciousness (Lily Cho, 2007:19). A close reading of Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Ali Farah's *Little Mother* reveals that the major characters of the three texts are plagued by a sense of homelessness, statelessness and placelessness. They are the displaced subjects incessantly oscillating between dispersion and anchorage. In this then lies the trauma of their marginal existence outside of their homelands. The migrant characters dare not call the diaspora home, and their erstwhile home has long ceased to be one.

Brian Chikwava's disoriented nameless protagonist in *Harare North* would journey from Harare South to Harare North only to suffer more disorientation. Right from the embassy at Zimbabwe, his unpleasant experiences had foretold an eventual social, psychological as well as economic immobility. The narrator relates that it is at the consulate that every

potential migrant hits the wall, since getting a visa is harder than a camel's head fitting into a needle. He endures the maltreatment at the British High Commission where the officer looks mean and unapproachable. His experience at the embassy frightens him and makes him feel so cheap he does not want to ever go back there. The migration process itself is as demeaning as the checks the foreigner is subjected to, in the name of immigration checks. Shailja Patel's *Migritude* (2010) recounts just how frustrating, racialised and debasing an encounter with immigration checks could play out: "Four hours/ after their plane landed/ they have not emerged/ and we know/ with the hopeless rage of third world citizens/ of African passport holders/ that the sum of their lives and labour/ dreams and sacrifice/ is being measured/ sifted/ weighed/ found wanting/ by Immigration" (Patel, 2010:57). Right from the point of entry, migrants are often assailed by a condescending gaze fuelled by archetypal and stereotyped perception of the migrant as an outsider and therefore an Other. This is more so when the migrant is from the Global South. The narrator is detained as soon as he lands in Gatwick Airport and he remains with immigration for eight days. He spends two more days at the detention centre before his cousin's wife comes to "claim" him.

The earlier part of *Harare North* depicts the narrator's amazement at the cold treatment he receives from his host family. Sekai, his cousin's wife makes it clear by her conduct and words that he is not welcome into their space, so that "before the end of my first day, I already know that Sekai don't want me to stay with them" (12). At Paul and Sekai's place, the narrator is treated like an unwanted package. When he gives Sekai the groundnut he brings for her from Zimbabwe, she throws it into the bin, claiming it may contain some disease. Paul does not talk to him because his wife disallows him from doing so. The narrator is then forced to listen to Sekai's endless phone conversations which she could have had in the room, but which she chooses to have in the sitting room to spite the narrator. Whenever the narrator cannot bear it, he goes to sit in the toilet. The narrator is also amazed at the hollow married life Paul and Sekai live, how they barely communicate, eat junks, and cuddle a dog instead of children. In the end, he sums up their lives in a sentence: "Big TV, ready-made meals from supermarket, funny long silences, grunts and making funny faces – that is Paul and Sekai's life" (18). As much as the narrator longs for a sense of belonging, wanting to join Paul in the construction of the study, he is deprived of it. He wants to sit outside the house but Sekai disapproves of it, maintaining that he is embarrassing them. In

a pathetic scene, he goes back into the house and relates that on that very day, he turned twenty-two but he tells no one since Paul and Sekai's is not a place where anything about him matters, much less his birthday. Overcome by loneliness and a prevailing feeling of helplessness, he seeks solace in the fading memories of his mother. In his hallucination, he holds on to his mother who wraps her arms around and holds him tight.

The narrator's dream where he sees his mother offering him solace and warmth betrays a desire for her maternal care, on the one hand and a longing for a rooting, a sense of belonging in the diaspora. His dream affirms Freud assertion in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that dreams are largely the expressions of unfulfilled wishes and desires. In his dream-like reconstruction of his utmost desires, the images of his mother and his motherland become an entangled narrative:

> Mother. Home. Early morning. She water bed of tomato plants at the back of house. By doorstep, there is she old shoes. Wet and red with mud… Mother. She wrap me up in she arms and hold tight. My small feet lock together, them small toes coil. I'm back in Mother's arms. 'Did you fall, my child?' I suck thumb and nod. Mother hold me to she bosom and rock me gentle. Then some funny long breast roll out down and swing past my face like pendulum. It come back; dark and dry, it hit my cheek. I miss it. It come back again; now I catch it. Outside, things is now quiet. Inside, breast is cold; the milk dry up long time ago (Chikwava, 2009:20).

It is noteworthy that even in his dream, the narrator's hope is dashed, his efforts frustrated and his toil unrewarded. The dream, strategically placed between when the narrator suffers rejection at Paul and Sekai's place and when he would seek help from Shingi, explicitly foreshadows the narrator's subsequent arduous but futile attempts at realizing his goals for coming to London in the first place.

Eventually, the narrator leaves Paul and Sekai's apartment for Shingi's. Paul's place had become an alien and alienating space. The narrator realizes that his plan of getting employed, making some money and returning to Zimbabwe would never materialize if he remains with Paul and Sekai. Unlike many immigrants, the narrator's ambition is a humble one, as he does not plan to stay in London for too long. All he wants is to "get myself good graft very quick, work like animal and save heap of money and then bang, me I am on my

way back home. Enough pound sterling to equal US$5,000 is all I have to make, then me I'm free man again" (Chikwava, 2009:12), but his stay at Paul and Sekai's place has taught him that Harare North is a place where dreams get denied, deferred and destroyed. He knows people who migrate full of hope and are rejected when they show up at their relatives' doors. His plan to work hard is hindered by his illegal status and the racial system at work in a community like his where teenagers who come to eat at Tim's place mock him to stupor. At the end of the narrative, the narrator's plight would be worse than any migrant he had known. His dream of making enough money to pay Comrade Mhiripiri to settle the police in order to have them clear the charges against him and make his troubles disappear, reimburse his uncle the money he paid for his flight ticket and pay for his mother's umbuyiso, would be shattered just as his psyche suffers disintegration so much that he falls apart.

Shingi's place turns out to be a squat occupied by other hustling people. The house itself is not much to write about. The house is distinct from other houses because of its grey brick; its two top windows that have red brick arch and what the narrator describes as the window's big sad eyes. If the outside of the house presents a hostile place, the inside of the squat is even more unhomely, what with its kitchen that smells of bad cooking with a sink filled with a heap of dirty dishes and the ceiling that grows mushrooms and other things. Added to the house's unfriendly "demeanour" is the menacing rules that stare the narrator in the face and stick to his brain: "Rule No. 1: DON'T eat what you did not buy! Rule No. 2: DON'T eat what you did not buy! Rule No. 3: DON'T eat what is not yours! Rule No. 4: If you don't work you don't eat Rule No. 5: Wash your pots and plates after eating, your mother is not here to wash them for you!" (Chikwava, 2009:32). Coming from a place where Sekai's dictatorship looms large, the narrator is confronted by the individualism that shapes the lives of those who lives in London. He contrasts the communal lifestyle he had known in Zimbabwe to what he faces in the diaspora.

The narrator's move to the squat is a plot propelling device employed by Chikwava to depict that the narrator's plight is not a rarity, as there are other people, Zimbabweans mainly, who share a similar fate. Aleck is the supposed owner of the squat. He makes the other occupants pay rent, and in a cruel fashion, he extorts money for electricity and gas. Each tenant is expected to pay him £120 per month. In the house, Aleck is like the head boy, ordering

everyone around like he owns a half of Brixton; thus, everyone puts up their best behaviour around him. He parades himself as shop manager in Croydon; while in actual fact, he works as a BBC ("British Buttock Cleaner") in Croydon. He acts as one superior to the others but he is just as illegal as the rest of the tenants. His application for asylum was not granted. In his four years in London, all he has to show for his hard labour are lies. When Farayi chances upon the truth and tells others about Aleck's real job, the narrator is astonished that the same Aleck who picks "old people's kaka off beds" walks around the house like "he is district administrator coming every time to collect tax money even when we have nothing… Things that is visited upon us in Harare North (Chikwava, 2009:103). Through Aleck, Chikwava recreates the exploitation of immigrants by other immigrants.

Besides Aleck and Shingi, Tsitsi and Farayi also live in the squat. Farayi unfortunately left his job as a teacher at a mission school for a hard life of illegality in London. The narrator relates that he works at Tooting where he makes photocopies for a recruitment agency. Farayi juggles his "job" at NHS with another at some fried chicken takeaway. He came to London on a visitor's visa which expired a long time ago. By making the narrator recall the story of how when Shingi stole from MaiShingi, when Shingi and the narrator were in school, with MaiShingi threatening to send a letter recounting his escapades to Shingi's uncle, Sinyoro, a schoolteacher with lots of money; Chikwava hints at the possibility of Farayi who was a teacher been better off, had he remained in Zimbabwe. In London, Farayi is humbled living in a house that does not deserve to be called one, and working two jobs that are far less dignifying than teaching. In the transition from Harare South to Harare North, Farayi successfully leaves certainty for uncertainty, and a dignified existence for an invisible one.

Tsitsi, the only female tenant of the shabby squat, is a seventeen-year-old mother. Tsitsi comes to London on a good promise from a cruel aunt. Tsitsi recounts to the narrator how her "tyrant auntie", married to a doctor brought her to London on a visitor's visa, a visa which had long expired. In London, she is made to slave and serve until she flees to Aleck who is the supposed father of her baby. The narrator relates that Tistsi's story is commonplace, like "them other stories that come from abroad, it has been tell many times in townships" whereby "some poor relative is lift out of poverty and is taken to them big lights of foreign city, is made to babysit, cook great mountains of meals, make she hosts'

bed" (Chikwava, 2009:33) until she is made to warm the host's bed too. Tsitsi's misery is compounded by her having a baby that has to be catered for. Predictably, Tsitsi's baby is often without food and care. To make ends meet, with the help of MaiMusindo, Tsitsi rents out the baby to women interested in duping social services. For £50 each, the single "mothers" get to loan Tsitsi's baby to apply for council flats at Lambeth Housing Department. The baby loan business is a testament to just how compromised Tsitsi and MaiMusindo's faculties have become.

Shingi, the narrator's childhood friend is the one who reclaims the narrator from a potential life of eternal servitude at Paul and Sekai's place and Sekai's verbal abuse. The narrator figures that immediately Sekai realizes that the narrator has a job, she would make him pay for every food he has eaten since he landed in London, and that way he will not be able to make the five thousand pounds he needs and head back home. At Shingi's place, the narrator plans to pay Aleck his rent and save whatever is left so he can return to Zimbabwe in the shortest possible time. The narrator is to join Shingi in the room he shares with Farayi. In Shingi's kindness, he invites the narrator to share his bed, a bed he found in the neighbourhood's bin. Shingi proudly tells the narrator how "he always go trawling through them neighbourhood's bins and skips finding good things that wasteful Londoners throw away" and how with a little manipulation the new found possessions could be made to serve his purposes. Back in Zimbabwe, Shingi and the narrator would never have thought of picking from bins, mainly because in Zimbabwe, valuable things hardly get discarded, thereby ending up in bins. Rather, the fairly good things are passed on to other people who need them. Secondly, their lives in Zimbabwe were not miserable enough to warrant them picking from bins. However, in Harare North, they search bins for valuable things, and they would eventually turn to bins to feed. At a time, they are able to "recover" sausages, bacon, tinned corn and buckets of prawn sandwiches that lasts them for days. The descent from people who buy and prepare their meals to those who rummage bins for food bespeaks an altered identity as well as a battered psyche.

When the narrator finally gets a "graft", his slang for a job, it is with Wimbledon, the landscaping company where Shingi works. Shingi tells the narrator that the company does not care if an employee's papers are not in place. In actual fact, the company does not care because they know that "paperless" people are easy to exploit. After the narrator's first

week, he earns only a pittance because the company has put him on an emergency tax code that siphons most of the money. By the time he pays Shingi for the work boots he bought for him, there is little left. He is pained that in just days of working in Brixton, he is already helping to put so much Mars bars in Londoners' pockets. Before getting a job, the narrator had stumbled on a post on the internet on how immigrants slave only to enrich the natives. He had read that the "immigrant people's contribution to this country is equal to one Mars bar in every citizen's pocket every year" (Chikwava, 2009:28). It is after he receives his wages for the time that the truth of the assertion sinks in. In many places around the world, and especially in Europe, migrants are only welcome for what they can do, often measured in terms of physical labour. Rebecca Saunders explicates in "Uncanny Presence: The Foreigner at the Gate of Globalization" (2001) that migrants, the "global foreigners" of this age, are often the labouring agents of globalisation but they hardly share its benefits. They are often "perceived as material objects: they are the subjects of reification, their value assessed in terms of capacity for physical labor or embodied service, their presence confined to the body" (Saunders, 2001:92). The narrator, Shingi, Farayi and even Aleck, underpaid immigrants, provide the labour and surplus-value upon which world capitalism thrives (Christopher Foster, 2015).

The narrator and Shingi's days at Wimbledon are few; they go to work one day only to find the site closed, without a notice. They are out of job again, after having put in excruciating labour:

> You spend them weeks shifting mud with shovels and sweat beads come out of every pore in the body because you is putting out heaps of effort while your buttocks point to high heaven and migrant flesh start to stink around you as shirts and underpants get damp. Here you quickly know that the weight of your buttocks increase by the hour and come down only by night when you is sandwiched between blanket and mattress (Chikwava, 2009:47).

The narrator and Shingi are often out of jobs, not because they are not hardworking, but because of the limitations put on them by their immigrant status and their "paperlessness". They wander from place to place, doing odd jobs until Shingi gets a fake French passport with which he gets a job where he and others like gig out "heaps of them drainpipes, repair some, lay new ones and getting used to crawling in them dark holes to clear them blocked

drains" (Chikwava, 2009:58). They work "always with long rope tied to foot in case you get overcome down there and pass out in the slurry, mud and poo" (Chikwava, 2009:57). In spite of the efforts put in here too, Shingi and other get frogmarched out of the site by hard men holding scaffold poles. For days after the incidence, Shingi keeps to himself, refusing to either talk or eat, making the narrator to declare "Shingi is in big trauma" (Chikwava, 2009:59).

When Shingi finally by a stroke of luck, has his asylum application approved, the narrator uses Shingi's Insurance Number and passport to secure a job at Tim's Fish Bar. When the month ends and the narrator receives his first salary, he cries. He cries for the past, the present and the future. In his joy, he recalls the sorrows of having his mother leave him, having to flee his homeland to get the money to buy his freedom and having to seek help from elsewhere:

> Today I have to cry. Today I cry for everything that have happen and everything that have not happen. Today I cry to Mother. I don't know how to cry for she when she leave, Mother. Today I cry because the river of pain have run through our hut sweeping everything with it. Today I cry because the month has end, my patience is now starting to pay (Chikwava, 2009:74).

The narrator cries because at last, hope seems affordable. In his excitement, he figures that he only has to work cleaning floors for six months, save almost every dime and head back home. It is however at Tim's bar that the narrator experiences London's style of racism first-hand. With Ricardo, his Portuguese co-worker, he is not a person but a unit of a continent; he calls him Mr Africa and to Tim, his boss, he must be ready to answer questions about Africa. The narrator is able to withstand the racist cruel jokes from Ricardo and Tim, but when some teenagers laugh at him while he cleans, he is infuriated. The teens continue to come only to make fun at him and the narrator continues to complain about their unbecoming behaviour but Tim does nothing, maintaining that they are his customers. When the narrator gets fed up with their mockery, he throws his broom at them and they leave. This results in a fight with Tim and he loses his job. Again, his rope of hope is cut in the middle. He has not saved enough to go back home and he has run out of options.

Chikwava in *Harare North* recreates the experiences of Zimbabwean migrants living interstitial lives on margins of the society. Chikwava relates in an interview with Josh Jewell (2018), that his recreation of the experiences of Zimbabwean migrants in Harare North was borne out of his fascination with people who find themselves on the margins, people who have no control over the kind of spaces they live in and what the world throws at them. Chikwava's characters are actors in what Iain Chambers (1994) presents as "The drama of the stranger":

> To come from elsewhere, from "there" and not "here," and hence to be simultaneously "inside" and "outside" the situation at hand, is to live at the intersection of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements along emerging routes. It is simultaneously to encounter the languages of powerlessness and the potential intimations of heterotopic futures (Chambers, 1994:14).

From the narrator to the old man, Chikwava's characters in dwell in an "in-between" space; they are suspended between where they are and where they long to be**.** McLeod (2000:211) affirms that the migrant often occupies a displaced rootless position, since the migrant is usually never fully a part of the host land nor can he safely be apart from it. The characters are strangers in a strange land. In a moment of helplessness while at Tim's Fish bar, the narrator relates that he feels like one pushed by waves, who has been washed off unto an unfamiliar place, and soon his fears that his life would "collect into one big shapeless thing and soon the whole thing slip off your grasp" (Chikwava, 2009:86) become his reality. The security he feels at having a stable job flees as soon as he loses the job. With the job goes the hope of ever saving enough to go back to Zimbabwe and clear his name.

An existential homelessness and helplessness plague the narrator, as well as other characters. Almost all the characters depicted in the narrative find themselves in what Homi Bhabha (1994) captures thus:

> In the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French

> rendition of the words au-delà - here and there, on all sides, fort/da, hither and thither, back and forth (Bhabha, 1994:1).

Their "border lives" resulting from an attempt make a home outside of their homelands only yield more troubles. Invariably, for the Chikwava's nameless protagonist and other characters, home is nowhere. They are strangers in the homeland just as they are in the diaspora. Their homes evict them and the diaspora does not accept them. They are foreigners in the sense that Saunders (2001:88) employs the word; they are unfamiliar, improper, incomprehensible and uncanny, always existing in binary opposition to and are ever being defined against the binary other. Hence, they suffer exclusion. They lack the very thing they yearn for: belonging. They flee Zimbabwe for Fortress Europe only to realize that their supposed Fortress is made up of crumbling walls.

The lack of belonging has untold and diverse psychological impact on the narrator and other characters. When Shingi loses his job for the umpteenth time, he does not remain the same again. Shingi's endless joblessness eventually makes him to lose his mind. According to Aleck, he is unable to cope with the pressures of life in Harare North. Shingi begins to disappear and reappear without explanations. All of Shingi's attempts to find a sense of purpose in London are futile. The narrator speaks of London as a place where the migrant's identity is ever unstable: it is a place where "you can become labourer, sewage drain cleaner and then French president, being many people in one person" (Chikwava, 2009:51) and yet be no one. Shingi's psychic collapse leads him to the mental backstreets when he gets stabbed on a rainy day. The narrator sees him soaked in his blood, but he himself is too helpless to help: "Around the corner, on them wet pavements of Harare North, Shingi is one untidy heap. Naked tramp has give him forgiveness… I feel helpless. I am useless. Everything is useless. I don't know what to do" (Chikwava, 2009:160). The narrator is torn between staying back to help his childhood friend and benefactor, and fleeing to safety, away from the police and an immigration system that would waste no time in sending him back to Zimbabwe, empty-handed.

When the narrator finally calls for an ambulance, he flees before the ambulance arrives. He fears that his illegal status would be used against him:

> And the woman at other end of 999 call – she is also useless.
> I hear it in she voice; she want to ask too many questions –

> where am I from, who am I and all that stuff but 'sorry you is not going to get that from me. Me I know your style, I know you is going to put this information inside long hands of immigration people and police. Me I don't want to be witness o' no.' Me I hang up. I don't wait around for ambulance people or police to arrive. I go sit under the chestnut tree where I can see police car and ambulance flashing blue and red inside dark alley and reflecting on them wet tarmac (Chikwava, 2009:160).

Herein lies the trauma of an illegal existence. The narrator, Aleck, Farayi and Tsitsi are condemned to an illegal existence. Without their papers, they have no work permits, and without work permits, they can hardly better their standard of living. To live always afraid of the police is to live and wake up in fear, a fear that is as humiliating as it as disabling.

As the narrative ends, the narrator is again homeless and helpless. His plight when compared to when he landed in Harare North is not any better; in fact, it is worse. His benefactor, Shingi lies helpless in the intensive care unit. His attempts at getting a job yield nothing; his dream of making enough money and returning home to Zimbabwe is unfulfilled. In the end, he leaves the empty house and becomes the metaphorical homeless dog:

> I walk on the white line with suitcase on my head. Nothing can hit my head. I feeling like umgodoyi – the homeless dog that roam them villages scavenging until brave villager relieve it of its misery by hit its head with rock. *Umgodoyi have no home like the winds. That's why umgodoyi's soul is tear from his body in rough way* (Chikwava, 2009:197, emphasis added)

The narrator's descent into insanity results from his failed border-crossing, a failure whose roots lie in his underprivileged and abject position (Toivanen, 2018:6).

Additionally, the narrator's failure results from his inability to rightly decode the cultural and material signifiers that bestow success on the immigrant. He then becomes trapped in the mental backstreets of Brixton. He cannot move forward or go backwards and so he walks half naked on Electric Avenue: "you are telling right foot to go in one direction and he is telling left foot to go in another direction. You tell the right foot to go in one direction and he is being traitor shoe-doctor and tell left foot to go in another direction. You stand there in them mental backstreets and one big battle rage even if you have no more ginger for it" (Chikwava, 2009:201). In a language that effectively captures migrant characters'

fractured identities, ruptured dreams and wounded psyche, Chikwava's recreates the miserable life of a nameless migrant character whose life is intertwined with other equally traumatized migrant characters, in order to depict the illusionary dividends of emigration and question the authenticity of globalisation's decentering of borders.

Besides *Harare North*, Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* also represents the plight of the lonely Zimbabweans, marked by dislocation, displacement and disillusionment in the diaspora. The protagonist, representative of other Zimbabwean migrants leaves Zimbabwe but she really does not leave; she arrives in Michigan but in actual fact, she really never arrives in America. She, like many migrant characters is doubly displaced. Zimbabwe has ceased to be home for her, and America has refused to grant her a sense of belonging. Like other illegal migrants and legal migrants sometimes, she only has the right to exist in the city but not the right to the city. Immigrants largely lack the right to the city, even though as Mark Purcell (2002:102) explicates that in Lefebvre's conception, enfranchisement is for those who inhabit the city, since the right to the city revolves around the production of urban space, it is those who live in the city – who contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space – who can legitimately claim the right to the city. This is hardly the case with Darling and other migrants in *We need new Names*, in spite of the fact that they contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space. They live out the routines of everyday life in the space of the city but they cannot fully participate in and appropriate the city space; they inhabit the city but lack the right to it. To Tovi Fenster (2005) "the right to appropriate" encapsulates the right to a full and complete use of the urban space in their everyday lives and "the right to live in, play in, work in, represent, characterize and occupy urban space in a particular city" (Fenster, 2005). According to him, the second component of the right to the city is the right to participation which connotes the right of an inhabitant to take a "central role in decision-making surrounding the production of urban space at any scale whether the state, capital, or any other entity which takes part in the production of urban space" (Fenster, 2005:219). It is those who belong to a place who have rights to its resources and it is those who belong who can hope to have their dreams come true. Darling and others do not belong to the cities they inhabit. They are outsiders and strangers moving through strange places, living on the margins of the society.

On arrival in America, Darling is disillusioned by anything and everything. She feels that she is propably in a wrong America, like she is "in a terrible story". What she had imagined America would be is far from the reality. The weather continues to shock and menacingly announce her non-belonging; the snow tells her to go back to where she came from. In none of her dreams about America had she envisaged the horrible weather that she is now to endure from time to time. With the sun missing, Darling feels like she is on another planet far from the earth. In her infantile dreams, everything she needs would certainly be hers, including "a Lamborghini, Lamborghini Reventón!" (Bulawayo, 2011:75); she is however amazed that where she resides with Aunt Fostalina is made of wood and not of proper bricks and that the house gets mouldy and smelly anytime it rains. The reality of life in America far from what she and her friends had seen on the television shocks her into silence, and so when she writes letters to her friends in Zimbabwe, she is careful to conceal the weightier displeasing realities such as the bad weather, "because there was almost always something wrong with it, either too hot or too cold" and the hurricanes. She also does not tell her friends about the prevalence of crime in her neighbourhood, how a woman who lives not far from them drowns her four children in a bathtub or how sound of gunshots keeps her indoors and how there are also poor, homeless people on the streets, holding up signs to beg for money. She would rather write about the food she eats, the clothes she wears and the music she listens to, to maintain the glories of the West engraved on the hearts of her friends back at home. She writes to impress Bastard, Chipo, Godknows, Sbho and others, when in actual fact, not much was impressive or enviable about her plight. With time, Darling stops writing. Her life in America no longer had any gloss to it and her sufferings needed no retelling.

Darling's performance of difference further engenders feelings of estrangement, others "teased me about my name, my accent, my hair, and the way I talked or said things, the way I dressed" (Bulawayo, 2011:110). Almost all she does including the way she laughed elicited mockery. With time, Darling experiences of racism and alienation chip off at her person, so much that she begins to alter her identity, but no matter what she does, the teasing continues simply because she is different. She starts to strive to look like the other people in her class, but they continue to tease her about everything to such a great extent that she begins to feel wrong "in my skin, in my body, in my clothes, in my language, in my head,

everything" (Bulawayo, 2011:110). Her attempts at what Tendai Mangena (2018) terms identity masking yield little dividend. She learns a new accent by watching tons of American shows and internalizing words, all in a bid to sound America. Darling, like other migrants who strive to become American in all ways and by all means, experiences the agony of living in translation. Their embrace of Ndebele, their mother tongue, as the language of thinking while English is the language of speaking "repeatedly draws attention to language as a signifier of (un)belonging, psychic (dis)connection and social (im)mobility" (Pier Frassinelli, 2015:718). The English language then becomes another border in the line of borders that barricade belonging and acceptance in America.

The agony of a life lived in translation entails that Darling must carefully process whatever comes out of her mouth every time:

> You usually can't open your mouth and it comes out just like that-first you have to think what you want to say. Then you have to find the words. Then you have to carefully arrange those words in your head. Then you have to say the words quietly to yourself, to make sure you got them okay. And finally, the last step, which is to say the words out loud and have them sound just right. But then because you have to do all this, when you get to the final step, something strange has happened to you and you speak the way a drunk walks. And because you are speaking like falling, it's as if you are an idiot, when the truth is that it's the language and the whole process that's messed up (Bulawayo, 2011:128).

Darling endures the stress of a careful construction of her words and a cultivation of an American accent, in order that she may be seen and heard in America. Darling had witnessed Aunt Fostalina's humiliation because she has refused to "wear" an American accent. Even when Aunt Fostalina's speaks "with her hands and head" and as audibly as possibly, during a conversation where she tries to order for a wear, the sales girl asks her to make an online order rather than order over the telephone, to which Aunt vehemently and angrily responds that she would have her order over the telephone. When the girl asks her to spell what she wants, Aunt Fostalina is humiliated. After the phone call, she looks for someone she could relate her experience to in Ndebele. Darling reasons that Aunt Fostalina needs "to tell it to someone who knows what you mean, who will understand exactly what you say, and that it

is not your fault but the other person's, someone who knows that English is like a huge iron door and you are always losing the keys" (Bulawayo, 2011:131).

After the phone call, still hurt from the experience, a pained Aunt Fostalina goes to the basement, stands in front of the mirror and start the conversation all over in careful English, "all the things that she meant to say, that she should have said to the girl on the phone but did not because she could not find the words at the time". In front of the mirror, "Aunt Fostalina will be articulate, that English will come alive on her tongue" (Bulawayo, 2011:132) even if she had been made to spell what she wanted like a child in the nursery school. In Darling's lamentation of the immigrant life in America, she mourns Zimbabwean migrants' inability to freely use their language in a new land, because "we were not in our country, we could not use our own languages, and so when we spoke our voices came out bruised. When we talked, our tongues thrashed madly in our mouths, staggered like drunken men"(Bulawayo, 2011:160). Because they spoke in other languages not using their languages they said things that they did not mean while what they really wanted to say remained folded inside, trapped. In America they spoke in translation, not always having the words, except "when we were by ourselves that we spoke in our real voices. When we were alone we summoned the horses of our languages and mounted their backs and galloped past skyscrapers" (Bulawayo, 2011160). The inaccessibility to free expression means that they cannot fully appropriate the urban city space; their limitation would always have a denigrating effect on their psyche. The migrant characters' negotiation of cultural and linguistic differences makes everyday life a continuous act of translation and self-translation, which often leads to psychic disconnections (Frassinelli, 2015:718).

They take our jobs! and 20 Other Myths about Immigration written by Aviva Chomksy, in 2007, presents the numerous distortions and often misguided misconceptions that surround the grand narrative that immigration is. In the seminal text, Chomsky sought to deconstruct myths, stereotypes and unquestioned assumptions around immigration, labour and the economy in the United States, in a bid to dismantle the distortions about immigrants taking up the natives' jobs, driving down wages and spreading diseases and crime. She points out how immigrants like Darling and Aunt Fostalina have been deprived of their rights; while in actual fact, their often low-paid labour provides the cheap services and goods that the economy thrives upon. On getting to America, Darling realizes that she must work. Darling

is shocked, even though when she was still in Zimbabwe, Bastard had in a childish yet factual manner hinted that she would be expected to work for whatever she gets in America. He predicts that she would work in a nursing home also, "cleaning kaka off some wrinkled old man who can't do anything for himself" like he envisaged her aunty was doing. Bastard had sounded silly and jealous but his words were a prefiguration of what Darling would experience in America. It is at the workplace that Darling discovers the truth about the American dream- that the American dream can often only be embraced by Americans and those who belong to the American society. Since neither Darling nor her aunt is a legal immigrant, they can only hope to eat the crumbs thrown from the centre to the margins.

Darling's experiences affirm one of Aviva Chomksy's respondent's assertion that immigrants are ever often into cleaning- all kinds of cleaning from houses to hospitals, restaurants, cars, clothes and even people (2007:xvi). In America, far from the America of her dreams, Bastard cleans because it is basically what she could invisibly do, far from the gaze of the law and the public. She relates that "when I'm not cleaning the toilets or bagging groceries, I'm bent over a big cart like this, sorting out bottles and cans" (168). Within months of working in America, Darling realizes that the low paying jobs are for the immigrants.

> And the jobs we worked, Jesus—Jesus—Jesus, the jobs we worked. Low-paying jobs. Backbreaking jobs. Jobs that gnawed at the bones of our dignity, devoured the meat, tongued the marrow. We took scalding irons and ironed our pride flat. We cleaned toilets. We picked tobacco and fruit under the boiling sun until we hung our tongues and panted like lost hounds. We butchered animals, slit throats, drained blood. We worked with dangerous machines, holding our breath like crocodiles underwater, our minds on the money and never on our lives… We cut ourselves working on meat; we got skin diseases. We inhaled bad smells until our lungs thundered.... We got sick but did not go to hospitals, could not go to hospitals. We swallowed every pain like a bitter pill, drank every fear like a love potion, and we worked and worked (Bulawayo, 2011:163)

Darling meekly buries her American dream having realised that to the immigrant belongs the indignity in labour. She is afraid she may continue to clean and sort bottles until she is

old. This is more so because her host, Aunt Fostalina is also into cleaning; she works at a hospital and a nursing home.

Even though the immigrants in *We need new Names* slave day and night, the compulsion to meet demands from "home" eats up whatever they earn. The narrator tells of how they send money home through Western Union and MoneyGram; how they buy food and clothes for the families left behind and paid school fees for the little ones. Yet every time, a new message comes in requesting for help, Kunzima always sends some money. The immigrants now turned providers for those left behind continue to honour usual and bizarre requests from home in order to maintain the illusion that those at home have about America. Whenever the immigrants hesitated, those at home are insistent, because they claim that they see how beautiful America is on the television. Rather than tell their people at home the truth about their affairs in America, they send them pictures of a prosperous America:

> We went to places and took lots of pictures and sent them home so they could see us in America. We took pictures outside the White House; we took pictures leaning against the Lady Liberty as if she were our grandmother; we took pictures at the Niagara Falls, at the Times Square; we took pictures with dolphins in Florida, took pictures at the Grand Canyon- we went everywhere and took and took and took pictures and sent them home, showing off a country that would never be ours (Bulawayo, 2011:164).

The pictures fuelled the longing in those at home and they paid all sorts of prices just to be in America. "For his passport and travel, Tshaka Zulu sold all of his father's cows, against the old man's wishes" while Perseverance had to take his sister Netsai out of school in order to migrate. "Nqo worked the fields of Botswana for nine months. Nozipho, like Primrose and Sicelokuhle and Maidei, slept with that fat black pig Banyile Khoza from the passport office", just for a chance to leave Zimbabwe. "Girls flat on their backs, Banyile between their legs, *America on their minds*" (Bulawayo, 2013:160, emphasis added). The migrants' deception, mimicking a luxurious stay in America catalysed more movements leading to more unwanted relatives coming to America and then becoming illegal migrants.

The trauma of an illegal existence is what Darling, Aunt Fostalina, Uncle Kojo, Tshaka Zulu and many others have to deal with daily. In Uncle Kojo's case, he has lived in America for more than three decades, yet he has no papers. When he becomes depressed because

TK, his son joined the Army and was sent to Afghanistan, and his doctor advised him to take some time off and go home, he cannot go to Ghana. He cannot leave America because if he leaves, he will never be able to get in. He just like Darling is stuck in America. They remain in America like prisoners, unable to go back to Zimbabwe, not for visits or even to bury their loved ones. In Bastard's logical reasoning, "you have to be able to return from wherever you go", especially if at a point one discovers that the place is "a kaka place" (Bulawayo, 2011:13). Darling, Uncle Kojo and most especially Tshaka Zulu have become helplessly stuck in America. The agony of leaving without been able to return is as strong as the pain of going back home empty-handed, while those left at home have successfully moved on with their lives. The home they would have gone back is not the one they left. The home they left like a flowing river changes with every current, hence their home had long become a stranger, with the migrant lost in a "Third Space" (Homi Bhabha). Migrant characters cannot just go back to their countries and pretend nothing has changed; "and then came the times we called home, and young strangers answered the phone, and we said, Who are you? and they said, I'm Thabani's son, Lungile; I'm Nyarai's daughter, Tricia; I'm Prayer's second child, Garikayi". They listened to these strangers and said, "Jesus, Thabani is a parent now? Nyarai has a daughter now? Prayer is a parent now? When did it happen, when did all these children have their own children? That is how time went. It flew and we did not see it flying" (Bulawayo, 2011:165), all because they were too busy chasing the elusive American dream.

For Tshaka Zulu, a seasonal insanity is the response to his feelings of alienation and what Isaac Ndlovu (2016) calls elusive rootedness in the diaspora. Tshaka Zulu is retired old man that sings traditional songs at events organized by Zimbabweans, with regalia- a knee-length skirt made of colourful animal skins, a necklace of sharpened bones, hoop earrings, a hat made of animal fur and matching armbands- that is reminiscent of the traditional Zimbabwean bards and communal artistes. Events organized with Tshaka Zulu performing presents the Zimbabweans in the diaspora the opportunity to express and at the same time repress the feelings of nostalgia and the loss of a home. When Tshaka Zulu (so named because whenever the illness comes upon him, he mistakes himself for Shaka the Zulu), is not performing at events, he is stuck in his room in a mental institution named Shadybrook, managed by Claudine. Through the character and characterization of Tshaka Zulu,

Bulawayo nuances this representation of migration as "a ruptured genealogy" (Polo Moji, 2015:9), that then ruptures subjectivity and fosters multiple identity translations. Whenever Tshaka Zulu goes beyond control in his psychic displays, threatening people with the imaginary assegai that he claims is hidden somewhere inside his room, Aunt Fostalina is called upon to calm him down. This she does by speaking to him in Ndebele because when his craziness start, the medicines hardly work and he would usually refuse to communicate in English. Tshaka Zulu's displays which Moji (2015) terms his elaborate "rituals of remembrance" essentially parade the "traumatic rupture caused by colonial violence that many African countries have experienced" (Tim Woods, 2007).

Tshaka Zulu's physical, mental, cultural and spiritual lockdown are traceable to repressed traumatic memories of Zimbabwe's colonial history. As Woods (2007:1) rightly asserts, colonialism for Africans is not an event encapsulated in the past but a history which is essentially not over, a history whose repercussions are not only omnipresent in all cultural activities but whose traumatic consequences are still actively evolving in today's political, historical, cultural and artistic scenes. Like Laura Brown pointed out in "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" (1995), and as strongly averred by this study, there are traumatic experiences of erstwhile colonized peoples that must not be allowed to "fly under the trauma-theoretical radar" owing to the fact that current definitions of trauma have been constructed from the experiences of dominant groups in Western society, as if there was an authentic traumatic experience or a standard traumatic experience that should be common to every man across the globe. As depicted in this narrative, there are the "traumatogenic effects" of oppression, colonialism, migration and displacement that are "not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Greenfield, 2013:41).

Through the character and characterisation of Tshaka Zulu, the haunting memories of the colonial enterprise are replayed:

> There is a strange look in his eyes, like they are not eyes but maybe a pit and something fierce is raging inside… Tshaka Zulu turns and points in the distance, sweeping the air with his spear… If we ever let them settle, then the whole motherland will fall, and we will be ruled by strangers. We will be forced to speak tongues from white lands, worship

> their wretched gods. They will enslave us on our own soil; we will be their dogs… I say no, by my father's black cow, today it will be death or victory. When Tshaka Zulu says death or victory, my heart skips. It is the way he says it, says it through gritted teeth like he is hurting, the tendons at the sides of his neck popping. According to him, the white vultures are hovering close; some, he says, are on horseback, and some are crouching in bushes with their evil sticks that spit fire (Bulawayo, 2011:182).

Earlier on, Tshaka Zulu had managed to convince a stranger to drive him to the airport, where he then "demanded a jet to fly him to Buckingham Palace so *he could go and talk to the queen about the things she owes him*" (181, emphasis added). Tshaka Zulu's displays affirm the reality of the traumatic legacies of colonialism, which as Bulawayo depicts, must be accounted for.

For the rest of the characters, the feelings of nostalgia, homesickness and unhomeliness, though not producing effects as overt as Tshaka Zulu's, however produce an emotional distress that is just as disturbing. Uncle Kojo for instance is always never really himself except for when he is chanced to commune with someone from his country. Darling relates that whenever he is with a Ghanaian, he is different in the way he talks, laughs and even eats. His relationship with his wife, Aunt Fostalina is marred by cultural and ideological gaps; neither of them fully comprehends the other, what with the identity masking that living in the diaspora compels them to embrace. When TK, Uncle Kojo's son defies him by joining the army of a country that has denied him subjectivity, Uncle Kojo becomes an emotional wreck. He becomes a wanderer, whom Darling nicknames Vasco da Gama. In addition to his endless wanderings that sometimes land him in the jungle, he turns to alcohol. He stops communicating and he stops eating. He would only eat the recipes that Aunt Fostalina gets from his country. Married to misery, his loss permeating every sphere of his life, he becomes an alcoholic TV addict, always flipping through channels that show "soldiers bombing things, soldiers walking streets carrying big guns, soldiers crawling on the ground, soldiers making things explode, soldiers smashing buildings", with the hope that he would see TK amidst the Afghan kids. To Uncle Kojo belongs the phantom loss of a home, a child and a hold on a legal existence; his pain is aggravated his lack of belonging since he is neither completely at one with the American setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, and like other migrant characters, he is then "beset with half involvements and half-

detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another" (Edward Said, 1994:49).

After years of living in America, Darling comes to the dual realization that America is not and will never be her home, stating that "some things happen only in my country; this here is not my country"; and that her dreams will remain unfulfilled. Even though the migrant characters leave their homelands with bags full of ambition and heads filled with dreams, the dreams are never achieved. The narrator relates that on getting to America, the migrants took their dreams, "looked at them tenderly as if they were newly born children, and put them away; we would not be pursuing them. We would never be the things we had wanted to be: doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers. No school for us" (Bulawayo, 2013:161), because instead of going to school, they worked. When Darling sees Kate wearing a Cornell shirt at Elliot's house where she cleans, she makes an attempt at telling Kate about Bastard who used to wear the faded Tshirt, but the quick realization of the disparity that will always exist between Darling and Kate shuts her mouth. She realizes that her dream of attending a good college and studying a useful course, like Aunt Fostalina would want her to, will never materialize, since she lacks the financial wherewithal to make her dreams come true. She sees that she and Kate may live in America but they are always on different planes because for Kate, there is the wealth and the belonging. Kate has all that she needs and will never lack and in addition, she attends a good school and lives like a queen. What is even most enticing to Darling is that Kate lives in her own country. Compared to Kate then, Darling will always be the immigrant servant, servicing the owners of the land while the owners relate with her as the outsider. Darling is always angered when Eliot, her boss, and other whites talk about Africa like it is a country. To them, she is to be pitied, observed and objectified. The distressing realization that America in reality is different from that in her imagination accentuates Darling's sense of loss and nostalgia, reflecting Bulawayo's own painful recognition of the politics of power at play around a migrant's status in a land not hers.

Ali Farah's *Little Mother*, like the previous two narratives, depicts African migrant characters' struggles to settle in places that beckon to them with one hand and pushes them away with the other. *Little Mother* depicts the dissonance, dislocation and disruption that mark the lived experience of the average Somali man or woman in the diaspora. Through

characters that represent different strata of the Somali society, "Farah foregrounds the (dis)location of being displaced from one social matrix to another, yet paradoxically trapped in movement or in translation" (Moji, 2015:189). Somali migrants are depicted as wanderers involved in a Sisyphean strive at letting go of their traumatic past in hope of embracing a less distressing present. Farah's migrants are found in almost all continents, from Kenya to Rome, Canada to Syria. In the text, Farah presents the complex configurations of the migrant, often "with plural identities, whether born in the colonies or in the metropolis, they are often of mixed descent; they can be refugees or asylum seekers; occasional or seasonal workers; exiles or guests" (Lidia Curti, 2011:81). Farah's migrant characters belong to non-homogeneous categories and the common denominator for them is the unstable condition of being neither here nor there (Curti, 2011). In all nine chapters of the novel, Somalis are wanderers, living border lives and making frantic efforts at yoking together their multiple identities; they indeed are the "necklace that broke off whose pearls have been scattered all over the world", for as Alessandra Di Maio elucidates in the introduction to the novel, there are more Somalis living abroad than in Somalia itself.

The three narrator-protagonists, Domenica Axad, Barni and Taageere, are forced to flee war-torn Somalia in search of safety, succour and success. In Taageere's words, Italy at a time became the desired destination because it was "there that we hoped we would get help" (Farah, 2011:154), but that was until measures were put in place in dissuade the people from entering Italy and the people sought other destinations. The people again began to go to Italy when boats became a part of the narrative and the clandestine sea route was discovered. Remarking on the migrant's capability to either find a way or make a way where there was none, Dominic Thomas (2011) asserts that no matter the degree to which border control mechanisms are strengthened, it would do little to curb migratory flows; the widening economic gap between the global south and the global north would continue to turn those from the global south into desperate migrants willing to cross into Europe at whatever cost. Taageere affirms that "the Somalis pursue all routes", caring little for the precarity and vulnerability that surrounds their emigration. What is evident then, as Juan Goytisolo (2010) argues, is that migration, especially irregular migration will remain inevitable for as long as the monstrous inequality between the South and North subsists. Confronted by ever growing insecurities, inequalities, world economic dis(order), discrimination and conflicts, Somalis

leave in droves, embracing whatever region of the world promises peace. Theirs is the trauma of devastation caused by the war, then dispersal and near disintegration in the diaspora.

Domenica Axad like many others leaves Mogadishu at the onset of the Civil War, wandering from nation to nation for a decade. In her testimony, she narrates that "as a refugee I followed the flow of a diaspora that was only marginally connected to me. I internalized its makeup, the absence of a vision, its lack of goals. I wandered around between Europe and the United States" (Farah, 2011:175). At first, she departs Somalia for Rome with Libeen by her side. She tells Barni how "like a soap bubble carried by the wind" (Farah, 2011:75), endlessly trying to find a rooting and stability, she sought acceptance and a sense of belonging in Rome and found none. Due to the pressure of living out-of-place, she becomes delirious. In Rome, she becomes a nobody and the effects of this wounded her psyche. She relates: "I was falling apart in Rome in this delirious state. Rome, a completely new city… So different from the small provincial town where I had lived before, an Italian provincial town full of certainties" (Farah, 2011:76). Following a path dictated by fate and largely chance, she becomes accustomed to the uncertainties that come with living in exile. Axad is shocked at how distressed she is by the newness and unfamiliarity that cocooned Italy. Being of mixed parentage, she must have expected to feel a sense of connection to Italy but her feelings are that of a foreigner navigating a strange place. Rather than feel a sense of welcome in Italy, her mother land, she senses a city that ignores her. She begins to wander around the street that mean nothing to her. She looks at people and she could sense rejection in the eyes: "I looked at the people and I felt ashamed. I, who was so miserably out of place, could not find the root of so much pain. Me, in my insignificance" (Farah, 2011:76).

In an interview with Genevieve Lavagnino (2013), Farah relates that the novel's major thrust is the presentation of what happens to a person when the world and life as was known suddenly gets lost. It is through Domenica Axad mainly, a character who shares similar attributes with the author, that Farah is able to trace the responses of a character to the shattering of a known certain world. Because of the lack of acceptance in Italy, Domenica Axad begins to hate herself and blame herself for the rejection she senses all around. She becomes overshadowed by disgust and a "sadness that has no name"(Farah, 2011:76). It is

in Italy that she experiences the pain of a double estrangement. In an attempt to reclaim herself and stop herself from feeling "empty to the very core", she begins to cut her skin again. Previously while still in Somalia, in the place of self-injury, Domenica Axad had embraced silence. As a child, she employed silence as a weapon. She often deliberately lost her voice and got it back whenever she willed. She narrates that hers was at first not a traumatic silence but a conscious, voluntary silence. Over time, the silence graduates to a traumatic silence and in addition to the silence, she dabbled into self- mutilation. The traumatic event that Domenica Axad experiences- the pain of separation from Barni and a familiar environment at the age of nine, the pain of having to hastily flee Mogadishu with Libeen at the beginning of the Civil War and her feelings of what Edward Said (1984:173) terms the crippling sorrow of estrangement, as well as the memory of the traumatic event, the two-part system that there is to trauma according to Geoffrey Hartman (1995)- overwhelm Axad and causes a disruption in her perception of her identity and her environment.

Domenica Axad's self-mutilation presents her attempts at asserting her fragmented identity and a futile strife to achieve an unambiguous definition of her person. In a letter to a psychologist, Domenica Axad asks rhetorically if her infliction of pain on her own body was "because I felt eccentric and undefined that I began to torture my skin? Did I perhaps believe that with the blade I could cut off the ambiguity of my essence?... Was it perhaps to make a statement that I cut myself with such rage? Aren't initiation rites meant to mark a presence?" (Farah, 2011:172). Her answers lie in Kim Hewitt's (1997:55) assertion that self-mutilation, like self-starvation, is a plea to be witnessed; "pain being a pathway to selfhood". Alycia LaGuardia-LoBianco (2019) explores self-injury through a framework of psychological oppression and relates that certain effects of psychological oppression share a surprising degree of overlap with subjective features of self-injury and so the socially marginalized people have a high risk of self-injury. Jane Kilby's "Carved Skin: Bearing Witness to Self-Harm" (2001) also bears witness to the connection between self-mutilation and trauma, asserting that self-mutilation is a naked appeal, since the act of self-harm renders the skin a deeply eloquent form of testimony, where a plea is made for social recognition. By cutting herself, Domenica Axad re-enacts past trauma, since as Kilby asserts self-harm, being a language that communicates the real of past trauma by rendering

it more real through a repetition of pain, articulates past trauma by repeating it in the present, one of trauma and pain. As a wanderer existing on borders and margins, Domenica Axad's self-harm projects her appeals for social recognition and acceptability. Domenica Axad's bizarre ritual of carefully purchasing razors at stores, planning the time and place where she would use them, cutting herself and watching the flow of blood, is similar to Chris Abani's *Becoming Abigail*'s protagonist's similar strange ritual of self-mutilation. She would decapitate her dolls, recreate a funeral for each one, kill birds and dress them in her mother's wedding dress, and then make marks on her body with needles and cigarette tips. Domenica Axad and Abigail's responses to a traumatic past are as bizarre as they are violent.

From Rome, Domenica Axad and Libeen leave for The Netherlands in a car. Domenica Axad stays with Libeen because she is afraid of being left alone:

> I remained entangled with Libeen for many years. Not even from this vantage point can I explain the nature of our relationship. An intricate entanglement that was never a real relationship, man and woman, fiance and fiancee: that's not what we were. And yet there was no space left for other relationships. It was inexpressible tension, repressed desire, chaste closeness. I wrapped myself in his presence (Farah, 2011:177)

Having experienced the pain of separation from both parents, Domenica Axad holds on to Libeen with a melancholic devotion, a melancholia that results from the inability to resolve the grief and ambivalence precipitated by the loss of the father, whose whereabouts is unknown, and the loss of her estranged mother. With Libeen, she feels secure but her security is plagued by the fear of Libeen's deportation. Axad lives every day with the fear that Libeen who was travelling with fake documents would get caught and be deported. Unlike Axad who had Italian documents and could therefore travel wherever she wills, Libeen's fate would be sealed if he were ever discovered to have tendered fake papers. At every stop, fear takes hold of Axad because Libeen pesents a passport that had a different face and picture everywhere he went. To his advantage however, to Customs personnel, black faces look the same. With time Libeen changes his name but Domenica Axad continues to call him "continued to call him by his own name, his real name" (Farah, 2011:77), until they eventually part ways.

For years, Axad strives to survive. From The Netherlands, she moves to Germany, "feeling lost, I moved from the house of one relative to that of another, searching for protection and warmth, always with a half-unpacked bag, a life spent amassing anecdotes and ways to survive" (Farah, 2011:176). She becomes skilled at survival, for as Said (1994) says of the exile, being skilled at survival is the main imperative, with the danger of getting too comfortable and secure constituting a threat that is constantly to be guarded against. The depiction of Axad moving from place to place with a half-unpacked bag is similar to Igiaba Scego's "Dismatria's" depiction whereby the "Mum was always saying: "'If we keep all our things in suitcases, we won't need to pack in a rush when the time comes'" (Scego 2006:10). Meanwhile "when the time comes" referred to some undefined future moment of a triumphant return to Africa, a moment that would never materialise. By living with unpacked suitcases and bags, "a figurative expression of existential homelessness" the Somali migrant characters, in effect, restrict the amount of room they take up in their host country (Nikos Papastergiadis, 1998). In Germany, after several years of living a nomadic life, Axad begins to make documentaries of the Somali diaspora. It is in the line of her work that she meets Saciid Saleebaan and it is through Saciid Saleebaan that she meets Taageere, an acquaintance from childhood, whom she eventually marries. Of their union, Taageere relates that it was a chance marriage, she having come along when he needed someone to unburden himself to.

Taageere, just like Axad had wandered from place to place, one continent to another in search of life, doing menial jobs. In Italy, like other Somali immigrants, he joined the unenviable workforce:

> Where did I work? In a meatpacking plant, I don't know what to call it, a place where they kill rabbits. It was a nightmare: a metal conveyor belt with the rabbits hanging from it with a hook through their brains. The conveyor belt went around, this dead animal would arrive, and I had to skin it and take out its guts. *It was a hard job and my hands were raw and then there was that violent killing of animals, all that blood after having lived through the war*. At night I dreamed of rabbits everywhere with their heads skinned… From that time on I have never eaten a rabbit again (Farah, 2011:155, emphasis added)

Having to work with dead and dying rabbits causes a reliving of his experiences at the start of the Civil War, when he had to carry Xirsi, his dear friend, who was hit by a stray bullet to the hospital, Xirsi's blood flowing down his body and into his eyes and mouth, as he bears him up trying to make it to the hospital before it becomes too late. He is as helpless to stop the circumstances where he works just like he was helpless to save Xirsi from his untimely gruesome death. Taageere continues to work, since those on margins hardly have the opportunity to configure the spaces that they find themselves in.

Taageere describes his time in Italy as an unfortunate one. He suspects that the country itself brings him bad luck. During his time there, he experiences the racial hierarchy at work there and how immigrants are only as useful as the extent to which they can labour. Vijay Prashad's assertion while presenting *Migritude* written by Shailja Patel, captures the paradox of the immigrant's living only to sustain the economy of wherever he finds himself. Prashad relates that immigration is almost always about what he calls the mobile capital and immobile race. He points out that the colonial rulers went wherever they willed, "and they even moved people from one colony to another; but the colonized were not to be fully welcomed in the heartlands of Empire, in Europe, in the United States. If they came, they were allowed in for their labor, not for their lives" (Patel, 2010:ii). Christiana de Caldas Brito's "I, Fingertip 5,423" (2006) also recreates the irony of Italy wanting and valuing migrants only for the work they do. In a humourous but thought-provoking depiction, where migrant characters as treated as numbers and samples and not as humans, during a fingerprinting exercise, fingertips invade a centre:

> Some fingertips were stained with tomato; they'd come to the meeting direct from the harvest in the fields. Others, stained with blood, came from the hospitals where they tended the sick, as nurses. Immigrant fingertips, tired of carrying out the jobs the Italians spurned… Number 1,600 for instance, a female fingertip, was actually smeared with shit. It belonged to a young immigrant who spent her nights caring for an elderly lady. Fingertip 702, who washed dishes in a restaurant, had an allergy to washing powders and was completely ruined (Brito, 2006:94)

This story vividly captures the inequalities- racial, political and systemic- that define immigrant's labours and the politics of a space that is only interested in their hands, and

sometimes their bodies and more recently their vital organs. Taageere laments that in Italy, "the Italians seem to always want to show off… they put on airs. They treat us like dirt, like trash, with a sense of entitlement" (Farah, 2011:65).

Taageere's aimless wanderings again take him from Italy to America, where by chance, he misses his wife's coming. In their disorderly plan, Taageere and his wife, Shukri had envisaged meeting in Rome. Shukri had been in Kenya, with their son. From the refugee camp in Kenya, she moves to Ethiopia to join her relatives. Taageere narrated that she "exhausted and in silent desperation, had joined your relatives in Ethiopia? Paths chasing other paths" (Farah, 2011:73). Shukri arrives in Rome just as Taageere leaves for America. Their story underscores how displacements occasioned by war and migration create disruptions in family networks. Taageere and Shukri can only communicate over the phone, a communication marred by network failures and distractions. In nine years, Taageere has not set his eyes on his son. He only gets to see his photograph, handed to him by his own father. The photograph was a in a dirty envelope, "dirty from so much traveling". In the son's case, he does not know what his father looks like, since he does not have any picture of him. With time, Shukri too forgets Taageere's face. Thanks to the trauma that dispersed family members to different continents, vital family communication and experiences are conveyed over the phone. Familial bonds and family life are enacted over the telephone; having been scattered, they must gather what remains over the telephone. At a time Taageere is frustrated that the three hundred minutes he bought for an international call with his wife ends before he has said the important things "You have one minute. Oh no, did you hear the message? We're out of time. Only one minute. I beg you, call me back, call me back. We still have to tell each other…" (Farah, 2011:75). Soon, their relationship is fractured and Shukri files for a divorce. The divorce is conducted over the telephone, in the presence of an imam. In three out of the nine chapters, the telephone moulds the characters' conversations. By featuring the workings of the telephone, Lavagnino (2013) relates that geopolitical boundaries and life in exile are vividly and intimately portrayed in order to underscore the ruptures in communication and the limitations imposed on the Somali diaspora.

In America, Taageere comes to the realisation that there is so much sadness in the West just as there are so many "homeless people on the streets on the streets than we imagine, in fact

we can't even imagine how many homeless people there are here when we're back home and hear of these countries that are doing so well" (Farah, 2011:53). He spends his days suffused in sadness, "a deep and shabby sadness, a crazy sadness that sprang from the cold and the disillusionment (Farah, 2011:53)" and whenever he is unable to bear the anguish in his body and soul, he goes missing for days. On the street, he looks dirty, shabby and helpless, so much that hardly would his mother have identified him, if she saw him. When another homeless man sees him, he invites him to a place that Taageere describes as a real hole filled with men. There he sees other men like himself, who drink in order to forget their sorrow and anguish. At a time, a well-dressed man, a Somali sees him there and comes to his rescue. He invites Taageere to his house. Taageere thinks that his help has arrived, only for him to discover that the man is a khaniis. When Taageere does not give in to his demands, the man becomes very unkind and asks him to leave his house. Taageere leaves but not before he has kicked his television set down. What Said (2001) captures as the aesthetics of interruption, dissonance, and the discontinuous (Curti, 2011) define Taageere's early days in America, where he struggles to work and save, even though he finds the job boring and tiring. Success eludes him in all he does until he meets Domenica Axad, with whom he is able to communicate his deep-seated pains, of the loss of Xirsi, the loss of his wife and son and the loss of a homeland, Somali, a land that is simultaneously present and absent.

Barni, the third of the narrator-protagonists lives and works in Italy as a midwife. In Italy, she is besieged by loneliness, homesickness and the pain of separation from her husband. She often frequents the Roma Termini train station, a place described by Axad as a crossroad, the coagulation of grief, the threshold of oblivion, because it is where the Somalis often go to relieve themselves of their feelings of homesickness. Barni relates that from the beginning of the war, at the peak of the exodus, the train station served as the meeting point for the Somali diaspora; it being the scene of their longings. At the train station, "the atmosphere vibrated in the expectation of news, everyone waiting, close to each other. We thought, soon we'll be going back… I thought the war would end quickly and we would go back home happier than before" (Farah, 2011:29). Barni and others waited in vain. The war did not end as they desired. It still lingers on. Scego's "Dismatria's" also recreates the Somali people endless waiting for a change, for a return to the homeland. The narrator tells

of their dream of a return and how the people waited, "the dream had a name in our hearts, a secret name that we never uttered so as not to crumple it or worse. So we waited…And waited…And waited…But nothing happened. Nothing ever happened" (Scego, 2006:11). In the end, he relates that they were perpetually waiting for an impossible return to their homeland, calling their nightmare "dismatria". Vivian Gerrand (2008), expantiates that for the young narrator as it is for Barni and others at the beginning of the war, the dream of a return, a homecoming is a fantasy, an infantile dream.

When it became clear that the return to the motherland was as vague a dream as the mist that settles on Somali café, Barni goes to school and makes attempts at making friends in Italy. She gets married but her husband leaves her soon afterwards. The pain of separation eats at Barni, just like it eats at Shamsa who was also betrayed her husband who left her "with six children hanging from her skirt" (Farah, 2011:63) and an immense sadness that led to depression. Like many other refugees, Barni's husband lacked a job and the means to sustain his family. *Little Mother* depicts the diaspora as a space that better favours the women than the men. The men suffer humiliation when they are without a job, and even when they have a job, which is often a demeaning job, like Taageere once had, they still suffer humiliation. It is no wonder then many Somali men take up refuge at the Somali embassy building which they converted into a makeshift hostel. With their ego wounded, they strive to make ends meet, and yet avoid the gaze of Italians. They lived "day to day" and end up forgetting "about what matters. Your mind is taken up with what should I eat today, how do I survive tonight, will I find a place to sleep in peace? Like an animal. Slipping away, time and years go by, without realizing it, far from you all" (Farah, 2011:63). Having paid heavily to get into Italy, they are reduced to rubbish in the diaspora; emigration from Somalia holds no promise of "a better life or enhanced social standing. In fact, it offers the opposite of the migrants' expectations, despite staying away from the violence in their natal home" (Tembo, 2017:79).

For the Somali migrants, the price paid to leave Somalia at the onset of the war is viciously disproportionate to what the diaspora has to offer them. Barni attends a funeral of many who got drown at sea, at the Campidoglio Square. Long after the funeral, she remains traumatised. She is haunted by her memories of the war and the images of the over three hundred Somalis that died trying to flee the war and reach Europe by land and on boats:

> My mind is still soaking up that wailing. In my throat I can feel that water that isn't there and I can see the desert that goes on forever. I hear people screaming and screaming because they are afraid of dying… Nausea that fills my throat. The thick sand burns my eyes and the horizon seems all one and the same. I forget where the sun will rise, where it will set. I see the tracks on the dunes that are quickly covered up, and I am tempted, but I do not have the strength, to run, run, run because my healthy legs are faster than those wheels. The desert swells and bursts inside of me, screaming and bubbling from my breast in the middle of the night, like burning fire. And I feel in my arms the weight of those bodies swallowed up by the white sea. Those lifeless bodies, Maxamed's sons, and Luul's husband who carried them on his shoulders in vain (Farah, 2011:46)

Accustomed to the agonies occasioned by loss, Barni is able to defend Maxamed, a traumatised Somali who is mistaken for a terrorist in Italy.

Through the characterization of Maxamed X, a mute Somali, one of the occupants of the embassy-turned-hostel, Farah underscores how the authorities in the host societies willingly fail to comprehend the migrant's plight and how they go on to mete out injustices served as justice. Maxamed X is arrested for setting a car on fire. He is charged with terrorism, when in actual fact, it was a group of young teenagers who mistakenly set the car on fire while trying to experiment with the car. Maxamed X had previously found Luul, Taageere's pregnant sister on her own. "In order to deliver the baby, Luul had sought refuge in a derelict car, just like a cat" (Farah, 2011:44). Maxamed X finds her in the car and helps her to cut the cord. Maxamed X prepares a place for Luul to sleep in the car and he brings her some food. The next day Maxamed X comes to the car only to find the car on fire. Unknown to him, Luul has left the car to take a stroll with her newborn, whom she named after him. Maxamed X then throws "himself into the car, heedless of the fire". Luul witnesses the scene from a distance afraid that the police who had arrived and were arresting Maxamed X, would arrest her and the baby. Maxamed X's story illustrates the politics of race at work in the diaspora and how ingrained racism often leads to selective arrests and the miscarriage of justice. In a similar fashion, the police come to a place where Taageere and other immigrants were gathered, sitting on a wall, and order them to disperse, maintaining that Italy is ruled by rules and that their gathering was illegal. Afterwards, Taageere remarks sarcastically that Italy was indeed the land of multiculturalism.

For the three main characters, their survival and the ability to effect a working-through is tied to communication and maintaining ties with a community. When Taageere begins to talk to Axad about his past, he finds relief. By offering Taageere a listening ear, Domenica Axad enables Taageere to begin a journey into healing, "to release his burden, the burden of his pain. Because it was to me, after days of silence, that he began to speak… Taageere began telling me everything" (Farah, 2011:124). He is even able to hope for a better future afterwards. Taageere confesses that "being on one's own for a long time stings like a badly treated wound… I feel the need for roots, now, today. A family. A family again. To feel like a man in a man's role. To take care of someone other than myself, to be a man worthy of trust (Farah, 2011:58). He plans on reuniting with his family and becoming a good and responsible father to his boys. Farah underscores how maintaining ties within the Somali diaspora enables the migrant characters to cope and to gradually let go of the past.

In the final chapter of the narrative, Barni highlights Farah's message to the traumatised Somali diaspora, on the need to embrace one another and erase the memory of past hurts. They must "lay down foundations in order to have the strength to fight every day" because it is "no longer possible to remain isolated; we seek to adapt and to rebuild our path. Through living together, we can share the greater part of our pain" (Farah, 2011:182). She underscores Somali's need for a support by embracing a communal living. Barni asserts that "a mother alone is no longer enough for her children… Our mothers suffered from too much loneliness. Together we will make it, children should be raised together. Only by doing that, many absences will become irrelevant" (Farah, 2011:182). To Farah, with communication, companionship and embracing a community, a working-through could be effected. She highlights how the intimacy of relationships presents the signposts that save one from getting lost. Di Maio (2011) concludes in the introduction to *Little Mother*, that the message of the novel is an optimistic one, affirming that despite chaos, uprootedness, disempowerment, and a sense of general demise, occasioned by war and dispersal, birth remains possible, and reconnections are not only plausible, but vital to bringing about healing and recovery.

4.4 Twice Disillusioned: Immigrant Suffering in *Blue White Red* by Alain Mabanckou and *The Belly of the Atlantic* by Fatou Diome

In Chika Unigwe's "Becoming Black in Seven Lessons", reproduced as "How to be an African", she details how blackness like gender is a social construct. Similarly, Chimamanda Adichie tells of how she only became aware that she was a black person when she got to America. These writers echo Fanon's age-long discoveries on the fact of blackness. In *The Belly of the Atlantic*'s protagonist like Diome, Unigwe and Adichie experiences the fact of blackness first-hand in France. Having lived an exasperating life on the island of Niodior, the escape to France was what she hoped would liberate her from a cheerless existence. In France, she encounters the fact of her blackness, one which portends dire consequences. Right from the airport, she is treated as different. On alighting from the plane and seeing that a queue moved faster, she had joined it and was almost at the front when she realized that the queue belonged to those with EU passports. She fumes as she left the line, sarcastically commenting on the apparent end of apartheid. In a lamentation she composes, she relates that "passports, permits, visas and the endless red tape" are the "new chains of slavery" (Diome, 2006:154). Emily Apter's assertion in *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013) about checkpoints aptly captures Salie's experience:

> ...the checkpoint particularises political ground. It is… an apparatus of state function dedicated to divisive acts of profiling and selectionism… The checkpoint… is used as a figure of performative sovereignty inseparable from the politics of catastrophism; a catastrophism of national non-recognition and subjectivation by a contiguous hegemonic power (Apter, 2013:106)

Apter's assertion speaks to the reality of the checkpoint creating a "we" versus "them" dichotomy, with one class dominating and determining the (im)mobility of the other.

On the queue at the airport, Salie who is freezing from the hostile weather is unfortunate to have been preceded by an African couple, the man old enough to father the lady. Salie imagines that the man is trying to "smuggle" the girl in as a second wife, using the first wife's passport. At a point the uniformed officer, the "custodian of the nation" and the African couple had problems communicating, as the Africans kept speaking a language that

Salie has never heard before. The officer asks Salie to translate whatever he says to them, pompously assuming that all Africans speak one language. When Salie tells him that she does not speak the couples' language, the officer tells her that it is unbelievable that she does not understand their language and asks if people communicate with their feet where she comes from. When Salie tries to explain to him the findings of the African scholar, George Fortune, on the fact that there are at least eight hundred languages spoken in Africa, he sarcastically shuts her up, "I don't give a toss about your George or his fortune. What pisses me off is seeing you all, the whole lot of you, coming to seek your fortune here" (145). The circumstance affirms Unigwe's predictions in "How to be an African", that Europeans would often assume, in fact, assert that the Africa is a country not a continent, and therefore the African migrant supposedly speaks African and even eats African, as if everything from the culture to the people in Africa is homologous.

The superior gaze of the European makes him see Africa as incapable of diversity; to Salie's interlocutor, all there is to the African continent fits a single story. What Unigwe suggests Salie should have done when asked if she speaks African is to ask her interrogator if he speaks European and enjoy seeing his bewilderment. In actual fact, to the European before whom Salie stands, she is an African migrant and thus she lacks subjectivity. He sees her as an intruder and not as a guest, and when Salie continues to respond with a "Yes sir" to whatever he says, he comments derogatorily that she is bleating. He examines her documents with suspicion before asking her to move ahead. For the African, the dark skin is a passport in itself, a passport that hardly passes ports but confers on the bearer illegality and the identity of a suspect until proven otherwise.

Salie is amazed at the warped politics that surrounds mobility, and how the dividends of globalisation are enjoyed by some at the expense of the others. She recalls that Europeans are always free to enter their own land without much ado, "any French citizen can go to Senegal with no formalities (Diome, 2006:178)". Salie relates that the French expats are pompous when they are in Dakar; they live superior to the owners of the land since "they have enough money to buy half the country" and get the natives to serve them, as a bonus. Salie again encounters what she calls the myth of superiority when is subjected to all sorts of test before she given a residency permit. She is invited to the immigration office for a full X-ray, and when at the end, she is found "free of scabies and pustules and not harbouring

any shameful diseases" (Diome, 2006:153), she is made to pay heavily for a medical certificate that authorises her to stay in France, having fulfilled the requisite health conditions for authorisation to reside there. Salie wonders how illness becomes a stumbling block, capable of barring access to the French territory. She traces this to the days of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, when "Negroes, ebony and spices were sold any which way", how that the colonisers never bought a sick slave and they never show themselves capable of being ill, all in a bid to display the infallibility of European civilization, even with regards to the coloniser's health. The natives then were led to believe that the colonial master never fell sick. Right on French soil, the immigration office demanded to know everything about her, the state of her health and the extent of her loyalty to France, even. They had seen her wearing Senghor's Negritude on her face and they were unsure what role she could play in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*.

In exchange for the "opportunity" to reside in France, Salie grimly remarks that she was willing to give the immigration office all her vital statistics to prove that she would "take up less room than a certain pain-in-the-arse politician", allow them to sniff her armpits and even let them "count the number of holes on my knicker lace, measure the length of my hairs and, if they insisted, I'd disembowel myself to show them precisely where in my guts humiliation has set its leeches" (Diome, 2006:153). Through the character and characterization of Salie, Fatou emphasises the degradation the African migrant is made to go through in France. Salie after years of residing in France realizes that the refrain "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" is only applicable to the sons of the soil, and that is what the migrant will never be allowed to be, for in the end, a hard-won naturalisation doesn't improve the migrant's opportunities, since their proof of nationality cannot be stamped upon the migrant's forehead. Salie tells her younger brother, Madicke and his friends, who are all bent on going to France to play in French clubs that they will never be on the same level with those they play with, no matter how good they are, and that is if they ever get the chance to leave the island for France. Salie tells them that in Europe, the black man is first and foremost a black, "citizens incidentally, outsiders permanently" (Diome, 2006:124). In the years spent in France, Salie sees enough cases of racial discrimination to warrant her assertion that the French integration policy is a ruse, a cliché designed to save face. She reasons that if "the French society were truly integrated, they wouldn't need to invent a

slogan" (Diome, 2006:125). Unfortunately, Madicke and especially Garouwale fail to believe Salie's sermons.

The story of Moussa is what Salie and Ndetare, the teacher hope would teach the young boys the pitfalls of emigration. Through Moussa's pathetic story of an emigration gone wrong, Fatou presents the reader what Salie terms the other side of the coin. Having failed at everything else, and with the slogan- "every scrap of life must serve to win dignity" ever ringing in his ears, Moussa leaves the island of Niordior with the hope that he will join a French club and become wealthy. At first, he goes to M'Bour and starts to work as a sailor on one of the big pirogues that fish on a small scale. With fishing, he was nowhere near the achievement of his dreams. The narrator tells that Moussa knocked on every door, but with too many mouths to feed, his resources always ran out, and his dream of working in an air-conditioned civil servant's office went farther from him with every earning. After several attempts, Moussa finally secures a place in the M'Bour's football team, from where Jean-Charles Sauveur, a Frenchman and dubious agent notices him at the matches where Moussa put in his very best. Jean-Charles Sauveur is able to convince Moussa of his ability to take him to France, get him into a training centre, from where he could get picked up by a French club. What Jean-Charles Sauveur does not tell Moussa is that he plans on getting him into France clandestinely and that he is far too old for the junior's club where he plans to place him. With the help of corrupt officials, and since "nothing is refused someone who's going to France", another birth certificate was arranged for Moussa.

In France, Moussa trains as if his life depends on it. In spite of all his efforts, the French coach, who scrutinised his every move, only comments on his build that was capable to demolishing the opponents. Months passed and the coach's comments do not change. Night after night, Moussa sees on the television the buying and selling of players, and as much as he longs to be "bought" by a club, he is not unaware of the imperialism that trailed the transactions, a process that "smacked of slavery" (Diome, 2006:65). Moussa quickly realises that he is hopelessly without a choice as he is now a part of this sporting cattle market. Through Moussa, the writer associates the plight of the migrant to that of the slave during the era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, since both are migrants brought in only for the physical labour that they can perform, all to enrich the master. Dominic Thomas (2006) points out that the colonial ideology is central to the commoditization of the migrant's body

in this construct given that it indicates how raw materials and labour served the interests of European market economies in which Africans functioned as physical labourers, a topos that is recuperated transcolonially as the immigrant's body is now also a disposable commodity (Thomas, 2006:196). Moussa's dreams of having his matches broadcast on the television in France, getting invited by the Senegalese President and touring France in a Porsche during championships, never materialise. Each passing day drown his dreams. When day after day, Moussa's dreams get deferred and denied, he is traumatised. The weather oppressed his body and his fellow players at the training centre haul verbal abuses at him. He is called names, mocked and isolated. To them, Moussa from a jungle is only fit to play with coconuts not a football. In the end, the training centre loses interest in him, and Jean-Charles Sauveur, sensing his investment was in jeopardy, he finds Moussa a job on a boat.

Jean-Charles Sauveur becomes the allegorical slave master who redeems Moussa from a life of mundane helplessness only to further enslave him. After the fruitless time at the training centre, Sauveur announces his exploitative game plan to Moussa:

> 'Listen, champ,' he told him, I've already spent enough on this, and you're really not getting anywhere. We're going to have to settle up. *You owe me about a hundred thousand francs. You'll work for it.* As you know, your residency permit's expired… I've got a mate with a boat… I'll get you a job down there. We won't ask for much; that way he won't blab. *He'll hand your salary over to me,* and when you've paid me back you can save enough to live it up back home. You're a strong lad, you'll be fine. But whatever happens, keep it quiet! Don't forget you have no papers. So one word and the cops'll have you in cuffs and you'll be playing your jazz in a dark cell… Now, tomorrow someone will come and take you to the boat. Once, you're there, that's it, we've never met. Not a word to anyone! (Diome, 2006:68, emphasis added).

In a traumatic twist, Moussa is back to square one. The choicelessness and helplessness that made him flee Senegal awaits him in the diaspora. The fishing business and life on the sea that he abandons in M'Bour is what he comes to engage in, albeit, clandestinely, in France. As Anna-Leena Toivanen (2019) notes, Moussa's short adventure in the football industry presents an allegory of the neoliberal world of labour which relies on profit seeking,

precariousness, competition and lack of solidarity. Naïve Moussa had expected to find camaraderie and mutual respect in sport but what he finds is contempt, exploitation and abuse.

Moussa at first thinks of revolting, as Sauveur gives him just some hours to pack his few possessions. His enraged outburst- "'the guy's a real vulture. I'm not going on that damned boat. Those people will work me to death and never pay me a penny…" (Diome, 2006:69) comes out too late. Moussa looks at the bare walls and mourns his fate, having been woken up from his ecstatic slumber. In a pathetic move, he brings out the last letter he had received from his father and read it again. In the letter, his father admonishes him to maintain his cultural purity and uphold the traditions. Most importantly, the father accuses him of being individualistic since he has not sent a penny home since his more than a year's sojourn in France. His father's words cause him psychological distress. He finds it hard to reckon that he has not only failed in the pursuits of his dreams, he has also dashed his parent's expectations, his father bemoaning that none of his plans has come to fruition. The last line of the letter, "you must work, save money and come home" propels Moussa to again try his luck with the Sauveur's game plan. His family's deafening complaints fuel his determination to succeed in France, against all odds. When he is apprehended at Marseilles, detained and deported, he is pained most especially because he is returning as a disgraceful son, as "the idiot" who did not make it in France, like everyone else did, or so he supposed. The narrator relates that the plane threw him off at the airport and that it took the generosity of a close relative to pay his bus ticket home. His homecoming was nothing like what he envisaged when he left Senegal. His family having assumed that his lack of luggage was because he needed another vehicle to carry them, and he impatient to see his family had come home first, made a feast to welcome him. Moussa, unwilling to allow his family to run into more debts confronts them with the truth of his fruitless voyage in France, a truth that "covered him in ashes"(Diome, 2006:74). Unable to cope with the shame of repatriation and then pain of rejection at home and abroad, Moussa commits suicide.

Moussa's pathetic story is enough to deter the youths whose only ambition is to leave the island and play football in France, but it does not. They see Moussa's case as the exception to the success-by-migration narrative. Ndetare tells the youths that all that remains of Moussa and his dreams is a yellowed photo that Moussa sent to the teacher when he was

still in France, before his shameful deportation, after which everyone in the village despises him, calling him an idiot and a failure. To Madicke and his friends, football is not only a first-choice source of income, it is the ideal emergency exit for and from the Third World. They have been fed fat on lies served by the man of Barbès. Constantly, the man of Barbès feeds the youths on tales filled with deceit where he paints everything French with gloss and gold. His constant admonition to the young footballers is leave the island by all means. The fisherman also tells them to look at another man on the island, Wagane Yaltigué, walk in his footsteps and leave and seek success elsewhere. In order to concretely channel their mobility, the man of Barbès fills their minds with images of a prosperous France beckoning to them. He tells them that everyone lives well and no one is poor in France. He tells them that the people *over there* live a life of luxury, each with his or her own car, the children all have money in the bank and even foetuses already have career plans. The man of Barbès tells the youths that *over there*, dead men sleep in palaces and so the youths reason that the living must dwell in paradise. In spite of all of Salie and Ndetare's warnings to the youths, Madické's eyes are set on France. When Salie's refuses to send him the money for a flight ticket to France, insisting that he must not leave the island and wander with no concrete plans, leaving everything to chance, he calls her an individualistic and selfish lady.

What Madické, and his friends fail to realize until close to the end of the narrative is that France is not the paradise they suppose it is. In actual fact, nowhere on earth is. The narrator relates that while the man from Barbés tells them fairy tales about his days in France, in reality, he suffered untold hardship when he was in Paris:

> He hung around métro entrances, picked pockets to relieve his hunger, begged, only survived the winter thanks to the Salvation Army before finding a squat with his companions in misery… he'd carried crates of fruits and vegetables, blindly obeying the slimy bastard who'd pay him under the counter with a crust of bread… equipped with a false residency permit, a photocopy of a friend and accomplice's residency card. He'd operated the pneumatic drill on building site after building site, in all weather, always on fixed-term contracts (Diome, 2006:60)

By presenting the man of Barbes' stories, the falsified version and the truth picture, Fatou invites the reader to sift through his tales and locate the pitiable existence he led in France.

By naming the character the man of Barbés, Fatou humorously alludes to the Paris neighbourhood of Barbès which according to Thomas (2006) has become inextricably associated with the African Diaspora in France. Barbès enjoys a mixed reputation, along with an area like Belleville, as simultaneously the nucleus of a vibrant multiculturalism and the focal point of negative characterizations of the immigrant underclass. Thomas further elucidates that the deconstruction of the term "Barbès" reveals a multiplicity of signifiers pertinent to the bi-directionality of projections in Diome's work organised around the simultaneously "exotic" (in the African imaginary) and "pejorative" (in French stereotypes) site of Barbès (Thomas, 2006:193).

Besides the man from Barbès, there is another returnee from France, whose wealth gained from exploiting the local people further accentuates the youths' thirst for France, because everything good on the island came from France; from the man from Barbès' TV to the school teacher, Ndetare, and so "on the island, even if we can't tell France from Peru on a map, we're well aware that it rhymes with chance" (Diome, 2006:32). Like the man from Barbés, El Hadji Wagane Yaltigué presents a picture of emigration from the island as the panacea to the oppressive poverty that the youths endure day after day. Every one of the youths aspires to be like Yaltigué, as he is their definition of a successful man, what with his honorary title, El Hadji, his three wives and his many fishing boats. Whenever Yaltigué is in the village, he makes every effort to show off his wealth, to affirm the youth's estimation that he is the epitome of success, even though his wealth is made at the expense of the numerous youths whose lives are lost almost on a daily basis on his fishing boats. His employees, all poor men, are treated as non-humans; an employee's death hardly moved him. He is always quick to replace the dead one promptly, from the "dozens of candidates who waited on the docks, ready to risk their lives for a few sea bream" (Diome, 2006:82). The narrator relates that the frequent loss of an entire crew was not sufficient to give jobs to the waiting ones and this is the reason the youths would rather flee the island than risk being consumed by it in the search of their daily bread.

Every of Salie's homecoming is a painful reminder to the youths of what is within their easy reach if only they could get on the plane to Paris. When Salie tells them like she always does that success for the immigrant requires more than determination and a flight ticket, she is often mocked, especially by Garouwale that if she a girl could make it in France, they,

the males would even be more successful. Salie finds it hard to communicate the pain that fills her heart every time she is to leave for France. She tries to tell them what she calls the "other side of the coin" (Diome, 2006:177), a narrative of migration that features immigrants sleeping under bridges, in slums and in churches. She reclaims for them the history of the immigrants who went to France after the Second World War when the "the French welcomed lots of people with open arms because they needed workers to rebuild the country" (Diome, 2006:123). She tells them of migrants who risked their lives, worked in coal mines, many of them contributing to "a pension they'll never draw" (Diome, 2006:123). The narrator tells the story of Mr Sonacotra, a labourer in France who goes from one temporary job to another and "knew nothing of life in France apart from the din of factories, the insides of sewers and the ratio of dog shit per square of pavements" (Diome, 2006:111), who yet returns home whenever he can to live like a king and distribute worthless second-hand "gifts" from France. On an occasion, he returns home and gets himself a second wife, who he promised to take to France on his next visit. The gullible lady, overjoyed, spends all her saving on making preparations to leave for France; she generously gives away all her pots and pans and shared her wardrobe among her sisters and cousins, before leaving for Dakar-Yoff to await her departure. After months of a fruitless wait, "she returns to the village with stooped shoulders, her braids frayed and heena faded" (Diome, 2006:112). Soon afterwards, those who had benefitted from her generosity tacitly agreed to return whatever they got.

To Salie, Madicke, Garouwale and others see migration as the only route because they have been fed fat on lies. They have been told that France is where their wildest dreams would come true and they choose to trade the truth for a soothing lie. They see her as one philosophizing on a full stomach. She says they know nothing of her life in France, of how that she is often beset by bouts of homesickness, nostalgia and solitude. In *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation and Memory*, Dennis Walder affirms that the rise in migration and exile accompanying the ends of empire and the disasters of war has led to a representation of the present as a place marked by a trail of survivors searching for their roots, for a home, in the ruins of history (2010:2). For Salie, a boundless rootlessness gnarls at her very being, having been a wandering migrant who is at home nowhere. In spite of having gotten her residency permit and having found modest fame from the publication of

a book, Salie lives unfulfilled. In her soliloquy, she feels like a wisp of straw and she relates that life passes her by. The condition of the diaspora heightens her feeling of homelessness. She tells of how in Europe, hers is a solitary existence. When her grandmother implored her not to keep a late night, on one of the days she was back on the island, her grandmother's words bring tears to her eyes:

> Make no mistake, these words were said with a stifled chuckle and boundless affection. They brought tears to my eyes. I thought of my solitary life in Europe, where nobody cared about my comings and goings, where only the lock on my door knew I was out. An e-mail or a message on the answering machine doesn't smile, doesn't worry, doesn't get impatient, doesn't empty a cup of coffee, still less a heart full of sorrow (Diome, 2006:134).

While Salie cherishes the freedom she enjoys in France, away from the prying eyes of the village gossips who question her decisions, especially her divorce of the white man she had married and whom the villagers disapproved of, she notes with nostalgia that freedom means nothing more than emptiness when it is no longer in relation to others.

In France, the migrant character suffers the pangs of solitude, yet back at home in Senegal, he or she is equally an outsider. Homecoming then becomes another distressing event or even an impossible one. The problematic homecoming and the impossibility of a return was earlier depicted in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventures*, where the fate of African migrant student is likened to that of a courier; Samba Diallo tells Pierre that "at the moment of leaving home we do not know if we shall ever return" because there is the possibility of being vanquished by the adventure and the endless metamorphoses that the migrant character engages in. He relates that sometimes, there is an incomplete metamorphosis whereby the migrant becomes a despicable hybrid, who then needs to hide submerged in shame. For Diome's migrant characters, as it was for Samba Diallo, Senegal then presents a place where they go to show off false identities or a place where they go shamefacedly, bearing "their suitcases stuffed with failure, humiliation and disappointment" (Diome, 2006:172). For Salie, even though there is always the irresistible urge to return to the source, "returning is the same as leaving" because she goes home as "a tourist" in her own country, for she has "become the *other* for the people I continues to call my family" (Diome, 2006:116). On the island, she is a misfit, and within days of getting

home, she again flees to the city where she is also treated as an outsider, "a curious creature" that evolved in the diaspora. It is then she realizes what she calls the wound the word "homesickness" conceals. Salie's experience of alienation at home and in the diaspora is responsible for her vehemence in not allowing Madicke to migrate. She does not want her brother to suffer the same fate all in the name of migration; to her, "to leave is to become a walking tomb filled with shadows… to leave is to die of absence" (Diome, 2006:162).

The Belly of the Atlantic depicts the exploitative politics often at work in the world of football. Because Madicke is a loyal fan of football, and worships Maldini, the Italian footballer, Salie is forced to watch football matches and be current about news in the football world, since football is the only connecting line that links her to her younger brother. Salie discovers there is an exploitative imperialist logic at work in European clubs' buying of African footballers. She relates how in an amazingly shameless imperialist fashion, Luciano Gaucci, president of the Perugia team did not wait for the 2002 World Cup to end before announcing that Ahn Jung Hwan, who was responsible for the golden goal that knocked Italy out of the World Cup had been dropped, simply because he scored a goal for Korea. She tells of a neocolonial order that treats footballers, especially African and Asian footballers who play in European clubs as part-time labourers, "seasonal workers" who are expected to "give up defending the colours of their native country in exchange for a fistful of euros" (Diome, 2006:175). She highlights how a leading Italian newspaper described the World Cup of year 2002 as "a dirty World Cup" simply because African and Asian countries had an unexpected entry into the big league. She lampoons the West for her inability to handle being matched by the Third World in football, thereby trampling on the spirit of the game.

Salie laments the fate of African footballers in France, who in spite of their hard work and diligence when they play for clubs in France, remain outsiders, since France, as a country takes credit for the feats on the football pitch but very often only gives them a temporary residency permit. The footballers often have to renew their anti-expulsion visa, in a process that ensures that "a proportion of what their goals earn them ends up in the embassy's coffers" (Diome, 2006:178) every year. She relates that "no one ever speaks of gratitude to them or even simply citizenship, but only of tolerance and integration into the mould of a sieve-society in which they are lumps" (Diome, 2006:172). Salie relates the restraint with

which the Senegalese migrants in France celebrated Senegal's World Cup triumph, how the Parisian Senegalese who rejoiced and paraded the Arc de Triomphe are contemptibly reminded that "the Arc de Triomphe isn't for Negroes! Move along there, please!... Bunch of morons! Go dance the bamboula under your banana trees" (Diome, 2006:173). Meanwhile in a similar circumstance in 1998 in Dakar, when French won FIFA World Cup, the French expats in Senegal, in celebrating the victory, blocked all the main streets and took over all the best restaurants, "drinking to the Cup into the small hours", disrupting the city people's sleep with their endless honking of horns. In France, the migrants must rejoice with caution, dink their "*bissap* juice so as to forget their miserable pay slips, if they've ever had one" (Diome, 2006:172). In the years spent in France, Salie has come to learn to fear the cops, because of their brutal ID checks and their accusing looks; she has also come to learn that the whites have an insidious way of "putting racism into perspective the better to practice it, remaining oblivious to the difficulties of those who are its victims" (Diome, 2006:113) To save Madicke and others the fate of living and slaving in places that never feature on the postcards from France, Diome personates Salie to write cautionary tales, to deter potential migrants from seeing France as El-Dorado, where all dreams come true.

Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red* also recreates immigrant suffering and how African migrants suffer double disillusionment, having failed at home and abroad. The novel recounts the plight of Massala-Massala, a disciple of Moki who falls for Moki's lies and decides to migrate to France by all means. Moki like the man from Barbes in Fatou's *The Belly of the Atlantic* paints an idyllic picture of France in the minds of the villagers in order to maintain his airs of superiority and create a futile longing in the youths. Unlike the man from Barbes who just recounts the beauties of Paris in the youths' ears, Moki goes a step further; he shows his audience the pictures of Paris to authenticate his claims. The youths all see him as a model of success and they seek to emulate him by all means. Having noticed that his skin was unlike theirs, theirs was not well tended, devoured and darkened by the scorching sun, whereas his was white, and unknown to them that he applied certain chemicals to his body, to deceive the people about the good life he lived in France, "the young people of the country who knocked themselves out in their irreversible blindness to ape Parisians made do with cheap products made in Africa like Ambi Red and Ambi Green" (Mabanckou 2013:50). What they get in return is a skin bedevilled by red spots, blood clots

and allergies. Moki's elegance drew the people in and he was often the subject of young girls' conversations. They studied his every movement, gather on street corners to watch walk by. They spied on him, followed his comings and goings, and guessed what he did per time. Moki's performance of superiority found him a disciple cum apprentice in Massala-Massala, who besought him to take him to France on his next visit.

With Moki's oppressive opulence which everyone traced to his migration to France comes the youths' desperation to also migrate to Paris. Massala-Massala relates that in the people's estimation, "the white man's country had changed Moki's life. Something had shifted; there was an undeniable metamorphosis" (Mabanckou, 2013:35), one that is clearly visible. Thence, to the average youth, France holds a mythic grandeur that it bestows on its subjects. What the natives in the colonial era perceived to be the Motherland's superior prowess, an illusion spread by the agents of colonisation, continues to dominate the people's beliefs about France. As Dominic Thomas (2011) notes, the lure of former colonial centers is still as strong as ever and it cannot be underestimated: trans-colonial connectivity remains a powerful vector in determining migratory objectives, even though it is no longer the exclusive factor since African-European relations have been and are being reconfigured. The illusion that the natives hold about the colonizing powers and their nations still continue to shape the expectations of those who migrate to the erstwhile colonizing nations and those who yearn to migrate. To everyone in Pointe-Noire, France must be the paradise or something close to it; a place where the streets are paved with gold since Paris as they see in Moki's photographs is a city of lights. Cazenave's (2006) description of France as a lark mirror (miroir aux alouettes) lucidly captures this reality. In a way, France attracts the youths and on getting there, often through illegal means, the men discover they have mistaken the shadow for the reality and that they have traded their all, and made huge sacrifices for cotton candy.

In a bid to also become a Parisian, Massala-Massala falls victim to Moki's lies. At first, Moki pretends to be reluctant to have Massala-Massala travel with him to France. He later agrees to allow Massala-Massala travel with him when he returns the next year at the end of the dry season. Moki congratulates Massala-Massala for making a good decision in deciding to follow him to France. Moki then goes on to make promises that he knows he will not and cannot fulfill; he tells Massala-Massala that he would provide him with a

housing certificate as soon as they get to France, so that he could easily get his visa. This then becomes the first in a long line of deceits and baits. On getting to France, Massala-Massala discovers that Moki and other migrants like him live a place that none in Pointe-Noire would believe if told:

> We had no elevator to get all the way to the eighth floor. The building was poorly lit and smelled of mildew. There were no other occupants besides us. We could hear everyone that climbed up and down from inside our room. Friends of Moki's whom I didn't know. We all slept there, nobody knew what anyone else did during the day… We would wake ourselves the next morning, piled together like cadavers tied to some sort of mass grave. To sleep, you had to put a superior intelligence to the test and do without all those hindering positions, such as stretching out length-wise or spreading your legs and hands. Space would cost you: a sharp dig of an elbow or knee, as needed...We were doubled over, some under the little plastic table, the only furniture in the room, others in the corners. The concert of snores no longer bothered anyone (Mabanckou 2013:92).

Massala-Massala is shocked to be a part of the demeaning life that Moki lives in France, while parading himself like a king back home. In the tiny room where all the occupants sleep on blankets on the floor, Massala-Massala loses count of all the occupants of the tiny room. They all feed on junks, live like rats, sneaking into the building at 2.00am, only to sneak out at 5.00am.

Massala-Massala on leaving Congo-Brazzaville makes up his mind to work diligently in order to surpass his discipler, Moki. To become successful in France, he is willing to pay any price. "I was ready for anything. I had made up my mind to knock myself out. To work in France twenty-four hours a day" (80). In his grand dream, he would work and make money in France, and first of all send some money to his father to repay his uncle for the loan that paid for his flight ticket, demolish their house made of old boards and build a permanent home, a building bigger than Moki's own. In his dream, he sees himself buying cars for his parents, and then cars that his parents could use for business. He wanted to ensure that he takes his mother away from the market where she sells peanuts. It was also his plan to build a big store for his father, where his sister could be the cashier and then his emergency wife, Adeline, the assistant. He also plans on installing electricity in the house,

as well as water pumps. “I made it a promise. Water would run like a torrent in the courtyard. And the neighborhood would come to our house to buy casks of water (Mabanckou 2013:79). What was unknown to Massala-Massala is that in spite of his grand plans, he would not be allowed to do any legitimate work to finance them. To Massala-Massala, all he needs to achieve his grand plans is to set foot in France, for France, his France is the land of bliss and abundance. It is the picture of France that was circulated during the colonial era till the present moment; “France, and Paris in particular, continues to occupy the mythic status it was invested with when it stood at the centrifugal point of France’s colonial empire” (Dominic, 200:951). However, on getting to France, Massala-Massala is forced to stay indoors and idle his life away for several months. The distance between his dreams and his reality became as far as the east is from the west.

Nostalgia, homesickness and disillusionment drive Massala-Massala to writes letters to his family in Congo-Brazzaville. Writing becomes his tool for survival. Like it was for Azel in *Tangier* and Salie in *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Massala-Massala resorts to writing in order to assert himself in a space that questions the essence of his being. Writing presents the “means of navigating the treacherous waters of a life lived between cultures and between worlds” (Robert Nathan, 2012:81); putting pen to paper becomes for him “a refuge and a survival reflex” (Jacques Chevrier 2007:35). “Suspended on the branches of disillusionment” (Mabanckou 2013:88), Massala-Massala, having been objectified by the erosion of his dreams, writes to lay claims of subjectivity and agency. In the letters that Massala-Massala writes, he details his unpleasant environment and circumstance. As he writes, he is able to transcend the limits of geography and see his mother’s face appear before him “very emotional, ravaged by my absence” and his father’s face, “serene but brushed with well-disguised worry” (Mabanckou 2013:89). He hears the tearful laughter of his carefree sister. In all he writes twelve letters, “letters written in the ink of anger and exasperation” about life in Paris, without euphemisms. Moki stops Massala-Massala from sending the letters. Unfortunately, the letters he writes are never posted, ensuring that his tales that give the true picture of life in the diaspora go unread. Had the letters gone like emissaries to Congo, Moki’s deluge of lies would have been destroyed.

Through Massala-Massala’s letters, the youths may have been forced to embrace the truth in the Peasant’s words when he warns the youths that life is difficult in France, especially

in Paris. He tells them that even French people dread life in Paris because rents are high and a cubic meter is not within the means of every pocketbook. He warns them not to go to France if they have nothing to do there, else they will roll around Paris like lost balls. In the town, it is Moki's words against those of the Peasant. To the boys, the Peasants are those who returned from French provinces. Unlike the Parisians, they eat the local food and live like every other person. Massala-Massala relates that no neighbourhood youth was infatuated with the Peasants. To them, it is "better to have not been in France than to come back from a province" (Mabanckou 2013:68). In a bid to sort the wheat from the chaff and decipher the false prophets, the youths weighed the words of the Parisians against those of the Peasants. In the youths' disregard for the Peasants, one of whom is the Peasant, they call him a seasoned liar, one who "lies like he breathes. And vice versa" (Mabanckou 2013:68). It takes Massala-Massala a trip to France to realize the truth in the Peasant's words. Unfortunately, his anagnorisis comes a little too late.

When Massala-Massala finally gets a "job", it is not what he had dreamed about, for in Congo, Moki had told his audience that in Paris, there were several jobs waiting to be taken up. He lies to them about the availability of all that they need. Moki gets Massala-Massala a place in his chain of illegal transactions. With the job comes a loss of identity. Massala-Massala has to shed his name for a new one- Marcel Bonaventure and then Eric Jocelyn-George, much latter. He has to constantly remind himself of his new name. In changing his name, a name that holds historical, cultural and spiritual significance for him, Massala-Massala loses a part of himself and experiences the trauma that comes with multiple discomfiting identities:

> Marcel Bonaventure… I say this name because over time I became accustomed to it, even though it isn't my name. In reality, I don't know who I am anymore… Use another name. Forget his name because that's necessary for the cause. Distance yourself from the ordinary world, the everyday world. Be on the margins of everything. Me, Marcel Bonaventure, I vow and reavow that up until the day that I landed on French soil, that Monday, October 15th, at dawn, my name was still Massala-Massala. The same name repeated twice. In our dialect, that means: those who remain, remain, those who stay will stay. The name carried by my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandparents. I thought the name was eternal, immutable. I thought the name reflected the

> image of a past, of an existence, of a family history, of its conflicts, its rifts, its grandeur, its decadence, and its dishonor. Yes, I thought that the name was sacred. Not something to change like clothing to dress appropriately for any given party (Mabanckou 2013:86).

In a nostalgic recollection, he recreates the cultural significance of his name and decries the circumstances that led him to a change in his name, his values and in fact, a deracination of his person.

As usual, the job Moki gets for Massala-Massala is demanding, dirty and dangerous. He is to serve as a vital link in the sale of tickets acquired through fraudulent means. During the course of his work, Massala-Massala discovers a France that simultaneously encourages migration and criminalizes migrants (Wandia Njoya, 2007). Migrants, especially illegal migrants too ashamed to go back to their countries empty-handed are often too desperate to respect the laws of the land in the search for survival. Njoya (2007) underscores the paradox of the immigration laws and practices that create a system that thrives on helping people contravene those laws. The authorities leave the gaps in the laws unamended and yet mercilessly strike at those who exploit the loopholes in the immigration laws. The situation can be likened to surrounding a hungry prisoner with sumptuous meals and ordering him to take his eyes off the meals. The migrant is especially an easy prey because of the conflicting forces that pull the migrants between the decision to either explore illegal means to succeed in the diaspora or choose the moral path and be sent home a two-time failure. Massala-Massala sees many migrants who suffer the same predicament; they are compelled to succeed by all means in the diaspora, in spite of the fading echoes from a guilty conscience. He knows several people, complicated people who "all juggled shadows and light" (Mabanckou 2013:96). They are those who have learnt the skills of surviving in the diaspora. He relates that the "masks they wore during the day miraculously concealed their nocturnal behavior and obliterated any natural urge for self-reflection, which would torment ordinary mortals" (Mabanckou 2013:96). They are described as migrants possessing "a sixth sense, honed through experience, facts, and observations about the universe they found themselves in" and who have over time "learned how to pinpoint flaws in this society they were not part of and to penetrate a world that was closed to them" (Mabanckou 2013:96).

With time, Massala-Massala discovers the reality of the French systems of assimilation that promise and yet bar access with all the might. By extending the analogy of the image of France serving as a lark mirror, Njoya (2007) highlights the paradox embedded in an assimilation process, which invites Africans to pursue the goal of integration into French culture while ensuring that the integration cannot take place. Njoya sees France as the most powerful actor of migration, since thanks to its aggrandized image that gained momentum especially during colonialism, many African migrant characters only dream of a better lived reality in France. The exaggerated image of the "mother country" exhibited during the colonial era served through exhibitionism and expressed through elaborate military parades and costumes, continue to attract the young and the old to France. Yet, France continues to pass laws to curb immigration. Massala-Massala, for instance is able to gain entry into France borne upon a tourist visa. Massala-Massala realizes that many migrants like him come into France "through the small door, very quietly. Then they progressively invaded the space and had finally left their marks and raised the pylons of their empire" (Mabanckou 2013:96). Over time, the migrants who came in through the cracks in the system now "ruled supreme… On the outskirts of society. They were unpredictable individuals, capable of the best and the worst" (Mabanckou 2013:96). In essence, the diaspora capitalises on their desperation and turns them into criminals; they "would be dressed modestly in the clothes of antiheroes" were they to appear in a novel. Massala-Massala accepts a change in his name, takes his forged papers and goes to work defrauding the system.

Mabanckou employs characters such Moki, an illegal migrant who comes from and goes into France at will, and Prefét, Benos, the Zairian and Bolou, all seasoned criminals, to satirise the systemic cracks in French immigration policies. Before getting to Paris, Moki had gone to Angola; In Luanda, he had seen how desperation drove people to carve out means of landing in France through diverse means. There were those who took the maritime route from the port in Pointe-Noire. What they did was "to penetrate the maritime world" by working as warehousemen at the port for months, after which "they picked an opportune moment to infiltrate themselves in the hold, not caring whether the ship flew a French flag or not" (Mabanckou 2013:65). In that way, some of them found themselves in Portugal, in Greece, or even in Latin America, thinking that they were heading to France. Moki, unwailling to travel through such a dangerous route soon found out that he could bribe his

way to France safely. Moki was stuck in Luanda for several months, often without food to eat, until he was able to raise enough money from the sales of salted fish, sole, dorade, and cakes in a big working-class market in Luanda. From there, he bribes his way into France, maintaining that the people needed was just a little money to get into France. Because of the loopholes, Moki continues to stay in France and even recruits others into his shady business. In France, Moki's has a circle of friends, comprising mostly illegal migrants who because they have sacrificed too much to be in France are desperate to make it in France or die trying. They all gravitated around Moki, despite their different areas of activity. They continue to maintain connections with one another even when their paths went in opposite directions, crossed each other, met up, and in the end converged, because they are characterized by the same spirit, "the same white-knuckled grip and the same fury to bust their way out" (Mabanckou 2013:96).

Because of the cracks in the system, Prefét too can continue to defraud the officials in France. Prefét makes much money from issuing fake documents. Prefét uses the loopholes and the numerous changes in the French immigration system to his favour. The narrator lampoons that there are as many changes in the system as there are migrants:

> The laws changed from one government to the next. One government would come to power and reopen the whole debate on the prior government's legislation. When the other returned to power, the business would be turned upside down again. And so on and so on. In the end, the police precincts, swept along in a ceaseless legislative waltz, no longer knew which procedure to follow. In the morning, they determined your status was legal, and in the afternoon, with their fists on the table, laws, presidential decrees, and official newspapers in hand, they solemnly denied it and gave you an appointment in forty-five days and a list of documents to provide, some of which were in the possession of your great-grandmother or one of your mother's three former husbands. A little more, and they would have demanded that applicants provide their baptismal certificates and bicycle permits. This is how those who had residency permits found themselves sans-papiers– undocumented– sandwiched between complex and draconian laws (Mabanckou 2013:105).

Prefét goes as far as acting as an intermediary between a French citizen who is interesting in making some easy money and an illegal migrant desperate for papers. The citizens sell

their identity cards to Préfet and thereafter make arrangements to later initiate the procedures to declare a lost card and then disappear from Paris for a while, knowing that "their administrative existence would be split with another person whom they should not encounter" (Mabanckou 2013:106). In this way, Prefét continues to extort the natives as well as the strangers. Through him, Mabanckou underlines the paradox of the immigration laws that creates "an economy that thrives on helping people contravene those laws" (Njoya, 2007).

Similarly, the Zairian who got into France in a ship's hold, in pursuit of a career as a professional boxer in Europe, works a bouncer in several nightclubs in Paris at night. During the day however, he together with a gang from the Les Halles neighbourhood carries out robberies. Bolou is the "real estate" specialist whose mission is to comb through the buildings in an arrondissement to find unoccupied apartments, offering financial compensation to the squatters. Benos is into the supply of stolen goods. He was nicknamed Conforama, just like the box store in France. Massala-Massala relates Benos was the household appliance and hi-fi specialist and that if anyone ordered something from him, he would deliver the merchandise to their home the next day. There was no paperwork done. Moki, Prefét, Benos, Bolou and later Massala-Massala all constitute the wretched of the diaspora. Benos' description is especially pathetic:

> He was a short compatriot who had stayed in his shell for eighteen years in Paris without going back to the country even once. His coarse, tattered clothes were the telltale signs of his devotion to a business that ate up all his time. He wore the same baggy clothes. A shabby boubou outfit with a red turtleneck pullover inside. His Palladium loafers were threadbare, and his toes, with hard, blackened nails, stuck out. He could have been taken for a pygmy parachuted into the middle of the city… He smelled like sweat and could not have known what a good shower was. He scratched his head. Very curly hair, dusted a reddish-brown and infested with (Mabanckou 2013:97)

If all in the name of living in France, Benos lives like this, then his emigration to France has profited him nothing.

While in prison after his arrest, Massala-Massala is able to count his losses. His France was a second Africa, only a worse version. In prison, he is called by another name- Eric Jocelyn-

George, the name on the documents that he had on him as at the time of his arrest. He laments the metamorphosis in France, from an innocent youth seeking success to a criminal always on the run from the police. Before his incarceration, he had suffered an erosion of his identity. Every time, he answers to Marcel Bonaventure, a part of him chips off. With his name change came a false birth certificate and a false nation of origin. Instead of Congo-Brazzaville, he was born in Saint-Claude in Guadeloupe, a country he knew nothing about and could not locate on a world map. It is the prison he discovers the trauma that solitude bestows. He laments that no one ever comes to visit him. He is forced to embrace silence. Even after his deportation to Congo-Brazzaville, silence was his response to the pain that is much his and his father's.

Massala-Massala suffers humiliation abroad and then at home. His shameful return was what he dreaded while in prison. He fears that he would become one of those that the people called the Parisian rejects:

> I see faces of other Africans in the courtyard. They are surrounded by uniformed officers, billy clubs in hand. The Africans are resigned. Heartache is written clearly on their faces. They are going back despite themselves. It's not so much the need to stay that torments them but the fear of confronting a whole large family that awaits them. Like me. This difficult reality. This other reality that we can't shake off. Those hands held out toward us. The family that encircles you. That's our fear. It takes guts to come back from a long trip empty-handed, without a present for your mother, for your father, for your brothers and sisters. This anguish resides inside your throat. It stifles your reason for living (Mabanckou 2013:135).

For returning home as a failure, people mock him and his family, asking if others could succeed, why not him. As his family's social security, he has failed to live up to their expectations. His ignoble homecoming confers on him the anguish being a second time a failure. No one cared to know that all in the name of living in France, he had suffered great humiliation and dehumanization. He has gone to the City of Light and only found darkness and death there. No longer at ease at home, Massala-Massala is bent on getting into France again. His decision to go to France again gives credence to the suitability of Cazenave's

description of France acting as a lark mirror, that attracts, entraps and leads larks to their death.

4.5 Conclusion

All eight narratives depict migrant characters' experience of trauma in diasporic spaces. The legal migrant characters and the illegal migrant characters suffer a similar fate. They experience first-hand racist attitudes and actions; they are denied a sense of belonging and they many times have to alter their identities in order to fit into the host environment. For the migrant characters, theirs is a partial presence; as Bhabha (1994:86) relates, the excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not just merely "rupture" the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the . . . subject as the "partial presence, they living under bridges and in hideouts, careful not to fully live. The migrant characters fall apart in the diaspora, some go missing for days, other embrace solitude, some practice self-mutilation and some commit suicide. Novelists such Unigwe, Farah, Diome underscore the importance of writing and speaking in mitigating the effects of trauma. Their characters only find solace and begin a working-through by the narrativization of their traumatic experiences. In the next and final chapter, a summary of the thesis will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Having presented an examination of the purposively chosen texts through trauma and postcolonial theoretical lens in order to explore migrant characters' experiences of trauma in the homeland and in the diaspora, in the previous chapters, this chapter presents the summary of the study and the conclusion. The first chapter of the study presented an introduction to the study, highlighted the need for a critical examination of African migrant narratives' depiction of immigrant suffering, crises and trauma. The chapter also underscored the significance of examining migrant narratives' representation of trauma through trauma theory and postcolonial theory, in a bid to centralise the under-explored power play as well as the tragic edge that there is the depiction of migrant characters' experiences and encounters at home and abroad. In the second chapter, a review of relevant literatures on African migrant literature and trauma studies was presented. The chapter also foregrounded the place of African migrant narratives as postcolonial trauma fiction, in as much as they depict characters' experiences of psychological trauma resulting from loss, displacement, disillusionment and distress; and they conform to configuration of the trauma narrative in the sense in that Anne Whitehead, a foremost trauma studies critic, employs the term in *Trauma Fiction* (2004). The first two chapters traced the study's conceptualisation of trauma in migrant contexts and highlighted the justification for the study's examination of the nature of trauma in the purposively chosen narratives, the means, that is the stylistic devices, through which the representation of trauma is done and the significance of depiction of migrant characters' emotional suffering, that is the end to which the depictions are made by African migrant writers.

The third and fourth chapters presented the analyses of the texts chosen for in-depth examination. In chapter three, Ali Farah's *Little Mother, Hope and Other Dangerous*

Pursuits written by Laila Lalami, Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*, Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*, Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Noviolet Bulawayo's *We need new Names* were examined for their representation of the postcolonial condition, what Step Craps and Gert Beulens (2008:4) capture as "wounding political, social, and economic system (Craps and Beulens, 2008:4), as stressor for migrant characters. In all eight texts, the abysmal state of affairs in the postcolony is responsible for characters' emigration. The four female protagonists in *On Black Sisters' Street*, Sisi, Ama, Joyce and Efe leave Nigeria because in the words of the narrator, the country is a *jaga jaga* one. In the same way, Darling in *We need new Names* refers to Zimbabwe as a *kaka* country that no one wants to identify with. In *Leaving Tangier* and *Hope and Other Dangerous Dreams*, Morocco is captured as a land that swallows the dreams of its youths. In both *Blue White Red* and in *The Belly of the Atlantic*, the Francophone African society is described as one that is tied to the apron strings of France in a confused mentor-and-mentee relationship. In all the narratives, emigration is embraced by the characters as the only option left, in a way that bear witness to the suffering engendered by the remnants of colonial oppression, chronic maladministration and fated catastrophes of wars and coups.

5.2 Summary of Findings

In each narrative, the novelists depict characters' desperate desire to leave the homeland by all means. The novels underscore how erstwhile colonial authorities are implicated in the continent's traumas. *Harare North*, *Little Mother* and *The Belly of the Atlantic* clearly depict the negative impacts that the lingering effects of colonial traumas continue to have on the economies of not just Zimbabwe, Somalia and Senegal, but most African countries. The novels depict how Western powers still largely influence the political realities of many African states, with the connivance of gullible and incapable leaders. One of the points that emerge clearly from the analysis in the third chapter is that postcolonial trauma is the catalyst for most if not all of emigrations out of the continent. All mobility in the texts studied is crisis-induced. No character leaves the continent for just for the pleasure of

leaving. The reality of a past and present shaped by economic instabilities, economic recession occasioned by debts and endless devaluation of currencies, natural disasters, and the ruptures of all sorts brought about by militancy, wars, coups and counter coups and genocide create, in the long run some traumatogenic effects in characters, who in turn seek solace elsewhere. The effects of a colonial history, everyday oppression, displacement and deprivation do not overtly threaten characters' psyche but in the long, they cumulate in psychic wounds in the characters, especially characters who have had a prior history of oppression, like Domenica Axad in *Little Mother* and the nameless narrator in *Harare North*.

The eight texts are not just narratives of migration but of escape, (that is a mandatory flight occasioned by the traumatogenic events encountered in the postcolonial context), and migration. In all humans, the fight-or-flight response is a common response to stress. Characters in the narratives analysed embrace flight in response to the distressing circumstances that had become their everyday reality in Morocco (*Leaving Tangier* and *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*), Nigeria (*On Black Sisters' Street*), Zimbabwe (*We need new Names*), Congo (*Blue White Red*), Senegal (*The Belly of the Atlantic*), and Somalia (*Little Mother*). Repetitively victimised by oppressive poverty, joblessness, displacement and the inconsistencies that have come to define the postcolony, characters take flight, escaping by trekking through deserts, on boats in the Mediterranean, and even in the undercarriage of an airplane. The eight narratives abound with the representation of the legitimate and illegitimate means that postcolonial subjects travel through to reach Europe and America. In *Little Mother*, *On Black Sisters' Street* and *Hope and other Dangerous Dreams*, the major characters travel using forged documents. In *The Belly of the Atlantic*, *Harare North* and *Blue White Red*, the major characters travel on visitors' visas, staying back in Europe and America long after their visas had expired. They then join others like them who live with the trauma of a paperless existence. They live in perpetual fear of police officers, and would usually embrace a change in their identities or forge papers in order to work in the host land. The case of Massala-Massala in *Blue White Red* is as humorous as it is pathetic. He must remind himself to answer to Marcel Bonaventure and later on, Eric Jocelyn-George. The novels recount moving stories of identity crisis and the politics of selfhood and subjective agency in diasporic spaces.

In all the texts, the migrant character is at first to be envied and then one to be pitied later on. Emigration is captured as an escape at first and then a launch into precarious existence. In embracing flight, the postcolonial subjects become the very "signs of a dislocated locality, mote in the eye of cosmopolitanism and possessor of that postcolonial identity which derives its legitimacy from the mastery of the culture of modern Europe" (Gikandi, 2010). This is because by journeying from Africa to Europe or America, the migrant character transits from a position of mild powerlessness to abject powerlessness. The migrant character moves from the margins to the centre, where he is regarded as the Other, a category that comes with consequences. The consequences or rather the cost of emigration is what the fourth chapter of the study traced in each of the eight novels. All through history, people leave in order to find; they leave to lay hold on what is absent in the homeland but present in the host land, and sometimes, what is present in the homeland but delightfully absent in the host land. In Africa, as depicted in the texts, migrant characters mistake the West for the Promised Land. They soon find out to their utter dismay that what they taught was the Promised Land was only just another location on the planet, with its own measure of aches and woes. In the discrepancy between what was envisioned and what became their experience lies the trauma of double disillusionment and dashed expectations.

All eight novels bear witness to the traumatizing consequences of migration. From one text to the next, migrant novelists present emigration to Europe and America for the African migrant, as a journey that is fraught with subalternity, marginality and more often than not, trauma. In *Leaving Tangier* and *We need new Names*, there are overt authorial intrusions where characters are warned to desist from seeing emigration from the continent as the ultimate panacea to all problems. Moha, a man man in *Leaving Tangier*, mocks the desperate youths whose eyes are set upon Toutia, in hope of leaving the country. He mocks the youths' plans to "leave, quit the country, move in with the Europeans, but they're not expecting you, or rather, they are: with dogs, German shepherds, handcuffs, a kick in the butt" (Jelloun, 2011:115). Moha, even though configured as a mad man in the text, speaks wise words to the youths. He demolishes the youths' tall thoughts about Europe, thoughts about they finding jobs easily and then comfort, grace and beauty. He tells them that instead of these, they would find "sadness, loneliness and shades of grey- and money as well, but not for those who come without an invitation!" (Jelloun, 2011:115). Similarly, in a section

deliberately cocooned between Darling's days in Zimbabwe and the representation of her experiences in America, titled "How they Left" in *We need new Names*, an omniscient narrator denounces African subjects' helpless devotion to the emigration dream. The narrator tells of how everyone is moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying and fleeing and abandoning the tatters that their country has become. Like Moha, the narrator predicts that the migrants will not be the same again and that they will be "welcomed with restraint in those strange lands because they do not belong, knowing they will have to sit on one buttock because they must not sit comfortably lest they be asked to rise and leave" (Bulawayo, 2013:98). Among all eight texts, *We need new Names* most explicitly depicts the doubled-edged trauma that is reality for African migrant characters.

In all the narratives, trauma is a double wound. There is also the double infliction of trauma. The migrant characters flee the homeland because its wretchedness, only to meet a worst wretchedness awaiting them in the diaspora. Sisi in *On Black Sisters' Street* flees Lagos, which she describes as a city of death, but ironically, it is in Belgium, that she will die gruesomely. Moussa in *The Belly of the Atlantic* quits working on El Hadji's fishing boats for a fleeting shadow in France. In a traumatic twist however, he will return to the sea for sustenance, even in the land of his dreams. The pathetic part is that he must now work on the sea as an illegal migrant. He the modern slave, works with many like himself in the hold of the ship, feeding on tasteless meals that do not deserve to be called meals, prepared by a chef that often has a runny nose as he cooked. During his incarceration, he will come to describe Paris as his Bermuda Triangle. A similar fate befalls Azel, the protagonist of *Leaving Tangier* who flees from Morocco only to lose himself in Italy. The opportunity to freely work and live was what he had hoped Italy would give him, but in Italy, he is enslaved and he then dies a gruesome death. Like Moussa, all that remained of the migrants' dreams of prosperity and fulfilment attained in Europe are their unmarked graves. In *Little Mother* as well, the characters flee war-torn Somalia for Italy and America, but they soon discover that Fortress Europe selectively bestows its succour. Somali migrant characters are reduced to rubbish in the diaspora (Nick Tembo, 2017). The migrant characters in all eight texts, both the legal and the illegal migrants all "flee their own wretched land so their hunger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands, the wounds of their despair bandaged in faraway lands, their blistered prayers muttered in the darkness of queer

lands" (Bulawayo, 2103:98), but all they got for their sacrifices is a hostile host land that reifies them as it enslaves them.

The novelists write to dismantle characters' blurred and stereotypical visions of Europe and America built on false impressions, assumptions and idealizations, by underscoring migrant characters' precarious, liminal and subaltern existence in the land of their dreams. They present immigrants characters who are not just traumatized, but doubly traumatized. With Azel and Samsa's death in *Leaving Tangier*, Moussa's death in *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Sisi's death in *On Black Sisters' Street*, Massala-Massala's incarceration and subsequent disgraceful deportation in *Blue White Red*, Murad and Halima's deportation in *Hope and other Dangerous Pursuits*, Taageere's endless wanderings in *Little Mother*, the nameless narrator's dissociation in *Harare North* and Tshaka Zulu's dissociation in *We need new Names*, Ben Jelloun, Fatou Diome, Chika Unigwe, Alain Mabanckou, Laila Lalami, Ali Farah, Brian Chikwava and NoViolet Bulawayo all question what it profits African subjects to emigrate at all costs, only to lose their lives or be maimed psychologically, in the diaspora. Each text depicts characters' desperation, vulnerability and then their precarious existence in the diaspora as they experience loss, abject destitution, violence, abuse and adversity.

Essentially, the representation of trauma in African migrant fiction is double-edged. Texts depict postcolonial traumas (occasioned by colonial violence, historical injustices, abject dismal state of affairs in the postcolony, of how a people who weave their weave their existence in incoherence, uncertainty, instability and discontinuity (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995)), and migrant traumas (engendered by racism, disillusionment, destitution and violence). Migrant characters' responses to traumatic stress occasioned by pre-migratory and post-migratory stressors are diverse. Exposed to pre-migratory and post-migratory stress, not all the characters develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Domenica Axad in *Little Mother*, the nameless narrator in *Harare North*, Joyce and Ama in *On Black Sisters' Street* and Azel in *Leaving Tangier* display such intrusion symptoms as nightmares, flashbacks; repetitive re-enactments; alterations in cognition, identity, mood and social relationships; self-mutilation; hypervigilance and avoidance of trigger situations. Characters in *We need new Names*, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, *Blue White Red* and *The Belly of the Atlantic* largely display resilience in the face of trauma. For instance,

in the face of abject objectification and sexual violence, characters like Faten in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* and Massala-Massala in *Blue White Red* do not succumb to Post-traumatic stress. They suffer varying degrees of post-traumatic stress but not for long. This then upholds Christine Agaibi and John Wilson (2005) and Anthony Charuvastra and Marylene Cloitre (2008) findings that some people exposed to extreme and distressing circumstances become resilient, such that their often-short-lived responses to the traumatic event do not severely impede their normal social and occupational functioning.

Little Mother and *On Black Sisters' Street* show that post-traumatic growth and a working-through are possible, through communication and communion. Domenica Axad, Barni and Taageere in *Little Mother* and Ama, Joyce and Efe in *On Black Sisters' Stress* only begin the journey towards a working-through after they embraced communal witnessing and testimony. By representing migrant character's trauma, responses and possible paths to post-traumatic growth, the writers being migrants themselves, become witnesses on the three levels of witnessing identified by Dori Laub (1995). The first level is being a witness to oneself within the experience, there is then the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others, and then the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself. This is especially true of Ali Farah, who relates that in writing and through writing, what is most important to her is the act of gathering testimonies; she considers herself a gatherer of testimonies and memories of the Somali people. Geoffrey Hartman (2003) in exploring the relationship between words and wounds upholds literature's capability to engender healing. He opines that wounds could healed by further words and therefore the failure of language, resulting in silence or mutism would only impede working-through for trauma victims. This is because as Marian MacCurdy (2007) asserts, silence perpetrates trauma and the shame and guilt that often accompany. Bearing witness is cardinal in trauma studies and so in writing about migrant traumas, all eight writers write to humanize migrants, and thereby transcend the presentation of the Africa migrant subject as just a tool for research and policy discussions. The texts contribute to reshaping of social perception about African migrants in the diaspora, by highlighting the structures and systems traumatise or further traumatise migrants.

All the texts examined tell the mobility story- of migration, exile, displacement and return migration; however, the texts are invested with a tragic dimension. They give voice to

migrant characters' pain and suffering; they all depict how migrant characters' experiences wound them bodily, financially, sociocultural and especially psychologically. Migrant characters are wounded bodily in their desperate search for stability in the diaspora. They are found in demeaning, dangerous and dirty jobs. In *Harare North*, for instance, migrant characters are labourers, guards, cleaners and British Bottom Cleaners. Mr Sonacotra in *The Belly of the Atlantic* is depicted as a labourer who knows nothing of life in France apart from "the din of factories, the insides of sewers and the ratio of dog shit per square of pavements" (Diome, 2006:111). When one of the women comments in *On Black Sisters' Street* on not having African clients, the general consensus was that African men were too busy hustling to care about sex workers. In *We need new Names*, African characters are into all kinds of cleaning jobs, from cleaning humans, to hospitals, to restaurants, cars and clothes. Darling relates that to immigrants like herself, Aunt Fostalina and Uncle Kojo belong the "low-paying jobs. Backbreaking jobs. Jobs that gnawed at the bones of our dignity, devoured the meat, tongued the marrow" (Bulawayo, 2013:163). Against their wish and expectations, immigrants often find themselves at the lowest stair of the ladder, doing the odd jobs that the natives would rather spurn. They suffer social and cultural isolation and marginalisation.

Immigrants are wounded financially by the gnawing need to service debts- debts incurred from loans taken to pay for boat passages, flight tickets, passports and other documents. In *Blue White Red*, *Harare North*, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, the migrant characters borrow heavily to finance their trips. For a character like the nameless narrator in *Harare North*, his world falls apart every time he loses his job because he is then reminded of his inability to fulfil his mission of making the equivalent of five thousand pounds that he needs to settle the charges against him in Zimbabwe, repay the loan from his uncle and pay for his mother's *umbuyiso*. Additionally, migrant characters suffer from the politics of exclusion at work in many places where they find themselves. They face racism, live in constant fear of the police, and because they are often without the right documents, they live in perpetual fear of deportation. They are the easy targets of racist attitudes, actions and comments. In the diaspora, postcolonial subjects discover that the commonwealth is not common to everyone. The constellation of bodily, financial, sociocultural and psychological wounds borne in the diaspora makes up migrant traumas.

African migrant writers committedly recount the traumatic encounters and experiences of migrant characters. This is done through the employment of traumatic realism, multiple narrators and multimedia resources. There are letters, phone conversations, interviews and sports commentaries. In *Little Mother*, for instance, conversations are held over the telephone; there is use of cassette tapes, video camera and letters. All these also vividly feature in *We need new Names* and *The Belly of the Atlantic*. Migrant writers appear to employ more stylistic liberties with the language, the modes of communication and the architectonics of narration. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* as well as *We need new Names* presents short stories loosely strung to form a novel. In *Little Mother* for instance, each chapter is named after one of the three major characters- Domenica Axad, Barni and Taaageere. The first chapter, the prelude is a testimonial by Domenica Axad. The second chapter presents Barni's interview with an Italian journalist. The third and fourth chapters are telephone conversations, just as the sixth and seventh chapter are conversations between Barni and Domenica Axad, Taageere and an investigator. The fifth chapter is the interlude while the eight chapter is a letter written by Domenica Axad. The last chapter is presented as the epilogue. Motifs such as the dream motif and journey motif are explored in a number of narratives. However, quest and journey motifs are common to all the texts. Tropes of shame, namelessness, nostalgia, homelessness, rootlessness and guilt are also employed to underscore the diaspora space's hostility and estranging postures towards the migrant character. All these depict a complex network of movement, mutation, communication and transition within the African diaspora.

5.3 Conclusion

African migrant narratives, as evidenced by the eight novels examined in the study, are preoccupied with the representation of migrant characters' experiences of distress, in order to testify to the reality of what Fatou Diome captures in *The Belly of the Atlantic* as the other side of the migration coin. The verdict in much of trauma studies, is that if an event is not unusual, then it is not is not traumatic. Laura Brown (1995) describes how the traumatic experiences of the Other, people on the margins (blacks, lower-class people, people with disabilities, and now migrants), often fly under the trauma-theoretical radar; she highlights the need for an expansion of trauma discourse to accommodate traumatic experiences that do not usually count as "real trauma" but which nevertheless contains "traumatogenic

effects of oppression that threaten the well-being of some people. Following Brown's assertions, this study also avows that traumatogenic events and encounters witnessed by postcolonial subjects can be and must to be accounted for within dominant trauma studies. This study then upholds a belief in trauma studies' avowed humanist aims and copious capacity to effectively interpret the representation of trauma in African migrant fiction. By reading migrant narratives through trauma theory and the postcolonial theory, the study retains faith in what Gayatri Spivak (2003:23) captures as the literature's potential to "be our teacher as well as our object of investigation". The study makes visible the plight of migrants with a view to drawing sympathy for migrant characters and thereby extending the frontiers on discourses around migrant crisis and postcolonial trauma studies.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study has underscored how that African migrant writers do more than tell the "migration story"- how a character successfully leaves Africa for greener pastures in the West, or the failure of a character to achieve the American dream. The study critically examined African migrant novels for their depiction of migrant characters' encounters with the traumatic, and this led to the discovery that African migrant narratives depict not only migrant characters' traumatic experiences in the diaspora, but also migrant characters' distressing encounters and experiences even before they ever leave the shores of Africa. Trauma serves in many instances as the push factor that causes many characters to flee their motherland, and yet in the diaspora, African migrant characters hardly find solace, as trauma equally awaits them in the West, as evidenced in all eight novels that were critically analysed. This study establishes the mobility of trauma, across space and time. Hence, this study displays the applicability of trauma theory and its interpretative modes in engaging African migrant narratives, and thereby demonstrates that African migrant fiction can contribute profitably to the trauma discourse in African literature. The study then avers that the representation of migrant characters' precarious, liminal and subaltern existence, both at home and abroad, bears witness to trauma's mobility across space and time in African migrant fiction. This representation by African migrant writers serves the postcolonial agenda of destabilising the hegemonic conception of the West as the Promised Land.

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