NARRATING MIGRANCY IN SELECTED SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANT NOVELS

BY

KINGSTON, ONYEMAEKI ONYIJEN
MATRIC. NO.: 148054
B.A. (Hons) English and Literature, M.A. English and Literature (Benin), M.Phil English (Ibadan)

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mr. Kingston Onyemaeki ONYIJEN, in the Department of English, University of Ibadan.

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Prof. R.O. Oriaku
Supervisor

DEDICATION

To the only true God, Jehovah, the supreme spirit: the unbeatable and undefeatable God of war; the war strategist.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title page	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Certification	v
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	vii
Abstract	ix

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION		1
1.1	Background to the study	3
	1.1.1 Beyond the "been-to" narratives: Broadening the diasporic African narrative tradition	5
1.2	Statement of the research problem	10
1.3	Justification of the study	10
1.4	Objective of the study	21
1.5	Significance of study (contribution to knowledge)	21
1.6	Scope of study	22
1.7	Theoretical framework	22
1.8	Research Methodology	27

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1	General review	28
2.2	Resistance	33
2.3	Objectification	35
2.4	Sex trafficking	39
2.5	Identity	41
2.6	Themes	41
2.7	Style	50

CHAPTER THREE

REPRESENTATION OF MIGRANTS' SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN *BEYOND THE HORIZON, NATIVES, ON BLACK SISTERS' STREET, WE NEED NEW NAMES* AND *A SQUATTER'S TALE* **59**

3.1 Introduction 59

3.2 Menial Jobs, Marriages and Fraud as Survival Strategies 62

3.3 Prostitution as a Survival Strategy 82

3.4 Affectation, Renaming and Denaming as Survival Strategies 98

3.5 Betrayal as a Survival Strategy 107

3.6 Conclusion 127

CHAPTER FOUR

BONDING AS MIGRANTS' SURVIVAL STRATEGY IN *CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION* AND *HARARE NORTH* **128**

4.1 Introduction 128

4.2 Psychological Bonding as a Survival Strategy 129

4.3 Emotional Bonding as a Survival Strategy 138

4.4 Conclusion 144

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION **145**

REFERENCES 152

ABSTRACT

Migration, a movement of individuals away from their homelands, is a motif in sub-Saharan African migrant novels. Existing studies on African migrant novels emerging since the 1980s have focused on culture contact and identity crisis, sex trafficking and transnationalism, with little attention to migrants' survival. This study was, therefore, designed to examine migrants' living conditions in the selected novels, with a view to determining their survival strategies, as well as the fictional elements deployed.

Gayatri Spivak's model of subalternity, and Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis were adopted as framework, while the interpretive design was used. Seven sub-Saharan African novels were purposively selected for their engagement with migrant issues. They were Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* and Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* (East/Central Africa), NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (Southern Africa), Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* and Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* (West Africa). The novels were subjected to literary analysis.

Prostitution, menial jobs, marriages, fraud, betrayal, affectation, renaming, denaming, and bonding are the survival strategies deployed. Akobi and Mara in *Beyond the Horizon;* Sisi, Joyce, Efe and Ama in *On Black Sisters' Street;* and Gerard Essomba in *Natives* migrate to Europe in pursuit of their economic survival. Akobi lures his wife into prostitution. Sisi, Joyce, Efe and Ama in *On Black Sisters' Street* engage in commercial sex, while Gerald Essomba in *Natives* is a gigolo. Darling and Aunt Fostalina in *We Need New Names*, and Obi in *A Squatter's Tale* do menial jobs. In *A Squatter's Tale*, a twenty-year-old boy marries a fifty-year-old woman. Kristal, in *We Need New Names*, and Hook and Uncle Happiness, in *A Squatter's Tale*, engage in advanced fee fraud. Akobi betrays Mara, while Kay's boyfriend betrays her into prostitution in *Beyond the Horizon*. Roser and Gerard Essomba betray Montse by eloping in *Natives*. While Polycarp and Oga Dele betray Alek, Sisi betrays Oga Dele in *On Black Sisters' Street*. In *We Need New Names*, Darling adopts an American accent, as she and fellow migrants rename themselves and dename their children at birth. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Akobi renames himself Cobby; in *On Black Sisters' Street*, Chisom becomes Sisi, Alek becomes Joyce; and Gerard Essomba in *Natives* becomes Bambara Keita. Many of the migrant characters also use meetings as bonding for emotional and psychological survival. Stephanos, Ken, and Joe in *Children of the Revolution,* and the unnamed narrator and his friends in *Harare North,* meet regularly to review their lives. In *Children of the Revolution*, Stephanos is advised to bond with a white lady, and he also sleeps with prostitutes as a means of bonding. Through verbal and dramatic ironies, and characterisation, migrants' motives are revealed. Situational irony underlines the nostalgia that characterises the migrants' lives. Flashback reveals migrants introspection, and point of view focalises them.

Sub-Saharan African novels deploy fictional elements of flashback, point of view, characterisation, and irony to reflect migrants' survival strategies.

Keywords: Migrant novels, Survival strategies in novels, Sub-Saharan African literature

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Migration which is a movement from one geographical location to another, for temporary or permanent settlement is a motif in socio-political discourses in sub-Saharan African migrant novel in the twenty-first century. Studies on African literature, the novel genre especially, reveals that writers and practitioners of the novel genre have used the medium to portray socio-political experiences of the African people. This is with the intent not only to entertain the reading audience, a function of literature, but also to document and educate the masses on the historical, social, political and economic burdens they bear as a people with same sensibility, personality, and destiny.

The African writer in the context of this study is the writer, novelist, poet or dramatist, whose focus of the creative lens is influenced by his African personality and sensibility, while Africa is, but a spatial and cultural space. Ojaide (2009) concurs with this when he writes that:

> Africa is a geographical, political, and socio-cultural entity. For this reason the African […] is not limited to the racial but also covers the totality of a diverse continent. African writers are those writers that express the African sensibility in their work. (2)

The African locale and its divers cultures and people have been the focus of the African writer who has over the years produced literary works extensively from the society, for the society.

Inasmuch as a lot seems to have been done by African writers on Africa, there appears a set of writers, males and females, who since the 1980s have given the novel genre a boost, to give further definition to the African novel. These writers narrate their homelands and life abroad in an effort to investigate and show to the world the current happenings in Africa. Many writers in this group focus critical attention on the issue of

migration of persons. This attitude which has expanded the frontiers of African novel, is a development in African fiction which fulfils Nnolim's (2010) observation in his essay on developments in Nigerian novel which is also applicable to the African novel generally. He argues that "… if diversity has marked the Nigerian [African] novel so far, greater diversity is to be expected in the future" (204). Adesanmin and Dunton (2005) see these writers who emerged in the late twentieth century, third generation writers. In their prominent essay on the notable emergence of this set of writers, they argue:

> The mid-1980s witnessed the gradual emergence in Africa of a new generation of writers born mostly after 1960, the emblematic year of African political independence from colonialism. This generation, the first in Africa to be severed from the colonial event except in cases like Zimbabwe and South Africa – came to be identified as writers of the third generation in Anglophone and Francophone critical traditions. (14)

In order to authenticate these writers who emerged by severing themselves from colonial preoccupation in their writings, Adesanmi and Dunton quoted above, go further to mention some notable names of this group of writers. They write:

> The initial third generation names to come into international reckoning were not Nigerians: Uganda's Moses Isegawa, Ghana's Amma Darko, Zimbabwe's Yvonne Vera, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Cameroun's Calixthe Beyala and Djibouti's Abdourahman Ali Waberi became the canoni[s]ed international icons of third generation writing at a time when the phenomenon was still largely confined to poetry in Nigeria. (14)

Close reading of these writers and many more not here mentioned by Adesanmi and Dunton reveals that some of this group of writers concern themselves with issues of migrancy in Africa, as they wish to totally severe themselves from colonialism, and post-colonial socio-political aberrations which have preoccupied the creative attention of earlier writers of African fiction.

In the modern world greatly enhanced by technological means of transportation which has reduced once very far distances to a "next-door-neighbor", people find it easier to move in such a way that tends to indicate that there is no border any more. Pourjafari and Vahidpour (2014) argue that:

> Nowadays, we live in a world of constant changes and movements, the immediate result of which is that nothing is stable and borders become mixed. The outstanding developments in the field of communication technology such as satellite, TV, internet and the modern means of transportation followed by the globali[s]ation of the world economy are all the influential factors in making our age the age of mobility and borderlessness. The traditional settler life-form has given its place to a new normadic lifestyle and migration has become a familiar trend. (679)

Joseph (1999) adds that:

> Migration has become a way of life in the latter part of the twentieth century. The large scale displacement of people from rural to the urban or across nations has heightened the precariousness of arbitrary boundaries while fuelling contemporary identifications with ossified national identities. (154)

This explains why Papastergiadis (2000) concludes that: "Migration, in its endless motion, surrounds and pervades almost all aspects of contemporary society. […], the modern world is in a state of flux and turbulence" (1). Bhugra (2004) argues that migration is not only from a state or nation to another nation, or from a continent to another continent, but could also be a movement from rural to urban domain.

He writes:

> Migration is a process of social change where an individual, alone or accompanied by others, because of one or more reasons of economic betterment, political upheaval, education or other purposes, leaves one geographical area for prolonged stay or permanent settlement in another geographical area. It must be emphasized that migration is not only a transnational process but can also be rural-urban. Any such process involves not only leaving social networks behind… but also includes experiencing a sense of loss, dislocation, alienation and isolation, which will lead to a process of acculturation…. Rural-urban migration is more likely to be for economic or educational reasons, whereas migration across nations may be social, educational, economic or political reasons. (129)

Hagen-Zanker (2008) defines migration as: "… the temporary or permanent move of individuals or groups of people from one geographic location to another for various reasons ranging from better employment possibilities to persecution" (4).

This issue of migration has been an experience that most African novelists of the colonial and post-colonial Africa have not been able to explore in detail. Being a movement from one part of a nation to another, one continent to another, either for temporary or permanent geographical settlement, migration of persons has engaged the artistic creation of novelists of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Harney and Baldasser (2007) in "Tracking Transnationalism: Migrancy and its Futures" conclude that "in its simplest definition, migrancy addresses the state or condition of being a migrant" (190). Consequently, Adepoju (1998) argues that:

> Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) [and Africa generally] is, historically, of intense migration and population movement prompted by demographic, economic, ecological and political factors. Other factors contributing to migration include the external debt burden of many African countries; deteriorating living condition, environmental degradation; the effect of structural adjustments programmes, the widening international economic inequalities; and lack of long-term peace and security. (7)

In African literature, the novel in particular, one notes the narration and exploration of characters who dramatise culture-conflict, resulting from culture contact with the western colonisers from Britain, France, Germany, Portugal or Spain. This conflict, becoming intolerable, becomes the brainchild of political struggles for independence. Political independence in the colonies or new nations failed to yield the expected results. Instead, post-colonial African states began to grapple with political corruption, ineptitude, military interventions in politics and governance, economic collapse, infrastructural decay and political crisis that in some cases snowballed into a full scale war. These socio-political malaise engaged the critical focus of African writers. Palmer (1979), argues that:

> Broadly speaking, the African novel is a response to and a record of the traumatic consequences of the impact of western capitalist colonialism on the traditional values and institutions of the African people. This largely explains the African writers' initial preoccupation with the past. (63)

Furthermore, as post-colonial Africa develops politically, democratic tyranny and dictatorship, social injustice, religious hypocrisy and the like became apparent in the political landscape. Novelists thus began to capture these sad developments in African political history. No wonder Larson (1978) argues that "the African writer himself has almost always been a microcosm of the accumulated experiences of his society" (279-280).

Indeed, these experiences, resulting from bad governance provided the push factor that forced Africans to the Western nations with more civilised, developed socio-economic and educational advancement.

1.1.1 Beyond the "been-to" narratives: broadening the diasporic African narrative tradition

The history of transatlantic slave trade on humans to the Americas and Europe appears to begin African diasporic writings in prose, drama and poetry. In the development of African novel, some writers began to beam their critical searchlight on Africans who migrate to America, Britain, Europe, and other parts of the world to study, after which they returned home to their African nations. Thus they are not permanent migrants. They travelled there to acquire academic knowledge and professional training.

This is evident in Chinua Achebe's creation of Obi Okonkwo who travels to Britain to study, and returns to his people in Igbo land, as narrated in *No Longer At Ease* (1960), Baako's journey to America to acquire academic knoweldge and returns to the Ghanaian society he left for about four years as narrated in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (1969). The Activist in Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* (2006) also travels abroad from Nigeria for studies and returns to his Niger Delta Nigerian society; and Ogie Obala whom Festus Iyayi imagines to travel overseas, and returns after successfully completing his academic programme as created in *The Contract* (1982). All this instances show that novelists have attempted the creation of characters who have been to overseas and return after acquiring academic knowledge. This led to the creation of "been-to" characters in African novel.

Studies reveal that in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century and till now, African novelists have deftly engaged the African society, exposing the increasing issue of migrancy, focusing on the factors that cause emigration. In the

introduction to essay on "International Migration and Africa: Trends and Prospects for the 21st Century", United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1998) concludes that "sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) [and indeed Africa generally] is […] of diverse forms of migration, refugee flows and international displacement of persons" (5). Migration of sub-Sahara Africans either within Africa or outside the African continent becomes a critical issue for some African writers (novelists) in the twenty-first century. Some of these writers write from Africa, while some others write from the West where they reside. Indeed, some of them are permanent residents who may have been in the foreign lands for twenty years or more. It is notable that in spite of their long or permanent stay, they still reflect African personality and sensibility in their works. Bhugra (2004) quoted earlier, argues that "when people migrate, they do not leave their beliefs or idioms of distress behind, no matter the circumstances of their migration" (134). Consequently, they find themselves mediating between two cultures – African and Western. Having the challenge of identifying properly with the foreign culture, as a result of being Africans and migrants, they begin to feel frustrated and nostalgic.

It is pertinent to stress that this study on migrancy is not a slavery diasporic one. The slavery diasporic writings or tradition, study reveals, has to do with writings on, about and for Africans, who were uprooted from their homelands and scattered in the Americas and Europe, with the same history of migration. This history of Africa, study shows, is the Trans-Atlantic slave raid, and trade which transplanted and transported many Africans to the Americas, Carib, and Europe as slaves. They later became settlers and part of the society but found themselves unable to fit in properly, being of African descent. Thus they constituted themselves into African-Americans, Caribbeans, and others in Europe and different parts of the world. Writers of this experience in that society include Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Michael Anthony, Toni Morison, Raph Ellison, to mention some in fiction writing. Deleva (2010), identifies three groups of diasporas when he defines it thus:

> Diaspora is often applied to groups of people that have settled due to different reasons in other countries than their home country but are still maintaining close contacts to the home country and in a way assist its development. The emergence of three groups can be because of different reasons, namely displaced or dispersed by force (e.g. Jews,

> African slaves in the New World) or open immigration policies for certain nations (Yugoslavs in Australia and Canada or intensive labour recruitment (Yugoslavs in Germany after the Second World War). (30)

It can be inferred from the above definition that there are three groups of diasporas – the Jews and African slaves in the New World, who had been displaced and dispersed forcefully from their original homelands in Africa, the Yugoslavs in Australia and Canada who enjoyed open immigration policies and Yugoslavs in Germany who emerged after the Second World War as a result of intensive labour recruitment. In addition, Knight and Craham (2003) observe:

> For nearly four hundred years, the most visible aspect of the connection between Africa and the New World was the existence of a massive migration conducted as a commerce in human beings. Unfortunately, for far too long the ramifications of [the] transatlantic slave trade remained the end of intellectual curiosity about Africa. The result has been an abysmally superficial understanding of the impact of Africa or the evolution of American societies. (142)

They go further to argue that:

> In 1492 the Caribbean became the umbilical cord that nurtured the first attempts to transport and transform European societies across the Atlantic Ocean. It also provided the great paradox of the American experience as both a microcosm of things past as well as a harbinger of things to come. (142)

From the above submissions, Knight and Craham explicate the origin of the diaspora phenomenon. There is no grain of doubt that the African diaspora as popularly known today in socio-political and literary discourses is as a result of the trans-atlantic slave trade that involved the forceful uprooting of African natives from their land, as they were carried off through the sea to the Americas and Europe as slaves. This movement of Africans as slaves and cheap labour from African continent to the New World (the Americas and Europe) where they settled with their common history and culture which they could not go back to, gave birth to the African-American diasporic societies. These indeed, migrated under the above peculiar historical circumstances. Hence, Knight and

Craham conclude that “African slaves who came to the Americas were migrants albeit migrants under peculiar circumstances” (145). This fact is further corroborated by Ropero (2003) who sees diaspora as:

> […] that segment of a people living outside the homeland […] that are dispersed from an ‘original centre’ to at least two foreign regions; that maintain ‘a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland; that believe they are not fully accepted by their host society and feel partly alienated from it; that regard their ancestral homeland as their ‘true home’ and place of eventual return; that are committed to the ‘maintenance or restoration’ of the homeland; and whose group consciousness is ‘importantly defined’ by this bond with the homeland. (11)

These migrants under peculiar historical circumstances (trans-atlantic slave trade to the Americas and Europe) are not our focus in this study on migrancy.

Existing studies reveal that since the evolution of the genre, novelists who focused on characters who travelled out of their African nations to the West, only explored the characters as they return from abroad to their home country, after years of academic endeavours. Nothing is explored of their lives abroad. Novelists only explored their dispositions as they return, and try to settle down in the culture and social milieu they were familiar with before they proceeded abroad for studies. But it must be mentioned here that in 1964, Mugo Gatheru, a Kenyan writer, attempted a migrant writing with *Child of Two Worlds*, a kind of autobiographical writing that focuses on the childhood experience of Mugo through his school days, working days, activism and the quest for the Whiteman’s knowledge (western education), in the United States of America, where he gets exposed to fellow Blacks who are either temporary, or permanent residents in America.

Representations in migration African novel, tend to suggest that Africans do not just migrate to another country or from the African continent to another continent of the world for the fun of it. While migrants of the twentieth century did so for academic purpose mainly, as Chinua Achebe in *No Longer at Ease* and Ayi Kwei Armah in *Fragments,* Tanure Ojaide in *The Activist*, and Festus Iyayi *The Contract* fictionally expose, for example, migrants of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century

and in the present, do so as a result of economic collapse and social unrests, political instability, war or religious persecutions in home country, to mention a few. Hence, some feel the need to migrate and escape from these crises and seek greener pastures, either in a neighbouring African nation or outside the African continent – United States of America, or Europe, for a better living condition. Falola (2013) argues that "the generation of African migrants in the years of the transatlantic slave trade are different from contemporary migrants" (2). No wonder Pourjafari and Vahidpour earlier quoted aver that migration in its modern usage "[…] refers to the trend of displacement and movement made by individuals with the hope to find more personal convenience or better their material or social condition" (681).

This trend thus stretches the migrant narratives. Consequently, our focus is on writers who emerged in the late twentieth century to the twenty-first whose focus are on post-colonial disillusionments, arising from political failures, which push characters to migrate out of the continent to a more civilised, developed and politically stable environment for socio-economic well being. Lombardi (2014) sees these migrants as constituting and broadening African diaspora in the United States. He writes: "New waves of black immigrants in the past three decades [30 years] have broadened the African diaspora in the United States" (4). Falola, earlier quoted adds that "we are now witnessing a new African diaspora, consisting of migrants to the United States in the last twenty-five years" (233). He concludes that these migrants "[…] belong to the more recent voluntary migrations […]" (236). Amuwo (2009) comments that:

> Contemporary forms of migration have occurred between the 1960s when most of Africa gained political independence – and now. These have largely involved African immigrants settling down in Europe, the United States and Canada. (39)

He argues further that:

> Even though the material question often looms largely in the explicatory schema of immigration patterns, a section of contemporary literature on migration indicates that much of South-North migration is undertaken, not by poor people but by the relatively affluent, educated and highly skilled professionals and intellectuals. (40)

Amuwo in the above arguments shows that presently, African immigrants migrate to settle down in their new found land. Among these are intellectuals and professionals who feel frustrated and disappointed with the political failures and socio-economic downturn of their African states and thus move out in search of greener pastures. This migration to greener pastures is summed up and induced by the generally soaring level of poverty in Africa. Deleva cited earlier confirms this when he argues that "push-pull" factors motivate migrants. He writes: "Push-Pull process, that is unfavourable conditions in one place (oppressive laws, heavy taxation, etc) "push" people out, and favourable condition in an external location "pull" them in" (11). Deleva reveals that people migrate from a bad or deteriorating economic, and socio-political condition to a better one for survival. Abubakar (2009) corroborates this view when he argues that:

> Indeed, the uniqueness of African continent is that, of all the continents of the world, it is the only one where poverty is soaring. In Africa, the concept of the poor, has led to a new social policy reform. The United Nations (UN) continues to declare more African people and countries as falling into the bracket of the poor. (25)

In the light of the above, Africans emigrate and settle permanently in the West because of permanently soaring and unabating poverty in Africa. These emigrants who reside in Europe and America, whose contact with the West is fictionally represented in African fiction of the late twentieth century till now, is our focus. This is to show from the selected texts that African migrant novels have gone beyond the "been-to" narratives of the 1960s and 1970s, and developed into migrant narratives as the latter focus on migrancy.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

Existing studies on sub-Saharan African migrant novels have critically focused on culture-contact and identity crisis, objectification, sex trafficking, effects of transnationalism and globalisation, with insignificant attention to migrants' negotiation of existence. Therefore, this study was undertaken to examine the representation of migrants' survival strategies, with the aim of identifying the state of migrants' life, in the selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels.

1.3 Justification of the study

Migrancy in selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels has been since the 1980s. It has attracted critical engagements to broaden the perspective of earlier scholars. Some sub-Saharan African novelists who emerged since the 1980s, issues which their forebears did not imagine in fiction writing. Such issues include economic collapse and financial fraud, political tyranny in a democracy, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sexual orientations such as, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest; child soldering, tribal or ethnic genocide and migration, among others. It is instructive to state at this juncture that a literary tradition that has many patrons such as African writers and novelists in particular, cannot suffer from "ashen paralysis" to use Nnolim's phrase, a creative vacuum or exhaust creative or thematic concern as Nnolim concludes.

In this era of globalisation, where the entire world has been reduced to a global village, movement of people from one nation or continent to another has attracted the imaginative lens of fiction writers in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region of the continent where migrancy is more prominent. Ojaide quoted earlier in this study, writes that: "Contemporary trends are enlarging the African literary canon. African writers have been responding to the impact of migration and globalization on their people and continent" (15). Indeed, Deleva to quote her once again, concludes that "globalization has changed the face of migration" (5).

Many novelists have always focused attention on contemporary issues militating against social cohesion, political stability, and the moral and economic well-being of the masses. Their writings tend to portray the lopsided relationships between the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited, and how these relationships impinge on the existence of the victims in a post-colonial society.

But some emerging novelists of the late twentieth century to the present twenty-first century, in addition to their social commitment, have deepened the knowledge by engaging issues such as migration. Study reveals that post-colonial African society has shown lack of favour and peaceful co-existence among the masses. Consequently, frustrations and disappointment arising from economic collapse, political instability, insecurity, corruption, infrastructural decay and unfulfilled life became worrisome. Thus, citizens became disillusioned and began to see the need to seek for greener pastures outside the homeland. Migration thus became the best option as they move out for

greener socio-economic pastures. Okafor (2010) helps us to understand this sad state of African nations when he says that:

> The catastrophic collapse of the economics of most independent African nations has in recent times triggered another exodus from the continent. This time, however, the emigration is voluntary and involves the most educated members of the various African states. This brain drain has over the years created a second African diaspora in America and the Western World. (28)

Novelists of the period under study focus on this issue of migrants, to reveal what motivates them to migrate, and how they try to settle down in their new found land. This is the focus of this study through the exploration of migrancy in the selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels.

The point has been made earlier that a backward gaze at the African novel reveals that some earlier novelists have attempted the characterisation of migrant characters. Some of these are those who invent 'been-to' characters whose explorations begin at the airport on arrival from abroad. Besides, an examination of available essays on African literature, the novel essentially, shows that some critics appear not to have focused adequate attention on the issue of migrancy. A look at the contemporary African society shows that there is the prevalence of socio-political and economic problems that make life unbearable. Okolo (2003) writing on the African condition, corroborates the above observation when he argues:

> We must say that a close unbiased critical look at the African (black), his status and human condition since his heroic struggles of political independence and autonomy, one easily realizes that his overall condition is far from being healthy. Historical existence since the end of colonialism has been clearly marked by poverty (material and mental), disease, famine, squalor, wars, ethnic conflicts of different sizes and duration, border clashes, refugee problems, overt and covert foreign manipulations and exploitations, coups and counter coups with resultant tragedies, […], and so on. (3)

The excerpt above comments on the African condition since independence. African writers of the post-independence era make this sad historical condition of the African their critical focus. George and Agbese (2008) confirm this condition when they write:

> Despite the euphoria over the apparent demise of autocracy and dictatorship in Africa within the last decades, mass poverty, the collapse of health and educational infrastructure, heavy external indebtedness, political instability in the form of civil wars [or near outbreak of civil wars], high unemployment among young people, gross violations of human rights and other forms of social malaise continue to haunt the African continent […]. It is nonetheless clear that Africa is still going through the throes of underdevelopment. The prevalence of the continent's socio-economic and political malaise clearly shows that the African continent entered the new millennium in no better shape than it ended the previous hundred years of underdevelopment, abject poverty, dictatorship and massive exploitation. (11)

An examination of George and Agbese's conclusion on the African condition shows that African nations have failed her citizens. The promised "better life" at independence is far from being realised as they are welcomed into the twenty-first century with myriads of the same problems and more, that haunted them in the last twentieth century. This condition indeed forces the African to look elsewhere, a greener pasture, for survival and well-being. Adesina and Adebayo (2009) in an introductory essay titled: "Introduction: Globalization and Transnational Migrations: An Overview", give more insight into George and Agbese's conclusion when they argue:

> Unfortunately, the development and political failures of the continent have occurred against the backdrop of great economic and political advancements elsewhere in the world. This would crystalize a process of migration in, around, and out of Africa. (7)

Ojaide (2010) confirms that "Africa becomes the place to flee from and the West, especially the United States, is the refuge to Africans in distress" (4). The experiences of these migrants before migration, and their migrant experiences thus become the critical vision of sub-Saharan African migrant novelists who emerged towards the end of the last

twentieth century and the new millennium, twenty-first century. Emenyonu (2010) confirms this emergence when he writes that:

> New voices are emerging from all parts of the African continent not only to reinforce the voices of the generations before them, but also to reveal the new realities, visions and concerns of Africa and its people. (xii)

These new voices, emerging from Africa as Emenyonu observes, include African novelists, aside from playwrights and poets, whose critical visions expose the realities and concerns of the African people. These novelists include Bandele Thomas, Amma Darko, Moses Isegawa, Petina Gappah, Yvonne Owor, Goretti Kyamuhendo, Yvonne Vera, Tstisti Dangarembga, Tyambe Zeleza, Margaret Afuh, Calixth Beyela, John Nkemngong Nkengasong, Djibouti Abdaurahman, Ali Waberi, Chinjera Hove, Shimer Chindnoya, Daniel Mengara, Ahmadou Kourouma, Dinaw Mengestu, Zakes Mda, Sello Duiker, Wicomb Zoe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, Maik Nwosu, Jude Dibia, Okey Ndibe, Helon Habila, Ike Oguine, Chris Abani, Uzodinma Iweala, Segun Afolabi, Brain Chikwava, Chika Unigwe, NoViolet Bulawayo, Serah Ladipo Manyika, J. Sorie Conteh, Alasan Mansary, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Alain Mabanckou, Inongo-vi-Makomè, Benjamin Kwakye, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, Teju Cole, Phaswane Mpe, to mention some, who form the avant-garde of African fiction in the late twentieth century into the twenty-first century. This group of writers try to give a new image to Africa. Nnolim, to quote him again, corroborates this view when he says that:

> […] a new image of the African personality needs to be fashioned, to reposition Africa for the take off of the 21st century. We need a new spiritual reorientation, a new creative hope to give artistic impetus to a new world order. (3)

Odamtten (2007) concurs with the above argument when he says that Amma Darko, a Ghanaian African writer recognises this need in the development of African fiction. He writes in an introduction to *Broadening the horizon: critical introduction to Amma Darko* thus:

> Certainly Amma Darko appears to be someone who emerged at the right moment in her nation's cultural history and someone with the

> kind of abilities and training that enabled her to recognize the need for new and different stories to be told. (4)

Nwakanma (2008), commenting on the emergence of a new generation of Nigerian writers, which also applies to African writers by extention, argues that "[…] a new generation of novelists has emerged within the last decade to shape the direction of contemporary Nigeria [Africa] fiction in the third phase" (4). Furthermore, a look at the selected writers and novels shows that their works illustrate experiences at home country, and in a foreign land. This artistic endeavour is quite different from the fictional creations of writers who shape "been-to" characters whose expositions begin from the airport as they return from their various foreign lands for studies as mentioned earlier in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease,* Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments*, Festus Iyayi's *The Contract* and Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist*. However, among the novelists under study, one notes a full imaginative enactment of life at home and abroad in a well threaded plot, sometimes employing flashback, reminiscences or memory in the narration. This fictional outlook, migrant narratives, fulfils Nnolim's conclusion, to cite him again, when he says that:

> The African writer in the 21st century should forget the complexes of the past and be more imaginatively aggressive and expansive, invading other continents and even the skies as new settings, striving to have a global outlook in his creative output, mounting a new international phase and not limiting his canvas to the African soil. (4)

Indeed, he continues:

> […] why can't Africans write about Europe or America? We have travelled to Europe and America [even Britain], worked there, studied there, married their sons and daughters, [befriended their sons and daughters as well] and lived there. Are we so unperceptive not to observe, so blind not to see, analphabetic not to write about them or about us in their midst? […]. African writers must face the future by developing an international theme, by engaging in futuristic literature […]. (5)

Nnolim's critical summation above is food for thought for any critic of African literature. Inasmuch as African literature before the emergence of the group of writers this study is engaging, focused on socio-political upheavals and corruption in its various manifestations in post-colonial Africa, one observes a shift in creative focus of the new

generation of writers as they direct fictional attention on international and intercontinental issues as they explore the life here in Africa, and the life there in America, Britain, or Europe, depending on where they chose as spatial setting alongside Africa to demonstrate migrant experience. They no longer limit their artistic canvas to the African society. This courageous and intriguing artistic effort informs the group of writers and topic for this study on migrant narratives to illustrate migrancy. Umezuruike (2015) while writing on resistance in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* reminds us that:

> The 21st century has seen a lot of African writers plumbing new directions and aesthetics. These writers are engaging with issues that appear marginal – issues that for the most part border on identity, subjectivity, sexuality, hybridity, and transnationality. (152)

Umezuruike's observation on the African's twenty-first century literary experience is born out of the fact that African writers who mediate between Africa and the West now write about their homelands while resident in the West. Kabir (2016) agrees with this view when he concludes that:

> Just like other Africans who live in the West while also not willing to give up their traditional identities or cultural links with their original homeland, most African writers also want to write about their homeland while also living in the West although as largely cultural or political émigrés and exiles. (135)

In addition, it has been observed in the study of sub-Saharan African novel that many critics focus attention on the old and well established writers. Studies reveal that a few have made attempts to examine the literary outputs of the writers who emerged since the late twentieth century till date, the twenty-first century. This informs the interest on the issue of migrancy in the selected novels, as migration of persons has become more prominent.

It is pertinent to state here that quite a good number of female novelists are observed to have engaged the post-colonial African condition and lend voices to the issue of migrancy. This observation compels us in this study to include females in our selection

of texts in order to give representation to them, and to show too that female writers who can dare where they feared to experiment years ago, have emerged greatly.

The selected novels for this study on migrancy are Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* (2000), Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009), Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* (1995) (West Africa); Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* (2007) (East Africa); Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* (2015) translated edition (Central Africa); NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013) and Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) (South Africa). A look at the above selection shows that there are writers from West, East, Central and South Africa. But there are more writers from West Africa, especially Nigeria. This selection is influenced not only by thematic affinities and relevance, but also by the fact that the issue of migration of persons to other lands, to the best of the knowledge of this writer, is more prominent in Nigeria, West Africa, than any other part of African region. Indeed, Nwagbara (2010) confirms this when he argues:

> A major thematic preoccupation of contemporary Nigeria literature is the subject matter of exile and transnationalism. The response of Nigerian literature to this trope is in view of the traumas of surviving in foreign land that exiles consider their new home as well as alienation following such transition. In post-colonial literature, the question of exile or transnationalism in the wake of globalization and contemporary global politics is very central in understanding the realities of a nation's political process, culture and governance. This is the case with Nigeria, where the pressures of living have forced people to seek greener pastures in foreign countries. (92-93)

Nwagbara in the above quote reveals that Nigerians seek greener pastures in foreign lands as a way of escaping from the socio-economic pressures at home. Ibeku (2016) corroborates Nwagbara's view when she argues that:

> Migration to Western countries is the order of the day for most Africans especially Nigerians. Africans believe that travelling abroad automatically makes one a billionaire without a meaningful job. Most people lose their lives in a bid to make ends meet in foreign countries as they engage in all sorts of business, ranging from stealing, illegal selling of hard drugs which are grievous offences in these countries. (29)

In the above, Nigerians are noted for migration to Western countries more than any other nationals in Africa. And a look at the corpus of the writers under study, Nigerians also dominate in the novel genre. Adesanmi and Dunton quoted earlier, confirm this development when they conclude that:

> Third generation writing in much of Africa is still largely a phenomenon of isolated names and works, recognized continentally and sometimes internationally […]. Nigeria presents a singular case of several hundred writers from the same country who subscribe to the third generation identity and are conscious of that collective image within the reins and dynamics of the broader national literary self-imaging. (15)

From the foregoing conclusions from Nwagbara, Ibeku and, Adesanmi and Dunton, it is pertinent to note that Nigeria in particular, and West Africa in general, has a good number of migrants to Europe, which has become the artistic focus of novelist as characters invented evolve in ways that they devise means to survive. It must be noted that no selection is made from North Africa in an African study such as this. The reason is not far-fetched. This is because, Hale (2006) in his essay on new dimensions for African literature in the twenty-first century, tells us why it is difficult to find novelists from the North that capture our focus. He says:

> Most of us have tended to focus on writing from sub-Saharan societies, though we have always welcomed to our meetings [on African literature] colleagues who work on North African literature. There has remained, however, a gulf that stems from a separation operating on many levels. Diplomatic services typically have North African concerns in the office of Middle Eastern Affairs […]. The problem of dividing up the continent carries over to the world of researchers. Although the Middle East Studies Association has held one annual [then] meeting in conjunction with the African Studies Association, in general scholars working on North African topics tend to view the world through 'Middle Eastern' rather than African lenses. (11)

This political situation, no doubt, as Hale points out above, has made it difficult for us to easily get a North African writer of the period under study, to the best of the knowledge of this writer, whose work illustrates migrant experiences.

However, writing on Maghrebian literature and the politics of exclusion and inclusion, Atilade (2014) properly positions the argument on North African literature. He writes:

> A lot of issues have been raised on the status of Maghrebian literature (i.e., literature in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, etc) in the African literary scene. Divergent views on whether it is or not an aspect of African literature in its outlook come up in the debate on the politics of African literature. One school of thought argues that Maghrebian literature could not and should not be seen as part of African literature because of the cultural orientation of the people in the Maghreb, the region of western North Africa or North-west Africa, west of Egypt home to the pan-ethnic Arabic-speaking in North Africa, parts of Eritrea, Djiboutis, Ethiopia and Somalia. However, this claim fails to consider the fact that the geo-political set up of the region situates it in Africa. (121)

The above argument reveals that Atilade attempts to conclude that literary works from North African states are part of the corpus of African literature. He contends that in spite of the fact that this part of the African continent has a different cultural orientation, Arabic, it is still part of Africa as it is geographically positioned in Africa and not the Arab world, though it shares Arabic culture. Atilade in this critical position tends to argue the politics of exclusion in African literature, and concludes that North African writers are not usually seen as African writers because of their Arabic orientation, but critics fail to ralise that the Maghreb region is in Africa. Thus one can conclude that North Africa and its literary endeavours are part of African literature, though they appear neglected in African literary discourses. On migration, our focus in this study, Atilade quoted above, goes further in the same essay to argue that:

> The issue of migration is more pronounced in Morocco than in Algeria or Tunisia which can be traced to both the socio-political situation and the geographical location of the country which serves as crossroad between Africa and Europe. The post-colonial Morocco is notorious for her unemployment rate and popular for its closeness to Spain, one of the European countries that is much better economically. (124)

Focusing on Morocco as one of the Maghrebian nations, Atilade in the above excerpt concludes that Morocco has experienced the migration of her population to Europe as a result of economic collapse (unemployment), and nearness to Europe, for greener pastures. This is the same sad reality of other African nations whose teeming population migrate out of the homeland to Europe or America for greener pastures as well. Of note is the critical fact that Maghrebian writers who focus on migration have been writing before the emergence of the crop of African writers on migration in the late twentieth century to the twenty-first century. Hence we note a writer like Tayeb Salih from Sudan with his debut novel: *Season of Migration to the North* (1969), on the migration of Sudanese to Europe either for western education or economic empowerment and social well-being. The date of publication shows that the issue of migration is not new to North African writers as they are geographically located close to Europe, and have the economic problem of unemployment which forces her nationals to seek for greener pastures in the nearby European countries and beyond, for economic survival and social well-being. Thus, Atilade concludes:

> Whatever uniqueness Maghrebian [North African] literature may exhibit, it is still a part of African literature […]. Hence, it shares the same global themes as its 'compatriots' in the other parts of Africa; and like other (contemporary) francophone/Anglophone writers across Africa, Maghrebian writers also base their subject matter on issues such as patriarchy, culture, identity, political disillusionment, religion, migration and racism. (129)

Inasmuch as this is the critical position, Talahite (2007) presents us with what makes it difficult to find North African writings as African works. This also makes it difficult for scholars to get their works for critical attention. Talahite argues:

> North African writing offers a perspective that cannot be strictly confined within the geographical boundaries of North Africa. From a linguistic and cultural point of view, it is part of Arabic literature, a category that includes the literature from the countries both of North Africa and the Middle East. North African writing is therefore determined by the sense of belonging to an Arab nation which shares the same language and culture, and to a certain extent, the same religion. (38)

However, he continues:

> The more recent history of North Africa saw the birth of a new literature that originated from the experience of French colonialism in the former colonies of the Maghreb (namely Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) […]. For North African writers, writing in French means reflecting on the relationships between European and indigenous cultures in order to construct a North African voice which would integrate the different cultures inherited from the past […] The countries of North Africa, from Morocco to Egypt, share the collective meaning of their common Muslim Arab past, which survives today in their language and literature and which plays an important part in the shaping of an Arab identity. (39)

Talahite in the above conclusion reminds us that a North African literature exists. Insofar as it does exist, he argues that it “cannot be strictly confined within the geographical boundaries of North Africa”. This is because of North Africa’s close relationship with the Arab world. This affinity makes the literature from that region have an Arabic identity in terms of language and culture. Thus, he clearly identifies the literature with Islamic culture and traditions. This means that most North African literary works are not produced in English, but either in French or Arabic language. This linguistic perspective makes it difficult for African scholars to easily lay hands on them for critical attention, as it is rarely available in Africa, but more in the Arab world. The few available ones are translated editions, which in most cases are not also easily available in Africa, down the sub-Sahara. This is the challenge that confronts scholars and critics of contemporary African literature. This is the major challenge of this writer which makes it appear as if there was no knowledge of, or a major representation of writers from North Africa. In North Africa, one does not find, to the best of the knowledge of this writer, emerging migrant writer that fall within the group of African novelists of the late 1980s to date, as the issue of migrancy in that region has been on-going, before the emergence of the writers of our focus. Be that as it may, our selection from post-colonial sub-Saharan African societies suffices for our study as the issue is more prevalent in sub-Sahara Africa.

1.4 Objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to show that sub-Saharan African narratives since the late 1980s have demonstrated writers who engaged the issue of migrancy. Thus, the novels illustrate a dramatisation of migrancy, evident in the stragies adopted to survive as migrants, and how the novelists narrated the experiences.

1.5 Significance of the study

Significantly, this study aims at complementing existing studies on sub-Saharan African mirgant novels of the late 1980s to the present. In addition, it would have demonstrated that the selected migrant novels explore the issue of mirgrancy in sub-Saharan African society. This will no doubt enhance readers' comprehension of the issue of migrancy in the selected novels.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study on migrancy focuses on sub-Saharan African migrant narratives. It dwells on novelists, males and females, who emerged from the late 1980s. Critical attention will be focused on migrants' economic survival and strategies employed, and how these are narrated.

1.7 Theoretical framework

This study engages subalternaity, a variant of postcolonial critical theory, and psychoanalysis as critical theories, for the analysis of the selected African migrant novels. It is necessary dwell on the relevance of these theories to the notion of migrancy in the selected novels.

Patode (2012) argues that "post-colonial [l]iterary theory is an intellectual field which makes an enquiry into the conditions of the colonised during and after coloni[s]ation" (196). Subalternity investigates the lives of the marginalised, exploited and oppressed in colonised, and decolonised societies.

Morton (2003), while making a case for subalternism, as a critical theory, remarks that historians see subalternism "as the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (48). He addes that "Spivak's theory of the subaltern is part of a longer

history of left wing anti-colonial thought that was concerned to challenge the class/caste system of India" (69).

Chaturvedi (2007) argues that "[…] subaltern politics tend to be violent because subaltern classes were forced to resist the condtions of elite domination and extra-economic coercion in their everyday lives" (10). As a post-colonial critical theory, subalternism examines texts from colonised and, or decolonised societies. The daily lives of the subordinated, either in governance or in the home (domestic domain), and strategies adopted to resist, or cope, or survive such subordination are investigated. It can be concluded that it interrogates the masses' effort to survive an untoward lopsided relationship between the rulers and the ruled. This could be violent resistance, or escape to a clement clime, better and safe environment for a more comfortable existence as a way, or strategy for resisting such domination in the local environment.

Tilwani (2013) affirms thus:

> The term, subalternity, remarkably and aptly employed by Spivak is to highlight the predicament of those who are allotted 'sub' or 'secondary' space in the human society. Subaltern is used as an umbrella term for all those who are marginalized and deprived of the voice to speak. (113)

Tilwani's contention above reveals that subalternity as a critical literary theory helps to look into the lives of the marginalised in the society as they cope with their oppression, exploitation, and pains, whether in public or private domains. Thus, it can be inferred that the theory caters for strategies the marginalised, deprived or denied, or persecuted, or dominated adopts to survive in the unfriendly space.

Safran (1991) in expanding this theory applies it to accommodate the examination of the lives of people whom political or socio-economic subordination have forced out of their homelands to a much better foreign space to survive. Thus, Safran is of the view that the lives of migrants in foreign societies can be interrogated, employing subalternity. Safran advocates

Comment [RO1]:

> … that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatirate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: (1) they or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "cent[re]" to two or

> more "peripheral", or foreign regions; (2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements; (3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; (4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their dedscendants would (or should) eventually return when conditions are appropriate; (5) they believe that they should collectively be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and (6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationship. (83-84)

Safran in his submission on subalternity as a critical literary theory argues in the above that the subaltern are those whom socio-economic and political history force out of their homeland to a foreign land, and thus form a disaporic community. They, or their ancestors move with, and retain their collective history, in memory and vision of the past – the homeland.

Besides, these migrants see themselves alienated from the new and host society, as the society does not accept them fully. Consequently, they find it difficult to inegrate into the society. Be that as it may, they still feel the emotional attachment to their ancestral homeland, which they see as the ideal home. There is the feeling of not-belonginess, and stranger status, the "other". Interpretative study of the sub-Saharan African migrant novels selected for our study on migrancy, reveals an atmosphere of a host society where African migrants, having been forced out of their individual African nations as a result of marginalisation, oppression, exploitation and total governmental unfriendliness, they see themselves unaccepted, and alienated in the host western nations they migrate to. The feeling of societal rejection, and subaltern status pervades among them. It thus becomes expedient that subalternity, a variant of postcolonial critical literary theory be applied to our critical enterprise.

However, it is very important to mention that subalternanity is embedded in a wider and more embracing postcolonial critical theory. This is because postcolonial

theory examines literary works emanating from once colonised societies, Africa being one. Tyson (1999) says that postcolonial theory examines:

> […] the initial contact with the coloniser and the disruption of indigenous culture, the journey of the European outsider through an unfamiliar wilderness with a native guide, ordering and colonial oppression in all its forms, mimicry (the attempt of the colonised to imitate the dress, behaviour, speech and lifestyles of the coloniser); exile (the experience of being an outsider in one's own land or foreign wanderer in Britain); post-independence exuberance followed by disillusionment, the struggle for individual and collective culture identity and the related themes of alienation, unhomeliness and hybridity; and the need for continuity with a pre-colonial past and self-definition of the political future […]. (374)

Hale, (2006) adds, in an introduction to "post-colonialism and the novel" in *The Novel: An anthology of criticism and theory 1900-2000* that:

> In one sense, post-colonialism can be viewed as offering simply another category for socially constitutive experience to be added to those already in play, class, race, gender, sexuality and now imperialism […] post-colonial theory may be seen as the culmination of late twentieth century preoccupation with identity politics in novel studies. (654)

A look at the postcolonial theoretical postulations above, from Tyson and Hale, one notes that the theory embraces migrancy critical theory which interrogates mimicry in a foreign land the migrant migrated to, in order to fit in and survive economically and socially. There is a sense of exile, alienation, unhomeliness, hybridity, class, racism, gender and sexual orientations. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) corroborate this conclusion further when they argue that:

> A major feature of post-colonial literature is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the specific post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being, the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationships between self and place. (8)

Koh (2015) concludes that "postcolonialism as a theory has been recently reinvigorated as a useful approach to advance existing migration research" (1). Postcolonial critical

theory as theorised by Ashcroft et al and commented on by Koh above, captures migrancy. There are the obvious issues of place and displacement which must have been caused by crisis resulting to migration. Consequently, there is the issue of dislocation resulting from migration as well. All this put together are capable of creating a sense of loss in the migrant in a foreign land, and thus exilic consciousness. Ashcroft et al go further to theorise that post-colonial studies overalp with feminist studies (30). In other words, feminism – issues pertaining to women personalities and sensibilities are also catered for, by postcolonial critical theory. After all, are some of the characters in migrant literatures not women? Are not some authors of migrant fiction not female writers, as representation in our selection in this study show? But this does not confine our study to a feministic critical approach.

The other central anchor for this study is psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytical theory in literary criticism observes how the psychology of the characters motivates them into action, or how character's actions, reactions, and development are governed or influenced by their psychological frames, as these could also be influenced by the author's psychological frame of mind. Eagleton (2008) writes on psychoanalysis as a critical theory and comments that:

> Psychoanalytical literary criticism can be broadly divided into four kinds, depending on what it takes as its object of attention. It can attend to the *author* of the work; to the work's *contents*; to its *formal* construction; or to the *reader*. Most psychoanalytical criticism has been of the first two kinds, […]. (155)

He adds that: "The psychoanalysis of 'content' – commenting on the unconscious motivations of characters, or on the psychoanalytical significance of object or events in the text […]" (155) is the critical objective of psychoanalysis. Eagleton thus shows four kinds of psychoanalytical attention to a literary text, namely the author, contents of the text, formal construction of the text, and the reader of the text. Our interest in the application of this theory – psychoanalytical critical theory – is the first two; the author and the contents of his fictional creation, as these two will help us illuminate our analysis. This conclusion is because psychoanalysis helps the literary critic to examine closely the

unconscious motives and feelings of the author, or characters illustrated in the literary work.

Cuddon (2013) sees psychoanalytical criticism as: "[a] body of criticism that emerged in the 20th [century] which seeks to explain the significance of literary texts in terms of psychological development and conflict" (568). Tyson, quoted earlier, broadens the perspective when he argues that:

> The notion that human beings are motivated, even driven by desires, fears, needs and conflicts of which they are unaware – that is, unconscious – was one of Sigmund Freud's most radical insights, and it still governs psychoanalysis today. The unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them. (15)

Psychoanalytical critical theory, from Cuddon's and Tyson's submissions, engages the conscious and unconscious actions, inactions, and reactions of characters in a literary text. This engages the personality of the characters. This means that for those experiences a writer invents in his fictional society, there is an unconscious basis. An examination of these, to ascertain what prompts an action, and inactions (behaviour) into an experience, is the critical concern of psychoanalysis as a critical tool in literary criticism.

It must be mentioned here that "psychoanalytical literary criticism begins with Freud himself, […]" (394), according to Rivkin and Ryan (2004). They write:

> Freud discovered the unconscious by studying patients with eucrotic symptoms which pointed towards unresolved conflicts between unconscious inclinations or feelings and the repressive demands of the ego or conscious self. According to them, Freud argued that our mental lives derive largely from biological drives, that the highest achievements and ideas of civili[s]ation are inseparable from instinctual urges toward pleasure, constancy, and the release of excitation and energy. (389)

Writing on literature and psychology, Wellek and Warren (1963) write: "Can psychology in its turn, be used to interpret and evaluate the literary works themselves? Psychology obviously can illuminate the creative process" (90). It is expedient to round off our critical arrangement for this study. No doubt, subalternity, a variant of

postcolonial critical theory, as moderated by William Safran's explanation of modern diaspora; and psychoanalysis, thus become our critical approach in this study as the selected migrant novels exemplify a social milieu that is unfavourable, as a result of the lopsided socio-political relationship between the rulers and the ruled and thus forces citizens to migrate to seek for greener pastures abroad, for better socio-economic well-being in their diasporic locales, as this impinges on the characters' psychological response to their dislocation in their migrant experiences.

1.8 Research Methodology

This study adopts a close and comparative reading and interpretive critical literary analysis of seven purposively selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels. The novels are: NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* (1995), Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009), Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* (2000), Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* (2007), Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009), and Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* (2015) translated edition. These novels were selected as migrancy binds them together with thematic affinity and relevance.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Genaral review

Literature as the imaginative expression of the human condition has been engaged to inquire into human existence from time immemorial. This informs why there is a record of oral literature. This is evident in communal oral traditions. Finnegan (2012) states that "Africa possesses both written and unwritten traditions" (3). The unwritten literary traditions expressed in myths and legends, folktales and songs performed orally and handed down through the same medium from generation to generation formed the oral literature of each society. In Africa, like in every other parts of the world, this form of literary expression belonged to no one. It is a communal property that educates, elucidates, entertains, and teaches communal earthly wisdom and morals and preserves communal heritages and ethos.

From this heritage, written African literature evolved as a way of responding imaginatively to the colonial incursion into African pristine traditional society. Thus, written African literature is a response to the evolving African society facing the challenges of colonial incursion. In all of this, it is observed that African literature is an inquiry into African pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial existence. Umukoro (2011) argued that: "[a] work of literature is a mimesis, a representation or reflection of life in which the author organi[s]es, explores and evaluates the nature and meaning of life" (3). Through this inquiry into the nature and meaning of life, African writers have deconstructed the colonial engagement. This gave rise to early writers (novelists) such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'O, Camara Laye, Alex La Guma, Ayi Kwei Armah, Naguib Mahfouz, Nawal El Saa-dawi, to mention some. However, as society developed, post-independence issues began to occur and sub-Saharan African novelists began to shift critical focus on socio-political, and economic travails confronting the post-colonial African. This is a sad development as the high expectations of the post-colonial African

was unrealised, as political leaders failed in their efforts to realise post-independence African dreams.

Comment [RO2]:

Gover, Conteh-Morgan and Bryce (2000) who comment on this sad socio-political development of post-colonial African society write:

> For many of the critics and scholars who work in the field of African literature, the phrase [post-colonial] has a straightforward historical meaning, as a term for contemporary African writing during the last thirty to forty years after many nations on the continent attained political independence from European colonialism.
> During this past generation African writers have grappled with the colonial legacy and other disillusioning realities of post-colonial politics. In many cases the hopes and expectations born in the 1960s with political independence have developed into bitter fruit. (2)

In the above introductory comment on the post-colonial condition of Africa, the author conclude that post-colonial African society has been saddled with several socio-political and economic challenges which melted away the hopes and aspirations of the average African, after independence from colonial powers. This post-colonial condition of the sub-Saharan African gave rise to the dire need for some to begin to migrate for greener pastures. Indeed, migration to the West for better post-colonial living condition to evade the consequences of political failures on the part of African political leaders became the concern of many Africans including sub-Saharan African creative writers. This is why, it can be concluded, as Gover et al quoted above, argue that:

> During the last thirty years, African writers have been re-evaluating their own cultures as well as their attitudes towards Europe and the west. As part of this process, the phrase "post-colonial" has come to acquire a variety of meanings, ranging from the theoretical to the practical. Indeed, it has become one of the important 'post-marks' of contemporary criticism. (1)

Writing on the post-colonial, Young (2009) asks: "What is the post-colonial?" (13). He sees it

> […] as the aftermath of the colonial. The situations and problems that have followed decolonization – whether in

> the formerly colonizing or colonized country – are then encompassed in the term post-coloniality. (13)

In order to clarify the term 'post-colonial', he remarks thus:

> What then would the post-colonialism mean? Whereas postcoloniality describes the condition of the post-colonial, post-colonialism describes its politics – a radical tricontinental politics of transformation […] the postcolonial is simply the product of human experience, but human experience of the kind that has not typically been registered or represented at any institutional level. (13)

Post-colonialism, according to Young, captures the socio-political transformation of the postindependent in their human experiences. Experiences show that this situation traumatises the post-colonial African. Thus, the African begins to envision the possibility of migrating to the West where he feels life would be better.

Some sub-Saharan African novelists of the 1980s to the present twenty-first century, study reveals, have been noted to have focused their critical lens on the African as he grapples with post-colonial challenges, especially as he moves away from Africa to Europe for greener pastures. This relocation (migration) is necessitated by what he sees as the post-colonial condition of the African in the present, as captured by Fanon (1980) thus:

> Privileges multiply and corruption triumphs, while morality declines. Today [in a democratic Africa] the vultures are too numerous and too voracious in proportion to the lean spoils [now fat spoils] of the national wealth. The party [in a democracy], a true instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, reinforces the machine, and ensures that the people are hemmed in and immobilezed. The party helps the government to hold the people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an implement of coercion […].
>
> In these poor, underdeveloped countries [of Africa] where the rule is that the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty, the army and the police constitute the pillars of the regime [as evident in many African countries, for example Nigeria]; […]. (138)

Given the above scenario, one would no doubt seek possible ways of relocating to seek greener pastures and security under a truly democratic atmosphere, albeit, the western world, where the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest civilisation, and technological advancement for a comfortable life, education and intellectual enlightenment and influence.

It is important to mention in our review that the push and pull factors on migration are the forces that initiate movement. The socio-economic adversities, political, and religious persecutions, or instabilities form the push factors whch prompts migrants to migrate. But before the decision to migrate, there is a pull factor as well. The pull factors are the economically and politically advanced, stable and buoyant environment with technological advancements of the western world that make life comfortable. These attract, and pull a migrant up from the devastated and impoverished African societies.

Writing on the nature and typologies of migration, Akokpari (2000), identifies the typologies of migrants. The first are those who migrate voluntarily "within or beyond their countries of origin at their own discretion rather than for uncontrollable factors. This form of migration can be permanent or temporary" (76). These migrants according to him, though not always, seek for "better social and economic opportunities in other regions or countries" (76). Furthermore, "growing economic adversities have also compelled unskilled individuals to take economic refuge in relatively affluent countries where they engage in unskilled jobs or more generally in the informal [labour] markets" (76), Akokpari adds. The second group, according to him, are those who are forced to "relocate either proactively or reactively because of conditions beyond their control" (76). Such conditions include political and religious persecution, uncontrollable political or social violence and total war. This indeed explains further the push and pull factors elaborated on earlier. de Haas (2010) argues that:

> The historical-structuralist paradigm sees migration as a "flight from misery" caused by global capitalist expansion, which is therefore inherently unable to resolve the structural conditions that caused migration. Quite on the contrary, migration is seen as aggravating problems of underdevelopment. (7)

She concludes that "… migration will not contribute to poverty alleviation" (9). Thus, study reveals that migrants eventually observe that migration does not alleviate poverty which was one major reason why they relocated for greener pastures abroad. Consequently, they begin to feel frustrated and disappointed. This feeling eventually leads to exilic consciousness as they feel lonely and not fully accepted by the society, as they try to survive. Psychologically and emotionally, they begin to feel abandoned in the foreign land.

Fadare (2015) reminds us that:

> Migration engenders transnationalism and transculturalism which inevitably bring about culture-contact and crises of identity. When people move across their boarder, they migrate with their culture: language, norms, beliefs, system of government and their economic practices. The transportation of the above factors leads to culture - contact with the emergence of a new culture and the result will be culture clash where the culture of the new environment plays a dominant role in dwarfing the foreign culture. (49)

He further re-affirms this conclusion when he argues:

> Post-colonial theory foregrounds the issue of crisis of identity and cultural hybridity. The theory takes care of issues of: migration, cultural defiance, gender and transculturalism etc. (51)

Amos and Ishaku (2015) conclude that "[t]he forging of a new identity or a hybrid is often the attendant effect of transnational migration that remains a phenomenon" (35). A critical examination of the selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels for this study reveals that the writers focused their artistic vision on post-colonial sub-Saharan African environment, which pushed the citizens to the West where they encounter the challenge of survival.

Furthermore, McLeod (2000) argues:

> Migrants may well live in new places, but they can be deemed not to belong there and disqualified from thinking of the new land as their home. Instead their home is seen to exist elsewhere, back across the border. (212)

McLeod in the above, observes that the migrant does not belong to his new land. He does not exist there. He still sees his home, as home, and not where he migrates to settle. Chancy (1997) confirms this while writing on exile thus:

> The condition of exile across the boundaries of self and other, of citizenship and nationality, of home and homeland; […] is the condition of consistent, continual displacement; it is the radical uprooting of all that one is and stands for, in a communal context, without the loss of the knowledge of those roots. It is, in fact, this knowledge that renders the experience of exile so cruely painful, for what one has lost is carried in this forced normadism from one geographical space to another. (1-2)

An interpretive examination of the selected migrant novels in this study, shows that the characters are indeed uprooted, from their homeland to the foreign land, without hope of returning soon. The issue of migrancy cannot be overemphasised in the socio-political discourse of sub-Saharan African migrant novel as imaginatively reflected in some novels of the late 1980s till date, the twenty-first century. Some critics who examined the novels under study have been able to expose some issues the various novelist illustrate. Studies reveal that many critics have examined, for example, Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Brain Chikwava's *Harare North*. Some other novels have not attracted so much critical appraisal. Among these are some that attracted just newspaper reviews or individual commentaries, to the best of the knowledge of this writer. This critical situation forms one major setback in this study. And this informs the choice of the selected novels in order to expose the writers' fictional engagements, and to increase the volume of knowledge and understanding of the novels.

2.2 Resistance

Examination of available critical comments show that some critics have looked at resistance in migrant novels. One of such critics is Umezuruike cited earlier, while writing on resistance in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, argues on *Beyond the Horizon* thus:

> In Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* Mara's realization to resist ideology is animated by her recognition of her loss of dignity. She realises that she is left with nothing, has lost virtually every form of meaning in her life, her relationship

> with her family, mother and her two children. Worse still, Akobi the husband whom she has tried so much to please and serve has robbed her of this dignity. (157)

In this excerpt, Umezuruike presents Mara in the novel as one who resists ideology, as Mara realises that she has lost her humanity. A study of the novel reveals Mara as a character whom Darko creates to lose everything she had before her migration to Europe. Akobi, the novel reveals, appears to be the instrument of loss which the novelist engages to actualise Mara's monumental loss. In his critical appraisal of the novel, Umezuruike concludes:

> Mara demonstrates her first act of resistance when she hoodwinks her pimp Pompey into believing that "her capital" is completely destroyed by one of her customers while she was having sexual intercourse with him [...] Mara's said act of resistance occurs when she hires the services of a private detective to extract information on Akobi's "financial deals, properties acquired, if any. (158)

Umezuruike here pinpoints two acts of resistance Mara engages, lies and a detective approach to stage her resistance. She deceives her pimp into believing that her capital has been vandalised by one of her customers. She engages a private detective to track and destroy her husband.

Chasen (2010) adds: "Darko emphasizes that it is neither the institution of marriage nor local tradition that puts women in danger but rather the ways in which ubiquitous capitalist desire influences these domains" (14). Chasen's submission reveals that Darko's novel is built on the exemplication of prostitution as a global business to build up capital and its flow in the international market between continents, Africa and Europe in *Beyond the Horizon*. However, she says that Darko weaves her novel in this manner, especially in the area of resistance, to show how women can resist their violation and economic exploitation. In her words:

> [...] Darko carved out a way for females to resist total corporal and economic exploitation in European space. In addition to making global flows of capitals, the female body in Darko's novel also serves as an alternative space through which women reorganize violating physical experiences and economic exploitation. (23)

When one looks at the twenty-first century African society, Chasen's conclusion above becomes obvious. Contemporary African society appears bedeviled by moral laxity constituted in prostitution among young girls and even women (married and single). Thus one tends to agree with Chasen's conclusion on Darko's novel as the text expresses the average contemporary African woman's crave for material wealth. It is instructive to observe in these reviews so far, that none of these critics who examined Darko's novel, sees it from the point of view of migrancy, with a focus on the migrant's existence and strategies adopted for survival. This is the critical gap this study tends to fill.

Umezuruike (2015) focuses on resistance to ideology in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. On Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street,* he argues that:

> […] in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* […] first act of resistance figures in her [Sisi's] decision to give up her job as a sex worker and start a new life with Luc, her Belgian lover. […] Sisi raises a fist in the air in triumph, having upturned in the interim her ideological subjection in sexual objectification. Having then recorded this triumph she sets out to resist Dele the pimp by defaulting in her payment. This marks her next act of resistance to ideology. (159)

Umezuruike in the above excerpt shows that Unigwe's chief character Sisi, resists ideology as she defaults in her repayments to Dele, her pimp in Nigeria. This action coupled with her decision to desist from the illegal sex trade and start a legitimate trade in Europe shows that Sisi, as Umezuruike argues here, tries to resist the sex trade.

2.3 Objectification

Responding to objectification, Umezuruike cited above examines Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* as a novel on objectification, and concludes:

> It is worth mentioning that Darko effectively depicts Mara's progress from naivety to self-knowledge – but this self-knowledge instead of liberating her, especially considering that she has been manacled the whole time, in her marriage, still keeps her captive […]. Darko has painted a realistic and haunting portrait of African women immigrants experience in Europe and the sexual

> exploitation and domination they have to go through in a male-driven society. (293)

Umezuruike here argues that Darko effortlessly, paints a realistic picture of Mara's engagement in commercial sex, in a society where the male is the commanding voice. This, he concludes, is a representation of the lives of African women in Europe whose feminine bodies have been trafficked for profit, and which leaves them exploited, degraded and cowed helplessly. There is no doubt that this is a valid critical conclusion on Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* when subjected to critical study.

Continuing on objectification, *Beyond the Horizon* shows that Mara is disappointed when her husband fraudulently initiates her into commercial sex. Onyerionwu (2016) further elaborates on this disappointment when he writes that:

> […] it is the colossal devastation of soul, spirit and body occasioned by her induction into the transnational and transcontinental vice of sex trafficking and prostitution that effects her comprehensive physical and psychological tragedy. (122)

Mara in the novel is no doubt a character Darko creates to show how physically, psychologically and spiritually devastating an unmeditated commercial sex, as Mara's experience indicates, and as critiqued by Onyerionwu, can be.

Koussouhon, Akogbeto and Allagbe (2015), while writing on the portrayal of male characters in *Beyond the Horizon*, argue that:

> […] almost all the named or labeled male characters in the novel are painted as brutish, exploitative, eccentric, materialistic, lustful, greedy, deceitfully, reckless and heartless. […] Two of such male characters namely: Mara's father and Akobi Ajaman (Cobby), Mara's husband, […]. Mara's father is represented as the person who out of sheer greed deliberately encages his under-age daughters including Mara in a marital relationship devoid of love, affection and sense of humanity. […]
>
> Akobi Ajaman is the man Mara is married to. He, like Mara's father, is delineated as deceitful or greedy. He lusts for material wealth so much so that he does not care about how he gets the money, the strategies he uses. (316)

Reading the novel reveals the above conclusion reached by Koussouhon et al above. Darko fleshes her male characters exposed in the essay under review, with all kinds of adjectival configurations. This she does to paint them through and through as cruel and wicked exploiters of the female gender. Still on objectification of the female, Gbaguidi (2014), writing on African immigrants' disillusionment in Europe, using Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* as a case study, argues:

> Amma Darko recounts the events in her novel out of order – amalepsy – in which the female character Mara becomes wizsened and remorseful out of prostitution in Europe and pities herself as she looks at what is left of her body in an oval mirror […].
>
> Mara's sexual hyper-activity and exploitation have produced in her the feeling of loneliness and seclusion in that imaginary promised land, which torments her to the marrow. (42)

Gbaguidi in the above quote shows that Darko's characterisation of Mara is one of regret and pity. The novelist paints Mara as one who regrets her situation. What an ironic twist of fate in her foreign adventure! Indeed, the novel *Beyond the Horizon* begins with this feeling of regret and ends with it as well, as Mara looks at herself in the oval mirror. Self-pity overwhelms her, no doubt.

In their essay, titled "Exploiting the Exploiter: Some Violations of Society's Expectations in *Beyond the Horizon*", Marfo, Yeboah and Bonku (2015) argue that Darko creates Mara as one character who is exploited, and later turns to be the exploiter as she, Mara, swoops on the husband, Akobi, in a revengeful manner. They write:

> In *Beyond the Horizon*, a disgruntled wife (and mother) decides to punish the husband whose exploitation of her motherhood renders her a prostitute. Here, one observes the instant of the exploiter being the exploited. (37)

Darko presents Akobi as a deceitful exploiter of his wife, as he arranges for Mara's coming to join him in Germany only for her to be lured into prostitution. But when Mara realises the moral damage done to her dignity, she swoops on Akobi and drags him down as well. Thus the exploiter becomes the exploited as Marfo, Yeboah and Bonku conclude above. Besides, Amissah-Arthur (2015) while employing the concept of phallogecentrism, which she defines as: "[…] the authority and centrality of the male

essence in the affairs of women…” (297) in her critique of Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*, concludes that “[…] *Beyond the Horizon* portrays the male as an authority when it comes to sex and the ability to portray sexual intentions to the women around them, thus phallic masculinity” (297-298). Amissah-Arthur in his argument reveals a critical reading of *Beyond the Horizon* where she notes the male exercise sexual authority over the female as Akobi usually, and all through the novel pounces on Mara, his wife, for sexual satisfaction. Inasmuch as one tends to agree with Amissah-Arthur here, one would also not forget the fact that Mara is caged, and ordered like a sex slave. This is because Akobi’s deep intention even before his wife joins him in Germany is to lure her into prostitution. Thus Akobi feels, the novel suggests, that the only way to get Mara in, is to strip off her, all sense of decency and dignity, two vital qualities that a prostitute does not ask for, or look forward to, while in the trade. Hence Akobi gets sexual pleasure from his wife in most undignifying manner, a manner unexpected of husband and wife. Thus one can conclude that Amissah-Arthur’s critique is deficient and bereft of deep critical thought.

However, Reinares (2012) sees women as disposable commodities in the fictional world Darko creates in *Beyond the Horizon*. This further justifies the issue of objectification in the novel. She writes:

> […] in this world Darko depicts, women are commodities to be traded, used, and discarded by men. The author targets a culture where marriage and prostitution intertwine as one and the same, with women becoming exchange currency from which men enjoy the profits. (12)

Of course, reading Darko’s novel, one notes that the author presents her female characters, especially those who engage in commercial sex, as articles of trade to be used and dumped. Even the married as well, see themselves as disposable commodities as their marriages break; Mara, Comfort and Gitte for example. Reinares exploration indeed reveals the obvious from the novel.

Angsotinge, Darko, Denkabe and Yital (2007) examine the novel and conclude that:

> In *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara fulfils the female roles as a daughter that adheres to her father’s wishes. She is a wife and let’s her husband use her, she is a mother and uses her predicament as an addicted whore as an alibi to provide for

> her children left behind in Ghana. […] What awaits Mara "beyond the horizon" is not education and a new life, but degradation and despair. (87)

Mara, Angsotinge et al conclude above, is a woman who finds herself under pressure as an African whore to satisfactorily play the roles of a daughter, wife and mother of children. In her attempt, the critics reveal, she gets trapped in prostitution. But the end of it after all was despair, humiliation and emotional trauma. This indeed is obvious in *Beyond the Horizon*, as the female protagonist is objectified

Reinares quoted earlier sees Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* differently. Her critical view shows that Unigwe characterises her prostitute character to pay the supreme price if they make any attempt to abscond or leave the sex trade. Reinares writes:

> […] *On Black* showcases the situation of the prostitute once outside their home countries, as they become fully dependent on their exploiters who treat them as commodities to be used up until the maximum profit is extracted out of them and if the women ever dare attempt to leave, they pay the price of their debt with their death. (117)

This conclusion is true when one looks at *On Black Sisters' Street*. Consequently, Sisi dies in the novel.

2.4 Sex trafficking

It is interesting to observe that Chika Unigwe, a female novelist, in *On Black Sisters' Street,* as selected for this study, also dwells on migration. Some critical comments on the novel available to the best of the knowledge of this writer include that of Udoette and Nwiyi (2015). Writing on emigrant women and transnational sex trade (sex trafficking), they argue that:

> Sex trafficking remains a significant feature of globalization yet it is often overlooked merely as social and economic statements in the African communities where these women are trafficked from to service the West. Unigwe demystifies this creatively. OBBS [*On Black Sisters' Street*] brings to the fore the exploitation of those who occupy the peripheries of society in global times and

> what they must negotiate to survive and thrive […] it is arguable that Unigwe's characters are victims of sex trafficking and thus, she seems to justify their need for survival and the choices they make. (25)

Reading the novel under Udoette and Nwiyi's critical view, one notes that Unigwe's characters are actually victims of sex trade. The four major female characters are trafficked to Germany, under the guise of gainful decent employment. But unfortunately, they become commodities for sale and use, misuse and abuse in the international market of prostitution. They are victims because that was not their dream or expectation as they depart from their various homelands for Europe. They thus find themselves exploited, servicing their clients sexually in order to survive economically.

In the same vein, Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* is one text that fascinates. The author's fictional creation attracts our critical attention in this study. Inongo's *Natives* has no much available critical comments or reviews to the best knowledge of this writer, to help us define our critical direction. This also was a challenge. But what informs our interest in the novel is the author's artistic preoccupation and novelistic prowess in the moulding of the society he presents to his audience. However, Atouba (2014) argues that:

> *Natives* is also related to the foreigner's image in Europe, that is, the African immigrant's condition. It underlines immigrant's invisibility in Western societies but have by means of two some Spanish women's negative and blameworthy attitude. They decide to pay a black African immigrant to satisfy their sexual intercourse. (42)

Looking at *Natives*, one notes Atouba's argument above. The novel, actually forgrounds the image of an African immigrant abroad. This image no doubt bothers on the immigrant's engagement as a sex worker to satisfy the sexual needs and demands of two Spanish middle-aged women. Though Atouba sees the demand of the women as blameworthy and negative, one appears to disagree because these women merely satisfy the natural desire for sex, and the need to satisfy it rather than repress it. But in the main, the critic has made a valid statement to the effect that *Natives* is a novel that presents the invisibility of African immigrant whose illegal status makes him victim of two sex-starved ladies who caged him in their apartments for the service for economic gain, on the part of the African immigrant. This is no doubt, a kind of sex trade.

Bardy (2018) comments that:

> "[…] *Natives* eventually becomes a story of people in a world that's as messy and as weighed down by the awkwardness of bodily needs – to eat, to be warm and to be comforted – as sex itself. And if you're looking for work, it helps to be a man with a good tool. (np)

Bardy's comment above is one that a critical reader of *Natives* would agree with as the novel actually presents a world of characters – an African immigrant and two sex-hungry Spanish women whose sex life is nothing but messy, as Bardy concludes. This is so because the novelist presents the ladies hiding their sexual relationships with the African immigrant from relations and neighbours as well. Sometimes telling lies to protect the immigrant when seen with them. But inasmuch as this is messy, the Spanish ladies must satisfy their sexual desires, and the African immigrant has the natural endowment (big penis) to do their bidding, good sex, as a way of satisfying one of their bodily needs – sex.

2.5 Identity

Examining migration and identities in Unigwe's novels, Ladele and Omotayo (2017) argue on *On Black Sisters' Street* thus:

> *On Black Sissters' Street* is also a novel about the emigration of four young ladies to Belgium in search of the proverbial "greener pasture" addressing as it does the consanguineous issues of globalising, prostitution, slavery, alienation, racism, human trafficking and transnationalism among others. (54)

They add that migration "has untoward negative effects on their bodies" as they "have to endure selling their bodies to numerous men in exchange for money day in day out in order to keep abreast of their financial obligations to Dele" (56-57). Reading *On Black Sisters' Street* one tends to agree with Ladele and Omotayo in their conclusion above. But one notes that inasmuch as the novel is on emigration of four major characters in the novel, in search of greener pastures in Europe, the critics above do not show what motivates, or compels them to migrate, why they do what they do in Europe, and how the attempt leads to relationship crisis. This is the gap this study attempts to fill as it draws

attention to strategies for negotiating survival at the economic level, as the issues Unigwe confronts in her migrant narrative.

2.6 Themes

Looking at thematic focus of critics, Yeboah's study (2012) on Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* reveals the presence of appreciable theme. She writes:

> Thematically, Darko's novels demonstrate a clear consciousness of women's problem. In *Beyond the Horizon* the pathetic story of an abused wife and mother is portrayed. Told through the tearful eyes of a "dying mother", Mara whose husband marries her just because he can feed off Mara's sale of her body, *Beyond the Horizon* teaches us that patriarchy does not only dominate women; it can also have a blinding effect on women and make them its involuntary agents. (272)

Yeboah's thematic discovery as argued in the excerpt, is indeed apt as Darko's novel is replete with the sad story of a physically, morally and sexually abused wife and mother, who appears helpless in a male dominated world.

O'Connell and Odamtten (2007) examine Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Stephen Frears' *Dirty Pretty Things*, and conclude on Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* thus: "Throughout *Beyond the Horizon*, Darko's protagonist, Mara, finds herself in morally ambiguous positions and is given the task of making profound 'choices' about the direction of her life" (49). Looking at the novel, inasmuch as one would want to agree with O'Connell and Odamtten's conclusion that Mara finds herself in a morally ambiguous positions, one tends to disagree with the conclusion that Mara has the task of deciding the direction of her life. The novel reveals Mara in the helpless, authoritative and patriarchally oppressive hands of a greedy husband Akobi. Mara could not have taken some positive steps to avert her fate under this kind of situation. This is because she finds herself in a foreign land, Germany, where she is a stranger, an immigrant without valid immigration documents. From the onset, Darko shows Mara to have been married off to a brutish man who she names Akobi (Cobby) who is a first class patriarch.

Another novel that has attracted the critical attention of critics is Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*. Writing on the need to rethink nation and narrative in a global era, Wilson-Tagoe (2006) focuses attention on Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* and writes that:

> Ike Oguine's novel, *A Squatter's Tale*, situates itself within the ramifications of such mutual impacts. Centred on the personal story of a young Nigerian banker, the novel encompasses the history of an entire generation of Nigerians, unanchored, rudderless and adrift in a nation that provides no meaningful forms of standards for living their lives. (97)

Wilson-Tagoe here reveals that Oguine uses *A Squatter's Tale* to illustrate an atmosphere of socio-economic and political crisis that is pervasive in the Nigerian nation as the masses have no tangible evidence of living a good life, consequent upon bad governance. This thematic focus is indeed crucial in the novel. Comparing this novel to earlier novels of the 1960s and 1970s, Wilson-Tagoe adds:

> Unlike earlier narratives of the 1960s and 1970s Oguine's novel confronts the global not as a threat to the nation's integrated and cultural consolidation but as an aspect of its continuing transformation in a new transnational and decentred global order. (98)

This excerpt above draws critical attention to a development in African novel. While Wilson-Tagoe's essay shows Oguine's novel under review as one that reveals a society transforming into a global outlook through transnationalism, the conclusion reached above shows a clear-cut departure from the focus of earlier writers and novelists. Earlier novelists focused on an integrated and consolidated cultural environment in the face of colonialism and neo-colonialism in a post-colonial era. But Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, Wilsn-Tagoe concludes, departs from this national environment and peers into the international, by creating a transnational environment. This is a welcome development in African novel, hence this study examines migrancy in a transnational environment of the selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels.

Like Wilson-Tagoe who compares *A Squatter's Tale's* preoccupation to earlier novels of the 1960s and 1970s, Maranga-Musonye compares the same novel's preoccupation to that of earlier African literary expressions. She concludes thus:

> Whereas earlier African literature dealt mainly with the effects of colonialism and Westernization of the African continent, *A Squatter's Tale* deals with the effects of capitalism and globalization on the psyche of the Africans in the Diaspora. (60)

Contributing to the literary criticism of Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, Raji (2005) argues: "[…] this novel narrates the identity of Nigerians who have been fleeing the country in droves since the late eighties" (146). It is true that Raji sees *A Squatter's Tale* as a novel that shows Nigerians flee the country in large numbers in the late eighties. But he does not show in detail what necessitated the flight and how the immigrant felt in the foreign land. This gap is what this study tends to fill with respect to Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*. Nyitse and Lorhii (2012) appraise the novel and conclude that:

> […] in *A Squatter's Tale*, […], the migration of people from Nigeria shows they are pushed into exile by economic and political issues which can be addressed if adequate attention is given to issues of good governance. (11)

Nyitse and Lorhii identify economic and political issues as being responsible for the migration of Nigerians into exile. These critics do not mention or examine such economic and political issues for the reader to see how their prevalence or seriousness formed the background for their migration, as well as what becomes of them as they strategise to eke out a living in the new land. This yawning gap is what this study sets out to fill.

Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* is another novel for this study. It has no appreciable critical appraisal except a few newspaper comments to the best of the knowledge of this writer. This dearth of literature among others, also informs our choice of it for this study, in order to contribute to the understanding of the novel. However, Mwangi (2013) focuses on theme and writes that:

> *Children of the Revolution* by Dinaw Mengestu is, largely, a novel capturing the plight of individuals living in exile. The novel relies on memory to narrate events and experiences that create various characters. It would therefore be important to note that the novel deals with different time frames, hence the use of flashbacks. (41)

Mwangi in the above quote sees *Children of the Revolution* as a fictional work that centres on the sufferings of individuals living in exile. But she does not show bonding as

a strategy the characters adopt in their effort to survive in exile. However, he notes the use of flashback and reliance on memory to narrate the experiences that create the characters of the novel. It is important to observe that Mwangi specifically points out specific places of origin of the immigrants in the novel who on arrival in a foreign land, acquire new identity as a result of dislocation from their original homelands. She concludes:

> The novel addresses the plight of African refugees, […], who are living in the United States of America. The three characters recall their lives as lived in African countries of their origin – Kenya, Congo and Ethiopia respectively. […] These immigrants acquire a new identity as a result of physical and spiritual dislocations. Their movement from Africa to the US, in the case of Stephanos, Kenneth and Joseph, constitute physical dislocation while their memory of Africa constitute spiritual dislocation. (73)

In addition, Pucherova (2015), writing on forms of resistance against the African post-colonial in Chikwava's *Harare North*, argues that:

> The disillusionment with independence became a pervasive theme in the African novel as soon as it became apparent across Africa that independence was not the beginning of self-rule; instead, it was the continuation of colonialism through corrupt arrangements between African governments and global capitalism. (np)

Looking at the foregoing critical insight from Pucherova, a critical reading of Chikwava's *Harare North* reveals a novel enacted in a disillusioned atmosphere. Disillusionment thus becomes a pervasive theme as noted by Pucherova. She goes further to write:

> Narrated by an unknown narrator in broken English, the novel from the beginning problematises the notion of identity as a stable and the binary pair of victim/oppressor […]. By constantly changing his identity, the protagonist both resists and flirts with power […]. (np)

Close reading of *Harare North* suggests Pucherova's conclusion above. Of note is the fact that she does not critique the novel as one on migrancy, hence this study selects the text to illustrate migrancy and how characters survival strategies are depicted. Tembi (2016) argues that […] Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* [is a] narrative […] of

displacement" (22). He continues in his argument and writes that "*Harare North* is a novel that treats migrancy as homelessness" (25), and concludes:

> As a text, *Harare North* explores the migrant status as one that is enforced on people. The characters in this novel are not privileged cosmopolitans who explore distant laws for pleasure, but people who leave Zimbabwe to get away from political persecution, poverty and an insecure future. (47)

However, Mangena and Mupondi (2011), having examined *Harare North*, are of the view that the novel illustrates how the diaspora destroys socio-cultural ties of immigrants. On this thematic preoccupation, they write:

> The Diaspora is seen as a place that leads to the destruction of marriages, entrapment and misery for the unfortunate so-journers and the smashing of important African socio-cultural taboos as new values displace traditional ones among other problems. (61)

Reading the novel, one observes the loss of traditional values and ethos in diaspora as noted by Mangena and Munpondi above. The migrants from Zimbabwe in United Kingdom are characterised as people who are bereft of some cherished African cultural values as the modern and foreign values overwhelm them in their migrant experience.

Neple (2015) observes in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, a sense of loss. She notes that *We Need New Names* is full of a sense of loss, as the author presents emigrant characters. She writes: "NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, which begins in Zimbabwe, is a novel full of loss. In fact, already in the beginning of the novel Darling and her family have lost their house […]" (17). Reading the novel, one finds the pervasiveness of this sense of loss. Darling, always on the move with her other character-companions, is in one way or the other, a victim of losses. Loss of home, identity, friends, and even family members as she sojourns to the new world, having lost her country Zimbabwe to corrupt and wicked political leaders. Thus, one agrees with Neple in her conclusion that *We Need New Names* is a novel of loss. This theme is noticeable in the novel. Commenting on *We Need New Names,* Nosalek (2015) argues that:

> In *We Need New Names*, from the ten-year-old protagonist, Darling, travels on a visitor's visa for her shanty town home in an unnamed African country, presumably Zimbabwe, to her Aunt Fostalina's home

> Destroyedmichygen. For the young girl, movement away from her grandmother, mother, and friends fulfills her desire to leave behind a life of corruption and poverty for what she believes will be a life of comfort in the United States. (43)

She concludes: "We Need New Names openly displays postcolonialism/ postnationalism as the new cause of movement" (44). The novel, *We Need New Names*, as Nosalek observes, illustrates migration from an unfavourable circumstance to a more favourable one. Nosalek is of the view that this movement is caused by post-colonialism and post-nationalism. In other words, migration from unfavourable African socio-political and economic landscape is as a result of post-independence malaise. Related to this movement necessitated by post-colonialism is Fitzpatrick's (2015) view that:

> It could be argued that the way Bulawayo chooses to name this diasporic movement and the people within it as "they" and "them" furthers the mentality of Othering as it is not individualized and they are nameless faces wandering from their unspecified homeland. The part of her writing is to create an individualized narrative from Darling's point of view that allows her to reclaim the Zimbabwean immigrant experience from the clutches of a Western view of Othering. (29-30)

In this excerpt, Fitzpatrick reveals that Bulawayo gives us a narrative where characters illustrate a life on the move, which eventually shows the emigrant as the "Other". In addition, Toivanen (2015) examines Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and observes abject mobility, as a thematic thrust. In his essay, he writes:

> The abject mobility theme manifests itself in the text corpus in two slightly distinct yet overlapping manners. The first dimension pertains to the failures of the post-colonial nation-state to claim the promises invested in it at independence. The social, political and economic problems from the abject essence of the post-colonial nation-state […]. The second dimension of the abject mobility theme has to do with the problematic relations that former empires have with their colonial past. (3)

He strengthens his argument when he concludes that: "[…] in *We Need New Names* abject mobility is associated with failed post-colonial nationhood; […]" (9). Indeed,

reading the novel reveals the theme of abject mobility caused by political failure in Zimbabwe. However, Muganiwa (2013) while reviewing the novel argues that:

> The novel captures the diaspora experience of a young girl, Darling Nonkululeko Nkala, after experiencing hardships in the Zimbabwean economic meltdown. It is therefore a critique of moving to the Diaspora as a solution to challenges in one's country. (188)

Inasmuch as this is true, this critic does not show adequately, how and why Darling moves to the Diaspora, and what becomes of her there.

Tembi quoted earlier on Chikwava's *Harare North*, argues on Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* thus: *"We Need New Names* focuses on the lives of slum-dwellers who reside on the outskirts of the city and highlights the ways in which they struggle with unemployment, political violence and poverty" (27). Aside from focusing on the struggle to survive unemployment and political violence and poverty, he notes the themes or issues of language to give Bulawayo's novel a local flavor (29-31). Of interest, is Tembi's critical insight in his analysis of *We Need New Names*. He observes that the practice of naming and denaming is used in the novel to send some specific messages of hope or despair (31-35).

Ibeku (2016), feels that Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* is beyond prostitution and international sex trade. She states:

> It is pertinent to reiterate that Unigwe's novel is beyond prostitution but touches its tentacles to the issue of corruption, neglect of the citizens by their governments and the high rate of unemployment in most African countries especially, Nigeria. […] Unigwe in her novel *On Black Sisters' Street* frontally attacks the corrupt practice of Nigerian leaders to their citizens and the high rate of unemployment that has led many astray as could be seen in the behaviour of the characters. (32)

Ibeku in this quote above disagrees on the popular position that women or young girls who get trafficked to Europe for sex trade are victims of the international market. She is of the view, as evident above, that citizens of Nigeria for instance, have been forced out of their country as a result of the high rate of unemployment. In other words, if there was gainful employment in the country, young girls would not have been trafficked to Europe for prostitution. Inasmuch as one tends to agree with Ibeku on this thematic concern, the

novelist seems to suggest that the young girls have alternatives. Afterall, they presented themselves to Oga Dele, a character and trafficker in the novel, willingly.

In addition, commenting on *Natives*, MacViban (2016) in a magazine review writes that "*Natives* is the story of Bambara Keita, a homeless immigrant who is employed by two Catalan women: Montse and Roser, to satisfy them sexually" (np). This is further amplified when he argues that:

> The politics of exile, which lies at the heart of *Natives*, shows how some immigrants reinvent themselves as the[y] leave their homelands, getting rid of their identity cards for fear of being discovered and repatriated. They are forced to assume new personalities by pretending to be who they are not as well as claiming to be from countries they are not. (np)

MacViban's argument above is one that gives an insight into *Natives*. The narrative is indeed focused on a homeless immigrant engaged by two Spanish women Montse and Roser who need him for their sexual gain. But the critic goes further to stretch his critical view, and thematic focus, when he concludes that the novel captures the politics of exile. His argument that *Natives* focuses on exiled immigrants who fake identities to avoid deportation, in order to survive is quite agreeable. Indeed the African immigrant Bambara Keita/General Essomba of Cameroon impersonated Bambara Keita of Mali to migrate from Africa to Spain. Claiming to be what he is not, is to enable him remain exiled, and start a new life. This observation is no doubt *Natives'* concern. But MacViban does not show or comment on how the African emigrant negotiates survival, except that he is noted as an exile. This is the gap this writer intends to fill with the close reading of *Natives* to show strategies adopted to survive economically as a migrant.

Another scholar who examines *Harare North* and makes critical comments on it, is Adami (2013). In his essay on three Anglophone texts, *Harare North* being one of them, he writes that:

> The sense of post-colonial displacement that often affects migrants struggling to integrate themselves in a new environment is the governing paradigm of *Harare North*, […], whose nameless Zimbabwean narrator has to cope with the difficulties of creating new social and cultural relations. (11)

Continuing in his critical view, Adami adds thus: "In this text too [*Harare North*], language is cunningly manipulated and reconstructed so as to subvert and abrogate social and cultural constrictions through the voice(s) of the 'periphery'" (11). The critical comments from Adami are no doubt obvious in *Harare North*. The novel demonstrates how post-colonial displacements affect immigrants. And it equally shows how the manipulative use of language affects social and cultural relations.

But Magosvongwe (2013) sees *Harare North* as a protest novel Brain Chikwava uses to protest against the socio-political situation in post-independence Zimbabwe. He argues that: "Chikwava's *Harare North,* then could be well regarded as a protest novel. He dramatises African's natural right to land that colonial appropriations erased and legally dismissed as theirs" (102).

Furthermore, Moyo, Gonye and Mdlongwa (2012) in an essay on representations of the diaspora in *Harare North* and collected short stories, argue that in *Harare North* "[…], the protagonist highlights the unbelievable expectations Zimbabweans back home have about their next of kin in the Diaspora" (1388). The novel, on a close reading actually demonstrates a diasporic settlement of Zimbabweans whom their family members at home in Africa expect so much from in terms of material and financial acquisitions, but gets nothing. The expectation is high indeed, hence the protagonist is determined to make much money, and send home, and return finally to Zimbabwe to meet family members. But this was a mirage, as the novel shows, and as the above critics note. Thus far, one can conclude that a good number of critics have examined Chikwava's *Harare North*. But none of these sees the novel specifically as a dramatisation of migrants' survival strategies, hence this study selects the novel as one on migrancy to provide more critical examination to illustrate bonding as a survival strategy, and an understanding of the novel.

2.7 Style

Some critics examined the style of construction of some of the novels. Onyerionwu (2016) examined Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* and concludes on Darko's narrative strategy in *Beyond the Horizon* thus:

> Perhaps, Darko's most effective narrative strategy is to invest so much hope in the aspirations of her central

> character and narrative voice, Mara, in order that her eventual disappointment and disillusionment, complete with their significant ironic implications, are well realized and in the intended carthic depth. (121)

Onyerionwu in his argument on Darko's narrative voice argues that Mara is all-embracing as the novel reveals a fictionalised world of hopes highly anticipated by Mara. This is a notable style in the novel.

Adjei (2009), commenting on Darko's three novels namely, *Beyond the Horizon, Housemaid* and *Faceless* writes on narrative point of view in *Beyond the Horizon.* He argues that the novel "[…] is told from a first person's narrative perspective. It is a story of the female protagonist, Mara told by her through a series of flashbacking" (49). He adds that:

> The first person pronoun '1' can be used in nuances of exaggeration, understatement, perception, prejudice sentimentalism or lyricism. The 'I' is a fictional voice or the alter ego, through which writers attempt to [re]present themselves. Through this fictional voice writers are able to dramatize the different viewpoints and present their own diagnosis of society. Thus, within the framework of the first-person narrative, everything is seen *subjectively* through the eyes of the 'I': the objects, concepts, conceits, perceptions and beliefs which pass through the lenses of that eye are filtered through the idiosyncrasies of the 'I', hazing, dinning, doubing, illuminating or totally annihilating them. (49)

Adjei's insight into *Beyond the Horizon* reveals Darko as a careful and an artistic user of the first person narrative point of view as a style of novel writing. The novel in fact lures a reader into the world of Mara through this narrative vantage position. Thus Adjei's critical comment is quite impressive, critically speaking, as he sees the use of "I" as the alter ego through which the novelist filters her protagonist's perception of events in her life in Europe.

Yeboah earlier cited, comments on the trials of motherhood in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, *The Housemaid, Faceless* and *Not Without Flowers*, reveals a focus on the narrative point of view (as Adjei reviewed above does), plot and thematic preoccupation of *Beyond the Horizon*. On narrative point of view, she observes:

> In *Beyond the Horizon*, the first-person narrative point of view is employed. Through the use of the first-person point of view, readers are made to view circumstances and events through the eyes of and perceptions of Mara. This injects objectivity, adds to reality and enables the thought processes of the reader to focus on the trials of motherhood. The constant use of personal pronouns such as "I" and 'me' reinforces Mara's claim as the owner of her story. (96)

On plot, Yeboah notes the use of circular/non linear method. She argues:

> We understand Darko's choice of the non-linear circular plot, because with its use, Darko succeeds in portraying that the trials of motherhood are not time-bound, they are timeless – mothers have been on trial in the past, are on trial in the present and will be on trial in the future. The use of the non-linear plot only urges mothers to quicken themselves and refuse to be made to suffer these trials. […] The non-linear plot method used by Darko helps readers to make sense of the jumbled sequence of events because they inform us about events that took place prior to the action of the novel. (102)

She adds that: "Darko's use of the circular plot will help us understand that the form of the plot – its circular/non-linear nature, actually reflects the challenges of mothers and daughters" (100). In terms of form of the novel, Yeboa has critically identified the first person's narrative point of view as a narrative mode the author of the novel uses to personalise the story and achieve an objective and realistic presentation of Mara's experience in her fictional world. The circular/non-linear plot structure also added to the aesthetics of the form of the novel which Darko employs to realise the content of her work. No doubt, these two identified elements of Darko's novel are well engaged by the author.

Chasen earlier cited, examines *Beyond the Horizon* and concludes that:

> By shifting her narrative from rural to urban and third world to first world space, Darko examines how "transnational flows" of capital and myths of capitalist progress travel across circumscribed national and regional borders and contribute to the global business of forced prostitution in the novel. (11)

In the quote above, Chasen shows that Darko sets her novel in the rural and urban, Africa and Europe to illustrate how capital can move within, and between these rural, regional

and continental spaces. In this trade for capital, Chasen reveals, is human body – Mara – the legally married woman who later turns a prostitute. The author, Darko is able to present this through her narrative style of shifting her narrative from rural to urban, third world to first world.

In his contribution, Okonkwo (2010) argues:

> In *A Squatter's Tale*, Oguine […] engages postcolonial Africa, Nigeria's 1990s leadership and generation, structures of power in mainstream United States and their intricate relationship to those on the edges, whether human or text. Obi's story unravels ultimately as an African character's growth into greater knowledge of self, others, and the world. In this respect, *A Squatter's Tale* becomes arguably an immigrant *bildungsroman,* […]. (142)

A critical reading of Oguine's novel shows the author's attempt to experiment with the bildungsroman genre of fiction, a novel of growing up. Thus one tends to agree with Okonkwo's conclusion essentially as the novel reveals the protagonist, Obi, as a young and promising banker in Nigeria, who appears ignorant or innocent of what is 'beyond the horizon' of Africa but faces realities of life as he begins to grow in social awareness on arrival in the United States. But Okonkwo does not show in his essay enough details to demonstrate this growth of an ignorant immigrant in a foreign land. Oguine's narrative style helps the reader to appreciate Obi's development in the novel. Maranga-Musonye (2007) examines *A Squatter's Tale* as a fictional exploration of the paradoxes of immigration. She writes:

> *A Squatter's Tale* is a tragicomic drama of the African economic refugee in America. […] the story explores the paradoxes of immigration through the aspirations and disappointments of Obi, a young Nigerian in California. (54)

Maranga-Musonye's argument above is quite pointed. It captures *A Squatter's Tale* as a tragicomic drama on the travails of a young Nigerian migrant in America. The novel indeed is a tragi-comedy that illustrates the protagonists' high hopes and disappointment as the hopes crash unrealised.

Looking at the environment Oguine dramatises in *A Squatter's Tale*, Onyerionwu cited earlier, while looking at Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* writes that:

> Oguine's novel [*A Squatter's Tale*] is set in the last but most excruciating and strangulating lap of the reign of terror of the military devil in Nigeria. The country was already sinking irretrievably as at 1993 when the vicious General Sani Abacha took over the reigns of power. (126)

Onyerionwu argues that *A Squatter's Tale* is set in Nigeria. Looking at the spatial setting, he argues that there was terror, misery, economic and socio-political turbulence. It was in this socio-economic and political atmosphere that Ike Oguine situates his novel to document the scenario and its aftermath. This setting is very obvious in the novel as the experience Obi encounters that pushes him out of the country are those that happened during the reign of General Sani Abacha in Nigeria, as Onyerionwu concludes.

Focusing on setting as a narrative strategy of *We Need New Names*, Tembi concludes:

> *We Need New Names* is set in two locations; Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city and Detroit, a city in the United States of America. It is a literary comment on the displacement of many Zimbabwean families as a result of political unrest arising from the fast-track land redistribution programme. (27-28)

A critical reading of the novel reveals the author's concern with unemployment, poverty, political violence; the use of name in naming as a social instrument to pass a critical message on the characters, as Tembi notes. There is no doubt too that the novel, as observed by Tembi, is set in Bulawayo, in Zimbabwe, and Detroit in the United States of America. This locale gives it the migrancy and transnational environment in which the characters act out their unemployment, and poverty in a politically violent atmosphere in Zimbabwe and the need to migrate to United States of America. Writing on narrative point of view, Tembi observes that the novelist engages a child narrator. He comments on the narrative voice thus: "Bulawayo uses the inquisitive nature of a child to engage the reader in a discussion on controversial subject such as state violence, HIV/AIDS, child

molestation and abortion" (28). He concludes that "Bulawayo's use of a child's first person narrative voice is central to the novel's plot" (28).

The centrality of the child first person narrative point of view in the forward movement of the plot is indeed, not in doubt. This is obvious from the exposition stage of the plot down to the denouement. The child's voice is pervasive all through the narrative. This is an artistic plus on the part of the author, NoViolet Bulawayo. It is critically important to mention that all the critics who have examined *We Need New Names* have looked at the novel from the various perspectives reviewed. But none in their efforts pays adequate attention to the novel as one that dramatises migrancy illustrated in the strategies the characters adopt to survive in the new land. This study thus interrogates this critical gap.

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Jennifer (2015) in her review argues that:

> […] *Natives* is a scathing satire, the story of an illegal African immigrant who is hired for an unusual assignment; he becomes the sexual object of two successful Catalan businesswomen, who take turns hosting and hiding him in their homes, where he fulfils their wildest desires. (np)

Jennifer's view on *Natives* above is worthy of consideration as it bothers on narrative style rather than thematic concern. She comments that *Natives* is built on satire. Reading the novel does not reveal a scathing satire as Jennifer concludes in her review. The novel does not forground satire as there is no much evidence of satiric elements, the novel being the forgrounding of an immigrant's quest for better economic survival in a foreign land. Consequently, the emigrant finds his extra-large penis as an asset in the employment of two Spanish women who engage him to use the asset to satisfy them sexually. Thus, the novelist merely shows how African immigrants can turn gigolos in order to survive rather than laugh at, or critic the survival strategy adopted. This is why Bardy, the critic we reviewed earlier above argues that:

> In the end, the best thing about *Natives* is that it never becomes predictable. It would have been easy to write a romance novel about a hunky immigrant and his harem of rich ladies, or to satirize these ugly old hags and their dumb African stud. (np)

In the case of *Natives'* Bambara Keita/Gerald Essomba, his stud is not dumb. He is not an ugly old hag. On the contrary, he is a young virile man with an active and strong stud which the rich Spanish women treasure and are willing to pay one thousand euros for its sexual engagement. Thus Jennifer's conclusion is faulty as Inongo does not set out to satirise Gerald Essomba or the Spanish society.

A study of the novel reveals that the author gives the reader a world of characters on the move, and their efforts to survive. It is evident from the study of the novel that the author attempts migrant writing, hence the choice to use it to illustrate migrancy, emphasis on strategies employed to negotiate economic survival in a transnational environment, and as a migrant.

Chigwedere (2015) focuses on representations of "madness" in post-colonial Zimbabwean literature, and examines Brain Chikwava's *Harare North.* His examination reveals a particular style. He writes that:

> Of particular interest […] has been the language and style that Chikwava adopts to carry the content of his narrative. […] analysis shows that a post-modernist style is apparent in the form of his narrative which is essentially fragmented, non-linear and lacks closure. There is also evidence of semantic idiosyncrasy in his literary work. Additionally, […] how Chikwava allows Shona and Ndebele speech patterns, lexical items and idioms to shape his narrative discourse in *Harare North*. What comes through to the reader is an indigenous language and a narrative style that possesses a distinct African flavor. This linguistic miscegeneration is ironic given the diasporic background of his literary text. It does serve, however, to emphasise cultural displacement that the narrator feels from being immersed in a foreign space. (143-144)

A critical look at the above quote reveals that the critic, Chigwedere, notes the use of language and style that sets out Chikwava's novel as an African novel on migration. He observes the evidence of semantic idiosyncrasy in the use of language in the novel and indeed the author's employment of his local Shona and Ndebele speech pattern's lexical items, and idiomatic expressions to give shape and African flavor to his narrative. This observation is quite critically laudable as it helps the reader to easily identify the setting (cultural milieu) of the novel, and the deep sense of loss of the narrator in a foreign land, as an immigrant in the United Kingdom. Continuing in his critical analysis of Chikwava's *Harare North*, Chigwedere argues that:

> Life in the Diaspora entails one of inner transformation and constant negotiation of identity between the inborn culture (home) and the physical surroundings and culture that one is immersed in, so as to forge some sense of belonging and cultural displacement typical of migration. (136)

He adds that "Chikwava's narrative provides a pertinent reflection of multiculturalism in the UK" (124). An examination of the novel indicates the novelist's careful weaving of constant negotiation of identity between the homeland and foreign land to demonstrate a multicultural environment as critiqued by Chigwedere. He does not note bonding as a strategy adopted to survive, as Chikwava's narrative reveal. This is the gap a study of this migrant novel is set out to fill.

Besides, commenting on the use of linguistic style in *Harare North*, Tembi earlier cited, writes:

> In *Harare North*, Chikwava blends standard English, British and Zimbabwean urban slang, Shona and Ndebele to come up with a pidgin that sounds like 'broken English'. He peppers the narrator's speech with vernacular words, proverbs, metaphors, and songs and uses code mixing to create a distinct register. (50)

A close reading of *Harare North* reveals the author's consciousness of code mixing, use of slangs, native dialect or vernacular and pidgin rather than standard British English known with the educated class in the British commonwealth which Chikwava belongs to, being a citizen of Zimbabwe, a former colony of Britain. Tembi's linguistic appraisal of the novel is indeed a true commentary on the author's skillful deployment of style in his use of language. One can conclude agreeably that Tembi no doubt gives a critical evaluation from the point of view of language to the novelist's choice of linguistic style. The novel reveals this choice of linguistic engagement when Tembi shows in his analysis that the author engages the help of a semi-literate twenty-two year old narrator to tell his tale. He thus argues that the novelist focuses on the subversion of "[…] cultural and literary norms by choosing to tell his story through the character of a twenty-two-year old, semi-literate, former ZANU-PF youth militia" (48-50). As a semi-literate, the narrator is not expected to be a fluent user of the English language. But it must be mentioned that it is a deliberate choice by the author to show that the novel is on the side

of the oppressed and impoverished subalterns of Zimbabwe who find migration as an option away from the poverty and political violence in the land.

Be that as it may, Odamtten quoted earlier in an introductory essay to the readers' understanding of Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* argues that:

> […] Darko positions her narrator in the heart of the [empire], in the blank of whiteness, not as a comfortable guest taking a recreation trip down the Isar River in Munich, but as a prostitute trapped in a brothel, seemingly doomed to sell her body for the pleasure of men ejaculating semen into her black body. […] Structurally, Darko's narrative design begins at its seeming chronological end and ends at a chronologically penultimate terminus. (103)

Odamtten's inquiry into Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* above leaves no reader in doubt as the novel indeed depicts Mara as a character Darko schemes to be trapped in the international trade of commercial sex which the novelist structures in a flashback to end from where it opens, and begins from where it ends in terms of temporality. This style of novel writing Darko adopts helps the reader understand the novel's movement in time.

He goes further to see the novel's non-adherence to correct grammatical rules of English grammar as a kind of protest. He says:

> The writer's refusal to observe English grammatical rules and idiomatic forms, options for the local flavor of one of the African indigenous languages is an act of fighting back. It amounts to the bold assertion of Zimbabwean national identity by some emigrants in Britain. (110)

He concludes: "[…] Chikwava renders the book into the oeuvre of protest literature" (110). Reading the novel, one tends to wonder, and even be discouraged by the author's use of Zimbabwean vernacular, and pidgin as a narrative style. Nevertheless, Magosvongwe in his critique of the novel concludes it is a deliberate attempt by the novelist to register his anger against the British hegemony, as a way of fighting back and asserting Zimbabwean-cum-African identity in the diaspora. This is quite bold on the part of the author, and artistically impressive as well.

Significantly, a lot appear to have been done on some of the selected novels for this study on migrancy, especially *Beyond the Horizon*, *A Squatter's Tale, Harare North*, *On Black Sisters' Street* and *We Need New Names*. Others are just a few critical

commentaries as in the case of *Children of the Revolution,* and *Natives*. These critical comments, we have noted, bordered on various issues as reviewed. But none appears to have looked at any of the novels in detail to show that the individual authors and novels imaginatively illustrate migrant experiences that demonstrate a negotiation of economic existence. Therefore, this study focuses attention on migrancy as evident in strategies migrants adopt to survive at the economic level.

CHAPTER THREE

REPRESENTATION OF MIGRANTS' SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN *BEYOND THE HORIZON, NATIVES, ON BLACK SISTERS' STREET, WE NEED NEW NAMES* AND *A SQUATTER'S TALE*

3.1 Introduction

In the examination of migrants' economic existence in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon,* Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives*, Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale,* in this chapter, attention will be focused on migrants' economic survival strategies as experiences the individual novelists create their characters to demonstrate, in a transnational space.

It has been observed that transnational migration takes many forms. Sometimes, there are forms which are present with us in our neighbourhood that one rarely takes note of, as one's attention is always drawn to migration from one country or nation to another. Studies reveal that transnational travels or migration includes not only national or international borders but also physical space between two persons guided by rules or conventions, according to Adesina and Adebayo earlier quoted, in an editorial comment:

> Transnationalism is more than the crossing of borders; but borders (or boundaries) themselves come in different shapes and sizes, and have different uses. Not just national or international, a border may be the physical space between two persons guided by rules or conventions. That physical space can be of varying sizes, and can be the source of misunderstanding where a person moves from a close-talking or hugging society to one where considerable physical distances are expected. Borders may also be psychological. It consists of the limits set by a society which often contributes to the total make up of a peoples identity – such as class, ethnic group, group mentality, or aspirations. Transnationalism implies a transcendence, a person's or group's ability to go through and beyond these psychological inhibitions or limitations. (4)

A critical look at the above excerpt shows that transnationalism is beyond general understanding as one could limit it to international migration. But Adesina and Adebayo throw more light on the term to say that it includes physical space between two persons which could be the source of misunderstanding between such two individuals. It is also psychological, as they comment in their editorial, quoted above. It thus implies one's ability to go through, and beyond these, they conclude.

Studies on the novels for analysis in this chapter show that the novels illustrate transnational movements. Thus, it is observed that the authors concern themselves with economic survival in a transnational domain. Kabir quoted earlier reminds us that:

> Transnational migration involves migrants across borders, from one nation-state to another, and who live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embedded them in more than one nation-state. (134)

Adesina and Adebayo write:

> From the 1990s a vast range of changes were induced by globalization. These would include transnationalism, integration, and interconnectedness of nation-states and the blurring of boundaries. Africans have now been swept into a fundamentally different world – one in which Africanness has been redefined in an extremely complex way. (6)

A look at the political history of Africa, as Adesina and Adebayo argue above, shows that there has been increase in migration experiences. Natasha (2011) argues that:

> Rather than being only an academic category, transnationalism is an experience that is part of the daily experience of a large group of people that live outside their home country. Even when the move is voluntary, it tends to complicate the relationships these migrants have with their country of origin and settlement, the experience changes profoundly the way migrants think about themselves, their family and their country. (1)

One observes in the daily migrant experiences of characters in the novels that they are people who migrate from one locale to another in order to access a better living condition. Hence Ilo (2006) argues that: "Migration has always been a way of escaping from a bad condition of life to a better situation of things. This is not only natural but also

human" (128). He concludes thus: "Many Africans simply think that something is inherently wrong with their societies and would rather prefer to leave for the western world" (105).

Generally, a look at the state of Africa reveals a sad narrative which makes the masses think that the continent is not a place to survive comfortably. The masses are surviving under the brute force of undemocratic governance as they live in abject poverty, psychological and emotional pains resulting from socio-political and economic crisis they cannot contend with. Lange (2001) confirms this sad state of Africa when he remarks that:

> Sadly, today's diagnosis of the state of African politics is a different one. Racked by war and sapped by disease; burdened by a traumatic past and failing to get to grips with the economic and technological revolutions that are reshaping the world as a result of globalization, the continent seems to be slipping out of the control of political leaders who claim to govern it, and beyond the reach of international institutions that seek to rescue it. (8)

There is no doubt that Africa is in a socio-economic and political limbo. Consequently, the dire need to migrate, change location for better human and fulfilling existence. The selected novels reveal characters who migrate in a transnational space for economic survival.

In the words of Rodney (1972): "[…] the rise of social classes with the conquerors on top and the conquered at the bottom" (54), and Fanon's earlier quoted in this study, but being quoted here again, that "[…] the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty" (138), many Africans living in the above socio-economic condition Rodney and Fanon describe tend to seek greener pasture elsewhere as the lopsided relationship between the leaders and the led continue to go on uncontrollably. Consequently, many Africans begin to consider relocation to better environments in their efforts to survive. They voluntarily move out to negotiate survival in their attempt to satisfy economic human needs for daily and comfortable existence in foreign lands. Foster (2015) argues that "Migritude narrates the economic conditions of existence facing contemporary migrants […]" (56). This economic condition, with regard to the strategies adopted for survival as migrants is the critical focus of Amma Darko's *Beyond the*

Horizon, Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives,* Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *Wee Need New Names,* and Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, as the novels reveal menial jobs, marriages, and fraud, prostitution and gigolism, accent compliance, renaming and denaming, and betrayal as strategies adopted for economic survival in foreign lands.

3.2 Menial Jobs, Marriages and Fraud as Survival Strategies

Kaya (2004) argues that: "After political independence, Africans become disillusioned. Thus, they find a good reason for voluntary, vertical migration" (91). This argument by Kaya is worthy of note as it points to the fact that the migration of Africans from their various African countries is a voluntary one as a result of disenchantment with the homeland as the expected gains of independence is far from being realised.

In Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, the author presents characters who negotiate for economic survival. The novel opens in a flashback where the protagonist and first person narrator Mara, looks at herself in a mirror and realises that she has lost her identity (1). But the novelist shifts from this scene to give the reader a background to the migrants' economic survival strategies.

In order to illustrate her artistic concern in *Beyond the Horizon*, Darko skillfully creates Akobi, negotiate economic survival in the fictional city of Ghana. As a background to Akobi's negotiation for economic survival in Europe, the novelist tells us that Mara goes to the village to deliver her first pregnancy. As expected, her husband visits to appreciate her wife and the new born baby named Kofo. At this juncture, Darko introduces Akobi's dire need to negotiate economic survival. In addition to his ministry work, Akobi plans for a project to yield plenty of money. Mara, the narrator, tells us:

> The very next day he announced he was leaving for the city because work was awaiting him. To my surprise, he insisted on taking with him the high-quality gold jewelry that his father had presented to me in gratitude for his first grandson, as well as the cloth and other jewelry given me as dowry, which I brought with me from the city [while coming to the village to deliver her child]. […] His father had flatly refused to give in to his demand that he should sell part of his farmlands and give him the money for some project he was about to undertake which would, guaranteed, bring in plenty of money. (30)

From Mara's narration above, Akobi leaves the village for the city under the pretext of going to resume work in the ministry office. But of note is the fact that Akobi makes away with Mara's gold jewelry and clothes given to her by her father-in-law. It is also worthy to note that Akobi tries to persuade his father to sell his farm lands and give him the proceeds to invest in a project that would yield plenty of money. This is where Akobi's negotiation for economic survival begins from, as events unfold to clarify this negotiation. Using Mara, her dominant character in this narrative on migrancy, Darko tells us that Mara goes back to the city, leaving her a year old baby behind (31). Mara narrates her experience thus:

> So, a year after my separation from Akobi, I left Kofo with my mother and, […] headed back to the city one Saturday morning and back to this man Akobi who was still my husband. A staggering surprise awaited me.
>
> Anxious to lay eyes once more on my gold jewelry which in the true sense of the word was my only life insurance, the only property I owed in life, I looked for it in the place where I knew Akobi was likely to keep it. I looked and searched and found nothing; neither the jewelry nor my new clothes. And the costly waist-beads I inherited from my grandmother when she died I didn't find. Plus other things, all of which were gone, even the little delicate ebony carving mother had given me the first time I was leaving for the city as my protection. (31)

In the above, Mara tells us her pathetic story. Her husband strips her of her valuables. It is sad to note that Akobi returns quickly to the city to perfect his plans to negotiate economic survival. In order to raise money for his pet project, Akobi sells off Mara's cherished belongings, namely, gold jewelry, new clothes, waist-beads, delicate ebony carving and other items for sale to plan for his pet "project". In a dramatic dialogue, between Akobi and Mara, Darko resolves the doubts in Mara's mind as to the whereabout of her cherished jewelry and other items. The author dramatisesthe encounter thus:

> Oh Mara you are back!
> How beautiful! […].
> 'Akobi' […] yesterday I searched for my jewelry and clothes and other things but I didn't find them. Did you put them here? […].

> No […].
> You said you were bringing them for safe-keeping but I didn't find them here, […]. Because they are not here, […].
> Where are they? […].
> I've sold them! […].
> You what!!! […].
> I sold them. […].
> Can you tell me why you sold them? […]. What did you do with the money? Did you buy a bus? Some land? Or maybe a house?
> […].
> No, […], I deposited the money for my passport and a ticket. I am travelling to Europe!

Akobi elaborates on the dream expectations behind his planned migration to Europe:

> I am going to Europe to live there for a year or two at most, […], and to work. Mara, do you know that there is so plenty factory and construction work waiting to be done there in Europe but with so little people to do them? That is why I sold your things, Mara. I want to go there and work, to work hard. And I tell you, I tell you upon the gods of Naka that, Mara, in a year, in just one year, you will see for yourself. I will make so much money that I can buy us everything! Everything, Mara! Television, radio, fridge, carpet, even car!
> Car! […]
> And that won't be all, Mara, […], that would be just the first year. If I don't miss you and Kofo too much by then […] and I am able to stay on for another year or more, then before I return we can have our own home. A beautiful block house just like those government ministers and doctors with their English wives have. All that Mara, all that! Can you imagine?
> […].
> Akobi, you are sure all this is indeed possible? […].
> Possible? Ah, Mara, would I lie to you? More than possible. Far, far more than possible, I tell you. Ho, do you know for instance that in Britain the people are so rich that they throw fridges away? And in Germany they throw cars away? […].
> They throw these things away because they simply have too much. […]. (32-35)

A critical look at the above long dialogue between Akobi and Mara (husband and wife), reveals that the author, Darko, engages them in this scene to demonstrate Akobi's

negotiation for economic survival. One would wonder why does Akobi want to abandon his wife, and a year old baby for Europe. Afterall, he has a salaried job, being a ministry worker.

Be that as it may, the novel shows that the fictional society Darko creates in *Beyond the Horizon* is spatially set in post-colonial Ghana when the gains of independence have become poverty as it were. Akobi as a post-colonial young, and married man feels that he cannot continue to suffer want, poverty, despair, and live in squalor where fowl-smelling gutter gapes open before him everyday. Hence he decides to negotiate economic survival in a greener pasture as he plans to migrate to Europe. In the excerpt above, Akobi brainwashes Mara, as he appeals to Mara's emotion, as a persuasion and survival strategy to convince her on why she needs to cooperate with his plan to migrate from Africa to Europe to work and make so much money for them to live like "big men, the top government officials" as in the quote above, in post-independence Ghanaian society, as these have all the conveniences and comforts of life. But Akobi does not have these, as he is merely a clerk in his ministry work, and his wife a petty trader, hawker and thrower – away of people's rubbish for economic survival (10), the novel shows. This sad socio-economic state of Akobi pushes him to look elsewhere for better socio-economic living standard where he can realise his dream of a good life. It is also to be noted that aside from the poverty and squalor surrounding Akobi which makes him plan to travel to Europe, Europe has a better and more economically fulfilling environment. In addition, Darko also reveals that there is work available in construction companies where emigrants like Akobi plans to be gainfully employed and make much money in a short time and become wealthy when such money is ploughed back home in poverty-stricken African nation, Ghana. Our interest is the strategies adopted by the subalterns and migrants in Europe in an effort to survive. In fact, writing on theories and typologies of migration, Russel (2012) writes: "The raving instinct, it is said, is intrinsic to human nature: the need to search for food, pasture and resources. The desire to travel and explore; but also to conquer and possess" (4). Russel in the preceding quote clarifies Akobi's plan to migrate out of poverty-stricken Ghanaian society to Europe where he hopes to find better means of economic survival. His migration is not for picnic but in search of food, financial resources and of course to explore the western world, and

improve his life, and that of his immediate family. Thus, Akobi is motivated to Europe by the technology and economic wealth of Europe as against the poverty in modern Ghana-cum-Africa which pushes him away from the homeland where he feels a sense of not-belonginess.

Darko in her narrative focuses on Akobi in Germany (Europe) as Mara tells us that Akobi writes her a letter from Germany requesting her to join him to "keep home for him" (51). Mara happily prepares and joins her husband in Germany, leaving the poverty-stricken rural and urban city of Ghana for the economically and technologically advanced wealthy Europe. At this juncture, the author, using Osey, another character in the novel, and Akobi's fellow migrant in Germany, illustrates the need for economic survival in the western environment. Darko further brightens Mara's experience when the latter tells us that:

> The very next week I found myself working as a housemaid for a German family. I worked three times a week and sometimes at weekends if the madam demanded it. Akobi took the money I earned as payment for the roof he and Gitte had provided over my head, for my food and transport, for the investment in my trip from home, and for the cost of setting me up for my coming big job. […] It was very hard work as there were six people in the family, among them two very untidy teenagers. During the days that I didn't go out to work for the German family, I did the cleaning and ironing and cooking in the apartment [Akobi's apartment]! (106)

While Mara awaits her big "job" being planned by Akobi, she is engaged as a paid housemaid (a menial job) for a German family of six, and Akobi's family where she plays the role of a sister, hence a housemaid in her husband's house. This menial job (housemaid) engagement is a survival strategy Akobi encourages his wife into, while waiting for the "big" job. Akobi's treatment of his wife, now sister, under his roof in Germany is pathetic. Darko creates Akobi as an exploiter who exploits Mara economically in his efforts to survive as a migrant.

It is pertinent to conclude thus far that African migrants do not find survival in foreign lands easy, just as it was not easy in Africa, which pushed them to migrate. As African migrants, they engage in menial jobs to survive. Indeed, Adesina and Adebayo

quoted earlier remind us again that "the margin of survival of the African in his/her country or in a land of sojourn is extremely narrow and precarious" (10). The narrowness of survival at home country is what pushes Africans like Vivian, Osey, Akobi and Mara in Darko's fictional world in *Beyond the Horizon*, Darling and her fellow migrants, and Fostalina in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, and Obi in Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* to adopt menial jobs as economic survival strategy in Europe.

NoViolet Bulawayo in her novel, *We Need New Names,* draws the reader's attention to the movement of individuals away from the homeland to foreign lands as a result of socio-economic and political upheavals in the post-independence state of Zimbabwe. She writes:

> Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with notihng are crossing, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing into countries near and far, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce. They are leaving in droves. (145)

Bulawayo in the above quote gives us a glimps of the migration of Zimbabweans to foreign countries. The narrative reveals a neocolonial setting where the leaders misrule the led. Failed governance, and unbabated socio-economic crisis, force the citiens to escape to foreign lands of their choice.

In the foreign land where they migrate to, economic survival becomes a challenge. As migrants, who crossed borders illegally, without legal documents, they need to eke out a living, no matter the odds. Critical reading of the novel reveals migrants who engage in menial jobs as a strategy to survive at the economic level. Without legal documents as immigrants, they cannot hunt for a good paying job, but make do with jobs ordinarily they would not engage in. But because they must survive, they have no choice but to work menially, and sometimes work harder than necessary in order to survive as an illegal migrant. The narrator tells us:

> And the jobs we worked, Jesus – Jesus – Jesus, the jobs we worked. Lowpaying jobs. Backbreaking jobs. Jobs that are grounded at the bones of our dignity…. We cleaned toilets. We picked tobacco and fruit under boiling gum…. We butchered animals, slit throats, drained blood. (244)

Bulawayo in the above excerpt reveals the pitiable status, and reduced dignity of the black migrant in America as he engages in menial jobs to a breaking point in order to survive at the economic level. The expression “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus” is an emotional outburst of the psychological pain and dissatisfaction with the tedium involved in the menial job they do as a survival strategy. Indeed, the narrator tells us further: “When I’m not cleaning the toilets or bagging groceries I’m bent over a big cart like this, sorting out bottles and cans with names like Faygo, Pepsi, Dr. Pepper, 7-Up, root beeer, Miller,…” (251). That Darling, the narrator, cleans toilet to survive is not in doubt, as she tells us above. In fact, to further show how debasing, negotiating economic survival in America is, she tells us that her Aunt Fostalina also does the demeaning job like she does. Darling narrates:

> Aunt Fostalina says when she first came to America she went to school during the day and worked nights at Eliot’s hotels, cleaning hotel rooms together with people from countries like Senegal, Cameroon, Tibet, the Philippines, Ethiopia, and so on. It was like the damn United Nations there…. In my head, this is not what I came to America for. (263)

In the above quote, it must be noted that the migrants work so hard as they adopt menial jobs as an economic survival strategy because they have no papers to enable them secure dignifying and well-paying jobs in the foreign land. Because of lack of papers, they do not even dare travel home in Africa as they will not be able to re-enter America. Thus, they are self-imprisoned in the foreign land, the author reveals (246-247), in order to survive. They also have immediate and extended families left behind in Africa to cater for, hence, they “… worked, worked like donkeys, worked like slaves, worked like madmen” (245). No wonder some adopt the strategy of keeping two jobs to meet the economic demands of those in the homeland. The novelist buttresses this reason for working like slaves, keeping two jobs sometimes, when she focuses on Aunt Fostalina again:

> Aunt Fostalina… is so busy with her two jobs, one at the hospital and one at the nursing home. The reason she is working hard like this is so she can finish paying for the house she just bought for Mother and Mother of Bones in Budapest. (188-189)

This preoccupation with menial jobs as an economic survival strategy of migrants in Bulawayo's *We Need News Names* is also the imaginative vision of Ike Oguine in *A Squatter's Tale*. In the novel, Oguine invents his protagonist, first person narrator-participant Obi, as one who migrates from Nigeria to America, like Darling and Aunt Fostalina of Bulawayo's world in *We Need New Names* migrate from Zimbabwe to America.

Obi finds that the envisaged greener pasture in America appears scorched as he is unable to secure a good job despite his degree in economics (52). No doubt, the degree should have earned hm a corporate job. But as an African migrant from Nigeria, and without genuine and legal travelling documents, there is the dire need to adopt a strategy to survive. Thus, when he says: "… even if I was going to do a menial job, …" (52), it suggests that he has already decided to adopt menial job as a survival strategy since his degree in economics cannot get him a corporate job. Hence he concludes: "… a university degree was a liability here [in U.S.A.]" (52).

It is disheartening to observe that migrants work themselves out to negotiate economic survival as they adopt menial jobs as a survival strategy. Obi laments his abnormal life, as he has only a menial job:

> Night work stood my world in its head. I made my way to the warehouse, … long after downtown Oakland had been emptied for workers; and I went back home on cold early mornings as people who led normal lives were getting ready to leave for work. (64)

He clinches the image of his predicament with

> … the depression and tedium of those warehouses, and of our guards' office in which too much despair had congealed over time, and the blue and black uniform I wore like a badge of shame, and the freaks and drifters with whom I shared that bleak life, began to graft on me a tough coating of hoplessness (65).

This economic condition of Obi is a sad commentary on the experiences of migrants' lives in foreign lands. Migration, at the on set is with the aim of a better and comfortable living. The kind of survival strategy Oguine, and Bulawayo create for the reader in their fictional transnational domains is one a critical reader feels pained at heart as one tends to

sympathise with the migrants who jet out with an American dream, only to be engaged as menial job workers, working late, and shifts at night. Some sometimes keep two or more jobs like Aunt Fostalina in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*. No wonder Obi asks himself, after appraising the situation: "… over and over, I asked myself: what are you doing here, for God's sake?" (140). He continues: "My bleak life got several times bleaker in that moment, … on the one side, my graveyard shift job at the warehouses…" (147). What a disappointment and frustration in America, a supposed land overflowing with milk and honey for Obi to sip and feel relaxed and comfortable! This is Obi who, while in Nigeria as a comfortable and successful banker asks: "… why anyone would go to such lengths just to do menial jobs in Europe and America[?] (115)

Indeed, before Obi migrates from Nigeria, he had heard stories of how Nigerians with Ph.Ds wash corpses to earn a living. Oguine writes: "… stories abounded, of Nigerian Ph.Ds washing corpses of the AIDS dead for a living…" (117). The author, Oguine, thus far, creates for us a migrant experience which shows that African migrants in America are disappointed that their migration ends in frustration as they do menial jobs to survive. He further directs our attention to Obi's frustration when Obi gets recruited as security guard as a survival strategy. Obi narrates:

> I had to stop rolling about in the vomit of self-pity, had to give up all the sense of injury I had hoarded like contraband gemstones. I had to get a green card somehow and find a better job than being a security guard. (196)

Obi, from the narrative, is not the only character who engages in security guard work as a strategy for economic survival. Maina, a Kenyan, is another character in the novel who adopts security guard job as a strategy for economic survival. Obi narrates thus: "The security guard job was just to make ends meet while his companies stabilised; …" (53). The novelist is indeed representing migrants' lives and the strategies they adopt to survive at the economic level. Oguine thus mirrors the harrowing and frustrating lives of migrants abroad, as they engage different survival strategies. They are forced to adopt these strategies because there is no hope of returning to the hopeless and socio-economically ruined homeland in Africa. No wonder Foster earlier quoted concludes that "[…] [migrant] writers show there is no salutary return to Africa" (94).

Comment [RO4]: New paragraph

The preoccupation with menial jobs as a survival strategy, as illustrated so far, is buttressed when Okey Ndibe in his *Foreign Gods Inc* (2014) shows his protagonist "Ikechukwu Uzondu, Ike for short" (1) as one who also adopts menial jobs as economic survival strategy. Ndibe writes: "Ike, who combined his studies with a menial job – cleaning several movie theatres, restaurants and offices at night…" (26) is a character who dramatises the unforeseeable plight of the migrant abroad. That these migrant writers expose the experiences of immigrants abroad is a bold step to alert would-be migrants of the challenegs awaiting them in foreign lands. By so doing, the novelists have artistically mirrored the attempts by migrants to eke out a living in foreign lands. This migrant experience, strategies for survival at economic level is a worrisome situation in the land of refuge.

Comment [RO5]: New paragraph

Marriage as a survival strategy

While some engage in menial jobs as economic survival strategy, there are some others who engage in marriage and fraud as strategies for economic survival as well. Amma Darko gives a world of migrants in *Beyond the Horizon* where one of the experiences is marriage as a strategy for economic survival. In Osey's house where Akobi comes to receive his wife from Ghana, Africa, Osey tries to enlighten Mara on the status of an emigrant and the need for her to fit in, and survive. Osey tells Mara:

> Mara, first we must tell you that life here in Germany for us black people, from Africa especially, is very very hard […]. Look, Mara, Akobi has permission to live here. And me too. My wife came about nine months ago [just as Mara has come] and is working to get plenty money to marry a German man so that she too will have no problem living here. You understand? We don't do it because we want to. We do it because we have to. It is the only way out for us to live here. […].
> We must find the money somehow, fair or fowl. (76-77)

Negotiating economic survival is, the author suggests in the excerpt above, the motive for every African immigrant who migrates from his or her nation-state to Europe or any other part of the world. Osey in the quote above, tells Mara the need for her to get ready to begin to negotiate economic survival. But of interst here is the author's attention on marriage which African migrants engage in as a strategy to survive.

The novel reveals above that Osey's wife already in Germany with him, is working hard to raise much money in order to be able to get into contract marriage with a German, since living in Germany as a black migrant is not economically rewarding. Of note is the fact that Darko uses Osey to reveal that all is not well with African migrants in Europe as Osey confides in Mara to say that they, the migrants, must find the wealth that pulled them up from Africa "somehow, fair or fowl". This shows that somehow, Africans live and survive illegally, and unpleasantly in sub-human living conditions. No wonder Osey tries to educate Mara on the fact that her husband, Akobi has married a German woman in order to survive economically. Akobi himself reveals thus: "Mara, I have married a German woman. That was what Osey was trying to tell you all this while" (78). Osey explains to Mara further:

> Akobi has married a German woman here so that he can live here long enough in peace to be able to make plenty money and repay all the money he took from home to come here. He has also brought you here, don't forget. And that too costs money. So he can't tell his wife that you too are his wife. You get it now? So you will go and live with them, but as his sister and not as his wife. (79)

In the above "closed door" meeting as it were, between Osey, Akobi and Mara, Darko suggests negotiation for economic survival as Osey tries to convince Mara on why she needs to bear with the husband, already marrying a German, and live with him as a sister and not as a wife. It will be recalled that in Akobi's letter to Mara while the latter was in Ghana, Akobi says that she (Mara) was joining him in Germany to keep his home. But here is Mara in Germany being educated on how to play the role of a sister to her legally married husband, and not to live with him as a wife. This is an artistic illustration of marriage as an economic survival strategy. Looking critically at this arrangement, one notes the dire need for economic survival in Germany as the ulterior motive. Osey, a character in the novel survives economically by working menially and allowing his wife who joined him to engage in contract marriage to a homosexual, to enable her work and survive, as well. One can infer from the foregoing that the frustration and disappointment which pushed these characters away from their homeland is also pervasive in the foreign land where they migrate to. Thus, they do not belong here either, hence they engage in contract marriages as a strategy to enable them belong as it were, in order to survive at

the economic level. Darko by so creating her characters in the novel tries to show that life in Europe for African migrants is one of constant struggle for economic survival.

The African dream of paradise on earth in Europe for every intending African migrant is a mirage, as a wife could join the husband in Europe only to swop marital roles. Osey who was already married before migrating to Germany remarries for economic reason. Akobi also in Germany remarries for economic reason. Osey's wife on arrival in Germany engages in contract marriage for economic reason. Akobi's wife on her part, is not to enjoy her marital relationship and privileges with her husband while with him in Germany, but to play the role of a sister to him under the same roof because of his German wife, for economic reason. Thus one can infer that Darko's fictional engagement is that the life of the African migrant in Europe is one of negotiation for economic survival. For the characters who migrate from Darko's fictional Ghana to fictional Germany to swop marital positions and status for economic reasons in order to survive at the economic level, is a sad commentary on the life of African emigrants abroad. Thus one concludes that the migrants do this as a strategy to survive, and belong to the society they do not belong legally.

Comment [RO6]: New paragraph

Of critical importance thus far in Darko's novelistic creation is her skillful use of dramatic dialogue in the dramatisation of her migrant characters, as if on a theatrical stage. As a work of art, *Beyond the Horizon* is a fictional creation the author forces the reader to participate in the world of the migrants. Her use of dialogue in the narrative is so artistic. It is punctuated in such a way that one wonders if the author was writing a play rather than a novel. This no doubt presents the author as one with a novelistic prowess that endears her art. Hudson (2006) reminds us that

> Dialogue, well managed, is one of the most delightful elements of a novel; it is part of it in which we seem to get most intimately into touch with people, and in which the written narrative most nearly approaches the vividness and actuality of the acted drama […]. Good dialogue greatly brightens a narrative, and its judicious and timely use is to be regarded as evidence of a writer's technical skill. (154)

Darko's employment of dialogue in her narrative is so copious and vivid that the characters appear realistic in the critical eyes of the reader. One appears in touch, psychologically and emotionally with the characters on stage in Darko's novelistic

theatre. This element no doubt helps the reader to understand the pains, struggles and sacrifices involved in the strategies adopted to negotiate economic survival as a migrant abroad.

Ike Oguine in *A Squatter's Tale* reveals the selfish motive in marriages which African migrants engage in when they get to their foreign land of destination. Socially and morally speaking, marriage is expected to be a union between two mature opposite sex adults for a lifetime union. But for the African migrants, they exploit this social contract as a strategy to survive at the economic level in foreign lands. Oguine reveals this when he tells us that: "One twenty-year-old boy entered Belgium illegally, married a fifty-year-old woman in order to become a Belgian (and European Union) citizen…" (216). For Oguine to write thus above is a representation of migrants' economic survival strategy abroad. Looking at the quote, one notes a wide gap in the age difference between the Nigerian (African) boy and the Belgian (European) woman. The boy, a critical reading reveals, is not interested in the marriage as a love and permanent relationship. One can conclude that the young boy enters the marriage with a survival motive, as the marriage would qualify him for a green card, and Belgian European citizenship, and thus enjoy all rights and privileges of a citizen in all aspects of economic, social and political life. This is no doubt a survival strategy, not minding the old age of the woman. Tendency is there that the African migrant would divorce the old woman, and marry a younger one for love and permanent relationship. What he does now is an interim and selfish relationship as an economic survival strategy.

This kind of small-boy-to-old-woman marriage as a strategy is akin to what Okey Ndibe reveals in his *Foreign Gods Inc.,* a migrant novel earlier referred to, when he writes about his chief character, Ike, thus: "Two distinct different dreams had driven them [Ike and Queen-Bee] into marriage. Ike was desparate to obtain a green card. It seemed that Bernita wanted to acquire her own in-house sex service" (24). There is no doubt from Ndibe's observation above that African migrants go into marriages on arrival in foreign lands as a strategy to survive, as they struggle to eke out a living. Ike marries Queen Bee as a strategy for economic survival as this social contract would earn him a green card that would enable him survive at the economic level in America with ease. He is thus selfishly motivated, but with the genuine and dire need to adopt it as a strategy for

Comment [RO7]: New paragraph

survival. Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, being our critical focus, is forced to imaginatively invent this secenario as the American society in which it is set, is one where the society does not fully accept the migrants. This sense of not-belongingness forces the migrants to engage in contact marriages sometimes, or hurriedly marry an American to quickly qualify for a social security card, the green card, to enable them survive more comfortably. Thus, migrants adopt strategies to survive as they are non-citizens, and without the possibilities of exploring opportunities legitimately, and successfully.

Interpretive reading of Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* shows that the novel takes off from an impoverished, socially and economically devastated Nigerian-cum-African society during the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) economic policy period of President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in the late 1980s, and settles in the economically wealthy and stable economic society of America of the period. Being a novelist with a critical and sensitively imaginative eye, Oguine projects this issue of marriage as an economic survival strategy, since migrants have no desire, and do not want to be repatriated back to their homelands, an economically impoverished particular society, but desires, and would want to remain, integrate and survive in the particular economically wealthy American society.

Fraud as a survival strategy

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines fraud as

> …the crime of cheating [somebody] in order to get money or goods illegally…. A person who pretends to have qualities, abilities, etc that they do not really have in order to cheat other people […] something that is not as good, useful, etc, as people claim it is[…]. (595)

according to *Oxford Advanecd Learner's Dictionary*, quoted earlier, is a projected vision of NoViolet Bulawayo in *We Need New Names,* and Ike Oguine in *A Squatter's Tale* as the authors point it out as a way of survival of African migrants abroad. In the narratives, the authors show that migrants survive by being fraudulent as they cheat, deceive unsuspecting victims to their economic advantage. This is a strategy to survive in the American society at the economic level since the characters do not have papers for an honest and gainful employment for survival. They thus resort to fraud such as advanced fee fraud (419), gambling, and forgery for survival.

In Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, the author reveals that Kristal, her character, engages in fraud to survive as she writes:

> And talking about being smart, I must say y'alls are mad, smart, coz otherwise you wouldn't be able to pull that 419 shit, Kristal says to Marina[…] What 419 shit?[....] she means to scam e-mails, don't act like you don't know[…] like, Dear Miss Darling, We need your help to wash this black money and you'll get a million bucks. Or, I'm the manager of this bank and this rich client has died in a plane crash and has no next of kin so can we give the twenty million to you? You know those kind of crazy e-mails, I have dozens of them in my junk-mail folder right now, all of them from Nigerians,[…] (222-223)

An examination of the above excerpt reveals the novelist's concern with migrants' economic survival strategy. The author focuses on advanced fee fraud (419) as a fraudulent engagement which migrants indulge in. The quote reveals that 419 is a scam, as the victim is sent e-mails, making juicy and mouth-watering offers in dollars under the guise of either a genuine business deal or sympathy payment of death benefits to a bereaved family, using the unsuspecting victim's account details to pull the money (bucks) through. This kind of deal is a scam as the author reveals, when he calls it "… crazy e-mails" in the passage. Indeed, this is forgery as well, as the writer of the e-mail forges names, addresses, places, imagines incidents that do not happen, all with the intent to defraud a victim. But it is a scam, and an economic survival strategy which migrants engage in foreign lands, Bulawayo seems to suggest.

In addition, this fraudulent practice which is a survival strategy adopted by African migrants in America, is also the interest of Oguine in his *A Squatter's Tale*. Obi the narrator tells us that his girl friend Robo, in Nigeria, tells him that the Hook, a Nigerian migrant in America has returned to Nigeria, having defrauded some victims. Obi narrates:

> Two months later, Robo told me on the phone that the Hook had suddenly turned up in Lagos the week before. The story going round, Robo said, was that the Hook had fled the US just ahead of an FBI investigation. During a raid on his apartment which was said to be the Northern California base of a large gang involved in every conceivable kind of fraud, they'd found seven passports

> [international] one British, one Jamaican, the others from African countries, a bag full of green and social security cards [fake], and a floppy disk which had the names and addresses of more than two hundred people – Americans, Nigerians, others – out of which about forty had already been conned in the last three years. (154)

The Hook, interpretive reading of the above quote reveals, is a fraudster, a 419, who specialises in the act of defrauding his victims as he deceives them into believing that he can help them secure green cards, social security cards, and even international passports to enable them to properly document themselves. They fall victims because they want to survive at the economic level. But the Hook defrauds them to survive by forging documents to aid their legal status to make survival easier for them. That the Hook is a crook is not in doubt. In fact Oguine locates him in the hot spot of conemen and fraudsters in America, Northern California, as the quote above reveals. This setting, where he resides, before his escape to Nigeria to avoid being nabbed by the American FBI is an indication that he is a 419. His escape, and flight to Nigeria to avoid FBI arrest shows that he is conscious of his crime, and he merely engages in it as an economic survival strategy. Thus the novelist gives us the African mirgants' experience of survival strategy in the American society.

Obi also reveals that his uncle is one of the migrants in America who indulge in forgery to survive. On arrival in America, he, Obi needs to begin to struggle to survive. Being in America for long, Uncle Happiness, his relation, feels the need to help his own to begin to survive by helping him forge a social security card, to enable him get a job. Forging this document suggests that Uncle Happiness has been doing so as a survival strategy in America. Obi narrates:

> Uncle Happiness took the card out of his pocket and handed it to me. I looked at it with excitement and fear. Armed with this piece of paper, I would be able to begin to work, to begin pursue my own modest American dream […]. I wonder for how long I'd be able to carry around a forged document without being detected in this land of megacomputers. (27)

From the above, it can be inferred that Uncle Happiness survives through forgery. That he goes to forge documents for Obi to earn a living illustrates the fact that African

migrants in America adopt forgery, a fraudulent act, as an economic survival strategy. Oguine's imaginative vision is so sharp that he unearths the secret lives of African migrants with regard to their survival strategies. The novel reveals further that Uncle Happiness, is also a coneman, a fraudster, and a cheat, who survives in America through cheating, deceit, and fraudulent acts against his victims. Obi, the narrator reveals thus:

> His [Uncle Happiness] appologies still running, he went round the room hugging everyone there, struggling to keep his CDs from falling on the floor. I hadn't seen or spoken to him since the day I found out that he had conned me out of two hundred dollars for the forged social security card. (131)

Obi reveals his uncle, Uncle Happiness, as a character who adopts tricks to get monetary advantage from his victim. The novelist reveals in the passage that Uncle Happiness tricks Obi to the tune of two hundred dollars to help the latter get a social security card as an immigrant, to enable him survive economically. However, the author uses this scene to illustrate conning, fraud and forgery as African migrants' economic survival strategy in America. Indeed, the novelist pricks the conscience of Uncle Happiness as the latter is seen apologise to Obi thus: "My son[…] instead of helping you I tried to steal your money. This country turns you into a liar and a thief[…]" (199). The above confession confirms the observations being made in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* that African migrants experience in the foreign land, with regard to their existence, is that their illegal immigrant status, and the society force them into all kids of shady practices as they adopt economic survival strategies such as 419, forgery, and even gambling, as in the case of Ike in Ndibe's *Foreign Gods Inc* (43) earlier referred to in this chapter.

Bulawayo and Oguine have imaginatively represented the African migrants' experience in foreign lands as regards their economic existence and survival strategies. Thus the novels illustrate the migrant writer as one with a social vision and consciousness of the homeland, as they set the milieu in Africa, and the socio-economic environment of America. They have no doubt given us a fictional reality of the migrant's experience with regard to economic existence in foreign lands. Azeez (2015), writing on migrant literature reminds us that:

> A migrant writer, like a nomad, has duality of experience and culture of the abandoned home and the new host community. This two-ness of being (double consciousness) is often reflected in the migrant literatures. (89)

The precariousness of survival in an attempt to realise the dreamed greener pastures in Europe is further shown when the author of *Natives*, Inongo, takes us to the hospital scene where Bambara Keita surrenders his fake passport and usurped identity, to his friend and fellow African emigrant to go to the hospital for medical attention. But sadly, the usurper of the usurped identity dies, negotiating survival in the hospital. Bambara Keita confesses to Montse, on her arrival at the hospital thus: “I gave him my passport to go to hospital. But he die” (125). The novelist uses this hospital episode to reveal how African migrants fearlessly adopt forgery to survive. It also shows the helplessness of African youths who migrate to Europe for survival. Focusing on Montse, at the hospital, the narrator tells us:

> Montse tried not to show her emotion. She saw the other Africans crying in silence [at the death of one of them]. They were all young, about the same age as the one she had hired [Bambara Keita]. Something very deep touched her heart. She had never been close to an immigrant except for Bambara Keita. And until then she had never truly understood the dilemma of immigration, the difficulties, the enormity of all the problems that immigrants had to endure. (125)

In the above, the novelist shows through the emotional response of Montse to the death of African emigrant at the hospital, that the youths who migrate are confronted with myriads of problems as immigrants in their attempt to negotiate survival. These problems range from proper documentation of their status and situation, to enable them survive and enjoy social amenities such as good health care which is lacking in their homeland, in the first place, and which was what pushed them out of Africa, where there is infra-structural decay. Usurping a usurped fake passport is fraudulent and a survival strategy. Thus the novelist, using fiction, tries to sympathise with African migrants who live in Europe, negotiating survival, like the character who usurps a usurpped identity, dies at the hospital, and Bambara Keita who usurps a Malian identity in order to survive. This migrants’ experience in Europe illustrates that migrants do not find existence and survival

easy or rosy, as they do not find a bearing in the new society, hence they adopt strategies such as forgery, for survival.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention at this juncture that all this while Bambara Keita negotiates survival in a foreign land, he is an illegal migrant. This means that though he appears free to move about, he is not totally free. He has no residence permit, working permit, and thus cannot legally negotiate his existence. This illegal status worries him as he lives in Europe hence he begins to ponder over the need to legalise his status. He appears tired of the strategies for economic survival. Doing underpaying menial jobs, tiring and health risk-full jobs, he feels the need to legalise his stay in Europe and earn a better living, rather than the demeaning menial job of a gigolo that he does to survive. The narrator tells us that:

> After a reflective pulse, Bambara Keita told them [Montse and Roser, his employers] that he was thinking about trying to legali[s]e his situation. He recalled once again what his grandfather had told him: life is a continuous negotiation. He was not in the best situation in regards to his residence status, but he would not accept defeat. If he gave up it would not be a negotiation but a surrender. (130-131)

While trying to negotiate his residency status, Bambara Keita confesses to Montse and Roser that he is not Bambara Keita from Mali, but Gerard Essomba from Ebolowa, Cameroon. He thus confesses further that the international passport he has is not his, but someone else. He bought it to enable him enter into Spain, Europe (137-138). This is fraudulent. The narrator adds: "If it had been difficult to assume the identity of another man, it was even more difficult to usurp that man's nationality" (138). This is done to avoid deportation back to Africa. The author uses the above to show how daring African nationals can be in order to negotiate survival in a foreign land. They fake identities as a strategy for survival, to escape any link with their homelands. The reader observes lose of personal and national identity in this scene Inongo invents in his narrative. This lose of identity as a strategy in order to negotiate economic survival reminds one of Sizwe Bansi, a character in Athol Fugard's play titled: *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1973). In the play, and of course in a dramatic dialogue, between Man and Buntu, characters Fugard creates in an apartheid South African society, negotiating economic survival in a racially and politically discriminating society, demonstrates lose of identity as a strategy in order to survive. Man (Robert Zwelinzima) assumes the identity of dead Sizwe Bansi, as he

presents the dead man's passport in order to get a job, to be able to fend for his family better than he was doing with his black identity (37). There is negotiation for economic existence as it is in the case of Gerard Essomba in *Natives* who assumes the identity of Bambara Keita in order to survive.

Looking critically at this scene draws the reader's attention to human psychology. The author of *Natives*, Inongo, shows that human beings are motivated by their desire to satisfy a need or needs. They can also be motivated by fears that they are unconscious of, as Tyson espouses while writing on the origin of the unconscious as radicallised by Sigmund Freud on psychoanalysis, as quoted earlier in this study. Gerard Essomba is motivated by his innate desire to live a comfortable life in Europe as opposed to the poverty-stricken life he lives in Africa. This is why he usurps a Malian identity as a strategy to cross-border to Spain, Europe, to survive at the economic level. He is also driven by fear of failure in the attempt to migrate, hence he takes the risk of fraudulently adopting another's personality and nationality. This is with the intent to succeed in his negotiation for survival at the economic level. Thus, the action helps to allay the fears of failure as he negotiates economic survival and satisfies other human needs and desires in a foreign land, as a migrant, hence he adopts forgery as a survival strategy.

Comment [RO8]: New paragraph!

It is pertinent at this juncture to comment on Inongo's use of the third person omniscient point of view to narrate his story on migrancy. The author's artistic prowess is demonstrated in the novel, in the use of point of view. Writing on point of view, Boulton (1975) reminds us that "The novelist may choose to examine a small portion of experience closely […]" (30), and he goes on to say that the author "[…] can tell the story as an omniscient narrator, […]" (30). He adds: "This omniscient narrator can comment on anything he likes to comment on; he can analyse motives more objectively than a character can; […]" (39).

Looking at Inongo's *Natives,* one is taken into the world of the characters as if one is at the centre of action, witnessing and photographing as it were, the events. This is due to the author's novelistic narrative ingenuity to present his work as a fictional creation and not a sociological or historical writing. This point of view adopted, the third person omniscient, gives the dramatised world a verisimilitude, as if one lives in the real

world. Perrine (1983) clarifies the use of omniscient point of view further when he writes thus:

> In the OMNISCIENT POINT OF VIEW, the story is told by the author, using the third person, and his knowledge and prerogatives are unlimited. He is free to go wherever he wishes, to peer inside the minds and hearts of his characters at will and tell us what they are thinking or feeling. He can interpret their behaviour, and comment, if he wishes, on the significance of the story he is telling. He knows all. He can tell us as much as or as little as he pleases. (162)

Comment [RO9]: Whose emphasis is this?

Comment [u10]: Author's (Perrine (1983)

He concludes: Used skillfully it enables the author to achieve simultaneous breath and depth. Unskillfully used, it can destroy the illusion of reality that the story attempts to create" (163). Reading *Natives*, the author appears to have demonstrated his skillful use of the third person omniscient narrative mode, as he goes into the minds of characters such as Gerard Essomba/Bambara Keita negotiating economic existence as he adopts strategies to survive in his relationship with two Spanish ladies, Montse and Roser. In the relationship between the two parties, we often note the author's manipulation of point of view to create verisimilitude, the illusion of reality, in the cosmos he weaves, as he peers into the minds of these characters to reveal their thoughts, psychological states and emotions, and even sometimes commenting on them to clarify their actions and reactions. But of critical plus too, is the author's ability to manage the scene where he moves Gerard Essomba to show his identity card (ID) which bears his real name, and which he uses to send money to his family back home in Cameroon, Africa (140).

3.3 Prostitution as a survival strategy

In order to illustrate further that not only do African migrants abroad engage in marriages, and fraud, but also adopt sexual relationships such as prostitution and gigolism as strategies to survive, there is the need to investigate Darko's contrivance in *Beyond the Horizon,* which takes the reader to a dialogue between Akobi and Mara, on the need for the latter to engage in prostitution as an economic survival strategy. The novelist writes, as Akobi tells Mara thus:

> There is a certain job that almost all the African women here do. But you are still a little too green for it, so we need a little more time to prepare you for it.
> What job is that? […].
> When the time comes for you to do it, I will tell you […]. Meanwhile, we'll fix you up with something else while we prepare you. (106)

For Mara, Akobi plans a "good" job. But before she matures for the job, Akobi plans to fix her up doing something to survive. It is observed in the dialogue above that Akobi keeps Mara in the dark with regard to the job coming her way later, as she matures.

It is intriguing to know that inasmuch as many critics have examined Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* as a novel cast on sex trafficking, or commercial sex in Europe, our attention is being drawn to the fact that Darko uses it to show a portrait of a migrant who engages in it as a strategy for economic survival as well. Looking at the novel, one notes that Mara who migrates from fictional Ghana, Africa, to join her husband, Akobi, in fictional Germany, Europe, needs to survive. It has been noted that she makes attempts to do menial jobs, work as a housemaid, but was disengaged because of her skin colour. Every day it dawns on her that she cannot continue to idle away her time in Akobi's house as a sister, instead of a wife, as earlier shown. She needs to adopt a more stable strategy for economic survival. In a dialogue, the author, Darko, brings Osey, Akobi's friend to visit. During the visit, Darko skillfully engages Osey and Mara in a dialogue to initiate negotiation for economic survival through a 'work' Mara claims ignorance of. Darko flashes the dramatic dialogue thus:

> You have been here long enough, Mara. Have you heard of something called "Unterhalting" before? […].
> I hadn't, […].
> It is work, […].
> So?
> Yes. Do you want to work?
> […].
> Of course I want to work, if I can find work or if the woman I worked for before will take me back.
> […].
> She won't take you back, […]. And anyway, it's not plenty money. This work that I am talking about, it is different and brings in plenty money too. Much much more plenty marks. And you will see that in a short time you will be

> able to make money for yourself, for your husband here who brought you over, and even be able to afford to send things home to your mother and sisters.
> I will? […]. Then why did you let me waste all this time? […]. You are pretty. Do you know that you are pretty? […]. You are ripe but you are still pretty. You get me?
> No.
> Oh don't worry, […[, you will understand when the time comes. (113-114)

The long dialogue above shows Mara, being told of the need to negotiate economic survival by getting a job that will earn her much money. It is observed from the dialogue that Osey tries, subtly, to initiate Mara into a new employment bargain to earn big money. For him Osey, prostitution is the only available job for female African migrants, the author appears to suggest. This is suggested in the statement in the quote above "You are pretty. Do you know that you are pretty? You are ripe". Naively, Mara thinks she was to get recalled as a housemaid by her former employer, or she was getting something better but not necessarily to go into prostitution. Hence she claims ignorance of the kind of job Osey suggests that has to do with her being pretty. Osey continues in his initiation and subtle persuasion:

> But Mara, Mara, oh Mara, even if you don't want to, you will still have to. For an illegal nigger woman like you, there is no other job in Germany, Mara. If you don't get a housemaid job then there's only this. You understand? Because you are too illegal and too black for any proper job, you get it? (114)

From the above, the author reveals that African migrants find survival very difficult. They are racially regarded as niggers. And as niggers, the females cannot do any meaningful and well-paying job as the only available job is the menial job of baby-sitting or housemaid, for economic survival, the author suggests. Hence Osey in the novel tactfully suggests and lectures Mara on the need, as a nigger, to get into prostitution as a survival strategy in order to get much money and survive.

Indeed, Mara tells us: "Taking on seven men a day was crucifying but I was aiming for a certain amount of money, plenty money, and the sooner I raised it the better, […]" (120). She adds:

> If I was sleeping with men and charging them for it, it was me giving myself to them. The body being used and

> misused belonged to me. What had that got to do with Akobi? So why should the money made go to him? […]. Once a prostitute, always a prostitute. The stamp would never leave me. (118-119)

The author in the quote above shows Mara adopt prostitution as an economic survival strategy. The author here uses Mara to create the portrait of African emigrants who migrate abroad with economic interests in mind. No doubt, no other interest pushes Africans to

migrate from Africa and get pulled up to Europe than economic interests – the need to make plenty money, take care of self, and kith and kins left behind in Africa, who live in abject poverty. This conclusion on economic need and survival is evident in Mara's conclusion thus:

> At Ove's brothel, I have plunged into my profession down to the marrow in my bones. There is no turning back for me now. I am so much a whore now that I can no longer remember or imagine what being a non-whore is. […]. I think a lot about my mother and my two sons. Recently I started getting so sad with the thoughts of them that I began pleasing my men less […]. So when I am down, when any of us is feeling down, Oves gives us 'snow' to sniff, to make us high. Now I can't go through a day without sniffing 'snow'. I am hooked on it. I am fast sinking into a place hotter than hell. But I know this. And that is why I have decided that before I sink too deep I will make as much money as possible for my mother and sons back home [in Ghana, Africa]. (139)

There is no doubt from the above that Mara is neck-deep into prostitution as a strategy for economic survival. But of critical interest in this study is not prostitution, but strategy for economic survival. Indeed, that Mara engages in prostitution at this level, the international level, shows the dire need to negotiate economic survival in a setting which appears to be her only hope, and the hope of her family wallowing in abject poverty back in Africa. She appears unhappy with the profession. But she must indulge in it to survive, and make much money to send home to her mother and two children. Her engagement in prostitution as a strategy to negotiate her economic survival abroad and the survival of her loved ones back in Ghana (Africa) reminds us of the thematic preoccupation of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* (2008). In the novel, the author portrays

negotiation for economic existence and survival when she presents her major female characters, Nneoma, Efe and Alice adopt prostitution as strategy for economic survival in Europe. These whores are African migrants from fictional Nigeria. The novel reveals these characters to have migrated from their home countries in search of greener pastures, in Italy (Europe).

The same socio-economic woes that pushed Darko's characters in *Beyond the Horizon* to migrate to Europe also pushed Adimora-Ezeigbo's to cross-border to Europe, to negotiate economic survival as their home country is not a safe haven for survival as narrated in *Trafficked.* In Europe, these characters indulge in commercial sex as a strategy to earn much money for themselves and be able to send some home to their family members in Nigeria, though later deported. As deportees, relieving their experiences, the author explores the situation and reveals through Nneoma thus: "In Italy I discovered I am trafficked. I have no say in the matter. […]. Life is hell in Rome – we are always walking in the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners […]" (129). What a sad strategy for survival! Nneoma whom the author focuses on, along with her friends, have come to Europe to negotiate economic survival through prostitution as Nigeria has failed to provide for them as a nation. Thus Nder (2013) argues that:

> […] it is clear that many Nigerian ladies [like those in *Trafficked* set in Nigeria and Italy and Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* set in Ghana and Germany] involved in the international sex trade did not go into it out of their own volition. They are pushed into the trade by prevalent socio-economic pressures in Nigeria [as well as in Ghana]. (21)

Nder concludes:

> It is the conviction of the writer [the novelist] that loss of societal values, mass unemployment, joblessness, social injustice and the general harsh economic situations in Nigeria [and elsewhere in Africa] aid and abet prostitution and the international sex trade. (22)

There is no doubt that Adimora-Ezeigbo and Darko illustrate this sad situation in their novels. In *Beyond the Horizon,* our critical focus in this study on migrancy, the author illustrates Akobi as one who exploits his wife whom he pushes into commercial sex work as a strategy in order to survive. Mara laments her exploitation:

Comment [RO11]: New paragraph.

> But the money I made laying men at Peepy, I saw none of it. Pompy was a disciplined businessman in his field that is – who never went back on his contracts. His contract with Akobi was that from the money I made, he would deduct his percentage and deposit the rest in Akobi's private account, of which Gitte knew nothing. Here it was that my whoring profits flowed. Every day, apart from Sundays, I took on at least three men. What they paid me went to Akobi. And Osey, too, I guess, had arranged his cut with Akobi. (118)

Darko in the above excerpt reveals Akobi and his friend, Osey, as economic exploiters. The duo arrange for a percentage of Mara's income from prostitution. In a way, they fleece Mara, as one of the ways of their own strategy for economic survival in Europe. This is also Kaye's experience, another character whose boyfriend exploits as well. In her own negotiation for economic survival through prostitution as a strategy, Kaye laments how her boyfriend takes part of her income, like Akobi does Mara's. Kaye tells Mara:

> The boyfriend who put me in the trade, he had told me he was studying Engineering at the University. So I came believing I was coming to join my aspiring engineer husband-to-be. Yet he was waiting for me to whore for him so he could buy plenty music instrument sets and drive a Porsche and afford dinner dates with beautiful white women whose feet he would lick if they commanded him to. My people back home now have everything they want, Mara. They don't know how I make the money to buy them the things but I don't think that it even interests them very much. (117)

Kaye's experience in the quote above is akin to Mara's, both in Germany as African migrants, who negotiate economic survival through prostitution. They both make money through the trade, but their men exploit them to serve their own ends. The novelist uses these female characters to picture female African migrants in Europe who adopt prostitution as economic survival strategy.

Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, preoccupies itself with an environment where characters feel dissatisfied with a local socio-economic environment and decide to escape to a greener pasture in Europe. Set in post-colonial Nigeria, and Europe, *On Black*

Sisters' Street presents a Nigerian locale where characters find it difficult to eke out a living despite their academic qualifications.

The author presents four major characters Chisom, who later adopts Sisi at the verge of migration, Efe, Alek who also later adopts Joyce, and Ama. Unigwe focuses on these characters who migrate from Nigeria, to illustrate their migrant experiences as a strategy to survive in their foreign locale. At the early part of the novel, the author presents Chisom complain thus: "[…] I am tired of being stuck" (30), "I must escape" (30). The author at this juncture informs the reader that her character is dissatisfied with her present socio-economic condition. Chisom is tired of seeking for unavailable job in a society where job prospect for a graduate is a mirage. The novelist reveals in the narrative that Chisom "[…] was never even invited to an interview" (22). In her conversation with her friends, Chisom expresses the general aparthy and joblessness in the land, as the character says: "No requests for interviews came from those quarters either" (23). Hence she tells her boyfriend, Peter, thus: "We are all stuck here, baby […]" (30). With this background, the novelist directs the reader to the socio-economic factor that pushes her characters to migrate and strategise for economic survival in Europe.

Besides, it is revealing to know from the narrative under study, that Unigwe's characters are passing through serious economic hardships in Nigeria, as Efe for instance indulges in premarital sex for money to meet her needs (58). No wonder she accepts Oga Dele's proposal to be packaged like a cargo for Europe to negotiate economic survival, despite the possible risks involved. The author writes: "People know the risks and people took them because the destination was worth it. What was it the song said? *Nigeria Jaga Jaga. Everytin scatter scatter*. No body wanted to stay back unless they had pots of money to survive the country […]" (82). Efe, the author uses here, to make a valid point necessitating migration to Europe, a greener pasture with hope, hence they take risks "because the destination was worth it", to use the author's phrase. Unigwe sees Nigeria as one that is "Jaga Jaga", a pidgin expression that denotes a nation in socio-economic crises where the masses can barely survive.

This sad situation, failed governance, evident at the socio-economic level of the society, creates the ample opportunity for characters like Oga Dele in the novel to begin to exploit the situation and begin to talk young girls into the possibility of leaving the

country for Europe to negotiate survival. The author demonstrates this as Chisom meets Oga Dele in a hair salon with a young girl whom he brings to the salon to make her hair. Oga Dele tells the salon girl: “Oya make am beautiful. She dey go abroad. Today! Beautify am!” (31) With this, Unigwe introduces the desire by the jobless youths to begin to look elsewhere for greener pasture for survival. At this scene, the salon girl engages Chisom in a dialogue, though Oga Dele intervenes:

> So you dey go abroad?
> Yes. […]. Spain
> Wetin you de go abroad go do?
> She dey go work. you wan go too? You wan go abroad too?
> […].
> If you wan commot from this our nonsense country,
> Come see me make we talk […]. (32)

The quote above reveals that Oga Dele is a human trafficker. The author introduces Oga Dele as a human trafficker who cashes in on the economic collapse of post-independence Nigeria to survive through human trafficking, as he prepares young girls for transnational travel. But of critical relevance is the fact that the author sees Nigeria as a “nonsense country” a phrase she uses in the quote above. This is where Unigwe locates her characters before their migration to Europe. This state of affairs forces Chisom to visit Oga Dele in his office as earlier suggested, if she wants to leave “this our nonsense country”, to negotiate survival. Afterall, in a dream, Chisom dreams “[…] of leaving Lagos. This place has no future” (18), she concludes in her dream.

From the foregoing, one can conclude that the social environment Unigwe moulds her characters in, is such that has no hope and future for the youth. The author uses this milieu to suggest the present day state of unemployment in Nigeria-cum-Africa which forms the basis for the migration of her youths to Europe for economic survival. Ogbinaka (2018) confirms this state of unemployment when he argues that “[u]nemployment has assumed an endemic proportion in Africa. Leaders of the various states in Africa have done little or nothing about the problems that are fast becoming a menace in our society” (369).

Furthermore, Unigwe pushes Chisom to Oga Dele to conclude arrangements to travel abroad for greener pastures (44-46). The author suggests this as Chisom changes her name from Chisom to Sisi (44). Efe too is packaged for Europe as she happily says:

"I am going abroad […] I'm going to Europe, Belgium" (83) after concluding with Oga Dele (82) as well. It is intriguing to note that Unigwe creates her female major characters as those who are economically deprived and socially debased due to socio-economic misery arising from unemployment. Ama, another character in the novel is a case in point. She is a character who migrates from the rural area to the urban Lagos to live with his uncle, Cyril. But unfortunately Cyril deflowers her and gives financial reward in return for Ama's economic survival. At this juncture, Ama considers it better that she is in Europe being rewarded with money for sex with an unknown man than being in Nigeria doing it with Cyril. She narrates:

> Brother Cyril had taken what he wanted [sex], no question asked. No please or may I or could I […]. And strange men taking and paying for her services. And it would not even be in Lagos. But overseas. (166)

Here in the above quote, Ama tries to rationalise going overseas to trade sex for money for economic survival with strange men (foreigners) rather than either willingly or forcing it from her in Lagos, Nigeria. This is a strategy and economic interest. This is with the intent to negotiate economic survival better than she is doing in Lagos, Nigeria. While with Oga Dele, the human trafficker for sex business, Ama concurs with Oga Dele to be trafficked to Europe for sex to negotiate economic survival (167). No wonder when successfully migrated to Europe, Ama joyfully exclaims: "I am in Europe. I am earning my own money. I'm even managing to pull some aside. That should make me happy" (177). Ama gleefully embraces Europe as she escapes the harsh economic realities of Nigeria, to the tantalising socio-economic well-being of Europe. Hence she expresses the emotion of joy as she now counts her own money from her own sweat in servicing men with sex for a fee. She thus adopts prostitution as a survival strategy in Europe.

However, it must be noted that Unigwe brings in a Sudanese, Alex into the narrative. She later changes her name to Joyce. The novelist shows that political crisis in Sudan pushes Alek and many others out of Sudan into refugee camps where Alek later gets out through the help of Polycarp, a Nigerian peace keeping soldier who promises love and marriage (187-200). It must be noted too that Alek and Polycarp end up in Oga Dele's office to discuss the former's migration to Europe for economic survival as they could not marry (227).

Besides, the author focuses on Sisi as a character who arrives Europe for work, to survive (116-117). Her madam tells her pointblank: “Here, your work clothes. Tonight, you start” (183). For Sisi’s madam to give her “work clothes” is an indication that Sisi’s job description is a professional one. The author tries to suggest that the “work” is not a normal job, but a different kind of work – prostitution as a strategy for survival. Thus, Sisi engages in commercial sex as a strategy for economic survival in Europe. Further reading of the novel reveals that this “work clothes” are short skirts, sexual body-parts-revealing wears, put on to sexually attract men. This shows that the character is in for prostitution, not for the pleasure in sex, but for the monetary gain, and need to negotiate economic survival in a foreign land. This is a strategy. The author, through authorial commentary reports on Sisi thus:

> Now she wondered if she would start drinking bottle after bottle to forget […]. There were worst things to become, she reminded herself. She was not a robber, not a cheat, not a 419er […]. She would make her money honestly. Every cent of it would be earned by her sweat. (210-211)

Through this authorial intrusion into Sisi’s mind, Unigwe digs up for us Sisi’s feeling and rationalisation of her new profession and strategy to negotiate survival. She argues that she was not a rogue, a cheat or a 419 (a financial crime in Nigeria) but was going to use her body to earn her money. Here, Sisi undoubtedly signs in for prostitution as a strategy to negotiate economic existence in Europe. The novelist illustrates Sisi and her three other female friends as sex slaves. They are commodities for sale and purchase. They are thus objectified in their attempt to survive in Europe. In a flashback, the author brings these four major female characters together in the sex trade. The novelist writes:

> In a house on the Zwartezusterstraat, the women Sisi was thinking of – Ama, Joyce and Efe – were at that very moment preparing for work, rushing in and out of the bathroom, swelling its walls with their expectations: that tonight they would do well, that the men would come in droves; that they would not be too demanding [for sex]. And more than that, they would be generous. (3)

In another flashback, Unigwe invents Chisom, now Sisi in Europe, express the emotion of joy in her mode of economic survival strategy – prostitution – as in the above excerpt. Sisi says: “I’m very lucky to be here living my dream. If I’d stayed back in Lagos, God

knows where I'd have ended up […]. Lagos was not a memory she liked to dredge up" (15) [the author writes]. Through this technique of flashback, Unigwe, like in other scenes in the novel, dramatises her major female characters who take to prostitution as a strategy to negotiate economic survival. They always look forward to a good paying or generous male customer to patronise their sex as economic survival is their target, rather than love or the emotional and sensual pleasure sex could give. Ama concludes: "[…] love is not part of the job description" (206). The characters are more interested in their financial wealth. Ama and Joyce conclude: "We'll make it ooo […]. How can we come to Europe and go back empty-handed? God forbid bad thing!" (177).

The expression in the above excerpt illustrates a determined soul. "We'll make it too" as expressed in the quote depicts an economic interest. Prostitution is shown here to be a survival strategy. The characters are not interested in the pleasure, love or excitement and joy that could result from sexual pleasure, but the money to be realised from the act as an adopted strategy to survive. Ama and Joyce are determined to succeed in their chosen profession to negotiate economic survival in a transnational space. "God forbid bad thing" as expressed in the quote above is to affirm their resolve to make much money from the sex trade which economic conditions, and failed governance back home in Africa pushed them into, in Europe as African emigrants.

Critical study of the novel demonstrates Unigwe's craft in the weaving of survival strategy in a foreign land – Europe. Her characters whom she uses to dramatise migrants' economic survival are those who are always in a reverie as they try to recall past sufferings that pushed them out, and as the challenging job of prostitution, sometimes in the cold snow, forces them to go into memory lane to "dredge up" the past, as earlier cited, to use Unigwe's phrase in the quote. This technique of flashback is with the noble artistic intent to give shape to her narrative on migrancy. For no one migrates without always flashing back to situations that forced or pushed him or her away, a kind of dislocation from the homeland, to a foreign space. Schorer (1969) writing on technique as discovery in fiction writing, reminds us that:

> […] technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of

Comment [RO12]: New paragraph

> discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it. (75)

Unigwe in *On Black Sisters' Street,* greatly demonstrated her creative prowess in the deployment of flashback as technique in the exploration of her identified subject matter; strategy for economic survival in a transnational space. This technique helps the reader to comprehend the emotional and psychological frame of the characters which force them to migrate for greener pastures and the condition of life as a migrant. Commenting on the use of flashback in fiction writing, Abrams and Harpham (2012) see flashback as:

> […] interpolated narratives or scenes (often justified, or *naturalized*, as memory, a reverie, or a confession by one of the characters which represent events that happened before the time at which the work opened. (296)

This definition informs the novelist's use of the technique as her characters are always in a reverie, and sometimes recalling past events or happenings in their lives to justify their present action or actions in the narrative. This almost makes Unigwe's novel read like different stories sewed together as one, that it is. There is no doubt that the migrant girls in Europe as Unigwe presents them are in for prostitution, not for the pleasure or love, but for economic survival as Sisi, Ama, Efe and Joyce are always out in cold nights, shading themselves in glass cabins like chicken barbeque, for sale, to sell sex to willing men for the men's sexual pleasure. What an unpleasant strategy.

As a literary piece, a novel in its own right, Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* illustrates a fictional cosmos that is relevant in this twenty-first century. The author has been able to provide a migrant narrative that responds fictionally to her Nigerian-cum-African environment. Kehinde and Mbipom (2011) remind us that: "In crafting an art which is relevant, the African writer not only probes, but also responds to the yearning of his environment" (63). They conclude:

> Literature as a creative activity projects those deeply ingrained and relatively enduring patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour of the society from which it is drawn. Apparently, literature captures the diverse forms of interaction between various parts of a society and its people. (62)

Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* as a literary creation, to a large extent, demonstrates patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours of a society where characters adopt strategies for economic survival through demeaning engagements in the case of Sisi, Efe, Ama and Joyce, who migrate from Nigeria and Sudan, Africa, to Belgium, Europe, to negotiate survival at the economic level through prostitution.

However, Inongo-vi-Makomé in his *Natives* engages a male African protagonist in Barcelona, Spain, who adopts gigolism as economic survival strategy. The need to cross border to a more economically attractive foreign land from an impoverished African society arises due to a pre-knowledge of the existence of a greener pasture somewhere in the foreign land. He presents his protagonist, Gerard Essomba from Cameroom who impersonates as Bambara Keita from Mali as one who crosses boarder in Africa to Spain in Europe. Set in these two environments spatially, and in contemporary Africa temporarily, *Natives* sets off to give us a world where an African gigolo negotiate economic survival with his extra-large male organ as the instrument for the negotiation.

The opening scene of the novel shows that Inongo presents negotiation for economic survival as his chief character becomes a gigolo in order to survive as a migrant in Spain. He presents this in a dialogue thus:

> Do you want work, Bambara Keita?
> Yes, want work, anytime, any place.
> […].
> Fine. If you want to work, you have to come with me. A friend of mine and I will give you work.
> Come now?
> Yes, now! I mean if you are interested, because I have to go now.
> […].
> Let's go, […]. (19)

In the dialogue above, Inongo introduces his protagonist of the novel, *Natives*, our focus here, as an African personality who is in search of work to earn a living. In an earlier dialogue, between Bambara Keita and Montse, the author shows the former to have hailed from Mali, Africa. Inongo presents the dramatic dialogue thus:

> Hola, […].
> Hola, […].
> Hello, […].

> Where are you from? […].
> Africa […]. Mali
> […]
> Ah, have you been here for a long time?
> […].
> Oh, yes. Not much… not long… a year…
> That's nice, […].
> You from here? […].
> Yes, I'm from here, from Barcelona.
> […].
> Why did you come to Spain?
> […].
> I come look for life. Africa now not good place for make life. No work for young people, lots of poor.
> […].
> Are you working now?
> Me? Oh, I no have work, I look for…. (15-17)

In this scene, the author reveals that Bambara Keita is from Mali, Africa, while Montse is from Barcelona, Spain (Europe). One can observe from the dialogue that Bambara Keita is a transnationalist, who crosses Africa to Europe in search of greener pastures. Indeed, the author reveals from the dialogue that his protagonist, Bambara Keita, does not cross border for the fun of it, but to find a better living standard, better than the poor socio-economic condition of Africa. This problem, economic survival in Africa, which Inongo initiates in the early part of *Natives* shows that as a writer, the novelist uses art to articulate socio-economic issues as the major cause of transnational movements in Africa. Indeed Ojaide reminds us that:

> In the African tradition, literature tends to be utilitarian rather than art for art's sake. In their works, writers often interrogate the socio-political, economic and other problems in their respective societies. (2)

Ojaide's conclusion above helps us understand Inongo's work as a literary creation which interrogates Africa's socio-political and economic problems. If the leaders in Mali, Africa, were to live up to their expectations in their leadership responsibilities, the youths, whom fictional Bambara Keita represents in *Natives,* will not migrate to Europe. Thus this unhappy relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Africa forces the youths to migrate, hence our choice of subalternism as our critical theory.

Continuing in his fictionalisation of strategy for economic survival of the African migrant, Inongo takes us, like a tourist guide, to the house of Montse. The author's narrator tells us that Montse entertains Bambara Keita as they get home. During the entertainment, Bambara Keita observes the opulence of Montse's apartment, and the exotic ambience that exudes, and of course the strange taste of the wine he is offered (30-31). At this juncture, the author, intruding into the character's thought, writes: "This is why he [Bambara Keita] had risked his life to get to Europe. He had come to find life. To enjoy the flavours and pleasures of civilization" (31). This is the motivating factor in the novel which compels Bambara Keita from Africa where poverty, misery, unemployment and lack of flavoured life, and technological backwardness to migrate to Europe. In a dialogue between Montse and Bambara Keita again, the author writes:

> Well, Bambara Keita, you say you want to work and we want to offer it to you […].
> Yes, want work. I came for work.
> Well, then. You're going to work with both of us, but it won't be anything like you might think. It will be simple. Roser and I will pay you a thousand euros a month. Each of us will give you five hundred. You'll be able to find an apartment, or a nice room. (31)

The author in this dialogue above presents Bambara Keita as one who is desperately in search of a job, a destitute who needs to survive in a foreign land. This is obvious as the character says above "Yes, want work. I came for work" in response to Montse's question to be sure he really needs work. Negotiating economic survival is evident in the offer of one thousand euros to Bambara Keita, as payment for the job being tactfully

negotiated. The narrative reveals that Bambara Keita accepts the offer with joy. This is because he needs to adopt a survival strategy in order to exist at the economic level. However, he does not know the kind of job he was being offered that handsome amount of money per month. The novelist, in his usual dramatic style presents his characters in a dialogue again:

> But you have not asked what kind of work you have to do for us.
> I do everything. I want work, all work
> […]
> Well, Bambara Keita, the work we have for you is simple. It has to do with being with each one of us. […]
> Have you heard what I've told you, Bambara Keita?
> Yes, I with you. Okay yes.
> […]
> You be with us, no… You have to *be* with us. I'm saying that you make love with me and with Roser.
> Oh, good, you good, I like.
> […].
> You're going to have two women just for you. Can you handle that?
> Oh, yes, I can with you two. […]. (32-34)

It is obvious from the dialogue that Bambara Keita is to be engaged by two friends for sex. That is the job he is to be paid one thousand euros per month. Bambara Keita has no objection but to accept the deal. One wonders why an African migrant would accept that kind of job. A critical reader must not forget that Bambara Keita is an emigrant who leaves his home country in Africa to negotiate economic survival in Europe. In his mind at the point of departure would be to get a job and survive, to enjoy the good life of Europe, a paradise on earth. It must be noted too that the character is ready and willing to do any kind of work to survive. Afterall, the author reminds us that his protagonist and other African migrants have been jobless, always scavenging for food, and sitting at the Plaza de Cataluna, a public place where the jobless could sit for attraction and economic or social sympathy and empathy (77-78). Thus one is not in doubt why Bambara Keita happily accepts to have sex with two friends for a monthly salary of one thousand euro. Thus, it is observed that Bambara Keita accepts the job of a

gigolo as a survival strategy. This is his own strategy for economic survival in Europe as the reader notes it.

Oriaku (2015) reminds us that:

> What the reader of a work of literature sees in his mind's eye is the society or life as the author imagines it to be. The images and vision which emerge in a text will depend on who the writer is, his relationship with the social reality being focused upon, the impetus behind the writing and/or his literary intention. (72)

The literary intention or the impetus behind Inongo's writing in *Natives* is to depict the life of African migrants in Europe as they adopt economic survival strategies. Hence the author crafts his protagonist the way he does to mirror fully and imaginatively, how African society has pushed her males into being a gigolo in their attempt to survive at the economic level in a foreign land.

It is important to comment on, and commend Inongo's adoption of proper names for his characters in *Natives*. Names such as Bambara Keita, and later Gerard Essomba, Montse and Roser, three chief characters of the novel, is quite artistic and realistic. Inongo assigns them such proper names to identify them not as nationals only, but also as realistic human beings, though fictional creations. Bambara Keita or Gerard Essomba for instance, sounds African. Indeed, the character identifies himself to have migrated from Mali, and later confesses Cameroon, in Africa. Montse on her part, and even her friend Roser, are characters whose appellations identify them as foreign nationals. And of course Montse, in a dialogue at the opening scene of the novel, identifies herself to have hailed from Barcelona, Spain, Europe. By assigning proper names to his characters in *Natives*, Inongo indeed demonstrates the artistic greatness of his novel. Gass (1996) reminds us that: "Normally, characters are fictional human beings, and thus are given proper names. In such cases, to create a character is to give meaning to an unknown X. it is absolutely to define; […]" (177). He concludes that: "Great literature is great because its characters are great when they are memorable" (172). Bambara Keita/Gerard Essomba, Montse and Roser are no doubt human beings, but fictionally created. Their naming indeed makes them great creations in *Natives*. In fact, Inongo's prowess is here

demonstrated as these characters are real, true to life, and memorable even after closing the novel. Trilling (1996) concludes that "the novel, then is a perpetual quest for reality" (83), and James (1996) adds, "A novel is a living thing" (18). Inongo's art in naming his fictional characters with proper names, no doubt, fulfils his quest for reality in his fictional cosmos, and thus makes the characters and the cosmos they exist in, a living thing as Trilling and James quoted above assert. Indeed, this craft helps the reader to understand the migrants' survival strategies better.

3.4 Affectation, Renaming and denaming as survival strategies

Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary quoted earlier defines "accent" as "a way of pronouncing the words of a language that shows which country, area or social class a person comes from" (7). Critical and interpretive reading of NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* reveals a social environment where the African migrants' experience is that they need to drop their African local way of pronouncing words, speech patterns and mannerisms, to adopt and comply with the pervasive American or European speech patterns as a strategy for survival at the economic level of existence Thus, accent compliance becomes a survival strategy in order to get even a menial job for economic survival.

In *We Need New Names*, Bulawayo shows this accent compliance by African migrants in America, when she connects her protagonist, Darling, with her mother in Zimbabwe, Africa, through telephone call. In the telephone conversation, Darling's mother observed that her daughter's (Darling) African accent has changed as she notes her use of American accent. The author writes: "And I see that America has taught you to speak English to your mother, and with that accent. He-he-he, so you are trying to sound white now"! (204). From Darling's telephone conversation, one can note accent compliance by Darling as she does not compromise it while talking with her mother on the telephone. The author uses the telephone channel to illustrate the seriousness of accent compliance in America from African migrants. The compliance becomes necessary as it is the only way they can survive in their social relationships. Indeed, in order to relate, or associate, the migrant must quickly adopt American accent as a survival strategy in order to be able to access the little one can access for survival. The

novelist writes further when she creates Stina, another character in the novel tell Darling thus:

> Why did you run off to America, Darling…? Why did you just leave?... Darling, my dear, you left… and you have the guts to tell me, in that stupid accent that you were not even born with, that doesn't even suit you, that this is your country? (286)

Looking at the above, one would want to ask why would a migrant try to adopt accent that does not suit him or her? One observes an attitude whereby the migrant needs to force himself or herself to learn the speech pattern of the Americans. There is no doubt that the accent compliance is with the aim of fitting into the American society. Besides, it is a survival strategy on the part of the migrants, hence they force themselves to learn it even when it does not suit them as Stina points it out to Darling in the quote above. Thus, there is a loss of identity through speech pattern, but it is with the intent to survive. Consequently, this speech patterns is observed as an identity marker in a transnational space as the characters try to identify with the host community in their effort to survive.

In fact, when it comes to job placement, even menial jobs, the accent is a prerequisite. Lack of American accent can deny a migrant a job opportunity in American society. Bulawayo in her novel shows the importance of accent compliance in American society as her characters reflect the accent even while on telephone conversation with their family members in Africa, as shown earlier. It gives them some air of belonginess even when they know they do not belong there in America. But in order to survive at the economic level, they must comply.

This accent compliance is better understood when one realises that it is evident all over. In Okey Ndibe's *Foreign Gods Inc.* earlier referred to, one notes the importance of accent compliance in American society when the chief character of the novel, Ike, lost out in a job interview, even when he appears highly qualified for the job. He failed the job interview because he is yet to be accent compliant as he still struggles with the African accent. The narrator tells us:

> But now he saw opposite a man telling him that if he wanted a job in the corporate world, he'd have to learn how to speak English…. 'I speak English'…. I took English course at Amherst – and made straight A's… You can look

> at my transcript'. It is what it is. The accent isn't right. I can't hire you. (33)

Before now in the narrative, Ike is acknowledged to have the qualification for the job. The employer tells him: "Your credentials are excellent, but the accent is crappy" (32). Ike decries his situation thus: "But I apply for a job and I'm excluded because of 'my accent', quote and unquote. It's worse than telling me outright I'm a foreigner, I don't belong.… You feel quarantined because of your accent" (55). Ike's experience above is akin to Bulawayo's Darling in *We Need New Names,* our critical focus, where the latter is being mocked for trying to be accent compliant as noted above. Ike in the above quote helps us to understand the plight of the African migrant in America as they need to adopt American speech patterns to fit into the society. It is important to note that without being accent compliant, the migrant is one who is totally alienated, "quarantined" to use Ndibe's phrase in his quote from *Foreign Gods Inc.* above.

However, being accent compliant as a survival strategy can ease the mirgants associations, and interactions in the American society. Bulawayo buttresses this fact when her narrator, Darling, tells us further: "I don't know why Aunt Fostalina doesn't think to learn American speech like this, seeing how it would make her life easier so she wouldn't have to have a hard time like she is right now" (194). Darling observes in the above quote that learning American accent, being accent compliant, can make life easier for her Aunt Fostalina. Indeed, life would be easier for her too, if she wants to survive in America. What Bulawayo does here with Darling's observation is to help the reader appreciate the place of accent compliance in the life of a migrant. In order to survive and have an easier life, the migrant must be accent compliant as a socio-economic survival strategy in the American society.

In order to strengthen Bulawayo's artistic representation of the migrant experience in America, accent compliance as an economic survival strategy among African migrants in America is also noted in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), In the novel, Ifemelu, one of the dominant characters dramatises the need for an African migrant in America to be accent compliant, as a survival strategy. The narrator reveals:

> Ifemelu decided to stop faking an American accent in a sunlit day in July, … it was convincing, the accent. She had perfected, from careful watching of friends and newscasters, the bluring of the *t*, the creamy role of the *r*, the sentences starting with “So”, and the sliding response of “Oh really”, but the accent weaved with unconsciousness, it was an act of will. It took an effort, the twisting of lip, the curling of tongue. (203)

Critical examination of the above shows that in American society, being accent compliant for survival is a must for African migrants. Ifemulu in the quote above is dramatised as a character who finds it difficult to learn the American speech pattern. But she needs to learn it if she must survive. Hence, she takes the pain to learn, by watching friends, listening to newscasters, and by practicing the pronunciation in order to become perfect in the use of the accent. This effort no doubt, is to enable her to integrate into the American society and be able to survive as an African migrant at the socio-economic level of existence.

The migrant novels examined here narrate the need for African migrants to face the reality of being a migrant, and learn the American speech pattern, if they want to survive. Indeed, having migrated from Africa, with no hope of early return, and no return at all, there is the dire need for the migrant to be accent compliant as a strategy to survive in the American society.

In the African cultural context, naming is an important mark of identity. It helps to identify a person and helps to associate or relate an individual bearer of a name to a socio-cultural environment. In one of the migrant novels, this study on migrancy focuses, there is the focus on renaming and denaming as characters who migrate from Africa to America change names (rename themselves), and name their children to reflect American or European environment (denaming the children). Being African migrants, their children supposed to bear a name that reflects their Africanness. But this is not to be, in a foreign land. This attempt in renaming and denaming, is argued to be an economic survival strategy.

Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* dramatises the characters’ effort at renaming and denaming as a strategy for economic survival. The first person narrator-participant, Darling, tells us:

> And when at work they asked for our papers, we scuried like startled hens and flocked to unwanted jobs, where we met the others, many ohers. Others with names like myths, names like puzzles, names we had never heard before: Virgilio, Babamugunthan, Aziz, Baako,…. When it was hard to say the many strange names, we called them by their countries…. We know you despise this job, Sudan, but deal with it, man. Come Ethiopia, move, move, move; Israel, Kazakhstan, Niger, brothers, lets go! (243)

In the foreign land as migrants, the migrants adopt different strategies to survive economically. They change, or adopt foreign names, or assign names of countries to themselves, for ease of identification, and to avoid being identified to have migrated from Africa. By so doing, they rename themselves. The renaming thus becomes a strategy for survival. That they "flock to unwanted jobs" according to the author, is evident of the fact that they do not mind menial jobs in order to survive. This no doubt is a strategy for economic survival in a foreign land as they rename themselves in order to fit in. This is because, as illegal migrants, they cannot afford corporate jobs as they do not have the papers as legalised migrants. But they must survive. Darling, the author's narrator narrates:

> We dropped our heads because we were no longer people; we were now illegals…. We hid our real names, gave false ones when asked… we had paid so much to be in America and we do not want to lose it. (242)

The author in the above quote tells us that African migrants drop their real names, and adopt false names, false identity in order to survive. The American society turns the migrant into something else, because the migrant needs to survive. That African names are dropped, and the characters rename themselves is not in doubt. The novelists uses the renaming to illustrate that the American dream is a dream that must be actualised. But only becomes a reality if one adopts renaming as a strategy in order to fit in and survive. Thus one notes that the characters lose their African identity as they rename themselves.

Besides, in order to show that renaming is a survival strategy, the novelist, at the early part of the narrative, shows characters scramble for foreign names. They adopt

foreign nations' names as their new names in order to reflect the foreign society and fit in. Consequently, Darling narrates:

> But first we have to fight over the names because everybody wants to be certain countries, like everbody wants to be U.S.A. and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy, and Sweden and Germany, and Russia and Greece and then…. (49)

The novelist dramatises her characters' effort to rename themselves after the foreign countries they envisage. This scramble for U.S.A., Germany, Britain, Sweden, Canada, France and other developed parts of the world is to identify themselves with the socio-economic well being of these societies before they migrate or relocate there. Renaming themselves after these countries is a strategy, aimed at emotional and psychological relief meanwhile, as they prepare their minds for eventual migration out of the harsh economic reality of Zimbabwe-cum-Africa. Thus we conclude that it is a strategy for survival at the economic level of existence. Adichie's *Americanah* earlier referred to also hints at renaming as a survival strategy when her character, "… Obinze became Vincent" (289) in America in order to fit in, and survive in the American society. It is sad that for African migrants to survive in America, they must rename themselves.

This strategy of renaming for economic survival, as the migrants leave the homeland, and settle in the foreign land, is a crucial one. It also reveals the novelist's aristic and imaginative vision as she titles her migrant novel under study as: *We Need New Names*. This title is artistic and imaginative. It reveals the fact that migrating to a foreign land will not be an easy transnational trip. In order to survive, there is the dire need for migrants to change names, drop African names and identity, and adopt foreign names and identity if they must survive in the foreign land. Thus, the title of the novel *We Need New Names* points to the strategy for economic survival, renaming, in the land of sojourn.

Furthermore, renaming as a strategy for survival at the economic level of existence is not only obtainable in America, but it is also in Europe where the dominant characters of Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*, and Inongo's *Natives* migrate to. In Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Akobi of fictional Ghana, Africa, becomes Cobby in Germany in Europe. He bears Cobby and relates as Cobby

when he is with his German wife, Gitte, but relates as Akobi when with Osey, his fellow African migrant, and Mara, his wife, now his sister, in Europe (98-99). This is a strategy for economic survival, no doubt.

In Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*, Chisom gets renamed as Sisi, Alek gets renamed as Joyce. In the novel, the author brings Alek, Polycarp's refugee girlfriend, being prepared to travel abroad to negotiate economic survival, having escaped war-torn Sudan through refugee status, and with the help of Polycarp, a Nigerian peace keeping soldier, to Oga Dele's office to discuss the trafficking of Alek to Europe. The author leads the reader to a renaming ceremony as it were. Unigwe writes:

> The fat man [Oga Dele, the trafficker] nodded at Alek and said, 'The name has to go. Sounded too much like Alex. Man's name we no wan men. *Oti oo*. Give am woman name. Fine fine name for fine gal like her…. Make I see… Cecilia? Nicole? Joyce? I like Nicole wetin you tink, Polycarp? Nicole no be nice name?... Joyce. Yes Joyce. Dat one sound like name wey dey always jolly. Jooooyyce!.... Joyce is a much better name! (230)

The author in the above quote enacts Oga Dele and Polycarp rename Alek, Joyce, in order to make her a more marketable commodity when she gets to Europe. The renaming is necessary, as it will make survival at the economic level easier. The novelist further reveals that Alek (now Joyce) wonders why she needs a change of name (renaming) if really she was going to Europe to babysit. The author writes, as Polycarp tells Alek (Joyce) thus: "'Yes look after children. Dele will find you a job as nanny in Belgium.' Alek said nothing. She did not ask why she needed a change of name to be able to babysit children…" (231).

Bearing Alek in Europe, Oga Dele suggests, sounds like a man's name "Alex," and would not attract male customers in the sex trade abroad, which Joyce would engage in for survival. Thus, the renaming is a survival strategy as she gets prepared for trafficking to Europe for commercial sex. On the part of Chisom, the novelist tells us that "… she would rename herself Sisi: a stranger yet familiar. Chisom would be airbrushed out of existence…." (44). That these characters in Unigwe's fictional world rename themselves is a clear statement on the need and the determination to survive successfully in a foreign land. There is no doubt that they already know that in a foreign land of

migration, survival would be difficult wih African names and identity. Thus the need to adopt a survival strategy, hence the renaming.

Inongo in his *Natives*, we noted earlier in this study, shows his chief character, Gerard Essomba usurp another person's passport to cross border to Spain, Europe. That he usurps another's passport is a kind of renaming in an effort to survive in Europe. He says: "not my passport, someone else passport I not from Mali but Cameroon…. So your name is not Bambara Keita, right?.... I Gerard Essomba from Ebolowa, Cameroon…" (137-138) to repeat quote earlier quoted. Gerard Essomba does this renaming through passport usurpation as a survival strategy while crossing border to Spain. Indeed the goal of migration to Spain is to survive at the economic level. He must not fail, hence the strategy. Inongo here illustrates a writer who is conscious of the plight of the migrant in a foreign land.

That these migrant novels illustrate renaming of characters who migrate, are African novels, is no doubt. It is interesting to point out at this juncture that the renaming process as a survival strategy is an invocation of the African oral tale of the Tortoise. Chinua Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart* (1958), gives us an oral tale of the Tortoise and the birds invited to a feast in the sky. In the tale, Achebe reveals Tortoise thus:

> There is one important thing which we must not forget, […]. When people are invited to a great feast like this, they take new names for the occasion. Our hosts in the sky will expect us to know this age-old custom[…]. And so they all took a new name [renaming]. When they had all taken, Tortoise also took one. He was to be called *All of You*. (68)

What the above tale from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* reveals is the Tortoise' initiation for the need for a renaming among them of the animal kingdom before they honour their invitation in the sky. The tale further reveals that on arrival, the Tortoise survives other birds as he reminds them that his new name before they left for the sky is *All of You*, when their host said the food set for them was for "All of You", hence he craves their indulgence to watch him eat the juicy part of the food set before them by their hosts before they could eat thereafter (69). This is a trick though, but a survival strategy adopted before travelling. Thus, this oral tale helps the reader of the selected African migrant novels under study, to understand why the individual authors invent their

characters to be renamed either before they migrate or while in the foreign land. This is so because survival in a foreign land is very precarious, and unpredictable, as the wise but trickish Tortoise realises and prepares for the unexpected by adopting renaming as a strategy for survival in the sky, a foreign land of sort.

It is pertinent to point out that not only do migrants rename themselves to be able to survive in the host community abroad, but also they dename their children to enable them survive in their social relationsihps, and economic endeavours as they grow up to earn a living. Denaming is thus a survival strategy. They do this as they give their children names that sound American, European, and not African. They realise that giving African names to their children when born, would work against them in schools and colleges as they would find it difficult to fit into the American society. This is what Bulawayo enacts when her narrator, Darling tells us:

> And then our children were born. We held their American birth cerificates tight. We did not name our children after ourselves [African names]; we feared if we did they would not be able to say their names, that their friends and teachers would not know how to call them. We gave them names that would make them belong in America [denaming to survive, to fit in], names that did not mean anything to us: Aaron, Josh, Diana, Corey, Jack, Kathlean.… (247)

For Darling and other fellow African migrants in America, denaming their children at birth is a deliberate attempt, and a survival strategy. This is to make economic survival easier for them when they grow up. Thus, one can conclude that denaming is another survival strategy African migrants adopt abroad as Bulawayo reveals. This helps us apprehend why migrants visit their homeland in Africa, or return, with changed names. Their children born there also bear American or European names. This is a strategy to fit in and survive in their academic and social relationsihps as they grow up in the foreign land. This will also make economic survival easier, it appears.

Continuing, Bulawayo confirms the above when Darling narrates thus:

> […] we convinced ourselves that we now belonged only with our children. And those children – they grew and we had to squint to see ourselves in them. They did not speak our language, they did not sound like us [as they need to be accent compliant to fit in]. (248)

Bulawayo in the above gives us a picture of African migrants whose children are denamed. This process of denaming not only affects the children but also their parents. Their African mothers see themselves as part of the American society through the eyes of the children who now bear American-European names to fit into the society and survive. It must be noted that the migrants feel a sense of lose of African identity as their children do not speak African local languages, and do not have African speech patterns or mannerisms. They speak and sound like the Americans, acquiring the American accent from infancy. There is no doubt that the author above depicts African migrants who dename their children in order to integrate themselves and their children into American society. They only belonged through denaming. What a sad migrant experience for survival in America. The novelist in her imagination presents us with a situation whereby African migrants who mean to relocate, migrate abroad, would need to adopt strategies for survival if they must survive. Denaming their children when born, is one of such strategies.

3.5 Betrayal as a survival strategy

Human life and relationships have been the major concern of fiction writers. Reading fiction, whether ancient tales or modern fiction, whether Western or African fiction, it has been observed that the novel dwells extensively on life and relationships at the domestic, private domain, as well as at the public domain. In novels, characters act and react in a social context, a milieu which the writer sets them down to operate spatially and temporally. Thus, characters' motives for actions and consequences are often revealed. In the migrant novels selected for this study on migrancy, Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street,* there are characters whose moral dispositional qualities portray the trait of betrayal as a strategy for their economic survival as migrants. Close reading of the novels reveal characters whom the reader could judge to be 'psychologically true' (91), to use Wellek and Warren's earlier quoted phrase, whom the authors engage to dramatise betrayal. Wellek and Warren to quote them again, remind us that: "Literature occurs only in a social context, [..]" (105). In *Beyond the Horizon,* Darko presents us with characters in a "social context" to use Wellek and Warren's phrase whose hearts are as dead as lead.

Darko through her narrator, tells us how Akobi travels to Germany, Europe, and encourages his wife to join him later, with the hope of becoming civilised, enjoying the greener pastures of Europe and becoming wealthy as well. But this promise was not to be, as the novelist tells us that Akobi betrays his wife into prostitution in Europe, as a survival strategy.

In the transnational space of Europe, Darko creates Akobi initiate, and betray Mara into prostitution. The narrative reveals that Akobi announces one evening that he would be having an outing with his wife, Mara, who just joined him in Germany, Europe from Ghana, Africa, and should get ready for the outing at 8.00pm (110). How happy Mara would be that no sooner had she arrived Europe, than her husband is giving her a treat! However, Mara does not know that Akobi's outing was to initiate her into prostitution. Mara tells us her experience on the Akobi arranged "evening outing":

> Where we drove to I didn't know, but I was certain that it was outside Hamburg. Eventually we stopped in front of a gate and some bushes. Behind was a small bungalow. We walked towards it and went up three small steps to a veranda, then to the door. Akobi pressed the bell and almost immediately a tall white man in jeans and a white T-shirt, with a large spider tattoo on his right arm, opened the door. He let us in, […].
>
> I was told nothing. Neither Akobi, nor the lanky white man said a word to me. They spoke only to each other in German. Eventually, Akobi told me that I could sit. […] while he disappeared with the lanky German into another room. Briefly, when they opened the door to the other room, I heard voices, male voices.(110-111)

Mara continues in her narration thus:

> Akobi returned some minutes later and brought me a glass of wine. Then I was left on my own again for a long, long while during which I finished off my wine and waited. Then something started happening to me. I was still conscious but I was losing control of myself. Something was in the wine I had drank. It made me see double and I felt strange and happy and high… so high that I was certain that I could fly free. Then suddenly, the room was filled with people, all men, and they were talking and laughing and drinking. And they were completely naked! There must have been at least ten men for what I saw were at least twenty images [double].

> Then they were all around me, many hairy bodies, and they were stripping me, fondling me, playing with my body, pushing my legs apart, wide, wide apart. As for the rest of the story, I hope that the gods of Naka didn't witness it. (111)

Comment [RO13]: Some of your quotations are too long! This one has 310 words in it.

The excerpt above reveals Darko skillfully narrate Mara's betrayal into the hands of White men who run a brothel. In the quote, Mara is a character whom her husband lures into sex with ten men as she is deceived into a night club and gets drunk. Getting her drunk is with the ulterior motive of destabilising her psychology, consciousness and to make her susceptible to any male sexual advances. But Mara is not aware of this plan. She appears ignorant of the fact that Akobi's plan was to hand her over to ten men in a brothel for commercial sex. It is strange to see a husband go out with his wife in an evening stroll and end up with this sad story Mara narrates as her personal ordeal in the hands of her husband. That the ten naked men fondle her and widen her legs apart in the "other room" of the brothel, having been given alcoholic wine to the level of intoxication, and senselessness, shows that the husband, Akobi, heartlessly rehearsed his betrayal plan, and strategy for economic existence and survival.

It can be inferred that Akobi betrays his wife, Mara, into the sex orgy she painfully narrates as she concludes that she hopes the gods of her village Naka, back in Ghana, Africa, do not witness how ten hairy White men had sex with her. Darko's weaving of this scene artistically portrays betrayal on a very sad note. One wonders why a husband would betray his wife into prostitution in Europe. This conclusion on betrayal is reached because when Akobi informs his wife Mara, that they would be having an outing in the evening, Mara receives the plan with joy, no doubt. She does not know what lies in the heart of her husband. Innocently, she follows him like a sheep to the slaughter, the brothel, where she gets drunk, and ten men had sex with her, with her husband waiting for her to finish with "the outing". Akobi at his scene initiates an economic survival strategy. Of critical note is the author's skilful employment of irony as a narrative device to introduce her preoccupation with betrayal as an economic survival strategy, sad and ironic expectations of African female emigrants in Europe. Writing on irony, Abrams and Harpham quoted earlier, remind us that "in most modern critical uses of the term "irony", there remains the root sense of dissembling, or of hiding what is

actually the case; […]" (184). Darko in the scene under critical examination employs this artistic strategy as she presents Akobi tell Mara to get ready for an evening outing, but hiding what is actually the case, which is an outing to betray her into prostitution. One notes both verbal and dramatic irony in this episode. There is verbal irony in Akobi's statement to Mara to the effect that the meaning Akobi implies differs from what is expressed. Abram and Harpham remind us again that:

> Verbal irony […] is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, […]. (184)

In order to further show that Akobi betrays his wife into prostitution in an ironic twist, the novelist directs Mara, to respond to Akobi's deceit and betrayal thus:

> Oh yes I got it, but too late, because before I could understand enough to acknowledge to myself that the best thing would be to pack my bag and flee, to return to Naka and to hawking boiled eggs, which was a far nobler job, I was made the property of a good-looking dark haired man who owned a sex nightclub called Peepy. How did it happen that I had let Osey and Akobi drive me to this club [sex club]? Why did I just stare at this man and sway, feeling that there was no way out for me and I had to do what Osey and Akobi demanded? Why? (114-115)

Akobi and Osey in the quote above are two characters and friends whom Darko creates to demonstrate a sense of betrayal. That they drive Akobi's wife to a sex club and hand her over to the manager, Peepy, shows the callous character of Akobi, and moreso the sense of betrayal. He (Akobi) never told Mara that she was coming to join him in Germany to engage in prostitution. In the excerpt above, it is obvious that Mara feels betrayed by her husband, and his friend, Osey, who collaborates with Akobi to betray her into prostitution. Mara laments this betrayal as she regrets coming to join her husband in Germany. It is sad to note that Akobi could connive with his friend to betray his wife. Nevertheless, Darko uses this scene to give us a picture of the nature of humans, in her fictional society. The novelist engages the reader to observe that in a foreign land, anything could happen to an emigrant as return would not be easy. In a way, Darko

explores the weakness of man, and the strength of woman as Akobi and Mara illustrate respectively. Indeed, the world of humans is a sympathetic one as one sympathises with Mara whose husband encouraged to migrate to Europe only to be betrayed into commercial sex trade as a strategy for economic survival. Ogude (2000) concurs with the above when he argues that: "Literature embodies and records the strength and weakness of men and women accurately but sympathetically" (7).

There is no doubt that Akobi is weak in character as he sees betrayal into prostitution as a survival strategy in Europe, and the only way he could engage his wife. Mara on her part demonstrates a sense of character as she regrets and laments her betrayal. She could have run away, but she is restrained by her status as an illegal emigrant who has been smuggled into Germany illegally. And Akobi knowing this, exploits the status against his wife in his betrayal plan. Indeed, his plan, as the novel reveals, is to bring Mara to Europe to fill the role he has now realised, to be used as a sacrificial lamb in his fanatical drive to succeed in Europe. Mara feels that the world we live in is dead cold because she never ever imagine that a man could betray his legally married wife into the kind of sexual promiscuity that Akobi and his friend lured her into in Germany. In a way, it shows the author's demonstration of the fact that the post-colonial African has lost sense of value and culture of hard and legitimate work to survive. Darko seems to suggest that the African migrant is in no small way always seeking for easy way out of his dilemma to survive in Europe. One of this is to employ strategies as he cheats, deceives and betrays his own if necessary, into a selfish deal for selfish interest such as Akobi's. Ogude, to quote him again, concludes: "[…] the African has become de-rooted to the extent that he can no longer draw on the resources of his tradition to confront the challenges of modern times" (36). The major challenge of post-colonial Africa is survival. As Ogude opines above, the post-colonial African, in his effort to survive, fails to tap from the available resources of his tradition to meet the challenges to survive. Hence, the novelist uses Akobi in *Beyond the Horizon*, to show the extent to which the African migrant can go in his attempt to survive a failed continent in foreign lands as they migrate, and betray to confront the challenges of survival in a foreign land. Darko thus suggests that what happens to Mara could happen to any female illegal emigrant who gets pushed by the social, political, and economic breakdown in

post-colonial Africa, and gets pulled up by the attractive socio-economically and politically stable, and technologically advanced Europe.

Through Mara, her narrator, the reader observes another character who has also had similar experience. Mara in her pains tells us how she exposes her experience to Madam Kaye, another character in the novel. Kaye is an African woman and a wife to the "good-looking man who was the owner of Peepy" (116) where Akobi betrays Mara into commercial sex. As their relationship becomes stronger, Mara confides in her and tells her her sad story. But Mara observes that Kay has also gone through the same ordeal. She tells us:

> She was the first person I told my whole true story, only to hear from her that she too had gone through a similar ordeal years ago, except that in her case the man who did it to her was her boyfriend and not her husband. She was surprised that a man who had formally shown his face to my family was doing this to me. (116)

Darko here in the above suggests that Mara is not the only victim of betrayal as a survival strategy in Germany. He uses Kaye's experience to show Mara that betrayal is common with African migrants as they betray to exploit one another to survive. A critical look at Kaye's and Mara's experiences shows that both characters who betray them are intimately related to them. In the case of Kaye, it was her boyfriend. In the case of Mara, it was her legally married man – husband. Thus we conclude without mincing words, that the issue of betrayal is obvious in Darko's migrancy fiction. Only someone who enjoys an intimate relationship with one can betray one just as Kaye's boyfriend and Mara's husband do, in *Beyond the Horizon*. Mara decries her betrayal thus: "so was this my fate?" (115). Darko artistically dramatises this consequence through the employment of flashback as a device, earlier commented on. This she does at the opening part of the narrative when she forshadows Mara's loss of personal worth and identity after being lured into prostitution by her husband, when she peers into her mirror thus: "I am sitting here before my large oval mirror [….] I am starring painfully at an image. My image? No! – what is left of what once used to be my image [….]" (1).

However, Inongo-vi-Makomè's *Natives* reveals the invention of betrayal in his female characters' relationships, as a strategy for emotional, and psychological survival

as they relate with each other, and with the African emigrant Bambara Keita from Mali, later known as Gerard Essomba from Cameroon, as a strategy for economic survival in Europe. Roser, a friend to Montse, another female character in *Natives*, betrays the friendship she enjoys with Montse. Being a company executive, Roser gets a letter from her boss to go on transfer to Germany to head the company's new office. It must be recalled at this juncture that Roser lives and works in Spain, where she and her friend Montse find a loitering African immigrant and engage him to satisfy them in turns with sex for a fee. Inongo tells us that: "Everything went well [in their relationship] until the day the head of Roser's company, called her into his office" (147). The narrator continues:

> Roser left the executive's office. When she was back in her own office, she thought about her situation. She didn't know how she was going to deal with this turn of events. She kept thinking about it on her way home. Leaving for Germany, would mean she would have to abandon everything that she had in Barcelona – her family, friends, and of course her employee-lover, Gerard Essomba, a.k.a. Bambara Keita. Thinking about the African, her heart began to beat rapidly [kpim! kpim! Kpim! kpim!]. She realized she had a problem. How would she tell Montse? What was she going to do?
>
> Montse had told her one day that all her ills came from lack of sex. (149)

In this quote above, one observes the author present his character Roser, as one who is perplexed over her unavoidable transfer and migration to Germany. What occupies her mind, the narrative reveals, is how was she going to cope with a life without her lover-employee, Gerard Essomba? How was she going to negotiate her sexual survival? Would she need to loose all her friends, lover – Gerard Essomba, and live a lonely life like an exile, because of transfer from Spain to Germany? These questions and many more no doubt, agitate Roser's mind.

She ponders over the situation and wonders how she was going to lose her relationships, especially her lover-employee, Gerard Essomba, whom Mother Nature has engaged to cure her long repressed sexual desire and need. It is pertinent to note at this juncture that Inongo exploits this psychological state of Roser to weave in betrayal as a

strategy to survive at the emotional and psychological level. Roser's agitation indicates that she is not only greatly in need of sexual satisfaction but also greatly in need of the company of Gerard Essomba because of his extra-large penis (41-42), perhaps considering the difficulty and shame that could confront her if she leaves her lover-employee behind, and begins to look for another male date in Germany, considering her age, and employment status. She appears to consider emotional and psychological survivel more than her cordial friendship with Montse. Afterall, it was Montse who summoned the courage to look for Gerard Essomba, and wooed him at the Plaza de Cataluna, in Barcelona, Spain. The author reveals further:

> She [Roser] imagined herself in Berlin with Gerard Essomba. She smiled slyly to herself. […]. She also tried to imagine her life without the African. A deep sadness overcame her. *God I love him,* she heard a voice cry out from inside her. (150)

And concludes:

> She [Roser] concluded she simply couldn't leave [for Germany] without her man [Gerard Essomba]. She would try to convince him to come with her, risking the loss of her friendship with Montse. But she couldn't do anything else. No, nothing else was possible. (151)

In his narration, Inongo reveals in the above quotes, Roser's intense need to take Gerard Essomba along as she migrates from Spain to Germany on job transfer. The author here probes into the mind of Roser to reveal what is in the heart, the seat of motivation for every action of man. Thus he shows that Roser appears to contemplate betraying her friend, and confidant, Montse, as she considers eloping with their lover-employee, Gerard Essomba. She sees this as the only option to alleviate, and possibly seal the emotional pain the transfer has brought on her. This is because, she does not want to suffer loneliness and sexual starvation again as she had, before engaging Gerard Essomba as a gigolo.

It is instructive to comment again on Inongo's skilful use of point of view. This scene above further strengthens the author's engagement of the third person omniscient point of view in his narration. Thus far, one could note the author probe the mind of Roser as she receives the news to go on transfer to Germany from his boss in the office.

The author appears to go in and out of Roser's mind to reveal her agitation, and sometimes commenting on possibilities agitating her mind. Even as Roser betrays her friend as she elopes with Gerard Essomba, the author focuses his critical lens on Montse's mind to also expose to the reader her innermost thoughts and feelings, and indeed possible reactions. We can thus conclude that the novelist has in no small way demonstrated himself as a master craftsman who has been able to skillfully engage the third person omniscient point of view which Perrine, quoted earlier in this study, argues its usage and vitality in novel writing. Reading *Natives*, there is no grain of doubt that Inongo has successfully employed his chosen third person omniscient point of view in his tale on migrancy, as the reader observes him always digging up information from the minds of his characters, and sometimes commenting freely, such as the scenes dramatising betrayal in the novel. The author writes on Roser, thus:

> Despite her awareness of her dilemma, she had no way to solve it outside betraying her best friend and humiliating herself. Roser knew what she was doing. She knew she was not behaving well: she should not deal her friend such bad hand, but she saw no other way out. (158)

There would be a way out of her dilemma. The way out would be, not to betray her friend, by leaving Gerard Essomba alone, and proceed on her transfer and sought herself out in Germany. But because the novelist is a creator, and godlike, he decides what he makes his fictional characters in his chosen milieu. Consequently, the novelist invents Roser betray her friend, Montse. While at home with Gerard Essomba, Roser engages the latter in a dialogue to consider, and act out what has been agitating her mind. The author uses this dialogue to tactfully initiate the trait of betrayal in the moral dispositional quality of Roser. The novelist presents the dialogue between Roser and Gerard Essomba thus:

> I've got something important to tell you Bambara – I mean Gerard Essomba, […]. Sorry, I just can't get used to it.
> No worry.
> I have a problem and I'd like to tell you about it. But before I tell you, I want you to swear that you won't tell anyone. (158)

Continuing with the dialogue, the author comments on the above to the effect that the African emigrant, Gerard Essomba, nodes his head to indicate that he would not betray the confidence Roser intends to repose on him in her effort to betray her friend, Montse. The dialogue continues thus:

> No, Gerard Essomba, that's not enough. I want you to swear in God's name that you won't tell absolutely anyone what I'm going to say, not even Montse!
> […].
> I swear, I tell truth […].
> Look, […] my company, I mean my work, is sending me to Germany.
> Oh, Germany! […].
> Yes, I'm going to Germany, and that's just what I want to talk to you about. I want you to come and live with me there […].
> Do you hear what I'm saying,
> Gerard Essomba? […]
> Yes, I hear […]. (159)

The excerpt above reveals that Roser is set to betray his friend, Montse. Having Gerard Essomba to swear in the name of God is nothing but a kind of seal to ensure the secrecy of her plans to betray her friend to come to a successful conclusion. She is determined to do this as the novel shows thus:

> So, I'm proposing that you come with me to Germany. We can get married, if you want. In a couple of years you could request Spanish citizenship and get a passport from the European Union. With that you go anywhere. And if one day you no longer want to be married to me, you can divorce me, but you'll still have all your documents from the European Union
> […]
> Wait, I haven't finished! I'm going to make you another proposition. You told me you'd have to build a pretty house in your town. Okay. So in a few years I'll go with you to Cameroon, and we'll build that house together. I'll contribute, so that when it's done it'll belong to both of us. (161)

Critical examination of the above reveals Roser's strong desire to betray her friend, and migrate to Germany with Gerard Essomba as she makes a juicy proposal to the latter.

Roser appears a character who is craftfully intelligent as she dangles a juicy carrot to Gerard Essomba to entice him to accept her proposal to elope with him to Germany and continue his services of sexual satisfaction. In order to compel Gerard Essomba to go with her without giving deep thought to the moral implications, Roser offers to transform him from illegal emigrant to a well documented, legal migrant, and subsequently a Spanish citizen through the marriage of both of them. Indeed, she stretches the offer further as she offers to join the African immigrant to build a beautiful house in Cameroon, Africa. These offers appear pretty, but tempting to the African whose immigrant status is shaky, as he could be repatriated anytime. This forms the bait which Roser employs to compel Gerard Essomba to cooperate with her to betray Montse. Inongo creates this scene in this manner to demonstrate Roser's craftiness. Thus, he illustrates the fact that human being is crafty in his attempt to betray. Roser's interest is not to properly document and legalise Gerard Essomba's immigrant status, but to satisfy her own selfish desire for sexual satisfaction and emotional and psychological stability. She is merely using the trait as a strategy. The novelist's craftsmanship in the moulding of betrayal out of Roser and Gerard Essomba is not in doubt in the narrative as the author goes further to conclude the plot to betray Montse at this level of the plan. If the house Roser intends to contribute to, would belong to her and her proposed husband, Gerard Essomba, when married, when they arrive Germany, why would she also provide a window for Gerard Essomba to escape from the marital bond, by offering and suggesting a divorce to the latter if he desires so?, a critical reader would ask. Having contemplated the juicy and tempting offer, and that God would punish him if he rejects it, Gerard Essomba accepts to go with Roser to Germany. "Roser […] I go with you" (167). At this juncture, he becomes the first to verbally betray his madam and sex-employer, Montse. He betrays to gain advantage selfishly and to survive. This action is also a strategy. But the author, as skillful as he is, a master craftsman of the novel genre, demonstrating his mastery of the use of the third person omniscient point of view, digs into the heart of Gerard Essomba to reveal the way the character feels psychologically, about the whole plot to betray Montse. The novelist writes:

> He had no idea how all of this had come to be. But he did know that Montse was the person who had come looking for him. She had always been friendly to him. She had

> come to him that day in the hospital when his friend died. She had understood when he revealed that his former name was fake. And most important of all, she had devised a work contract so that he could get his papers legally. That was the person he was going to betray. (171)

He continues:

> He knew that if he allowed himself to reflect, he would be drawn back to the Bible. He would see God's finger pointing at him as if he were a bad person. He would end up comparing himself to the sacred scriptures worst pariah: Judas himself. (172)

The above quotes reveal the psychology of Gerard Essomba as the author probes his heart to reveal his feeling of guilt. He recalls how good Montse has been to him, especially as she was the one who embraced him, and introduced him to Roser. And even when he confessed his false identity, Montse does not mind but planned to properly and legally document him as a legal immigrant so as to enjoy the rights and privileges that accrue. But now, Gerard Essomba is at the verge of betraying this loving and caring woman, his lover-employer. The author uses this to show the working of human mind and conscience. It shows that Gerard Essomba like every other human creature, has conscience, no matter how good or bad man is. The character ruminates the action he is about to take, and feels guilty. The novelist uses this to demonstrate Gerard Essomba as a reflection of man with full psychology in thought and action. In a way, he also presents him as a character who sees betrayal in the circumstance as an economic survival strategy.

Indeed, betrayal as the author invents, is a weighty psychological human error that could disturb and destabilise human actions and reactions even when it has not been carried out. Thus the author tends to give us a slice of human character in fiction. For Gerard Essomba, betraying Montse is a big flaw, and a show of lack of appreciation for all that the latter has done for the former. This further perturbs his psychology even when it was Montse's turn to have him satisfy her sexual needs. In the novel, the author artistically contrives Gerard Essomba with a realistic portrait of a human character with flesh and blood as he, Gerard Essomba, reacts to his conscience. The author, like an earthworm burrows into the soil, burrows into the mind of Gerard Essomba to reveal

thus: “The betrayal that most concerned him now was his own – his betrayal of the one who had helped him most” (173). The author continues:

> His heart was beating fast. Lord, what torture! Is this what Judas went through before he betrayed Jesus? Judas knew he had sold him out but he acted like he’d done nothing wrong. (175)

Gerard Essomba indeed is acting as if he does nothing wrong against Montse. But his conscience would not allow him rest, and worst still it affects his erection while in bed to perform his task of sexual satisfaction, which he was employed to do by the two friends (Roser and Montse). That he has “no desire to make love” (175) “as if his prick were dead” (176) is due to the fact that he is going through psychological torture as a result of the on-going betrayal drama he, and Roser are acting out against their confidant, Montse. Indeed, he illustrates Halperin’s (1974) critical comment that “[…] life is seen as a perpetual moral struggle” (5).

Thus far, Inongo, in his fictional creation of characters and illustration of betrayal as a survival strategy in a migrant space, attempts to demonstrate the nature of man. He has no doubt painted a picture showing the characters with psychological depth and verisimilitude. Boulton, quoted earlier, reminds us that: “A good novel is true in the sense that it gives a sincere, well observed, enlightening picture of a portion of human life” (5). The portion of human life Inongo shapes imaginatively in *Natives* is that which illustrates the human nature to betray when, and where there is interest. In the betrayal episode in the novel, the author presents Roser as a character whose interest is to continue to negotiate her sexual pleasure, satisfaction and emotional and psychological survival from Gerard Essomba. On the part of Gerard Essomba, his interest is to fully secure his negotiation for socio-economic survival in Europe, having migrated from Cameroon, Africa, for greener pastures, thus coniving with Roser to betray Montse is his own economic survival strategy. But the reader of *Natives* would want to see Gerard Essomba and Roser as selfish characters who are heartless as they both conspire selfishly to betray Montse (employer and friend). Roser on arrival in Germany, could have been able to fall in love with another man. Gerard Essomba also would have continued to be in the employment of Montse as her gigolo. And Montse no doubt was ready to promptly

legalise Gerard Essomba's immigrant status. Thus, both Roser and Gerard Essomba are selfish and heartless. The author, indeed gives us a realistic human portrait.

However, Roser heartlessly writes Montse before departing from Spain for Germany, to inform her that she and their lover-employee have migrated to Germany. She writes:

> I know the damage I'll cause you when you find out what we have done. […]
> Yes, I am using "we" because I have taken our man with me, Gerard Essomba. (188)

On this note, Roser confesses her betrayal in writing to her friend, Montse. In human relationships, there are actions and reactions, and "conflict is unavoidable […]" (230), according to Kehinde (2004). The novelist in *Natives* brings this human psychology to fictional reality as Montse reacts to her friend's betrayal thus:

> I can't believe this! I just can't believe it! That bitch tricked me. She planned this trip without telling me so I wouldn't find out about her treachery! This is low! Really low! [Really really low!] (189)

And she adds: "I thought she was frigid and it turns out she's a snake in the grass" (190).

It is critically important to comment on Inongo's characterisation of the three characters that dramatise betrayal in *Natives*. The author skillfully employs artistic dexterity in his creation of Roser, Gerard Essomba and Montse as they fictionally enact betrayal. Each is observed to have been able to play his or her artistic roles well, and realistically plausible. The novelist gives us Roser as a character who is callous, heartless and selfish. Though she regrets her action and tries to beg for forgiveness, she is evil through and through as she acts like the snake in the grass Montse describes her with. That the author uses the snake in the grass, is a symbol to illustrate Roser's treachery, untrustworthiness and eventual betrayal trait. He also uses her to portray the hypocritical and untrustworthy nature of humans in any relationship. Gerard Essomba is not only a complex character like Roser, but also realistic as he portrays man in action. He is one who from the beginning of the novel, sets off for greener pastures in Europe from Africa. A critical reader does not expect him to act otherwise in the betrayal saga, as he is always seizing every available opportunity to negotiate his economic survival very well. He

appears most pitied. One tends to sympathise with him because of the precarious situation he finds himself. Indeed, the offers Roser proposes to him are very tantalising, and irresistible. One also tends to sympathise with Roser as she demonstrates the emotional nature of a woman, as she acts on emotion, rather than reason. She does not give thought to the effect her act of betrayal would have on her friend, Montse. She acts on emotion, to satisfy her immediate emotional needs, the companionship of, and sexual satisfaction from Gerard Essomba. Montse, the author creates, is a woman of substance. She is a great character, a realistic portrait of a lovely and rational woman. She reacts to situations realistically as the author further shows, as he probes Montse's mind and reveals that:

> Her hatred knew no bounds. The best thing she wanted was to forgive the hurt they had caused her. And to top everything off, they had betrayed her in the springtime, her favourite and most special season. (197)

All in all, there is no doubt that Inongo has endowed his chief characters – Roser, Gerard Essomba and Montse – with some elements of complexity. They are indeed great characters. Boulton quoted earlier reminds us that: "Great characters in novels are seen as complex human beings and come to life as such, often with such vitality that it does not seem absurd to ask what they might do in other situations" (77). He adds that: "A good character is more credible if he has some natural frailties, as is a bad character if he has some glimmer of goodness, or wins some slight sympathy by a clue as to why he is bad" (79). There is no doubt that "the most enjoyable fictional characters seem very lifelike" (73), Boulton concludes. Looking at Inongo's Roser, Gerard Essomba and Montse in action, they are indeed not only lifelike but also great and credible as they act out human nature realistically, demonstrating their frailties. Boulton, to quote him once again argues:

> Yet, the greatest verisimilitudes of the greatest novels are their insights into the human heart: society and its demands; human beings in relation to family, friends and others; human beings in the ultimate loneliness of individuality. (24)

In the author's attempts to create fictional characters who dramatise real life situations, we observe the artistic prowess he exhibits in the novel. A good example is his use of

biblical allusion in his portrayal of betrayal in *Natives* as his characters negotiate survival. This is noted in the imaginative invocation of the biblical Judas Iscariot. In Luke Chapter 22:47-48, the Bible tells us that Judas betrays his master and friend, Jesus. Jesus rhetorically asks: "Judas, do you betray the son of man with a kiss?" (1322) according to *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. This biblical episode, the novelist employs to weave in betrayal in his *Natives*. He does this to illuminate, and strengthen the realistic bent of his preoccupation with betrayal as a survival strategy in the novel. The author is seen to have put in great efforts to realise his fiction, as serious fiction that dramatises human life is his goal. According to Boulton, being copiously quoted:

> Since the serious novel in some sense portrays real life, great effort goes into giving it verisimilitude, likeness to truth. We know the things did not happen, but must be made to feel that they could have happened. (15)

It must be noted here that Inongo's fictional creation conforms to Boulton's conclusion above. The events he narrates did not happen. They are merely his imagination. But he makes us believe and feel that they could happen by the way he skillfully demonstrates artistic harmony. The novelist's perception of reality in his creation of strategies for survival, is indeed very sharp. He thus presents himself as a skillful writer who knows his artistic tools, and uses them well to apprehend his African society in a flux. It is pertinent here to invoke Oriaku's (2011) argument thus:

> […] the creative writer possesses a mind which seeks to find a meaning for every event. Nothing seems to escape his notice so that his experiences encompass both those that are directly his and those of other people or things around him which his ultra-perceptive mind has apprehended and which he ultimately appropriates to himself. (150)

Inasmuch as Inongo demonstrates his perception of reality in *Natives* in an artistic and skillful manner, one must remember that he is an ordinary human being like everyone of us. He is merely acting as a medium. Thus the African writer in post-colonial twenty-first century is poised to beam his critical lens to zoom, capture and print for us the challenges, emotional and psychological trauma the African emigrant is confronted with abroad. By engaging the third person omniscient point of view, Inongo acts as a god who sees, and projects and sometimes even dictates the social direction of the society, either

good or bad. This, the novelist has successfully done in *Natives*. Like the poet, the novelist, Egudu (1982) reminds us,

> […] is an ordinary human with flesh and blood, but with extra-ordinary sensibility and imagination, which help to make him not a diviner, but rather a definer: a definer of human experience, human events, human traits [such as betrayal in Roser and Gerard Essomba in *Natives*] human behaviour – in short, a definer of human life. He is an inquirer who by constant imaginative wonder at life arrives at an interpretation, a definition, a meaning, which is wisdom. (41)

Comment [RO14]:

Comment [RO15]: Is this, with its indented quotations, ONE PARAGRAPH – 1129 words?

Comment [u16]: No sir

Furthermore, betrayal as a trait in migrant characters as they negotiate survival, in a transnational space, is Chika Unigwe's preoccupation too, in *On Black Sisters' Street.* She gives the reader a transnational environment where she focuses on Polycarp and Sisi, characters in the novel, to illustrate betrayal as a strategy for survival. The novelist beams her searchlight on Polycarp. It has been noted in this study that Polycarp meets Alek as a helpless girl whom Sudanese soldiers raped in turns. In her attempt to run for safety, Alek takes refuge in a refugee camp where she meets Polycarp. Polycarp returns to Nigeria with Alek with the understanding that their relationship would lead to marriage. Alek indeed happily looks forward to the day she would be introduced to Polycarp's family and get married.

An examination of this episode on Polycarp and Alek reveals the depiction of betrayal of a budding relationship. In the novel, the author presents Alek insisting on Polycarp's visit to her family for a formal introduction to his family as a wife to be. Every young girl with the kind of socio-political background back home that she has, a war refugee, would no doubt want to be quick about formalising her relationship with a man like Polycarp, a Nigerian peace keeper. Hence, she continues to perturb Polycarp with the need to visit his parents and get her introduced. But the author reveals that:

> Alek began to suspect that things were not right, when Polycarp stopped saying, 'I'll think about it,' when she asked about visiting his family in Onitsha. Instead he muttered over a newspaper that 'it was impossible at the moment', and returned to his paper. (221)

Alek here suspects Polycarp to be reneging, or withdrawing from the relationship. This, the author reveals as Polycarp leaves for Onitsha alone to visit his family, instead of going with Alek so as to introduce her to his family at Onitsha.

Besides, it is interesting to note from the novel that Polycarp returns from Onitsha with his mother to initiate the termination of the budding relationship with Alek that was intended to lead to marriage. Polycarp's mother receives Alek coldly and the latter becomes suspicious of the former (222-224). "And then Alek knew. She knew that it had come to an end and she did not know why" (224). It is true that Alek does not know why a relationship that started from a refugee camp in Sudan, and migrates to Lagos, Nigeria, should abruptly come to an end. Nevertheless, Polycarp explains:

> I'm the oldest, […]. I'm the oldest son and my parents want me to marry an Igbo girl. It's not you, Alek, but I can't marry a foreigner. My parents will never forgive me […]. I am sorry, […]. I am really sorry. I tried to avoid them because I knew this would happen. […]. I know you can't go back to Sudan. You want to leave Nigeria? Go abroad? (225)

The quote above indicates Polycarp's tactical termination of his relationship with Alek. Critical examination shows that Polycarp is a character whom the author engages to illustrate betrayal as a strategy, as the former apologises to Alek for bringing the relationship to an end. The excerpt reveals Polycarp to be aware that he is the oldest son and his parents would want him to marry an Igbo girl and not a foreigner, Alek. Indeed he knows that this situation would occur as he falls in love with Alek and promises returning to Nigeria with her. Having known that his parents would not allow him marry a Sudanese (a foreigner), and he goes ahead to strengthen the relationship, by giving Alek hope of matrimony is a betrayal of relationship trust in a transnational space. Alek, a refugee is full of hope, a greener future in the hands of Polycarp, a soldier. She is sure of her economic, social and political security and survival as the relationship relocates her from a war-turn Sudan to Lagos, Nigeria, where she would enjoy her marriage to Polycarp. The author thus suggests betrayal as Polycarp rhetorically asks: "You want to leave Nigeria? Go abroad?" as in the quote above. This rhetorical question puts Alek off, as she realises that Polycarp was done with her. This is betrayal indeed. The author's

creation of betrayal is so deep in depiction as she (the novelist) presents Alek being betrayed into the hands of Oga Dele, a human trafficker who eventually prepares Alek for Europe for survival. There is not doubt that Alek depended on Polycarp for survival as the relationship lasted. But now that the relationship is terminated, Alek must negotiate survival on her own as Polycarp does not want to continue to shoulder the responsibility, hence he suggests travelling abroad to her. The novelist uses Polycarp to illustrate how characters can be, and how situations of socio-economic, political unease can force one into a behaviour that is inimical to social cohesion. Alek appears helpless and a victim as she has no choice but to yield to Polycarp's suggestion to migrate abroad. She bemoans her betrayal as the author intrudes in her thoughts and reports thus:

> The soldiers that raped her that night in Daru [Sudan] had taken her strength, and Polycarp's betrayal had left her unwilling to seek it back. From now on, she resolved, she would never let her happiness depend on another's. She would never let anyone hurt her. (231)

This resolution Alek takes to the effect that her happiness would not depend on someone else, consequent upon Polycarp's betrayal, appears to motivate her into action as she concurs, innocently but helplessly too, with Polycarp to visit Oga Dele to prepare her for migration abroad as she appears stranded, abandoned in Nigeria. It must be noted that Alek cannot return to Sudan, a war-turn African nation, a situation that pushes her to accept Polycarp's relationship that ended in Nigeria.

While with Oga Dele, the human trafficker, we also note the betrayal of Alek. The arrangement was that Alek "would be taken to Belgium. "Make you go look after people. Nanny work […]. Yes, look after children. Dele will find you a job as a nanny in Belgium" (231). Here, Oga Dele and Polycarp try to let Alek know her job description and engagement, in Europe as she is being prepared to travel. But the author reveals that this was a deceit and betrayal, as Alek gets to Europe and gets recruited into prostitution as a way, and the only lucrative way, to negotiate economic survival as an African female emigrant. She, now "Joyce" in Germany, in a conversation with her roommate and prostitution colleague, wonders:

> You know, everyday I go to work I wonder if Polycarp was in on this. I wonder if he knows all along what Dele had in

> mind for me. I don't want to believe that he is that heartless. But thinking of all the *whys* and *how comes* I can't sleep at night. (241)

The author in the above presents Alek as a naïve character who is innocently deceived, and betrayed into prostitution as a strategy for economic survival. Nevertheless, it must be observed from the above that Alek is shocked that Polycarp could betray her. She appears to have implicit trust in Polycarp as she migrates with him from Sudan to Lagos, Nigeria, with the hope of getting married. But this hope is dashed as Polycarp betrays her into prostitution abroad, hence, she goes into psychological trauma, doubting if Polycarp could have done all this to her. She suffers from insomnia as she is perturbed by the ways she was lured into a trade she was not prepared for. What a betrayal!

This betrayal first hit her consciousness as soon as she arrives Europe. It must be recalled that the narrative reveals that Alek, now Joyce, was prepared for the job of a nanny in Europe. But on arrival, she discovers the opposite. No children to take care of. The novelist reports:

> The flight was long. And dark. And lonely. Alek felt like Cargo with a tag: Destination Unknown. For what did she know about where she was going? About the children she would be babysitting? As soon as she stepped into the house in the Zwartezusterstraat and saw the long thin mirror, she started to have her doubts about the sort of job she had been brought to do. When Madam came to see her that first day and she asked, 'where are the children I am supposed to be looking after?' and Madam laughed so hard that tears streamed down her face and said, 'Which children? Which*yeye* children?' she felt a sandstorm whirling in her, […]. (233)

The above quote illustrates further, Unigwe's concern with betrayal in her characters' attempt to negotiate survival. Alex is amazed to find that while she was prepared to babysit children in Europe, she finds no child to babysit on arrival in the accommodation provided for her. Instead, she finds herself in the care of Madam, a pimp, who laughs hysterically as she inquires about the children to look after. Confused and looking helpless at this juncture, the Madam tells her to get ready to start work. But when she unconsciously ponders over the kind of work, Madam responds thus: "Earning your keep.

Oya, time to open shop! Time to work! Time to work! Chop-chop!" (233). This is betrayal indeed. Alek does not leave Sudan for Nigeria, and Nigeria for Europe to do the kind of work she eventually ends up engaging in to negotiate economic survival. The author reveals in the narrative that Alek at this point in her migration story starts off as a commercial sex worker in order to survive in a foreign land, as Madam indicates in the excerpt above 'earning your keep, oya, time to work, time to chop'.

Unigwe uses this betrayal experience to illustrate how socio-economic and sometimes, political crisis push African girls to become victims in their attempt to negotiate economic survival in a transnational space. Her character, Alek, depicts the abandoned, betrayed, and psychologically and emotionally wounded in a transnational space, negotiating econoimc survival. This is true when one examines Ama's rhetorical question to Alek, now Joyce, in Europe. Ama asks: "Why did he [Polycarp] take you all the way to Nigeria only to abandon? […]. Why do people do the stuff they do?" (241). There is no doubt that Unigwe gives us a glimps of migrant girls in Europe who are helpless, and betrayed into what they do for survival, even when they know it is indecent and morally destructive. Like an observer and objective reporter and judge, Unigwe does not only show that young girls could be betrayed into prostitution as a strategy for economic survival in Europe, but also she depicts that such victims of betrayal could equally betray their sponsors or pimps as they could fail to fulfil their own terms of the deal. This is what Unigwe uses Sisi to illustrate as the latter betrays Oga Dele by refusing to complete her repayment of the money invested on her migration from Nigeria to Europe to negotiate economic survival. The author's narrator reveals that: "She [Sisi] had defied Dele, cut all links with Madam and the house on the Zwartezusterstraat. She was ready to deal with whatever the consequences might be" (286).

Sisi, the author shows, betrays Oga Dele in the trust reposed in her to faithfully pay back all that was agreed to be paid back for her migration to Europe. It will be recalled from the narrative that Oge Dele warns Sisi against failure to pay back his investment. "Any failure would result in unpleasantness, […]. No try cross me o. Nobody dey cross Senghor Dele!" (42), Oga Dele warns Sisi while in Nigeria, at the negotiation table and preparation for migration to Europe for survival. But Sisi, in her character, betrays this trust, not minding the consequences. The author here, leaves no stone unturned to depict that every betrayal attracts a consequence, as Oga Dele carries out his threat and masterminds from Nigeria, the assassination of Sisi in Belgium, as a

consequence of “betraying Senghor Dele” whom nobody crosses, like Sisi crossed him (293).

The novelist uses this episode to illustrate that in the experience of migrants, the migrants could betray their sponsors as they could cut of links with them, and repay their investment no more. This is a strategy at the economic level. Thus one can conclude that the author, in her artistic canvas, has creatively given us a clear portrayal of what the odds are, in a transnational environment when one chooses to migrate for greener pasture, to negotiate survival at the economic level, as strategies such as betrayal could be adopted.

3.6 Conclusion

In migrants’ economic survival, the migrant African novels selected for this study have shown in detail man’s effort to negotiate his existence and survival at the economic level in a transnational space. This is with the intent to demonstrate that in a migrant’s journey, the ultimate is to negotiate economic survival, whether the migration is voluntary or involuntary, that is, whether willingly undertaken or forced by socio-political or economic crisis.

The five novels critically examined here in this chapter, Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*, Inongo’s *Natives,* Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters’ Street,* NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* and Ike Oguine’s *A Squatter’s Tale* explore migrants’ economic survival in the lives of African migrants abroad. Thematically related, they all enact migrancy as their various protagonist migrate from Africa to Europe. It has been established that the authors enact strategies such as menial jobs, marriages, and fraud, prostitution and gigolism, accent compliance, renaming and denaming. The authors also show their characters’ human nature, human frailty as they betray their confidants as a strategy for survival, and to show that no human relationship is stable in an attempt to survive at the international environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

BONDING AS MIGRANTS’ SURVIVAL STRATEGY IN *CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION* AND *HARARE NORTH*

4.1 Introduction

In our study on migrancy in sub-Saharan African migrant novels, there is the observation of bonding as a strategy for survival in the existence of migrants in foreign lands. A critical and interpretive reading of Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* and Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* reveals a migrant narrative where the individual authors imaginatively peers into the daily lives of the characters to dramatise bonding at the psychological, and emotional level of interpersonal relationships.

The *New Websters Comprehensive Dictionary* defines bond as "That which binds…" (153). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* sees it as: "Something that forms a connection between people or group, such as a feeling of friendship or shared ideas and experiences…" (155) and bonding as "the process of forming a special relationship with [somebody] or with a group of people[…]" (156). Besides, according to Wikipedia

> Human bonding is the process of development of a close, interpersonal relationship between two or more people. It must commonly take place among family members or friends, but can also develop among groups, such as sporting teams and whenever people spend time together… is a mutual, interactive process, and is different from simple liking. It is the process of nurturing social connection. (1)

A critical examination of the definitions above shows that bonding has to do with the bond, ties, and strong association and relationship between two or more individuals or groups, resulting from a shared feelings of friendship, or peculiar experiences. Thus, bonding is a process, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* quoted above, whereby a special interpersonal relationship with somebody is formed, or as people come together in order to have shared experiences. Hazan and Campa (2013) argue that:

> It is amply documented that day-to-day well-being, overall happiness and psychological adjustment, physical health, and even the length of life itself are all significantly influenced by the quality of our closest relationships. Indeed, our continuation as a species depends on the formation and maintenance of social bonds. (1)

Bonding as our critical concern in this study on migrancy, is one that the authors selected above focus their creative vision on their characters in foreign lands to depict the

relationship among African migrants in America, and London, as one whereby the characters are seen to adopt bonding (social buds) as a strategy for survival at the level of psychological, and emotional existence.

4.2 Psychological Bonding as a survival strategy

In Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution*, the author narrates a migrant experience where his protagonist, and narrator-participant Stephanos, meets regularly with his fellow African migrants, Kenneth (Ken) from Kenya, and Joseph (Joe) from Congo (1), to review their lives as refugees in Washington, America. However, these characters, it must be noted, are forced out of their countries as a result of socio-political and economic upheavals in the homeland. In the new-found land, and as refugees, and migrants who migrate into America illegally, they live sub-human lives as menial job seekers. This unexpected condition, as against the expected greener pastures compels them to see the dire need to associate and relate with one another to ease psychological tension, loneliness, and frustration.

Consequently, Stephanos' store where he sells provisions and articles of trade appears a centre for bonding in their relationship. The three migrants, from different parts of Africa are bedeviled by one crisis and the other. They all meet in America as migrants. Stephanos, a shopkeeper in Logan Circle neighbourhood, Kenneth (Ken) and Joseph (Joe) "… working as valets at the Capital Hotel" (1). These three characters find interest in forming, and maintaining an interpersonal relationship in a foreign land as a strategy for survival. The narrator – participant, Stephanos narrates:

> At eight O'clock Joseph and Kenneth come into the store. They come almost every Tuesday. It's become a routine among the three of us without ever having acknowledged it as such… seventeen years ago we were all new immigrants working as valets at the Capital Hotel. (1)

Looking at the quote above reveals that Stephanos' store is a centre where the three migrants meet every Tuesday as a way of bonding themselves at the psychological level. This is so because, as menial job workers and African migrants (illegal ones), they appear to see the need to form the relationship, and relate with one another regularly, as a way of relieving themselves of the boredom and frustration that comes with their refugee status, as they could not move freely and engage in meaningful and decent economic endeavour

for existence and survival. The novel reveals that while at the store, these characters review the happenings back home in Africa, as a way of counting themselves to be lucky to have escaped to America. In fact, they recall thirty-five (35) coups in Africa and "… dictators, rebellious guerrilla leaders" (8). Reviewing this gives the reader a background to why they migrate to seek refuge in America. They find that life was not as envisaged from their individual homelands. The narrator-participant tells us about himself thus:

> Left alone behind the counter, I was hit with the sudden terrible and frightening reali[s]ation that everything I had cared for and loved was either lost or living on without me seven thousand miles away, and that what I had here was not a life but a poorly constructed substitution made up of one uncle, two friends, a grim store, and a cheap apartment. (40)

Stephanos' narrated experience above, when left alone at the store, appears psychological. He sees himself as a disappointed and frustrated shopkeeper who has failed in life. His reaction to this state of mind is the realisation that his life as a migrant is a failure. There is no doubt that his life revolves round a relation, his two friends and fellow migrants (Ken and Joe), his "grim" store to quote him, and the poor accommodation he lives in. A character who lives such a life would no doubt be in dire need of friends to regularly relate with, share views and opinions with, hence the psychological bonding to his two friends as a survival strategy, in order to survive the awkward situation he finds himself.

In addition, he recalls losing all that he cares for, and loves, in Ethiopia, such as the family bond, evident in the phrase in the quote: "everything I had cared for and loved… lost or living on without me seventy thousand miles away [in Ethiopia, Africa]", above. Having lost his family ties, it becomes imperative he adopts bonding at the psychological level as a survival strategy, as he concludes that "what [he] had here [in America] was not a life, but a poorly constructed substitution…" to requote the quotation above. Thus psychological bonding becomes a strategy to survive disappointment, and disconnection from the homeland as there is no intimate familial relationship in his new-found land, except the friendly bonding he finds in his fellow migrants, and friends, Ken and Joe. It is instructive to note that each time this trio meet, they review not only their lives as migrants in a foreign land, but also the lives of those left behind in Africa as

being reported in foreign media such as the *Washington Post* (42-43). The narrator reports that "Joseph [Joe] and Kenneth [Ken] come to the store together, this time…" (42). The regularity of their meeting is not in doubt as the bond is such that keeps, and helps them to alleviate the frustration and boredom of unrealised American dreams. Stepahnos tells us, to show the regularity of their coming together thus: "I go to the back of the store and pull out the fold-up table and chairs the three of us always sit" (3). The phrase "the three of us always sit" as in the quote above indicates a psychological bonding of the three migrants in the narrative. The novelist uses the bonding to suggest a survival strategy as the characters find themselves alienated in a foreign land, being refugees and escapees from their individual homelands in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya and Congo). Having lost family intimacy, and bonds in their homelands, they thus survive the inner feelings of loneliness without family members to relate with, by forming a new relationship in their migrant lives with their fellow African migrants, hence one find the trio in constant touch with one another at Stephanos shop, the meeting point for African brotherhood, as a strategy to survive the lose of family members back home in Africa, and the life of an illegal immigrant and refugee in America, where survival is challenging. The situation becomes worse when they realise they cannot go back to Africa, as the situation left behind does not improve as they read and update themselves from the *Washington Post* and other media.

Okpewho (2006) argues that:

> […] the conduct of affairs in many African nation has become so demonic as to discourage any illusions by the citizen of exercising honest conscience, let alone of challenging the government's authority in any regard. Which is why some of us have fled our countries to settle elsewhere. (69)

Okpewho helps us in the above, to see why African migrants find it difficult to return to their homelands after sometime, as the envisaged greener pasture is not actualised. The social, economic and political situation back in Africa makes a return uninteresting, and unthinkable. Hence they remain in the new found land, and confront the challenges as they adopt strategies to survive. One of such strategies is bonding at the psychological level.

In his creation, Mengestu fictionalises Stephanos to narrate further:

> At seven-thirty [in the evening] I close the doors to the store. Neither Joseph nor Kenneth asks me why I'm closing early, whether it has been a good day, since no one has entered since they arrived[…].
>
> Kenneth throws his arm around my shoulder and says 'come on, Stephanos. It's time to leave". He squeezes my shoulder once, firmly, for encouragement. (43)

There is a sense of psychological bonding in the quote above. Stephanos reports to the reader that the day's sales at his shop has not been encouraging. It has been a bad day for him as there was low patronage. But as a friend, and fellow African, Kenneth (Ken) tries to encourage him as he warmly embraces him, taking his arm round his (Stephano's) shoulders. This move and action is psychological as it sparks off an encouraging reaction from Stephanos. The phrase "come on, Stephanos" in the quote gives an affectionate response to Stephanos' bad day at the shop. This is with the noble intent to give hope to the hopeless Stephanos, and create a sense of psychological bonding (brotherhood) in a foreign land. That migrants adopt psychological bonding as a survival strategy is not in doubt. This is obvious when the reader notes the bond, friendly relationship among the trio in the narrative under examination. Stephanos, the pivot character on which other two migrant characters revolve, tells us that Ken advises him thus:

> You have to change [business strategy] with the times, Stephanos[…]. You can't rely on a bunch of kids and prostitutes to make your living anymore[…].
>
> You can't stand still, man. You have to move on. That's the way the world works. I've been telling you and Joseph this for years, but you never listen. (190)

This is an encouraging business suggestion from a concerned friend, and fellow African migrant, no doubt. This suggestion, it appears, the novelist uses it to illustrate psychological bonding of the three chief characters (Stephanos, Ken and Joe) in the novel. There is bonding indeed, as a critical study of the novel reveals. The three characters are always meeting at Stephanos store to review their individual lives; as shown in the quote above and their collective lives as African migrants in America. Thus Mengestu uses this scene, and other scenes illustrating psychological bonding in the novel to strengthen the bond among them as it draws them closer, and glues them

together, having the same African personality and sensibility, in a foreign land. This is a survival strategy, the author suggests.

In order to continue to strengthen the bond, at the psychological level of existence as migrants in America, Mengestu's focus on bonding as a survival strategy, move out of Stephano's shop to a bar, in the city. Stephanos reveals:

> Joseph and I made plans to meet at our damp, sometimes crowded bar on the edge of the city[…] and he would call Kenneth at his office and talk him into meeting us there […] the three of us would spend yet another Christmas night together, laughing out our isolation, mocking one another and ourselves for all we were worth[…]. (180)

From the above, the author moves his characters away from Stephanos store to the city, and locates them in a bar. This is with the intent to give them a psychological relief, as they socialise outside the regular store setting of Stephanos and his business customers. Thus the novelist dramatises the characters to show that they meet regularly to review their lives as migrants. In the quote, the writer gives an insight into the conclusion above when he writes that while being together having fun in a bar, the characters laugh at their "isolation," mock "one another" and themselves for what they "worth" to use the author's phrases. They laugh and mock themselves because, having reviewed their lives in America, they find it not satisfactory. What they note is frustration and disappointment as they only survive through "frustrating, underpaying jobs and unreali[s]ed ambitions" (145), and non-profit making daily sales shopping business as in the case of Stephanos. Joseph (Joe) for instance has a Ph.D. having lived in America for nineteen (19) years. Yet he works menially at the "Capital Hotel, and now the colonial Grill,[…]" (171).

Going to the bar, and restaurants to eat, and drink together, is evident of the fact that there is a bond among these three characters. There is a psychological bonding as a survival strategy which they try as much as possible to maintain, and strengthen. This bonding helps them to stabilise psychologically to some extent, as they confront the daily challenges of a migrant which they least envisaged before migration, and escape from their homelands in Africa.

This study illustrates the survival strategy of African migrants in America. Psychological bonding of characters as demonstrated so far gives the reader the

impression of "togetherness" of Africans even in foreign lands. As refugees and migrants, the three characters of Mengestu's narrative depict the lives of migrants and their survival strategy abroad. Bonding as shown at the psychological level of existence of the characters is a way of relating with one another to enhance the brotherhood, and to enable them relate, and ponder less on their isolation and refugee status. It thus informs why sometimes they shift venue for their regular meeting from Stephanos store to a bar or a restaurant in town. Their situation compels them to share feelings, eat, and drink together as they review happenings around them. Thus, psychological bonding helps the characters to cope with the life of a migrant in a foreign land. The novelist, Mengestu has no doubt given the reader a fictional world which illustrates how African migrants live and survive in their land of sojourn either as voluntary or involuntary migrants. The characters' reaction to their unfriendly environment through psychological bonding is a strategy to live in the environment.

Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* also agrees with Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* in the representation of psychological bonding as a strategy to survive as migrants. In *Harare North,* Chikwava gives us a fictional British society where his unnamed narrator flees to, from Zimbabwe, in Africa, seeking asylum. Being an asylum seeker in London, the unnamed narrator tries to quickly adopt strategies for survival as he leaves detention camp eight days after arrival, and detention (4). The narrative reveals that political turmoil forced the unnamed narrator and many others before him to flee to London to avoid being trapped, and killed in the Zimbabwean political imbroglio at the time. The unnamed narrator tells us that "[he] never wanted to leave Zimbabwe and come to this funny place [London] but things force him" (16). Here, Chikwava's unnamed narrator reveals to the reader how much he wanted to remain in his homeland, without running away. The quote appears to suggest that, London, the place he migrates to, is a "funny place". And this is because he finds that the new found land is frustrating, and he is disappointed that things are not working out as he envisaged. There is an overbloated expectation at home before migration. But ironically, he finds that he is not only an asylum seeker, but also a migrant who squats, hunting for non-existent menial jobs, and running from police and immigration officers.

This scenario makes him and other migrants to adopt a strategy to survive the failed dreams of a greener pasture in London. Thus they adopt bonding at the psychological level as a survival strategy. The novel reveals that inasmuch as they squat with one another, the characters enjoy the bond as they visit once in a while even when they leave the other in the squat. The unnamed narrator reveals: "I get back to our house and I am in high spirits and I try to cheer up Shingi and give him the chance to chew my ear about why the long face when *Harare North* is such a great place to live" (105). A critical study of the above quote illustrates a character who sees himself as one whose relationship with Shingi can make happy as he visits the latter. The unnamed first-person narrator-participant, comes in with high spirits, with a sense of brotherhood with Shingi. Shingi appears forlon, unhappy with his life as a migrant. But the sense of a visiting and, interacting with fellow African migrant could make him happy. This association, relationship between the unnamed narrator and Shingi is bonding. There is a bond between them as African migrants in London, hence the unnamed narrator sees the need to visit him, cheer him up, rather than allow him to continue in his sad mood. Thus one can conclude that psychological bonding as the author demonstrates above, is a survival strategy the African migrants in his fictional London society adopt.

Besides, it must be noted that Chikwava in his art, contrives a home away from home. This is the metaphor of chestnut tree in the narrative, a rallying point, a meeting centre for every African migrant irrespective of the African country of origin. The chestnut tree in the novel is a place where migrants come, socialise, discuss and even hide away from the British police, and immigration officers who chase squatters and illegal immigrants about. Thus the chestnut tree is a haven for relaxation, and a place to ease off psychological tension created by the frustration and disappointment of the migrant life in London. The unnamed narrator tells us further:

> I go to Ritzy Cinema. Under the big chestnut tree. There is heap of them laid back liars, dog thieves in trench coats, pigeons, coarse runaway married men that have develop bad habits like spitting on pavement every minute,[…] all them funny types is gathered there on the grass or the benches. (127)

The unnamed narrator in the above goes to the chestnut tree where all kinds of people assemble. The chestnut tree is not just a tree. It is a shield, a place of refuge for African

migrants, who, in London where they thought would be a greener pasture, comingle with fellow African migrants to review their lives, and survive the unfriendly and frustrating environment. They appear to find solace under the tree which does not discriminate. It is important to observe that nobody squats, no squatter squats under the tree as they sit on the grass or on the benches. They are free, happy, as they chat, relate and even play games. The tree is a kind of psychological relief for them as a sense of African brotherhood pervades the atmosphere. Thus we conclude that it is a strategy for survival as there is psychological bonding among them. This psychological relationship helps the reader to understand the plight of a migrant in a foreign land, as they are not psychologically stable, but always tensed, restless, being chased by immigration officers as illegal migrants. The unnamed narrator reveals a scene at the chestnut tree to us thus:

> On them faces of everyone around there's gleeful look. Someone rush and grab dartboard from the MFH and having it on the chestnut tree. Peter come and stand between the challenger with no name and the MFH, ask them to put them fives each for him to hold and give to the one who win. (129)

The novelist in the above quote takes the reader to the chestnut tree to see the friendly atmosphere, and thus psychological relief that each migrant gets from the association. An examination reveals characters who are happy, and joyful to have come together to meet with fellow migrants. Playing games and betting, is a way, and a calm attitude towards their situation as the games delight them. And who wins the bet on the games is equally happy. This is a psychological bonding strategy to survive in the society as they do not have stable menial jobs, and accommodation, being squatters. This association is a psychological attitude towards their migrant and illegal status in London. It is a way of coping with the frustration the life of a migrant throws on them. No wonder, McMahon and McMahon (1986) remind us that psychology "[…] includes the activities of large groups of people or their attitudes, […]" (4).

Continuing, the novelist helps us to note that the attitude of the migrants, includes: "[…] homeless people start to trickle to the tree with their dogs, ready to start to put out the burning truths of their lives with buckets of brew and all" (134). A critical and interpretive examination of the quote above reveals migrants whose attitude towards their

situation in a foreign land is such that takes them to the chestnut tree where they meet and review their lives, smoke and drink. It is instructive to observe that the homeless, squatters assemble together, anonymous narrator being one. The homeless, smoking and drinking under the chestnut tree, illustrates a life of destitution among the migrants, hence they adopt psychological bonding as a survival strategy. Coming together to smoke, drink, talk about their lives as illegal immigrants and sometimes the lives lived and left behind in Zimbabwe, Africa, indicates that the chestnut tree is a bonding centre. They assemble there, united by one purpose – survival strategy in a foreign land.

However, Chikwava peers deeper into the lives of the migrants and reveals that there is "Zimbabwean community in Harare North" (132). The unnamed narrator, focusing Aleck, a fellow migrant and squatter, reveals further: "The kind of things that Aleck have been doing – he should not complain when if Zimbabwe community in Harare North start throwing funny kind of mouth around […] (132)". Here, it is being revealed that there is a Zimbabwean community in Harare North. This suggests that there is an area in London, mapped out for migrants from Zimbabwe, aside from many others scattered all over London. This community so formed is an association of Zimbabweans who migrated from the homeland to London. It is the coming together of migrants with the same memory of socio-political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe which forced them to foreign land for greener pastures. The Zimbabwean community is a survival strategy. It is a bonding of Zimbabwean migrants as they relate, interact and review their lives and future prospects as migrants in London. It must be noted that in spite of this community, the migrants still find life difficult to live. The expected greener pasture is not forthcoming, and it is far from been realised. "Life is not fair" (223), in London as a migrant, the author seems to conclude. This informs why the migrants regularly meet at the chestnut tree to play games, drink, smoke, and socialise as a way of bonding themselves psychologically. This we conclude is a survival strategy, as the unnamed narrator and participant in the narrative relates further:

> Without one word, I pack my suitcase and make way to the chestnut tree, where I sit and smoke cigarette. Shingi is not happy, but he come with me having realise even if he is not illegal, the police still able to bag him if it turn out to something is unlawful about the squat. (133)

Chikwava in the above, further depicts the chestnut tree as a place for relaxation, a comfort zone away from the squatting and uneasy life of the migrant. Squatting is illegal. But many immigrants in the novel squat. Thus they are not living the life they envisaged. Reviewing their lives of frustration and disappointment as they squat, do menial jobs, run away from immigration and police officers as illegal migrants, and destitute, they adopt psychological bonding as a survival strategy in the circumstance. The unnamed narrator concludes: "I spend all day in bed trying to collect my head into one heap […] (177). I "march straight to the chestnut tree. Among them all the homeless and asylum seeker, […]" (179).

The above quote summarises the characters of the migrants who regularly meet at the chestnut tree. The homeless, squatters, asylum seekers assemble together, as a psychological bonding strategy to survive their unrealised dream for migration. What an irony of situation that these characters fled their homelands to become homeless, squatters, asylum seekers in a foreign land, giving in to drinking, smoking, and games-playing as a psychological bonding survival strategy.

Using the fictional Harare North, Chikwava laments, through his anonymous narrator, over the unbearable outcome of their lives in fictional London. Casting mind back home, the unnamed narrator reminds the reader that "Back home inflation have go crazy at Zillion per cent, your family is starving […]? (175). In London where they flee to, they end up frustrated and disappointed as the society becomes indifferent and docks them into a wretched and pitiable corner. It is indeed an irony of situation. The novelist, writing fiction, thus employs this artistic device of irony to demonstrate his fictional prowess in novel writing. Perrine (1983) reminds us that:

> IN IRONY OF SITUATION, usually the most important kind for the story writer, the discrepancy is between appearance and reality, or between expectation and fulfillment, or between what is and what would seem appropriate. (203)

There is no doubt that back in fictional Zimbabwe before migrating out of the socio-economic and political crisis of the homeland, Zimbabweans as represented by Chikwava's characters in *Harare North*, expected a better socio-economic deal which was why they headed for London, and not any nearby African country, for settlement. On

arrival, and subsequently struggling to survive, they find themselves in more socio-economic crisis as they are unable to find jobs, comfortable homes, and thus adopt psychological bonding as a survival strategy. Chikwava's creation of situational irony in his novel helps the reader to understand that African migrants in Britain, Europe, America and other parts of the world are not finding life as easy as they expected before migration. Many of them end up as destitute, an ironic situation.

The reality is a sad and an ironic one. Thus Chikwava's art in *Harare North* is a successful one as it encapsulates the meaning of the novelist's intention in his fictional cosmos. Perrine quoted above concurs with this when he argues that irony helps the author to give meanings to his world without "stating them" (204).

4.3 Emotional Bonding as a survival strategy

Being "connected with people's feelings" (479), according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* quoted earlier, and "[…] pertaining to or expressive of emotion. […]. Having capacity for emotion […]" (414), as expressed by *Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary* earlier referred to here, emotion is a behaviour whereby one consciously or unconsciously forms a relationship with another individual in order to forge a bond whereby emotions of joy and excitement resulting to a satisfactory outcome could be realised.

In Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution,* the novelist creates his protagonist, and migrant character as one who adopts emotional bonding as a survival strategy in America, away from his Ethiopian crisis-riden homeland. The novelist in his creation, is observed to have psychologically bonded his protagonist, Stephanos, with his two fellow migrants, Kenneth (Ken) and Joseph (Joe) in the narrative as they always meet in Stephanos store. The author further reveals the budding relationship between Stephano's Logan Circle neighbour, Judith, and the former. Stephanos narrates:

> The next day Joseph and Kenneth came to the store and I told them about my dinner with Judith. I had mentioned her before – the house, Naomi, our conversations at the store […]. When I told them about the dinner and brief kiss, the two of them looked up from their chessboard at each other, and not me.
> [….]

> 'You see' Joseph said. 'You should listen to me more often.
> […]
> 'You have nothing to be embarrassed about, Stepohanos. You've been in America for almost seventeen years. It's about time you dated a white woman. (61-62)

Stephanos in the above reveals to the reader, the forming intimate and affectionate relationship with a female "having capacity for emotion" to requote *Webster's Dictionary* above. He reports to us that he seems to be in a relationship with his neighbour, Judith, and Naomi (mother and daughter). An examination of the quote shows that he is in close contact with the family as he had had dinner with them in their private home, and had had a brief kiss. For Stephanos to kiss, is evident of the fact that there is an emotional relationship that he is already enjoying. Being alone always in the store, until in the evening when Ken and Joe would come around, Joe suggests he gets a white lady for a date. His friends observe that he has been in America for seventeen years, all alone, without a lady friend, and this manner of life (living alone without a woman) is not the best "way for a man to live", Ken corroborates in the novel. A critical look at the conversation between Stephanos and his two friends, and fellow African migrants, shows that there is need for bonding, an intimate human relationship as a strategy for survival in a foreign land. Dating a white lady as being suggested to Stephanos is to get the latter into a relationship that would help him have the emotion of joy, and be less lonely. This is emotional bonding as the relationship with a female partner would affect the bodily feeling of love, and affection. This indeed compels him to kiss when he visited them for a dinner in their home. He feels the need for a companion, a lover with whom he can share affectionate feelings and love in a society where he feels restricted to his fellow migrants.

Mengestu in his novelistic invention, illustrates emotional bonding as migrant's survival strategy. He leads the reader to his chief character and first person narrator, Stephanos, to portray emotional bonding as survival strategy in Washington, America. This the author does as he brings the reader to the knowledge of Stephanos emotional bond with prostitutes. The narrator tells us:

> I had slept with almost every prostitute who had come into my store. I did so by refusing to take their money when they come to the register to pay for their candy bar or can of soda. I would tell them that if they were free, they should

> come back alone just before I closed. When they did, I […] for a half hour tried to forget everything about myself. It was easy enough. (138)

Having cheap sex with prostitutes as Stephanos confesses above is nothing but his own way of coping with his loneliness, and frustration in America. Engaging in sex with prostitutes as he reports, is an emotional survival strategy as he bonds himself with the prostitutes who come to his store to buy things.

Doing this is evident of the fact that, as a normal human being, a mature adult male, in a foreign land, he needs a female companion, the author seems to suggest. His emotional bonding with prostitutes is consequent upon the fact that he cannot afford the financial implication of having a steady date with a white lady. Besides, he is a poor, lonely African migrant who lives on the little money that comes from the daily sales at the shop. This conclusion is obvious when one examines the quote where he says that he refused to take money from them for what they bought. Thus he uses that as a strategy to lure them back, and exploit the situation to have sex with them. There is no doubt that this relationship is an emotional bonding as Stephanos is usually relieved of bodily tension, feelings of loneliness, as he forgets his plights, and ironical existence as a migrant. This is noted from his statement in the quote above when he says that: "I […] for a half hour tried to forget everything about myself. It was easy enough". Thus the author uses this scene Stephanos narrates here to illustrate emotional bonding as a survival strategy. That the character forgets "everything about" himself indicates the emotional satisfaction he derives from the sensual pleasure he gets from his interpersonal relationship with the opposite sex – the prostitutes. The emotional bonding is indeed a survival strategy to alleviate the emotional trauma and instability associated with his life as a migrant in a foreign land.

In addition, not only does Stephanos have sex with prostitutes as an emotional bonding strategy, he also relates with Judith and her daughter, Naomi. The novel reveals Stephanos co-read a novel with Naomi, when the latter visits him at the store. Reading a novel together with a girl illustrates an emotional attachment to each other. Stephanos reports:

> I spent the next three days after she [Naomi] picked it [the novel] out, reading *The Brothers Karamazor* with Naomi. With school closed for the holidays, she came to the store everyday just shortly after waking up. (102)

Naomi, the author reveals above, appears emotionally attached to Stephanos, hence she comes to the store every day to relate with the latter. What intrigues a critical reader is the author's fictionalisation of Stephanos and Naomi in a novel reading session at the store, all alone. He reports:

> I looked up every couple of pages to see if Naomi was still paying attention, and of course she was[…]. I felt her staring at me sometimes when my eyes were focused on the page, and I realized she was taking it all in, not just the words, but me, and the scene that we had created together […]. I tried not to notice too much, to simply just live […]. Every time I looked at her I became aware of just how seemingly perfect this time was […], and I would be happy once again. (103)

The foregoing text foregrounds the emotional attachment Naomi has developed with Stephanos. In the scene, "an older man [Stephanos] and a girl [Naomi] young enough to be the man's daughter", (103) sit together reading a novel. This brings the duo intimately close to each other, as it enhances emotional bonding. Stephanos sees the setting a perfect one as it gives him joy. Thus bonding with the opposite sex, Naomi, a neighbour's daughter, in this manner, is a survival strategy as it relieves him of emotional pain arising from the low patronage at the store, and his unfulfilled life as a migrant generally. That this emotional bonding is a survival strategy cannot be in doubt is born out by the fact that both of them enjoy the intimacy, but Stephanos enjoys it more as he has no wife, and no female date, hence he flirts with mother and daughter (Judith and Naomi). Nevertheless, he appears to be more intimately bonded with Naomi, than her mother. This is obvious when one critically interprets his comment thus:

> Sometimes while I read, Naomi would lay her head against my arm or in my lap and rest there, wide awake and attentive, until forced to move. It was just enough to make me see how one could want so much out of life. (105)

Emotional bonding as a survival strategy, the focus of Mengestus fictional cosmos is dramatised in the above scene. Critical examination of the scene reveals his character,

Stephanos enjoy the feeling of warmth and joy in his relationship with Naomi. In the book reading session, Stephanos tells us that Naomi lays her head "against [his] arm, or in [his] lap and rest there." This is a demonstration of an emotional intimacy in the relationship between the two of them. Laying her head on an adult male's lap gives the impression of an affection for the male adult. Stephanos, the focus here, enjoys the display of affection from Naomi as he expresses the emotion of happiness when he says in the quote above thus: "… one could want so much out of life." The author here helps the reader to understand why such mature adult would allow a young girl who could be his daughter to lay so intimately close to him, on his lap, in the store. This is an emotional strategy to survive his loneliness, and boredom, as the bonding between the two of them makes him feel happy and wishes to get more of it.

There is no doubt that Stephanos's relationship with the Judith's family (Judith and her only daughter, Naomi) is an emotional bonding strategy for survival in his lonely and bored migrant life in America. The novel reveals that he is fond of both of them to such an extent that Joseph warns he should be careful with American women (109). Mengestu in his creation illustrates a character who sees emotional attachment to a female as an avenue to cope with the irony of life in America. Creating Stephanos, the author tries to show that the former cannot find stability in his emotion except he is in the company of Naomi, or the mother, Judith. In fact, when both travelled to Connecticut, Stephanos felt lonely, abandoned, and emotionally down. He finds himself looking forward to their quick return to Logan Circle (187). Indeed, he bares his mind thus: "Without her and Naomi, the nights were suddenly hard. I found that it was difficult to sleep…" (187). Stephanos confession here portrays a character who is dependent on his emotional relationship with the Judith's. There is emotional attachment to, and intimacy with the two (Judith and Naomi). We could note in the above that Stephanos suffers from loneliness, as he could not sleep without seeing, or being with Judith and Naomi. He finds it not easy to stay alone, unable to sleep even, giving thought to their absence. A seeming void is created as they travel. Thus he yearns for their quick return, and the bonding at the emotional level of existence. The Wikipedia cited earlier in this chapter concludes:

> Bonding typically refers to the process of attachment that develops between romantic or platonic partners, close friends, or parents and children. This bond is characterised by emotions such as affection and trust. Any two people who spend time together may form a bond. (1)

There is no doubt that Mengestu's character Stephanos enjoys an emotional attachment to Naomi, as well as Judith. There appears to be affection for the two of them. This seems romantic as well as platonic, hence he adopts such emotional bonding in his personal relationship with the two females. This is indeed, a survival strategy in his transnational space as a migrant.

The novelist in his fictional creation seems to suggest that migration to a foreign land has its own challenges. One of such is survival in the daily existence of the migrant. He has been able to use the novel genre to imaginatively shape a world where African migrants adopt bonding as a survival strategy. Emotional bonding helps the migrant to cope with the loneliness and boredom associated with the life of a migrant in a foreign land. Thus the author seems to conclude that in this age of migration, intending migrants need to understand what awaits them, and possible strategy that could be adopted to survive in the new found land.

4.4 Conclusion

Thus far, it has been argued that bonding is a survival strategy among African migrants in Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution*, and Brain Chikwava's *Harare North*. In the exploration, we noted psychological and emotional bonding. At the psychological level, it has been observed that while *Children of the Revolution* presents Stephanos and his two friends and fellow migrants always meeting at the former's shop, and sometimes at a bar in the city, the unnamed narrator and fellow migrants in *Harare North* meet regularly under the chestnut tree to relate with one another and review their lives as migrants in foreign lands.

Besides, we noted emotional bonding in Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* as Stephanos enjoys intimate emotional attachment to Naomi and Judith and sometimes enjoys brief and cheap sexual relationship with prostitutes who come to patronise his

shop. Thus we concluded that psychological and emotional bonding are strategies African migrants adopt to survive their transnational space.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that African novelists who emerged since the 1980s in the twentieth century till date, the twentry-first century, have explored migrancy to investigate the African continent thereby exposing the challenges that force her citizens to migrate from one nation or continent to another, and essentially, their experiences as migrants in their foreign land of destinations.

Amma Darko, Inongo-vi-Makome, Chika Unigwe, NoViolet Bulawayo, Ike Oguine, Dinaw Mengestu and Brain Chikwava are purposively selected novelists for the study. The selected novels are observed to illustrate migrant experiences of characters who migrate to foreign lands as a result of frustrations and disapointments in the homelands, arising from failed governance.

Besides, the study shows that the focus is not on migrants who travewlled abroad to acquire academic knowledge and professional skills and returned to settle in their countries, but on African migrants whom the individual authors explore to demonstrate how socio-economic and political situations in their individual homelands force to migrate to their various transnational spaces, and the strategies adopted for survival. The study further revealed that the issue of migrancy as the selected African migrant novels dramatise through the critical lenses of subalternism, a variant of post-colonial critical literary theory, and psychoanalysis. This shows how the lopsided relationship between the leaders and the led force the citizens to flee the homelands, and seek socio-economic refuge as they adopt survival strategies to survive in foreign lands.

However, the study exposed the experiences of migrants' survival at the economic level of existence in foreign lands through the adoption of strategies such as menial jobs, marriages, fraud, prostitution and gigolism, accent compliance, renaming and denaming, betrayal, and bonding at the interpersonal level, and how this is narrated. Furthermore, our examination of migrant experiences in America reveals that the migrants adopt different strategies in order to survive at the economic level of existence. In NoViolet

Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, we noted migrants painfully report their engagement in menial jobs as a survival strategy. Darling the narrator and her Aunt Fostalina the author focuses on, to show how to a breaking point they clean toilets, pick tobacco and fruits, clean hotel rooms and sometimes keep two jobs, low-paying jobs in order to survive as a migrant. This we noted is a survival strategy in the foreign land. This survival strategy, menial jobs, we also noted is the preoccupation of Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*. It is observed that his first-person-narrator participant, Obi, flees Nigeria from socio-economic woes which resulted in frustration and disappointment, and migrates to America. As an African migrant without valid documents, we noted he adopts menial jobs, keeping night jobs, security guard job, as an economic survival strategy, in spite of his degree in economics.

Moreso, it is noted that the migrants also engage in marriage as a strategy to survive. We observed this in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* as Akobi marries Gitte, a German, for economic survival. While Osey remarries as well, his Ghananian African wife works hard menially to raise much money to remarry too, by marrying a German, a homosexual, for economic reason as well. In Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, we noted a twenty-year-old boy marry a fifty-year-old Belgian for economic reason as this would enable him quickly legalise his stay, being an illegal African migrant. This is also a survival strategy, we concluded. Besides, it is observed in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* that characters indulge in fraudulent practices such as forgery, advanced fee fraud (419), cheating and tricks as strategies for economic survival in America. In a conversation between Krista and Maina, in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, the author is noted to reveal characters who adopt advanced fee fraud (419) as a survival strategy. This is also noted in Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale*, as the Hook escapes FBI arrest in America, and flies back to Nigeria. The author uses Obi, his narrator to reveal Uncle Happiness as a coneman, who cheats, tricks, and forges documents for fellow African migrants to survive. We concluded that this is also an economic survival strategy on his part.

The study reveals that Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, set in contemporary Ghana (Africa) and Germany (Europe), depicts Mara, the author's first-person narrator and protagonist, migrate to Europe to join the husband, Akobi, to negotiate survival at the

economic level. In addition, we noted in the novel that Mara negotiates economic survival by adopting prostitution as a strategy. Her husband, Akobi and his friend, Osey tells her that that is the only way she can survive and make much money as she does what other African women do in Europe – prostitution for huge economic gain, and not for pleasure. Thus, Mara engages in prostitution as a strategy for economic survival in Europe. Darko reveals in her novel that Mara engages in it with as many men as possible for commercial sex and even in the cold, to earn money and survive economically and not for emotional, or psychological, or sensual pleasure, or gain. On the part of Osey and Akobi, they exploit to negotiate their own economic survival. Osey and Akobi negotiate with Peepy, a brothel owner, to get a percentage of the money accruing from Mara's prostitution. Thus, we concluded that they exploit Mara as their gain from the latter's strategy for survival.

In Inongo's *Natives*, the author's protagonist, Gerard Essomba is shown to adopt gigolism as a strategy for economic survival as he migrates from Cameroon, Africa, to Spain, Europe. In Spain, he meets Montse in a plaza who proposes work to him, which he accepts. Close and interpretive reading of the novel reveals that Gerard Essomba is a gigolo, who services Montse and her friend, Roser, sexually in turns for financial gain, and economic survival. The study reveals further that as a gigolo, Gerald Essomba is priced highly by the two women because of his extra-large penis which endeared him to them. His negotiation and strategy for economic survival as an African migrant is the focus of *Natives*, we concluded. In addition, the issue of migrancy was also noted in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street,* set in Nigeria, Africa and Belgium, Europe. *On Black Sisters' Street* presents characters who migrate in an attempt to negotiate survival at the economic level in a greener pasture.

The author uses Sisi, Efe, Ama and Joyce, four major female characters in the novel to illustrate economic survival strategy in a foreign land. We noted that Sisi and her friends, are unemployed, though educated, in Nigeria. This economic situation put them at an economic low ebb, hence, they begin to look elsewhere for survival. This need to survive, we observed in our study, motivates them to get engaged by a human trafficker, the author christened Oga Dele who packages them like a cargo to an unknown destination for an unknown job – prostitution as later known and indulged in, as a

strategy, and only strategy for economic survival. Thus we concluded that these female characters engage in commercial sex as a strategy, not for the love, passion or pleasure obtainable, but for economic gain.

We also noted accent compliance in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*. In the novel, we observed characters' attempt to reflect American speech pattern, pronunciations and mannerisms in order to fit into the American society. The need to comply with the American accent is so critical that characters even practice it, and use it even in their telephone conversatons with relatives back in Africa, as in the case of Darling and her mother. We concluded that accent compliance is a survival strategy as it helps them in menial job placements.

Nevertheless, we also noted renaming and denaming as survival strategies adopted by characters who flee Zimbabwe to America. The novel, we noted, illustrates Darling and her fellow migrants in America hid their real African names, and adopted false names such as America, Britain, Germany and Sweden to mention a few. It was concluded that it was a survival strategy at the socio-economic level of existence, in America. We also noted denaming, a situation whereby Darling and her friends give birth to children, and name them American and European sounding names to identify with the American society and survive economically, as well as socially, as their children enroll in schools in America. Thus we argued that denaming is a survival strategy as the children bear Aaron, Josh, Corey to mention a few.

Unigwe's *On Black Sister Street* reveals that the author renames her migrant characters to enable them survive in Europe as their names would sound appealingly. Chisom is renamed Sisi, Alek renamed as Joyce, to enable them survive as migrants in Europe. Inongo's *Natives* also shows Gerard Essomba pick up Bambara Keita as his name through passport usurpation to enable him survive the immigration officers at the border, and to a large extent, to enable his economic survival in Spain. We could recall that he confesses his real name, Gerard Essomba, after using the fake name Bambara Keita, to gain the job of a gigolo from Montse and Roser. In Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Akobi, her male character renames himself as Cobby. He uses Cobby when with Gitte his German wife, but uses Akobi when with his Ghanaian wife, Mara, who portrays the role of a sister in Germany.

Betrayal as a strategy for economic existence and survival in the lives of migrants is also explored by the novelists under study, to illustrate that no relationship can be stable in a transnational space, and in the life of a migrant. In *Beyond the Horizon* we concluded that Akobi betrays his wife, Mara, into prostitution as a survival strategy. This he does by taking his wife out on a supposed outing where Mara gets drunk, and lured into sex orgy with ten (10) men. Thereafter, we noted that Akobi hands her over to a brothel owner where she goes into full-time prostitution as a survival strategy to negotiate economic existence in Europe. Darko also presents Kay to be a victim of betrayal as the latter's boyfriend betrays her into prostitution as well. We thus concluded that Darko uses these victims of betrayal, to illustrate a survival strategy, and that the act of betrayal is common among migrants as they meet with the challenges of survival in a transnational locale, taking advantage of one another in order to survive at the economic level.

The female characters, and gigolo (Gerard Essomba) Inongo invents in *Natives* also portraybetrayal. Our study revealed that Montse and Roser are close companions, and company executives. But the author creates them in the novel in such a way that we noted betrayal. Roser, it is observed, gets transferred to Germany from Spain by her company boss. At this point, the author revealed the betrayal trait in the character of Roser, as the latter enjoins Gerard Essomba, a gigolo to betray Montse, her friend. We noted in our study that Roser's plan to betray her friend was because of her selfish interest to continue to have Gerard Essomba's large "instrument of work", (extra-large penis) while in Germany. It will be recalled from our study that Roser elopes with Gerard Essomba to Germany, leaving Montse stranded in their engagement with Gerard Essomba for sexual satisfaction for a fee. Thus, we concluded that the author contrives betrayal as a survival strategy in the fictional cosmos he gives us. On the part of Gerard Essomba, he embraces the proposal to betray Montse. Thus we argued that while Roser betrays Montse for emotional and psychological survival, Gerard Essomba betrays Montse as a strategy for his own economic survival and existence, as he appears unsure of tomorrow, having been offered a juicy welfare by Roser.

The study argued that *On Black Sisters' Street,* presents Polycarp as a character who betrays Joyce who looked forward to being married by the former. Polycarp, the novel reveals, terminates the budding relationship between him and Joyce as he argues

that he cannot marry a foreigner, Joyce being a Sudanese, and he a Nigerian. We concluded that this was a betrayal, having given Joyce high hope of continued relationship that will end up in marriage. This indeed is a strategy Polycarps adopts to survive. Sisi, we also discovered, betrays his mentor and trafficker, Oga Dele in Nigeria, and Madam in Belgium as well. This is obvious as Sisi cuts off every contact with Oga Dele in Nigeria, as she stops repayment of the latter's investment on her to travel abroad. On the part of her Madam, she stops every communication so as not to be responsible to her anymore. We thus inferred that this character trait Sisi exhibits towards Oga Dele in Nigeria, and her Madam in Belgium is betrayal of the confidence reposed in her to be a loyal commercial sex worker who would repay all investments on her. But her betrayal of both is a strategy to be free from any ties, and to double up efforts in her economic survival and independence in Europe.

The representation of migrancy in Dinaw Mengestu's *Children of the Revolution* and Brain Chikwava's *Harare North* focuses on bonding as a survival strategy in the daily existence of migrants. Mengestu in *Children of the Revolution*, and Chikwava in *Harare North* we noted, give us a world where characters adopt psychological bonding as a survival strategy in their lives as migrants. Stephanos, Kenneth (Ken) and Joseph (Joe), meet regularly in the evenings in Stephanos's shop to review their lives in America. Sometimes, they shift venue to restaurants and bars where they could eat, drink and discuss their lives. But the important thing is the bond in the interpersonal relationship among them. Such bond helps them to feel a sense of oneness as they comingle together and interact. Brain Chikwava's *Harare North*, we noted, guides his migrant characters to the chestnut tree where the squatters and homeless come together to drink, smoke and play games to alleviate the psychological trauma of the life of the migrant. At the emotional level of existence, we noted the artistic presentation of intimate emotional relationship between Stephanos and prostitutes as he engages in cheap sex with them, as well as the display of affection and feeling of love towards the Judith's family, made up of mother and daughter. Thus, we concluded that these relationships are a bonding, an emotional bonding, as a survival strategy in America.

It is pertinent to remark that all the novelists in this study demonstrate that they have not confined themselves to the "imaginative timidity" of the twentieth century as Nnolim, quoted earlier in this study, alleges:

> The 21st century beckons Africans to embrace new challenges in this epoch of globalization. If African literature in the 20th century suffered from imaginative timidity, it has no reason to be so confined in the 21st century. (4-5)

It is instructive to note that the selected novels individually, and collectively assert that migration from African nations to America and Europe is with the nobel intent to negotiate economic survival, whether as an illegal emigrant or a documented emigrant. African migrant novelists, and writers generally, who concern themselves with migrancy in the twenty-first century, like the authors selected dramatise, have indeed confronted the challenges of migrants in this twenty-first century. We observed that the novelists, as applicable in this study, engaged the fictional elements of flashback, characterisation, and devices of dramatic dialogue and irony in the selected sub-Saharan African migrant novels.

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