# DIASPORA, IDENTITY FORMATION AND CRISIS OF BELONGING IN BUCHI EMECHETA'S *SECOND CLASS CITIZEN* AND CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER DEGREE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,**
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**ZARIA, NIGERIA**

2016

## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled ***Diaspora, Identity Formation and Crisis of Belonging in Buchi Emecheta's Second Class Citizen and Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah*** has been carried out by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other Institution.

_____ _____ _____

Onuh Martha Ene Signature Date
M.A/ARTS/44426/2012-2013

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled ***DIASPORA, IDENTITY FORMATION AND CRISIS OF BELONGING IN BUCHI EMECHETA'S SECOND CLASS CITIZEN AND CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S AMERICANAH*** by Martha Ene ONUH meets the regulations governing the award of Masters in English Literature of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

_____ _____

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Father, Late Mr. Christopher Alenyi Onuh. You were the best husband, father, grandfather that we could ever wish for. Rest on Dad.

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I wish to express my sincere and utmost happiness, gratitude and appreciation to GOD Almighty for HIS provisions, protection and guidance throughout this work. I acknowledge my indebtedness to my supervisors Prof. Tanimu Abubakar and Dr. Edward Abah for their relentless effort, encouragement, strict and objective supervision.

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Lastly, I appreciate the support, love, prayers and encouragement of my parents Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Onuh and my siblings Pat, Stan, Miky, D Joe, Blessing and Tessy – God keep You.

## ABSTRACT

Diasporic literature centres on the experiences of people all around the world who leave their homelands in search of "greener pastures" or are forced out of such homelands for various reasons. As a neo-colonialist tendency, the search for greener pastures is often perceived as the way out of the socio-political dilemma of 21st century Nigeria. To repudiate this "green pasture" façade therefore, this dissertation explores issues of identity formation and the crisis of belonging in order to show that the Diasporic experience is a complex reality that amounts to double consciousness and/or identity crisis. In discussing Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) as Nigerian Diasporic Literature, this study adopts postcolonialism as the theoretical basis for the assessment of how the characters in the selected texts grapple with issues of race, identity, nostalgia and alienation in their new homes. The study proceeds on the assumption that Nigerian Diasporic Literature deserves critical attention since it expresses the relationship between literature and discourses like political instability, poverty, unemployment and other societal issues in Nigeria and the Diaspora where the various characters emigrate to. In this regard, the study examines the cause and effect relations of the diaspora experience in the texts under study and finds that immigrants who leave their country of origin in search of greener pastures are confronted and disillusioned by issues of racial discrimination and culture difference in the Western societies that they relocate to. The study also finds out that their experiences alienate them as the 'other' and deprives them of a sense of belonging.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Background to the Study

The term diaspora is found in the Greek translation of the Bible and originates in the words 'to sow widely'. For the Greeks, the expression was used to describe the colonisation of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean in the archaic period (800–600 BC).Although there was some displacement of the ancient Greeks to Asia Minor as a result of poverty, over-population and inter-state war, diaspora essentially had a positive connotation. Expansion through plunder, military conquest, colonisation and migration were the predominant features of the Greek diaspora (Cohen 1996, p.1).However, diaspora has overtime gained wider usage referring to "the migration of people from their place or countries of origin to other parts of the world" (Okpeh 1999). Brubaker (2005, p.3) also notes that the use of the term diaspora has been widening and suggests that one element of this expansion in use "involves the application of the term diaspora to an ever-broadening set of cases: essentially to any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space",hence, the need to focus on Nigerian diaspora. All the definitions of diaspora, whether it is dispersion of people from their homeland, or voluntary migration, or attachment to multiple nations, signify that diaspora involves concepts of identity and belonging. And the belongingness becomes a vehicle for people to share their connections, kinship, shared values, cultural heritage, their similarities and differences – the important elements in identity formation (Guragaini 2014, p.4)

The concept of diaspora has also been examined in relation to cultural, political, social, educational and literary representations, among others. Some examples are Hall's (1990) *Culture, Identity and Diaspora*, Vertovec's *The Political Importance of Diaspora* and

Panossian's Between *Ambivalence and Intrusion: Politics and Identity in Armenia* (1998) to mention a few. Although each one of them has adopted different historical and theoretical modalities, they have a common denominator: the opening of the term that once had been thought of as embodying a specific referent. This primary concern of these revisionist projects has been paralleled with the conjunction of the emergent schools of thought which includes post-structuralism, deconstructionism and post-colonialism, among others. They experimented with the creation of theoretical possibilities towards a proliferation of meanings and usages of the term in many aspects of human life. Such attraction also reflects the enigmatic power of the term as a constitutive aspect of human life. Fernandez (2009), for example, perceives diaspora as a notion that stimulates research in all directions as well as having a power to discover gaps and interrogates the nexus necessary between theory and practice. She believes that the:

> "diaspora can be managed meaningfully if we understand that it is in itself an open-source and that any attempt to limit its scope or its definition transgresses the boundaries of both its conceptual and epistemological framing. Diaspora is derived from the idea of scattering of seeds. As such the concept must be allowed to take root, transplant, cross-fertilise, rather than fossilise." (p.7)

To show the connection between postcolonialism, diaspora and the literary text therefore, the theoretical innovations of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford and others have in recent years bolstered postcolonial and diaspora studies, challenging ways in which we understand culture and developing new ways of thinking beyond the boundaries of the nation state. The notion of diasporic literature has been productive in giving attention to new forms of knowledge and discourse, whether these discourses are produced in the host-land, in the transitional spaces of cultures or absorbed by people at home. Thus, in literary and cultural studies, diasporic works have been a well-

established paradigm as appears the extensive writings of famous cultural and literary theorists such as Bhabha's *'Hybridity'* and *'Thirds Space'* (1994, 1996); Hall (1996) and

Gilory's (1997) *'Hybrid identities'*, among others. As a common theme, the aforementioned critics share in the exploration of the complex fabric of diaspora within the notions of Hybridity, 'culture-in-between,' cultural difference and multiculturalism. Reflecting on the role of those border-crossing theorists and artists who write outside the 'nation-state' borders, Azade (2001, p.36) observes that "every theory of postcolonial, transitional, or diasporic literature and art is most convincingly articulate and performed by works of literature and art themselves". With the emergence of literature as social practice the role of readers who engage with literary meanings and interpretation has become very much like agents who rely on literature to help them in larger purposes in life. Thus, in considering the history of diasporic literature, Abu-Shomar (2013, p.1) in *Critical Spaces of Diaspora for LiquidPost-Modernity* is of the view that:

> Literature of diasporas is an offshoot of diasporic experience. The assumption is that, for long, literature has been an integral part of postcolonial and diasporic experience which appears to be instrumental to our study of societies, cultures, historical momentum, and above all the critical discourses we sanctify to understand the human conditions.

In other words, the way the authors in this collection engage with the diasporic text might be broadly understood as an attempt to take in hand a revisionary approach to the stance of knowledge production and meaning-making in contemporary times. As Maniam (qtd in Dalai 2008, p.8) declares: "to understand the symbiosis between diasporic experience and the literature that grows in it, literature becomes a 'device to decode the epistemology of diaspora." Diasporic literary experience appropriates reality not as an authoritative end, but rather as an ongoing process with heteroglossic and polyphonic implications and intentions

(Dalai, 2008). As the influence of diasporic literature is growing, it is pertinent to examine the contributions of diasporic writers not only to the literature of their homeland but also in the global context.

In this age and time, shifting one's root has become a normal happening. It is on the basis of this that several studies have emerged, and chief among them is diasporic literary studies. Diasporic writers register their everyday experiences and plights in their works. In general, their writings talk more about the isolation in the new land, the problems they face in their new society and their 'in-betweeness.' In spite of the basic similarities in their experiences/expression, diasporic writing cannot be homogenised. As Brah (2003, p.616) states in her article *"Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities"*, diaspora experience differ according to "when, how, and under what circumstance one has settled in a new society". Even though the works of diasporic writers differ according to the reason of their movement, the common ground in their writing is their deliberate attempt to strike a balance in their search for identity in both societies. With such feelings, their mind swings between the home country and the new settlement. The tension of living in-between the two worlds is often reflected in their works. Rushdie (1983, p.76) in his essay 'The Indian Writer in England' describes the recollection of the diaspora communities about their homeland and its culture as, "that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind".

In addition, such diasporic writers as Buchi Emecheta,Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Chris Abani, Vidiadhar Naipual, Krishnan Maniam, and Salman Rushdie and others have pointed out the complexity of meanings in their diasporic texts, for example, in his *'Imaginary*

*Homelands: Essays and Criticism'*, Rushdie (1991, p.73) perceives meaning as "a shaky edifice we build out of scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved; perhaps it is because our sense of what is the case is constructed from such inadequate materials that we defend it so fiercely, even to death". Maniam (1987, p.218) perceives the intersection of diaspora and literature as a powerful apparatus in discovering the power of the text to decode the epistemology of diaspora. For him, fiction has been the exploration of the past, present, psychology, conflicts and ambitions of Indian diaspora. Similarly, Nadan (2000, p.101) perceives diaspora writing as a venture not only to understand but also to survive: "it has become… not only the enigma of survival, but a way into the world... writing, though fragile and vulnerable, is the only home possible" (qtd in Abu-Shomar 2013).

### 1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Millions of Nigerians have emigrated and a good number of others are still migrating to other parts of the world. These migrants and their descendants living in countries outside Nigeria make up the Nigerian diaspora. Early approaches to Nigerian diaspora were mainly focused on involuntary diaspora which deals with forceful "uprootment" of Nigerians to serve as slaves in the West. This is illustrated in the autobiography of Olauda Equaino titled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olauda Equaino* (1789)and in the historical narrative of Bishop Ajayi Crowther. The account of their lives is imbued with a sharp critique of slavery and its effect on the individual.

However, this study focuses on the recent studies on diaspora, particularly the prose narratives of Emecheta andAdichie centering on the voluntary type of migration. It also evaluates diaspora in terms of adaptation and construction- adaptation to change, dislocation and transformation, the construction of new forms of knowledge and new ways of seeing the

world. This work also provides a veritable historical platform for studying the Nigerian diaspora against the background that its study has largely been subsumed under the rubrics of the broad historiography on the African diaspora. Not only that, literary works on Nigerian diaspora have dwelt so much on remittance, how Nigerians in diaspora can help better their home country and the brain-gain factor of coming home to establish themselves. Asseffa (2013) in his thesis, *The Assessement of Nigerian Diaspora in the USA and Exploring its Potential Contribution to Sustainable Development*, shows that the Nigerian diaspora plays a major role in the development of their country of origin through remittance and engaging in different development programs. This study therefore advocates for an in-depth focus on country specific diaspora in order to make room for specificity. Thus, this study is premised on the propositions that:

i. Nigerian diasporic literature deserves critical attention and study.
ii. There is a correlation between Nigerian diasporic literature and other discourses of political instability, poverty, unemployment and other societal issues in Nigeria that are behind the mass migration of young Nigerians to other countries of the world.
iii. Nigerian diasporic literature is more than a celebration of wholesale migration. It gives in-depth description of issues of racism, cultural hybridity, hopelessness, depression, nostalgia etc. that the migrant faces in the new settlement and how it shapes their identity.
iv. Postcolonial theory is a viable platform for the evaluation of Nigerian diasporic literature.

## 1.2 Aim and Objectives

This study examines through the poetics of postcolonial discourse the different challenges that Nigerians in diaspora experience in their host countries and how these problems are

depicted in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Adichie's *Americanah* to debunk the illusion of a waiting goldmine that awaits the Nigerian diaspora in the host land. In this context, the objectives are to show that:

i. Diasporic literature explores the contingent relationships between diasporic subjects and their homelands/ host lands.
ii. Prose narrative is a significant literary discursive form for signifying Nigerian diasporic experience and how these experiences lead them into creating new identities for themselves.
iii. Nigerian diasporic literature depicts a people who are socially and economically discontented with the situations back home and migrate out in search of better opportunities abroad but end up disappointed.
iv. Postcolonial theory is an appropriate tool for analysing the texts of the aforementioned authors.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

Diaspora is a field of study that has continued to grow over time. There are different types of diaspora: the African, Asian, Chinese, Indian, Jewish, Caribbean diasporas and lots more. These types have all been examined in different fields of cultural, political, social, educational and literary studies. However, owing to the fact that most countries of the world have their own specific diaspora story, this study provides an avenue for studying the Nigerian Diasporic literature as a specific field of study which deserves critical attention in its own right because its study has largely been accounted under works dealing with African Diaspora as a whole. This is due to the fact that those from the West collectively tag any occurrence specific to any 'black' country an African situation. By using the works of the aforementioned authors (who are from the second and third generation of writers) that best

broaden the focus for the understanding of Nigerian diasporic literature in terms of its multifaceted dimensions, this study points to the fact that the issue of disillusionment and green pasture façade behind the mass movement of Nigerians to the West ought to be critically examined and studied since this issue has existed overtime.

This study also depicts that not all migrations are involuntary, in view of the fact that a number of immigrants in the texts embark on migration willingly. In this respect, some went for educational purposes, a large number for better living opportunities, several others do so out of curiosity and others because of the social and political issues back in their home of origin. Furthermore, this study is intended to effect a noticeable change with regard to the current practice concerning the study of Nigerian diaspora which is mostly based on how diaspora Nigerians are making or will make significant contributions to the Nigerian economy.

## 1.4 Scope and Delimitation of Study

This study examines Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* (1974) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) from the Nigerian Diasporic context. It is in the light of this that this study focuses strictly on the prose narrative of this two Nigerian diasporic authors in order to carry out an in-depth study of the issues faced by Nigerians in the diaspora, the reason for their migration to the West, the nature of the welcome they got in the host lands, how they adapt to a new culture different from theirs and so on.

## 1.5 Methodology

This research uses the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is an umbrella term for an array of attitudes towards and strategies for conducting inquiry that are aimed at

discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world (Sandelowski 2004, p. 893).The primary sources include Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* (1974) and Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). The secondary sources include books, journals, articles, library materials, and internet sources. The critical analyses of the selected texts are based on Postcolonial assertions and how the various trends are employed as strategies of defense

## 1.6 Organisation of Chapters

This study is divided into five chapters as follows: chapter one, the introduction, contains the background, statement of research problem, aim and objectives, significance of study, scope and limitation, research methodology and the theoretical framework. Chapter two covers the review of related literature, while chapter three focuses on Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* as a literary representation of Nigerian diasporic experiences. Chapter four, using Adichie's *Americanah*, explores the identity issues of Nigerians in diaspora and the grounds that necessitated some Nigerian Diasporas' sojourn abroad, and also explores the relationship between diasporic subjects and their homelands/ host lands. Chapter five is the conclusion which encapsulates the entire work.

## 1.7 About the Authors: Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The Nigerian writer, Buchi Emecheta had a life that was always overshadowed by the poverty and the deprivations of her early years. She was a poorly, undernourished child both physically and emotionally, but with a ravenous desire to survive. She lost her father - who doted on her - when she was eight years old. With her father's passing, Buchi and her younger brother were left at the mercy of a mother who, due to lack of education, was unable to appreciate the talent in her young daughter. It was a benefactor in Ibusa, Mr Hallim - a former government Permanent Secretary – who, according to family legend, spotted the

intelligence in the young girl with the large, forever watchful eyes. He gave her the support she needed and encouraged her to continue her education, rather than work in the market selling oranges as her mother wanted.

Emecheta won a scholarship to a prestigious high school in Lagos where she mixed with children of the Nigerian nobility. In her first year there her mother also died and she was passed back and forth between distant relatives within the Ibusa community in Lagos. During holidays, while her classmates returned to their family mansions, she elected to remain in the empty dorms taking refuge in books and in her imagination - regaling her friends on their return with the wondrous things she had done during the summer. Years later, in the UK, when her husband burned the handwritten manuscript of her first novel, she again quietly determined that she would find her own way. She surprised him with a separation and set about raising her five small alone, while studying at night school for a Sociology degree and working by day as an administrator at the British Museum.

Some writers write because they have to, Buchi was a compulsive writer. She once admitted half-jokingly that "writing kept her sane and that this and the love of her children were what made her get up in the mornings". She would write whole manuscripts long-hand before later transcribing them to type. Hardly was one novel finished when she would be starting on the next, bouncing ideas around the kitchen table which was where she did her typing."I recall as a child at the close of the 1960s being very poor - living, in a series of one- and two-room slum apartments, and later, on various council estates. By my mid-teens I realised that we had somehow become comfortable and middle-class. We could afford holidays and even a car - a red Austin 1100, in front of which I remember my mother proudly posing in her black gown and mortarboard for graduation photos, to send to Ibusa to let the folks back home know that she had "arrived".

These changes were reflected in Buchi's often-autobiographical literary output, from *In The Ditch*, her 1972 breakthrough novel (with origins in a *New Statesman* column), which dealt with a single black mother struggling to cope in England against a background of almost Dickensian squalor; *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), which focused more squarely on issues of race, poverty and gender, through *Gwendolen (1989), The New Tribe* (1999).The main source of inspiration for her writing, however, was Africa, and in particular the villages of Ibusa in Eastern Nigeria where her family came from. Even though she had spent a relatively brief period of her childhood there, the villages and the stories she heard on her visits with her mother left an indelible mark on the impressionable young girl and became the lodestone for all she wrote. In *The Slave Girl* (1977, for which she won the *New Statesman*'s jock Campbell award), *The Bride Price* (1976), and the ironically titled *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), she poignantly captured, in a manner reminiscent of her male contemporary Chinua Achebe, a vanishing Igbo culture in the process of transition to modernity.

Though a feminist in all she said and did, her feminism was very much inscribed in her identity as an African woman, with African values, and political discourse did not always chime with the rhetoric of her sisters in the UK and US. Writing was a vocation but it was also a job, a way to feed the family and keep the wolves from the door. She made many plans to return over many years, even building a house in the village while working as professor at the University of Calabar – an experience that formed the basis for her novel *Double Yoke* (1983). But having lived in the UK for so many years, she found it increasingly difficult to adapt to life in modern Nigeria. And Ibusa, in her long absence, was transforming itself into a town and a conurbation that she barely recognized any more. Though towards the end of her life her illness stole from her the ability to manipulate words and to travel, the cruel beauty of dementia allowed her to take refuge once more in her imagination, where she

would revisit the landscapes of her early years, peopled with characters and stories that she would no longer be able to write. (Onwordi, 2017)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on the other hand, was born on 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria, the fifth of six children to Igbo parents, Grace Ifeoma and James Nwoye Adichie. While the family's ancestral hometown is Abba in Anambra State, Chimamanda grew up in Nsukka, in the house formerly occupied by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Chimamanda's father, who is now retired, worked at the University of Nigeria, located in Nsukka. He was Nigeria's first professor of statistics, and later became Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. Her mother was the first female registrar at the same institution. Chimamanda completed her secondary education at the University's school, receiving several academic prizes. She went on to study medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria for a year and a half. During this period, she edited *The Compass*, a magazine run by the University's Catholic medical students.

At the age of nineteen, Chimamanda left for the United States. She gained a scholarship to study communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia for two years, and she went on to pursue a degree in communication and political science at Eastern Connecticut State University, where she also wrote articles for the university journal, the *Campus Lantern*. While in Connecticut, she stayed with her sister Ijeoma, who runs a medical practice close to the university. Chimamanda graduated summa cum laude from Eastern in 2001, and then completed a master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

It is during her senior year at Eastern that she started working on her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, which was released in October 2003. The book has received wide critical acclaim: it was shortlisted for the Orange Fiction Prize (2004) and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005).

Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (also the title of one of her short stories), is set before and during the Biafran War. It was published in August 2006 in the United Kingdom and in September 2006 in the United States. Like *Purple Hibiscus*, it has also been released in Nigeria. Chimamanda was a Holder fellow at Princeton University during the 2005-2006 academic year, and earned an MA in African Studies from Yale University in 2008. In 2011-2012, she was awarded a fellowship by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, which allowed her to finalize her third novel, *Americanah*. The book was released to great critical acclaim in 2013. She is now married and has a daughter. She divides her time between Nigeria, where she regularly teaches writing workshops, and the United States. (Tunca, 2017)

### 1.8 Historicising the Nigerian Diasporic Literature

The international migration of people from the continent known as Nigeria today could be dated back to the pre-colonial era. Adepoju (2005, p.2) is of the view that it effectively began with the Hausa transnational links that found its best expression in the trans-Saharan trade especially between the 14th and 16th Century. This period also witnessed pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade, however, marked a significant milestone in the forced movement of people from this area to the new world. The colonial era equally witnessed large scale labour migration required for plantations, mines and public administration from Nigeria to such countries as Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Benin Republic and Ghana. During this period and parallel to migration to other African countries, Nigerians also migrated first to the United Kingdom and later to other countries of the world for the pursuit of higher education and better life as shown in the character of "Ifemelu" in Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and "Adah and Francis her husband" in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) . After independence the quest for education and greener pastures

continued in earnest. According to Adepoju (2004), some highly skilled Nigerian Migrants have even found the booming economy of South Africa a convenient alternative to Europe, North America and the Gulf states. This is probably due to the dismal state of higher education in Nigeria as portrayed in *Americanah*:

> "No Light! No Water!" and "VC is a Goat!..." "I understand the students' grievances, but we are not the enemy. The military is the enemy. They have not paid our salary in months. How can we teach if we cannot eat?" And, still later, the news spread around campus of a strike by students gathered in the hostel foyer, bristling with the known and the unknown.(2013, p. 91)

As a result of the usual setbacks in Nigerian Universities and instability in government (military and democratic rule), Universities in the united Kingdom, North America and South Africa often embarked upon recruitment of Nigerian students. Most of these students when they finish their studies find ways to renew their visas; pick up jobs and become permanent residents like Ifemelu who stayed behind for years in America after she had finished her studies. Others like Obinze's mother in herconversation with Obinze during his final year in the university, the year that people danced in the street because General Abacha had died, his mother had said: "one day, I will look up and all the people I know will be dead or abroad" (Adichie 2013, p.232). Obinze went further to say:

> He sensed, in her voice, the sadness of defeat, as though her friends were leaving for teaching positions in Canada and America had confirmed to her a great personal failure. For a moment he felt as if he, too, had betrayed her by having his own plan: to get a postgraduate degree in America, to work in America, to live in America.

The turbulent politics in many African countries especially Nigeria, is driving citizens abroad to seek greener pastures or political asylum. The unstable and increasingly falling standard of education and attendant devaluation of certificates in indigenous universities is driving more people to seek better education in foreign lands; the adventurous minds have perhaps

increased in proportion in the quest to have a taste ofoverseas. The brain drain phenomenon has, perhaps, more than anything else in recent history, shipped hundreds of Africans abroad. Brain drain, which is the migration of country's highly skilled intellectuals and technical manpower to other perceived more favourable environment or countries, has accounted for a massive exodus of Nigeria's academics to Europe and America. Adebayo (2011, p.1) describes the situation thus:

> One by one, they left Nigerian universities, polytechnics, teaching hospitals and research centres. They left government establishment and private sectors. They left from various parts of Nigeria. One by one they arrived Southern Africa, the UK, EU countries, Canada, and the United States… Nigerian professionals filled the vacancies in their new host countries. They took endowed professorship, and received grants to control path-breaking researches that they could not do back in Nigeria. Doctors, lawyers, and engineers took the necessary broad examinations to practice. After the initial homesickness and culture shock, they settled down in their new homes. They secured good school for their children. When the opportunity arose, they pulled one or two or more of their former colleagues from Nigeria to join them. Small drops turn into small streams. The streams gathered strength and became a flood. That was in the 1990s, and that was the brain drain.

Not all those who migrated however are successful and seemingly satisfied as portrayed by Adebayo. Out of the stream that became a flood, a larger percentage of them encountered frustration and misery in their host countries resulting in disillusionment and degradation. Even for those who got it well off, many had to behave as in Emecheta's words, "second-class citizens" rightly puts it.

In the Nigerian literary space, there has been a steady convergence between writing within and outside the Nigerian temporal space. This is mainly because for both the artist residing within the Nigerian space and the emigrant, the postcolonial condition has instituted a break between the self and the nation-state as an object of self- apprehension. This break is confirmed by the world of make-belief which literary creativity creates so that what is lost in

real life is brought back to life in narratives of self-reinvention. This penchant for recreation has generated a variety of responses in recent Nigerian literature (Kehinde 2011). Although not all artists write from the diaspora, their narrations explore the connections between "home" and "abroad" and thus uphold the postcolonial theme in their literary narratives. The convergence and reciprocities, Abubakar (2013, p.18) asserts covers but is not limited to:

> Re-narrativisation of the past as a continuum, an evolving as opposed to a static existential space of being and becoming, a signifier of motion, fusion and displacement, a living history which restores temporality to the hitherto pristine and static re-centering of the margin, the subaltern both as a maker of the closure of postcolonial identity-formation, power, economic and gender relation and as a mystical phenomenon which shocks and bewilders. Deployment of exile and journey motifs to the textualisation of fragmentation, retreat and their use as idioms of estrangement from both the self and the social space within and outside. The diaspora is thus an experience as well as a narrative strategy which depict the complex processes of displacement, relocation and adjustment that define the delicate boundaries between the individuality and community spirit. Signification of predatory social order in which life is tough and uncertain and self-preservation and its attendant survival strategies assert the primacy of resistance, moral, political or spiritual. (qtd in Gombe papers)

These and other tendencies he continues, rupture the notion of the diaspora as an all-inclusive organic vision or source. The claim can be made that despite the specificities, neither Nigeria nor the literature of the African diaspora is irreducibly unique in itself; they are also not similar but are, each in its own way, different, more or less intertextual and historically specific.

Nigerian writers in diaspora have contributed a large quantity of literary work to the Nigerian and African domain and often in their literary works; Nigerian diasporic writers construct identities that separate their characters from the host communities. As the character acquires cultural values, norms and roles; his personality is being developed, it is this personality that defines the character's identity. The identities of diasporic individuals and communities can

neither be placed only in relation to some homeland to which they all long to return nor to that country alone where they settle down in. They, by all means, face the crisis of hybrid or dual identity, which makes their existence all the more difficult. Identity is one of the most common themes in Nigerian diasporic literature, and in many cases the search for self-identity is portrayed as confusing, painful and only occasionally rewarding. Some diasporic writers write semi-autobiographical novels, like *Second Class Citizen* by Emecheta (1974), who delves into her characters' personal pasts in order to either discover or re-examine their motivations and affinities. Others like Adichie use fictional characters and situations to question traditional norms, testing, trying, and occasionally reinforcing (whether internally or otherwise) notions of race and culture as seen in her novel *Americanah* (2013).

To further elaborate on the Nigerian diasporic writer's infatuation with identity, the psycho-historian Erik Erikson as quoted in Lawrence Friedman's *Identity's Architect* (2000, p.29) sees identity as "a process located in the core of the individual, and yet also in the core of his or her communal culture, hence making a connection between community and individual". If we are to follow the Erikson's definition, then the Nigerian writer will be someone born of Nigerian parents, who sees himself as Nigerian based on the beliefs of the parents and the cultural heritage handed down to them.

For most of the writers abroad, it was not until sometime later in their life that they migrated out of their homeland and as such; their 'inner core' has been formed, seeing themselves as Nigerian. Note that it is not just the fact of their birth within a geographical location that identifies them as Nigerian, but their relationship with the community in which they grow. This 'inner core' never changes, not even the colour of a passport changes it. It is a continuous and unbroken story. This is why Adiche will remain a Nigerian writer irrespective

of where she lives as her writing is a reflection of her background as an African raised in Nigeria. Her works reflect this cultural heritage as it feeds off it. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Adichie draws mainly from her unique experience within the Nigerian society where she grew and flourished. This experience is uniquely hers, experienced within the borders of Nigeria and bequeathed unto the world. This makes her African and Nigerian by all definitions and while she may have migrated to some other geographic space, the experience is fixed in her psyche. She cannot lose that identity of Africa. So also are other Nigerian diasporic writers like Buchi Emecheta, Helon Habila, Taiye Selasi, Chika Onuigwe, Chris Abani, Isidore Okpewho, Sefi Atta, etc.

Migration may have collapsed the barrier between time and space but it has also raised the question of the content of the writing of the migrating writer. The Nigerian experience has been the main thematic focus of the writings of contemporary Nigerian authors. Thus, there is no better way of understanding diaspora without looking at the past which is to compare and contrast how Emecheta came about writing *Second Class Citizen* which is among the first Nigerian novels on African diaspora, her portrayal of the Nigerian 'woman' in the Nigerian/ English setting and sexual issues as compared to how Adichie, a more recent writer portrays same issues in order to illustrate whether there has been any major change in the writers representation of Nigerian diaspora since Emecheta wrote *Second Class Citizen* in the 70s to date.

Thus, for Emecheta as well as Adichie, migration is a thing of choice for their characters. After all said and done, it is the characters that at the end decide if they want to migrate to another continent or not. *Second Class Citizen* (1974) portrays a protagonist Adah who shares almost the same qualities with Ifemelu the major character in Adichie's *Americanah* (2013).

However, their experiences before they left the shores of Nigeria differ. Emecheta represents a time when the ‘woman’ in Nigeria was taken as contributing nothing significant to the human race but only to give birth,pleasure their husbands, keep the home and in general maintain a background position of “voicelessness.” Adah, the protagonist in her work is a perfect representation of the Nigerian woman in the 70s.

She was allowed to go to school only because it was thought that her uncle would be able to get more money for her when they finally married her off. “Children, especially girls, were taught to be very useful very early in life, and this had its advantages. For instance, Adah learned very early to be responsible for herself. Nobody was interested in her for her own sake, only in the money she would fetch, and the housework she could do and Adah, happy at being given this opportunity of survival, did not waste time thinking about its rights or wrongs. She had to survive" (Emecheta, p.18). This desire to persevere and survive in her society is what leads Adah on her journey through life. It is also the driving force behind her desire to never give up on her dreams. She avoids marriage over and over until she realises that marriage might be her only way to actualise her dreams. She then uses her marriage in the sense that she gets a good job and takes care of her husband and her children and she saves money with the intent for her family to go over to the United Kingdom. Compared to Emecheta’s work, from Adichie’s recent picturing of the present day realities of the Nigerian woman, it is quite obvious that a lot has changed.

Women segregation is shown to have reduced drastically compared to the period in which Emecheta wrote her major diasporic piece. The character of Ifemelu through her stages of growth shows a woman who cannot be relegated to the background so easily, a period where parents support their children irrespective of the sex of the child, the girl child is allowed to pursue any dream she sees fit and also to get an education even if entails going to a strange

land to get it. Life for the woman inpresent day Nigeria is a lot better than it used to be as shown in some Nigerian prose fictions like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Arrow of God* (1964), Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966) to mention a few.

Furthermore, in Emecheta's time, there was always a laid down way of talking about sex. The woman is always this composed parcel of morality. Issues of sex or sexual display in most Nigerian literature of her period were not as graphic as what can be found in recent literary write-ups, specifically in *Americanah*. Thus, it didn't come as a surprise when Adichie in her own words said:

> I admire women who live life on their own terms. Not to make a point, but simply because it is the life they want to lead. And often the world doesn't give them the room. (Academic OneFile, 17th March, 2014)

This is probably why Adichie shows Ifemelu as a woman who, like she said above, lives life on her own terms. She cheats on her boyfriend, Curt, without remorse, left for Nigeria without a second glance at the man she was leaving behind (Blain). Adichie's characters both male and female are portrayed as people who view sex as a normal natural physical phenomenon between two mature adults, thus, she shows no hesitation in discussing sex, nor does she coat her words in innuendos or with poetic connotations, rather her narrations are as graphic as it can possibly be. An example is seen thus:

> She took off her shoes and climbed into his bed. She did not want to be here. Did not want his active finger between her legs, did not want his sigh-moans in her ear, and yet she felt her body rousing to a sickening wetness… she had lain on his bed, and when he placed her hand between his legs, she had curled and moved her fingers. (Adichie 2013, p.154)

Although these two great authors portray their female characters differently, they however arrive at a consensus. Their female characters at a point in their life got fed up with the male folks in their lives and took immediate actions that changed their life for the better. Aunty Uju presents a clear picture of this when she tells Ifemelu:

> Both of us come home at the same time and do you know what Bartholomew does? He just sits in the sitting room and turns on the TV and asks me what we are eating for dinner… He wants me to give him my salary. Imagine! He says that is how marriages are since he is the head of the family, that I should not send money home to Brother without his permission, that we should make his car payments from my salary. (Adichie 2013, p.217)

On a personal level, Aunty Uju transforms from being the Nigerian woman who is seen as docile and submissive. She realises her full potential and resists further exploitation by Bartholomew. She finds her voice and is able to tell Bartholomew off and ends the relationship. She openly tells Bartholomew of his extravagant habits and how she pays for his car. She then relocates from Warrington to Willow which signals freedom and fulfillment. This bears fruit when she gets into a new relationship with Kweku, a Ghanaian doctor, whom Ifemelu describes as "a gentleman and a gentle man" (p.299). Also, looking at the racial situation at the time Emecheta wrote her book, one cannot help but notice that a lot has changed between then and now. The black consciousness as of then was still at its early stage and Africans, or rather blacks in general were seen as trouble makers and barbarians by the whites in the host country. To get a good house as a black at that time wasn't easy even if the African/Nigerian/black had the money to pay. Once the white landlord sees the tenant to be is black, the space becomes unavailable. Emecheta (1974, p.85) shows this racial segregation in *Second Class Citizen* thus:

> At first, Adah thought the woman was about to have an epileptic seizure. As she opened the door, the woman clutched at her throat with one hand, her little mouth opening and closing as if gasping for air, and her bright kitten-like eyes dilated to the fullest extent… she found her voice… that voice that was telling them now that she was very sorry, the rooms had just gone… Francis and Adah said nothing as the flood of words poured out. Adah had never faced rejection in this manner. Not like this, directly… just because they were blacks?

Adichie's characters experience the same discrimination. So, in spite of the decades between when Emecheta wrote her classic and Adichie's, the same thing apparently has remained unchanged. This racial issue is also shown in *Americanah* (2013, p.166) when Ifemelu opened Kimberly's door to a white cleaner, he stiffened and became hostile when he saw her because he couldn't get beyond the fact that a black person could actually own a house so big and fine. His immediate hostility however disappeared when Ifemelu referred to Mrs. Turner as the house owner. This made Ifemelu towrite the blog post "Sometimes in America, Race is Class" with the story of the cleaner's dramatic change, and ends it with:

> It didn't matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked. In America's public discourse, "Blacks" as a whole are often lumped with "poor whites."

This confirms the unchanging face of racism in America and, of course, constitutes one of the reasons for the personal despair of Nigerians in diaspora. Despite their contributions to the country and the heights they have achieved in their professions, American racism is still a brick wall they have not been able to scale. Emecheta and Adichie portray Nigerian and African immigrants generally. By the use of different characters, male and female, they reveal their philosophy which enables us infer their vision on Nigeria in relation to the West. Mwihia (2014, p.64) in *"A Critical analysis of Athold Fugard's Social Vision inFour SelectedPlays"* says:

> Through his/her creative imagination a writer aims at persuading his/her reader to view not only a kind of reality, but more important from a certain angle and perspective, a certain vision…the writer's creative work both reflects reality and also aims at making the reader's take a certain attitude to the reality presented.

Ngugi (1992, p. v) in Homecoming also says that literature is not created from a vacuum but "is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society". If that is the case, it then means that when an author sets out to

write a literary text, it is with the intended hope that the audience may gain insight from its reading. In "A Conversation with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie" an interview with Parul Sehgal (2013, p.1), Adichie herself confirms that she writes with a vision. This is in response to a question on why, in writing *Americanah*, she seems to break free from her usual style. She replies, "More seriously, my vision as a writer is dark. I am more drawn to melancholy, the sad, and the nostalgic. And so I wanted to do something a little different". So from her statement and by analysing the attitudes of Nigerian immigrant characters in the aforementioned texts, we get a glimpse into the author's intended vision and worldview. This may enable us grasp how Adichie and Emecheta go into the deep and serious issues of Nigerian immigrants and the solutions provided to these situations.

## 1.9 Postcolonial Theory as Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this work is the postcolonial theory. This is because movement, be it in culture, human movement, or postcolonial migration to former colonial metropolis has always been central to postcolonial theory. Diaspora also has been one of the key concepts of postcolonial studies within this context of individual and collective journeys. Within contemporary analysis, diaspora has tended to be explored in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality and even religion. The deployment of a theory is paramount and expedient when considering the values and beliefs in studying a literary text such as the novel. It is needed to examine and bring to the fore the meaning within itself as any literary text contains its own meaning within itself. For example, a critical explanation of Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) will clearly brings to light the socio-political context of a particular social background or political situation in which the novels were set.

The novels also reveal the literary and historical positionof their creative output within the mainstream of other literary activities in thecountry. Thus, the study locates and traces the

literary influence of a particular genre. Postcolonial studies were necessitated by a gradual buildup of experiences ranging from colonialism to neocolonialism. The coining of the term "third world" by Alfred Saury in the 1950s aroused interest in postcolonial studies. Concerns ranged from the history of racial, economic, social and religious hegemony to the aftermath of colonialism. The term postcolonialism came into prominence in the 1980s even though publications on the theory have been in use since the 1960s. As a theory, postcolonialism cuts across fields like political science, sociology and psychology. The interest in the legacy of colonialism manifested in the birth of a hybridised culture has continued to grow.

Beginning with Frantz Fanon's publications of *"Black Skin White Mask"*(1952) and Amie Cesaire's *"Discours Sur le Colonialisme"* in the early 1950s, and the subsequent publications of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart(1958)*,George Lamming's *Pleasure of Exile* (1960), and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, the stage was set for postcolonial discourse. Fanon's major call was for Africans to resist western hegemony by seeking their cultural identity. Edward Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978 largely influenced the growth of postcolonialism. Said drew attention to the stereotypic portrayal of the "third world" countries. For him, the intention was to assert and justify their military and economic dominance over the "Other". Said's call in *Orientalism* is for the literary circle to beam it's analytical search light on issues relating to and arising from colonisation, imperialism, and adeliberate construction of the "Other" for hegemonic and exploitative purposes. This call has prompted issues relating to language, feminism, oppression, cultural identity, race and education as off shoots of colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism.

This study in this regard aims to explore the literary texts of Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) to bring out this concept of the "Other" and its effects on the characters in the text. Ann B. Dobie quoting

from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) in his work titled *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* (2009, p.207), supports the above assertion when he said that the Europeans' "view of the "Other" world as "Orientalism" is inevitably coloured by their own cultural, political, and religious backgrounds, leading them to depict those unlike themselves as inferior and objectionable for example, as lazy, deceitful, and irrational. The self, by contrast, is defined as good, upright, and moral". Thus, they claim to know all about Africa from what they have read and the story they have been told that it is now quite difficult for them to dissociate fact from fiction. For example, this excerpt from Adichie's *Americanah* (2013, p.133) vividly illustrates this argument:

> But when Ifemelu returned with the letter, Cristian Tomas said, "I. Need. You.To. Fill. Out. A. couple. Of. Forms. Do. You. Understand. How. To. Fill. These. Out?"… Cristina Tomas was speaking like that because of her foreign accent, and she felt for a moment like a small child, lazy-limbed and drooling. "I speak English" she said. "I bet you do," Cristina Tomas said. "I just don't know how well".

Cristina Tomas in the above passage has a single story about Africa and Africans; people that are so backward they can't speak nor understand English. It's possible she thinks she is being helpful by speaking slowly, but unknowingly she has unintentionally taken from Ifemelu the remaining dignity she had because in the following week, as autumn's coolness descended, Ifemelu "began to practice an American accent" (p.134). The idea of the common wealth literature gave rise to what W.E.B Dubois calls a "double consciousness".

The practicality of postcolonialism in the literary circle began to receive widespread notice in the early 1990s. The theory was not entirely limited to the postcolonial literature but to every work that displayed what Dobie describes as "attitude to others". Bhim Singh Dahiy in a lecture on literary theory has described postcolonial theory as partly theoretical and partly attitudinal. Also, Helen Tiffin in *"Postcolonial literature and counter discourse"* (1987) opines that since the colonial past is not 'regainable' and the present cannot be totally free of

the past, then colonialism ought to investigate the means by which Europe maintained colonial denomination of so much of the rest of the world. She suggests a "counter discourse" of canons through a character(s) assessment or an explication of basic assumptions of a British canonical text.

**Postcolonial Theory: Characteristic Features**

Postcolonial theory emerged as a distinct category in the 1990s, having gained influence through the work of Spivak (1987), Ashcroft (1989), Bhabha (1990) and Said (1993). Postcolonial criticism begins from the moment of colonisation. Some critics assume that it emerged in the 1980s from dissatisfaction with previous approaches to colonial discourse. But Ashcroft (1998, p.8) sees postcolonial analysis as the function of the activities of writers and critics since the 19th Century, burgeoning in the wake of independence. Fanon advocated that the first step for colonised people in finding a voice and identity is to reclaim their own past and then begin to erode the colonialist ideology.

Edward Said is another writer whose work is fundamental to postcolonial discourse. Barry traces the origin of postcolonial criticism to Said's *Orientalism* (1978). He identifies a European cultural tradition of orientalism which is a particular and long standing way of identifying the east/colonised as cruel, sensual decadent, lazy, exotic, mystical and seductive. They are seen as homogenous, anonymous masses rather than by conscious choices or decisions. Linking his analysis with Fanon's view on the question of colonialism, Barry (1995) lists out the characteristics of the Orientals/Coloniser thus:

They are people whose emotion and reactions are always determined by racial considerations rather than by aspects of individual status or circumstance. Webster (1990, p.119) elucidates further by saying that Said's *Orientalism* (1978) identifies the systematic discipline of Western colonial discourse on the Orient as the means of political control. It is a Western

style of dominating/ restructuring and having authority over the Orient. Postcolonialism according to Ashcroft (1989,p.10) is:

> A way of talking about the political discursive strategies of colonised societies… generated by a simple reaction; simple realisation that the effect of the colonising process over individuals, over culture and over society throughout Europe's domain was vast, and produced consequences as complex as they are profound.

The significance of postcolonial discourse lies in the fact that it reveals the extent to which the historical condition has led to a certain political, intellectual and creative dynamics in the postcolonial societies which it engages. In nations where settler colonialism was entrenched, postcolonialism was determined by an individual's position in the hierarchy of racial classification. Those at the bottom-end of the Hierarchy according to Loomba (1998, p.9), who are still at the far economic margins of the nation-state, have nothing post about them. Even those who are basically Westerners but, who, through the process of colonialism, have been estranged from their home country are also considered as postcolonial subjects. Then, there are the Africans for whom the dismantling of colonial rule has not meant an automatic change for the better for the status of women, the working class or the peasantry. This itself is a duplication of 'colonialism, from within' as Loomba (1988, p.12) puts it.

**The characteristic features of postcolonial discourse according to Barry (1995) are:**

i. It rejects the universality claim of literature being timeless and of the Universalist significance. On the contrary it recognises cultural, social, regional and national difference in experience and outlook.
ii. Postcolonial writers create a pre-colonial version of their own nation, rejecting the modern and contemporary which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries. Postcolonial criticism is therefore characteristic for its awareness of the representation

of the non-European as exotic or immoral "other".

iii. Some postcolonial writers have concluded that the colonisers language is permanently tainted, and that to write in it involves a crucial acquiescence in colonial structures. They therefore insist that the language may be appropriate for the writer's own purpose, its rhythm and syntax changed to correspond to a local diction.

iv. The identity of the postcolonial writer and by implication for the colonised people is hybrid, for when they identify with their colonised past they stand as colonised, but when their Western education and by implication Western lifestyle is taken into consideration, they double up as the colonisers.

**Major Tenets of Postcolonial Theory**

Due to the lack of specificity in postcolonial concerns, it becomes difficult to establish a clear-cut boundary of what postcolonialism is. The major tenets however are basic assumptions and generalisations that cut across the aforementioned issues especially as it relates to colonialism and its aftermath effects. The initial idea which is central to postcolonial theory is the call by Frantz Fanon for the colonised to seek or reclaim their cultural identity. The idea of cultural assertion enables a reassertion of cultures that have been long subverted by the colonisers as a way of affirming their superiority over the colonised. Fanon a psychiatrist argues in *"Black Skin, White Mask*" (1952) that the acceptance of the white culture by blacks is the reason behind the inferiority complex expressed by the backs. This is vividly portrayed in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974). The novel is quite significant in terms of the illustration of the protagonist, Adah Obi's attempt to adopt social values imposed on the native community in line with the colonial discourse although it takes place in the postcolonial era.

In this respect the novel illuminates the novelist's experiences as a young girl in Nigeria and, later, as an immigrant in the contemporary British society. The independence of Nigeria in 1960 was only a political development, and the effect of the colonial rule could be observed in the society with the common feelings of frustration towards their own values and inferiority against the British, which are represented in the text. Adah is treated as the ultimate other because of being female, being black, and being the colonised. Although Adah tries to resist this social attitude, the black community in Britain has already accepted their inferior status. Just as she wants her children to have a good education in English, the blacks look for foster mothers that will help their children adopt English manners while disregarding their native traditions. Adah reacts to this tendency among the immigrants in England as follows:

> They say that in England Nigerian children have two sets of mothers – natal mother, and the social mother. As soon as a Nigerian housewife in England realised that she was expecting a child, instead of shopping for prams, and knitting little bootees, she would advertise for a foster mother. No one cared whether a woman was suitable or not, no one wanted to know whether the house was clean or not; all they wanted to be sure of was that the foster mother was white. The concept of whiteness could cover a multitude of sins (Emecheta 1974, p.39).

The outcome of this complex is expressed in the term "mimicry" which postcolonial study describes as the ambivalent relationship between coloniser and the colonised. When colonial discourse encourages the colonised subject to ‘mimic’ the coloniser; by adopting the coloniser's cultural habit, assumptions, institutions and values; the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result a “blurred copy” of the coloniser that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behavior of the colonised. The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha’s view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. For him,

the mimicry is the process by which the colonised subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite (qtd in Ashcroft 1998). The copying of the colonising culture, behavior, manners and values by the colonised contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace' (p.86). Mimicry, Bhabha asserts, reveals the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse, almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction (qtd in Ashcroft etal 1998). Parker in *How to Interpret Literature* (2014, p.253) goes further to support Bhabha's stance thus:

> Inevitably in a world of cultural mixing and differences of power, colonised people often end up mimicking their colonisers, adopting the colonisers' language, educational systems, governmental systems . . . clothing, music and so on. When the colonisers gaze in the mirror of the colonised's mimicry, the image they see looks, as Bhabha puts it, 'almost the same, but not quite.' The blend of repetition and difference can threaten the coloniser's sense of their own power and superiority . . . The colonisers may suppose that their surveillance of the colonised, in Foucauldian terms, disciplines the colonised. But when the colonisers gaze at the colonised and see the mimicking colonised's displacement of the colonisers' gaze turned back on the colonisers, it alienates the colonisers from their confidence in their own essence, thus destabilising colonialism itself"

In response to this postcolonial tenet, most writers like Chinua Achebe have sought to assert the value of African culture and seeking and exploring the cultural identity of the African people. Over time, the search for identity has formed a major thematic preoccupation in response to this call.

Another key tenet centres on the idea of what Dobie (2009) calls "cultural colonisation" or cultural hegemony. Dobie points out that "colonisers not only physically conquer territories, but also practice "cultural colonisation" by replacing the practices and the beliefs of the native culture with their own values, governance, laws and beliefs. The consequence she stresses is the loss or modification of much of the postcolonial culture. This of course is achieved through a description of the culture of the colonised with terms like "barbaric" and

“primitive”. Postcolonial theory also questions the role of the western literary canon and western history as dominant forms of knowledge-making.

The terms "first-world," "second world," "third world" and "fourth world" nations are critiqued by post-colonial critics because they reinforce the dominant positions of western cultures assuming first world status. This critique includes the literary canon and histories written from the perspective of first-world cultures. So, for example, a postcolonial critic might question the works included in "the canon" because the canon does not contain works by authors outside western culture. Moreover, the authors included in the canon often reinforce colonial hegemonic ideology, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Western critics might consider *Heart of Darkness* an effective critique of colonial behavior. But postcolonial theorists and authors might disagree with this perspective (Tyson 2015, pp.374-375):

> The novel's condemnation of Europe is based on a definition of Africans as savages: beneath their veneer of civilisation, the Europeans are… as barbaric as the Africans. And indeed…the novel portrays Africans as a pre-historic mass of frenzied, howling, incomprehensible barbarians….

The concept of “Othering” forms another basis of postcolonial discourse. This is a deliberate grouping along racial lines, economic standing and civilisation in the western sense. The colonisers deem it fit to describe the colonised in the category of the “other”, they having the task or project of civilising the colonised. Tyson (2015, p.401) points out that:

> The practice of judging all who are different as less than fully human is called othering, and it divides the world between “us” (the “civilised”) and “them” (the “others”, the “savages”)…. The “savages” were usually considered evil (the demonic other) as well as inferior. But sometimes the “savages” were perceived as possessing a “primitive” beauty or nobility borne of closeness to nature (the exotic other). In either case however, the “savage” remained other and, therefore, not fully human.

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is another postcolonial text that contributed a great deal to the concept of the "other". Said identifies a European cultural tradition of 'Orientalism', which is a particular and long-standing way of identifying the East as 'Other' and inferior to the West. The Orient, he says, features in the Western mind 'as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (Walder 2004, p.236). This means, in effect, that the East becomes the repository or projection of those aspects of themselves which Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on). At the same time, and paradoxically, the East is seen as a fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. It also tends to be seen as homogenous, the people there being anonymous masses, rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury, etc.) rather than by conscious choices or decisions. Their emotions and reactions are always determined by racial considerations. (qtd in Barry 1995, p.128)

Barry (1995) still on the concept of the 'other" postulates that "postcolonial writers evoke or create a precolonial version of their own nation, rejecting the modern and the contemporary, which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries". Here, then, is the first characteristic of postcolonial criticism – an awareness of representations of the non-European as exotic or immoral 'Other' (p.129). To adequately buttress this point, Barry uses an excerpt from James Joyce's The Portrait of an Artist (1916) as an example: in the early scene in the novel one of the characters, Stephen, is patronised by an English priest because of his use of a local dialect word. Stephen tells himself "the language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine... My soul frets in the shadow of his language" (chapter 5). Thus, some post-colonial writers have concluded that the colonisers' language is permanently tainted, and that to write in it involves a crucial acquiescence in colonial structures (Barry 1995, p.129).

Furthermore, the concept of hybridity occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse. It is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweeness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt 1997: p.158). This is particularly so in Bhabha's discussion of cultural hybridity. Bhabha had developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity (Bhabha 1994; Bhabha 1996). For him, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonised (the "Other") within a singular universal framework, but then fails, producing something familiar but new. In postcolonial discourse, the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable (Ashcroft et al 1995). Ang (2003, Pp.149-150) in 'Together-in-difference beyond diaspora, into hybridity', is also of the view that:

> Hybridity then is a concept that confronts and problematises boundaries, although it does not erase them. As such hybridity always implies an unsettling of identities. It is precisely our encounters at the border… where self and other, the local and global, Asian and Western meet… that make us realise how riven with potential miscommunication and intercultural conflict these encounters can be. This tells us that hybridity, the very condition of in-betweenness, can never be a question of simple shaking of hands, of harmonious merger and fusion. Hybridity is not the solution, but alerts us to the difficulty of living with differences, their ultimately irreducible resistance to complete dissolution. In other words, hybridity is a heuristic device for analysing complicated entanglement.

In the light of the above, hybridity in postcolonial discourse is not an end in itself but an ever growing social process. It means different things to different people.Steven G. Yao (2003, p.363) in *'Taxonomising hybridity: Textual Practice* is of the view that:

> ...the term 'hybridity' carries with it a sense of sexual, and implicitly violent, transgression of 'natural' categories that produces a new entity with a

> complex and multiply determined lineage. Hence the notion entails a necessarily biologistic conception of (re)productive interaction between categorically separate or distinct 'types'. Transporting this idea of generative fusion to the domain of culture implies mutually constitutive and reinforcing signification between different cultures and traditions.

Bhabha (1994) thus summed it up by asserting that "hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist stance, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority… its rule of recognition (pp.114-115).

Universalism is yet another tenet that pervades postcolonial discourse. Dobie describes it as the belief by the colonisers that their ideas and experiences were universal. This is expressed in the idea of canonisation and the building of certain literary tradition which must be circumscribed to. The postcolonialists fear is that, universalism has always been a counterfeit value which tries to ensure western cultural-intellectual domination of thenon-west in the name of universal norms which, actually, derive from western traditions. Barry (1995, Pp192-193) is of the view that postcolonial criticism "undermine(s) the universalist claims once made on behalf of literature by liberal humanist critics …whenever a universal signification is claimed for a work, then, white, Eurocentric norms and practices are being promoted by a sleight of hand to this elevated status, and all others correspondingly relegated to subsidiary, marginalised roles". Thus, in order to put a stop to being the marginalised other, the colonised created oppositional narratives against the imperialistic thought protesting against the supposedly universal methodology of the West in evaluating their native cultures and literary works as it put them in a disadvantageous position. With a view togenerating their own distinctive identities, the colonised are determined to recover their native knowledge systems and to see their history in their very own cultural perspectives. They believe that is the ideal way to grow out of their self-denigration and self-abasement.

Achebe, one of the most powerful postcolonial writers in advancing African perspectives says in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* "I should like to see the word "universal" banned altogether from discussions of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe…" (Achebe1975, p.7). He took it upon himself to defend his continent against the biased writings of the West. He protested against the European portrayal of Africa as a dark and barbaric continent and assumed the duty as a novelist to re-write Africa's history, culture, tradition, norm and society in his fictional works to re-present their real identity and importance. Hence, this theory is a viable means of actualising the intention of this research. This is because it is on the basis of the tenets mentioned above that this research which is focused on Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) as models of diasporic literature is able to tackle thedifferent challenges that Nigerians in diaspora experience in their host countries.

It is also suitable for analysing the texts under studysince postcolonial literatures responds to the intellectual discourses of European colonisation, their status as the power house of knowledge and their portrayal of the east as subservient and backward. Thus the urge by writers from formerly colonised countries to portray the effect of colonialism on the colonised and its subsequent effect of changing the ideology of the colonised making them believe that the west is superior and holds the key to their civilisation. In essence, this theory is fitting for this research as postcolonialism questions and reinvents the modes of cultural perception—the ways of viewing and of being viewed, records human relations among the colonial nations and the subaltern peoples exploited by the west and presents the stories of colonial subjugation of the subaltern charactersthat pervades both postcolonial texts under study.

Thus, diasporic literature stems from an attempt to capture the voluntary and involuntary mass migration of blacks across the sea into the new world and the resultant effect of the migration both physically, psychologically and otherwise. These experiences are strongly expressed through literature as a means of projecting the diasporic experience(s) of blacks who migrated voluntarily or involuntarily. Nigerian diaspora writers have been using almost all the major forms of literature to narrate the experiences of Nigerian immigrants. Thus, for most writers coming from a once colonised country, writing has become a way of deducing and remaking their culture through a "writing back" in response to "a history others have written" (Culler 1997: p.131). This is what Adichie and Emecheta engage in an attempt to re-construct the Nigerian nation, Nigeria before Colonisation, and the phenomenon that sprang up after colonisation in their prose narratives. Hence, the use of postcolonial theory as a critical lens for a close examination and better understanding of the intent of this study.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature as an imaginative creation projects deep-rooted patterns of thought, feelings and behaviour of the society from which it emanates. By far, the most dramatic event that has affected the psyche of writers and citizenry in Nigeria and the African continent as a whole is colonialism and its aftermath. So, literature captures the various forms of contact between different parts of the society and its people. Mary Kolawole (2005, p.5) affirms this assertion as she points out that "literature is not only an imitation of life, but also a concept which derives from certain sustainable principles". Literature goes beyond mere entertainment to expose the moral and social views of the writer and of his/her surroundings which form the inspiration for his/her art. Demeterio (2001, p.11) backs this up thus:

> Literature is a social institution: it is created by the writer, who is a member of the society. Its medium is language, which is a social creation. It represents life, which is a social reality. It is addressed to men who form a social body. It is centrally conditioned by social and other forces and, in turn, exerts social influence.

Nigerian diasporic literature narrates the Nigerian experience, the struggles associated with imperialism and its disparagement and repression which remain visible features of post-independence Nigeria. This accounts for the Nigerian writers' attempt at bringing to the fore societal issues that exists within and outside the shores of Nigeria. Acknowledging that literature reflects life, Kure and Babajo (2009, p.73) are of the view that since literary materials are rooted in identifiable communities and societies, literary writers portray people's experience or issues from real life. Usoro (2009, p.117) also adds that writers draw from the rich cultural well of their societies. Unfortunately, the attainment of independence has not automatically predicted the realisation of the cherished dreams of freedom, responsibility of self-government, socio-political and economic satisfaction.

A new reality however unfolds, maimed by anarchy, chaos, coups, disillusionment, injustice, betrayal, poverty, social unrest, hunger, oppression, unemployment, corruption etc. Hence, the massive movement of Nigerians to the West, seeking to escape the dilapidating state of affairs in the country, only to meet other forms of derogatory experiences in the host country that they have to battle with in other to survive. This awareness of social injustice and discrimination beckons on the writer's intellect to tell an uncommon story, armed with diasporic perspective and experiences. This shows that literature cannot exist independent of the society from whence it emanates.

There seems to be a conscious awakening of the Nigerian writers in the diaspora to their responsibility as the conscience of their society. Writers like Emecheta and Adichie in their use of language evoke images of suffering and "choicelessness" of the Nigerian masses, as well as their struggle to raise above the perils of socio-political and socio-economic issues that seem to have dominated the country, thus, the need for a more promising environment. Nigerian diasporic writer's project pictures of their ancestral land through graphic details although they could be described as being physically removed from it. They are mostly preoccupied with narrating issues affecting Nigerians both home and abroad from the diaspora as depicted in most of their works. Gehrmann (2009, p.142) offers the following insight into the importance of diasporic fiction:

> Because of the long-lasting effects of the colonial system based on ideological and aesthetic binary oppositions, postcolonial literatures, in particular those that have emerged in situations of migration, prove to be a fertile ground for critical reflection on cultural, sexual or ethnic differences as problematic constructions. Fictions enable the dense narration of the constitution and negotiation of differences through personal stories which may outline the tragedy of the process of "othering" or may challenge and even overcome such a process.

The literature produced by diasporic writers who had emigrated or been exiled from their ancestral home plays an important role in spreading awareness of diaporic experiences of Nigerians in their new place. The predicaments of Nigerians in diaspora can hardly be thought of without the push that came from the diasporic writers. This is because writers derive their creative imagination from the events happening around them, and as such create an awareness of such societal events or issues in their writings for general consumption. The distance from the country of origin often encourage writers to tread new ground, investigating and trying out new themes and forms, breaking cultural taboos prevailing in their home countries and developing new ideas. In creating awareness through their writings, diasporic writers are now able to challenge the literary canon of their host countries. Thus in reading Nigerian diasporic works, there is an inherent freedom to roam imaginatively in new places as well as an exposure to new experiences and the chance to reflect on one's own place, time, journeys and identities. It also allows readers in places with few immigrants to gain imaginative access to the issues of people from different background and cultures. As a result of this, this study reviews relevant scholarly opinions and issues on diaspora, postcolonial Nigerian diasporic literature and the location of Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* within them.

From researches carried out for this study, it has been observed that although the definition of diaspora differs from one scholar to the other, most of the scholarly definitions of the term gotten so far in one way or another regard diaspora as a kind of dispersal or movement of people from one location to another. However, some scholars like Baubock and Faist (2010, p.35) are of the opinion that diaspora has gone beyond this single trans-migrational movement and now covers a broad range of issues and histories. They assert that:

> The term diaspora, long used only to describe the dispersion of the Jewish people throughout the world, has for a long time elicited unprecedented interest, attracting the attention not only of the academic world but also of

> the media. In everyday language, ***the term is now applied to all forms of migration and dispersion of people, even where no migration is involved***; this corresponds not only to the development and generalisation of international migration throughout the world, but also to a weakening, or at least a limitation, of the role played by nation-states at a time when globalisation has become a dominant process.

Dash (2014, p.271) further defines it as:

> The displacement of a community or culture into another geographical or cultural region for purposes of livelihood, education, business or for acquiring higher skills in different branches of human knowledge

Going by the above definitions, diaspora has become more of what Barman (2015) refers to as a "buzzword, a catch-all phrase to represent or speak for all movements, theorisations of hybridity and cross-cultural, multi-ethnic dislocations." In other words, the term diaspora is now being applied to any form of movement and has gone beyond the old Jewish dispersion usually attributed to it. In *Global Diasporas* (2008, p.8) Cohen calls this wide usage of the term a "diaspora craze". To buttress this point, Cohen quotes Dufoix whom he stresses opens his book *Diaspora*, with a blog penned by a frustrated Nigerian thus:

> I have been away from Nigeria for 30 years … In all these 30 years I have been convinced that I was living abroad and, at a push, overseas. It now turns out, however, that I have actually been living in the diaspora. This sounds like a very lovely place, with flora and fauna, nubile virgins, blue skies and a certain *je ne sais quoi*. The sort of place where you can tiptoe through the tulips, stopping every so often to smell Rose, her friends Chantel, Angel, Tiffany and any other delicacies that take your fancy…All this time I have been 'abroad' studying and working my ass off, sitting in dull offices, with dull people, doing dull things to pay off dull bills, when I could have been in the diaspora with nubile virgins with understanding ways. I am so mad.

As Dufoix states, the word diaspora have long moved from the melancholic sentiments of displacement, alienation and exile associated with the ideal diaspora. Cohen (1997, p.ix) recognises the difficulty in coming to terms with "diaspora", and as such introduces conceptual categories to display the variety of meanings the word invokes. Although Cohen sees a common element in all forms of diaspora; a community of people who live outside their natal territories and recognise that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the

languages they speak, religions they adopt, and the cultures they produce, it is good to take this into consideration, however it is also important to go beyond it. As such he broke diaspora into five ideal types namely: victim, labour, imperial, trade and deterritorialised diaspora. Each of these categories underline a particular cause of migration usually associated with particular group of people. So, for example, the Africans through their experience and slavery have been noted to be victims of extremely aggressive transmigrational policies, or in the case of Indians, they are seen to be part of the labour diasporas because of their involvement with the colonial system of indentured labour. Cohen acknowledges that these categories are not mutually exclusive, and at any given moment one diasporic group could fall into different categories. However, like the above scholars stated, "diaspora" has grown out of proportion from the particular notion that it has to do with the Jewish dispersion. According to Bhabha (1994, p.139) diasporas are:

> Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues or in the uncanny fluency of author's language, gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment of other world lived restoratively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present".

This shows that diaspora covers a significant part of the life of any immigrant or person living outside his or her own place of origin. For this reason therefore, it is pertinent to discuss what diaspora is and how it is understood by different scholars and individuals. Thus, the need to cite an essay by the Chinese-Canadian literary scholar Cho (2007), who in *'The Turn to Diaspora"* says that:

> Diaspora must be understood as a condition of subjectivity and not as an object of analysis. "I propose an understanding of diaspora as first and foremost a subjective condition marked by the contingencies of long histories of displacement and genealogies' of dispossession"… some diasporic subjects are transnational, but not all. Diaspora emerges as subjectivity alive to the effect of globalisation and migration, but also

> attuned to the histories of colonialism and imperialism. Diaspora is not a function of socio-historical phenomena, but emerges from deeply subjective processes of racial memory, of grieving for losses which cannot always be articulated and longings which hang at the edge of possibility. It is constituted in the spectrality of sorrow and "the pleasures of obscure miracles of connection. (qtd in Tölölyan 2012, p.8)

Looking at the above quotation, it is difficult to support Cho's views in its totality. Indeed no scholar can afford to agree with the notion that diaspora may not be 'an object of analysis', as she puts it. Cho's assertion that diasporic persons are "mourners of loss" associates her with scholars who see individuals gathering into communities consisting of victims whose identity are linked to their sense of alienation. Cohen (2008) first introduced the notion of victim diaspora before Cho. He acknowledged that: "while no enduring diaspora endures merely through such memory, still much of its life can be organised around commemorative functions and discourses and practices that take the wound as their starting point"(qtd in Tölölyan 2012, p.9). This assertion by Cohen implies that for every diaspora or immigrant that have journeyed out of his/ her ancestral home to other place of dwelling, is either running from something or pursuing something. This is the case of the major characters in Adichie and Emecheta's prose narratives. They migrate from the aftermath of colonialism to a place where they believe would hold better opportunities for them. Zeleza (2008, p.1) gives a broad definition of diaspora which encompasses any populace that is spread across various parts of the world other than their original location. He asserts that:

> Diaspora is simultaneously a state of being and a process of becoming, a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning, a navigation of multiple belongings, of networks of affiliation. It is a mode of naming, remembering, living and feeling group identity moulded out of experience, positioning, struggles and imaginings of the past and the present, and at times the unfolding, unpredictable future, which are shared across the boundaries of time and space that frame 'indigenous' identities in the contested and constructed locations of 'there' and 'here' and the passages and points in between.

The various definitions and understandings of diaspora by different scholars regard diaspora as a certain type of movement of a group or individuals from their ancestral land to a more

global/western setting. Therefore, to be in diaspora is to be a part of a larger group in transition, part of an alternative community within a larger national whole, and to be an individual who must feel the claims of various nations and cultures. Diaspora on its own then can mean different things to different scholars depending on the context of its usage.

The effect of migration on individuals is severe when they are not treated properly and equally by the host country. Such effect leads to psychological, sociological and economic breakdown of the migrants. The experiences of such migrants living outside their countries are often reflected in literature such as in the form of fiction and other genres of literature. Thus after the migration from the ancestral land to the global setting, black writers started to give voice to their experiences from the overseas space. Williams (2008, p.1) in *"A State of Perpetual Wandering: Diaspora and Black British Writers"* claims that immigrant black writers "are not writing as the post-independence or postcolonial subject displaced in Britain; they are writing as the British subject in a postcolonial world trying to contest and displace the dominant narrative of nation". In light of this claim, Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* can be said to be indisputably a "sociological handbook" (**Silkü**2010). Emecheta in her fiction has combined her early and late life experiences both in colonial Nigeria and Postcolonial London. Meriwether (2011) in his review on *Goodread* is of the opinion that Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is:

> …a personal story, one that candidly depicts the challenges of living with a difficult and unfaithful spouse, of being a young mother with little money, of the added challenge of "polite" racism that forces her to live beneath her previous standards, and even her own trivial concerns, such as not being properly dressed in the hospital after nearly dying during childbirth. One wants to reach through the pages and shake this obviously intelligent woman and make her stand up on her own….

As one of the most prolific writers in West Africa, Emecheta, has depicted Africa and its people in their various facets and in this sense her works invariably speak of the African

situation or the condition of the black community. Based on the different settings used (Nigeria, The Caribbean and England), the novel *Second Class Citizen,* for instance, covers wide range of issues. The pre-colonial African tribes, the mixed identity of the Afro-Caribbean's, the migrant blacks in the diasporic communities in England and even to the generation of hybrids suffering from identity crisis due to mixed parentage of black and white. But Emecheta deals mainly with the issues that have direct concern with her own self, the Black African woman of Nigeria and her fortunes, before and after colonisation and the social transformations therewith.

Prono (2013, p.1) in his article in *British council literature* is of the view that:

> The characterisation of Adah as a "second class citizen," the definition which also gives Emecheta's second novel its title, illustrates the author's thorough exploration of gender discrimination in her native Nigerian society and in African immigrant communities in Britain. Like the majority of women in Emecheta's works, Adah is a second class citizen in Nigeria where her parents initially deny her a proper education and arranged her marriage. She is equally second class in England both because she is black and because the Nigerian diasporic community replicates the patriarchal value of the mother country. Yet, in spite of her second class status, Adah engages in a tenacious struggle for freedom and self-achievement which ultimately allows her to improve her situation through education. The female protagonists in Emecheta's fiction challenge the masculinist assumption that they should be defined as domestic properties whose value resides in their ability to bear children and their willingness to remain confined at home.

Inventiveness and determination become the distinctive marks of Emecheta's women. They are quick-witted and turn adverse conditions into their triumph, yet the men are characterised as lazy and inactive. While, at the end of *Second-Class Citizen*, Adah has become conscious of her potential and supports her children alone, her husband Francis keeps failing his university exams and is still jobless. Adah's ability to come out of the trench where her marriage has thrown her is paralleled by Emecheta's own progress as a writer. It is necessary therefore for female writers to modify the bildungsroman because in conventional coming of age stories, female characters are not allowed access to self-

development in the same way the male characters are. The traditional male 'centered-form' allowed women roles only as helpmates to the development of the male protagonist. In her dissertation *Decolonising Genre: Caribbean Writers and the Bildungsroman*, Lima (1993, p.49) argues:

> Because the fully realise and individuated self who caps the journey of the bildungsroman does not always embody the developmental goals and possibilities of women, female fictions of development reflected the tensions among the assumptions of a genre that embodies norms constructed as male, and the social constraints that prevent women's development.

The female postcolonial bildungsroman demonstrates through their manipulation of the forms original template, new expressions of, and theories about, individual and national identity formation (Kushigian 2003, p.36). In essence therefore, if *Second Class Citizen* were read as a novel of personal development (bildungsroman), some of the seeming inconsistencies within the text would be more fully understood. Also, a look at this work as a novel dealing with a young African woman's gradual acquisition of knowledge about herself as a potential artist and about the themes of love, marriage, and the subject of student life overseas (especially in a hostile environment) will add more weight to the already popular feminist theme in the book.

O'Brien (2001,p.100) expresses the same view. She writes that:

> Women as doubly colonised, firstly by white colonialism, secondly by black masculinity, are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of value through the gendered response by the black man to his own racial oppression. Those two oppressions are thus irrevocably intertwined; the more feminised the blackman is by white men, the more he is made inferior, and the more feminised the black man is by white men, the more he is made inferior, and the more he needs to assert his masculinity, by which I mean his superiority, over the black woman.

According to O'Brien, women are treated as the "Other" by their men and the Other's other by the white British society. Emecheta's voice is one of direct feminist protest aiming at an

explicit confrontation with what she considers to be a male-oriented world. Her novels also provide an insight into those weaknesses and misconceptions in the women themselves which tend to bring about their humiliation and state of subjugation. Al-Azawi (2013, Pp. 21-22) in his thesis *London Seen Through the Eyes of the Female Other* asserts that:

> Emecheta portrays the female other within her new diasporic space through her social relations inside and outside the home. She questions the legacies of slavery and colonialism and their effect on the African immigrants in general, and on women specifically.

The emancipation and resettlement of African women is a recurrent theme in Emecheta's works. It is presented in the context of the lives of Nigerian immigrants in Britain in the 1970s. In other words, cultural adaptation into a modern western culture is emphasised and referred to in the novel as a means of emancipation for Nigerian women, while the cultural values of patriarchal Nigerian society that are enslaving for women are associated with and represented by deceitful and oppressive male figures. Consequently, with respect to her characters portrayal, female Nigerian immigrants appear to be more successful in creating bicultural and hybrid identities for themselves in an alternative "emergent" culture, thereby achieving the final passage towards a new "home," (Akilli 2014, p.1).In addition, Ward (1990, p.9), in *"What they Told Buchi Emecheta, Oral Subjectivity and the Joys of 'Otherhood'"* observes that:

> Emecheta's novels represent the experience of the African women struggling to assert herself against historically determined insignificance, a self constituted through the suffering of nearly every form of oppression– racial, sexual, colonial that human society has created. A self that must find its true voice in order to speak not only for itself but for all others similarly oppressed.

Emecheta shows her concern with the condition of African women within the African Social, Political, Economic and Cultural spheres to reveal the over dominance of men and the society at large. Postcolonial literature of women writers like *Second Class Citizen* and a host of

others have been preoccupied with the task of extricating women from the shackles and bondage of patriarchy. Their works can be said to have portrayed the condition of women in their various societies. They have also theorised them and drawn attention to women's desires and quest for a change of attitude. Thus, Ward's claim is not far from the truth that Emecheta speaks for the African woman that cannot speak. However, in *Second Class Citizen* she interweaves these 'womanistic' issues with an exploration of race, immigration, deprivation, and identity. Other issues include depression; a topic that is rarely talked about in African communities especially in Nigeria, and to an extent divorce, which is usually the climax of Emecheta's prose works.

Prono (2013) further posits that:

> Emecheta's writings document the author's multilayered yet intersecting identities: the diasporic single woman, the sociologist observing grim urban realities, the bestselling novelist, the narrator of African myths and traditions that clash against modernisation, the re-creator of her continent's enslaved traumatic historical past.

The diverse interests that converge in these identities add to bestow on Emecheta's fiction and essays, the social and political responsibility of contradicting the stereotypes to which black people are still subjected and of challenging the subaltern status of black women both within their own race and in the larger society. Emecheta's attention to gender and racial difference is therefore always attached with her exploration of how this overlie with education, poverty and enslavement in women's quest towards self-empowerment. Monica (2012, p.8) in her thesis *Image of the Emerging Woman in the selected novels of Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta* is of the view that Emecheta's concern in Second Class Citizen is not:

> Merely the male dominated society's attitude to sex, she is equally concerned with how gender bias affects the attitude of work. Through Adah's refusal to settle down for a second-class status, Emecheta reveals the strength of woman in oppressive atmosphere. She shows how with new

> awareness and determination women can triumph over everything impossible and gain the status of 'New African Woman'.

Monica's assertion that this book raises fundamental questions is true. This is because by examining a few of the possible, compelling themes that might be discussed and elaborated from close textual exegesis of this short novel, reveals a surprisingly long and complex list of authorial concerns. Concerns like the Nigerian traditions including superstition, patriarchy, marriage, family structure, and the authority of elders; the crucial role of education in colonised societies; decolonisation as a process of disillusionment – how independence often merely entails changeover from one form of oppression (direct, by white colonisers) to another (indirect, through natives who absorb and implement the policies, methods, and mentality of white colonisers); questions about industrialisation and the benefits of "civilisation;" contrasts between Nigerian and English culture, as well as the effects of mixing these cultures; communalism versus isolation; racism; intra-racial bias; sexism; poverty; care and nourishment of children; what it means to be "second class;" the idea of "Presence;" issues of identity, self-reliance, and the will to succeed despite overwhelming obstacles and obstructions; writing as a vehicle for survival, self-creation, as well as liberation of self and others (qtd in Walsh 2014, p.3).Ezewanebe (2000, Pp.351-52) adds more credence to this claim thus:

> Adah's life as a wife is one of constant struggle against oppression and exploitation. Emecheta's anger against the traditional Igbo family is therefore justified. She detests the system where women are owned as any other property, a structure that traps and enslaves women, an environment that forces women into subservience, regardless of their achievements and potential just because they are women.

Francis' conduct throughout the novel is grounded in assumptions stemming from his patriarchal heritage or male dominated culture. However the entire action of the novel pivots on Adah's rejection of this male dominated paradigm: "she was not going to be that kind of

wife. Francis could beat her to death but she was not going to stoop to that level" (SCC 1974,p.165).

Chinweizu in *Anatomy of Female Power* (1990, p.14) summarises this whole point. To him a woman knows when and how to manipulate a man, no matter how strong he may think he is. A woman knows her man's weakest point and she acts on this to get him down without wasting time. He states that:

> Female power exists, it lungs over every Man like a ubiquitous shadow. Indeed the Life circle of a man from cradle to grave may be divided into three phases, each of which is defined by the form of female power which dominates him: mother power, bride power or wife power.

Chinweizu claims that the woman exercises influence over the man because of his peculiar weakness which he manifest, rather unconsciously at each of the stages. He also states further that: 'Every day of a life, he is subject to the dictates of the womb kitchen 'and cradle' (p.15). Yearwood (2011,p.138) in her essay *"The Sociopolitics of Black Britain in the Work of Buchi Emecheta"* focusing on the "socio-political" aspect of Emecheta's work gives a deeper insight into the lives of the Nigerian diasporic women. She identifies them as sufferers of neo-colonialism thus:

> Emecheta's fiction maps the social trajectory of West African women on the continent and in Britain and reveals the political nature of mores and communities that shapes a woman's destiny wherever she may live.

From the reading of *Second Class Citizen* it is portrayed that even though 'Francis' beats, cheats, and disrespects his wife at any opportunity he gets, he still runs back to her for food, his school fees, follows her around to search for a better accommodation for the family etcetera. Jago (2003,p.194) is of the opinion that Emecheta:

> In Second Class Citizen... she was critical of middle class Nigerian men... unquestioning attitude towards the imperial 'centre'... and their failure to live up to the ideal model of English education.

Also Sizemore notes that:

> Emecheta's novels often examine the "liminal situation" of the immigrant "because from the perspective of England she sees problems for women within patriarchal Nigerian culture but from the perspective of her homeland she sees the problems for blacks within racist British culture" (qtd in Affective Metamorphosis 2012,p.82)

For Emecheta, Adah her major character remains caught in both patriarchy and racism, as Francis proves to be an abusive and selfish husband who demands his "rights" as a Nigerian husband. He struggles with his studies and finds himself unable to succeed personally or professionally in London and punishes Adah for his perceived inadequacy by beating her, belittling her, refusing to work, having sex with other women, and even disallowing her from using birth control. Adah finds no intimacy or fellowship with her husband while in London as he becomes increasingly lazy and monstrous. Nigerian men like Francis who have failed in achieving success in the metropolis show their frustration by beating and maltreating their wives. As Emecheta's narrator describes it "the dream of reading law and becoming an elite in their newly independent country, became a reality of being a black, a second class citizen." (p.69) Prono (2013) goes a step further to draw a general conclusion to the works of Emecheta thus:

> Emecheta's characterisation of her books as being about "survival...just like her own life," calls attention to the autobiographical element that pervades them. Throughout her prolific literary activity, Emecheta has reproduced her struggle against the social, economic and cultural forces that, according to her, lead to the exploitation of black women. Yet, the attempt to translate personal experience into a sociological interpretation of African womanhood, particularly in her first novels, has proved problematic to some critics. The heavy reliance of the novelist's first works on autobiographical elements is thought as compromising an unbiased character analysis. In spite of her denunciation of the Western rape of Africa, Emecheta has been faulted for her attitude of offering herself as a model for all African women and for her adoption of seemingly Eurocentric standards in her investigation of African patriarchy and her

> representations of African males... What emerges from Emecheta's writings is neither a definite embracement nor a rejection of African customs. As far as it is nurturing to women, traditional heritage is celebrated, while damaging prejudices and superstitions are challenged.

While there is no doubt about the validity of this statement, a lot of scholars tend to read Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* only within the feminist protest tradition. It would not make sense, of course, to suggest that in evaluating the works of a writer such as Emecheta (who in all of her novels deals quite seriously with the role of women in various societies); one can avoid the feminist question. It is something else however, to imply that this is the only aspect worth examining in her work. Thus, this study tries to prove that her works go beyond this single motif. It is a simple superstructure that hides a work of uncommon depth and incisive observation. In *Second Class Citizen* Emecheta argues a lot of points like racism, culture difference, identity issues, oppression, male hegemony, class stratification etcetera as will be shown in the subsequent chapter. Baisel (2012, p.11) in regards to Adah emerging as a survivor is of the view that:

> From the long-going war Adah gets out as the winner. She becomes successful in her flight with the outside world and and makes England her home and thus gains her identity. So in the immigrants experience it is the woman who succeeds finding a place of belonging, a real home and building a secure sense of self- identity.

Adah's western education and her employment as a librarian in the American Consulate Library At Campell in London opens way to a new life as a promising writer even though she struggles with her four children and another child in her womb. She takes charge of her own life as well as her children's singlehandedly in a white man's country. In "Of French Fries and Cookies: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Diasporic Short Fiction", Tunca (2010, p.309) in the book *African Presence in Europe and Beyond* is of the view that:

> While Adichie draws upon the influence of previous generations of Nigerian authors in her work, her extensive interest in the progressive formation of cross-cultural identities bears considerable relevance to the contemporary Nigerian context(s). She has undoubtedly become one of the

> major voices of the county's 'third generation' of writers, whether their home lies in Africa, Europe, America or in the luminal spaces between".

Adichie in her own little way has contributed her own quota to Nigerian, American, African Literature and the world at large. *Americanah* examines all the issues that affect common black folks everywhere; it is a steady-handed dissection of the universal human experience. A platitude made fresh by the accuracy of Adichie's observations. Mami (2014, p.1) posits that:

> The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie instantiates in the corollaries of cultural reification non Nigerians in particular and African in general…Adichie advances the idea that even when they stay back in their homeland, Nigerians are unconsciously engrossed in an exteriorising process whereby they ultimately become enstranged from themselves…Adichie's stories shows that nearly all parties, American nationals as well as Nigerian immigrants, and even the non-immigrants Nigerians cannot but stimulate over all cultural reification. Accordingly, the promise for a materially stable and satisfying life as circulated publically through the media hides a nefarious call for false ideas and self-estrangement.

The above quotation brings to mind the adage "all that glitters is not gold". The media although a constant source of entertainment, never tell it all. Things are usually garnished out of proportion and such televised announcements are consumed en mass day–in-day-out without questioning the facts. 'Ifemelu's ideas of America are shiny, glossy television shows and advertising: "She saw herself in a house from *The Cosby Show*, in a school with students holding notebooks miraculously free of wear and crease" (p.99). Instead she finds out first hand that life in America is nothing like what is portrayed in television. Thus, the rush to leave a country of birth to a foreign one because of the promise of a better and more satisfying life becomes an unrealised dream; devastation sets in when at the destination, the immigrants find something entirely different from what they once thought to be the answer to all their prayers. Hence, the need to point out the disappointments and harsh realities that befalls the average Nigerian person in America, instead of the exaggerated life of bliss always portrayed in television. Bady (2014) *in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Solid Personal Achievements* written on March 15th is of the view that:

> *Americanah* is sprawling and unfocused, ambling through an undetermined love story whose inevitability can make the plot itself, feel kind of superfluous. One has the feeling that we are just killing time, telling stories, waiting for the moment when the two lovers find their way to each other, a bourgeois story about a bourgeois romance between two bourgeois Nigerians who suffer from the kind of petty problems from which the bourgeois suffer. Hair, Status, Love…while Americanah's protagonists suffer various trials and tribulations- the course of true love never runs smooth when the immigration and naturalisation service is involved- there is no war here to give their love story its gravity, or to make their experience a microcosm of a nation's. A middle class love story turns out to be, in the end, a middle class love story.

Although Bady's review is somewhat lacking in its understanding of Adichie's *Americanah*, it is quite true that as he says "one has the feeling that we are just killing time". The novel at some point becomes too narrative and to an extent, lost its coherence especially when it came to 'Ifemelu's blogging. Although this study agrees with Bady about the 'sprawling and unfocused' nature of the text, it is nevertheless unbecoming to say that there is nothing in the novel to make "their experience a microcosm of a nation's". *Americanah* in all ramifications have contributed immensely in drawing attention to the different experiences ranging from trauma, racism, depression, nostalgia, identity crisis to mention a few, that Nigerians in diaspora which she portrays through most of her characters of which 'Ifemelu' and 'Obinze' plays the lead role go through to fit into their host country. When read in detail, one gets the feeling that Adichie's protagonists are the 'transformers' in which the other characters lighten up. In other words, these two characters are what she used to represent the larger 'whole' of the Nigerian and American society. Hence, this study finds the novel adequate for analysing the Nigerians' diasporic experiences. This is because it has all the needed elements to prove that despite the fact that Nigerians sojourn abroad differently from the Caribbean's, Asians, Jews etcetera, Nigeria Diasporas ought to be looked into too. Norridge (2014,p.81) in her essay is of the opinion that:

> *Americanah* is a novel about group identities – about knowing where you belong, learning to fit in and reading new codes... Adichie explores with humor the journey from a majority black country to one where to be black

> is to be marginalised... it is a work about the complex social construction of the self and the personal stories that are chosen rather than simply made.

John (2013) in his article titled '*Americanah* a Sprawling Novel on Poisonous Racism', written in *Philadelphia Inquirer* asserts that:

> We get bracing looks at what arises from race in the United States: financial, social, and legal inequality; the legacy and shame of slavery; the resentments of conscience; victim-blaming; tribalism; race obsession and race unease; and the good old vintage stuff, toxic prejudice, true racial chauvinism, and discrimination.

Americanah covers lot of issues affecting the migrant Nigerian in the diaspora. It runs the breadth of immigrant lifestyle experiences with low-level work, undervalued selves, identity displacement and the difficulty of fitting into a left-behind culture on return. Alex (2013,p.6) also complimented John's assertion thus:

> *Americanah* is a book that works better when it is in transit, detailing people and situations who are in the act of becoming. Its structure is complex and sometimes unwieldy; there is much looping backwards and forwards in time as Ifemelu sits in the hair salon, and one feels slightly lost once her braids are finished and the narrative has moved on. Similarly, some characters are glimpsed too fleetingly to make a lasting impression; in the case of Ifemelu's parents, for example, this neatly mirrors their daughter's fading memories of them, but it is also tricky for the reader.

Adichie's novel explores different facets of structural inequality, different kinds of oppression, gender roles, the idea of home, racism and lots of other happenings affecting the diasporic Nigerian persons. Walker (2014, p.1) is also of the view that:

> *Americanah*… is one of those books we long for but doubt we'll live to see: a book by an African woman who has tools to dismantle the myth of the West whenever she encounters it. Someone who is not seduced, finally, by America, and, in fact, in the novel the deeply self-possessed (much of the time) heroine, Ifemelu decides to go home. And realises, the moment she steps off the plane in that chaotic but what the hell it's home, Lagos, that she is no longer, as Americans understand, or misunderstand, these things, "black." That when you are in your own country regardless of how crazy it might be you are no longer a color but a person.

The above review by Alice Walker offers a refreshing insight into the novel. Although "Ifemelu" spent many years in America, but all these years she was never completely herself.

She was always the black girl from Nigeria trying to fit into a different world any way she could: from relaxing her hair to speaking with American accent, to dating a white man. However, she felt liberated when she made the decision to return back to Nigeria. She decided to stop speaking with an American Accent, took pride in her kinky hair and re-established contacts with her Nigerian ex-boyfriend "Obinze". And finally when she got to Nigeria, she became 'Ifemelu' a Nigerian, because like Walker said "when you are in your own country regardless of how crazy it might be you are no longer a colour, but a person."

## 2.1 Features of Diasporic Literature

The literature rising from the background of diaspora has led to two distinctive types of writing. Tololyan (1994, p.654) makes a distinction between these two types of writing by explaining that there are two discourses, named the emic diaspora and the etic diaspora. The emic diaspora refers to the diasporas that talk about themselves, while the etic refers to scholarly works on diaspora. He further states that, "the self-study of diasporas produce representations and various forms of self- knowledge, some embodied in quotidian practices, some in public performances and others in oral and written archives and the thriving native language press of groups such as the Armenians and the Chinese". However, this study intends to examine writers from the perspective of those whose works focus on their home country, and writers whose works talk about the settled country. The first categories of writers locate their works in their home country in order to criticise it or to portray their home country and its cultures to foreign readers or use their work as a tool to remember their home country. The second type of writers locate their works in their new settlement to reflect the

changes they undergo or to tear the mask of multicultural nations, by portraying its discrimination towards them, or to show their developed condition in their new settlement.

In spite of these kinds of differences, most diasporic writings reveal certain thematic and stylistic features that are similar. The diasporic writers' choice of words, sentence structure, figurative language and sentence argument all work together to establish mood, images, and meaning in the text. Emecheta and Adichie adequatelydescribe their characters' appearance, actions, habits, inner feelings and thoughts. It is germane to say categorically then, that the style of writing determines the authenticity and acceptability of any literary work. It has also been observed that effective manipulation of language in writing determines the literary proficiency of the writer. Thus, these two writers of Nigerian diasporic fiction in their works use simple and less complex words in their attempt to explore and convey the diasporic experiences both home and abroad in their works. Hence, they use the language of the colonisers (English Language) to pass their work across to their readers. Achebe in his own words shows the relevance of using the English language when he asserts in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975, p.62) that:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings".

Many of the works on diaspora discuss the individual's community's attachment to the homeland and the urge to belong in the settled land and as a result of this; they reveal a hybrid existence as stated by Lau (2000, p.241):

> They are people who are as multi-cultural as they are multi-lingual. They do not regard themselves as fully belonging in either culture, and have practically evolved a sub-culture peculiar to themselves. They try to take the best from both worlds, but they suffer a sense of hybridity and cultural entanglement.

Emphasising this point, Jain (2004, p.76) refers to it as a 'split narrative'. She further portrays the past and the present of diasporic literature as being different; the past has a different history, tradition, regional and colonial memories, and political equations. The present has different kinds of loneliness, isolation, success, affluence and recognition. Even though they live in the present, they co-exist in the past too. Yet another point of interest is that of Ramraj (2003, p.12) in "Diaspora and Multiculturalism" who discusses the difference among immigrants, exile and expatriate writings. According to him, "exile and expatriate writings are more immersed in the situation at home and the circumstances that prolong the individual's exile or expatriation" than with "the emigre's community relationship with the dominant society". Therefore he thinks that diasporic writing is often about persons linked by common histories of uprooting and dispersal, common homelands, and common cultural heritages, but due to the political and cultural particularities of the society, it develops different cultural and historical identities.

Nostalgia and displacement are other common thematic features of diasporic literature. Rushdie (1992, p.76) clearly points out that "exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt". Diasporic writing is mostly a response to the lost homes and to issues such as displacement, nostalgia, racial discrimination, survival, cultural change and identity. Displacement is one of the first feelings that haunt a diasporic community. There are several factors which account for the displacement of a community from their home country to a foreign land. These can be broadly divided into two: voluntary and non-voluntary movements. There are two factors responsible for Voluntary movements, they include: Educational and Economic need. On the other hand, non-voluntary movements occur due to Political and National compulsions and in the case of women, it could be marital causes.

When diasporic people find themselves displaced from their ancestral home, they are upset mentally and strive to remember and locate themselves in a nostalgic past. Through nostalgia they try to escape from the reality of life in the settled land. Most often, the diasporic community faces loneliness and alienation in the new country. The implication of this therefore is that they do not mingle with others in the settled society. Even if they try to blend with people in the host community, most of the time, they find it difficult as they find that they are discriminated against. A sense of alienation, loneliness and feeling of loss are inextricable for the diasporic people. Even though they face external problems like discrimination and identity crisis, their own inner problems like loneliness and alienation cause more suffering to them.

Cultural change is yet another major problem faced by the diasporic community especially by the first generation of immigrants captured in most diasporic literary works. Every attempt to settle in a new environment springs up peculiar challenges. The new challenge spurs up certain nostalgic effects that make them cling strictly to cultures of their ancestral homeland. As Wieviorka (1999, p.72) states, when a diasporic community is "constantly rejected or interiorised while only wanting to be included, either socially or culturally, or when this group or this individual is racially discriminated, and dominised under the argument of a supposed cultural difference, then the individual or the group is embarrassed and this eventually leads to a self-definition and behaviors based on this culture and, eventually, racial distinction".

Even though the diasporic community stays in a new land for a long period, they seldom break away from their culture. They tend to promote their communal life by simulating the original family ties that characterised their ancestral family structure in the bid to preserve their cultural traditions. Diasporic literature therefore provides an excellent model to divulge

the fragmentation of the self and the creation of feelings that can be stirred up by migration. Diasporic writers have skilfully narrated the “destructive, agonising and painful” (Frank 2008, p.18) experience of migration in their works. In a way, “the experience of migration acts as a catalyst and conduit for nascent feelings, a re-conception of our sense of self and our relationships with others” (Jacobs 2011, p.142). Nigerian diasporic literatures' theme and style reveals a migrant’s struggle between desires and opportunities as a sign of past circumstances and of expectations for the future.

## 2.2 African Diaspora and Literature

Since literature cannot divorce itself from the society from which it emanates, it is thus pertinent to assert that African Diasporic literature cannot completely dissociate itself from the African experience. In terms of number, African diaspora is one of the most important in the world. According to the African Union: “The African diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship or nationality…” (AU, 2005, cited in Bakewell 2008). Okpe (1999, p.10) observes that, “the origin of the African diaspora can be traced to the dehumanising trade in slaves across the Atlantic ocean. It started with Europeans invading the coast of African (sic) and capturing inhabitants for sale on European market…” This means that three main periods can be identified when it comes to giving an overview of the history of the African diaspora. What may be seen as the first instance of Africans leaving the shores of their continent for foreign climes falls in the category of forced migration. In other to fully illustrate how African diaspora really started, Robert Cohen in Global Diaspora (2008, Pp. 49-50) quoted William Bosman, the Chief Agent of the Dutch West India Company at its main slave trading station in modern-day Ghana as saying:

> When these Slaves come to Fida, they are put in Prison altogether … they are thoroughly examined, even to the smallest member, and that naked too

> both men and women, without the least distinction of modesty. Those which are approved as good are set on one side; and the lame and faulty are set by as Invalids … the remainder are numbered, and it is entered who delivered them. In the mean while a burning iron, with the arms or name of the companies, lies in the fire; with which ours are marked on the breast … I doubt not but this trade seems very barbarous to you, but since it is followed by mere necessity it must go on; but we yet take all possible care that they are not burned too hard, especially the women, who are more tender than the men. For the ship captains, merchants (European and African) and, above all, for the plantation owners in the New World, African slaves meant vast profits for a relatively modest outlay. More often than not the cruelty meted out on slaves was quite decadent when there were plenty of slaves to be managed.

The suffering of these Africans can be said to have been entrenched in their consciousness partly because it was their own experience, but also by the extraordinary success of some Africans in conveying a sense of their plight through art, literature, music, dance and religious expressions. It is this slave trade that accounts for the classic examples of diaspora in America and Caribbean islands where the descendants of the African slaves shipped there now live permanently. The second wave of African diaspora is the result of the difficult process of decolonisation. Starting from the 1950s, there was a great increase of migrations coming from Africa to Europe in terms of numbers, creating the condition for the settlement of a long standing and active African diaspora. Despite gains of independence, economic and cultural ties remained strong between the two regions, especially with the old colonist countries. Many people willingly left the African continent, in search for better working or educational opportunities, mostly for Europe and North America. This period marked a rather important increase in emigration aimed at acquiring better quality of life and education.

This diaspora is mainly the product of "voluntary migrations". The reasons for why immigrants left their homeland differed; their reason for seeking succour abroad varies from one individual to the other. Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) for instance, did not show characters dying from hunger or starvation, instead her work centres on two young couples,

Ifemelu and Obinze, who migrate to the United States and the United Kingdom respectively not because of the familiar stories of fleeing from natural disaster, war or poverty, but because they are running away from what Adichie calls the "lethargy of choicelessness." (p.276). Both Ifemelu and Obinze belong to the Nigerian middle class where the need to migrate is not brought on by poverty but by the quest for adventure. This battle against 'choicelessness' is clearly projected to the reader through Obinze's mind while attending a dinner in a friend's house during his short stay in Britain. When Alexa, one of the guests, commends Blunkett's intention to make Britain continue to be a refuge to survivors of frightful wars, Obinze agrees with her, yet feels alienated because his own migration story is different from those common ones motivated by wars and woes (Adichie 2013, p.276)

> Alexa, and the other guests, and perhaps even Georgina, all understood the fleeing from war, from the kind of poverty that crushed human souls, but they would not understand the need to escape from the oppressive lethargy of choicelessness. They would not understand why people like him, who were raised well-fed and watered but mired in dissatisfaction, conditioned from birth to look towards somewhere else; eternally convinced that real lives happened in that somewhere else…none of them starving, or raped, or from burned villages, but merely hungry for choice and certainty.

From her work, one gets the feeling that Adiche's characters all had their personal reasons for leaving the shores of Nigeria. For Aunty Uju, it was to escape the evil plan that her boyfriend's family had for her and her son; for Obinze, it was his love for America; for Ifemelu, it was to escape the constant strike in Nigerian Universities, and quest for better educational opportunity; for Emenike, it was the belief that 'the road of America is paved with gold'. Each character that migrated had his/her own reason, but with the same expectation that America or the host country will welcome him/her with open arms, this belief of theirs was discarded when they came face to face with the real thing. Thus, even though the crude and dilapidating condition of Nigeria is a contributing factor to the reason why some of her sons and daughters leave their ancestral home to the diaspora, it is however

limiting to restrict their movement to a single motive like Kehinde (2011, p. 2) who is of the opinion that:

> The voluntariness to migrate to foreign lands, can be weighed against the backdrop of the absence of environment capable of offering its citizenry the opportunity for a meaningful existence.

Africans are on the move across borders seeking for better opportunities far away from the continent. This movement involves Africa's skilled and unskilled, men and women, including those who are displaced by the incessant wars, civil strife, and violence that have plagued almost every region of the continent. Up till now, more Africans have settled and are still settling in the United States voluntarily. The United States has become a site for the cultural formation, expression, and contestation of the newer identities that these immigrants seek to depict in their new place of settlement. Relying mostly on their strong human capital resources (education and family networks), these Africans are devising creative ways to position their new identities in global arenas (Arthur, 2010). Combining their African cultural forms and identities with new ones that they imbibe in their host lands, these Africans are redefining what it means to be black in a race, ethnic, and colour-conscious American society (Arthur 2010, p.xii). While the factors that engendered the wave of migration and the experiences of the immigrant are the concerns of this study. It focuses on a specific phase of migration, the Nigerian diaspora.

In conclusion, from the reviews on *Second Class Citizen* and *Americanah,* more emphasis tend to be on Emecheta and Adichie's portrayal of the challenges of the Nigerian woman at home and in diaspora and its effect on their characters. This shows that Nigerian diasporic writers like Emecheta and Adichie in their narratives bring to life the dominant themes that affect the Nigerian diasporic man, and the destructive, agonising and painful experience of migration in their works. These Nigerian diasporic writers uncover a migrant's struggle

between desires and opportunities as a reflection of past circumstances and of expectations for the future.

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.0 The Representation of Nigerian Diasporic Experiences in *Second Class Citizen*

Representation plays a major role in how literature is understood. Through it, the lives of men and the events in their societies are illustrated by an intricate mix of words. Henry James holds that "the only reason for the existence of the novel is that it does attempt to represent life" (cited in Francis Sparshott 1967, pp.3-4). This suggests that "real life" analogues must exist for any plot to be presented. Also, representation in literature encompasses the manner in which a particular issue or subject matter is addressed. This varies from one literary work to another and is often influenced by a writer's personal views. What writers attempt to portray are various happenings that are prevalent in a society, often one within which they exist. To this effect, representation may be subjective and closely related to the ideology or philosophy of the writer with regards to events in the literary work. Hence, writers represent societal issues from the perspectives of their own stand point. In so doing, Althuser (1977,p.12) states, "the writer intends to make the reader feel the openings, silences, lapses which really and truly in ideology are not so apparent" since in literature, representation could be a way of reproducing the ideas, beliefs and behavior a person needs to live with in a society. In essence, the ideology of writers determines the representation created by such writers which reflects the version of the reality that is accepted to them. Young (1999) also describes the following three necessary conditions for something to be identified as representation:

> For a start, if something is a representation of some object, it must stand for the object. Second, if something is a representation, it must be intentionally used as a representation. This may be called the intentionality condition. Finally, there is the recognition condition: nothing is a representation of an object unless it can be recognised as standing for the object by someone other than the person (or persons) who intend that it be a representation of the object.

The first condition talks about the requirement that any representation bears adequate resemblance to the object being illustrated. The second highlights the requirement of intentionality indicating that nothing can accidentally be a representation, while the third suggests that any representation must be acknowledged by independent observers to be an accurate version of the target object, event or issue. Hence, since literary writers represent objects, events and issues that are evident in the society taking their own stand point, a description or an allusion to such issues or events is necessary.

The Nigerian writer, Buchi Emecheta, in her novel *Second Class Citizen (1974)* represents events affecting Nigerian diasporas in their host countries. Drawing from her beliefs, she makes allusions to the obvious: the experiences of racism, cultural differences, identity crisis and other sundry issues affecting Nigerians in a foreign country. Her novel depicts the difficulties Nigerian migrants face caught between two cultures as exemplified in the character of Adah Obi; the protagonist. This novel represents the struggle of Adah and her quest for survival especially as it relates to the actualisation of her dreams, while growing into a woman and moving from an elite position in her native Nigeria to a very poor class in a predominantly white European society. She struggles with motherhood, with being a wife and with supporting her entire family alongside being an independent woman. Part of her struggle is caused by issues of race, being black in the face of perceived English racism. This study argues that the female protagonist Adah Obi suffers from the patriarchal and colonial discourses dominant in contemporary Nigerian and British societies where she is portrayed as the ultimate "other" due to her disadvantageous position as a black woman and an immigrant.

As the number of African migrants to Europe and America rapidly rises, an issue which has increasingly come to the fore in diasporic literature is the representation of Africans in diaspora. This is an attempt to capture the often complex relationship immigrants have with

their host communities and their experiences in trying to acclimatise to a new environment. In this vein, *Second Class Citizen* attempts to portray what it meant to be a girl child in Nigeria in the early 1960s, and then compares the Nigerian society at the time with the English society. The structure of the novel can be said to be episodic. It starts with Adah's childhood, emphasising her early dreams and aspirations and ends with her leaving her husband Francis. This is reflected in the way Emecheta titles each chapter; from the first titled "The Childhood" to the final chapter (chapter thirteen) titled "The Ditch Pull". It follows Adah's progression through life in distinct chapters.

Through Emecheta's use of Nigerian characters, in *Second Class Citizen* she can be said to have represented the average experience of Africans living in the diaspora by highlighting common challenges caused by racism, differences in culture, and loss of identity. All these are illustrated by her use of literary techniques like characterisation, setting, language/dialect, parody/mimicry, imagery, etcetera. Through her use of these methods, Emecheta reflects the hostility of the British society towards black immigrants. She depicts the struggles of those considered as outsiders, who often face displacement and resettlement even in a new environment. The story follows the protagonist Adah through the turmoil, difficulties, and despair she faces and her subsequent achievements in life. The narrative is told in the third person linear structure where Adah develops as a character, questioning the social values, norms and expectations of her identity in both societies. Using Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* therefore, this study shows that representation plays a vital role in literature because it brings to the fore happenings in our immediate society and the surrounding areas and sometimes offers valuable perspective within which to consider these events.

### 3.1 Nigerian Diasporic Experience

The Nigerian diaspora is spread across the globe, from neighboring countries such as Ghana, Cameroon to continents like North America, Europe, Asia e.t.c. Prior to the 1960s, some Nigerians already lived in Britain, especially in the London area. However, in the years that followed, the influx of Nigerians into the United Kingdom increased rather rapidly as they pursued the proverbial greener pastures, in search of a better life, different from what was obtainable in their home country. Academic pursuit is one among other reasons why some Nigerians migrate. Emecheta, through her narrative shows that the era portrayed by *Second Class Citizen* witnessed a flood of people from ex-colonies into the metropolitan city of London. In chapter seven titled "The Ghetto," her characterisation summarises the reason behind the influx of Nigerians like Adah, Francis, Mr. Babalola, and Mr. Noble into England:

> These group of men calculated that with independence would come prosperity, the opportunity for self-rule, poshy vacant jobs and more money, plenty of it. One had to be eligible for these jobs, though, thought these men. The only place to secure this eligibility, ***this passport to prosperity***, was England. They must come to England, get a quick degree in Law and go back to rule their own country... some of them actually made it... most of those men who sought the kingdom of the eligible's did not make it... if they remembered their original dream, the dream of reading law and becoming an elite in their newly independent country, they buried it deep in their bitter hearts. It was such a disappointment, too bitter to put into words. When these men fell so disastrously, their dreams were crushed with them. The dream of becoming an aristocracy became a reality of being black, a nobody, a second-class citizen. (pp.87-89)

Many Nigerians that journeyed to England soon after their country's independence were forced out of their native societies because of an unrealised dream that the advent of independence and democracy would bring great prosperity to the Nigerian nation. Disenchanted with the outcomes, they then moved to England with the hope of improving themselves educationally and otherwise. However, some, like Mr. Nobel remained behind in England instead of going home as they realised their dreams were still far from being realised, and thus, they came in contact with incessant racism. Wright (2004, p.28) writes that

Western mainstream depictions of the Blacks "cling to their fantasies of a primitive homogeneous people who are "undeveloped"…For the West, the image of the Black Other is as vibrant as ever." The black person is seen as a lesser being because of his/her skin colour, language, customs, place of birth or any factor that supposedly reveals the basic nature of that person. Jamaica Kincaid in her prose poem "Blackness," from her 1992 collection of short stories *At the Bottom of the River* also describes the complex series of contradictions that produce black identity in the West:

> The blackness is visible and yet it is invincible, for I see that I cannot see it. The blackness fills up a small room, a large field, an island, my own being. The blackness cannot bring me joy but often I am made glad in it. The blackness cannot be separated from me but often I can stand outside of it. The blackness is not the air, though I breath it. The blackness is not the earth, though I drink and eat it. The blackness is not my blood, though it flows through my veins. The blackness enters my many-tiered spaces and soon the significant word and event recede and eventually vanish: in this way I am annihilated and my form becomes formless and I am absorbed into a vastness of free flowing matter. In the blackness then I have been erased, I can no longer say my own name. I can no longer point to myself and say ''I". In the blackness my voice is silent. First, then, I have been my individual self, carefully banishing randomness from existence, then I am swallowed up in the blackness so that I am one with it. (qtd in Becoming Black 2004,p.1)

The issue of "Blackness" as expressed in the above quote is a defining part of the black experience especially as it relates to the Nigerian diasporas. As a black person in diaspora, the individuality of a person seizes to exist, all that is left is the fact of one's blackness. Thus Kincaid's assertion above is less a definition of "blackness" and more an examination of the "in-between" space that it inhabits. Emecheta explores this in-between space in *Second Class Citizen* in the chapter titled "A Cold Welcome." This chapter explores the reception Adah receives on her arrival in London; Francis, her husband reminds her that despite their respectable social status in Lagos, they were "second class citizens" in London. Adah faces a shocking truth about London when he explains the difficulty in acquiring accommodation in

the city: “you see, accommodation is very short in London, especially for black people with children” (p.41). A major problem for blacks was finding adequate housing as Landlords preferred not to rent out their buildings to coloured people.

As Francis said, “We are all blacks, all coloured, and the only houses we can get are horrors like these” (p.41). Adah’s attempt to find proper lodging for her family demonstrates the racial discrimination and takes the “othering” process to a new level for the protagonist. In the process of trying to find a vacant apartment, they often came across a painted sign saying “Sorry, no coloureds” on the notices (p.80). This is an example of racism in its most explicit and vitriolic form. Because of her colour, Adah could not rent the apartment she wanted. Her house hunting was made significantly more difficult by the fact that she was black; and “she was beginning to learn that her colour was something she was supposed to be ashamed of. She was never aware of this at home in Nigeria, even when in the midst of whites” (p.76). She learnt to suspect anything beautiful and pure because those things were for white people, not the blacks (p.83).

In a significant way, Emecheta’s characterisation, ranging from pre-colonial to diasporic characters also represents the essential distinctiveness of the African woman. She portrays Adah, for whom some significant experiences result from her efforts to find a suitable place for her family after they are forced to move out of a rented flat by their Landlord. True to her roots, she takes the initiative to search for an appropriate place where they could live. Many of the troubles faced by black immigrants in Britain come from the fact that their race had been ‘Othered’; described as savage and inferior to the white race. According to Said (1993), the western discourses of colonialism have historically and ideologically stereotyped and constructed non-western people as other, relegating them to a position of displacement and marginalisation. Stressing on Said’s postulation, Hall (1990, p.226) in *Cultural Identity and*

*Diaspora* also asserts that not only have western discourses constructed the subject position of the blacks as a position of marginalisation and inferiority, they have also led the Blacks to internalise that positioning:

> Not only, in Said's Orientalist sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'other'. Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, 'power/knowledge'. But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and con-formation to the norm.

The idea of a fluctuating identity can be very powerful especially for a black person outside his/her ancestral home. This is because trying to merge these two identities of home and diaspora is not a state that is deliberately chosen, which points at its potential to change how people think of themselves because this inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, 'individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless - a race of angels' (qtd in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 1990, p.395). This construction of the non-white people, especially the Blacks, as the "Other" in the above excerpt leads eventually to racial exclusion. In *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism,* Loomba (2005,p.95) points out that "colour was the most important signifier of cultural and racial difference." The colour of skin and other physical features is the common basis for racial discrimination. By the virtue of their white skin, the British claim a dominant position. Emphasising on this, Emecheta in *Second Class Citizen* depicts the attitude of some white people toward blacks when Adah and her husband Francis go to meet a prospective landlord who had informed Adah over the phone of the availability of an empty apartment to let:

> At first Adah thought the woman was about to have an epileptic seizure. As she opened the door, the woman clutched at her throat with one hand, her little mouth opening and closing as if gasping for air, and her bright kitten-like eyes dilated to the fullest extent…she found her voice… that voice that was telling them now that she was very sorry, the rooms had just gone… Francis and Adah said nothing as the flood of words poured out. Adah had never faced rejection in this manner. Not like this, directly…just because they were blacks? (p.85)

The irritation exhibited by the white landlord on sighting Adah and Francis and her declaration that " the rooms had just gone" points to the fact that even issues such as the acquisition of property are successful not just only on consideration of one's financial status but also on the basis of one's race. Adah's experience with the white landlord is a reflection of what some Nigerians in diaspora go through while in their host communities. This shows racism as a major stumbling block for many migrants and of course, it constitutes a major reason for the personal despair often felt by the Nigerian diasporas in different western countries. In the same light, Rev. Al Sharpton in an article titled *Racism and Bias—Can We Pause and Be Honest With Ourselves?* stresses more on this thus:

> As I often say we have come a long way from the days of slavery, but in 2014 discrimination and inequality still saturate our society in modern ways. Though racism may be less blatant now in many cases, its existence is undeniable. If you don't believe me, just listen to others and take a look at our nation for yourself.

The existence of racism as pointed out by Rev. Sharpton is evident in Emecheta's projection of the Nigerian diasporan experience in *Second Class Citizen.* From the era described in this novel to the present time, racism has remained an active bug ravaging foreign societies beneath a facade of tranquility. As a result of this, the discourse on racism is important in exploring the lives of Nigerians in the diaspora. The belief that differences in physical appearance have something to do with differences in the behaviour, attitude, intelligence, or the intrinsic worth of individuals promotes racism, prejudice and animosity against people perceived to belong to other races. Thus, the second class treatment faced by black people abroad holds an important place in the context of Emecheta's novel. Both Francis and Adah

face racism in many situations such as in hiring their baby-sitter, and in renting an apartment. The effect of this environment on the psyche is represented when Adah finds that her sick son Vicky is being taken to a hospital named "Royal Free" hospital. The name of the hospital seemed ironic to her since it appeared as though the treatment they were to receive was "royal" and still "free" of charge. Adah refused to believe this and had doubts about the treatment her son was to receive. She wondered if the hospital was only meant for second-class people, the blacks:

> Was it a hospital for poor people, for second-class people? Why did they put the word "free" in it? Fear started to shroud her then. Were they sending her Vicky to a second-class hospital, a free one, just because they were blacks? (p.60)

The caution that characterised Adah's line of thought as expressed above reveals the level of caution a typical black person in Britain takes when faced with an unusual display of kindness by the white or British health system. Under normal circumstances, Vicky's treatment at "Royal Free" hospital would not have been an issue, but considering the constant maltreatment Black Africans endure from their White hosts, Adah's fear was understandable because the situation was difficult and confusing for her. After all the fuss made about "lazy" blacks and the segregated society, for the white man to seemingly turn back and offer treatment free of charge was incomprehensible to Adah partly because:

> She had never seen or heard of a place where a child was given such close attention by adults, free. There must be a catch somewhere. By the time they arrived at the hospital, she was convinced Vicky's innards were going to be taken away from him (p.61)

The fear of accepting any form of kindness from the white as expressed by Adah in the quote above characterises the prevailing situation in the west which in time affects the personal character of individuals by sowing seeds of distrust. From the feelings expressed above, we get a peek into the psychological trauma that some of these experiences put Nigerians through. Because Adah had never experienced this sort of service at home in Nigeria where

it would have been understandable, she finds it difficult to grasp that the same people who would not rent out a flat to a black person can turn back and give the same individual free medical care. Although, the experience of Nigerian subjects, especially women, who have launched a journey into a world pervaded by social and economic inequality is what Emecheta's novel portrays, the conflicting personality trait of Adah, the major character moves the action forward. Emecheta uses Adah to illustrate that the oppression of the Nigerian female child starts at home. Emecheta identifies Adah's mother as Adah's first contact with oppression. Because of this, a bad relationship exists between them; Adah finds herself unable to cooperate with her mother in any way. Emecheta states that the girl "would lie, just for the joy of lying; she took secret joy in disobeying her mother" (p.9), a delinquent situation brought about by the psychological oppression that she suffers at the hands of her mother (Oppression of Women 1997, p.466).

After the death of her father, Adah's fortune in life takes a steeper downward turn because she is left in the care of her mother who is charged with making almost every decision for her. As a result of previous experiences, Adah knew that it was the end of the road for her educationally. Her mother was unwilling to work in order to earn enough money to send her to school and she made a decision to find a husband for Adah willing to pay a suitable bride price. It turned out to be an unacceptable situation as all the suitors that came for her hand were old, bald headed men: "...because only they could afford the high 'bride price' Ma was asking" (p.20). Other passages in the novel attest to the oppression of the African woman, perhaps none more explicitly than an incident which occurred near the close of the novel. Adah's husband (Francis) demands that she should not practice birth control, she however defies his authority and goes ahead to get a birth control device because she knew that they could hardly afford another child. Moreover, her work was being interrupted by her pregnancies. When Francis found out that she had gotten birth control without his consent he:

> Called all the other tenants to come and see and hear about this great issue – how the innocent Adah who came to London only a year previously had become so clever. Adah was happy when Pa Noble came, because at least it made Francis stop hitting her. She was dizzy with pain and her head throbbed. Her mouth was bleeding. And once or twice during the proceedings she felt tempted to run out and call the police. But she thought better of it. Where would she go after that? She had no friends and she had no relations in London. (pp.160-161)

Adah's husband represents the patriarchal Igbo Nigerian male who would go to any length to stop their women folk from adopting any Eurocentric norm, since it would free the woman from the absolute control of her husband. Thus in the above passage, Francis publicly shames Adah by beating her in front of all the neighbours and the landlord for getting a birth control device. This incident inspires Adah to consider leaving her husband. She told herself that she will not live with such a man. "Now everybody knew that she was being knocked about, only a few weeks ago she had come out of the hospital. Everybody now knew that the man she was working for and supporting was not only a fool, but that he was too much of a fool to know that he was acting foolishly." (p.161) As an eminent female writer from Nigeria writing about the issues surrounding the role of African women in a patriarchal society, their subjugation and marginalisation; Emecheta is of the view that the patriarchal system in Africa and in Nigeria specifically, considers women as insignificant and irrelevant causing women to be denied the right and privileges that men enjoy.

In *Second Class Citizen* (1974) Adah fights against the forces of poverty, racism, patriarchy, marital and societal customs that assail her. She struggles tirelessly to extricate herself from the shackles and manacles of discrimination that entrap the African girl child. She prefers to keep aside some money from the household management purse to facilitate her registration for her examinations and tragically welcomes a battering session from her husband for her action. Her resolve to leave her husband reached its peak when Francis, in an attempt to frustrate her dream of becoming a writer burns the manuscript of a book she had written and

was going to call *The Bride Price*. She had told him about her book because she wanted his opinion. "She tried to convince him that it was good, that her friends at the library said so…" (p.184), but to undermine her efforts and to portray the image that Adah as a female could write nothing worth reading, Francis lashed out saying:

> You keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think nothing except how to breast-feed her baby.

Adah as a diasporic Nigerian woman is doubly colonised; as a woman and as a black person in diaspora. She is colonised by her husband Francis who believes that the woman has nothing tangible to contribute to the society at large and that her role as a woman should not go beyond attending to her kids and caring for her husband's needs. She is also colonised by the British society that sees anyone black as the 'other' different from the mainstream Caucasian British society. Eager to show Francis her "brainchild" as she called her manuscript, Adah:

> In her happiness she forgot that Francis came from another culture, that he was not one of those men who would adapt to demands with ease, that his ideas about women were still the same. To him, a woman was a second-class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and, if she refused, to have sense beaten into her until she gave in; to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her; to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the right time. There was no need to have an intelligent conversation with his wife because, you see, she might start getting new ideas. (pp.164-165)

Most Nigerian immigrants refuse to fully adopt the culture of their new place of dwelling which sees the woman as equal to the man as is evident in the character of Francis as revealed in the above citation. Even in diaspora, his cultural orientation of the role of the woman is still unchanged. Traditional patriarchal Nigerian society considered docility to be the character of a good woman. The woman as a second-class human should have little say in any issue even if it affects her directly, and if she dared to oppose her husband "he is

encouraged to beat sense into her until she gives in." Adah unable to live up to this standard, gets depressed and leaves Francis. This act of desertion may be said to depict the African woman's yearning for emancipation and her efforts at conquering a wider public space. Though she suffers assaults and destruction of property, the court adjudicates and resituates her entitlements. Adah's story is common to the modern Nigerian woman struggling against patriarchy, male supremacy and social customs. The traditional image of a rural, back-house, timid, subservient and lack-luster woman has been replaced by her more modern counterpart; a rounded human being, rotational, individualistic and assertive, fighting for, claiming and keeping her own" (qtd in Obiageli and Otokunefor 1989). Emecheta replaces the traditional African woman known to be timid, voiceless, helpless and vulnerable with a modern counterpart who is confident, ambitious, innovative and resolute.

*Second Class Citizen*, in some allegorical aspect portrays societal issues that pervaded the Nigerian society immediately after her independence. The lack of qualified workers able to fill the gaps left behind by the English colonisers and the search for better environment free of incessant corruption, female oppression, and a poor educational system are some factors that contributed to the influx of Nigerians into the western world. Thus, the novelist in her imaginative creation represents the plurality of discourses and social actions that Nigerians in diaspora experience. To appropriately explore this, Emecheta uses conflict as a literary device for expressing the resistance the protagonist Adah finds in achieving her aims and dreams in a foreign land. Conflict is a discord that can have external aggressors or can even arise from within the self. It can occur when a subject is battling his inner discord, at odds with his surroundings or it may be pitted against others in the story. As a result, Francis, Adah's husband is shown at odds with his surroundings. To fit into their new place of dwelling, African migrants frequently try to adopt some western values considered as valuable. This is

portrayed by the character Francis who wants his kids to fit into the Western system and forces them to learn how to speak English:

> One day when a friend and classmate of hers came to visit them…when her back was turned, the friend started to tease Titi in Yoruba, encouraging her to talk. Tired of Titi's silence, Adah's friend snapped at Titi: 'Have you lost or sold your tongue? You used to talk to me in Nigeria? Why don't you talk to me now? Then Titi, the poor thing, snapped back in Yoruba: 'Don't talk to me. My dad will cane me with the belt if I speak in Yoruba. And I don't know much English. Don't talk to me…***Francis wanted their daughter to start speaking only in English***. This was due to the fact that Nigeria was ruled for so long a time by the English. An intelligent man was judged by the way he spoke English. But it did not matter whether the English could speak the languages of the people they ruled. (p.59)

The need for diasporic Nigerians to imbibe some aspects of a new value system from their host communities pervades Emecheta's prose narrative. In the above passage, it is believed that this new cultural assimilation will make them appear more civilised forgetting that the people they strive so much to emulate cannot "speak the language of the people they ruled." Thus, it didn't matter to Francis if Titi forgot her own ancestral tongue; all that mattered was that she be fluent in the language of the colonisers.

Emecheta's representation of the characters in her work *Second Class Citizen* examines how some of them lost touch with their own identity by pretending for too long to be something they were not. And in Francis' behavior we see an indication of the distance a typical migrant is willing to go to suppress their original identity and adopt one which suites them better in their new environment. From a postcolonial perspective, Francis, being a Nigerian in England, has a double identity as both a Nigerian and a 'wanna be' Londoner and it is the recognition of such contrasting traits that constantly weigh him down and reminds him of the need to absorb more Western mannerisms. Like most immigrants from the ex-colonies, Francis realises that fitting into this new society would require the ability to use their language in an efficient way. In essence, *Second Class Citizen* is about more than just racial

issues, it deals with all the ways people form their identities: what they put on and what they take off, the things they accumulate and the items they discard along the way.

Migrants are the real subject of any postcolonial literature. They face a double trauma about identity: they come from countries that have suffered colonisation and are given cause to question their identity again by leaving their homes and moving to a different place with different culture. In the western world they are often regarded as second class citizens, they work underpaid jobs and their languages and skin colours are considered as exotically fascinating, and at the same time ugly and primitive. Although Adah tries to resist this social attitude, the black community in Britain already seemed to have accepted an inferior status. Black Africans commonly found white foster mothers for their children in an attempt to ensure they adopted English manners in total disregard for their native traditions. Adah reacts to this tendency among the immigrants in England as follows:

> They say that in England Nigerian children have two sets of mothers – the natal mother, and the social mother. As soon as a Nigerian housewife in England realised that she was expecting a child, instead of shopping for prams, and knitting little bootees, she would advertise for a foster mother. No one cared whether a woman was suitable or not, no one wanted to know whether the house was clean or not; all they wanted to be sure of was that the foster-mother was white. The concept of 'whiteness'could cover a multitude of sins (p.50).

To make the assimilation process easy for their children, and for them to find their own world and to structure their identity in the new setting they will be coming into, many diasporic Nigerian women will advertise for a white foster mother otherwise known as the "social mother" different from a natal mother (birth mother) once she realises she is expecting a child. This they do to hasten their child's incorporation into the white society at an early age.

In the novel *Second Class Citizen* (1974), Adah's problems with identity began as a child arising from a lack of consideration of her uniqueness and importance as an individual by

traditional African culture. For example, Emecheta shows the insignificance of Adah's birth to her family:

> She was a girl who had arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So, since she was such a disappointment to her parents, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth, she was so insignificant. (p.1)

The preference for boys in African society over girls is not just limited to the time of birth but continues through many situations in life such as in the field of education. As a member of the 'lesser' sex, Adah is deprived of an education and other facilities in stark contrast to her brother who is provided for and encouraged in his educational pursuits. Emecheta in the excerpt above explores how the girl child is viewed in an African setting. Adah's struggles begin early in her life. After her father's death, she is taken into an uncle's home where she lives with her mother and is tutored only on how to be a good wife, and not to be a woman of her own will. All she is allowed to learn are the responsibilities of a woman in the household and to the family.

Emecheta in her work depicts the second class position of the African woman who is not even allowed the freedom of travelling abroad, a privilege only granted to the male folk. This may be seen in Francis' reaction to Adah's desire to accompany him to London: "Father does not approve of women going to UK…it is allowed for African males to come and get civilised in England, but that privilege has not been extended to the females yet" (Pp.24-34). A black woman faces even more marginalisation than a typical black man, a fact to which Emecheta asserts in the novel. She is of the opinion that a black woman generally endures a greater level of discrimination than any other group of people in the western countries and elsewhere. They are not only at the bottom of the social hierarchy but also, negative stereotypes are attributed to them.

In *Second Class Citizen*, Emecheta breaks this stereotypical chain as her protagonist succeeds in recovering her lost identity. The identity she lost as a result of her position as a black woman, the general social alienation of black people and dislocation due to migration into a foreign land. However, despite all of Adah's struggles as an African second-class citizen, she finally succeeds in carving out a place for herself, 'a real home and building a secure sense of self-identity'. Her western education and employment as a librarian in the American Consulate Library at Campbell Street in London opens her up to a way to a new life as a promising writer. Though she struggles with her four children and another child in her womb, she takes charge of her own life as well as her children's singlehandedly in a foreign country. Hence, Adah can be said to have overcome the internal and external conflicts arising from her struggles with Francis and the psychological trauma she went through, and has finally carved out a place for herself and her children.

Emecheta as a Nigerian diasporic writer uses her writing as a way of representing and capturing the typical Nigerian diasporic experiences. In *Second Class Citizen* she uses different settings as a strategy in making the narrative relay information to the reader and particularly, to develop the story in order to make it more complete. Set in post-colonial Igbo/ Yoruba society in Nigeria, the Caribbean and England, the novel covers a wide range of cultural issues encompassing Igbo male attitudes and the English treatment of black immigrants. Emecheta uses these different settings to explore how Nigerians in diaspora battles with culture differences in their host communities and how different the issues they come across are from what they may be accustomed to in their ancestral homes. The issue of culture difference cuts across different countries as shown in literary works from the Caribbean, Asia, India, Nigeria, and in the works from any continent or country that has ever or is still experiencing any form of diasporic movement. We see this portrayed in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) Selvon's *Lonely Londoner* (1954), Selasi's *Ghana Must*

*Go*(2013), and Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) to mention a few. Chika Unigwe in her article "Migration to Belgium" written 14 March, 2013 highlights this problem of culture difference when she said:

> In that first month of my migration, I was busy losing my voice in small imperceptible ways. I was finding that nothing I knew before seemed to be of consequence. Not language. Not social etiquette…J woke me up to have breakfast. I was not hungry and I told him as much. 'No, darling,' he said. 'Everyone is at the table. They are waiting for you'. 'Why?' I found it baffling that I would be required to come down to breakfast- whether I was hungry or not- and certainly did not understand why anyone would wait for me before eating.

As a Nigerian Igbo married to a Dutchman and living in Belgium, Unigwe is confronted daily with the reality that her Nigerian culture/norms vary from that of her husband. In the above quotation Unigwe could not come to grips with the traditions of the Dutch and hence was unable to grasp the strange custom of eating even when not hungry. 'Adah' in *Second Class Citizen* (1974) also experiences this culture difference firsthand when she leaves her childhood setting in Nigeria to England:

> In England, she couldn't go to her neighbour and babble out troubles as she would have done in Lagos, she had learned not to talk about her unhappiness to those with whom she worked, for this was a society where nobody was interested in the problem of others. If you could not bear your problem anymore, you could always do away with yourself. That was allowed, too. Attempted suicide was not considered as a sin. It was a way of attracting attention to one's unfortunate situation. And whose attention do you attract? The attention of paid listeners. Listeners who make you feel like you are an object to be studied, diagnosed, charted and tabulated. Listeners who refer to you as 'a case'. You don't have the old woman next door who, on hearing an argument going on between a wife and husband, would come in to slap the husband, telling him off and all that, knowing that her words would be respected because she was old and experienced… instead you have the likes of Miss Stirling, whose office was along the Maiden Road… (pp.72-73).

Adah's thoughts and feelings in diaspora is of no concern to the white community where she finds herself in, only paid listeners (psychologists) who would consider her a case were readily available. There was no one to share her problems with unlike back home in Nigeria

where people were quick to interfere in the private life of other individuals. Emecheta in the above passage explores how lonely the life of a Nigerian in diaspora can get. As a postcolonial novel, Emecheta examines the influence of a new culture on Nigerian immigrants and their personal reactions to it:

> There was no time to go to church and pray. Not in England. It took her years to erase the image of Nigerian church which usually had a festive air. In England, especially in London, 'church' was a big grey building with stained-glass windows, high ornamental ceilings, very cold, full of rows and voice of John the Baptist lost in the wilderness. In London, churches were cheerless. She could not go to any of them because it made her cry to see such beautiful places of worship empty when, in Nigeria, you could hardly get a seat if you come late. You had to stand outside and follow the service through it all, you are encouraged to bellow out the song-that bellowing took away some of your sorrows. Because most of the hymns seem to be written by psychologists. One was always sure of singing or hearing something that would come near to the problem you had in mind before coming to church. In England you were robbed off such comfort. London, thus killed Adah's congregational God, created instead a personal God who loomed large and really alive. She did not have to go to church to see this one.Hewas always there, when she was shelving books in the library…when she was doing anything. (pp.164-165)

Adah compares the mood of worship in Nigeria to the one obtainable in England. The atmosphere in Nigerian churches was always "festive" and like Emecheta emphasises above "one was always sure of singing or hearing something that would come near to the problem you had in mind before coming to church." This was unlike the ones in England which are "cheerless" and uneventful.This shows that the issue of culture difference touches on all aspects of an immigrant Nigerian life. Nisbett's (2004,p.52)*The Geography of Thought*attempts to illustrate how different Africans are from the West by providing an analysis of these differences in the character and mentality of blacks (easterners) and whites (westerners). This study finds his breakdown necessary because it will help create a better understanding of the reasons behind the constant disagreements that Africans have with their white counterparts. Nisbett captures some of the main difference in the table below:

| The Self | East | West |
|---|---|---|
| Sense of self | Weak | Strong |
| Sense of interdependence (group) | Strong | Weak |
| Attitude and Focus | Holistic | Analytical and detailed |
| Life control | The world is complex and we have poor control over events. | The world operates by rules and can be analysed and controlled. |
| Universal God | No, there is a universal truth | Yes |
| Visual attention | Background | Foreground |

Nisbett attempts to highlight the contrast between Western and Eastern thought and thereby promote cross-cultural understanding. The above characterisation however has quite the opposite effect, fostering or feeding unproductive stereotypes (or worse). Instead of causing mutual understanding between both cultures it constitutes a major challenge for black people in their host country as they realise the importance of existing on the right side of both extremes.

It is arguable to assert therefore that Postcolonial literatures, of which *Second Class Citizen* is one, is marked by its concern for ambiguity and issues of culture differences. Furthermore, Dobie (2009, p.208) supports this claim when she said that postcolonial literature "investigates the clash of cultures in which one culture deems itself to be the superior one and imposes its own practices on the less powerful one. Its writers examine their histories, questions how they should respond to the changes they see around them… they recognise in themselves the old culture and the new, element of the native one and the imposed one…" Setting has an immense effect on characters as it can act as conflicts that characters needs to resolve, or shed light upon characters, and can also present symbolic persons, objects, place,

action and situation. It can establish the mood or atmosphere of a scene, or story and develop the plot into a more realistic form, resulting in creating convincing characters. By establishing mood, setting also helps the readers relate themselves to the characters in the story. This is better illustrated in*Second Class Citizen* (pp.39-40) thus:

> England gave Adah a cold welcome… if Adah had been Jesus, she would have passed England by. Liverpool was grey, smoky and looked uninhabited by humans…For the first time Adah saw real snow. It all looked so beautiful after the grayness of Liverpool. It was as if there were beautiful white clouds on the ground. She saw the factory were Ovaltine was made. Somehow that factory, standing there isolated, clean and red against the snowy background, lightened her spirit. She was in England at last. She was beginning to feel like Dick Whittington.

The sight that greets the Nigerian immigrant on getting to Europe for the first time is quite disappointing. Emecheta in the above excerpt points to the fact that the real Europe is nothing compared to the Europe of Adah's dreams. Although Adah spent all her life dreaming about Britain, she was rather surprised that nobody cared about her arrival, and the 'civilised' world little resemblance to what she expected and was taught to believe. The change she observes in Francis when he kisses her in public contributes to this initial shock. The most significant aspect for Adah, however, was the general attitude of the British. Although aware that her fellow Nigerians were lacking in this respect, the attitude British did not come across as appropriate either: "the whites she saw did not look like people who could make jokes about things like death. They looked remote, happy in an aloof way, but determined to keep their distance" (p.40). Although disappointed by the cold reception she receives on her arrival, the sight of a familiar thing like the Ovaltine factory finally lightened her mood.

Thus far, *Second Class Citizen* has been shown to be realistic in its representation of the Nigerian diasporic experiences in the West. To highlight the feelings and thoughts of her characters, Emecheta employs parody in making mockery of the set ideals of the society,

making light of an otherwise serious state of affairs. She uses parody to achieve this and also to keep the reader interested. In the same light, Hodgart (2010: p.122) posits that "another form of mimicry is parody, which is the basis of all literary satire in literature." So on the basis of Hodgart's assertion, the term mimicry will be used in this study in place of parody. Mimicry is an important term in postcolonial theory because it describes the undecided relationship between colonisers and colonised. Ashcroft *et al* (2000) in *The Key Concept of Postcolonial Studies* is of the view that "mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics…mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonised" (p.125). In other to locate a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, Emecheta uses the urgent need for accommodation by Adah to ridicule a part of the British culture:

> She knew that any white would recognise the voice of an African woman on the phone. So to eradicate that, she pressed her wide, tunnel-like nostrils together as if to keep out a nasty smell. She practiced and practiced her voice in the loo, and was satisfied with the result. The landlady would definitely not mistake her for a woman from Birmingham or London, yet she could be Irish, Scots or an English speaking Italian. At least, all these people were white" (p.80).

Because of the various accents in London, Adah knew that her voice on the phone calling for the vacant room in Hawley Street will make it clear to the landlord that she was African. With this in mind, she mimics the London accent on the phone to the landlady to break the boundaries of her black identity which had been a great obstacle for social acceptability when she saw another notice for an apartment. Mimicry in postcolonial literature is most commonly seen when members of a colonised society imitate the language, dress, politics, or cultural attitude of their colonisers. By emulating the white way of speaking, Adah suppresses her own cultural identity. Another example is seen when Adah is getting ready to give birth to her fifth child. Unlike her previous delivery when she gets no flowers or gifts from her husband like other white patients in the ward, she decides to mimic them, this time:

> Her baby was going to arrive in style… she addressed twenty greeting cards to herself, gave three pounds to Irene, the girl, and told her to post three cards a day after the baby was born. Two big bunches of flowers were to be sent to her, one on her arrival, with Francis' name attached to it with sentimental words. The other was to arrive at the hospital after her safe delivery. But if she did not survive the birth, Irene was to put Adah's children's names on it and make it into a wreath… (p.175)

Most times a Nigerian immigrant goes to great length to be assimilated into the white system. Adah goes through the hilarious process of addressing twenty greeting cards to herself because she felt left out from the happy scenes going on around her. She imitates the white culture of sending herself card and flowers so that others will believe she have a loving husband even though that was far from the truth. This shows that mimicry goes beyond impersonating someone or a group of persons. Hodgart (2010) in *Satire: Origins and Principles* throws more light on the issue of Mimicry thus:

> Mimicry is an invasion of privacy, in that it destroys every man's private conviction that he is unique and inimitable: even though it may be affectionate in its malice, it is another weapon against human pride. The mimic must create a likeness, so that his audience shall recognise it; but he must not stop at mere impersonation, he must go on to produce a ludicrous distortion in which the compulsive gesture and tics of the victims are exaggerated. (p.121)

The intent of mimicry from Hodgart's postulation above is to reduce human pride by outrageously imitating the likeness of the person one intends to mimic. Hodgart's assertion lends more credence to what Emecheta tries to portray in *Second Class Citizen.* The quest by Nigerian immigrants to fit into what they see to be a dominant and more civilised culture has affected them to the extent that it is now the case of the "Other" striving to become like the westerners even if they have to mimic it. In the first pages of the novel, one comes across the comparison between 'Ibuza,' the symbol of all native values left behind by the Nigerians, and Lagos, which is the symbol of civilisation established by the coloniser. For the natives, living in the city is "a misfortune" (p.8). However, even this city is not considered to be civilised enough when it is compared to Britain. A native African who has simply visited Britain is

regarded as someone superior and all others rush out to meet this extraordinary person that has experienced Britain. The influence of having been to Britain completely changes the social status of the native people: “The Ibuza women who lived in Lagos were preparing for the arrival of the town’s first lawyer from the United Kingdom. The ‘United Kingdom’ when pronounced by Adah’s father sounded so heavy…It was so deep, so mysterious, that Adah’s father always voiced it in hushed tones, wearing such a respectful expression as if he were speaking of God’s Holiest of Holies. Going to the United Kingdom must surely be like paying God a visit. The United Kingdom, then, must be like heaven” (p.8).

The belief that the United Kingdom is a holy place is as a result of the colonial discourse. Once the native mind is thus colonised, the natives can never recognise the inferiority they assign to their own values, conditions and lifestyles. For this reason, one observes a great amount of mimicry in the colonial society: “the women of Ibuza bought identical cotton material from the UAC department store...They dyed their hair, and straightened it with hot combs to make it look European. Nobody in her right senses would dream of welcoming a lawyer who had come from the United Kingdom with her hair left naturally in curls...It meant the arrival of their own Messiah” (p.8). The native women preferred to look like European women in a manner of aspiration towards the higher values and standards of the supposedly superior civilisation. In other words, the Nigerians simply mimic European manners and lifestyle, and confirm the inferiority of their native values.

As Bhabha (1995,p.86) argues, “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, unrecognisable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say that, the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference”. These similar yet different people in Africa aspire for a sophisticated European style, but it will always remain to be

impossible for them to achieve this desire. As Bhabha further argues, "mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualises power" (p.86). Therefore, it might be argued that the colonial rule in Nigeria has successfully achieved the process of colonising the native's mind, since, even after the independence, the British are still considered to be superior people in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*.

In another dimension, following her perspicacious interpretation of the Nigerian situation abroad, Emecheta uses language to describe her characters' appearance, actions, habits, inner feelings and thoughts. Since it has been observed that effective manipulation of language in writing determines the proficiency of the writer, Emecheta thus uses simple and easily understood language and clarity in her choice of diction. She uses the language of the colonisers (English Language) to pass her work across to her readers. Supporting Emecheta's use of English language, Achebe in his essay *Morning Yet on Creation Day* asserts:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (p.62).

By using the colonial language against itself, Emecheta is attempting to break the power it holds and its influence. The simple and intriguing use of language by Emecheta is seen in her portrayal of the different issues that the Nigerian person goes through both at "home" and in diaspora. In the context of postcolonialism, language has often become a site for both colonisation and resistance. In particular, a return to the original indigenous language is often advocated for since the language was suppressed by colonising forces. So in most cases, the language is made to "bear the burden" (Ashcroft1989, p.38) of one's own cultural experience. Because of this, there is always the incorporation of local dialects in most postcolonial works and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is no different. Characters are given native names and

there are instances where the writer uses indigenous languages, as shown in the following "*Ezidijiji ode ogoli, omeoba"*- (Igbo) meaning, "When a good man holds a woman, she becomes like the queen" (p.9). "Iyawo" (p.92) - Yoruba word for a young wife. "Opoho" (p.103) - Igbo word for woman. "Okei" (p.103) – Igbo word for young man. "Odo" (p.154) – Igbo word for mortar. Apparently, Emecheta has been exposed to these two languages and by using Nigerian languages, although sparingly, she is identifying with them. (cited in Olutayo and Ilechukwu 2015, pp.4-5)

In addition, Emecheta uses idioms to make her expressions brief and vivid. Some examples are as follows: Adah is allowed to stay in school after her father's death because, being educated will fetch a larger bride price that will "tide Boy over" (p.12). Emecheta uses this idiom instead of saying "the extra money would support Boy for a certain length of time". When Francis writes his first letter to Adah from England, he accuses her of being happy at his departure because, she did not cry. Adah wonders whether she should narrate her entire experience when he was leaving and how the tears came after he left, but she decides otherwise because: "He would think she was mad...(so) She simply let sleeping dogs lie." (p.29). This means that she left the matter as it was. The day Adah arrives in England, Francis attempts to slap her but restrains himself. We are told that this was something he would never do in the presence of his parents because, "to them, Adah was like the goose that laid the golden eggs" (p.36). It is Adah's salary that supports Francis and his family. Trudy, the minder of Adah's children neglects them. When she is queried, she denies sternly and from then on, Adah "took everything Trudy said with a pinch of salt" (p.52).

This means that she doubted the accuracy of any information coming from Trudy. The contexts in which these idiomatic expressions are used reflect the issues of the novel. For example, in the use of these expressions, "tide Boy over" and "goose that laid the golden

egg", Adah is allowed to be in school and is treated well by Francis' family not for her own sake, but because of what the people involved stood to gain. Also, the issue of Adah being maltreated and left with all the responsibilities of the home is reflected in the idiom. "Marriage is not a bed of roses". In essence, some of the idioms descriptively explain a thought, while others give images of actions in order to produce a more thought provoking image of what was said or done in a particular situation. (qtd in Olutayo and Ilechukwu 2015, pp.6-7)

On the whole, this chapter considers the various angles from which Emecheta represents the challenges many Nigerians in diaspora grapple with. *Second Class Citizen* projects the experiences of Nigerians in diaspora. Emecheta explores the thoughts and experiences of Adah an immigrant who is forced to contend with racism and various forms of oppression in her daily life. It highlights the despair and identity crises faced by migrants, brought on by cultural differences and their inability to secure meaningful jobs and assimilation into the western society. It also portrays a constant desire by black migrants to fit in having been made to believe that they come from an inferior culture. Emecheta's use of literary techniques like characterisation, setting, language/dialect, imagery etcetera demonstrates that there is a clear break between the London people imagine, and the London that really is. Their actual experiences in the city reveal a situation that directly contradicts that of their imagination. London for them has become a socially and economically oppressive place.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.0 Adichie's *Americanah* as Diasporic Literature

Literature is a window to the viewpoint, mental setup and complex nature of the human being. It reveals fantasies, fears and feelings which find expression in the fictional representation of characters that embody certain humanistic traits of particular or universal significance. It is within this broad framework that literary works examine concerns allied with the adoption and adaptation of immigrants into their new societies. Common issues that arise during immigrant integration include cultural dislocation/difference, feelings of nostalgia, loneliness and alienation, a sense of hopelessness, and a host of other problems. These issues are usually preceded by the inability of immigrant characters to quickly adopt the prevailing socio-political and cultural values of their host communities. Even after eventual assimilation, they soon are forced to contend with a sense of loss brought upon by a realisation of the value and significance of the cultures they have left behind. This largely accounts for the nostalgic predicament of most Nigerian diasporic characters as seen in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). For example, even though the character Aunty Uju was able to fit into her new society, once a while she is portrayed as having nostalgic feelings for her home of origin: "I don't even know why I came to this place. The other day, the pharmacist told me my accent was incomprehensible" (p.218).

There is also a fluid sense of identity and a deliberate fascination with the dynamism that characterise the construction of the identities of Nigerian diaspora characters in Adichie's *Americanah*. Right from the title of the text, Adichie projects a sense of identity crisis. The title 'Americanah' is a localised variation of the adjective American which is commonly used by way of ridicule to describe a Nigerian who has been to America especially one who consciously exhibits traditional American mannerisms. It describes a person whose lifestyle

is American by way of mimicry (a concept that connotes imitation of dress, language, behavior, even gesture).

Dobie in *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* (2009) points out that in *Black Skin White Masks,* published in 1952, Franz Fanon argued that the inferiority complex created in the black people who have accepted the culture of another country as their own will cause them to imitate the codes of their colonisers, in this case their host communities. As Nigerians in the diaspora adapt to their host communities, they become increasingly imitative. This is seen in the character of Doris who on her return from America started dressing oddly, "white socks and brogues, men's shirts tucked into pedal pushers-which she considered original, and which everyone in the office forgave her for because she had come back from abroad" (p.402). Bhabha points out that the mimicry is never exact; however, it is at best resemblance and menace (1994:86).

Furthermore, Simon During is of the view that "For the post-colonial to speak or write in the imperial tongues is to call forth a problem of identity, to be thrown into mimicry and ambivalence."(1995, p.125) For the Nigerian back home, to be thrown into this mimicry and ambivalence is to qualify as an 'Americanah'. An equivalent variation of the expression "Americanah" is also realised in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (1969) as "Been-to." In *Fragments,* Bako, the protagonist is referred to as a "been-to" because he has been to the United States. Adichie's definition of the term "Americanah" is seen in the novel when one of the characters was about to leave Nigeria for America and her friends teased her that she would "come back and be a serious Americanah… they roared with laughter, at the word "Americanah,"…and at the thought of Bisi, a girl in the form below them, who had come back from a short trip to America with odd affectations, pretending she no longer understood Yoruba" (p.65). The title therefore emphasises the predicament of a group of Nigerians

whose diasporic experience and homecoming earns them a new identity especially when they have been deeply influenced by the American lifestyle.

Also, in a world where political instability, poverty, corruption, racism and several shades of hegemonic practices hold sway, writers have a responsibility of appropriating their works to point out these vital issues. To this end, cross-racial, cross-cultural and political issues which are more often than not based on cross-continental experiences are becoming a major thrust of many literary works especially in those written by writers in the diaspora. Thus, by merging cross-cultural experiences, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) critically explores Nigeria, North America and Europe**.** From politics to economy, from ideology to the struggle of oppressed diasporas, the novel centres on the salient and obvious effects of cultural difference, syncretism, hybridity, mimicry and the otherness that characterises a diasporic experience.

*Americanah* is a story about two young Nigerian high school friends Ifemelu and Obinze whose lives take different paths when fate separates them to different worlds: America and Britain respectively. Through the character of Ifemelu, Adichie projects the Nigerian woman by highlighting her challenges as she tries to find her feet in an alien land, first as an African and also as a woman. However, Ifemelu is able to assert herself by resisting and overcoming these challenges. Obinze on the other hand experiences racial prejudice in England where he feels unwelcome, and is forced to work menial jobs which seemed the exclusive preserve for black migrants like him. After running afoul of law enforcement and immigration laws, he opts to return home rather than exploit the services of a state lawyer to appeal his case. Destiny however brings the two major characters; Ifemelu and Obinze back together after they relocate to Nigeria.

Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) has a complex structure comprising of seven distinct parts. The chapters are evenly distributed across the seven parts in a unique fashion that contradicts the sequence of beginning, middle, and end. The narrative sequence is distorted as the novel yields itself to two distinct voices (Ifemelu and Obinze), whose perspectives give the reader an insight into the the text. The first part which consists of chapter one and two is set in a Trenton braid salon and in Lagos, Nigeria. Part two is made up of Chapters three — twenty two. Many of these chapters contain flashbacks into the past, some in the U.S. but weighted toward Ifemelu's former life in Nigeria. Chapter four is set in Lagos. Part three comprises of Chapters twenty three — thirty detailing Obinze's attempts to become a success studying and working in the U.K. Part four covers Chapters thirty one — forty one, showing Ifemelu's life in the U.S. with fewer flashbacks to Nigeria. Parts five and six consist of Chapters forty two and forty three. These are transitional chapters, with Ifemelu still in the U.S. but on the verge of returning to Nigeria and meeting Obinze again.

Part seven include Chapters forty four through fifty five set in Nigeria. Its cross-continental flow provides readers with a balanced knowledge of juxtaposed cultures within the fictional world and reveals the tendencies of cultural hegemony manifested in the inevitable interaction between the juxtaposed cultures. This is better explained by looking into the character of Ifemelu who upon getting to America realised that in her new society she was considered an irrelevant "Other"; and that she could only become relevant by adapting to the "superior" culture of the empirical centre. She could only be considered for a job if she "lose her braids and strengthen her hair" because like her white college advisor told her "nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job" (p.202). In other words, to be considered suitable for any job in America, Ifemelu "needs to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight(hair) is best but if it's going to be curly then it must be the white kind of curly, loose curls or at worst, spiral curls but never kinky" (204

*Altered*). This is what Hall (1990, p. 223) in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* defines as "one true self", hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common' (cited in Ashcroft's *Post-Colonial Transformation* 2001, p.4).

Through this balanced projection and interaction between cultures, Adichie is able to represent the hybridisational effect of such cultural interplay and how they shape and inform the world view of the characters. As her characters move cross-country/continent, Adichie invokes our consciousness to the tendency of western thoughts to view the world in terms of binary oppositions that establish a relation of dominance. Consequently, this study examines the grounds that necessitated some Nigerian Diasporas' migration to the west, the relationship between diasporic subjects and their host communities. It also looks at how *Americanah* explores the different identity issues that immigrant Nigerians face in their new place of dwelling and the nature of bias they face especially with reference to their attempt to find a middle ground and the hybridised outcome of these attempts.

### 4.1 Fantasy versus Reality: Exploring the Grounds that Necessitated Some Nigerian Diasporas' Migration to the West

Nigerian diasporic work of literature like Adichie's *Americanah* is a representation of the cultural, social, political, economic and even religious experiences of the globally dispersed populations of Nigerian ancestry. The Nigerian writer has always taken the lead in meshing of socio-political concerns with their works. This brings to mind Williams (1996: p.49) assertion that:

> The crisis of governance and democratisation in Africa has left a profound mark on its literature, African writers have played a crucial role in the political evolution of the continent particularly in influencing the turbulent trajectory of the postcolonial state in Africa.

Writers like Adichie in their literary creations highlight through her character representation how the Nigerian government have contributed to the dilapidated state of the nation's economy decades after its independence, and how this contributes to the mass migration of citizenries to the western hemisphere. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) echoes the voice of postcolonial Nigerian characters devastated by the lackluster and unlivable condition of their ancestral home. An example is seen in Adichie's portrayal of the state of the restroom in Nigerian female hostels in the text. Ifemelu can only use the toilet by collecting "water in her bucket from the tap… to squat over the toilet before it became unbearably full. Sometimes, when she was late… the toilet already swirled with maggots" (90). *Americanah*is thus a contemporary Nigerian diasporic narrative that incorporates social, economic and political trends dominant in the society and how these trends cause the movement of characters to the west in the text. Adeleke (2008, p.17) writes about the use of narrative style in Nigerian novels:

> …emigrating to America helps forge a closure for each story of unbearable life under Nigerian Military dictatorships… the flight to America in the…novels replaces the recuperative escape to the unspoiled village, the narrative strategy commonly used in the earlier stories of nation. (Cited in Ortega 2015, p. 48)

The unstable environment in Nigeria during military rule as illustrated in the prose narrative *Americanah* contributed to the mass movement of Nigeria citizens in the novel to the west. Adeleke in the above quote observes that the literary traditions in Nigerian novel writing apply to the message presented in *Americanah.* Hence, in the wake of harsh living conditions during the rule of General Sani Abacha as presented in Adichie's literary work, many Nigerians fled to America. Her characters reasoned that a democratic society will give them the opportunity to achieve their personal dreams and aspirations; it would be a far more prosperous society than a Nigeria under military dictatorship. Thus is not surprising when one of the characters in the novel, Obinze proclaims "America is the future" (p.70). Adichie

utilises flashback to depict the various social issues that contribute to the eagerness behind her young characters urge to leave their ancestral home for where they believe holds better opportunities for them. While sitting in a hair salon at Trenton in America, Ifemelu flashes back to how unstable the educational system in Nigeria was before her migration to the West:

> Stikes were now common. In the newspapers, university lecturers listed their complaints, the agreements that were trampled in the dust by government men whose children were schooling abroad. Campuses were emptied, classrooms drained of life. Students hoped for short strikes, because they could not hope to have no strike at all. Everyone was talking about leaving. Even Emenike had left for England. Nobody knew how he managed to get a visa. (p.98)

In *Americanah* many of the Nigerian characters that leavetheir home land to the west are depicted as escaping from poor political, educational, social, and economic conditions in Nigeria. They all have hopes of living better lives in their host country. As such, in the imagination of these characters, America and Europe represent a safe haven; a place free from incessant strikes where they could finish their education at the stipulated time. Two characters in the novel, Ginika and Ifemelu leave for America in search of better educational opportunities because the school term in Nigerian universities was always interrupted by non-stop strikes by academic staff.Hence, the resigned expression by Obinze's mother that "Nigeria is chasing away its best resources"(p.100) due to the constant fissure in the educational system in Nigeria. Intending migrants in the text would even organise prayer vigils all in an attempt to ensure that their dream of travelling to America came true. At Ifemelu's mother's church, Sister Ibinabo organised a student Visa miracle vigil on Friday. Every participant came expecting his/her own miracle.

For most of them, it didn't matter if they leave their ongoing university education in Nigeria to begin anew in America, for America holds for them a certainty of completing their education within a predetermined time frame. This desperation is seen in the unnamed final

year student at the University of Ife who testified in church. She says "even if I have to start from the beginning in America, I know when I will graduate" (p.98). Hence, America and Europe are presented in the narrative as places of escape for the 21stCentury Nigerian characters in search of a better life. Ifemelu, too, yearning to run away from the instability which was the reality in university education in Nigeria, applied for a scholarship to a school in the United States on Aunty Uju's prompting. When Ifemelu did apply and took her SATs at a Lagos centre, she met with "thousands of people all bristling with their own American ambition" (p.99). Ifemelu is not left out of this quest and fantasy, for '…from time to time, she dreamed of America' (p.99).

Despite the fact that most of the characters presented in the novel left the shores of Nigeria because of the bad educational system and the dilapidating nature of the nation, others like Obinze, Aunty Uju and Kayode had their own different reasons for migrating abroad. Obinze however is driven to the west by his love for all things American. His attitude regarding America in the text is evident during their school days in Nigeria. The cultural diversity exhibited by Obinze in terms of his taste in books, American movies, soap operas, magazines and even his use of language points to his love for American norms. The narrator's description of Obinze further emphasises this love for America, she says:

> Everybody watched American films and exchanged faded American magazines, but he knew details about American presidents from hundred years ago. Everybody watched American shows, but he knew about Lisa Bonet leaving *The Cosby Show* to go and do *Angel Heart* and Will Smith's huge depts. Before he signed to do *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air.* "You look like a black American was his ultimate compliment…" (p.67)

The characters' obsession with America emphasises the value that he places on the country in contrast to the value that he places on Nigeria his home of origin. To him, America is perceived as the biblical Promised Land. An example can be seen when the General who sustains Aunty Uju gets killed, her friends advises her that "you have to go somewhere for a

while, so that they don't give you trouble. Go to London or America." (p.87) Hence, America and Europe are presented as places were a new and better beginning could be obtained by hopeless Nigerians who had given up on their home country. The effect of this is seen in Obinze's mother, a principled and upright woman, who is subdued by the crooked ways of government institutions in Nigeria and the agonies of defeat to tell a lie in-order to help her son Obinze acquire the UK visa:

> "I am going to put your name on my British visa application as my research assistant," she said quietly. "That should get you a six months visa. You can stay with Nicholas in London. See what you can do with your life. Maybe you can get to America from there. I know that your mind is no longer here…" "I understand this sort of thing is done nowadays…"she was a woman who would not lie, who would not even accept a Christmas card from her students because it might compromise her, who accounted for every single kobo spent in any committee she was on, and here she was, behaving as though truth-telling had become a luxury that they could no longer afford… (p.234)

To fulfil her son's dreams of going to America, she had to join the league of corrupt people in Nigeria. From the above quotation, she puts Obinze's name in her British passport as her assistant researcher even though it was a lie. The quest to leave Nigeria for America and other Western parts is a constant theme that runs through the novel. Ashcroft argues in *Post-colonial Transformation* (2001, pp.207-208) that:

> We cannot understand globalisation without understanding the structure of global power relations which flourish in the twenty first Century as an economic, cultural, and political legacy of Western imperialism.

The Nigerians leaving the continent are escaping to the metropolitan centre, which holds economic, cultural, and political power in the 21stCentury. As such, Ashcroft notices that "a common view among theorists in the developing world is that globalisation is simply re-colonisation" (p.208). Thus, Afropolitans risk becoming victims of such forms of neo-colonial domination.

Safran (1991, pp.83-84) is of the opinion that diaspora people "believe that they are not fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it." This is the case of Obinze and Ifemelu in the text who on coming face-to-face with the dystopian America feels alienated from it. The text explores how many Nigerian Immigrants in the novel with university degrees from their home countries struggle to get odd jobs which are not always readily available to them. Obinze experiences it first hand when he got to Europe:

> Everybody joked about people who went abroad to clean toilets, and so Obinze approached his first job with irony: he was indeed abroad cleaning toilets, wearing rubber gloves and carrying a pail…the toilets were not bad, some urine outside the urinal, some unfinished flushing; cleaning them was much easier… and so he was shocked, one evening to walk into a stall and discover a mould of shit on the toilet lid, solid, tapering, centered as though it has been carefully arranged and the exact spot has been measured… Obinze stared at the mould of shit for a long time, feeling smaller and smaller as he did so, until it became a personal affront, a punch on his jaw. And all for three quid an hour. (pp.236-237)

The degrading situation of the Nigerian migrant is illustrated in the above excerpt when Obinze who had left Nigeria with the hope of getting a good job and to eventually finish his postgraduate studies, came face to face with the fact that the England he had been fantasising about is different from the real England. He half-heartedly does the cleaning job until he encounters an unsightly mess which brings back his sense of self-worth and he leaves the job. The pursuit of a better education and ultimately a better life sees Obinze and many other migrant Nigerians doing jobs they would be too ashamed to talk about to any relative back home. Similarly, Ifemelu, despite Aunty Uju's simplistic and starry-eyed view of her coming to America gets there to discover that it was not just about getting a scholarship easily and getting to take care of Dike. Ifemelu, faced with the reality of America lapsed into depression and even stopped communicating with Obinze:

> She was swallowed, lost in a viscous haze, shrouded in a soup of nothingness. Between her and what she could feel there was a gap. She

> cared about nothing. She wanted to care, but she no longer knew how; it has slipped from her memory, the ability to care. Sometimes she woke up flailing and helpless, and she saw, in front of her and behind her, an utter hopelessness… she lay in bed and read books and thought of nothing. Sometimes she forgot to eat and other times she waited until midnight, her room-mates in their rooms, before heating up her food, and she left the dirty plates under her bed, until greenish mould fluffed up around the oily remnants of rice and beans. Often, in the middle of eating or reading, she would feel a crushing urge to cry and the tears would come, the sobs hurting her throat. She had turned off the ringer of her phone. She no longer went to class. Her days were stilled by silence and snow. (p.156)

Ifemelu finds herself in a web of depression few months after her arrival in America. Faced with the huddles of trying to get a good job and schooling, she experiences firsthand what it meant to be a penniless black person in America. After Ifemelu's escapade with a tennis coach in Ardmore who had paid her $100 for a sexual experience, she is left psychologically wounded from the experience as she was pushed to exchange her body for money, something she would never had thought of if she was back home in Nigeria.

Based on Bhabha's theory of **"**Otherness**"** therefore, this study is of the view that colonial society is built in large part on the assertion of the inferiority of the colonised people. The coloniser always looks at the colonised as the "other" and here the issue of discrimination reveals itself which means that in colonial society, the colonised are not fully accepted as original settlers and their coloniser treats them differently. They keep the colonised dependent and inferior so the colonised feels a lack of acceptance and alienation while encountering the "dominant" society. Because of the inferior status of Nigerian diasporans in the text, Ifemelu after her encounter with the white coach "felt like a small ball, adrift and alone. The world was a big place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around emptily" (p.154). That's why, in some of these characters quest for a better life, they are content with making themselves socially acceptable and struggle to make as much money as possible, making them pawns in the hands of the economic cum social realities of the

American society.However, by going back and forth into the memory of her characters, Adichie maximally exploits the flashback technique to bind the story and to glue the reader's interest to the unfolding narrative and events.Consequently, due to the prevailing issues of unemployment, social instability, inadequate infrastructure and the poor educational system in Nigeria as portrayed in Adichie's diasporic text, many characters in diaspora despite their bad experiences in their host land, would rather remain than go back to their ancestral home. An example is Obinze's cellmate who on being deported from Europe to Nigeria said: "I will take off my shirt and my shoes and when they try to board me. I will seek asylum… "If you take off your shoes, they will not board you." He repeated this often like a mantra. (p.283)

Most of the Nigerians in Adichie's *Americanah* refuse to return home especially since the condition back home is worse than the one in their host land. The fact that Obinze's cellmate in the above quotation was not one of those to be deported alongside Obinze indicates that he succeeds with his machination of seeking for asylum in other not to be deported back to Nigeria. Also, when Ifemelu out of nostalgia decides to return home to Nigeria, no one could understand her reason. Unlike Obinze, Ifemelu had secured a scholarship that gave her legal entrance into the United States. During her thirteen-year sojourn in the US, she was able to complete her college study, work with her college certificate, undertake a fellowship in Princeton and successfully run a race blog with teaming followers and great financial benefits. Given this profile, Ifemelu stands as an accomplished migrant woman, who is not constrained to undertake a permanent return home, especially since conditions back home, both in terms of infrastructure and the economy, was poorer in comparison with those obtainable in her host country. In spite of her successes, Ifemelu still felt nostalgic, motivated by no other reason than a desire to return home:

> It had been there for a while, an early morning disease of fatigue, a bleakness and borderlessness. It brought with it amorphous longings,

> shapeless desires, brief imaginary glints of other lives she could be living, that over the months melded into a piercing homesickness. She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a music production business, a fashion label, a magazine, a fast-food franchise. She looked at photographs of these men and women and felt dull ache of loss, as though they had prised open her hand and taken something of hers. They were living her life. …there was no cause; it was simply that layer after layer of discontent had settled in her, and formed a mass that now propelled her (pp.6- 7).

Nigeria, when viewed from a distant shore, replaces America as the proverbial "land of opportunity." Ifemelu's absence and, more significantly, her distance from her homeland, transform her perspective of the homeland. She idealises her life in Nigeria, much like she had idealised her life in America, in order to justify the abandonment of what she had obtained in the United States. Ifemelu's life is both cyclic and dualistic; she exists with her feet in two countries separated not only by geography but also politics.This globalised perspective and ability to be nostalgic of her homeland as she sometimes is of America, is a function of her experiential knowledge of both cultures. Thus, her decision to return home is an entirely heroic one, especially because everyone around her failed to see the rationality in her resolution to return to Nigeria. No doubt, the lack of support from family and friends contributes largely to her uncertainty:

> Everyone she had told she was moving back seemed surprised, expecting an explanation, and when she said she was doing it because she wanted to, puzzled lines would appear on foreheads. "You are closing your blog and selling your condo to go back to Lagos and work for a magazine that doesn't pay well," Aunty Uju has said and then repeated herself, as though to make Ifemelu see the gravity of her own foolishness (pp.13-14).

For Ifemelu home became a site of struggle. This is fuelled by the fact that Ifemelu regards America as her home, having learnt to be at home in America and having secured American citizenship. The question of whether she will be able to cope in Nigeria thus becomes a

relevant and rational one. Also, when Aisha, Ifemelu's hair stylist in Trenton, asked her whether she can stay in Nigeria, Ifemelu quickly recollects that when her aunt finally accepts that she is serious about returning to Nigeria, she (her aunt) also asked a similar question: "Will you be able to cope?" In the same way, her parents believe she may not be able to cope in Nigeria but are consoled by the fact that she can always return to America, since she is an American citizen. In spite of the fact that her diaspora home is more beautiful and promising than her ancestral home, Ifemelu choose to go back to Nigeria. Safran (1991,p.84) supports Ifemelu's journey home when he asserts that: "for diaspora people, their homeland is their ideal home where they or their descendants should eventually return." This implies that, while people leave faraway, they remain emotionally attached to "home" as the place of origin. Ifemelu's development leads her to return to Nigeria after spending thirteen years in America:

> Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil... (p.6)

For Ifemelu, Nigeria is the only place she feels she actually belongs to; a place she can deeply sink her roots, her home. This is because Nigeria as her ancestral home is bereft of any racial biasness that to pervade the American society. However, when Ifemelu finally returned, the reality of the deplorable conditions of her homeland stare Ifemelu boldly in the face as soon as she takes her first ride through the city of Lagos:

> "Ifemelu stared out of the window, half listening, thinking how unpretty Lagos was, roads infested with potholes, houses springing up unplanned like weeds. Of her jumble of feelings, she recognised only confusion" (p.386).

A further description of Lagos life from Ifemelu's view depicts the chaos and confusion characterising daily life in the city:

> …Lagos assaulted her; the sun-dazed haste, the yellow buses full of squashed limbs, the sweating hawkers racing after cars, the advertisements on hulking billboards… and the heaps of rubbish that rose on the roadsides like taunt. Commerce thrummed too defiantly. And the air was dense with exaggeration, conversations full of over-protestations. One morning, a man's body lay on Awolowo Road. Another morning, The Island flooded and cars became gasping boats. Here, she felt, anything could happen, a ripe tomato could burst out of solid stone. And so she had the dizzying sensation of falling, falling into the new person she had become, falling into the strange familiar. Had it always been like this or had it changed so much in her absence? (p.385)

Apart from the conditions of the landscape, many aspects about her people including their fashions and passions, religious practices, spending habits, work ethics among other things look very unfamiliar to Ifemelu and she finds herself suspended between two cultures struggling to find a good fit. This predicament that the major character finds herself in is what Homi Bhabha refers to as the "Third Space" in his concept of hybridity. To him, hybridity classify those living in the gaping void between two cultures, but who find it problematic and difficult to identify fully with either; thus becoming a part of what Bhabha refers to as the "Third Space," an in-between space of hybridisation. This third space he argues is according to Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin, the space in which cultural meanings and identities always contain the traces of other meanings and identities. (*Post-Colonial Studies, The Key Concepts* 2007, pp.53-54)

*Americanah* also explores the issue of identity as an important theme in the novel as the plot follows Ifemelu and Obinze growing up and finding their place in the world. The novel is divided into segments of identity formation that reflects on the process of the postcolonial migrant identity. She portrays her characters stages of identity which include their time as native Nigerians, their experiences as immigrants in America, their "Americanisation" and subsequent return to Nigeria. Adichie shows this first stage of identity formation thus:

> Looking at him as he sat mute on the sofa, she thought how much he looked like what he was, a man full of blanched longings, a middlebrow civil servant who wanted a life different from what he had, who had longed for more education than he was able to get… His was a formal elevated English… once, their former house help, Jacintha, had come into the kitchen and started clapping quietly, and told Ifemelu, "you should have heard your father's big words now! *Ode egwu!"*... sometimes Ifemelu imagined him… an overzealous colonial subject wearing an ill-fitting school uniform of cheapcotton, jostling to impress his missionary teachers…it was costume, his shield against insecurity. He was hunted by what he did not have… (p.47)

The predicament of middle-class Nigerians is personified in the character of Ifemelu's father. A figure characterised by the words "middle brow civil servant" with "blanched longings." These descriptors point to the unfulfilled desires of the middleclass in Nigeria, who seek an identity free from the extensive confines of classism that originate from a national identity unable to free itself from colonial ideology. Adichie's criticism of the Nigerian situation is shown by Ifemelu's aunt who describes the Nigerian economy as an "ass-licking economy" thus:

> The biggest problem in this country is not corruption. The problem is that there are many qualified people who are not where they are supposed to be because they won't lick anybody's ass. I am lucky to be licking the right ass. (p.77)

Ifemelu's aunt criticises Nigeria and provides reasons behind the stagnation of its economy. Many qualified people do not have good jobs because they refuse to be a part of the corrupt practices involved in acquiring a good job or would not stoop low like Ifemelu's father who was fired because he refused to call his boss "mummy." So they move to a place where they believe would hold no prejudice. *Americanah's* plot follows this trend with Ifemelu moving to America, a place she perceived as being a glamorised modern location that would provide an escape from her country's inadequacies. This led to the various misconceptions she had about American culture. This is portrayed in the novel thus:

> She stared at buildings and cars and signboards, all of them matt, disapointly matt; in the landscape of her imagination, the mundane things in America were covered in a high-shine gloss. She was startled, most of all, by the teenage boy in a baseball cap standing near a brick wall face down, body leaning forward, hands between his legs. She turned to look again. "See that boy!" she said. "I didn't know people do things like this in America."… A fat cockroach was perched on the wall near the cabinets…if she had been in their Lagos kitchen, she would have found a broom and killed it, but she left the American cockroach alone and went and stood by the living room window…the street below was poorly lit, bordered not by leafy trees but by closely parked cars, nothing like the pretty street on *the cosby Show*. (pp.104-106)

The idea that the American landscape provides a resolution to postcolonial identity of Nigerian characters is disregarded once faced with the reality of cultural politics in the United States. Ifemelu learns about the politics of national identities by comparing Nigeria to the United States. In America, Ifemelu is discriminated against because of her cultural background. She is portrayed as being spurned because of her non-American accent which shows her as having an inadequate identity that could not fit neatly into the standardised trends of the American culture:

> Ifemelu half smiled in sympathy, because Cristina Tomas have to have some sort of illness that made her speak so slowly, lips scrunching… she realised Cristina Tomas was speaking like that because of her, her foreign accent… "I speak English" she said. 'I bet you do,' Cristina Tomas said. 'I just don't know how well.' (p.133)

As part of Ifemelu's identity formation as an immigrant Nigerian, Adichie sets up this experience between Ifemelu and Cristina Tomas; Ifemelu must understand how she is viewed in America. For example, because Ifemelu's foreign accent does not adhere to United States cultural standards, it informs her of the expectations of American assimilation as noted in the exchange when she spoke English but is questioned because of her accent. She must learn to perform recognised American traits that grants acceptance into American society. Thus, "in

the following week, as autumn's coolness descended, she began to practice an American accent" (p.134).

This shows the writer's attempt at comparing Nigeria which is the "Othered" to America the "Centre". Thus as the "Other", Ifemelu must do away with her native and fluent English for a "superior" model from the "Centre" (American English), on the basis of having an accent. According to Bhabha (1994) the "Other" can be compared to the empire (the empirical centre) which makes the colonised subject conscious of one's identity as somehow "other" and dependent. In other words, the colonising "Other" gets established when the colonised "Others" are treated as subjects. Thus Cristina Tomas, as a representative of imperialist politics seeks to intimidate Ifemelu into submission, as noted in her comments, 'I bet you do' and 'but I don't know how well.' This dialogue between Ifemelu and Cristina indicates the danger of Ifemelu being dominated by the superior centre. Hence, in other to be accepted in American society, Ifemelu had to first allow the erasure of her native culture for a new one. Another level of Ifemelu's assimilation into the white society is seen when Ifemelu befriends Curt an American:

> With Curt, she became in her mind a woman free of knot and care, a woman running in the rain with the taste of the sun-warmed strawberries in her mouth. "A drink" became part of the architecture of her life, mojitos and martinis, dry whites and fruity reds. She went hiking with him, kayaking, camping near his family's vacation home, all things she would never had imagined herself doing before. She was lighter and leaner. She was Curt's girlfriend… she laughed more because he laughed so much. His optimism blinded her… she imagined him as a child surrounded by too many brightly coloured toys. (p.196)

Curt represents the allure of Americanisation. The privilege and wealth available to the white upper class tempts Ifemelu as she becomes "a woman free from knot and cares" because of her relationship with Curt whose success was largely a result of the access granted by his class and the colour of his skin. Ifemelu, as his girlfriend learns more about the pressure of

the white society. Because of her connection to Curt, she is offered an employment opportunity. She is comfortable enough to accept Curt's aid, and the implication of her taking advantage of his privilege, he could "with a few phone calls, rearrange the world, have things slide into the spaces that he wanted them to" (p.202).

Unlike her peers, "wambui who was working three jobs under the table to raise five thousand dollars she would need to pay an African American man for a green-card marriage. And Mwombeki who was desperately trying to find a company that would hire him on his temporary visa…" (p.202) Ifemelu gets everything easy because of her connection to a white rich American man. This is to show that the more these characters adapt to their American society, life is made more bearable when they loss bits of themselves to accommodate the supposed "superior" culture of the Orientalist. This is because like Aunty Uju said in the novel "you are in a country that is not your own. You do what you have to do if you want to succeed" (p.119). Although these characters do all they can to be successful in their host land, there is however a price to pay for wanting to integrate into the white society. After straightening their hair to gain employment, *Americanah* portrays that the hair straightening process by Ifemelu and Aunty Uju is both destructive and oppressive. Ifemelu feels the oppressive weight of changing her appearance to achieve an American ideal:

> As the hairdresser rinsed out the relaxer, Ifemelu's head bent downwards against a plastic sink, needles of stinging pain shot up from different parts of her scalp, down to different parts of her body, back up to her head. "Just a little burn," the hairdresser said. "but look how pretty it is. Wow, girl, you've got the white –girl swing!" her hair was hanging down rather than standing up, straight and sleek, parted at the side and curving to a bulb at her chin. The verve was gone. She did not recognise herself…later after she breezed through the job interview, and the woman shook her hand and said she would be a "wonderful fit" in the company, she wondered if the woman would have felt the same way if she walked into that office wearing her thick, kinky, God-given halo of hair, the Afro. (pp.203-204)

The precarious situation of the immigrant and the usurpation of her original identity is seen in the above quote when Ifemelu straightened her hair. The novel's language of "losing her verve" and "not recognising herself" expresses the subject matter of the novel, *Americanah*. To get a good job, Ifemelu had to lose her old self to imbibe a different identity by straightening her kinky hair to look more American before going for a job interview. The loss of her Nigerian identity is made more obvious by the hair dresser who after relaxing Ifemelu's hair exclaims "wow, girl, you've got the white-girl swing" (p.203). She got the job, but couldn't help but wonder at what would have happened if she had "walked into the office wearing her thick, kinky, God-given halo of hair, the Afro"(p.204).

This shows that in other for a Nigerian diaspora characters to get noticed or rather get accepted fully into the white society, they had to discard some aspect of their original self/identity and acclimatise to the white ways of doing things. This adaptation of the western norms is made more obvious when the novels protagonist Ifemelu spoke Igbo to her cousin Dike only to be reprimanded by her Aunt who said " please don't speak Igbo to him… two languages will confuse him… this is America." Americanisation thus becomes the highest point some characters like Aunty Uju can strive to attain because like Ifemelu said "America had subdued her" (p.110).

The adoption of American accent is another example of cultural hybridity of diasporan Nigerians in the prose narrative. When Ifemelu's friend Ginika was about to leave for America, her school mates teased her that she would come back speaking like an American. For example, she would start "adding a slurred *r* to every English word she spoke" (p.65). However, upon arriving in America, Ifemelu understood this desire of Africans in diaspora to assimilate because even Aunty Uju when she speaks around whites, speaks with an accent. Also Bartholomew, Aunty Uju's boyfriend in the novel is illustrated using American accent

even though his is “an American accent filled with holes,” words mangled “until they are impossible to understand” (p.115). All these are done in the bid to fit into their American society. Another example of cultural hybridity is seen in the novel when Ifemelu describes Aunty Uju and Ginika. For her, Ginika had adapted more to the American culture than Aunty Uju had because Ginika was young, easily adaptable and had thus quickly learnt the culture and their ways of doing things. The knowledge that Ginika had made Ifemelu envious because:

> She hungered to understand everything about America, to wear a new, knowing skin right away: to support a team at the Super Bowl, understand what a Twinkle was and what sports “lockouts” meant, measure in ounces and square feet, order a “muffin” without thinking that it really was a cake, and say “ I ‘scored’ a deal” without feeling silly. (p.135)

Ifemelu desires to learn about the American culture and their ways of life in other to fully assimilate into her new environment. To this effect, being familiar with some American terms and being able to use them without “feeling silly” will go a long way in making her have a sense of belonging in her new home. By trying to acclimatise into her new home, Ifemelu is not trying to forget or abandon her own ancestral Nigerian culture, but because she is in America, she needs to learn their ways to easily blend in.

Stuart (1991) sees the constant need by diasporans to achieve communicative competence and properly fit into their new environment as a process of identity formation. He asserts that:

> Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in progress, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.

The implication of this therefore is that identity is a representational process characterised by consistent renewal and reformation; it is never static. This identity, though in constant fluctuation, eventually results in a sense of belonging to a common identity, and this helps to

reaffirm the connection to the diaspora. To fully portray how problematic the issue of identity is, Ifemelu after her return to Nigeria joins a group who called themselves Nigerpolitans. It was a group for returnees from America with whom she shared the "same reference" and they could "list all they missed about America" (p.408). Though in Nigeria, Ifemelu hungered for American dishes:

> She wished...that she was not interested in the new restaurant, did not perk up, imagining fresh green salads and steamed still-firm vegetables, she loved eating all the things she had missed while away, jollof rice cooked with a lot of oil, fried plantains, boiled yams, but she longed, also, for the things she had become used to in America, even quinao... mad with feta and tomatoes. This was what she hoped she had not become but feared that she had: a "they have the kinds of things we eat" kind of person.

Ifemelu had truly become Americanised as she longed for the meals she loved eating while in America even though she was now in Nigeria and those dishes were beyond her reach. Similarly, while in America she had also hungered for Nigerian meals. Therefore, her world view had become a product of a synergy between two different cultures and her identity is informed by the influences of the interactions of both cultures. Ifemelu's condition finds expression in Ang's assertion about the concept of hybridity. Ang (2003, p.2) is of the view that:

> Hybridity foregrounds complicated entanglement rather than identity, togetherness-in-difference rather than separateness and virtual apartheid. It is also a concept that prevents the absorption of all difference into a hegemonic plane of sameness and homogeneity.

Ang's position on hybridity proves to be useful in exploring the elements of hybridity expressed in Adichie's *Americanah.* This is because according to him, hybridity does not imply a harmonious fusion between people who are different, but it makes them aware of the complexities that can be encountered when living with such difference as in the case of Ifemelu in Adichie's *Americanah.* Ifemelu's position as a hybridised person separates her

from both cultures. This is due to the fact that she is not fully American and she after having distanced herself from Nigeria for years doesn't feel fully Nigerian either. This brings to mind Lazare and Van Garde's (2007, p.187) postulation that "postcolonial theory unfortunately does not reproduce the old native culture, nor does it bring a totally new culture, but it produces a dislocated culture, a mixture of worlds – a "fragmented and hybrid theoretical language" within a "conflicted cultural interaction." (cited from Loomba 1998, p.15)

Adichie also satirises societal beliefs and practices in her prose narrative. Her characters presentation of the actual American world reveals the fact that the expectation of most Nigerians aspiring to travel abroad and their perception about America is merely Utopia. Thus she mildly reveals the strains of paradise which many Nigerians in Diaspora refuse to voice. Her characters address the unspoken issue of race in America in a mild way. Her major character Ifemelu takes on the American culture of silence; determinedly making a statement without voicing a word: "one of the things her friend Ginika told her was that "fat" in America was a bad word, heaving with moral judgment like "stupid" or "bastard," and not a mere description like "short" or "tall". She had banished "fat" from her vocabulary" (Pp.5-6) and for the next thirteen years, Ifemelu never used the word 'fat' since she learned that **in** *America* "*you're supposed to pretend that you don't notice certain things*" (p.127). Just after she arrived into the States, she noticed a cashier's behaviour in a clothing store. The cashier tries to find out which of the two sales persons had helped Ifemelu, distinguishing them on all bases but refusing to mention the obvious skin colour. Adichie satirises the contradictory way Americans avoid describing someone with the word, "black". Also Kimberly, the lady Ifemelu baby-sits for, while she sponsors herself through college, typifies this American norm. *Kimberly uses the word "beautiful" in a peculiar way:*

> *"I'm meeting my beautiful friend from graduate school," Kimberly would say, or "we are working with this beautiful woman on the inner-city project," and always the women she referred to would turn out to be quiet ordinary-looking, but always black. One day… Kimberly said, "Oh, look at this beautiful woman," and pointed at a plain model in a magazine whose only distinguishing feature was her very dark skin. "No she isn't." Ifemelu paused. "You know, you can just say "black." Not every black person is beautiful." (pp.146-147)*

*Ifemelu satirically reveals an evasive side of American people. They refuse or rather avoid pointing out obvious things the way they actually are. Instead of simply calling a black person "black," Kimberly would rather say "beautiful" even when the black person she was referring to was not beautiful. Adichie adopts satire in the novel as a powerful art form to "point out the deficiencies in human behaviour and the social issues which results from them in such a way that they become absurd, even hilarious…" (LeBeouf 2007, p.1). Thus, Americanah is a statement making piece to the three continents Adichie pegs in the novel. The text uses mimicry as a form of mockery, a comic approach to colonial discourse by ridiculing and undermining the ongoing pretensions of colonialism and the empire (America). Mimicry is used in the novel as a response to the circulation of stereotypes by the American/British society.*

While satirising the ills of society, the narrative points out the pointless ridiculous practices in Nigeria. Ifemelu's dad loses his job because he refuses to call his boss, "Mummy". "He came home earlier than usual wacked with bitter disbelief, his termination letter in his hand, complaining about the absurdity of a grown man calling a grown woman mummy because she had decided it was the best way to show her respect. "Twelve years of dedicated labour. It is unconscionable" (pp.46-47). Adichie in ridiculing the Nigerian situation further portrays how the lack of employment opportunities affects the psyche of Nigerians. After several

months of remaining jobless, Ifemelu's father becomes completely dependent on his wife, she says to him: *"If you had to call somebody Mummy to get your salary, you should have done so!... losing his job made him quieter, and a thin wall grew between him and the world…And Ifemelu knew that, if given another chance, he would call his boss Mummy."(pp.47-48)*

The narrative further explores Ifemelu's decision to return to Nigeria after spending over a decade in the States, refusing to fully Americanise, only to find herself in the midst of people who found pleasure in mocking Nigeria, the Nigerian accent and everything Nigerian. Ifemelu is invited to the Nigerpolitan club meeting by her fellow Americanah in Zoe Magazine, Doris, who parodies the way Nigerians say "I will take wine," using "take" instead of drink." Adichie satirises the Nigerpolitan Club, which is made up of mostly people with the "air of away" (p.55).They discuss how difficult it is to find a decent smoothie in Lagos, how one cannot find a decent vegetarian restaurant, how there is poor customer service everywhere in Nigeria, how Hollywood is better than Nollywood and most interestingly they use foreign accents. Ifemelumakes mockery of American returnees in Nigeria in the first article in her Nigerian blog which she calls *"The Small Redemptions of Lagos"* which focuses on Nigerpolitan:

> Lagos has never been, will never be, and has never aspired to be like New York, or anywhere else for that matter. Lagos has always been undisputably itself, but would not know this at the meeting of the Nigerpolitan Club, a group of young returnees who gather every week to moan about the ways that Lagos is not like New York as though Lagos had ever been close to being like New York. …If your cook cannot make the perfect Panini, it is not because he is stupid. It is because Nigeria is not a nation of sandwich-eating people and his last oga did not eat bread in the afternoon. So he needs training and practice. And Nigeria is not a nation of people with food allergies, not a nation of picky eaters for whom food is about distinctions and separations. It is a nation of people who eat beef and chicken and cow skin and intestines and dried fish in a single bowl of soup, and it is called assorted, and so get over yourselves andrealise that the way of life here is just that, assorted(p.421).

Although the article is composed rather sarcastically, what the text does is to use mimicry to underline the gap between the norm of civility presented by American/European enlightenment and its colonial imitation in distorted form to indicate how different the Nigerian nation is from developed nations of the world. And also how returning migrants must learn to admit and embrace this difference and readjust in order to be accepted in the homeland, and to make their selves feel at home. The novel also critiques America's insensibilities, including its self-absorbing obsession with charity. While working as a babysitter for a wealthy white woman, Ifemelu is asked to help out at the fundraising party, the guests she interacts with are nothing short of reprehensible:

> Two women spoke about their donations to a wonderful charity in Malawi that built wells, a wonderful orphanage in Bostwana, a wonderful microfinance cooperative in Kenya. Ifemelu gazed at them. There was a certain luxury to charity that she could not identify with and did not have. To take "charity for granted, to revel in this charity towards people whom one did not know- perhaps it came from having had yesterday and having today and expecting to have tomorrow. She envied them this. (p.169)

Instead of being philanthropic, indulging in charitable acts merely reaffirms the wealth and power of the benefactors and sounds as a reminder of the destitution and powerlessness of the beneficiaries. The guests at the party use charity to justify their wealth, as if by giving something "back" they can be absolved of the crime of inequality and to ascertain their superiority over the African continent seen as lackluster and backward. And so in the above excerpt, charity becomes a demonstration of wealth rather than a legitimately generous activity. The work is suggestive of the fact that Adichie's *Americanah* is also critical of American academics, and channels most of her uneasiness with the American approach to knowledge through her portrayal of Ifemelu's boyfriend, Blaine, an assistant professor at Yale. Blaine is a very ethical person; every decision he takes is value-oriented. He only buys organic vegetables, exercise every single day, and is constantly engaging in activities that he

doesn't really enjoy simply because they are "good" for him. Ifemelu finds conversation with Blaine's academic friends stifling and irritating. One example is Nathan, a literature professor who told her:

> Some months earlier, in a voice filled with hauteur that he did not read any fiction published after 1930. 'It all went downhill after the thirties,' he said. She had told Blaine about it later and there was an impatience in her tone, almost an accusation, as she added that academics were not intellectuals; they were not curious, they built their stolid tents of specialised knowledge and stayed securely in them. (pp.323-324)

Ifemelu's problem with American academia's was their eagerness to condemn things, to accept that every problem is a result of arranged oppression, that only by living principally can they escape the issues around them. From the above quote, Adichie reveals that she finds the specialisation of knowledge itself problematic, because it leads to narrow-minded thinking. Many of the academics she meets, including Blaine, are self-righteous in their indignation, and consider themselves the liberated few who really know how the world actually works. Although Adichie presents Nigeria, North America and Europe in the novel with an endearment quality, this however does not stop her from castigating and pointing out the ills predominant in her home and other countries. In *Americanah,* Ifemelu makes mockery of the American society as a people that cannot speak good English: "some of the expressions she heard everyday astonished her, jarred her… *You shouldn't of done that. There is three things. I have a apple. A couple days. I want to lay down*" (p.134). This is probably why Bhabha (1994, Pp.86) argues that mimicry is central to political discourse. He goes further to define it as:

> The desire for a reformed recognisable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excesses, its difference.

For Bhabha therefore, mimicry does not merely 'rupture' the literary discourse, but transforms it into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. **To show this alteration to the notion of the empire being "unique", Adichie in *Americanah* (2013) goes a step forward by mimicking the American fashion sense, the boundaries of American hospitality, and their nature of excessively tipping waitresses. In the novel for instance, Ifemelu in her blog wrote:**

> **When it comes to dressing well, American culture is so self-fulfilled that it has not only disregarded this courtesy of self-presentation, but has turned that disregard into a virtue. *"we are too superior/busy/cool/not-uptight to bother about how we look to other people, and so we can wear pajamas to school and underwear to the mall."* (p.129)**

The American/ European society is ridiculed as a nation that claims to be self-fulfilled, but have no regard for fashion. Their aural of superiority they believe assuages them from something as irrelevant as looking good. Thus, it is not surprising when the Nigerian diasporan character Ginika went to shop for a dress she would wear to a party opted for a shapeless one she calls "postmodern," the dress looked to Ifemelu like "a boxy sack on which a bored person had haphazardly stuck sequins" (p.126). Ifemelu wondered if she too would come to "share Ginika's taste for shapeless dresses, whether this was what America did to you" (p.126).Also, by poking fun on the structure of America's hospitality and tipping technique, Adichie uses the character of Ifemelu to illustrate the nature of hospitality in American/ European society. Ifemelu's roommates invites her to follow them to get something to eat and thinking that it was an invitation of a sort and that her roommates Allison or one of the others would buy her a meal, was left baffled when the waiter brought their bill and Alison "carefully began to untangle how many drinks each person had ordered and who had the calamari appetiser, to make sure nobody paid for someone else" (p.129). In portraying the hilarious ways the host country do things, the literary text under study gives a

graphic picture of how different the two culture are; Nigerian and America, and how the clash of both worlds affects the immigrant Nigerian characters.

Adichie's *Americanah* describes the unlivable nature of the American/British dream for Africans and their unwelcomed status by presenting the hardships of living abroad, including that sense of belonging both toward homeland and host land before and after displacement. Also, the sense of alienation which is caused as a result of being different, thus, the novel proposes a strong consideration of return as the only recourse free from different culture issues, identity crisis and a sense of belonging. However, it also points out that upon an eventual return home, returnee migrants often find it difficult to fully acclimatise because their identity has been hybridised like the character Ifemelu, an American returnee who found it difficult to fit into the Nigerian system on her return.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) as models of Nigerian diasporic literature and an extention of the African diasporic experience. To bring Nigeria diaspora to the fore therefore, this research used the works of this authors as texts that broaden the focus for the understanding of Nigerian diasporic literature in terms of its multifaceted dimensions. The significance of this study is embedded in the fact that both narratives offer a glimpse of the Nigerian Diasporic experience and portrays the prose narrative as an important tool for creating social awareness. Thus, deserving of critical attention, are the experiences of Nigerians in diaspora.

The study also broadens the scope of Nigerian diasporic literature by creating stereotypes that aid our understanding of Nigerian diasporic experience. In this sense, therefore, the study confirms that contemporary migrations have changed from forced migration as in the time of Olauda Equiano and Bishop Ajayi Crowther to a voluntary one, in view of the fact that a number of the characters in the texts under study willingly embarked on migration. Some went for educational purposes, others went in search of better living opportunities and there are those who just wanted a change. This latter category of migrants are those who are not comfortable with the social and political issues back in their home of origin and thus migrate to the West where they believe hold better living opportunities for them.

This research demonstrates that Nigerian diasporic literature explores the contingent relationships between diasporic subjects and their homelands/ host lands. Secondly, that prose narrative is a significant literary discursive form for signifying Nigerian diasporic experiences and how these experiences lead them into creating new identities for themselves.

The study also considers Nigerian Diasporic literature as a representation of a people who aspire for a better living condition but are disillusioned by the challenges that their new environment poses. Furthermore, the research examines the extent to which Adichie's *Americanah*and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* depict the various dimensions of the experiences of the diaspora and how these experiences often climax in disillusionment. As such, the thesis captures issues that are Nigerian, diasporic and deserving of critical attention.

The study is text based and qualitative, relying on library material as well for its analysis. In achieving this, resources ranging from books, magazines, articles, journals and internet materials from a variety of scholarly fields were consulted. The study is limited to the analysis of Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* specifically focusing on how both writers have used the medium of prose to capture the day to day experiences of Nigerians in diaspora and the challenges they face on getting to their host country.

Furthermore, this thesis finds that both texts are a purposeful projection of the reason behind the migration of Nigerians abroad and the dystopian consequence of this endeavour. Through the postcolonial lens, this study has been able to explore the issues of Otherness, identity crisis, culture difference, mimicry, hybridity and all other derogatory treatment that Nigerian diasporic characters in both texts are exposed to. In all, both Emecheta and Adichie have demonstrated their concern about Africa and Nigeria in particular by portraying societal problems dominant in the country and how they act as catalyst to the massive influx of Nigerians to the western hemisphere. Also many of the troubles faced by immigrant Nigerian characters on getting to the West come from the "Otherness" that their race suffer, being often perceived as savage and inferior to the white race. This depiction of the Nigerian diasporic characters as the "Other" projects them as victims of racial exclusion. The colour of skin and other physical features become the common basis for racial discrimination. Both

narratives also demonstrate a fluid sense of identity and a deliberate fascination with the dynamism that characterises the construction of the identities of Nigerian diasporic characters portrayed in the text. Emecheta and Adichie's works project a sense of identity crisis as faced by characters that came in contact with traditions, cultures and ways of life different from what is obtainable back home in Nigeria. These characters had to create new identities for themselves in other to fit into their new home. Some acquired westernised accent, changed their fashion sense to suit the trend of fashion in Europe and America, straightening their kinky hair in other to be granted easy access into the white community and some even went as far as marrying white women all in the bid to blend in and/or to gain acceptance in their host communities.

Consequently, through the exploration of Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Adichie's *Americanah*, this research has been able to portray the Nigerian diasporic experiences and the green pasture facade that informs the migrant experience and its attendant disillusionment that eventually characterise the experience. Thus, the contention of this thesis is that migrating to a new place exposes the Nigerian immigrant character to a new worldview. A worldview that clearly projects the notion that it is not entirely right to see one culture as a "solution" and the "other" as the problem. Both texts give a clear perspective as to what constitutes culture and the fact that no culture in itself holds the answer to every problem. They also point to the fact that every culture has gaps which need to be filled and it is only by the interaction between these two cultures that the gaps in these cultures become clearer. Hence, when these characters get to that point of realisation, they attain a state of hybridity; the ability to easily blend with both cultures and lives within the demands of both cultures. The experience of characters in the texts reveals the fact that the hope of finding an utopian world in the West is erroneous. Thus, characters in the texts become wiser and aware that no

culture in itself is the solution to the problems of life especially that faced by people from third world countries.

With emphasis on the texts under study, this research dismantles the popular notion that migrating to the diaspora is the key to finding rest from the postcolonial conditions in Nigeria. Both works reveal the unlivable nature of the American/British dream especially for Nigerians and their unwelcomed status. This is achieved in both texts through a portrayal of the hardships faced by Nigerians in the Diaspora, the disillusionment that greets their search for a better life, the nostalgia that prompts their return in the case of Ifemelu and Obinze in Adichie's *Americanah* and the sense of alienation that the condition of hybridity creates both at home and abroad. Also, this study portrays Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works as an expression of the fact that the massive influx of Nigerians to the West is marked by missed opportunities, truncated development, frustrated hope and political sense manifested in poor socio-economic performance, causing suffering and unfulfilled expectations as well as conflicts and political instability.

On the whole therefore, both texts express the view that the western world is not a safe haven but also presents a unique set of challenges especially on the basis of race. The nostalgia that such challenges invoke puts to question the influx of Nigerians to the West. It is on the basis of these double edged portrayal of the diasporic experience that this study recommends the repositioning of the study of diasporic literature (prose) especially in relation to Nigerians in the diaspora because such literatures will forever remain a significant tool not only to drawing an awareness to the happenings within and without the immediate society but for general development of the citizenry and the society at large. Hence, the exploration of sensitive concerns like identity crisis, racial issues, alienation, culture difference, nostalgia, etc. constitutes the major basis upon which Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Adichie's *Americanah*qualify as literary models as far as diasporic literature is concerned.

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