

Re-reading Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* and Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*: The vision of the writers in social reformation and nation building

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Abstract

Literature has over the years become an indispensable tool for social criticism and reconstruction. It has also mirrored the lives and mores of any given society by bringing out the socio-political, religious and economic problems. This role has placed writers in a spotlight and identifies them as strong forces charged with the task of bringing positive and lasting changes in our society. Writers, in the bid to harness the full potentials of literature have become social crusaders of the imminent disaster facing the nation. This paper examines Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* to find out their stand point in the face of our various problems ranging from child trafficking, prostitution, displacement, exploitation, embezzlement, poor governance, discrimination, acculturation and all the attendant experiences of Africans in Diaspora in their bid to escape from the country and find refuge, succour and better life abroad. Using psychoanalytical theory, the paper analyses the traumatic experiences of these migrants in Diaspora. It is obvious that Adichie created African characters that are battling with their foreign unfriendly environment while Adimora-Ezeigbo showed total hatred for human trafficking and these views which they proffer formed the crux of the study. The paper concludes that for these migrants to find peace, they have to go back to their root and build their nation in one way or the other.

Keywords: diaspora, human trafficking, migrants, discrimination, racism, trauma, dehumanizing

1. Introduction

No society exists significantly without its literature and literature cannot function and blossom in isolation of the society. As expected and in the exploration of the gains and glories of literature, writers in all parts of the world have artistically manoeuvred the gains and benefits of this unique and distinctive art which plays very prominent and significant roles in the social re-education, re-orientation and re-direction of their societies evident in the quality of literature produced across continents. Literature functions and helps to shape our attitudes to life which brings change in the society. Literature in this regard will never die for according to Nwahunanya^[1]:

Contemporary society poses a lot of challenges, provides a variety of working materials for the creative writers. Most of our creative writers, therefore, because of this surfeit of socially relevant topical issues, believe they have a message worth listening to, once they dip their hands into the available pool of ideas and experiences which may not be new to their presumed audience. Indeed, the writer has not yet started to write if he does not believe he has a socially relevant message... (379)

Writers at all-time continue to follow the developing changes in their various societies which they believe that it is their duty as writers to intervene and proffer solutions to the various

Emerging ills of their societies which is targeting towards building the ideal, prosperous and Harmonious societies of their dreams. It is in view of this that writers continue to examine several contemporary issues that are prevalent in our society today. This paper tends to analyze this issue

from the perspective of two notable African writers - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo in their novels *Americanah* and *Trafficked* respectively using psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud.

Sigmund Freud's ideas of psychoanalyses according to Dobbie, Anne^[2] has continued whether consciously or unconsciously, acknowledged or not to influence writers. Psychoanalytical theory is the personality theory, which is based on the notion that an individual gets motivated more by unseen forces that are controlled by the conscious and the rational thought. According to him, the human behaviour is formed through an interaction between three components of the mind that is the id, Ego and Super ego. All of Freud's work depends upon the notion of the unconscious - the part of the mind beyond consciousness which, nevertheless, has a strong influence upon our actions. It is from this dimension that the traumatic experiences of Africans in these diasporic literatures will be explored. Chimamanda is one writer who has taken the literary world by storm. In this regard and in cognizance of all her notable achievements, Onukaogu and Onyerionwu^[3] in their full length book on Chimamanda Adichie speak of her thus:

If there are new world writers who do not need any introduction, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 32 years old Nigerian writer of fiction, is surely one of them. She has not only taken the literary world by storm in the few years that she has been around, she has also set out to redefine the universal fictional aesthetic, transforming in the process the reception and appreciation of modern African literature. After only three published works of fiction, she may have met virtually all the yardsticks for the conferment of the tag, 'classic writer'...Adichie's accomplishments are

more than sufficient introduction for her on any given occasion (8).

Her novel *Americanah* tells a story of young Nigerians caught in the agony of unbearable conditions in a dwindling state. Unremitting military coups and interventions took Nigeria many years backward and this gave rise to alarming rate of emigrants from Nigeria to countries like America and United Kingdom just to escape the untold hardship brought by the political problems. This is followed by Nigeria's friable democracy where corruption, social and moral decadence are the order of the day. The novel is also a story of love as witnessed from different perspectives. Adichie explains explicitly in *Americanah* as she uses the protagonist in United States of America to look at the issues of gender, race, ethnicity and class. The novel captures the traumatic and psychological effects of this inhuman treatment on the immigrants who are continually discriminated and restricted because of the colour of their skins. Ifemelu, Obinze, Aunt Uju, Dike and a long list of other characters were victims of this racial treatment that home at the end of the day proved to be the escape route for them. Leaving America to return to Nigeria is the only thing that made Ifemelu fulfilled, it gives her peace of mind. Akachi Adimora is one of the accomplished writers in our contemporary time, who has used her visions as an artist to direct the ship of her society towards a more lasting and idyllic society.

According to her in an interview with Olu Obafemi as was quoted in Asika ^[4]:

I have been writing and publishing since the 90s. I have also been teaching literature for as long as that and before the 90s. I love writing, not just creative writing. The love of writing was with me even when I was in the primary school. I was one of the best students in English language in my primary and secondary schools. I recall that my essays were often read in class to the pupils to show what a good essay should look or sound like. I am imaginative by inclination, this has helped me to propel my creativity... Obviously, having fertile imagination helps one to have many things to write about. I believe this is true in my own case (Qtd in Asika, 151).

In her novel *Trafficked*, she x-rayed though not newly born child trafficking but newly modernized and re-structured business of trafficking women abroad for the purpose of using them as sex objects to satisfy the material and selfish desires of their owners. This is a great injustice to humanity which Adimora-Ezeigbo like some other non-governmental organizations that have risen in defense of this cannot pardon nor allow to go on unchecked and unnoticed. She recreated the story of Nneoma, her heroine as well as other victims of trafficking from whose eyes we were able to obtain first-class information on the horrors, brutalities, abuses and inhumanity these young girls are made to pass through in Italy and London among other foreign states where sex is in a very high demand especially from Africans believed to be of different variety and spice of taste. The author did not only center her work on this business of child trafficking though it provided the backbone for her novel, she also concerned herself with several other social issues.

Racism and African-diasporic Experiences in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

In the novel, *Americanah*, the writer recreates the image of a country wallowing deep in corruption and social vices. Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant mineral resources and other economically viable resources. This is stating the obvious and the idea that the country is corrupt is a known fact. Bad governance, corruption, mismanagement, embezzlement, nepotism, bribery, lack of basic amenities, social vices and disorder are among the arrays of diseases that have eaten deep in our very fabrics. This is the situation that makes every citizen to yearn for escape abroad. This is the environment we encountered in Adichie's *Americanah*. It was this environment that Obinze grew up in and developed a childhood passion to check out of Nigeria and live abroad. This was to become a psychological problem to him. It was as a result of this that Obinze's mother lied to the London embassy in order to secure a visa for him as her research assistant. It was not America, but she felt London could also offer such psychological cure which her son was in dire need of. This was something she was not out for and it destroyed her. She scarified her personality; everything she believes in for her son.

Again, we have the character of Aunt Uju who was forced by the environment to date a married Army General because she had refused to travel abroad and had high dream of surviving in Nigeria. The environment was such arranged that she could only survive through the General. In the end, the abroad which she had resented as a young graduate, becomes her only escape route. Ifemelu, the heroine of the novel also escaped to America when she could no longer cope with the incessant strike actions in Nigeria. In America, we-witnessed the influence of the environment and other external factors on these immigrants. These are factors beyond their control which at the long run claim their identities and transform them. This is the clear case of Aunt Uju in America. Aunt Uju was described as a loving, cheerful and generous character way back in Nigeria. While growing up she shared a unique bond with Ifemelu, a bond that started while Ifemelu was three years. It was the American environment that extinguished all the love, care and generosity of Aunt Uju. America destroyed the bond between Aunt Uju and Ifemelu, even her families as Ifemelu met a different Aunt Uju in America, Aunt Uju that now plays by the rule and was struggling to survive in the stiff American environment.

The environment was well organized to frustrate and limit the blacks in many ways, and in their bid to cope and survive, their old selves are sacrificed at the altar for something new, stiff, uncaring, and tough in order to cope with the American system and laid down pattern of life. Aunt Uju cared less about Ifemelu and her survival in America. America has a way of spelling out 'on your own' ideology to everyone. Aunt Uju even planned and married a divorced accountant, Bartholomew to help her cope with her needs and all other environmental issues. This was not the Aunt Uju, Ifemelu knew in Nigeria because she could not understand many things about her newly acquired features and personality. She had continued to clash with Aunt Uju on a number of issues through which she perhaps hopes to resuscitate the old Aunt Uju and remind her of who she was, the loving, caring, generous cheerful Aunt Uju who has not always done things because others do the

same. Auntie Uju finally had to remind her of the realities of the environment which Ifemelu soon found out herself. Auntie Uju told her thus:

I have told you what they told me. You are in a country that is not your own. You do what you have to do if you want to succeed. There it was again, the strange naivety with which Auntie Uju had covered herself like a blanket. Sometimes, while having a conversation it would occur to Ifemelu that Auntie Uju had deliberately left behind something of herself, something essential, in a distant and forgotten place. Obinze said it was the exaggerated gratitude that came with immigrant insecurity. (*Americanah*, 119) ^[5]

Ifemelu soon was to encounter her own realities about the American environment. She too was soon to cover herself with the same strange naivety Auntie Uju did. She was soon to lose something essential, to forget herself, her old personality and became something new, just like Auntie Uju did, even much more. Ifemelu had hungered to understand America and be part of it. For Ifemelu to survive in America, she has to pick up a fake identity. She was forced to be Ngozi Okonkwo a name on an identity card she was given. Ifemelu has many traumatic experiences in assuming the name and personality of Ngozi Okonkwo. Many times as a matter of instinct, she says her name "Ifemelu" even during an interview before she would remember her pseudo name. Ginika had teased her thus:

...You could have just said Ngozi is your tribal name and Ifemelu is your jungle name and throw in one as your spiritual name. They believe all kinds of shits about Africa. Ginika laughed a sure throaty laugh. Ifemelu laughed, too, although she did not fully understand the joke. And she had the sudden sensation of fogginess, of a milky web through which she tried to claw. Her autumn of half blindness had begun, the autumn of puzzlements; of experiences she had knowing there were slippery of layers of meaning that eluded her (*Americanah*, 131) ^[5].

Gradually, Ifemelu watched helplessly as the American environment rose in unison to claim her. The external and conflicting factors began to take toll on hers. Even with the fake identity of Ngozi Okonkwo, she still could not secure any meaningful job, the few jobs she saw on newspaper were advertising for Escorts. Ginika had told her to forget about the escort job. That it is prostitution though they claim it is not but Ifemelu really needed to survive. Auntie Uju could not help but abandon her to her fate. Ifemelu's psychological disposition soon began to degenerate into an unknown bitterness, anger, a suppressed violence with the world. It terrified her and began to rise in her. It was in anger to destroy everything, shatter America and replace it in the shape she would wish it to be for her. She began to plan and execute her own ways of surviving in a cruel and harsh environment. The search led her to a tennis coach, a pervert and sexually disoriented personality. He was a little tennis coach that needs some naked contact with a lady to be able to relax and sleep. He pays anybody willing to indulge a hundred dollars bill per encounter. The hundred dollars was enough for Ifemelu's house rent. She had resented the job and walked away but when she could not secure a job

and her house rent and tuition fees were due, she had no choice than to go back to the tennis coach and slept with him. That particular incidence was to mark a turning point in her life. The encounter was what robbed her of a part of herself that she never recovered again. The experience was devastating. That was something she may never have done in Nigeria, but she did in America, because she has to survive, and the American environment made it so. The environment was organized to frustrate blacks and when you can't cope anymore, you could have a free ticket back to your country as a deported citizen. The writer depicts her trauma thus:

She walked to the train, feeling heavy and slow her mind choked with mud, and, seated by the window, she began to cry. She felt like a small ball, a draft and alone. The world was a big, by place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around emptily. Back on her apartment, she washed her hands with water so hot that it scalded her fingers, and a small soft wet flowered on her thumb. She took off all her clothes and squashed them into a rumpled ball that she threw at a corner, staring at it for a while. She would never again wear those clothes, never touch them. She sat naked on her bed and looked at her life, in this tiny room with the moldy carpet, the hundred-dollar bill in the table, her body rising with loathing. She should never have gone there. She should have walked away. She wanted to shower, to scrub herself, but could not bear the thought of touching her own body... (*Americanah*, 154) ^[5]

She had called Auntie Uju but was surprised that she did not care about what she did to get the money. She had called her for some words of comfort, to keep her going like before, way back in Nigeria growing up but the call confirmed the environmental influence on Auntie Uju. She has become part of the American system and lives by its code. She has fully integrated herself in the main stream of survival. The psychological trauma of the event left her with a gap, an emptiness that lasted for over sixteen years.

The environment made Ifemelu, a typical 'Americanah' who began to survive in alignment with the American code system of life. Obinze on the other hand faced the harsh environment of London when he had gone there courtesy of her mother's lies. He had taken up a fake identity to survive in London. Obinze became Vincent Obi to survive in London because he had no papers. His greatest pain was the day his office were celebrating his birthday, unknown to them, it was not Obinze's birthday but Vincent's birthday as his identity card suggested, Obinze even planned a sham marriage to ensure his stay in London. The marriage was arranged by some Angolans he paid heavily. It was in the court where he was about to be wedded that the immigration officers caught him and that was how he was bundled back to Nigeria. Chika, while speaking to Obinze in London expresses the environmental factors in London. She had told him thus:

I met this man recently," Chika said. "He is nice o, but he is so bush. He grew up in Onitsha and so you can imagine what kind of bush accent he has. He mixes up ch and sh. I want to go to the chopping center. Sit down on a sheer." They laughed "Anyway, he told me

he was willing to marry me and adopt Charles. Willing! As if he was doing charity work. Willing! Imagine that. But it's not his fault, it's because we are in London. He is the kind of man I would never look at in Nigeria, not to talk of going out with London is a leveler. We are now all in London and we are now all the same, what nonsense," Bose said. (*Americanah*, 244) ^[5]

But in all these, the underlying theme of the novel is racism. The writer unveils the true picture of the sufferings of African immigrants as a result of racism in London and America, but from the view point of the writer, more than any place in the world, America harbours the greatest level of racial prejudice and practices. It has become part of their culture and inseparable part of America. Racism influences Ifemelu and other immigrants, Ifemelu refused to allow things to go unchecked. She had opened her blog to fight racism. It brought her money and a fellowship in Princeton. Regrettably, Ifemelu realizes that the most someone can do about race in America was to discuss and speak openly about it. It doesn't change anything. That was why she has to close her blog. Aware of her old personality which she lost to America, the people in it, the way of life, her free spirit and Obinze that was part of it, aware of all she needed to reclaim, she had left America back to Nigeria, in search of Obinze who was married with a kid. But it wasn't only Obinze she was searching for, she was searching for her true self, all she lost, back in Nigeria, the only place she does not need to explain herself to wasteful eyes, itching ears and suspicious gaze.

In the novel *Americanah*, Adichie ^[5] did much to reinforce the realities of racial prejudice from the perspective of many of her characters in the novel. Almost all the characters created by the writer suffer heavily and were deeply affected, physically, environmentally, psychologically, and otherwise by the constant racial exposure in the various parts of America and Europe where they found themselves the moment they left their fatherland. Adichie created many characters from Africa, and the Caribbean who left their fatherland to America and Europe in search of the Golden Fleece and in escape of several unbearable situations that have become part of their hope countries. This is the case many Nigerians experienced in the novel. The likes of Auntie Uju, Emenike, Ifemelu, Obinze, Ginika, among the long list of Nigerian emigrants left the country when they can no longer cope with the corruption, poverty, backwardness, embezzlement, bad leadership and continual mismanagement that have become part of the well-known and popular realities of our nation. In America, these characters encounter a racial world that in most situations blurs their views, reduces them and force a new identity on them. This is a psychological trauma not many survive from in the end and Adichie could only do little but to write about them. Auntie Uju in America had a rough time surviving and obtaining her medical certificates. Part of the problem, could be attributed to her race. The moment she was qualified and managed to start practicing, it was so psychologically depressing her encounters in a racial America as not so many patients would allow her touch them or attend to their medical needs simply because she is a black doctor. Some patients at the sight of her colour would demand immediate transfer to another hospital where they believe their lives are 'safe' and could be taken care of.

Those who managed to see her, often exhibit that disposition that they are doing her a favour by seeing her (171) ^[5]. Auntie Uju bore all these silently and allowed the environment to take its toll on her. Auntie Uju would have survived and live the rest of her life in America without a word for the racial Americans, if not the constant troubles Dike, her son has to face in the American schools because he is black. The writer wrote personally thus:

In America, tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds- class, ideology, region and race, first class pretty easy. Rich folk and poor folk. Second, ideology, liberals and conservatives inter-marriage is discouraged and on the rare occasion that it happens, is considered remarkable. Third, region. The north and the south.... Finally, race. There's a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on top, specifically white Anglo-Saxon Protestant otherwise known as WASP, and America. Black is always on the bottom, and what's in the middle depends on time and place. (Or as that marvelous rhyme goes: if you are white, you are all right, if you are brown, stick around; if you are black, get back! America assumes that everyone will get their tribalism. But it takes a while to figure it all out. So in undergrad, we had a visiting speaker and a classmate whispers to another, "Oh my God, he looks so Jewish," with a shudder, an actual shudder. Like Jewish was a bad thing.... In America's ladder of races, Jewish is white but also some rungs below white.... The longer you are here, the more you start to get it.... (*Americanah*, 184-185) ^[5]

All these are parts of the bitter indictment on America and the realities of their racial world. The writer in turn hopes to win sympathy for these 'black Americans' all over the streets of America constantly reminded that they are not needed, that America is only being benevolent to accept them and some day there might be limit to her benevolence. The writer unveiled other actions that are psychologically traumatizing to a non-black America, a fate she shares in common with her fellow blacks in Diaspora. The writer sacrificially reveals thus to the non-American blacks:

You must nod back when a black person nod at you in a heavily white area. It is called the black nod. It is a way for black people to say "You are not alone, I am here too".... When a crime is reported, pray that it was not committed by a black person, and if it turns out to have been committed by a black person, stay well away from the crime area for weeks, or you might be stopped for fitting the profile. If a black cashier gives a poor service to the non-black person in front of you, compliment that person's shoes or something, to make up for the bad service, because you are just as guilty for the cashier's crime..... You see, black people have a gene that makes them not tip, so please over-power that gene. If you are telling a non-black person about something racist that happened to you, make sure you are not bitter. Don't complain. Be forgiving. If possible, make it funny. Most of all, do not be angry. Black people are not supposed to be angry about racism...(*Americanah*,221) ^[5]

Indeed, this is the way it is, the way the blacks ought to accept America. There are so many things the Blacks don't have to do in America as a result of their black colour.

There is also a long list of what they ought to do if they must survive in a racial world like America. America seems to be doing them a favour by allowing them to stay within her walls. This is a favour they ought to return by accepting the racial situation, making fun and laughter from it, never complain to the whites who will continue to rob them of their humanity. The incessant strikes affect the characters in *Americanah* a lot. At last Ifemelu and Emenike could not finish their university education but had to travel to US and UK respectively. These strikes made Ifemelu, Obinze, Emenike, Koyade, Ahmed, Osahon, Ginika, Ranyinudo, Priye and Tochi to dream of leaving Nigeria.

Abroad, they experience more serious trauma-race issues, prostitution that affected their lives permanently. Ifemelu starts a race blog and later comes back to Nigeria when she could no longer bear the frustration. Emenike marries an old woman to sustain himself. Obinze is repatriated and had psychological problem when he first came back. Ifemelu's journey is psychological as well as physical, for she moves from the security of consciousness to the unknown. There is a powerful force [frustration] that directs her to leave Nigeria and then forces her back again to Nigeria. Same force made Obinze, Emenike, Ngozi Okonkwo, Bartholomeo, Kayode, Okoli, Okafor, Nicholas, Chika, Ojiugo, Auntie Uju, Nosa, Chidi, Wale, Iloba, and Vincent Obi to leave Nigeria to look for greener pasture. In fact, it was the political instability that brought corruption which turned a lot of things upside down in Nigeria and brought about the untold hardship which made people like Emenike, Ifemelu and those listed above to leave Nigeria in quest for a greener pasture. These people cannot tell reality from dreams as they are surprised with reality. People may be confused why Ifemelu behaves in certain ways in the novel, for example - why on earth did she stop communicating with Obinze while abroad but to look for him when she knew that he was married? Why did Ifemelu sleep with dirty Rob when she had a clean and caring boyfriend, Curt? Why did Dike almost kill himself? Why did Ifemelu come back to Nigeria? Why did Ifemelu start the blog? There are so many questions to be asked. All these actions are carried out due to psychological problems. 'id', part of human psyche is a socially destructive force because it achieves its desires without any concern for law, customs or values. This is the case with Obinze when he challenges the acceptable behaviour by leaving the highly regulated life to participate in acts normally forbidden in the society as he leaves his matrimonial home (wife and daughter) without any tangible reason. This caused psychological trauma for the wife. Auntie Uju does same as she becomes the general's mistress and the relationship produces an illegitimate child, Dike. Emenike equally does the same as he marries a woman old enough to be his mother just because he wants luxury but within him, he is not happy. The decent into the unconscious in Ifemelu's life has to do with many ugly experiences she had, especially race issues in America which presents a conflict between the 'superego'-the normal life style she used to know in Nigeria and the 'id' the racial attitudes of people especially whites in America. Lack of a viable ego of her own, she returns to Nigeria as the solution to her race issue and other problems. The film, 'Roots' caused a lot of psychological trauma to Obinze's mother for as she watched it she felt the pains blacks went through as slaves in chains. 'As Kunta Kinte was being flogged into accepting his slave name, Obinze's mother got up

abruptly...and left the room, but not before Ifemelu saw her reddened eyes.'(137) ^[5].

Human Trafficking as a Contemporary Vice in Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo's Trafficked

Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo in the novel, handled the issues, problems and the psychological depression associated to human-trafficking, a social menace the writer could not allow to go unexposed and unchecked. Our society today, is becoming a more violent and inhumane one as a result of people's excess love for materialism, wealth and its attendant fame and fortune which is to them the essence of all things. According to Asika ^[4]:

Human trafficking is one of the topical issues in society today, a bizarre and inhuman business that has been heavily refurbished and repackaged to lure as many women as possible away from the shores of the country, only to use them as sex object to satisfy foreign pleasure. It wasn't the brain drain this has on the country that bothered the author most, but the inhuman and psychological trauma associated with such evil practices, which her novel has come to expose and give the victims hope that all is not lost. They could still live above the stigma of trafficking and fulfill their desired lives of dreams. (157)

The author through the eyes of her characters, Efe and Nneoma, her heroine unfolded the various ways these women were deceived and lured away to foreign lands against their wishes for prostitution. Efe narrates her story to Nneoma thus:

One day I saw an advertisement in a newspaper while I was on a visit to my cousin in Lagos. It asked young men and women who wished to work abroad to come to a certain address to be interviewed. You know how people longed to leave the country; especially during the military regime... I responded to the advertisement without my cousin's knowledge. The office seemed perfectly normal. Quite a number of people were interviewed the same day, some were rejected, but I was selected. None of the men who were interviewed was taken... we took an oath to work for the agency until we had paid our debts.... (*Trafficked*, 99) ^[6]

Efe had continued to narrate her ordeal which she summarizes thus:

Well, to cut a long story short, we were taken to Italy and ended up in Palermo. It was terrible. I was sold to a woman called Madam Gold, a Nigerian. She was vicious. She used us shamelessly, made us walk the streets every night... Madam Gold sold me to a pimp after four years of slaving for her. I worked for my new owner for two years before I escaped. Then I fled to Verona and teamed up with a prostitute I met there and worked independently for about another year because I wanted to save money to return home. Then the police arrested me and I was deported... (*Trafficked*, 99) ^[6]

It was such a pathetic thing to learn what these young girls pass through in foreign countries, worst still is the knowledge that even our very own people are the facilitators

of this terrible crime against humanity. Nneoma, a young girl betrothed to a young man Ofomata in her village, for some personal reasons had left the village in pursuit of academics and teaching job. So she was deceived. That was how she lost her marriage, her family and was deceived into prostitution. She narrated her ordeal thus:

For personal reasons, I fled from home one Friday morning without telling my family. A friend and classmate had told me that some people had helped her secure a teaching appointment in the United Kingdom and she would introduce me to them... we travelled to Lagos together to meet her sponsors. In no time, they get passports and flight tickets for us, and keep them. They show us pictures of the schools where we'll be teaching and give us appointment letter signed by people with English names. They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money. Everything seems normal. I am already thinking of the money I will make in the United Kingdom... (*Trafficked*, 127) ^[6]

The girls were made to swear oaths of secrecy and to abide by the terms and conditions of service. Nneoma's hope was dashed to the ground on getting to United Kingdom as her dreams of teaching and studying became a mirage. She remembered her travails thus:

...In Italy I discover I am trafficked. I have no say in the matter. There's a woman called Madam Dollar - nothing comes between her and money. She owns us... she keeps us prisoners. Life is hell in Rome - we are always walking the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners... (*Trafficked*, 129) ^[6]

That was only an aspect of Nneoma's ordeal. For three years she has suffered and worked for Madam Dollar. Later, she was sold to Baron, a near devil who took her to London. There was nothing dehumanizing which Baron never did to Nneoma, until she planned her escape when she had had enough. It was in the process that she was rescued and later was deported back to Nigeria, where Oasis Rehabilitation Centre was waiting for them, a non-governmental agency that has risen to take care and assist young ladies deported from trafficking; to restore their sanity and balance to life, give their lives back to them and shield them from social stigmatization until they are able to learn odd jobs and stand on their own. It was the place where Efe and Nneoma first settled to garner strength and motivation to recount their horrors. It is apparently obvious that the author wishes that no one alive should be allowed to pass through such soul-torturing and psychological traumatic life. Nneoma's disappearance from home for several years created nightmares for her family members. She ran away from home believing that some people would help her get teaching appointment in UK. Abroad, Nneoma 'nightmares about her (her family) terror, frustration and hopelessness at her loss. The uncertainty about her where about must have been a torture that would disorientate them and steal away their sleep' (20) ^[6]. This shows that Nneoma and her family members are affected psychologically by her disappearance as 'she was the only source of relief and hope for a better life for them,' (20) ^[6]. In Britain, Nneoma 'was grateful to be doing something less demeaning and humiliating than

walking the street or living in a flat where she was a sex object for every male. The things that had happened to her which she had to forget! How blessed are those who had suffered a loss of memory! Healing is a reward of forgetting, Nneoma breathed, (159) ^[6]. Nneoma really got frustrated abroad. Efe equally suffered from frustration abroad because she went through hell in Italy under Madam Gold she was turned into a sex object (99) ^[6]. Nneoma's father got frustrated when he could not be paid his 'retirement gratuity; nor was his pension, and he got tired going on fruitless trips to Enugu to try to get his money. He descended into depression, and then he took consolation in alcohol' (71) ^[6]. Nneoma and twenty-three young women were deported from Italy and United Kingdom where they were taken to through force, coercion or deception and into situations involving their economic and sexual exploitation. They were taken to 'Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development'- a reformation centre (48) ^[6]. The horrors Nneoma went through in Rome, the disorientation and savagery in the London flat, the humiliation of arrest and detention always plagued her mind. Nneoma challenges the acceptable behaviour by running away from her home to travel to Italy with people she did not know too well. Ofomata went through hell by wondering about Nneoma's where about as she did not write to him. Furthermore, we maintain that Adichie recreated characters that were in a constant battle with the environment and the forces that try to rob them of their humanity. She demonstrated the influence of our corrupt and decaying environment on the citizens. Again, we see vividly the influence of the American environment on the immigrant. America from the perspective of the writer is a racist environment arranged to swallow a black immigrant in the cesspool of things he cannot control. The environment is in many ways unfriendly, and Ifemelu's bold step to come back to her fatherland is obviously part of Adichie's important message to the many 'Americana's' out there. Those immigrants suffering untold hardship and discrimination abroad should come back sooner than later and contribute their quota in the making and reshaping their Nigerian environment which is where they belong. In *Trafficked*, Adimora-Ezeigbo ^[6] casts aspersion on the evils of child trafficking and those involved in perpetrating such evil deeds. This is a situation the law, police and many government and non-governmental organization are fighting tooth and nail against. The writer hopes to unveil several hidden sides of the ugly business and also heal the psychological pains of those who are victims by giving them hope and vision of a presumed and promising tomorrow still waiting for them. The writer also by unveiling the insensitivity of our government hopes to continue to attack them just like many other writers until the balance is achieved in the corridor of power.

Conclusion

In all the events of the novels one thing could be felt and that is the place of love as a symbol and hidden motif in the novel. Love in the novels is a symbol of peace, harmony, decorum, orderliness, freedom, serenity, economic stability, security, growth, togetherness, equity, justice and humanity which the society seek and is in dire need of. Love is the most important motif and message which the authors hope to pass across to the society. Love holds the answer too many of the worries, for with love, the government will

understand and make the society better for all individuals. With love, trafficking as a social crime may not have been witnessed in the first place. With love there would not have been bad governance which led to Ifemelu and others leaving Nigeria for a greener pasture. With love families will stay together. With refined love, all other forms of ethnic and religious rivalry, social injustices and anomalies may have remained a thing yet to be known. With love the novels bonded all people into the umbrella of one people, one nation, one dream, one family and one love. This love is experienced in the lives of several characters in the novels and instances of this abound in the novel. From the view point of the authors, love begins and ends all things. Only one, pure and refined love holds the answers to many questions we seek and ask. This is the message Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie wish we never forget in their novels, *Trafficked* and *Americanah*. To resolve all the problems, Ifemelu finally settles in Nigeria. Obinze comes back as well and settles down and starts business. Nneoma comes back, settles in 'Oasis Youth Center For Skill Development' [OYCSD] a reformation center for over a year and then goes back to school, university to be precise to study Business Education. Efe comes back home as well. They all come back to help build their nation. There is nowhere like home, sweet home.

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