

# Immigration and Race Relations in Selected Stories in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*

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## Abstract

In recent times, it has been observed and recorded that the number of Africans migrating to countries such as Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand etc. is increasingly high because these countries are perceived as the most ideal places to live on earth. These perceptions are enhanced by what they see in movies where the best sides of these countries are shown. The Africans who already reside in these countries also contribute to this situation as they give the impression that life is easy over there. Though not far from the truth, there is no doubt that the material conditions and social utilities in developed countries have reached higher levels compared to Nigeria. However, the real picture of life abroad is rarely portrayed. It is the recent fictions the show the negative sides of the picture. The researcher with the aid of five short stories in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*, exposes immigration and race relations in order to understand issues surrounding immigrants' lives there. Concentrating on Nigeria and the United States of America, this study adopts racial theory as it looks at what led to African migrations. Enhanced through the use of data gotten from secondary sources, this study therefore explores the intricacies of immigration and discomfitures encountered by individuals who find themselves in foreign nations.

**Keywords:** Immigration, Race Relations, Africa, Immigrants, Discrimination.

## Introduction

Racism and immigration are worldwide and age long phenomena. Wikipedia defines Racism as the belief in the superiority of one race over another, which often results to discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their races or ethnicity. United States Civil Rights Commission opines that racism is any action or attitude, conscious or unconscious that subordinates an individual or group based on skin colour or race. It can be enacted individually or institutionally. Racism is the unfair treatment of people who belong to a different race or the belief that some races are better than the others.

Bill Ashcroft explained racism as "a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, which on this basis distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior racial groups (199). Ashcroft no doubt made a valid point when he observed that the need to establish a distinction between superior and inferior came with the rise of imperialism and the growth of Orientalism in the nineteenth century and find its most scientific confirmation in the dubious analysis and taxonomy of racial characteristics. Racism

therefore, is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. The ideology of racism simply means to treat a person or group of people differently, based on their racial origins. Wikipedia defined "Immigration" as:

The international movement of people into a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle or reside there, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take up employment as migrant workers or temporarily as (a foreign worker) (652).

This simply means that immigration is the act of immigrating to other places. Merriam Webster defined an "immigrant" as "a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence". It further states that the term "immigrant" is gotten from a Latin word "migrare" which means wanderer. These people who cross national borders are called

"emigrant or out-migrant" from the perspective of the country which they enter, while the country which they leave from call them "immigrants" (774). Commuters, tourists and other short term stays in a destination country do not fall under the definition of immigration or migration. They are motivated to leave their former countries of citizenship or habitual residence to other parts of the world for diverse reasons, especially Africans who are pushed into desiring to leave their country. A lot causes people to migrate from their place of origin or nationality to other parts of the world, some of these reasons that prompt immigration in contemporary African Countries include: political and socio-economic issues as political discontent, wars and the quest for economic empowerment, perception of overseas countries, search for new opportunities, slave trade which played a part in the forceful migration of blacks to the four corners of the world particularly to America; desire to find or engage in paid work to better their standards of living, local access to resources and social amenities that tend to make life better, retirement, climate or environmentally induced migration, exile, escape from prejudice, conflict or natural disaster, or simply the wish to change one's quality of life, the quest for better education,

commerce, political asylum and other socio-economic factors.

These sets of people (immigrants) often before they leave, have the "notion" that the only way to solve their problems is by relocating to a new country, which can be a disorienting experience. Immigrants often end up finding themselves in a strong new world where the rules have changed, the surroundings are unfamiliar, and the inhabitants speak in strange tongue. Unfortunately for them racial discrimination embraces them as they end up being underrated, sometimes shoved to the margins, faced with untold hardship like joblessness, solitude, loss of original culture, disappointment, identity crisis and lastly regret, just because their colour is different.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in *The Thing Around Your Neck* sets out to address the crushing poverty currently ravaging most African countries. Also, her main intention is to educate Africans (Nigerians in particular) on the need to avoid being lured into abandoning their home country in search for an elusive greener pasture foreign countries. The United States of America is most often referred to as "America" by majority of Nigerians; therefore it should be understood

as such when used in this article and in the stories under analysis.

### **A Glimpse into Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck***

*The Thing Around Your Neck* is a short story collection. The twelve (12) the collection include: "Cell One", "Imitation", "A Private Experience", "Ghosts", "On Monday of Last Week", "Jumping Monkey Hill", "The Thing Around Your Neck", "The American Embassy", "The Shivering". "The Arrangers of Marriage", "Tomorrow Is Too Far" and "The Headstrong Historian".

Ada Azodo, a commentator on the art of the short story, makes an observation which to a large extent, describes the stories under study in this research with the following remarks:

The writer seizes the plot at the high point of emotion, when the story is most interesting to the reader or listener and does not relent until the final denouement. This condensation of a full story in a form that can be easily adapted in terms of time and space to the small interstices of busy everyday life gives the short story a

definitive edge over the novel (22).

The dearness of *The Thing Around Your Neck* anchored on the fact that it focuses on the general lifestyles in Nigeria and America. It predominately revolves around Nigerians; Nigerian women who struggle with their relationships, religious and political violence, and adjusting to the Western culture; men, children and most especially the immigrants experiences with some forms of racial discrimination directly or indirectly meted out on them.

### **Immigration and Race Relations in Some Selected Stories in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*.**

This literature of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has charted new directions in the African short stories. Immigration and Racism are portrayed in these short stories through the general lives of Africans in Diaspora. Out of the twelve stories in *The Thing Around Your Neck*, the five under study ("The Thing Around Your Neck", "Imitation", "On Monday of Last Week", "Arrangers of Marriage" and "Jumping Monkey Hill"), focus on the experiences of Nigerians in Diaspora. And the sordid experiences and the challenges encountered by African migrants in America as reflected

in the various stories under consideration. The analysis is done through an extensive study of the ordeals of the main characters- Akunna, Chinaza, Nkem, Kamara and Ujunwa in the stories.

### **"The Thing Around Your Neck"**

*"The Thing Around Your Neck"* is one of the short stories in the book entitled *The Thing Around Your Neck*. The fact that "The Thing Around Your Neck" is the title of the collection makes it the most compelling story of great importance in relation to other stories as it demonstrates the experiences of Nigerians in America and their fondness of the foreign lifestyle. It touches the false and over bloated expectations of Nigerians about to move to the United States, their general belief of comfort, ease, good houses, good food, plenty of dollars, employment and general economic and social security with additional feelings that the excesses will be sent home to augment the conditions of relations at home.

Being an immigrant herself, Adichie successfully spotlights the struggles of migrants by contrasting the expectations of Western society with reality as she uses third-

person narration to tell the story through a narrative voice centering on a struggling immigrant Akunna thereby placing the reader in her shoes. Akunna is a young Nigerian lady from a poverty-stricken home, as the narrative voice gives an insight into the prevailing poverty in Nigeria when she recalls the poor state of her family back in Lagos. The picture she painted is one in which the rickety Peugeot 504 her father drives allows the rain into their vehicle on their way to school because it has a rust-eaten hole in the roof. Some of her cousins make money by pushing cars stuck in the mud when it is raining because of poor roads. These poor conditions exist side by side in an upper class that treat the poor with disdain as reflected in the story. In search of her elusive American dream, she won an American visa lottery. Getting to America, she moves into her uncle's house in Maine. Akunna was full of unrealistic expectations and ideas about life in America. Nigerians perception about America is influenced by Hollywood films and what they watch on television screens. This is indicated in the opening lines of the story, as Akunna jolts the reader's senses:

You thought everybody in America had a car and a gun, your uncles, aunties and cousins thought so too. Right

after you won the American visa lottery, they told you in a month you will have a big car. Soon, a big house..... In comparison to the big house and car (and possibly a gun), the things they wanted were minor- handbags, shoes, perfumes and clothes. You said okay, no problem'' (115).

Her relatives appear to be keenly interested in obtaining goods or products from America, in which they have no real use for and would be readily available in Lagos. They only want a piece of the elusive American dream. Instead of being welcomed by her long awaiting dreams of America. Akunna however, meets a different scenario. She had always thought of making it big in America but ended up in Connecticut. First, she was confronted by her uncle whose house is in a small white town in Maine, she had to leave because she refused to allow him sleep with her. She was left with no option than to leave the sheltered home of her uncle, into a world of crushing loneliness where she experienced yet, a different perspective of life in America, as she was surprised with social values different from what is obtainable in the country she had left. Akunna had to look for a job to sustain herself and her family members back at

home, so she retreats further into a solitary existence as she is forced to live a frugal life such as having to accept lower wages working as a waitress in a restaurant where Juan another immigrant is the manager, for a dollar less than the other employees and living in a tiny room with stained carpet and lumpy mattress which makes her get lonely and nostalgic of home. Her hopes and dreams of going to school never materialized, as she is left with no other option than to work and independently pay her rent and cater for all her needs with the little she earned at her waitress job. She sends half of her earnings to her parents every month, and even when she sends them the little money she has, her address or whereabouts is never disclosed, as she doesn't write a letter in the money because she couldn't reach up to their expectations. Having nobody to confide in, she couldn't share her problems with anybody, not even her family members, as she disconnected herself from them because of the overrated beliefs they have about America, which made them full of expectations from their daughter traveling to America. Akunna could neither face them with the real truth about America nor meet up with their expectations, so she ends up not communicating with them. Her inability to send them anticipated gifts prevents her from

writing to them although she wants to write. She comes to realize many things about America such as the fact that "rich Americans were thin and poor Americans were fat and that many did not have a big house and car, you still were not sure about the guns, though, because they might have them inside their pockets" (119).

Akunna's experiences point to the state of socio-economic vulnerability of migrants in foreign countries. Her problems lead her into a period of adversity where she starts feeling less of herself and lonely, which most migrants face in another man's country. The fact that she connects with very few people and finds it difficult to connect with others while she is in America may also be symbolically significant, as it may suggest that she is lonely and long for the stability that she knows she can have should she return to Lagos. Because of the un-conducive situation in which the character finds herself in, she feels as if something is around her neck trying to suffocate her "At night something would wrap itself around your neck, something that very nearly choked you before you fell asleep" (119). The experience of something around the character's neck forms the title for the short story collection of Adichie. The "Something" probably relates to the experiences of disappointment and

disillusionment that face Akunna in America as an immigrant. A reader could read many meanings into the phrase "something around your neck" as maybe implying the many nauseating and illuminating experiences of the migrants and the suffocating psychological state into which migrants are pushed. Akunna gets confronted by endless arrays of stereotypical encounters and abrasive experiences that face her on daily basis like racial discrimination/attitudes, culture shock, joblessness, settlement/resettlement, adaptation, sexual harassment, poverty, exploitation in the workplace, loneliness and disillusionment, and many others, in America. These were situations she and her family members never looked forward to while she was in Nigeria waiting to migrate, situations she never expected to come her way. These thoughts convey the tension at the heart of the story that engulfs the young protagonist immigrant. She thinks to herself that she feels invisible and then becomes overwhelmed by the enormity of her situation and encounters a downward state emotionally.

Akunna's situation improves somehow when she meets a lover, a white man who through his sincere affection, eases her loneliness, economic, financial and emotional situations and offers her emotional validation of her

humanity. The thing that chokes Akunna around her neck begins to ease a little and loosen its grip on her neck when she makes a solid connection with him. Loneliness and isolation loosen her emotions as well, as she begins an unexpected and uncertain romantic interlude as she shares her life and experiences with him. Her relationship ushered in a new life of emotional release that is thrown against the backdrop of stress and pointed comments from both blacks and whites that they encounter as an interracial couple. After she finally wrote home and included her address she receives shocking and emotionally devastating news about her father's death, five months after she left her home in Nigeria. Her white lover not only comforted her but also offered to buy her a ticket and accompany her to Nigeria but she refused. When he asks her if she will return, her response suggests that she might, though the reader is unsure.

Elements of racism can be traced to when Akunna, is considered to be different from those around her due to her skin colour. Her uncomfortable experiences began at the Maine Community College she attended. She comes across Americans who believe that migrants like her cannot speak fluent English except she's from Jamaica because they assumed that every black person with a

foreign accent was Jamaican, also that there are no cars in Africa, that the hair of Africans are exotic and strange, and that Africans eat all kinds of wild animals. Many of the people that she engages with had questions with regards to her home. Race baiting becomes dramatized through accounts of pointed questions, condescending remarks, and ridiculous assumptions by people in her new incomprehensible England environment. They asked her "where she learnt to speak English", "whether people in Africa had real houses and questions about her hair as they gawped at it, ask if her hair stands up or falls down without braids. She faces a barrage of questions that are based upon what her uncle describes as beliefs by Americans which smack of a certain condescending, as "a mixture of ignorance and arrogance" (116), and in addition, a racist outlook. It indicates that Americans live in a closed world and do not appreciate that people in other parts of the world particularly Africans are human beings like every other race in the world.

Race Relations can also be traced in the story when the waiter in Chang was talking to Akunna's boyfriend, it was as if the waiter considered it impossible that she, a black could be the white man's girlfriend. Observably, this shows that the waiter is



indirectly judging her by her skin colour. Akunna however discovers that;

Racial relationships between an African like her and a white man is regarded as abnormal. You know by people's reactions that you two were abnormal the way the nasty ones were too nasty and the nice ones too nice. The old white men who shook their heads at you, the black women whose pitying eyes bemoaned your lack of self-esteem, your self-loathing (125).

This situation indicates racial attitudes still pervasive among both the black and white people of America.

The ending of the story is on an indeterminate note, as Akunna, having to go back home following the letter she received informing her of her father's death, wonders what she had been doing on the day her father died. Akunna's ability to let go of her lover at the airport to travel back to Nigeria shows that she has been able to come to a resolution of what life for a migrant in America entails, which is unpleasant. The reader is left wondering if Akunna would ever think of going back to America or not. It's as if she has given up on the American dream because in reality, her returning home was of little or no

consequence because she had already missed her father's funeral and her mother never suggested or insisted on her coming home. Having come face to face with the realities of America, she finds it difficult to acclimatize with the environment she encountered in America. She only spent the duration of her time in America unhappy and unsure of the direction that her life was taking. At least if she returns to Lagos she knows who she is. Being conclusively a poignant account of an alienated existence, the story however, shows how far reality is from the perceptions Nigerians hold about overseas countries. This is particularly cogent in respect to the émigré's America. It also provides insight into the impact of failed expectations and disappointment that many Africans and other immigrants from face when reality sets in just like Akunna in *"The Thing Around Your Neck"*.

### **“Imitation”**

“Imitation” explores women's experiences as immigrants in America. It illuminates the unhappy life of the main character, a young and wealthy Nigerian wife Nkem, who is living a luxurious and privileged life with her children in Philadelphia in the United States of America, as her husband provides them with the best life can offer. Her stay

there becomes threatened when she learns from her friend Ijemamaka, who is also a migrant like her, that her husband residing in Nigeria had not only taken a mistress but had also moved her into their home in Lagos. She feels inner turmoil and emptiness, especially as she feels that she is imitating someone else's life that has nothing to do with who she really is.

The story is told in the third person and skillfully unravels Nkem's inner battle to rediscover her womanhood, following the erosion of a long-distance relationship. Changes begin to take place, as she attempts to alter her appearance, she cuts off her hair and starts openly confiding in others. She is torn between two worlds because despite these new revelations, a part of her celebrates her questionable existence in America as she thinks that: "She really belongs to this country now", making her shallow in her thinking

By exploring the pressures of immigration, un-fulfillment of marriage and the reclamation of Nkem's cultural identity, the story is a representative of one of the many diverse reasons why Nigerians emigrate to USA. as it is implied in the story that there are not only better schools there for their children to attend, but also better housing and

other utilities that serve their everyday needs. Security and good life can also be one of the reasons for migration in this story as Nkem describes America as:

This country of curiosities and crudities, this country where you could drive at night and not fear armed robbers, where restaurants served one person enough food for three..... America has grown on her and snaked its roots under her skin (37).

This quotation implies that Nkem has become so used to the good life in America, that she has come to luxuriate in the system. Although Nkem misses her Nigerian roots, her home and friends, she has never seriously considered moving back to Lagos, she gives going back a second thought because of the poverty lifestyle that rids the majority of the people in Nigeria, as grimly recounted by Ijernamaka"..... even garri is so expensive now... so many more children hawk in traffic hold-ups.... erosion has eaten away chunks of the major road to her hometown in Delta State" (23). These descriptions of the social conditions in Nigeria, affords a reader the contrast between the ideal situation in America and the harsh realities in Nigeria. Loneliness is another thing most immigrants also experience as they have no one to talk to,

just like Akunna in *The Thing Around Your Neck*. They get covered in their own problems as portrayed in Nkem's thought:

It is what America does to you. It forces egalitarianism on you. You have nobody to talk to, really, except for your toddlers, so you turn to your house girl. And before you know it, she is your friend. Your equal (29).

Also is the theme of hybridity which Adichie artfully weaves into the story through the strong symbolism of the Benin mask and Nok terracotta that her husband brought from Nigeria on his yearly visits. The art works are imitations but their beauty and cultural significance are lost outside the historical context of Nigeria. The symbolism parallels Nkem's worthless existence in America as she appears to copy another man's lifestyle and also the appearance of her husband's mistress in Nigeria. This makes her inner conflict -deepen through voiceless submission and vacuous perceptions of herself, her life and her empty marriage. In a pivotal scene in the story, her husband brings an original piece of artwork from Nigeria that dates back to the eleventh century. As she reflects upon the historical significance of the

carving, and with its originality, her conscience begins to stir.

The story ends in an upbeat note, as Nkem, after facing the modern day parable of diaspora conflict by imitating the white man's culture and being stretched out of shape emotionally in a foreign environment, she awakens to reclaim her Nigerian identity and recover what they have lost or pushed aside to acquire the trappings of western life. She finally decides to go back to her country as she indirectly confronts her husband regarding the affair by cutting her hair just like that of his mistress and announcing that she and her children will return back to Nigeria "...we are moving back to live in Lagos. We are moving back" (41.) Imitation is a realistic and vivid rendering of the pitfalls of acculturation.

### **"The Arrangers of Marriage"**

"The Arrangers of Marriage" remains one of the most sympathetic in the collection. It is a story that brings out the callousness of men and subtly expresses disgust towards their attitudes in their relationships with women. It silently but clearly elucidates Adichie's feminist tendencies clad in a rather subtle tone told through an innocent young girl Chinaza Okafor, whose aunt and uncle arranged her marriage to a Medical Doctor

residing in America and who has fraudulently got married before. She is expected to be grateful for being lucky enough to marry an American doctor, and be a dutiful wife to him no matter what happens.

But the paradoxical features of life in America create unhappiness and conflict for Chinaza Okafor. Her marriage unfortunately turns into a disaster, as all her expectations both in marriage and in the country she was moving into, were ruined and ended up in disappointments. As she narrates, "I had imagined a smooth driveway snaking between cucumber-coloured lawns, a door leading into a hallway, walls with sedate paintings, a house of those of the white newlyweds as in the American films that NTA showed on Saturday nights" (167).

Immigration can be seen in the story when Ofodile Emeka her husband, who is indirectly confused as to which identity he belongs to, molds a false identity by rejecting his Nigeria identity and renaming himself Dave, as a route to success in America. He also pressurizes Chinaza to do the same, by assuming a new name Agatha Bell, and adopting new behaviour such as speaking only English and cooking American food. He is critical of immigrants who maintain their ethnic identities and when he and Chinaza are

shopping, he tells her. "Look at the people who shop here; they are the ones who immigrate and continue to act as though they are back in their countries(175). He constantly corrects her speech and reminds her of the importance of blending into the mainstream. Chinaza doesn't quite know what to make of all these but thinks to herself that, "I felt as though I were in a different physical world on another planet... the people who pushed against us, even the blacks wore the mark of foreignness, otherness, on their faces" (176). The world around her is a blur of inscrutable differences that her →mind is unable to fathom. The sights sounds, tastes and strange behaviour assault her sensibilities identity as her husband commands her to assume a new persona that will erase her Nigerian persona identity.

But Nia was different from her husband. Nia was her African-American neighbor who has visited Africa and has an Africa name. Chinaza surprisingly states that "she, a black American had chosen an African name while my husband made me change mine to an English one" (180). This fact tensed her, but the tension is heightened when she learns about some hidden truth about her husband. Her husband had been previously married to a white woman in order to acquire a green card and even when she confirmed it from

him, he also admits that it was because of her fair-skinned complexion he saw in her picture sent by his mother, that he decided to marry her, so they can produce children who are fair in complexion like Americans. This betrays the fallacious nature of their marriage, and sharpens her feelings of otherness. She felt so disappointed and hurt that the only thing that kept her from travelling back to Nigeria was her new friendship with Nia. This major reason prompts her to pack her bags and go to Nia's apartment. She learns from her friend how she can eventually become financially independent.

Adichie ends the story on a hopeful note as she amplifies the idea that women can become self-determined and draw strength from sisterly support. She also illustrates that despite the disheartening features of the immigrant experience in America just like Chinaza's expectations for happiness and security was ruined by the contradictions and confused identity of her Nigerian husband; Western society may provide a woman with routes of resilience and survival, which doesn't take place in most African countries, and can be one of the reasons Nigerian women especially, travel to America so that their woman rights will be completely covered and respected.

### **"On Monday of Last Week"**

"On Monday of Last Week" is told from the point of view of Kamara. It tells the story of the nasty and slavish jobs African immigrants engage in for survival. Like every other Nigerian without other residence papers, "Tobechi was driving a taxi in Philadelphia, for a Nigerian man who cheated all his drivers because none of them had papers" (83). At the same time, his newly arrived wife Kamara was doing the "common job of wiping the buttocks of a stranger's child" (78). Tobechi and Kamara were not citizens of America, which if they were, could have had a resident permit and worked anywhere they wanted. This unfavorable policy of non-citizens of America is an immigration experience for those who end up frustrated on their bid to blend in America.

Kamara who traveled to America to meet her husband Tobechi had her American dreams and expectations crashed as Tobechi her husband had changed. He has become "Americanized", he speaks using a false American accent that makes Kamara want to slap him. Also, Tobechi could not take care of Kamara because for all the six years he spent in America, he had to struggle for the green card. The years apart has put a distance between them thus, Kamara thinks "for a

moment that he was somebody she did not know at all" (85). The change in Tobechei can be ascribed to the syndrome of hybridity which M. A. R. Habib describes as "a state of "in-betweenness with respect to two cultures" (273). The concept of hybridization thus accounts for persons in Diaspora like Tobechei displaying traits that come from his original culture and the culture of the people he has come to live among in the diaspora. This could be seen in most African immigrants, just like in Tobechei's state, who after staying six years in America has become a creature of two cultures both Nigerian and American, making him act in ways that are surprising to Kamara who newly came from Nigeria.

Because Kamara does not have a green card with which she can apply for a work permit, and for financial reasons, Kamara pushes, aside her Masters Degree program, to take up a poorly babysitting position of looking after Josh in his parents' house. Here, Kamara begins to observe Americans and American life, which in this case is clearly middle classed. Josh's mother, Tracy, fascinates Kamara, and slowly she begins to alter parts of her appearance and behavior so that she can fit in better. Tracy spends all day in the basement where she has set up a studio and is not to be disturbed. Kamara who gets this job

as a nanny to Josh realizes that American parents tend to over pamper their children. She portrays the scenario this way:

She had come to understand that American parenting was a juggling of anxieties, and that it came with having too much food: a sated belly gave Americans time to worry that their child might have a rare disease that they had just read about, it made them think that they had the right to protect their child from disappointment, want and failure (82).

The quotation offers a contrasting picture of what obtains in America and Nigeria regarding parenting. In the story, Americans have most material needs at their disposal, they however over pamper their children and subject themselves to unnecessary worries in contrast to Nigerian parents who are shown as having pressing materialistic needs that are not available to them to give to their children. Kamara, however, has to adjust herself to the way her employer Neil wants his child to be looked after.

Race relations are portrayed through the actions of Neil who employs Kamara to baby sit his son Josh. Neil despises the word half-caste, and he treats Kamara who helps him look after his son as a mere nanny despite her

high academic qualifications which is of the level of a Master's degree. Kamara also experiences a new type of sexuality as she gets attracted to Tracy, Neil's wife. Even in this, Tracy lets her down as she shifts attention to Maren, Josh's French teacher. This implies that the diaspora allows the hitherto hidden lesbianism and homosexual tendencies of characters in such climes to express themselves in their environment.

### **"Jumping Monkey Hill"**

"Jumping Monkey Hill" portrays a situation where Ujunwa Ogundu, the main character in the story is confronted with subtle and patronizing racism from Edward and his wife Isabel the organizers of the workshop she attends in the outskirts of Cape Town. Isabel holds onto false ideas about Africans. She says Ujanwa must come from Nigeria royal stock because of her "exquisite bone structure", and good looks" (99). This implies that Isabel regards most Africans as ugly and barbaric. That is why she sees the hunting of apes as poaching them for their private parts for charms rather than for bush meat (90-100) Edward ogles Ujunwa by always looking at her chest. Her writer colleagues agree that Edward's eyes were always leering when he looked at Ujunwa and that "Edward would never look at a white woman like that because what he felt for Ujunwa was a fancy without respect" (109). Edward equally dismisses the realistic stories that participants wrote in the course of the workshop. This implies that the ideas Edward and Isabel hold regarding contemporary African societies are false and

exotic rather than real. Edward at a point makes the remark that "homosexual stories of this sort weren't reflective of African reality" (108); which makes Ujunwa blurt out "which Africa?" (108). This shows that Edward a representative white figure, does not really know what truly Africa is.

The stories Edward relishes in about Africa are those of killing and violence, the type the Tanzanian writer wrote concerning the killings in the Congo, which is "from the point of view of a militia man full of prurient violence" (109). Such a story according to Edward "was urgent and relevant... it brought news" (109). Adichie in "Jumping Monkey Hill" attempts to bring out the gulf of understanding that exists between, Africans and whites. The white guests at "Jumping Monkey Hill" look at the African guests with suspicion; Edward does not accept the true stories of Africa. It is noticeable how the guests of different colours keep to people of their own race.

Race relations as displayed in these stories show that the white people in these stories regard the Africans as the "Other" Another implication of these stories is that people of different races have long ways to go in achieving true understanding and appreciation of one another. There is a lack of social integration between the races.

### **Conclusion**

In spatial terms, the stories analyzed so far, uncovered and exposed the vivid details of black immigrants experiences, particularly the female gender. The study limited to the analysis of five short stories in Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing Around*

*Your Neck*, embodies the explication of the nature of African literature as a genre of literary studies. This study also finds out that these immigrants go through a lot which expose them to the harsh realities of life in foreign countries, pointing out the isolation and emptiness many immigrants feel in a new country as all the protagonists in the short stories under study were disappointed on migrating to America.

These conditions force them to become nostalgic of home, resilient in their attitudes to life, and sometimes to decide on returning home. The essence of this study is to expose the sordid experiences of immigrants on relocating to a new country. Most of the immigrants in her stories, question what it ultimately means to be human, to live in this world, today, with all its contradictions, problems, and injustices. Thus, the crux of the research is the study of environmental and natural features that act against immigrants in foreign nations and the resultant segregation of the white inhabitants against the black migrants. It also brings to limelight the detriments of immigration and the uncertainties that accompany it.

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