

## ANALYSIS OF RETURN MIGRATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN SEFI ATTA'S *A BIT OF DIFFERENCE*

**Ifeoma Cassandra Nebeife, Ph.D**

Department of English and Literary Studies,  
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State Nigeria  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5033-9182> ifeoma@fuwukari.edu.ng,  
ifcassandra@gmail.com  
+2347039837113

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the theme of return migration and the disillusionment it fosters in Sefi Atta's novel, *A Bit of Difference*. It examines the protagonist's experience upon returning to Nigeria after years of living abroad. The analysis focuses on the clash between the idealized memory of home and the harsh realities of social, economic, and personal stagnation encountered upon return. The paper argues that Atta utilizes the protagonist's disillusionment to critique the romanticized notions of migration and expose the challenges faced by returnees struggling to reconcile their expectations with the complexities of a changing homeland. Through the protagonist's journey, the paper sheds light on the psychological and emotional impact of return migration, highlighting the place of displacement and unbelonging that can arise when the promise of a better life in one's native country fails to materialize. This exploration is guided by migration theory to analyse the factors that push and pull people to migrate in the text. The paper finds that the pattern and impact of migration on individuals are critical interwoven factors that demand attention.

**Keywords:** Migration, Return Migration, Disillusionment, Nigeria, Sefi Atta

### **Introduction**

The dream of returning home after years spent abroad is a powerful one, often fueled by nostalgia and a yearning for reconnection. This phenomenon of return migration has become increasingly prevalent in the contemporary world. However, the reality of return migration can be far more complex. Sefi Atta's novel, *A Bit of Difference*, delves into this dissonance. It unravels the theme of return migration and disillusionment.

The paper analyzes how the protagonist's expectations of a smooth reintegration into Nigerian society clash with the harsh realities she encounters. Nigeria often called the Giant of Africa is in sub-Saharan Africa and as at this time, it is the seventh most populated country in the world. Lagos is one of its most populous cities. Research estimates that the country's population will surpass that of the United States of America before 2050. When this happens, Nigeria will be the world's third largest country in the world. She comprises of three major tribes- Igbo, Hausa and the Yoruba tribe and further 200 smaller ethnic groups. Two major religions- Christianity (south) and Islam (north) cut across the religious divides.

Since the end of political colonization, Nigeria has consistently been bedeviled by several economic and social upheavals. The most current include the rampant security challenges of which the Boko Haram terrorists ravaging the north is one. In the south-east, Biafra calls for secession with compulsory Monday- sit- at- home until their leader Nnamdi Kanu is released from the custody of the Nigerian government. Banditry and fights for acquisition of land dominate the security scene. Since 2020 when inflation escalated, the economic recession has crippled businesses and other sources of livelihood. The impact of the climate crisis has defied containment and the country's leadership does not seem to have a clue as to how to fix these issues.

Through a close examination of the narrative, the paper explores how Atta utilizes literary techniques to depict the protagonist's growing disillusionment. This disillusionment stems from encountering social and infrastructural shortcomings in contemporary Nigeria. Additionally, the paper explores the complexities of identity formation in the context of return migration. Ultimately, this paper aims to illuminate the complexities of return migration and the disillusionment that can arise when the romanticized vision of home collides with the lived experience.

There are several factors which can determine if emigrants would return to their home countries or not. These factors revolve around political and social stability of the home country, economic power as occasioned by employment and poverty which constitute the major 'push factor' for emigration. Also, the capacity of emigrants to meet up with their target savings in host country so as to start up life in the home country can influence return migration. In addition, quality medical care and its cost implication in the home country, social entitlement of retirees, family bond or social

culture between parents and children as well as social expectation of return which is often crowned with formal and informal welcome preparation and display. This usually comes with an honour on the returnee by the community.

Notwithstanding the above motivations for return, Ada Guisti avers that “over and over again, families cited the welfare of their children which included living in a stable economy, having access to education, protecting them from violence as a major determinant for staying in France”(139). Scholarly interest has focused mainly on migration to the West and the discontents of migration. Nevertheless, there is a seeming dearth of scholarship on return migration and even its discontents which demand urgent and sustained attention. The economic, political and social instability of many African nations lend credence to migration. This paper channels attention towards the acknowledgement that Africa is the only home of black people, irrespective of how long one lives in the West.

### **Return Migration**

Migration is essentially an aspect of how society flows (Nail 236). The migrant is a product of the progress and regression surrounding the world. The economic, environmental and political state of the way informs the movement of one who is called the migrant. He is part of history and also of the contemporary times as issues of migration are still obtainable in today’s world as in time past.

Return migration is a phenomenon which has been in existence, although research on it opened up in the 1980s following the encouragement of return (voluntary or forced) of migrants by European countries. Due to lack of popularity of return migration, it is not formally documented unlike migration as we know it.

There are various interpretations of the exact meaning of return migration. Return migrants might include individual immigrants who work abroad and who come home to visit their families before going abroad again. It could also mean migrants who eventually return for good following retirement from work. These various definitions of return migrations make for lack of assessment of needs and proper provision for reintegration. There is also the challenge of lack of tools for registration of returnees.

Despite the dearth of studies on return migration, some scholars have laid the foundation for further scholarly works to be added to return migration. For instance, Frank Bovenkerk’s work attempts to do a systematic compilation of literature bordering on return migration. Next is George Gmelch’s article, “Return Migration” which interrogates the spirited adaptation and readjustment process of returnees. Also in the ground breaking analysis of return migration is the work of Francesco Cerase. The above mentioned works focus on return migration from United States to Italy and the motivations for return.

There are several academic debates on the complex and varied nature of the concept of ‘return’. To King and Christou: What characterizes recent studies of return is a far more variegated and nuanced exploration of the ontology of return, stretching its meaning across time, space and generations and where the “place” of return and the type of movement can have various expressions- real, virtual, imagined, desired, forced or denied (453).

For Russell King, “return migration is the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration” (7). Adele Galipo in her work uses the instance of the return of Somali skilled and educated migrants from Western Europe and North America. She casts in a brighter light the “complexities of migrant transnational experiences as situated in global political and economic processes” (1). In expressing the nexus form of the migrants’ position, she concurs that ‘return’ in its multifaceted interpretations is seldom permanent. Roger Brubaker suggests that:

To think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim, as a category of practice... used to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilise energies, to appeal to loyalties. It is often a category with a strong normative change. It does not so much describe the world as we seek to remake it (12).

For Sophia Akhmemokhan, “return can be physical, mental, metaphorical, cultural or even biological, as when children are carbon copies of their parents” (125). In this paper, the focus is on physical return of migrants back home. According to Jean-Pierre Cassarino, a return migrant’s success back home is influenced positively if return takes place voluntarily and the return was carefully prepared for (10). Robert Nadler et al, opine that economic success should not form the only basis for return migration. In other words, returnees who regain emotional stability as a result of return to family or to a place where they feel at home have also achieved success. This is because such feelings make a huge impact on life satisfaction which is success also (370).

To H.S Shryock and J.S Siegel, “a return migrant is a person who moved back to the area where he formerly resided” (618). Research has shown that Africans more often than not, choose to return to their home countries especially after retirement. Nevertheless, there are instances where the original home might not be traceable anymore. This corroborates Oladele O. Ariwolo’s assertion, “the original home or place of residence before migration may be unknown for a variety of reasons, especially in situations of war, exiles returning to their country of origin after 20 or more years away from home following cessation of hostilities” (62).

Sin Yih Teo avers on the ‘myth of return’ that, “no matter how settled, it is believed that migrants still dream that they will eventually return to their homeland” (806). To Christian Dustman and Yoram Weiss, return migration is described as a situation where migrants return to their countries of origin of their own will, after a significant period of time abroad (258). Blunt and Dowling view home as a place of comfort, stability and security, a hearth and anchoring point (11). The idea of home is such that gives the returnee a sense of belonging. Jennifer Ann Fawcett opines that a home serves as a, “representing acceptance of the true self, or an arena to express this, a secure environment to be sad or happy, a space of recognition from the others who belong in the home, a place to house the soul as well as the body” (2).

According to Eleni Gage, return ought to be a journey of therapeutic self-fulfilment where the returnee finds or becomes his complete self by “rejoining the pieces of his life together” (14). To Evangelia Kindinger, “return is a home coming to a home that is created through the act of return” (5). For Gerhard Stilz, ‘home’ is defined as the place of one’s first orientation in the world, the central node on which ‘our’ personal identity has been nurtured, the place to which one ‘belongs’ and ‘returns’”(9).

It is worthy of note that return definitely has its challenges. In the words of Katie Vasey, “there is no such thing as genuine uncomplicated return to one’s home” (32). Return migration, despite its challenges is a matter of choice. People choose to either return or remain in host countries whether or not they achieve success over there. In this paper, the focus is on a migrant who eventually returns despite having achieved economic success in the West, however feels a deep sense of loneliness and unfulfilled life dreams.

### **Pull Factors for Return Migration in the Text**

The concept of home in this study is akin to John Mcleod’s argument of what constitutes a home in human living. In his words, “to be at home is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves” (210). Return migration for most immigrants in the West is likened to the statement made by Helon Habila’s protagonist in *Travellers*, “every departure is a death, every return a rebirth” (12). Death here is in terms of the traumatic discontents of migration. Several pull factors are responsible for attracting young African immigrants towards home. According to Baffour Takyi, these pull factors include the assurances of improved living conditions, the accessibility of jobs, educational prospects and the likelihood of social development in the United States and Europe (237).

### **Migration Theory**

In understanding conceptual approaches to migration, Douglas Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor aver that:

At present, there is no single theory widely accepted by social scientists to account for the emergence and perpetuation of international migration throughout the world, only fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries (17).

Being that there is no ‘one size fit all’ theory of international migration, rather pieces of theories coined independently across disciplines exist, it therefore pushes the border for a more advanced theory which can integrate varying viewpoints, degrees and presumptions (Douglas et al 432). The push-pull theory despite its popularity in solving migration issues has been watered down by Ronald Skeldon in his comment that push-pull theory is “but a platitude at best” (125-6). He believes that it is not enough to know the reason why people migrate as that is not all there is to migration process.

In trying to arrive at a common ground in bridging the gap between already existing theories by adding new concepts and analytical tools to them, Hein De Hass proposes the Conceptual Eclecticism theory. While some scholars argue

against the combination of different theories which have different assumptions, others like Massey et al argue for a combination of insights from different theories. In their words:

A full understanding of contemporary migration processes will not be achieved by relying on the tools of one discipline alone, or by focusing on a single level of analysis. Rather, their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels, and assumptions (432).

Nevertheless, scholars like Oliver Bakewell counter this argument by positing that “claim that there are no inherent contradictions in the different theories is hard to sustain” This is specially so, “when one considers very different ontological and epistemological foundations of migration theories” (1692). T.S Kuhn argues further that advocates of different paradigms live in different worlds, use different terminologies and standards defining the validity both of problems and of proposed solutions in terms of methodology and analysis. Each paradigm consequently has the inclination to gratify the conditions it sets for itself and to scrap the problem definition as well as assessment benchmarks used by the other paradigms (109).

### **Critical Review on Sefi Atta’s *A Bit of Difference***

Dobrota Pucherova’s article views Sefi Atta’s *A Bit of Difference* in the context of migration, that is, moving from Africa to the West and the Afropolitan narratives and empathy. The major character Deola Bello is examined in relation to her Afropolitanism and at the same time Nigerianness. Reasons for migrating to the West are examined from the Nigerian dilapidating situation and explain why Nigerian intellectuals especially writers will always choose to live abroad. The sense of living abroad, in a way, gives them the immunity to the negative happenings in their continent (Africa).

In her words, “*A Bit of Difference* is very critical not only of Nigerian corruption at the highest level, but also of the general lack of social consciousness and empathy towards other fellow citizens” (413). The point of this article differs from this paper which focuses on using *A Bit of Difference* not to interrogate Afropolitanism nor migration to the West. Rather, to highlight the political, economic and social situation in Nigeria which propel Nigerians to migrate. Deola, notwithstanding her Afropolitanism in terms of Western education, international job, London residence, British passport and the rest of other privileges, still views Nigeria as home and makes her way to Nigeria more often than not until she decides to relocate finally.

Not enough reviews have been done on *A Bit of Difference*, hence the choice. This paper will add to scholarship on the text especially as regards return migration.

### **Synopsis of Sefi Atta’s *A Bit of Difference***

Sefi Atta’s *A Bit of Difference* revolves around the protagonist, Deola Bello, a Nigerian emigrant based in London at age thirty-nine. Having spent a lot of years from her teenage years to adulthood, she is unhappy with the fact that she is yet to be married and that she does not find fulfilment in the job she does although she earns well financially. Considering the nature of her job as a Financial Reviewer for an international charity, she embraces the opportunity to represent her company in Nigeria. It will be an opportunity to attend her father’s five-year memorial service. This return journey unlike others that she had embarked on in the past marks a turning point in her unsettled life. In Nigeria, she finds that she desires to be closer to her family and further the development which she finds at home. These, she compares with the boredom which London offers her. As she resolves to return home to live permanently in Nigeria, her path crosses with that of a widower who is likely to satisfy her marital hopes. Jobs, unlike what is obtainable elsewhere in Nigeria are available for her to choose from considering her academic pedigree and the foundation laid for her by her late father.

### **Migration in the Text**

As regards migration in *A Bit of Difference*, the major returnee character, Deola happens to find herself in England as a teenager although she was born in Nigeria by Nigerian parents. While telling her colleague, Anne about herself, she mentions that, “She went to school in England in her teens, got her degree from the London School of Economics and has since lived and worked in London” (7). Despite living in England she has always detested the circumstances of being a migrant with Western citizenship. She is not proud of being an emigrant. Nigeria remains for her, a home. Deola’s ability to relieve her childhood memories to her colleague suggests a psychoanalytic event. Deola’s character is similar to that of Enitan in *Everything Good Will Come* written by Atta as well. Atta always presents characters who despite living or having lived in the West still view Nigeria as home. In the words of protagonist, Enitan: I was in

England for nine years, coming home only for vacations. My parents sent me to a boarding school there after that summer, as was the fashion in the seventies” (73).

Deola is successful in London. In fact, she buys a flat in Willesden Green (18). Even as a wellpaid Accountant who has her own home in London, Deola feels that, “Within the social network to which she belongs, love is so contained, so predictable, and marriage might be as banal and unsatisfying as her career”(40). However, irrespective of the number of years Deola has spends in London, she is yet to adjust to life in the West.

### **Pull Factors for Return Migration in the Text**

The concept of home in this paper is akin to John Mcleod’s argument of what constitutes a home in human living. In his words, “...to be at home is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves” (210). Return migration for most immigrants in the West is likened to the statement made by Helon Habila’s protagonist in *Travellers*, “every departure is a death, every return a rebirth” (12). Death is this regard is in terms of the traumatic discontents of migration.

Several pull factors are responsible for attracting young African immigrants towards home. According to Takyi Bk, and Konadu- Agyemang K., these pull factors include the assurances of improved living conditions, the accessibility of jobs, educational prospects and the likelihood of social development in the United States and Europe (237).

According to Maximilian Feldner, “What distinguishes the new African diaspora is the possibility of return. In contrast to other diasporic formations, where the old homeland is usually an unfamiliar but mythologized place impossible to return to, the new African diaspora is well connected with their homeland (16).

Migration can also happen as a function of people’s aspirations and capabilities to migrate (De Haas, 402). Migration aspirations depend on people’s general life aspirations and their perceptions of the extent to which these aspirations can be fulfilled ‘here’ and ‘there’. This relates to either migrating to the West or returning home to Africa. Both these aspirations and perceptions about geographical opportunities are highly subjective and likely to change under the influence of social and cultural change.

### **Allure of Home as Context of Return Migration in *A Bit of Difference***

In *A Bit of Difference*, the desire by Deola to return home to Nigeria runs through the gamut of the text. This is despite her achievements in England. When her colleague in London office asks her if she will ever go back to Nigeria, “Deola finds the question intrusive, but she has asked herself this whenever she can’t decide if what she really needs is a change in location, rather than a new job. Eventually, she says” (8).

Deola’s mother does not hesitate to use any opportunity to appeal to her to return home, “Her mother tells her to come home for good, to work for the bank, by which means Deola ought to find a man to settle down with” (34). Deola’s career and social life in London is so banal and unsatisfying (40). Deola has always desired to date men who have the same Nigerian history and upbringing which she has. For Deola, “Similarity on all fronts is essential” (61). When she first returns home from her father’s memorial service she enjoys the nearness of the voices of her siblings, “The Sunday newspapers are on the dining table. The headlines are about trade and politics, not the news she is used to reading overseas about Nigeria, which is about internet fraud, drug traffickers, Islamic fundamentalism and armed militants in the Niger Delta” (76).

Deola’s siblings also find opportunities to invite her home, “Come home more often, Jaiye says” (79).

Deola as a member of the new African diaspora, having citizenship of the host country has the privilege of moving freely between Africa and Europe. This gives her the opportunity to remain in touch and even make some impact in her home country when given the opportunity. This freedom sums up Toyin Falola’s idea of the new African diaspora:

Contemporary migrants have intensified the linkages in a global manner, evidenced in monetary remittances from the West to Africa, the movements of goods and peoples in various directions, the greater traffic in ideas, and the spread of popular cultures. Air travel between Africa and the West has increased markedly, carrying thousands of Africans as they move from one part of the world to another (101).

Deola on her part thinks that some of her colleagues in Trust Bank when she was in Nigeria are not doing poorly in Nigeria for themselves. She sees that they have their ways of climbing out of recession and living above the supposed

disadvantage that the unfavourable exchange rate brings, “She held on to her independence there, even as her independence began to look more like loneliness”(120).

Eventually, she makes up her mind to return home and does so, “She is glad to be back home where she knows people” (244). Although she is worried about easily getting a job, her cousin, Ivie assures her that she will easily get a job (246). When her mother hears that she is returning home finally, she assures Deola, “You will be well taken care of” (260). Return migration makes for a regeneration of the psyche and a recoupling with one’s own culture. Olumide Ogunrotimi, in his paper postulates that Ifemelu and Obinze’s return home in *Americanah*, “epitomized in the drive for self-realisation and a deep acknowledgement and appreciation of the virtues of their own multicultural society and its positive values” (148).

### **Gains of Return Migration in the Text**

There are gains and hopes of return in *A Bit of Difference*. Deola upon her visit to Lagos Nigeria for her father’s five-year memorial ceremony sees that despite the fact that people speak ill of the economy of Nigeria her home country, things are not exactly so. There is actually money in sectors like oil industry, telecommunications, banking industry, churches, non-governmental organisations, professional practices, political positions and so on (86).

Lagos Nigeria for instance is sub-Saharan Africa’s biggest metropolis and is likely to be the world’s biggest city by 2100. Lagos state with its diversity plays a major role in influencing cultural trends. For instance, the fashion industry in Lagos thrives and competes with its foreign counterparts. The music industry is as globally acknowledged as its film industry popularly known as Nollywood. The film industry churns out more films than any other film industry apart from Bollywood. The current generation of youths in Nigeria and Africa as a whole proudly believe in their cultural heritage and identity rooted in their homeland. Unfortunately, Africa is plagued with poor governance. Its leaders are corrupt, senile and usually are not willing to relinquish power once they get hold of it. The youths are nevertheless rising up to change the narrative.

Deola is weary of the constant use of the term brain drain when people politely mean to ask Africans to go back home. Most times when she is in Lagos, she finds that a lot of people are doing well for themselves even if you cannot say that everyone is doing well generally, “She runs into old friends, most of whom are married with children, and marvels at their accomplishments – lawyers who are jewelry designers on the side, doctors who just happen to be manufacturing beauty creams, accountants who produce Nollywood films. They make the opportunities overseas look like a joke” (119).

From Deola’s experience as a citizen living in London, Nigerians are better respected in Nigeria than abroad, “Nigeria is where they are called ‘Madam’ and treated with respect” (162). The thought of staying away from racism is another advantage of being home as no one is stigmatized as a result of skin colour. Although these immigrants love ‘home’ (Africa), they cannot really express the extent of this love for home when they cannot return home. This is expressed by NoViolet Bulawayo when the character Chipso, chides her friend Darling for leaving home and then professing her love for her country. In Chipso’s words, “Why did you just leave? If it’s your country, you have to love it to live in it and not leave it. You have to fight for it no matter what, to make it right. Tell me, do you abandon your house because it’s burning or do you find water to put out the fire?” (286).

### **Poor Governance and Corruption as Disillusionment of Return Migration in *A Bit of Difference***

Despite the joys of return home portrayed in the text by Atta, we see elements of disillusionments interspersed through the novel too. The first sign of disillusionment of returning to one’s home, begins with Deola’s friend, Subu who although being a Nigerian, resides in London just like Deola. Although Subu has a British passport and sometimes makes allusion to Nigeria as home, she does not go home. She only sends money to her parents and siblings back home and even invites her mother to come to London to be with her when she desires.

For Subu, Nigeria is a place to avoid. In her words, “Naija is too tough. No water, no light. Armed robbers all over the place and people demanding money” (34). Also, Bandeke, a Nigerian residing in London, who is a friend of Deola too, does not view Nigeria as home. He was born in Nigeria before his parents migrated to the UK. He outrightly tells Deola, “Nigeria is not my home” (50). This is despite the fact that he is not even doing so well in London as a creative writer. He had been laid up in the hospital in the past for depression and he is still not free from it. Yet, he does not even see moving back to Nigeria as an option. He feels that London is very much safer and better than Nigeria and that racism is better than relating with fellow Nigerians.

Before Deola's final return migration to Nigeria, she often visits her home country Nigeria. She has formed the habit of constantly comparing life in London as she has it to that in Nigeria as her family and friends live it. On this particular return for a job, at the same time for her father's memorial service, her flight lands from Heathrow Airport to Lagos. As she waits to disembark fully with her luggage, she notices that, "Their suitcases emerge between cardboard boxes, which are untidily taped. The air conditioner is not working and the spot where Deola is standing reeks of armpits" (69). The customs officials on duty do not hesitate to beg her for gifts. Deola's mother who comes to the airport to pick her up does not mince words in telling her about the armed robbery situation at home and how nothing works. She says that they even attack in broad daylight.

Deola is surprised at the passivity which she encounters at home, "Her mother's eyesight is poor, yet she won't wear glasses, except to read. The roads in Lagos are full of potholes. Why would a seatbelt matter?"(72). Deola notices how the environment in which she grew up, Victoria Island which used to be spacious, free and safe as they played around is now airless with buildings and commercial facilities filling up any available space. The noise from generators and church buildings makes it difficult for Deola to sleep peacefully on her first night. Even in the city of Ikoyi, Jaiye, Deola's sister maneuvers the decay and rot occasioned by bad roads in the city as she drives Deola to a hotel since she is not able to sleep soundly in the family house.

Deola is disappointed in the set of Ikoyi elites who despite the good education and training they have are not able to make the country better or even preserve the city of Ikoyi whose environment is gradually degenerating like other parts of Nigeria. As Deola discusses with her brother, Lanre who manages the bank their father leaves for them, Lanre constantly complains of corruption in the business circle despite the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. Armed robbers too are consistently attacking innocent citizens. Lanre further declares that he wants to leave the country. Deola is not surprised as, "They pass people queuing outside the Embassy of China. Perhaps they have given up on getting British and American visas, she thinks (102). The constant traffic on Ikoyi Island makes living or running business on the Island further difficult (97).

Lagosians undergo stress daily as they struggle to make ends meet. From traffic to bad roads to armed robbery, to corruption, to marital infidelity, epileptic electricity and so on. Ivie, Deola's cousin sums up the situation by saying that everyone is caught up in the show called Nigeria. Nevertheless, they think that things are not so bad as to quit the country.

Deola while in Nigeria, visits WIN, a Non-Governmental Organisation which has requested sponsorship of her London company. She is sent by her London company to audit the organization to ascertain if it is worth investing in. After many investigations, Deola notices that WIN is involved in some shady deals of syphoning funds donated to them for the running of the NGO into other uses. It is sad that the report of her review will have no choice than to bare the truth of her findings (126-127). In the words of Lapsley and Stey, "The superego... is an agency that seeks to enforce the striving for perfection, as it holds out to the ego idea, standards and moralistic goals" (6). The superego therefore works against the id by repressing socially unacceptable desires back into the unconscious when the need arises. This is seen in the character of Deola as she uses her office as an auditor to demand that WIN should do the right thing. Therefore when the superego succeeds in balancing the desires and attitude of the id through its restrictive means, a better human emerges. This is argueably for the whole societal system.

Deola's stepbrother, Dotun is married to a Ghanaian and most times, she is in Ghana with the children. When Deola asks Dotun how his family is doing, he attests to the fact that in as much as Ghana is not perfect and has her own problems too, nevertheless, "Accra is clean, clean and organized, not like this Lagos"(149). On the other hand, Jaiye continues to quarrel with her husband. She has seen enough troubled marriages in Lagos and concludes that, "Everyone fights in front of their kids" (155). Generally, people in Nigeria especially in Lagos where Deola is born have a lot of things they constantly pursue or are afraid of, "In Lagos, people are afraid of death by armed robberies, car crashes and sickness. They are terrified of bankruptcy financial ..." (187).

When Deola returns to London and tells her friend Subu about the situation at home especially the NGO soliciting for funds from her London company, Subu sounds weary of Nigeria constantly being seen as a charity case. She asks Deola, "So why don't we solve our economy problems instead of begging for funds all over the place?"(205). Nigeria lacks investors. This can be as a result of the country's dwindling economy. However, Subu submits that the reason why the West continues to give to Africa, Nigeria in particular is only because they want Nigeria to remain subservient

to them. They never want Nigeria to break loose from the shackles of poverty. Nigerian leaders are not helping matters, too. They only talk without much corresponding action (207).

After Deola confronts Bandele for not confiding in her that he is gay being that they are friends, Bandele says it is because she is Nigerian. He has negative memories of Nigeria especially after he loses his brother. Bandele says of Nigeria, "It was such an emotionally brutal place to grow up in" (236). Deola does not have this opinion of Nigeria. She has compared her life in London with the few times she spends in Lagos with her family and decides on returning permanently to Nigeria. Of course, she can always visit London since she has a British passport. When she tells her siblings that she has made up her mind to return home, they are happy to have her around. Nevertheless, her brother, Lanre warns her of the frustration lurking in Nigeria, "traffic, poor quality repairs and servicing, stupid and devious house help. Mosquitoes. Good schools are expensive and so is pediatric food and medicine" (266). However, these problems cannot be compared to racism in the West, says Lanre (267).

Deola's new friend, Wale whom she meets in Nigeria tells her of his plan to send his daughter for her university overseas. He is a widower and from his experience running a hotel in Nigeria, "Universities here are a mess. I hire graduates who can't construct a basic letter. I spend half my time training them and the worst part is, you finish training them and they leave" (277). These are push and pull factors of migration.

Deola realizes that whenever she is in Lagos, she looks forward to flying back to London but no sooner does she land in London than she begins to miss home, Lagos. She meets up with her Friend Tessa in London who wants her to play the role of maid of honour during her wedding. Their discussion tilts towards Nigeria and the happenings around there. Deola admits that the stress in Nigeria reduces the life span of people such that, "People don't live that long back home" (282). When Deola meets Bandele and they gist about Deola's trip to Nigeria, Bandele surmises that one of the things one can tell about someone who has recently been to Nigeria is that, "The hostility quotient goes right up"(283). It is a pity that Bandele is set on antagonizing Nigeria his home country. Maximilian Feldner sums up the situation in Nigeria in these words:

Nigeria is characterized by corruption and is often criticized for its ubiquitous graft, bribery, and nepotism. The country loses a lot of money through financial mismanagement while being unable to provide stable and permanent infrastructural services in the areas of transportation, electricity, water, and sewage. Due to these problems, also the result of its lack of a cohesive and connective national narrative, it is not unreasonable to claim that Nigeria is far from being a stable and functioning polity (21-22)

### Summary and Conclusion

This study reveals that Atta's *A Bit of Difference*, portrays the experiences of return migration and disillusionment as they affect returnee characters in the text. This is done through the lens of migration theories, favouring Hans De Haas return migration theory. It also incorporates the works and ideas of Ernest Ravenstein, Douglas Massey, Kristin Espinosa, and Aderanti Adepoju on migration theory. The conceptions put together, served as the framework alongside existing literature on the subjects of return migration and disillusionment in general migrant literature and the primary text under focus. This is to provide the opportunity for critical examination of the subjects of the research.

The subjects of the paper are portrayed around the themes of lack of integration, poor leadership, corruption, societal pressure, patriarchy, insecurity and general disillusionment. These themes are what drive the contexts of disillusionment of return migration in the text. In *A Bit of Difference*, the gains and joys of return migration refuse to be overshadowed by the disillusionment of return migration. Deola, despite knowing that Lagos- Nigeria is not a perfect place in terms of security and functional social infrastructure, however believes that Nigeria represents peace, fulfilment and economic security as her family members rally around to make her feel at home. She compares the economic situation in her home country to that of London where she lives and works and concludes that things are not as bad as people think in LagosNigeria.

The evidence is seen in the equally classy and bougie lifestyle of her siblings and former classmates who despite all odds are thriving in their various professions in Lagos. The loneliness which she experiences in London always disappears on arriving Nigeria where her family and friends make life cheery for her with their complaints, innocent intrusions and parties. Her dream of having a baby and being in love with a loving partner which does not materialize all her life in London begins to fall into place following her return to Nigeria. Deola believes that when all hands are on deck, joining the government, that Nigeria can be made better. The joy and peace of living in one's home country cannot be compared to the cold environment and racism found in the West. However, poor governance and corruption form the core of the disillusionment of return migration in the text.



The contexts of return migration in the texts are seen in the areas of loneliness, racism, lack of job satisfaction which propelled return migration. *A Bit of Difference* relates the disillusionment of return migration in the Nigerian government's nonchalant attitudes towards developing the nation. This is seen in the corruption rampant in leadership circles, unsafe neighbourhoods occasioned by armed robbery and thefts, lack of basic infrastructure and other challenges bedeviling Nigeria, Africa.

This paper is not set to discourage migration to the global South *per se*. Africa is a populous continent with hardworking population. History has further shown that Africans and in particular Nigerians love their countries. Even when they migrate, they eventually return. Either permanently or divide their lives visiting and living in other countries like most diasporan writers. The paper posits that return migration should aid to cushion the effect of colonialism. Most postcolonial countries grapple with state formation and wealth expansion as ways of remaining liberated. These processes go a long way in shaping and structuring recent migration patterns.

The findings of this paper indicate that factors such as political instability, quest for education and desire for better living condition account for migration as evident in the text analysed. Also, it unveils that the depiction of return migration occurs as a result of search for home belonging, allure of home, unfulfilled dreams and so on. However, the paper reveals that return migration has also presented disillusionment to the returnees due to certain challenges. Such challenges include insecurity, insurgency, poor governance, corruption in government and others.

Consequently, this paper recommends that there is need to ensure political stability, improved educational system and provision of necessary amenities for better living condition to curtail migration. Return migration should be encouraged so as to harness the experience and expertise of the returnees for socio-economic development of the society.

On the over all, the onus is on the government and people of African countries to improve the immigration rules of Africa such that foreigners would easily visit. This is in terms of making citizenship visas easy for foreigners because Africa is another site to behold. As should be noted, the economic, political and social environment need to be improved so that African immigrants can be further motivated to return home whenever they desire to do so. Proper integration and networking from host countries are important as they contribute to the development of home country upon return.

For further studies, it is the researcher's view that more studies should be conducted in the area of return migration employing other theories like postcolonial theory and new historicism. This will give other perspectives to the understanding of the text used in this paper.

### Works Cited

- Akhuemokhan, Sophia. "'The Backward Glance' Repetition and Return in Pede Hollist's *So the Path Does Not Die*." *Diaspora and Return in Fiction. African Literature Today*, vol.32, 2016, pp 121- 142.
- Arowolo, Oladele O. "Return Migration and the Problem of Reintegration." *International Migration*, vol. 38, no. 5, 2000, pp. 59-80.
- Atta, Sefi. *A Bit of Difference*. Fourth Estate, 2013.
- Bulawayo, Noviolet. *We Need New Names*. Vintage, 2014.
- Cassarino, Jean-Pierre. "Return Migrants to the Maghreb: Patterns of Reintegration and Development Challenges." *Return Migrants to the Maghreb Countries: Reintegration and Development Challenges. General Report 2008*. Edited by J.P. Cassarino. European University Institute, 2008, pp. 9-32.
- De Haas, Hein. "Migration Theory Quo Vadis?" *International Migration Institute*. Vol.24, no.100, November 2014.
- Falola, Toyin. *African Diaspora. Slavery, Modernity and Globalization*. University of Rochester Press. 2014.
- Feldner, Maximilian. "Narrating the New African Diaspora (21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria Literature in Context) Return Migration in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* 2013." *African Histories and Modernities*, 2019, pp.185-199.
- Gage, Eleni N. *North of Ithaka: A Granddaughter Returns to Greece and Discovers Her Roots*. St. Martin's Press, 2004.
- Diaspora." *Routledge Studies in Development, Mobilities and Migration*, Routledge, 2019.
- Gmelch, George. "Return Migration." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 9, 1980, pp.135-159.
- Guisti, Ada. "Ruminations on Migration and Return in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century France." *Coming Home?* vol. 2, 2013, pp.129-145. Habila, Helon. *Travellers*. Hamish HaMilton, 2019.

- Kindinger, Evangelia. "I Can't Wait to Go Back Home!" *Negotiating Spaces of Belonging in Greek American Narratives: The 4<sup>th</sup> Hellenic Observatory Ph.D Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus*. London School of Economics, June 2009, pp.2526.
- King, Russel. "Generalization from the History of Return Migration." *Return Migration: Journey of Hope or Despair?*, edited by Bimal Ghosh, International Organization for Migration, 2000, pp. 7-55.
- Lapsley, Daniel and Stey Paul. "Id, Ego and Superego" in V.S. Ramachandran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*. Elsevier. 2011.
- Massey, Douglas S., Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor. "Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal." *Population and Development Review*. vol.19, no. 3, 1993, pp.1249-74.
- McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester, Manchester UP, 2000.
- Nadler, Robert et al. "Conclusions: Current and Future Perspectives on Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe." *Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe*. Mobility Against the Stream. 2016, pp. 359-376.
- Nail, Thomas. *The Figure of the Migrant*, Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Ogunrotimi, Olumide. "Multiculturalism and the Epistemology of Migrational Praxis in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*." *Texts and Contexts of Migration in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Oluwole Coker and Adebunsi Adeniran, Pan- African University Press, 2021.
- Pucherova, Dobrota. "Afropolitan Narratives and Emphathy: Migrant Identities in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference*." *Human Affairs*, vol.28, no.3, October, 2018, pp.406-416.
- Skeldon, Ronald. *Population Mobility in Developing Countries: A Reinterpretation*. London: Belhaven Press.1990.
- Stilz, Gerhard. *Territorial Terrors: Contested Spaces in Colonial and Postcolonial Writing*, Konigshausen and Neumann, 2017.
- Takyi Bk, and Konadu- Agyemang K. "Theoretical Perspectives on African Migration." In Konadu- Agyemang K, Takyi B and Arthur J (eds). *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building and Adaptation*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 13- 28, 2006.
- Teo, Sin Yih. "The Moon Back Home is Brighter?: Return Migration and the Cultural Politics of Belonging." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 37, no. 5, May, 2011, pp.805-820.
- Vasey, Katie. "Place-Making, Provisional Return and Well-Being: Iraqi Refugee Women in Australia". *Refuge* vol.28, no. 1. 2011, pp. 25-35.