



# The Narrative of Chaos in Post-Independence African Literature: Representations of Development-Related Issues in Adichie's Short Stories and Noo Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*

ALOU Yacoubou<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> English Department, Université de Zinder (Niger Republic)

## Abstract

*Knowledge production experiences some noticeable widening and tends to become interdisciplinary in its scope. With globalization and transnationalism, postcolonial African literary corpus presents a growing interest from migrant writers in events happening in their place of origin. In their fictional craftsmanship, these writers attempt to deepen their commitment to issues related to development in what is known as 'postcoloniality.' Drawing on postcolonialism theory, this paper explores texts from two third-generation Nigerian writers namely Adichie and Noo Saro-Wiwa by revealing their contribution to a better understanding of African developmental challenges in their narratives. The essay continues the conversation over the need to locate development fiction within the development aesthetic paradigm. The two writers under scrutiny, the paper contends, strive to contextualize impediments to advancement in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. Adichie's short stories: "Cell One" and "The American Embassy" direct the reader to development-related issues in terms of bad governance, safety, and security challenges while Saro-Wiwa's travelogue points to city mismanagement and city transportation mayhem. The essay concludes that their fictional rendition of development-related issues appears as an attempt to bridge the gap between literature and development studies and thus, appraising 'interdisciplinarity' over traditional disciplinary compartmentalization in academia.*

**Keywords:** African literature; Postcolonialism; Immigration narratives, Development, Adichie, Noo Saro-Wiwa

## 1. INTRODUCTION

African literary corpus has witnessed a noteworthy achievement in recent years. Most of the first written African fiction was the domain of predilection of men. Out of necessity imposed on them by colonialist literature, early African novelists focus on representations of African cultures and people (Nnolim, 2009). These writings heroically celebrate African cultural and historical richness in an attempt to fire back and deconstruct the fallacious claims made by Eurocentric writers such as Hegel, John Locke, or Joseph Conrad (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002; Adichie, 2009b). Writers like Chinua Achebe commit themselves to a dynamic of 're-membering'<sup>1</sup> African image which was 'dismembered' by stereotypical Western purposeful misrepresentations of the continent and its people (Coker, 2014).

African writers' aesthetic craftsmanship equally embodies some continual propensity to socio-political engagement while pointing to African identity assertiveness before it actively participates in the anti-colonial struggles during the decolonization period (Nnolim, 2009; Kehinde, 2004). This literature, among other things, critically looks at socio-political issues in the 'independent' African States like failed political leadership through a striking realism by depicting chaos and decadence along with people's disenchantment as is the case in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* by Ayi Kwei Armah. Many writers aesthetically strive to interrogate these issues which may stem from both internal/external forces related to the lingering colonial hangover and neocolonialism (Irele & Gikandi, 2004; Alou, 2018). In this endeavor, the role of the African writer is to foster their readership

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<sup>1</sup> Wa Thiong'o, N. (2009). *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas. Wa Thiong'o theorizes how Africa as a body has been cut off physically and spiritually by the colonizer and there has been a political and intellectual effort to put its body parts together (re-membering) from local and diasporan Africans.

reflect on these preoccupations; thus, this literature has the proclivity towards some socio-political activism and it less focuses on “art for art’s sake’ (Nnolim, 2009).

Thematically, African literature has expanded its focus from the above-mentioned preoccupations to more topical issues. And Zaugg (2017) reveals that, Noo Saro-Wiwa, in an interview on April 6, 2017, at Université de Lausanne, proclaims, “African literature is thriving in some ways, but in the diasporic sense” (148). Though immigration stories are not new to African literary corpus with early narratives (focusing on the so-called tradition and modernity binary) such as Buchi Emecheta’s (1975) *Second-Class Citizen*, Ama Atta Aido’s *The dilemma of a Ghost*, or Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, the experience of migration appears central to contemporary African literature because the former has thematically become integral to the expressive aesthetics of the latter (Iheka & Taylor, 2018). This expansion is more pronounced in the works of African writers who happen to be ‘here and there’ and who have received “considerable journalistic coverage” (Adesanmi and Dunton 2008, vii). They have cast a “paradigm shift”<sup>2</sup> in migration stories. These artists, also known as new generation African writers, stress the issues of displacement and its consequences on the home and host countries of the African immigrants (Alou, 2018). In a similar vein, their writings target development-related issues and aim at bridging the gap between literature and development studies (Coker, 2014). This research work on the exploration of new generation African writers builds, and extends, on Coker (2014) while it demonstrates the saliency of artistic writing in development scholarship and discourse.

Furthermore, without any risk of fallacy, one would argue that though travel and immigration stories are protuberant in post-independence African fiction, less attention has been made to ponder its contribution to a better understanding of post-colonial woe. And Steiner (2009) pinpoints that they provide new avenues over transnational and political debates. Indeed, diasporic or immigrant writers of African origin (such as Chimamanda N. Adichie and Noo Saro-Wiwa) have artistically made a noteworthy commentary on not only immigration but also development challenges the continent faces. While the current paper pertains to elucidate the themes tackled by Adichie and Saro-Wiwa in their narratives, it contends that their fictional rendition of development-related issues appears as an attempt to bridge the gap between literature and development studies and thus, appraising ‘interdisciplinarity’ over traditional disciplinary compartmentalization in academia. In so doing, the researcher, cognizant of the efforts so far made and in an attempt to further broaden scholarship over migration narratives as already tackled in Iheka & Taylor (2018), reveals the two writers’ contribution to a better understanding of development issues.

## 2. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in 1977 in Nigeria where she got her primary and secondary education, specifically in Nsukka. After a glimmering university education at both Johns Hopkins University and Yale University respectively, she embraces a career in creative writing (Alou 2018, 23). She published novels (*Purple Hibiscus*, in 2003; *Half of a Yellow Sun*, in 2007; *Americanah*, 2013), a collection of short stories under the title: *The Thing around Your Neck*, in 2009; essays: “The Danger of a single story” in 2009 and *We Should All Be Feminists* in 2015. In *The Thing around Your Neck*, Adichie compiles several short stories some are American-based and others Nigerian-based. This paper explores two of her Nigerian-based short stories namely “Cell One” and “The American Embassy.” These stories represent some thought-provoking realities about Nigeria, a place when mentioned, any discerned reader would think about its comfortable place in the African economy, its recent history of ethno-religious tensions, and its development-related challenges. Both stories depict human rights abuse and political irresponsibility as impediments to peace (Alou, 2021).

Noo Saro-Wiwa was born in 1977 in Nigeria. She migrated with her family to England where she attended Roedean School and King’s College London before she proceeded to Columbia University, New York (Cruz-Gutiérrez, 2016). Saro-Wiwa currently lives in London with some visits to her mother/fatherland Nigeria. As a journalist, she has worked with *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Financial Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, and *Prospect Magazine...*) and as a travel guide author, she wrote *Lonely Planet, Rough Guide* (Zaugg 2017). Her only book long publication work, *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* (2012) relates captivating discernments about the most populous African country, Nigeria, while it hints at this country’s subjectivities, contradictions, and diversity. The book not only narrates the writer’s family’s history but also delineates her experience with Nigeria upon one of her visits to this country in a travel writing style. It mostly focuses on the Nigerian failed transportation system resembling chaotic confusion. Unlike Adichie, Saro-Wiwa was raised in England. However, this expatriate upbringing does not break her tie with her ancestral country. Her

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<sup>2</sup> Harrow, Kenneth W. (1994). *Thresholds of Change in African Literature*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Harrow demonstrates that while early African migration stories found in early works like *No Longer at Ease* or *The Dilemma of a Ghost* for example stress the binary tradition vs. modernity, new generation African writers on migration narratives have departed from this type of thematic preoccupation to tackle issues such as the rationale behind contemporary African migration and its consequence on those who experience it while abroad and upon possible return.

travelogue recounts her traveling experience which helps her explore the outrageously exuberant chaos of transport in Lagos, the amazement at the calm beauty of the tropical rain forest, and the historical monuments along with stinking corruption and booming success of films at Nollywood (Radoulska, 2016). Saro-Wiwa's "narrative of return" and "Migration of the Heart"<sup>3</sup>(Iheka & Taylor, 2018), with a sense of frankness, reveals how she engagingly and amusingly discovers unforgettable people and places which put her in a love-hate relationship with her place of birth, Nigeria.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is carried out within the premises of the qualitative approach. Through hermeneutic tradition (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004), or interpretive tradition, words and their meaning are scrutinized. The rationale behind the choice of qualitative approach resides in the fact that this approach offers a diversity of ways to construe data. Drawing on this method, this study stresses content analysis through a close and critical reading of the texts under investigation after the review of related literature. The data that the researcher alludes to are words and sentences which are explored and interpreted in an eclectic theoretical approach encompassing mobility, transnationalism, and postcolonial theories and criticism along with development fiction. Indeed, the choice of this eclectic theoretical approach resonates with Morehouse's (2015) claim whereby she opines that "whether researching slavery, emancipation, black military life, black politics, social institutions, philosophy, or African Diaspora arts and letters, the scholar must employ a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach" (10).

Mobility theory stresses the socio-political construct behind people's displacement (Cresswell, 2006). This theory evokes, Cresswell (2006) continues, the growing possibility to move from one place to another, or 'motility' and the knowledge production that comes with it. This knowledge production, which impacts the identity of those who are in the movement, Bauböck & Faist (2010) observes, links mobility to transnationalism and transnational theories which "take their cue from cross border mobility" (21). Transnationalism, as Vertovec (2009) remarks, points to border crossings in such things as "as type of consciousness, [...] a mode of cultural reproduction," (4) and those who are involved in this activity become transnationals with double or more citizenships as it is the case of the two writers under study. In a similar vein, Pressley-Sanon (2018) contends that diasporic writers' literary production has always been marked by their physical and psychological attachment to their place of origin (160-172). And Rushdie (2002), in his *Imaginary Homelands*, avers "writers of [his] position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back" (313). Both Adichie and Saro-Wiwa are troubled and preoccupied with what their country of origin experiences in terms of concerns of governance, education, security, social unrest, and public safety and welfare; issues that are at the core of development studies. While they seem to tackle similar themes related to issues of development, their thematic inclination diverges on several points.

Another theory that this research considers is postcolonial theory. Besides the founding fathers of this theory vis. Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri C. Spivak who preach the interpretation of texts and knowledge production (coming from both the West and 'the Rest') by analyzing the unequal relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, other scholars have further clarified postcolonial theory. Culler (1997), to begin with, defines it as an "attempt to understand the problems posed by the European colonization and its aftermath" (130). Furthermore, as the novels under study stress events that happen in Africa, the paper aims at demonstrating how migrant writings, like other postcolonial literary enterprises, attempt to portray the continent from an Afrocentric perspective. In this endeavor, Bonnici (2004) rightly asserts:

Post-colonial African writing comprises a strong reaction against negative stereotypes constructed during the colonial period. African writers had to dismantle myths of African inferiority, assert African cultures, combat the apartheid regime in South Africa and criticize corruption in Kenya and Nigeria. (7)

In a similar vein, Tiffin (1997) observes that postcolonial theory seeks to engage with the experiences of the colonized throughout the world. Interestingly enough, McLeod (2000) views this theory as an activity of

reading texts produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism (...), reading texts produced by those that have migrated from countries with a history of colonialism, or those descended from migrant families, which deal in the main with diaspora experience and its many consequences. (33)

<sup>3</sup> In The book chapter titled "Looking for Transwonderland: Noo Saro-Wiwa's Migration of the Heart," Pressley-Sanon (2018, 161) explains that upon the four-month journey in Nigeria, Noo undergoes "an internal rending and opening of herself to Nigeria in all of its complexity". Noo's voyage represents "a step toward coming to terms with, if not fully healing, her traumatic history."

Most of the time these texts represent the ongoing condition of the people living in postcoloniality<sup>4</sup>.

In addition to these theories, the paper considers development fiction theory which appears better discussed in Lewis, Rodgers, and Woolcock (2008). Indeed, these scholars by comparing and contrasting some fictional works, question the validity of what people consider as development knowledge by stressing the relationship between more formal academic writings about development with a fictional rendition of developmental issues. In doing so, they challenge people's received nature of knowledge by demonstrating the significance of literary aesthetic on development knowledge. They further insist that development fiction concerns "the potential contribution that works of literary fiction can make to development" (1). This kind of claim later appears in Adichie's (2010) essay on "The Role of Literature in Modern Africa" whereby she opines that "African countries need to change and change occurs through ideas. Literature is an essential repository of ideas. Literature can lead to change, not by espousing crude propaganda but by creating a collective sense of who a people are" (96). The change that the novelist unarguably alludes to remains in people's socio-cultural habits, political leadership which may help the continent move forward in its effort to attain better collective welfare.

This conceptual and theoretical clarification helps the researcher probe the following questions: how does postcolonial African writing by artists who happen to be transnationals shade light on their commitment to positive change in African societies? In which way/s have Adichie and Saro-Wiwa responded to Adichie's (2010) rather sketchy but inspirational article on the role of literature in modern African? This paper, arising from a combination of transnationalism, postcolonialism, and development fiction stipulations, analyzes Saro-Wiwa's travelogue and Adichie's short stories while it engages with issues of development. It explores the experiences of the two writers (the colonized) in a close reading activity of the migrant writers' stories to raise awareness on the stubborn development-related preoccupations in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

#### **4. NARRATING DEVELOPMENT RELATED ISSUES IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN MIGRANT WRITINGS**

Exploration of conversations over African migrant writings has been central to diaspora or immigration criticism. Though less discussed than Adichie in African migration discourse, Saro-Wiwa has received some scholarly attention recently. Pressley-Sanon (2018) in her analysis of the knottiness of the migrants' return to their place of birth/origin, views Saro-Wiwa's return as "a kind of ritual mourning not only for her father, whom she lost to state violence when she was a teenager living thousands of miles away in England and whose absence she feels deeply but also the resultant severed relationship with Nigeria, which she hopes to repair" (161). However, Pressley-Sanon's (2018) psychological reading of Saro-Wiwa's travelogue-cum-memoir by stressing the issues of trauma, loss, absence, and nationality/ethnicity overshadows the writer's implicit activism in which she urges her audience to contemplate development-related preoccupations that Nigeria, like many other African countries, faces. In *Looking for Transwonderland*, the writer wittingly intertwined her memoir stories with issues such as political leadership's failure to provide the basic societal needs such as electricity, running water, and safe public transportation.

##### **4. a. Deconstructing 'Misery Porn:' Writing Chaos as a Call for Awareness in *Looking for Transwonderland***

While Krishnan (2018) claims that in *Looking for Transwonderlands* "the protagonist's return is motivated by largely pragmatic-if effectively emotional-motives" (147), the narrative further informs the reader about things that only social scientists may document. Her travelogue foregrounds the idea that travel narratives can catalyze the raising awareness on things that matter while the reader enjoys the aesthetics, the history, and geography of Nigeria within a well-crafted and humorous language. Indeed, the book provides important information about Nigeria with its description of the country's major cities with their complexities in a subjective way. *Looking for Transwonderland* confirms Zaugg's (2017) claim in which he avers that "travel writing has always been subjective" (153). In doing so, the narrative blurs the line between fiction and fact. If Saro-Wiwa's return to Nigeria is motivated by her research which would ultimately lead to the writing of the book under scrutiny, the narrative expands this objective to further horizon which one may interpret as the writer's astute way of teaching people about contemporary Nigeria and Africa as well.

Relations between the West and the African societies have steadily been unequal and tinted with misrepresentations and condescending attitudes of the former towards the latter. Stories about Africa and its people are unceasingly expected to depict the continent as a place of everything negative, misery, political irresponsibility, and chaos. As such, books on Africa serve as a recreational tool like films about violence and war for the western public. This public's quest for chaos-related stories is theorized as "misery porn." And Zaugg (2017) defines "misery porn" as the demand-driven centrality of tropes about misery and violence in books on Africa" (148).

<sup>4</sup> . Ahmad (1995, 9) observes that in addition to it being the "global condition between the West and the Rest [...], postcoloniality refers to conditions that are to prevail in the former colonies."

However, *Looking for Transwonderland*, a book which may appear (with an undiscerned reading) as a type of “misery porn,” contradicts the aforementioned assumptions about African narratives. In an attempt to reconcile herself with Nigeria, the writer offers a window to contemplate issues that starkly bedevil her homeland. Saro-Wiwa’s travelogue rather invites the reader to mull over developmentally related preoccupations in Nigeria ranging from insufficient electricity and running water supply to dismal public transportation.

In its thematic demarcation, *Looking for Transwonderland* insists on Nigerian failed electricity and water supply. This preoccupation appears when the writer talks about the challenges of aesthetic values (long scenes, awkward camera angles) regarding Nollywood, a booming Nigerian film industry. She artistically inserts these problems of electricity supply and reveals that she wants to see things change as stated in the followings: “maybe Nigerian viewers differ from the rest of the world. Perhaps all those electricity blackouts and traffic go-slows have stretched Nigerians’ attention spans and raised our tolerance threshold” (Saro-Wiwa 2012, 81). For many Nigerians, having a cooling shower after all the nightly heat appears another difficulty because “you had to fetch the water first. We didn’t have to trek all the way to the river, but the jerrycans still needed to be dragged from my grandmother’s house 20 metres away from ours, which wasn’t easy when the water weighed more than we did” (ibid, 5).

The narrative further delineates another development-related issue through a detailed description of Nigerian city cumbersome and cantankerous transportation system resulting in public unsafety. On one occasion of her errands in Lagos because her aunt, Auntie Janice’s car is not working, the narrator explains: “I timidly flagged down a minibus taxi, known as a danfo. Danfos are condemned hand-me-downs from Europe, so decrepit that one can watch the tarmac moving beneath one’s feet” (ibid, 19). These are the kind of public buses that the population uses in the absence of a sound well-regulated transportation system. The danger that they represent is not only in their physical appearance and oldness but in the way the drivers unlawfully speed up with the unfortunate passengers (ibid, 46-47).

Besides these poorly maintained cars, the narrative (as the writer cruises) points at another dismal public transport with the use of motorbike taxis or Okadas. These are Chinese-made 100cc motorcycle taxis, that people ride because, Saro-Wiwa (2012) relates, “they are cheap and fast and can weave through the traffic go-slows that consume such a huge proportion of people’s days” (34). The writer goes on to state that they have the best option because the public transport has failed. Riding with Okadas means jeopardizing one’s life since the “drivers zip around at homicidal speeds, without any regard for who or what lies ahead of them” (ibid, 34-35) on “nightmare streets” (ibid, 67). Narrating these unsafe public transport systems, which makes many Nigerian cities appear as a “twenty-first-century urban jungle,” where “hustling” becomes the lifeblood of people (ibid, 23), tunes the reader’s cognizance of areas that need to be changed in Nigeria and many other places in Africa.

Upon these observations, the reader may ask the question, what is at the basis of this chaos. Without any delay, the writer observes:

naturally, corruption is the main cause. Politicians steal \$140 billion a year from Africa – a quarter of the continent’s GDP – mainly by controlling trade licences and skimming funds from government contracts. No facet of the economy goes unaffected: every road, school, oil drum, hospital or vaccine shipment is milked for cash. It diminishes the quality and quantity of everything in the country. (ibid, 24)

Corruption remains an overarching theme in narratives about Nigeria and only diminishing it requires sound and well-thought strategies that the political leadership needs to come up with. However, as the narrative unfolds one learns that public affairs mismanagement vindicates this situation.

In a related development, bad governance explains the ever-spreading corruption with new generation workers afraid of suffering from the same misfortune their seniors experienced. On one occasion, Julius explains to the narrator that there is corruption because “successive governments have been very slow in releasing many civil servants’ pensions” (ibid, 61). Some regretted why they had not stolen. This fear of suffering like their elders causes the younger workers to steal (ibid). In a similar vein, lack of priorities in governance causes the implementation of projects that results in penury of daily needs and plunges the country into economic stagnancy. The narrator hints at this issue with the example of the construction of *Transwonderland Amusement Park* in Ibadan, a park that no one visits and was abandoned, a waste of public money (ibid, 101). Furthermore, leisure facilities if built and properly managed, the Nigerian tourism economy would but flourish. Saro-Wiwa implies this in her story about the amusement park of the title, *Transwonderland*, which appears in the advertisement as Nigeria’s Disneyworld. It is sad to learn that upon her arrival at the park, the writer realizes that it is largely non-functioning and abandoned.

Besides, this failed priority planning, Nigeria vegetates in another chaos regarding sanitation and hygiene which favors mosquitoes’ thriving and the suffering of people under this life-threatening insect. In the prologue, one learns the misery of Nigerians with the mosquito bites as she recounts with humorous mood:

“Then at bedtime we provided the meals for an invisible but frighteningly audible army of mosquitoes and sandflies. By dawn, our arms were covered in itchy lumps that looked like strawberries, only bigger, and our fingernails had turned black from the nocturnal scratching of sweating flesh” (5).

This pathetic account calls attention to the spread of malaria on the continent and the fight of which is thought to be reserved to development policymakers. However, stories like these can contribute to further raise people's awareness about this threat to many individuals' life and may constitute a plea to the donors in the fight against malaria in many places in Africa.

By the end of the travelogue/memoir, Saro-Wiwa has cruised many places and this brings her into contact with considerable chaos and experiences of corruption and discomfort, without ignoring her quest of identity with her last stop at her father's hometown, Port Harcourt, a place full of the memory of her assassinated father's activism. While she considers all of these happenings, the narrative makes it clear that the developmental issues need to be addressed not only at the governmental level but also within Nigerian/African culture and this could foster African efforts towards a better future. In the narrative, it appears clear that Nigeria for the writer, besides its haunting effect on her, remains a place inextricably linked to her 'raison d'être' or her very being. Her travelogue contributes to deconstruct the Eurocentric misrepresentations of the continent in that her stories are those of an activist eager to see positive changes happening rather than recounting chaos just for an exotic audience in search of 'misery porn' to appease their everyday stress of the developed world. She made it clear in a talk she gave on April 6, 2017, at the University of Lausanne, where she discussed, Zaugg (2017) reports, “the persistence of biases affecting the representation of Africa in literature and journalism as well as the many challenges one faces when writing about this continent in the 21st century” (145). This analysis demonstrates how through a dynamic maneuver and subversive aesthetics, Saro-Wiwa casts doubt on the received and simple reading of African migration as a teleological movement from 'the Rest' to the 'West.'

#### **4. b. Representation of Bad Governance as Source of Economic Stagnancy and Impediment to Development in Adichie's Short Stories**

While some of Adichie's thematic preoccupations stress ethnic and religious cleavage as an impediment to peace (Alou, 2017; Alou, 2021), her literary production represents other issues and challenges germane to the African continent. Indeed, Adichie's short stories namely “Cell One” and “The American Embassy” thematically aim at, among other things, instructing people on developmental needs in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. This aspect of African literary production, in other words, African texts as a platform from which the reader learns about the continent, its people, and its contemporary challenges in teaching like manner is not new to the African artists who aesthetically stick to the significance and purpose of literature. Indeed, two thousand years ago, before Achebe's (1965) acclaimed essay, “The Novelist as Teacher,” the Roman poet Horace averred that literature not only delights but it also teaches people. This claim has historically always been reverberated by African writers in their enduring enterprise of raising issues that matter for change to occur in Africa. Adichie typifies one of the contemporary voices who daringly cast a critical look at their societies and aver their concern regarding the stubborn question of development in the continent.

In her “The American Embassy,” to begin with, the writer succeeds to embed issues of insecurity and governmental persecution as push factors in migration narratives. Since migration from the colonized lands to the Western countries has become a major concern in our today's world, development and social science theorists have been digging deep to detangle the root cause of this phenomenon. There is no doubt that migration empties African countries of their youth and intellectuals; yet, these are the people who are supposed to stay and work in their societies to bring the necessary change that people need to alleviate their daily struggle for a better future. However, it is unfortunate to realize that there are forces that are beyond the candidate migrants' control, forces that push them to leave their homeland and venture to the West in search of the fulfillment of their smashed dream for a blissful future.

A close reading and critical analysis of “The American Embassy,” (Adichie, 2009a), written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient narrator, reveals how this text delineates these forces in a well-crafted narrative. The main character, an anonymous woman fails to secure a US visa that would allow her to save her life after her husband has sneaked through the neighboring Benin border before he travels to the US with his unexpired visa. Her husband's activism and invectives towards the government bring him trouble. As the narrative unfolds, we learn that when the government sends their security agents to arrest him he is already gone and as they break into his house they find his wife and their little son, Ugonna (133-134). They recklessly and violently kill the innocent child while the wife hides in a dustbin before they depart the house and leave the sorrowful mother in her bewilderment. Later, the reader learns that despite her desperate insistence to leave the country, the US embassy denies her the visa to join her husband in the US because she has no evidence that the furious and bloody military regime endangers her life if she stays in Nigeria (140). The story of this single family represents failed political leadership

as an impediment to advancement in Africa. Instead of them being the guarantee for people's security and welfare, many leaders turn to be a threat to their fellow Africans' life, which fellow most often would consider leaving their countries to migrate to a not welcoming western environment. In depicting this sad situation, the writer strives to contribute to raising African leadership awareness and development activists/agencies to mull over developmental preoccupations in the continent from a bad governance angle.

Moreover, in "Cell One," Adichie (2009a) features Nigerian university cultism, political leadership's failure to implement a sound justice system, and corruption as obstacles that hinder Nigeria and African efforts for change. In the story, university cultism represents a threat to both students and professors when it creates an atmosphere of fear on the campus. Different gangs are formed, each gunning down opponent groups while girls are leered and raped (7-8). This feeling of insecurity jeopardizes university education which constitutes an important pillar for development. As the story continues, the reader learns that the police intervenes to arrest those who are involved in cultism. The first-person anonymous narrator tells us that her brother, Nnamabia is arrested while drinking alcohol in a pub with his friends during a night curfew and they are believed to be part of the gangs on campus. Through this episode, the writer drags her audience through the Nigerian justice and police system.

Depiction of failed justice in Nigeria appears at the center of Adichie's thematic preoccupation in "Cell One." Failure to implement an upright justice system jeopardizes efforts of peacebuilding (Alou, 2021) and creates insecurity which in turn hinders development motives. The story sketches injustice with the character 'the old man' who is jailed because, as it appears in (Adichie, 2009a), "his son was wanted for armed robbery, and when the police could not find the son, they decided to lock him up instead" (15). This malpractice of enforcing the law has become persistent and everybody knows that "it is wrong, but this is what the police do all the time. If they do not find the person they are looking for, they will lock up his father or his mother or his relative," the narrator laments (15). Besides this unthoughtful strategy and instances of bribery (10-13) as "symptoms of a larger malaise" (13), the way the police threaten people at the prison house is revolting. The suffering of the old man and another inmate in the hands of the police (16-17) showcases leadership irresponsibility and lack of human rights concerns, and this triggers revolt and possibly causes mayhem which would endanger development initiatives. This awkward way of law enforcement reveals bad governance and incites people to hate the police which is supposed to be a protector rather than an oppressor. This feeling of injustice fuels anger and hatred towards the government which in turn results in the lack of respect of law and order on the side of the population. Thus, chaos would but prevail, peace threatened and development postponed.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Following the stipulations of Postcolonial theory, transnationalism scholarship, and development fiction, the paper attempts to lend credence to the analysis of a fictional text and a non-fiction work from a development discourse angle. This essay, far from being a thorough exploration of *Looking for Transwonderland*, stresses the depiction of postcolonial malaise through a critical reading of texts from third-generation Nigerian writers. Their representation of chaos in Nigeria may not be perceived as a condemnation of sort of curse on their place of origin but as a call addressed to policymakers, scholars, and development agencies for a better understanding of social tension and conflict management along with strategically well-thought enforcement of laws and regulations to make Nigeria a better place to live in.

In her mobility account, Saro-Wiwa reveals her psychological connection with places that yet haunt her when she thinks about the assassination of her father. Her ties with Nigeria cast doubt on Ojaide's (2008) claim when he emphasizes that when compared to their predecessors, migrant African writers appear disconnected from the continent. Though Nigeria appears as the favored setting of the two writers under study, the thematic ubiquitousness of the stories appeals to development studies. This thematic omnipresence lends a broader scope to their fictional account of the postcolonial condition. Undoubtedly, they have cast a remarkable contribution to the development narratives and have shown 'the role of literature in modern Africa' (Adichie, 2010). Adichie's and Saro-Wiwa's narratives confirm Coker's (2014) claim whereby she declares that the third-generation Nigerian novels tend to foreground issues related to African advancement.

By exploring fiction and nonfiction narratives and their relationship to development studies, the paper yields a new avenue in the exploration of travel writing to suggest a new theoretical framework which may interrogate Peter and Youngs' (2002) theory. These narratives undoubtedly enrich postcolonial theoretical discourse in its unrelenting maneuver to extend the conversation over the experience of the colonized. As Alou (2019) contends, "exploration of the lives of postcolonial subjects serves as an impetus for understanding the African socio-political malaise" (20). Though at the heart of Saro-Wiwa's narrative resides her struggle for her Nigerian diaspora identity, *Looking for Transwonderland* partly tunes the reader towards developmental preoccupations and artistically evokes areas that need to be addressed.

The thematic concerns of these writers give testimony to the participation of immigrant African narratives in the contemporary debates on development-related challenges that the continent faces. They are both from a generation which, Coker (2014) avers, "responded more vehemently to this challenge of social engagement and

politically motivated writings with writers actively engaging and offering revolutionary alternatives and pursuing the agenda for change on several fronts – activism, literary journalism and creative writing” (38). The selected texts are examined within the stipulations of mobility, transnationalism, and postcolonialism theories and as any narrative analysis involves the clarification of the concepts used (Morehouse, 2015), these theories are reviewed and some concepts related to them clarified. While migration “burdens the individual with psychological, spiritual and other problems” as Ojaide (2008, 46) observes, for Saro-Wiwa, return serves not only some sort of self-fulfillment but a recording and documenting of development challenges that her place of birth needs to address.

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