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HOMECOMING TO LAY WREATH: THE EXAMPLE OF NGOZI ANYANWU'S *THE HOMECOMING QUEEN*

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Abstract

The worsening state of peace, and unity since the dawn of democracy in Nigeria, compounded with failed political elites, socio – economic issues, and environmental factors such as ethnic crisis, political discontent, quest for economic empowerment, lingering poverty in the land, religious crisis, decay social infrastructures, food insecurity, the desire for material gains, poor educational infrastructure, kidnapping etc, have forced many Nigerians to diaspora where most live and experiences a dynamic tension. In achieving this objective, this paper posits that playwrights in Nigerian society have the creative weapons for the espousal of the mirage of social ills clipping the nation's wings from growth, sustainable development, and prosperity, most importantly of its teaming population. Therefore, the paper adopts the content analysis as a methodology for analyzing the issues of migration, and the psychological tension of living away from home as evident in Ngozi Anyanwu's *The Homecoming Queen*. Premised on the theoretical position of "Diasporic and Transnational Theory", for anchoring "homecoming to lay wreath". The paper justifies that the exigency and precarious situation of the 21st century has bestowed huge responsibility on African literature, particularly Drama, to craft our world and makes us view society through its own narratives, symbols, images, and imagination for social reconstruction. The paper, in conclusion, argues that migration can be curbed by good governance and economic boost in Nigeria; then unnecessary migration will cease, and people will no longer be exposed to ill treatment in foreign lands.

Keywords: Diaspora, Belonging, Nostalgia, Culture, Homecoming

> The migrants believe that the center signifies realms of possibility, fantasy, and wish fulfillment where identities and fortunes may be transformed. The migrants did not know the center is, also a place of banishment, unlawful practice, oppression, social disgrace,

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> disillusionment, and frustration. However, the individuals believe that they cannot be fully accepted by the countries in which they reside. So, they retain a memory, a vision, and a myth relating to their original homeland. Diaspora is about long distance, exile, separation with an always relevant issue to return (Maxwell 12).

Introduction

Socio–economic issues and environmental factors such as wars, political discontent, the quest for economic empowerment, drought, flood, famine, volcanic eruptions, and so on, over decades have been the precursors for Africans in the diaspora, migrating from their locality and country to live or work in foreign lands. Recently, globalization and the integration of the world's economy have further fueled the urge for migration (Thirlwall 3). However, Castles (19) has posited that the history of migration is enshrined in the origins of mankind, believed to have migrated from Africa, before spreading to other parts of the world. In the same vein, Ikweta (1999) explained that the slave trade is responsible for the forceful transportation of Africans from their original motherland to spread over to the Western hemisphere. These scholars' positions, without doubt, have come to foreground decades of literary discourse that locates Africans in the Americas, Europe, the West Indies, North Africa, and so on.

Migration is a universal phenomenon. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, migration is defined as the act of moving from one country, place, or locality to live or work in another. Similarly, Ashcroft (68) asserts that the word "diaspora," derived from the Greek word meaning to disperse, refers to the voluntary or forced movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions. With the growing spate of bad leadership, terrorism, kidnapping, religion, ethnic unrest, unemployment, decaying social infrastructures, food insecurity, and poverty, the desire for material gains, poor educational infrastructure, and a collapsed economy, most Nigerians relocate to the developed part of the Western world, seeking refugee or asylum status in the Western hemisphere. For many of those refugees or asylum-seekers, the journey to the host countries wasn't that smooth, as they had to risk their lives by going through tremendous difficulties before being granted refugee or asylum status.

While in the diaspora, some immigrants face difficulty adjusting to their new home, including coping with racism, overcoming cultural and language barriers, and encountering discrimination. The effects of these unhealthy experiences on psychological and social well-being are especially profound for certain populations, including children, women, and those with limited financial resources. Between the reality of life in overseas countries and the urge to return to their country of birth, the former is often the more preferred option. The individual living in the Diaspora experiences a dynamic tension, every day between living 'here' and remembering 'there', i.e., between memories of the place of origin and entanglements with places of residence and between the metaphorical physical home (Boehmer, 1995). Simultaneously, these Nigerians have consanguineal mothers, fathers, siblings, extended family members, ancestral homes, and cultural rituals that sustainably define them as Nigerians. This paper discusses the dilemma Nigerians in the diaspora face, the tension between memories of their place of origin and entanglements with their places of residence. Significantly, this paper examines Ngozi Anyanwu's *The Homecoming Queen*.

This study uses the character Kelechi in Ngozi Anyanwu's *The Homecoming Queen* to construct a framework for understanding the issue of representation of the home in migrant /migration literature, the social construction of "home," and the myth of a return to the cultural homeland that diasporic Africans, including Nigerians, face each day. It explores some of the variables that impact their ability or unwillingness to establish social and psychological

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roots in the diaspora, as well as those that create ambivalence and barriers to their constant refrain to return and settle in their cultural homeland. This condition leaves the African diasporic persons in limbo and in the middle of nowhere. It frustrates their integrational processes in the diaspora where they reside, and conscientiously contribute to nation-building, or the mythical and elusive cultural homeland where they fervently walk away from, like the Israelites during their Babylonian and Assyrian deportation, pray, and strive to return to. Additionally, this state of limbo pervasively skews their socialization and acculturation capacities for their children and future generations.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical underpinnings of this paper are grounded in the multitude of conceptual and theoretical perspectives embedded in diasporic and Transnational Studies (Bhabha, H. K., 1994; Gilroy, P., 1993; Hall, S., 1990; Said, E.,1978). This is because diasporic and transnational discourses spring from the dialectical intercourse between the emergent social theories of nationality, ethnicity, race, culture, socialization, and identity on the one hand, and on the other is the theorization of the concept of diaspora, transnational movements, and their implications for the construction of a permanent homeland. This subjective construction of 'homeland' presents in two facets: one is the real, and the other is the putative, mythical homeland. The existence, interplay, and intersectionality of the corporeal and mythical homeland then create physical, mental, and emotional tensions and turmoil in the psyche of diasporic and transnational entities, with no foreseeable end date for the crystallization, settlement, integration, and assumption of a linear citizenship.

The African diaspora (Allex Assensoh, 2010) refers to a growing transnational community, contingent on their historical experience with external subjugation and colonial domination over several millennia. This reality which became exacerbated by neo-colonial manipulation, subterfuge and to which hitherto, has made globalization become the catalyst for forced or optionality compulsory separation or flight from the homeland. Resultantly, and over time, a sense of deterritorialization began to emerge, and bred sentiments about a putative homeland, with the discourse assuming increasing dominance among the migrant persons. Rather than the acquiescence of a deterritorialization ethos (Eisenstadt, 2000; Tambiah, 2000), Diasporic Communities have engaged in the paradigm shift of transnationalistic interests and engagement and the persistent mythical idea of a homeland return, with the Nigerian diaspora as an epitome of this emergent diasporic transnationalism.

The Relevance of the Theory to the Paper

Migrants share common features of dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions. For decades in Nigeria, the country has been enmeshed in several social unrests threatening the corporate existence of Nigerians, particularly, socio-economic issues and environmental factors, such as wars, political discontent, the quest for economic empowerment, drought, flood, famine, volcanic eruptions, and so on, over the decades have been the precursors for Nigerians in the diaspora. Sadly, over the past two existences, from a religious crisis to Boko Haram, Fulani insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping, etc. Such a distressing life makes it necessary for the citizens to migrate from their locality and country to live or work in foreign lands (Elaigwu, 2011). However, globalization and the integration of the world's economy have recently further fueled the urge for migration. Therefore, the concept of Diaspora has become firmly rooted (Brubaker, 2005) in the yearning for an increasingly migrating "homeland" (Safran, 1991).

Resultantly, exposure to traumatic conditions, coupled with difficulties in acculturation, can lead to severe and long-lasting psychological and behavioural problems, including depression,

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anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a high risk for suicide. These conditions force Nigerians in the diaspora to become nostalgic of home, resilient in their attitude to life and sometimes to decide on returning home. This reality berates Gaspar de Alba's (1991) thesis on "the links between geographical, social, cultural displacement and identity in contemporary today's globalized world".

Conceptual Definition of Terms

Diaspora: Diaspora refers to the dispersal of people from their homeland to other parts of the world, often resulting in the creation of new communities and identities. This dispersal can be voluntary or involuntary, and it often involves a sense of displacement, dislocation, and longing for one's homeland (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1993).

Belonging: Belonging refers to the emotional and psychological sense of connection and attachment to a particular place, community, or culture. It involves a sense of identity, security, and acceptance, and it is often tied to feelings of nostalgia, memory, and tradition (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010).

Nostalgia: Nostalgia refers to a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, often triggered by memories of one's childhood, homeland, or cultural heritage. It involves a bittersweet emotional state that combines happiness and sadness, and it often serves as a coping mechanism for dealing with loss, displacement, and social change (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979).

Culture: Culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a particular group of people. It encompasses various aspects of human life, including language, religion, art, music, and literature, and it is often tied to a sense of identity, community, and belonging (Tylor, 1871; Geertz, 1973).

Homecoming: Homecoming refers to the act of returning to one's homeland, community, or place of origin, often after a period of absence or displacement. It involves a sense of reunion, reconnection, and reintegration, and it often serves as a way of reestablishing one's sense of identity, belonging, and cultural heritage (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1994).

Literature Review

Diaspora

The African diaspora is a geographical process that predates long-distance coerced migration in history, in which more than 12 million Africans journeyed to the Americas in over 27,000 voyages between the 16th and 19th centuries. The concept of the African diaspora first developed among Africans. John Mbiti's (1990) echoes this contention, arguing for scholarly attention to the difference among African Diasporas which existed on the continent of Africa before the introduction of the European slave trade, whereas a handful of Nigerians have been diasporic residents since the 1950s and 1960s, due to their quest for the acquisition of Western education and skills.

In the traditional understanding of home among Nigerians (Africans) in the diaspora, the notion of "home" is often synonymous with the country of birth or origin. Home never fails to evoke strong recollections of childhood, of happy times spent with family and friends. It conjures up memories of sudden and spectacular nostalgia or that frequent act of remembering the past, through familiar sights, sounds, scents, and even tastes, connecting Nigeria in the diaspora to home. Everywhere in the world, Nigerians and other diasporic persons idealize the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, and prosperity. This collective memory and myth about

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the homeland, including its location, history, and achievements, becomes catalytic in the quest to return.

Belonging

Belonging refers to the emotional and psychological sense of connection and attachment to a particular place, community, or culture. It involves a sense of identity, security, and acceptance, and it is often tied to feelings of nostalgia, memory, and tradition (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010). The quest for belonging is a pervasive theme in Nigerian African literature, reflecting the complexities of identity, culture, and nationality in a postcolonial society. One of the most iconic works of Nigerian literature, Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963) offers a nuanced exploration of belonging, navigating the complexities of cultural heritage and national citizenship. The play's protagonist, Baroka, is a traditional Yoruba king who must confront the challenges of modernity and national identity. Soyinka's work highlights the tensions between traditional and modern identities, as Baroka's quest for belonging is shaped by his cultural heritage and his role as a national leader.

In contrast, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) explores the quest for belonging in the context of colonialism and cultural disruption. The protagonist, Okonkwo, struggles to maintain his traditional Igbo identity in the face of British colonialism, which threatens to erase his cultural heritage. Achebe's novel highlights the tensions between traditional and modern identities, as Okonkwo's quest for belonging is ultimately thwarted by the colonial powers that seek to impose their own culture and values.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a universal human emotion that plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity. It is a sentimental longing for the past, often triggered by memories of childhood, homeland, or cultural heritage. Nostalgia has the power to evoke strong emotions, create a sense of belonging, and shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world (Halbwachs, 1992). Nostalgia allows individuals and communities to connect with their past, heritage, and traditions. Nostalgia can evoke feelings of warmth, comfort, and belonging, providing a sense of continuity and stability in an ever-changing world (Boym, 2001). Nostalgia allows individuals to reflect on their cultural heritage and traditions, and to reconnect with their roots. This is particularly important for individuals who have experienced displacement, migration, or cultural disruption. For example, the African diaspora has utilized nostalgia as a means to reconnect with their ancestral homeland and cultural heritage (Gilroy, 1993).

Furthermore, nostalgia can be used as a tool for cultural preservation and revitalization. By nostalgizing cultural traditions and practices, individuals can help to preserve cultural heritage and pass it down to future generations. For example, the revival of traditional music and dance in many African countries can be seen as a form of nostalgic cultural preservation (Turino, 2000). However, nostalgia can also be problematic, as it can distort historical memories, perpetuate myths, and reinforce social hierarchies. It can also lead to a romanticization of the past, ignoring its complexities and injustices. In contemporary culture, nostalgia is often exploited for commercial purposes, with retro-themed products, films, and music evoking a sense of nostalgia and sentimentality (Davis, 1979). Nevertheless, nostalgia remains a powerful force, shaping our cultural identities and informing our relationships with the past.

Culture

Culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a particular group of people. It is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of

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human life, including language, religion, art, music, and literature. According to Edward Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1). This definition emphasizes the idea that culture is a learned behaviour that is acquired through socialization and interaction with others. Culture plays a crucial role in shaping our identities, values, and beliefs. It influences the way we think, feel, and behave, and it provides us with a sense of belonging and connection to others. For example, language is an essential aspect of culture that enables us to communicate with others and express our thoughts and feelings.

Nigerian culture is a rich and diverse tapestry of traditions, customs, and practices. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is a multicultural society that is characterized by a wide range of cultural expressions. Nigerian culture is a rich and diverse tapestry of traditions, customs, and practices. Its traditional clothing, cuisine, music, and dance are some of the most distinctive aspects of the country's culture, and they play a crucial role in shaping the identities and values of Nigerians (Awoshika, 2023).

Homecoming

Homecoming is a pervasive theme in African American literature, symbolizing the quest for identity, belonging, and roots. In Toni Morrison's Beloved, the protagonist Sethe embarks on a journey of self-discovery, confronting the trauma of her past and reclaiming her heritage. Similarly, in Richard Wright's Native Son, the protagonist Bigger Thomas struggles to find his place in a society that denies him his humanity. Homecoming in African American literature is often marked by a sense of nostalgia, longing, and dislocation (Brah, 1996). It reflects the historical experiences of slavery, segregation, and migration, which have disrupted African American communities and identities (Clifford, 1994). Through their works, African American writers seek to reclaim their cultural heritage, rebuild their communities, and assert their right to belong.

The concept of the African diaspora first developed among Africans. John Mbiti's (1990), work echoes this contention, arguing for scholarly attention to the differences among African diasporas that existed on the continent of Africa prior to the introduction of the European slave trade. Even though a handful of Nigerians have been part of the diaspora since the 1950s and 1960s, driven by the pursuit of Western education and skills.

In the traditional understanding of home among Nigerians (Africans) in the diaspora, the notion of “home” is often synonymous with the country of birth or origin. Home never fails to evoke strong recollections of childhood, of happy times spent with family and friends. It conjures up memories of sudden and spectacular nostalgia or that frequent act of remembering the past, through familiar sights, sounds, scents, and even tastes, connecting Nigeria in the diaspora to home. Everywhere in the world, Nigerians and other diasporic persons idealize the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, and prosperity. This collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, and achievements, becomes catalytic in the quest to return.

The Dramatist and Her Social Responsibility

Literature (drama) has been widely acclaimed as a positive medium for mirroring society. While drama entertains, it also teaches and informs. This powerful attribute of drama has been employed by playwrights over the ages to make constructive commentaries on the happenings in society and thus, affect some positive changes in man and his environment.

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This is aptly captured by Eghagha (11) in the introduction on the potential for popular theatre for national development thus, … "because popular theatre (drama) can reach all strata of society using a simple language, a simple method, its outreach could be the tonic the nation needs for the change in values which both the leaders and followers of the country are currently clamoring for''. The dramatist can achieve this through her works, because she is "a member of society. So, naturally her artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic contradictions and political happenings of her time". As a product of a particular society, the playwright cannot divorce herself from her society without becoming irrelevant. A notable trend is that drama or the theatre influences society, while society also influences drama or the theatre. It is against this background, therefore, that Ngozi Anyanwu in *The Homecoming Queen* examines some crucial migrants' problems bedevilling the Nigerian in the diaspora.

Qualitative Research (A Textual Analysis)

This study will employ a textual analysis. Textual Analysis is a qualitative research methodology that involves a systematic and detailed examination of texts, such as written documents, images, videos, or performances (Fairclough, 2013). It aims to uncover the underlying meanings, themes, and power dynamics within the text. Drama Textual Analysis is a specific type of textual analysis that focuses on the critical examination of dramatic texts, such as plays, scripts, or performances (Creswell, 2014). By employing drama textual analysis, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the dramatic text, its cultural and historical context, and its significance within the broader literary and theatrical canon. It is against this background, therefore, that Ngozi Anyanwu in *The Homecoming Queen* examines some crucial migrants' problems bedevilling Nigerians in the diaspora.

Thematic Preoccupation of *The Homecoming Queen* by Ngozi Anyanwu

The play text is a deepening reality of psychoanalytical, sociological, postcolonial, and psychosocial. The Homecoming tells the story of a novelist, Kelechi, who returns home to Nigeria to care for her elderly father. Kelechi left the country after a traumatic event in her youth, and her return forces her to examine her past after a decade away from the place she was raised. Kelechi left Nigeria for the United States, leaving her family and her culture behind. Fifteen years later, she is now a best-selling novelist and must return to Nigeria to care for her ailing father. Before she can say goodbye, however, she must relearn the traditions she had forgotten. Kelechi's homecoming soon becomes a head-on collision with her culture, trauma, family history, the love of those who never forgot her, and her little "monster secret".

The first scene of the play begins with the preparation for the welcome celebration of Keechi, who left her Nigerian Igbo family 15 years ago to live in the USA. The lively women who are busy with cooking invest much energy in their traditional Igbo cultural songs, gossiping for amusement. Probably, anxious to set eyes on Kelechi, and to feel the mannerisms characteristic of Nigerians who have overstayed with the white man. In the same background, Papa, Kelechi's father, is mustering his fragile energy to welcome his daughter.

Women 3: (sings). It has been tooooo long....
Papa: Will she remember this old man
Women 3: Papa, but I knew you'd bring her back.
Papa: No matter. We will proceed. The women, oh my God, so loyal you are, sooo joyful you are. Nigeria's daughter is back, back, back, back, oh..... oh..... (The joy is interrupted when

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we hear the sound of a car pulling up, and a car door slamming, and the faint sound of a very American voice haggling with her ride, it is Kelechi.

At the heart of a young girl of 15 years going abroad to stay all by herself for economic, educational or employment reasons, or for a better life opportunity lies the fundamental tension of living abroad, while being drawn back to Nigeria. This tension is made explicit in a passage from Teju Cole's "Every Day Is for the Thief" (2014), in which the protagonist thinks about returning from New York to Lagos. Similarly, she must return to a culture with which she is not connected. Kelechi is not bilingual. She is just connected to parents who are Nigerian and Igbo, and to be close to her culture, but not of the culture, has a debilitating emotional wreck on Kelechi's mind and ability to cope and absolves all that the women, and Beatrice, slap her with upon her homecoming. This resulting tension is a typical, perhaps even constitutive characteristic of contemporary Nigerians living in the diaspora.

Kelechi: Hey, don't touch that. Is my father here? I don't have a key. I said don't touch that. (they grab her thighs)
Woman 2: Hey! She dey strong oh (See, she is strong) (they grab her arm)
Woman 1: But she is getting too big. See, Fatima-
Kelechi: I see we still have no need for personal space. Hey, did you just call me fat?
Woman 2: See, her arm. You tink sey you be man? (You think you are a man? The women laugh as they touch her bottom).
Woman 1: See, her nyash. Helty, helty! (It's very healthy! They grab her breasts; she aggressively slaps their hands away).
Kelechi: Okay. That's enough. Stop, Stop. HAFIA! (haff-EE-yuh.

In fantasy and myth, homecoming is a dramatic event: bands play, the fatted calf is killed, a banquet is prepared, and there is rejoicing that the prodigal has returned. In the same vein, Sandy Shawn (2020) argues that returns and homecomings are often complicated and painful affairs. The concept of "home" is a much more relatable piling of trauma, healing, despair, and love. Kelechi, the novelist, is back because her father doesn't have long to live, and she has come to pay her final respects. Death is the ultimate reckoning. Homecoming stress is the most significant predictor of current PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptomatology, superseding combat exposure, childhood and civilian traumas, and stressful life events. A factor analysis resulted in four orthogonal factors: shame, negative interpersonal interaction, social withdrawal, and resentment (Brandy Williams, 1999).

Kelechi: Seriously daddy, are you good?
Papa: (Not answering). You would know if you called.
Kelechi: Dad we talk once a month
Papa: Once a month? Am I a chore? Are you in prison? Chai, you think that's good enough?
Kelechi: I bought you the laptop so you can Skype
Papa: SKYPE?
I want to see my family.
I want to hold onto my daughter.
That is what I want
Is that too much to ask?
I don't want to Skype.
I don't know how to use DAAT TING.

This expensive confrontation cracked Kelechi's voice, and she began to cry. The wall of control that she had carefully maintained for fifteen years began to fall with her secret tears.

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Kelechi was feeling the residual anger in her own wounded inner child, and she wanted to cry out in rage and indignation. The sadness and loneliness of all that happened here-home, where she has returned to in obeisance to her inner will, accompanied by her father's consent, felt overwhelming. How could she ever recover from so much grief? This expression of inner trauma in Kelechi to her father is perhaps compounded with what Robert Gooding-Williams (2019), William Edward Burghardt (2020), and Du Bois (1903) called "double-consciousness, to refer to a source of inward "twoness" putatively experienced by African-Americans, because of their racialized oppression and devaluation in a white-dominated society.

Consequently, emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless in a dangerous world. Psychological trauma can leave you struggling with upsetting emotions, memories, and anxiety that won't go away. It can also leave you feeling numb, disconnected, and unable to trust other people. Sadly, this emotion is leaving Kelechi and her father, too haltingly and often painfully, attempting to reconnect and reconcile in anticipation of his passing. Matters are further complicated by entanglements and conflicts with the house girl, Beatrice.

Papa: Are you hungry?
Kelechi: I'm tired.
Papa: Nonsense. Will you eat?
Kelechi: I will after I sleep. (The girl who answered to door has brought out an old-school Nigerian/English breakfast tea/soft bread/egg and begins to set the table).
Papa: Nonsense, you must eat. I want to hear of your adventures. I want to live vigorously through you.
Kelechi: You mean vicariously?
Papa: It is rude to correct your father.
Kelechi: Of course.
Beatrice: Kelechi, here you are, I am very excited to-
Kelechi: (to the girl). Can you grab me water? (The girl looks at Papa first. The lively, lightly confrontational exchanges between father and daughter are quietly observed by the young servant Beatrice (excellent speaking volumes through her deadpan silence), who Papa explains to be Kelechi's cousin.
Kelechi: Does she only understand Igbo? (To the girl) Wotah. (louder) Woo-tah.
Papa: She's not deaf. (To the girl) Go. Bring her water. (The girl leaves)
Kelechi: Daddy what is it with you and the strays? Which hut did you find this house girl?
Papa: Kelechi what?
Kelechi: What? She's a house girl right?
Papa: She... She is your cousin.
Kelechi: It's the village, everyone's my cousin. That doesn't make her not a house-girl, Dad.
Papa: (frowns at her).
Kelechi: Don't frown at me dad.
Papa: You've... You've been in America too long.
Kelechi: You sent me there, daddy.
Papa: At your request and I raised you here-
Kelechi: Don't remind me.
Papa: You didn't have to stay away-
Kelechi: Yes, I did. (Papa & Kelechi both suck their teeth). Papa, I don't want to argue with you!
Papa: You will drive me to an early grave.

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Kelechi: Well. You are welcome. As much as I enjoy these hearts to hearts, can you bring me my pills, please?
Beatrice: What is wrong with you?
Kelechi: What do you mean?
Beatrice: You don't need all those pills for malaria Are these anxious pills?
Kelechi: How do you know about?
Kelechi. You got me I get anxious I actually get very anxious
Beatrice: You need God
Kelechi: I need my pills Go get them.

The above dialogue between Kelechi and Beatrice may have eloquently urged Kelechi to put her mask aside and come out of hiding from her wounded inner child. Kelechi's wounded inner child contaminated her life with temper tantrums, overreactions, marital problems, addictions, toxic parenting, and damaging and painful relationships. Solomon Harold (2021) similarly notes that traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety. Any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed and isolated can result in trauma, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. It's not the objective circumstances that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened, and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized.

Obina: Can I touch you? (He asks, and an agonizing eternity of indecision fills the gap before she answers, "Yes."

Obina, Kelechi's childhood friend-turned-handsome-and-successful-world-banker, who was once her family's houseboy, stands to reveal to the readers the core of Kelechi's homecoming, to attend to her dying father or to face the demons she buried and walked away from 15 years ago when she travelled to the diaspora. Contrastingly, this is the scene in which the ambitious Kelechi finally melts for a steady Obina who has always loved her; it is a staple of romantic comedy, if not so much of real life.
Papa Kelechi! beeya! Come down!
She comes down the stairs.
Papa: This is Obina. He will be staying here, he will be doing the cooking, and cleaning around the house.
Kelechi: Nna why not a gal
Papa: Do not question me Say hello
Kelechi: Hello papa (in igbo)
Kelechi: Kedu
Obi: Odima. Kelechi do you know how to play football?
Obi: Of course
Kelechi: Come closer. (Obi does).
Kelechi: You are small. (Papa comes down the stairs).
Papa Kelechi: why have I not heard you? When did I say when I call you must answer (He surveys the area. Surveys them both; Kelechi wearing Obina's singlet. The following scene is done in igbo.

Papa: What happened ……. What has happened? (Kelechi and Obina looked at each other. Papa rushes towards Obina).
Papa: What did you do!
Kelechi: Stop. He did nothing
Papa: Did I ask for you to speak? What happened? (Their silence is loud).

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Papa: (to Kelechi). If you do not tell me I will beat you well well. (He moves towards her as if to strike her. She begins to cry He stops**).**
Papa: What happened? I demand to know Fine. (She winces and slowly and painfully walks up the stairs).
Obina: They hurt her
Kelechi: Meachaunu
Papa: Who? Who?!
Obina: There were many. I'm not sure.
Kelechi: You promised.
Papa: What did I tell you you! …… You wanted to be a boy. Stupid gall, and now they have shown you Fungah. (She continues up the stairs …… They listen to her go up the stairs. It is painful to hear…).
Obina: Oga I am sorry I know you told me to-
Papa: Shut up-
Obina: I know I was supposed to**…**
Papa: Shut up your mouth or I will give you something to cry about. We will not speak of this again. You understand? Draw your ear. (Obina pulls on his own ear. Papa Look at me). What is tomorrow for? What is tomorrow for?
Obina: Tomorrow is for forgetting…
Papa: Ehn?
Obina: Tomorrow is for forgetting the bad things of today.
Papa: Forget Obina. Forget. (Obina watches Papa go up the stairs. Phone rings for some time snapping Obina into PRESENT**.**

Time seems to freeze when you learn that someone you love has a life-threatening illness. Maybe you instinctively pushed the news away. Or perhaps you cried or swung into action. No matter what happened that day, time and life go on after the diagnosis is made—regardless of whether you feel ready to cope. Often, people feel anticipatory grief when they know someone they care about is seriously ill. Anticipatory grief means grappling with and grieving a loss before it completely unfolds. As the scene closes, it is revealed as nothing but a dream. In reality, returns and homecomings are often complicated and painful affairs, especially for expats from countries still enmeshed in the consequences of post-colonial looting and free-for-all corruption. For those of us who have chosen to build lives abroad, the concept of "home" is a much more relatable piling of trauma, healing, despair, and love.
In its happy, but deliberately unreal ending, her play suggests that for some traumatized people there's no place like home — not even home itself." "I've been waiting all my life for someone to find me"; "It feels like a homecoming"; "My life has been transformed since I found my child." (John Bradshaw 13). Yet, by the end of the day, the mood had changed to one of peace and joy. People sat together; some held hands, and most were smiling as we did the closing exercise. Anyawu's play focuses on helping people finish their unresolved grief from childhood grief resulting from abandonment, abuse in all forms, the neglect of childhood developmental dependency needs, and the enmeshments that result from family-system dysfunction.

Conclusion

This paper examined the representation of the home in migrant/migration literature (drama) in Ngozi Anyawu's *The Homecoming Queen*. In *The Homecoming Queen*, the writer discusses the experiences of Kelechi, who returns to her homeland in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, from the United States of America. The attempt made here was to try to expose the representation of the home in migrant/migration literature. In this, there were several

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concepts of "home," a lot of which were not always coterminous with physical structure. The construction of home in the case of diasporic Nigerians is both physical and mental, but mostly mental. The mental construction of home then leaves such Nigerians in the quandary of where they belong. Nigerians often reside in and become attached to their foreign residences and host countries. They also maintain a putative construct of home in the places from where they migrated to their diasporic domiciles, which now becomes the bone of contention for their inability to construct a sustainable mental home. The family's responsibility to parents, friends, relationships, acquaintances, and the bond with their country of origin reinforced the constant yearning for their homecoming. Migration is being caused by different reasons. People often migrate due to the Golden Fleece, poverty, unemployment, academic purposes, crime, etc.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that Nigerian political elites must prioritize the country's interests over their own self-enrichment. Employment, affordable education/accommodation, social security, social infrastructure, and health infrastructure, among others, must be created for the teeming Nigerian youths. Only then will the Nigerian nation witness growth, sustainable development, and prosperity. The need for unnecessary migration into foreign lands, where migrants are exposed to ill-treatment, will then become a choice.

1. The main factor driving this migration is simply the failure of their governments to provide them with opportunities within their countries of origin.
2. African governments, in general, need to prioritize economic development through investment in youth, education, and job creation as a means to curb the migration crisis.
3. Countries should promote stability, education, and employment opportunities and reduce the drivers of forced migration, including by promoting resilience, thereby enabling individuals to choose between staying or migrating.
4. Migration can be halted by a substantial investment in infrastructure and human development.
5. A focus on the creation of training and employment opportunities for young people within the continent.
6. African countries and global partners must break the smuggler networks that currently grossly exploit young people.
7. Increased support and recognition of the informal sector and creating policies that allow it to thrive and transition to formality. This can be achieved when governments embrace local innovations and support their growth by providing the necessary resources and support.
8. Embracing and investing more in non-traditional business models such as sports and sporting academies.
9. Increased resource allocation by governments to ministries supporting youth and gender, as they make up the most significant constituent in our population, thereby being the most affected.
10. Finally, a mindset shift by young Africans, which drives us to take control and responsibility for our continent, is required.

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