
**Difficulty of Assimilation in Chimamanda Adichí's "*You in America*" (2001) and Molara Wood's "*Indigo*" (2013)
(Socio-psychological approach)**

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Abstract:

African literature has become prominent recently; especially that the African writers focus on controversial topics like the issue of belonging, the problematic of language, and national identity. Nigeria, which is famous for its rich literature, is known for its diverse ethnicities and its renowned writers. The paper in hand analyzes two short stories by two Nigerian writers from two different ethnic groups with binary cultures. Chimamnda Ngozi Adichie and Molara Wood were brought up in Nigeria, but spent a significant portion of their adult life in European countries and American states. Their writings show intimacy and connection to their Nigerian culture and tradition. In the present short stories, they focus on the idea of pluralism and acceptance of others as well as the difficulty of assimilation in two different societies. The paper also delves into the meanings and definitions of assimilation and multiculturalism, displaying the perspectives of sociologists and scholars towards the terms. This paper attempts to analyze the assimilation process while focusing on the emotional development of the protagonists, showing culture clashes through omniscient writers who apply modernist techniques like the flashback and interior monologue, manifesting the importance of pluralism and accepting others.

Keywords: assimilation, multiculturalism, culture clash, acceptance, Pluralism, Nigerian culture

Building a nation out of diverse ethnic entities is not confined to the United States of America or European countries as it can be also found in African countries specifically in the present days. After the independence of most of the African countries in the twentieth century and recently the emergence of the African Literature as it becomes a recognized epistemology in 1990, it has been crucial to discover the kind of literature written by the post-colonial African writers in the twenty-first century. Most of the post-colonial African writers have some points in common, for instance, the theme of belonging and non-belonging, the problematic of language, and national identity.

Nigerian literature in English is one which drags the most attention lately and it has a great influence worldwide mainly because this kind of literature has been written by new generation of writers who are able to produce prose in English as if it is their indigenous language (Ogunba). The paper in hand analyzes two short stories for two Nigerian writers with binary cultures focusing on the idea of pluralism and acceptance of others as well as the difficulty of assimilation in two different societies. Although both of the writers received their higher education in Western countries, and they do live in and work for western countries and magazines nowadays, one can sense in their writings a feeling of loss and homesickness, a strong affinity with their national identity.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichi's "You in America" (2001) highlights the difficulty of assimilation and mingling in the United States along with the idea of pluralism and being accepted in the American society through a Nigerian girl who had won a lottery and travelled to the U.S. The story reveals the truth of the falsified dream that most of the Nigerians imagine about America. It shows the hardships that might face a person who is not ready and qualified to be in such society. On the other hand, Molarra Wood's "Indigo" (2013) displays the problem of mingling, or one can say re-assimilation, faced Nigerian couples who came back to live in Nigeria after spending around five years in London. Although both of the stories are told from two different perspectives, they have nearly the same endings which accentuates the importance of

national identity and returning to one's homeland; one's origin. It is through the use of the language technique and the different points of view that the themes of belonging and homesickness are highlighted brilliantly, focusing on the emotional development of the female protagonists in Adichie's "You in America" and Wood's "Indigo", along with tracking the gradual steps required for the assimilation process, and highlighting the importance of pluralism and accepting others.

Terms of Assimilation and pluralism may appear to be contradictory in meaning, however, they can both be found in the same society; as some people go for assimilation, which means they try to get rid of their old norms and traditions in order to fit in the new society, while others are preserving or reviving their traditional cultures (Healey 43). Assimilation simply means the predominance of the host culture with its language and traditions. This can be seen in the United States in what they call the 'melting pot' process; that is to say, all the different minorities that come from different backgrounds should abandon their traditions and languages and dissolve in the new 'pot' in order to fit in the new society. The same idea of dominance can be seen in Nigeria, where the Nigerian language, traditions and beliefs are dominant. Thus, the new group or individuals is expected to adapt to the dominant culture and give up some of their traditions and beliefs.

Milton Gordon in his book *Assimilation in American life* quoted the definition of assimilation by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess which states: "Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (62). In Gordon's opinion, the meaning of the terms 'assimilation' and 'acculturation' may overlap. All of it is that sociologists tend to use the word 'assimilation', while cultural anthropologists go for 'acculturation' and both are results of ethnic confrontation. Regarding the term "acculturation" in social science, it is clear that its meaning is included in the previous definition as there are sharing experience and incorporation in common cultural

life. Furthermore, Arnold Rose defined acculturation as “the adoption by a person or group of the culture of another social group” (qtd. in Gordon 63). Thus, Assimilation is considered a natural result for the social interaction.

One of the causes of assimilation is the “voluntary immigration which increases the ethnic diversity of the host country” (Gordon 60). Gordon believes that an immigrant in the United States is considered assimilated as long as he/she acquires the language and can participate and get on in the native community without encountering prejudice; that he is able to find a place for himself in this community. This is what happens to Akkuna, the heroine of “You in America” as one can say she is on the first step of assimilation. Thus, assimilation mainly depends on the change of cultural behavior on both sides. It is a gradual process where cultural differences tend to disappear.

Robert Park, one of the most prominent American sociologists in the 1930s, and who has put the bases of a lot of theories of assimilation believes that there are predictable set of phases in which people go through towards assimilation that he called ‘race relation cycle’. Milton Gordon, as well as Park, believes that there are phases of interaction that lead to assimilation. Gordon broke down the overall process of assimilation into seven subprocesses. The main three of them are: ‘acculturation’ or what is called social assimilation, which depends on the changing of the cultural behavior. The second phase is ‘integration’ which focuses on the interaction among small groups and big communities, finally, ‘intermarriage’ which is considered the highest example of interaction (Healey 45-8, Gordon 61-5).

Milton Gordon distinguished between the cultural and structural components of a society. The cultural aspects are concerned with the customs, values, beliefs and ideas that individuals use to interpret their existence. The social structure is divided into two sectors, the primary one consists of small clubs, and groups of friends which enhance the interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, the secondary sector includes organizations, schools, and larger communities that connect the individual to the larger society

(Healey 48). This can be seen in the two short stories tackled in this paper as in “Indigo” there is the interpersonal relationships in small communities of friends and families, while in “You in America” there is a larger interaction in bigger communities which leads the heroine to her first step towards assimilation. One can guess that by the end of the story she might get married to her American friend, as she promised to come back to America, and so, this would be the third step of assimilation mentioned by Gordon which is “intermarriage” or “amalgamation” as Park called it. In Gordon’s theory, movement from acculturation to integration is the crucial step in the assimilation process. However, other critics believe that the assimilation does not need to be in a linear or one way direction, it can start from any phase.

Assimilation happens only when the minor groups change their cultural behavior and abandon their previous culture and acquire the new language and traditions. Gordon argued that acculturation, which is the change of cultural behavior, was prerequisite for integration (Gordon 60-1). This is very clear in the American society. The United States accepts different minorities, but they all should be dissolved in the American ‘pot’. President Roosevelt said in a speech about immigrants: “We have room for but one flag, the American flag. . . . We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language . . . and we have room for but one loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people” (qtd. in Healey 43). Therefore, assimilation depends more on the effort exerted by the minorities in a society.

Social assimilation mainly means the change in cultural behavior. According to the dictionary of sociological terms in the early 1940s assimilation is “the process by which persons who are unlike in their social heritages come to share the same body of sentiments, traditions, and loyalties” (qtd. in Gordon 64). It is thus clear that assimilation is limited to the fusion of cultures. Both cultures change their cultural behavior, though the weaker group, or that of the less number, is affected more by the host culture. Thus, social assimilation requires some modification in the characteristics of the foreign individuals; those who are new to the host culture, in

order to enable them to fit smoothly in the new society.

Re-assimilation or assimilating back to one's own culture is considered a part of assimilation as well. For example, when people take their yearly holiday and they travel to any country and change their daily routine, or drive on the right instead of driving on the left, they find it weird to drive on the left again when they come back to their homeland, and perhaps when they enter a supermarket, they find that their minds direct them to speak a different language; it becomes a little bit hard for them to assimilate again to their own culture. This happens with most individuals who travel to another country, especially if it has a different culture from their own, to learn or work for a long time. They found it difficult to assimilate back to their culture's norms and traditions. This can be seen in "Indigo".

Not everybody accepts change, or accepts other culture different from his/her own easily. There is always a clash at the beginning which most sociologists as Park and Gordon see it natural and inevitable towards assimilation. It is normal as different ethnicities have different values, beliefs, and backgrounds which let the new individual introduced to the host society get astonished from mostly everything he/she sees, this is very clear in "You in America", and that is why sometimes cultural conflict appear.

Cultural clash theory attributes ethnic conflict to cultural strife. In other words, differences in language, religion, customs, norms, values, beliefs and behavior generate confrontation among different ethnic groups. According to this theory immigration increases ethnic conflict because it heightens the awareness of differences between groups. However, ethnic conflict will subside as new groups become assimilated into the culture and institutions of the host society and cultural differences between them diminish. (Yang)

The host culture finds the traditions, values, language, and even names of the new individuals very strange. That is why a lot of immigrants tend to change their names in order to avoid the embarrassing situations in which people ask about the meaning of their names or find difficulty in pronouncing them. This

can be exemplified clearly through the heroine of “You in America”. Even Chimamanda Adichi herself when she publishes in some American magazines they tend to use an American name for her which is Amanda.

Although people live in the twenty first century, with all its technologies that made the world a small country, still there are cultural clashes between people and it happens because mainly they do not accept each other, and they do not want other minorities to affect their culture. “Cultural clashes began when people started to be on the move, even within their own national and local territories. Throughout history the misrepresentations of cultures, the hatred of different cultures, coupled with an ignorance of cultures have always been the underlying reasons for human conflict.” There should be a model of cultural harmonization or at least cultural understanding, so that human interaction would be easier and without conflicts. The modern societies are against change, however, there are a lot of different identities that obliged the new communities to realize “an era where interculturality, transculturalism and the eventual prospect of identifying a cosmopolitan citizenship can become a reality.” Still a certain level of cultural awareness of the other is not attained (Cuccioletta 2). As Radka Neumannova mentioned “there are still problems of integration, and continuous cultural misunderstandings and integration policies are not quite innovative” (2).

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, multiculturalism is “the practice of giving importance to all cultures in a society” (Multiculturalism). That is to say, different cultures live together in a society having the same rights and demands, and each of them enjoys practicing its own traditions and having its own separate identity; yet, they all follow the same rules and outlines that are drawn and directed by the society they live in, that is to say they live under the umbrella of multiculturalism. The term can be exemplified clearly through Nancy Jervis's article “What Is a Culture?” when she mentioned the multicultural classroom and that the American society acknowledges and accepts its differences and that they share their diversity which “has become a hallmark of

[their] culture” (Jervis). However, people and countries do not believe intrinsically in multiculturalism, they just assume that they accept it, while deep inside they are against it. This can be seen through the speech of a man of responsibility in one of the major countries around the world that embraces different religions and identities in its lands. As it was published on the BBC News Magazine, David Cameron; Britain’s Prime Minister declared in a security conference in Germany in 2011 “that the UK needed a stronger national identity to prevent extremism”. In his opinion multiculturalism “has encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream” (“Multiculturalism: What does it mean?”).

Not only Cameron who manifested this opinion, but also in 2004, Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality told the Times that “multiculturalism was out of date because it ‘suggests separateness’ and should be replaced with policies which promote integration and assert a core of Britishness” (“Multiculturalism: What does it mean?”). It is clear then that European countries, such as Britain, and American countries, such as the United States, as mentioned above in the speech of Roosevelt, do not accept the existence of other cultures that might affect their national identities. That is why assimilation becomes difficult for the minorities as assimilation is a reciprocal process, not one sided that depends only on the minorities.

Pluralism is another term that is much alike multiculturalism as both maintain the idea of distinct groups or individuals preserving their own culture and identities; yet, multiculturalism is like an umbrella that gathers all the diverse groups under it, while pluralism allows each group to live separately and practice its own norms and traditions with no interference or limitations from the host society. Moreover, “Multiculturalism is a matter of economic interests and political power; it demands remedies to economic and political disadvantages that people suffer as a result of their minority status” (Song). A simple definition of pluralism can be cited in Merriam Webster Dictionary as “a situation in which people of different social classes, religions, races, etc., are

together in a society but continue to have their different traditions and interests” (Pluralism). Pluralism has a lot of subcategories; one of them is ‘cultural pluralism’, which some critics as Roy L. Brooks considers it an equivalent to multiculturalism (Grosu 108).

In 1915 Horace M. Kallen was the first one to use the term ‘cultural pluralism’ in which he “envisioned a nation of European multi-ethnic nations residing within an ‘American Civilization and utilizing the English language as a common language” (Pantoja et al. 127). Moreover, Peggy R. Sandy exclaimed that cultural pluralism can be found in any society where there is “more than one style dimension,...more than one set of cultural themes, information components and behavior styles sanctioned in a society” (qtd. in Pantoja et al. 128). She argued that these subcultures will interact together to share the same elements in the mainstream culture, that is the core idea of multiculturalism. In addition, The Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of teachers set forth a societal value and goal that is consistent with cultural diversity claiming that cultural pluralism requires the presence of individuals, groups, and communities of two or more languages and different cultural styles and behavior, and they can practice their customs and religion publicly and normally within the dominant majority, and no one is preferred over another. Thus, it is clear from the definitions mentioned that multiculturalism is equivalent to cultural pluralism.

According to Bruce Garder, a linguist from the United States Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, cultural pluralism “implies social justice, but goes far beyond” (qtd. in Pantoja et al. 129). Garder added:

It means the co-existence, preferably in a status of mutual respect and encouragement within the same state or nation, of two or more cultures which are significantly distinct one from the other in their patterns of belief and behavior including, as the case may be, different languages. Cultural Pluralism is not an assimilated posture; it is a negation of assimilation. It is a posture which maintains that there is more than one legitimate way of being human without paying the penalties of second class citizenship, and that this

pluralism would enrich and strengthen the nation. (qtd. in Pantoja 129)

A researcher can conclude that cultural pluralism has the same meaning of multiculturalism which enables different individuals to live peacefully in a society and practice their beliefs and religions openly, all as indigenous inhabitants.

It is worth mentioning that multiculturalism differs in its application from a country to another. This can be illustrated clearly through demonstrating multiculturalism in Canada as it is an American bilingual country that applied multiculturalism politically and socially through which the advantages and disadvantages can be spotted. It was first used as a political term in 1960 to highlight the position of the non-Europeans in European countries. Then, the term gained its national usage in Canada in 1970, and in 1988 they issued Multiculturalism Act, and it became an essential part of the Canadian heritage and identity. The main political objectives that appeared with the enunciation of multiculturalism in 1970 emphasized the assistance of migrants to retain and support their cultural identities along with participating in the Canadian society as well as helping them to acquire at least one official language. Consequently, multiculturalism is a sociological fact in which different groups live together and accept each other; yet, each of them keeps its native identity. It is an ideology, a set of ideas that support cultural diversity (Grosu 103).

However, there are pros and cons for multiculturalism. As Lucia Grosu mentioned in her research paper "Multiculturalism or Transculturalism? Views on Cultural Diversity," multiculturalism "is charged with actually standing for assimilation by the host country's national culture" (105). Some critics believed that multiculturalism encouraged the separation between the minorities and the host society, and others accused the multicultural policy of constructing a fragmented identity for the country by keeping minorities as outsiders in need for legitimation as illustrated in the example of Canada. However, no one can deny the importance of multiculturalism as it might be a step towards transculturalism or what is called cosmopolitan citizenship.

Donald Cuccioletta argued that multiculturalism in Canada failed to achieve its goal “of a cosmopolitan identity of Canadian citizenship” as it was “tainted with the passages of ethnocentrism” (1). In his opinion, transculturalism could achieve the cosmopolitan citizenship that the first failed to establish. Any culture is not static; it is an “evolutionary process” that involves other different cultures, and that is why cultures need to be in a continuous process of give and take (3). The main difference between multiculturalism and transculturalism is that the first gathers all the different cultures in a country and try to integrate the minority into the mainstream; as if it’s a big umbrella that gathers different cultures below it and they should all belong to its norms; meanwhile, it reinforces cultural boundaries. On the other hand, transculturalism interweaves all cultural identities in a country, it blends them to form a new mainstream culture; as if they are mixed in a big melting pot, and by this way it breaks all the cultural boundaries. However, some critics argued against transculturalism as it obliges each distinct culture to sacrifice some of its identity and accepts others’ identities; “[t]his process of recognizing oneself in the other leads inevitably to a cosmopolitan citizenship” in order to share a new identity in the new mainstream (Cuccioletta 9).

Both assimilation and multiculturalism seek integration in the host society; yet, each with its own rules of incorporation. Assimilation requires minorities, or the new individuals to give up most of their norms and traditions and acquire the cultural norms of the host culture. Multiculturalism, apparently, let individuals have their distinct cultures; meanwhile, it helps them to integrate by teaching them the requirements of inclusion in the new culture, and in this respect it is also imposing the host culture, but in a different way. Some researchers as Donald Cuccioletta support the cosmopolitan citizenship as the solution to the drawbacks of multiculturalism; while others see that transculturalism or cosmopolitan citizenship, with its concept of mixing all the cultures when they interact, deprive each of them of having its own distinct identity.

All the theories and concepts are made to provide

acceptance and equilibrium of living among people. New individuals or groups in different countries need assimilation to adapt to the host society. Although it depends mainly on them to acquire and accept the dominant culture, there is an effort on the society to accept them as well and be tolerant with their differences till they integrate completely as it is a gradual process as mentioned above and a reciprocal process as Milton Gordon asserted. However, there is anxiety concerning national identity in different countries around the world, that is why the inhabitants of the host cultures attack the new subjects. This worry about identity and the commitment to the traditions and beliefs is displayed in the two stories tackled here especially that the protagonists are originally Nigerians and they experienced living in western countries.

Nigeria is very well-known for its literature and writers among its African counterparts. After its independence in 1960, Nigeria became aware of the different ethnicities that form the country. It is estimated that there are more than 250 ethnic groups, each with its own language and traditions. The most famous of which are the Hausa, the Igbo, and the Yoruba. The Hausa is in the north of Nigeria, and the Muslims and the Arabic language affect it deeply; however, light will be shed more on the Igbo and the Yoruba as they are the origins of Adichie and Wood successively.

The Yoruba people live on the southwestern part of Nigeria, they occupy the lands of the Benin Republic and part of Togo. They all speak the same language and “[t]hey held a belief system in common: the Ifa religion” (Robinson). Anthony Millard gives more information about them in the following lines:

They consider the city of Ile-Ife their ancestral home and the deity Oduduwa their progenitor. Most Yoruba are farmers but live in urban areas away from their rural farmland. Each Yoruba subgroup is ruled by a paramount chief, or oba, who is usually supported by a council of chiefs. The ooni (oni) of Ile-Ife, who is the spiritual leader of the Yoruba, and the alafin (alafin) of Oyo, who is their traditional political leader, are the most powerful rulers, and their influence is still acknowledged throughout the Yoruba areas. (Millard)

The Ifa divination system is practiced among the Yoruba peoples, and the word refers to the mystical figure of Ifa, which was regarded by the Yoruba communities as “the deity of wisdom and intellectual development. In the twelfth century, the city of Ile-Ife, located in the Osun region of the South-west of Nigeria, emerged as the cultural and political centre of this community.” The Ifa divination system depends on a system of signs that are interpreted by a diviner (“Ifa Divination System”).

As for the Igbo, it is the third major ethnic group, and it is located in the south east of Nigeria. They live in small decentralized and democratic settlements. “The largest political unit is the village, which is ruled by a council of elders (chosen by merit, not heredity) rather than by a chief” (Millard). The Igbo respects the personal relationships especially the males. The father is considered strong if he can support more than one nuclear family and has land and wealth. Children are required to give greetings to their elders. Moreover, “[s]ocial status is based on wealth, regardless of occupation” (Igbo). There are some differences between the Yoruba and the Igbo, what concerns the reader here is that the Yoruba “are more mythic people than the Igbo” (Ottenberg 48).

Nowadays, the third generation of Nigerian writers like Adichi, Wood, and others try to avoid the oral tradition and folklore in their writings, which was the main characteristic of the Nigerian literature, and they entangle themselves more with contemporary issues related to their country as “culture-contact and culture conflict, ... notions of sexism and the place of womenfolk”, that might help Nigeria to overcome its problems and become one of the prominent nations in the world (Ognuba). The Nigerian literature was mainly depending on the folktales using fairies and magical characters. In the twentieth century, there was a major shift in literary style from fantasy to realism as the writers employed human characters and concrete symbols. In addition, the younger writers' works show a particular interest in the exploration of the characters' emotional development as found in the two short stories displayed here. “Nigerian Literature has a long history in the oral tradition” (Gardner). It was through this oral medium that they could keep

much of their traditions and beliefs. In Yorubaland, for instance, farmers used to gather their children and recount stories “to teach them to respect the dictates of their custom” (Gardner). That is why the Nigerian traditions, customs, and beliefs are ingrained in the new writers’ minds and it affects their writings. Their English writings seem informative about Nigerian beliefs and customs. In the two stories tackled here, the writers expose some of their Nigerian beliefs as well as using words from their native language and explain their meanings, and so they open the eye of the reader to new culture, traditions, and struggles of Nigerian people inside and outside their country.

Whether the assimilation is found in a new country or in the same society of the individual or group, it needs time to be achieved. People need to accept each other’s differences in order to help the new individuals to adapt, and this is the main core of multiculturalism. At the same time, the new individuals need to accept and learn the culture of the new society in order to adapt quickly. In the two short stories tackled here there is difficulty of both assimilation into a new society, and assimilating back into one’s own society. In both stories the adaptation is gradual, and there is a clear acculturation; as there is adoption of the host culture. In addition, culture clashes are seen clearly through the situations between the characters in both stories. The need for multiculturalism is felt deeply in the two stories; however, it is not dominant in the situations of both of them. The Nigerian writers care about introducing their cultures and traditions to the world, and this is very clear in both stories. Therefore, “Indigo” and “You in America” can be analyzed tracing the assimilation process and focusing on the emotional development on the side of the characters, while showing culture clashes during that assimilation through omniscient writers who apply the flashback and interior monologue techniques manifesting the importance of pluralism and accepting others.

Both Chimamanda Adichie and Molara Wood are Nigerian writers from the third generation who believe in the Nigerian traditions and beliefs and want to revive it and spread their indigenous culture around the world. They write for Western

magazines and newspapers, but they still keep their identity which they are proud of. A researcher may say that they are hybrid writers as they were brought up in Nigeria, and they gained a great part of their education and work from the United States and London, and so their background is a blend of two diverse cultures. However, there is a great intimacy in their writings towards their Nigerian beliefs and traditions. Being hybrid helped them to expose and criticize the two worlds perfectly, that is to say the Western world, and the African world. Although some critics as Frantz Fanon believes that such writings in a European language can not be considered part of the African literature as he called it 'Afro-European Literature', their writings indeed occupy a massive part of the Nigerian literature nowadays which represent their heritage and their problems faultlessly.

In the researcher's opinion, Nigerian writers who are hybrid are the best ones to display the difficulties on both sides, especially when they are honest and faithful to their own cultures. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an Igbo writer who was born in 1977 in the town of Nsukka, South East Nigeria. She left Nigeria at the age of 19 to study communication and political science in the United States, then she gained her masters degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University, and in 2008, she received a Master of Arts degree in African studies from Yale University. She has a lot of awards for her writings, to name just a few: The Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2005 for her novel *Purple Hibiscus* and The Orange Broadband Prize For Fiction in 2007 for her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* ("Awards"). Nowadays, she spends a lot of time in her hometown as she encourages people to write and helps them to through workshops held in Lagos. Moreover, Adichie wants to drag investments to her country albeit the catastrophic disasters she can see which proves how faithful and closely related to her country she is ("Varieties of Blackness").

Molara Wood is a Yoruba writer, who was born in 1967 in Lagos, South West Nigeria. She had most of her primary education in Nigeria and a bit of it in Los Angeles in the United States. She lived about 20 years in the United Kingdom before

returning to Nigeria in 2008. She studied English and Latin American Studies at London Metropolitan University, UK. She is a journalist, critic and a former art columnist for The Guardian -Lagos. She won the inaugural John La Rose Memorial Short Story Competition and received an award from the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association.

Concerning their beliefs and ideas, one can track them through their own words in different interviews. Both of them are very loyal to their country. Chimamanda Adichie in an interview with Aaron Bady said : “My loyalties are first Nigerian.” In an interview with Molar Wood by Miriam N. Kotzin, Wood declared that most of her writings were about Nigeria, she even expressed that she had one leg in Nigeria and the other in London. However, after her returning to Nigeria, both her legs were completely fixed in her homeland. “My own return is not unconnected to my writing, most of which is about Nigeria. The more I wrote the more I felt like I had one leg in Nigeria – and now I’ve placed both legs firmly at home,” she admits. She has strong affinity with her hometown. “Our parents and extended families were back home, and so we always referred back there. Our roots were elsewhere. We loved England but defined ourselves as Nigerians first”. These specific words of her, are related directly to and displayed clearly in her short story “Indigo”.

Regarding their way of writing, Adichie announced, in an interview with Aaron Bady, that she likes the works that are realistic, touch the emotions, and analyze the psychology of the character. On the other hand, Molar Wood believes in magical realism and that it allows people to add layers of meaning. In her interview with Abubakar Adam Ibrahim, she told him: “you can recognise that conceding to the magical element, or the fantastical, is one of the ways in which people add layers of meaning to their lives. It’s another way of making sense of the outlandishness of their world.” She believes that magical realism has place in literature and as long as there are writers whose imagination allows them to see wonder and magic in everyday life, magical realism will have future. Moreover, Wood likes to observe and psychoanalyze people, and she enjoys writing dialogues, which is

reflected in her stories.

Both stories criticize the Nigerian and American societies in order to reform them through calling subtly for assimilation and acceptance. In addition, they use their Nigerian language to spread their culture and display part of their beliefs to the world. The best example is in Wood's story through the river Indigo which reflects part of their Nigerian beliefs. In Adichie's story she uses a lot of examples of her language and explained their meanings as in the name Akunna. Both stories criticize the look of the society to the black woman, whether she is married or single, whether it is an American or Nigerian society, that is why their protagonists are females. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has won the U.S National Critics Book Prize for her novel *Americanah*. In an interview about the book she said that it reflects her own experience as an African living in the U.S. as the novel told a story of a Nigerian woman who moves to the U.S to pursue a college education. The same idea is presented in the short story in hand. "You in America" which was nominated for the Caine prize in 2002. Molara Wood is better known for short stories than for novels, even the short story in hand is part of an Anthology of short stories entitled *Indigo* as it was named after the first short story in the book. Therefore, both are prominent hybrid writers with international awards, who are proud of their country and national identity; meanwhile, they display the problems that face their generation in a creative way that dragged the world attention to the Nigerian Literature.

In "You in America" Adichie displayed her ideas from the first lines of her short story. She started by criticizing the imaginable ideas of the Nigerian youths concerning the dream of wealth and prosperity if they travelled to America. The story starts by using the second person point of view as if the narrator is talking to the reader, to every youth, every man, having the same believable dream and knows nothing about the truth of the actual life or the difficulties that he might face in another country. The story starts as follows, "You believed that everybody in America had a car and a gun. Your uncles and aunts and cousins believed it too. Right after you won the American visa lottery, they told you, 'In a month, you

will have a big car. Soon, a big house. But don't buy a gun like those Americans.' (Adichie) She always criticizes the blind imitation of the Nigerian youth to the American life. She wonders why they do not have strong feelings of belonging to their country. This was obviously declared in her essay "Heart Is Where The Home Was" which she wrote in 2002 after being away from Nigeria for five years. Commenting on the way the youth dressed in Nsuka, the city where she was brought up, she said: "They wear tight jeans and t-shirts with Sean Jean and Phat Farm inscriptions. They want to go to America by all means and avoid speaking Igbo as though they are ashamed of it." She added : "They are imitating American movies. And I cannot understand." Thus, it is clear that Adichie has strong feelings of belonging to her country and she is proud of her Igbo ethnicity and her identity.

Adichie begins the story by showing the initial signs of cultural clash that her heroine encountered when she first stepped in America through the sandwich of hot dog that annoyed her. "Your uncle in America said you could live with him until you got on your feet. He picked you up at the airport and bought you a big hot dog with yellow mustard that nauseated you. Introduction to America, he said with a laugh." Her uncle showed her how to do things in America as "how to apply for a cashier job in the gas station on Main Street" and "he enrolled [her] in a community college." He also told her how to deal with people and what she should expect from them. Her uncle was like a guide to her as if Adichie wants to tell every person who never went to America that he/she needs a guide to be with them, it is not that easy and prosperous as they imagine. The uncle said it clearly in a plain sentence: "The trick was to understand America, to know that America was give and take. You gave up a lot but you gained a lot too." This particular sentence refers to different concepts as 'assimilation' in which a person gives up a lot of his identity and characteristics, and 'transculturalism' in which people gain from each other's cultures. One can say that the short story here is a little bit didactic. Adichie is informing the reader about the normal situations he might face in his everyday life and may find them weird

if he travels to America for the first time.

The idea of 'give and take' does not mean only that one would sacrifice part of his identity or culture, but also sacrifice in order to live and work in such society. When she applied to work in a restaurant, she told the owner that she "would work for two dollars less than the other waitresses." The owner agreed saying that "he had never had a Nigerian employee but all immigrants worked hard." The sentence indicates that she is weird to this society, something strange that the owner have not had before. In addition, his confirmation that "all immigrants worked hard" prove that they suffer and sacrifice a lot to live.

The difficulty of assimilation in the United States depends mainly on the acceptance of the Americans to new individuals from different cultures outside their own. When the heroine of the story was enrolled in a community college the girls there "were curious about her hair." They asked direct questions that seem embarrassing as: "Does it stand up or fall down when you take the braids out ? All of it stands up ? How ? Why ? Do you use a comb?" She faced a similar situation when she met the mother of her American boyfriend. Although his mother should be educated, cultured and open minded as she taught "Women's Studies" she asked if there "were real cowries strung" through her braids. She did not mean to humiliate or tease her at all, but it was a real question about something weird and new to the American culture.

Not only do the Americans got surprised when they face other cultures, but also the new individual got shocked by the American culture.

You wanted to write about the surprising openness of people in America, how eagerly they told you about their mother fighting cancer, about their sister-in-law's preemie-things people should hide, should reveal only to the family members who wished them well. You wanted to write about the way people left so much food on their plates and crumpled a few dollar bills down, as though it was an offering, expiation for the wasted food. You wanted to write about the child who started to cry and pull out her blond hair and instead of her parents making her shut up, they

pleaded with her and then they all got out and left.

Adichie presents the difference in customs and traditions between the two different cultures using the second person point of view to intensify that difference. The heroine confronted much openness that is not found in her country. Also, food leftovers is not that much in her country, part of it is because economically they are poor and not rich. She mentioned that twice in the story when she talked about cooking with meat. In her hometown, "when there was meat, [they] were the size of half [her] finger" (Adichie). Here, Adichie alludes to two different cultures not persons, It is not about the African girl and her American boyfriend, but it is about Africa and America, a poor country, although it is rich with its natural resources, and a rich country. A culture that is reserved and respects family relationships and traditions and another which is characterized by openness in everything. The same for bringing up children, she was astonished to see that the parents in the restaurant pleading with their child instead of blaming her for what she did.

Culture shock can be seen in ideas as well. Akunna, the Nigerian girl, was astonished to know that her American friend chose to stop his education at the faculty and travel to discover himself. "He said he had taken time off, a couple of years after high school, to discover himself and travel, mostly to Africa and Asia." She was surprised as she "didn't know that people could simply choose not to go to school, that people could dictate to life." In her country, she used to accept "what life gave." Another thing that stunned her is his relationship with his parents. He dealt with them in a strict way. She wondered "why he was so stiff." He told her "about his issues with his parents" and "how they portioned out love like a birthday cake." (Adichie) she was shocked because in Nigeria the family ties and respecting the elders in the family is something crucial to their culture.

Culture shock is manifested also in presents. Akunna was confused about the present given to her by her American friend. "His presents mystified [her]." He bought her a "fist-sized ball that [she] shook to watch snow fall on a tiny house, or a plastic ballerina in pink spinning around on a tiny stage. A shiny

rock. An expensive scarf hand-painted in Mexico that [she] could never wear because of the color.” His presents were useless to her because he did not understand the characteristics of her culture, even the expensive scarf he bought her, she could not put on because her skin is dark and not all the colours fit her complexion. At the end she told him “that Third World presents were always useful. The rock, for instance, would work if you could grind things with it, or wear it. He laughed long and hard but [she] did not laugh.” They come from two different worlds with different backgrounds represented in the traditions, the food, dealing with parents, everything. The difference led to argument, however, they “argued and then [they] made up.”

Although America claims that it is a multicultural country, it does not tell its people how to accept and respect others. America should help its people to be knowledgeable about the cultural differences around the world as their country encompasses different entities. The falsified information about the Africans let the American inhabitants believe that the Africans are not civilized. They imagine that Africans are savages and weird, they do not use comb to brush their hair, their hair stand up, and “they ate all kinds of wild animals.” She was prepared for such questions about her appearance as her uncle had told her what people ask and what they think about Africans. He called it “a mixture of ignorance and arrogance.” The ignorance is simplified in the fact that they lack information, they do not know about other cultures around the world, they thought that Africa is a small country. When she worked in a restaurant in America people thought that she was from Jamaica “because they thought that every black person with an accent was Jamaican” and others who “guessed that [she was] African asked if [she] knew so and so from Kenya or so and so from Zimbabwe.” Meanwhile, the ‘arrogance’ can be condensed in the fact that the American inhabitants see themselves as the normal thing, the standardized state that should be followed, while others are abnormal. This mixture of ‘ignorance’ and ‘arrogance’ make it difficult to the new individuals to assimilate easily in the society.

“You knew by people’s reactions that you were abnormal” (Adichie). The difficulty of assimilation and acceptance is

clear in this sentence. Although America always claims that it is a multicultural or a pluralistic country that accepts others, the Americans themselves do not accept this other. It is difficult for them to accept the new individual in their so called 'melting pot'. They looked at the heroine as an expatriate, something bizarre or eccentric. They blamed her being in their society and they wanted to expel her out of it. This is explicated through people's reactions when she was with her white American friend.

The old white woman who muttered and glared at him, the black men who shook their heads at you, the black woman whose pitiful eyes bemoaned your lack of self-esteem, your self-loathing. Or the black woman who smiled swift, secret solidarity smiles, the black men who tried too hard to forgive you, saying a too obvious hi to him, the white woman who said, 'What a good looking pair,' tooloudly, as though to prove their own tolerance to themselves.

People do not accept them together. He represents the American culture and she represents the African one. Her being with him means that she wants to mingle with the American society; she wants to be part of it. She tries to assimilate, but the people in that society whether black or white, men or women, do not accept this assimilation. They blamed him and pitied her, they mocked them verbally and nonverbally, by pitiful looks and satire "What a good looking pair." This society intends on dividing itself by means of discrimination whether by sex or colour. How such society claim that it applies cultural pluralism!

The discrimination or the criticizing looks were not only on the side of the American inhabitants, it was also on the side of the Africans. When Akunna, the Nigerian girl, was with her American friend at the African store, the Ghanaian owner "asked him if he was African, like the white Kenyans or South Africans." The point is that even the Africans in America can not accept the presence of African and American couples together. Another situation is when they were dining at Chang's, a Chinese restaurant, and when he told the waiter that he lived for a year in Shanghai, the waiter asked him if he had a girlfriend in Shanghai. The Chinese man

who was serving them “assumed [that Akunna] could not possibly be his girlfriend,” and that upset her a lot.

People do not accept them to be together because they consider her inferior to him. This feeling of inferiority let the expatriate feel bad about himself/herself. She wished she had lighter skin colour. “You wished you were light-skinned enough to be mistaken for Puerto-Rican, light-skinned enough so that, in the dim light of the indian restaurant where you both shared samosas with his parents from a centrally placed tray, you would seem almost like them.” She wished she had the skin colour of honey so that people would not stare that much when they saw them together. She did not tell her American boyfriend about her feelings because he always sympathizes with her and says that he understood. However, “there was nothing to understand, it was just the way things were.” This feeling of being eccentric to the society adds pressure to the new individual in that society. Although Adichie is talking mainly about Africans, the situation applies to all other ethnicities. They try to adapt and be part of the society by getting rid of part of their culture, for instance, their language, and try to hide their traditions, but the society knows they are different and people do not accept them, except for those who understand like the American boyfriend in the story here. This refusal from the side of the society burdens the new individual.

Adichie displayed part of her culture, which accentuates the culture shock as represented in the Nigerian food and some Nigerian names she mentioned in the story. Adichie presented a famous dish in Nigeria and specially for the Igbo when she invited her American friend and cooked for him “jollof rice”, garri, and onugbu soup. “[H]e liked jollof rice but after he ate garri and onugbu soup, he threw up” in the sink. He vomited because he is not used to this kind of food. It is another culture that he might have liked and read about, but he did not try. It is a culture shock that happened to him. Adichie opened the eye of the reader to the three big ethnicities in her country when the American friend asked the protagonist for the first time he met her if she was “Yoruba or Igbo, because [she] didn't have a Fulani face.” Adichie made her protagonist from the

Igbo as herself, which means she is proud of her ethnicity.

As for the technique of using language, the Nigerian language was introduced through few words throughout the story. When she was living with her uncle, his wife called her “nwanne” which means ‘sister’, while his children called her “Aunty” which means that the second generation who was born in America got assimilated more than the previous one. One would say that this is clear ‘acculturation’ as the children adopted the other language completely. Meanwhile at home, “[t]hey spoke Igbo and ate garri for lunch and it was like home.” The narrator also explained the meaning of the name Akunna and the trouble it makes when people ask about its meaning. Akunna means father’s wealth, and people used to wonder “[y]ou mean, like your father will actually sell you to a husband?” This shows the falsified information that people have about Africa and about the family relationships in such countries.

The feelings of loneliness and homesickness are felt throughout the story. Adichie presented the miserable life that her heroine had to live in America. She worked for less money as mentioned above, and she could not go to school as “a credit in the State University cost too much.” She rented a “tiny room with stained carpet.” She used to send half of her month’s earning to her parents and she did not write them a word because there was nothing pleasant to write about. She felt deep longing for her hometown and her people. “Sometimes you sat on the lumpy mattress of your twin bed and thought about home”. She wanted to write to everybody, her parents, “friends and cousins and aunts and uncles” but she could not. There was a sense of misery and loneliness. “Sometimes you felt invisible and tried to walk through your room wall into the hallway and when you bumped into the wall, it left bruises on your arms.”

Akunna passed through gradual steps of assimilation throughout the story. At the beginning, her uncle introduced her to the American life and told her what to expect from people. Then, she worked at a restaurant and met her white American friend. At first, she was afraid to mingle in the American society, and she refused to serve the table that her American friend used to sit at.

She also refused to go out with him for three successful days. However, when she did not find him waiting for her outside the restaurant on the fourth day she “panicked.” and when he appeared from behind her, she rejoiced, and agreed to go out with him even without his asking. She was scared that “he would not ask again.” Her being with him means that she wants to be part of the American society. Meanwhile, she faced difficulties as people do not accept her in that society. She felt that she was eccentric which loaded her with feelings of uneasiness and she felt more homesickness. However, the presence of her understanding white American friend made life easier for her, and took her hand to assimilate and ignore what others say. Although Akunna lost a lot when she was outside her country as her father died and all what she could do was to give him a nice funeral because of the money she used to send every month to her family, she promised to come back to America. She had a green card and she would lose it if she did not come back in a year. The same as Adichie herself when she goes to Nigeria and comes back to the United States.

The presence of her American white friend, who knows a lot about Africa, helped her to assimilate gradually as he encourages her to accept and ignore what people say when they see them together. He takes her hand towards assimilation when he first accepted her as she is. He invited her to dine with his parents; he invited her at a Chinese restaurant. Meanwhile, he accepts her culture and ate the food she cooked, though he was tired after that. She passed through the first two steps of assimilation as Gordon mentioned, the primary level and the secondary level, as she was studying at the local library, and she worked at a restaurant, and so she met people and got accessed to their culture. At the end of the story, she promised to come back to the United States, to complete the assimilation process, may be by ‘amalgamation’ which was mentioned by Robert Park as well as Gordon.

In addition, Adichie displayed part of the catastrophic problems that are found in her hometown Nigeria. Although it should be a rich country with its natural resources, yet it becomes a disaster when there is rain simply because the government

does not care about fixing roads. Akunna explained: "The traffic was heavy, the traffic was always heavy in Lagos, and when it rained it was chaos. The roads were so badly drained some cars would get stuck in muddy potholes" (Adichie). At the same time, she exposed the injustice and the gap between the rich and the poor in her country when her father hit a car by accident. "The big man seated at the back did not come out. His driver did, examining the damage, looking at [her] father's sprawled form from the corner of his eyes as though the pleading was a song he was ashamed to admit he liked".

Adichie criticizes her country Nigeria in order to reform it. The image of the poor life mentioned in the story represented in the "hole in the roof" of Akunna's father's car, the heavy traffic, the rain that caused chaos because of the potholes and swampy roads. The potholes and the roads were mentioned as well in her essay "Heart Is Where The Home Was" as she displayed the poor life of the inhabitants and how they became poorer than before. Adichie criticized the blind imitation of the youths to the American style whether in clothes, food, or even the gangster style. During Adichie's staying in Nsukka, after being five years away of it an incident happened in the university which shocked her "Eight boys are murdered, by four masked young boys who drive in and start to shoot", the boys have joined cults. In spite of this, she loves her country and the city where she was born. "But this is not just any city: this is Nsukka, the city that witnessed my early crushes, on whose soil I had my earliest scrapes, whose trees I climbed and fell off to get scars that still linger on my arms. This is Nsukka, where I went to church and school and library. This is Nsukka, now" ("Heart Is Where The Home Was").

There is deep affinity with her country to the extent that she dreams of building a house in Nsukka, "a charming simple bungalow" where she rests and enjoys the incredible nature. At the end of this essay she mentioned the conflicting ideas inside her.

I dream of organizing cooperatives, of becoming a well-regarded writer and writing so much about Nsukka that people who care, will invest in it. And yet, as I was driven away, towards the

airport, my visit temporarily over, I felt liquid emotions churning inside me. The strongest was a sense of loss. And as the car rocked from side to side, as the driver tried to avoid the potholes, apologizing as though they were his fault, I realized that there were things I would always look for and never find (“Hear Is Where The Home Was”).

Adichie is bewildered. She feels lost when she leaves her country, but at the same time she can not live in it forever because now she is hybrid, she has different life in America which is better than her life in Nigeria. She mentioned in her essay that she was ashamed when she refused to drive in her city because of the potholes, and the motorcycles that are so many and come so close. She said: “I feel something close to shame.” It is true that she loves her country and that is why she divides her time now between the United States and Lagos where she made her writing workshop, but she can not live in Nigeria forever as her heroine Akunna.

Although Akunna as well as the author Adichie love their country Nigeria, and they are truly connected to it, they can not live completely in it. Adichie, as mentioned before, is a hybrid writer, who has her own prosperous life in the United States. Meanwhile, she loves her homeland, and she wants it to be the best in the world. However, it is very difficult for her to live in Nigeria all the time. She admitted that she feels shameful when she refuses to drive in her country because of the potholes and the motorcycles. Akunna and Adichie lived within two different cultures; they are connected to both of them, and they can not ignore any of them. Akunna will go to Nigeria, and she will come back, exactly as Adichie, who divides her time between the two countries. What helped the researcher to make this connection is the technique she used in writing the story as she applied the second person point of view, and so the reader can infer that the author is the one disguising behind the protagonist.

The situation is quite different for Molar Wood and her heroine Idera as they came to settle in Nigeria after spending a long time of their lives in London. The story tells about Idera and her husband who are originally Nigerian, but they were living in

London, and they have come to settle in Nigeria, especially Lagos, for three years. In the story, Molara Wood displays part of the traditional beliefs and customs that are connected to the Nigerian society especially the Yoruba. Moreover, it shows the excessive interference of the Nigerians in each other's lives. The story is told from the third person omniscient point of view and begins by Idera who visits her friend to congratulate her on her newborn baby. Since she entered, every woman in the room gave her "a look of pity." The unconscious mistake that Idera committed was that she commented on the aunt's comment who said that the baby is a "carbon copy of his father", and Idera said that "the features are not quite set yet." She smiled saying "It may be too early to tell who the baby resembles." Once she uttered those spontaneous sentences, she was heaped upon by looks and offences. Idera "became aware of the frozen stares in her direction. Several women raised their eyebrows" as if she said something wrong or shameful. Furthermore, the aunt directed aggressive and satirical questions towards Idera: "What do you know about babies? How many have you pushed out? How dare you contradict me?" She also called her "so-called woman". She added: "is this not the one that came from London and thinks she's European?" Finally, she insulted and humiliated her saying: "Next time when mothers are talking about children a barren woman keeps quiet". That is why Wood started the story saying that "Idera spoke against the accepted wisdom, and wished she had never opened her mouth" (Wood). She was humiliated and mocked at from within her kin.

Idera and her husband Jaiye got married five years ago and they decided not to have children and enjoy each other's company. When they were in London there was no problem, but when they came back to live in Nigeria they found themselves against the norm. Idera was brought up by her barren aunt, the sister of her father, who educated her very well until she got married and lived in London. Yet, when they came to settle in Nigeria after five years because her mother in-law asked Jaiye to do it for her sake, they found it difficult to deal with the interference of people in their personal life to the extent that her husband Jaiye used to avoid social

gatherings in order not to be asked about why he does not have children. A culture clash happened here due to their returning to their homeland. They got used to the European life where there was no such interference as there is in Africa, they might have forgotten how people deal in their homeland.

As for Idera's aunt she cried and blamed herself for sending Idera for fancy schools in a desire to give her everything she could give to her own child. Being childless in that society was a problem.

Don't you see? A woman cannot be married in our society and have no child to show for it. And that high-class diplomatic family you married into with their snooty ways, their determination not to behave like regular folk, they've only aided your refusal to face the truth. A five year marriage without issue! Child, have you ever wondered why I didn't last in my husband's house?

The traditions of the society put much pressure on the individual. They do not accept other individuals as they are, but they press on them till they become part of the norm. Those who are not entangled in the same circle are considered expatriates, and the society might refuse them as what happened with her aunt. She was divorced because she could not give birth.

A similarity can be drawn to the pressure experienced by Akunna in Adichie's story and the one experienced here by Idera; however, the milieu is different. Akunna was a Nigerian in an American society, and one might say it was quite expected that she would not be accepted easily; however, Idera is Nigerian who was not far from her country for a long time. However, both of them were seen as eccentric in the society they live in and they faced situations that made their tears trapped in their eyes. As for Idera, when she said that she and her husband agreed not to have children for few years, the women in the room were dumbfounded, and they annoyed her verbally and by body language as what happened with Akunna. When Idera explained saying, "my husband and I choose not to have children yet," the aunt replied in an aggressive and impolite way accusing her of being barren. "Don't give me that! What kind of women chooses not to have a child? The

aunt looked at the others; they stretched their lips thin, shook their heads and averted their eyes.” Here the pressure is from within her own society. It was more direct and aggressive than the one Akunna faced. When Idera replied, “I’m not barren!” The aunt interrogated, “Are you sure? I’d get myself checked if I were you.” It is clear that Wood is a descriptive writer, and she enjoys writing in dialogues and so a reader can imagine a real situation.

Wood illustrates some traditional and religious beliefs in the story through the using of the native language and famous proverbs which characterize the Nigerian literature. Having children and a big family is something essential to the Nigerian families. Her aunt Yeye said, “It is only a snake that crawls around without offspring behind it. Let’s walk concerning this thing. Let’s go the traditional way. Jaiye need never know.” Idera’s aunt declared it to her: “I’m just going to come out with it, Idera; something must be done, for your parents in heaven will never forgive me if I continue watch you like this and do nothing.” The interference of the family members and friends is considered something normal in the Yoruba region. Although Idera was well educated and a “sophisticated merchant banker who lived overseas and travelled everywhere,” and though the fact that she had agreed with her husband not to have children now, she was subdued to her aunts pleadings and went with her to the Ifa priest. Here Wood is presenting the Ifa religion, and the babalawo, a spiritual title that denotes the priest of Ifa.

Yeye fixed herself up, closed up shop and hailed a taxi. She said it was that urgent.

An hour later, Idera Shivered as they sat in front of an Ifa priest with sharp sheek-bones and small, piercing eyes. The babalowe was dressed in white, with a dog-eared cap of the same colour. A chunky white shawl was draped on one shoulder.

His voice when he started to speak, reminded Idera of the soft rain on a warm night, and a calm settled on her.

Although Idera came with her aunt just to comfort her, she believes in this religion as she “shivered” once she sat in

front of the Ifa priest, and once he started speaking she remembered “the soft rain on a warm night”. It is obvious that deep inside her she is still connected to her land and her religion; she believes in the beliefs and traditions of her ethnic group; it will be easier for her to re-assimilate.

Wood introduced the Ifa religion with more detail as mentioned above, she described the ‘babalawo’, his clothes, and his voice. She also mentioned the ‘opele,’ which is a chain he used made of nuts and he moves it on a tray called ‘opon ifa’. Through the language technique, Wood introduced to the reader part of her Yoruba culture, that she is proud of. Also, at the beginning of the story when she described the aunt in the room, she mentioned the boubou attire, which is a wide colourful traditional cloth worn by men and women in Nigeria. Thus, Wood applied the language to show the beliefs and traditions of her ethnic group.

As mentioned before, the Nigerians respect the family life and respect their parents, they respect the elders in their society, that is why Idera obeyed her aunt. The same for Jaiye, Idera’s husband, when his mother asked him to come back to Nigeria he obeyed her immediately especially after his father’s death. This is completely different to the white American friend in “You in America” who refused to spend a week or two with his parents in their summer cottage in Canada and Akunna was astonished by that. Idera got affected by the talk of her aunt Yeye, her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, the women in the community. She took their words into consideration and she changed her mind about the idea of having children. She is easily assimilated back to her country’s traditions.

In spite of all the distress and the irritating situations that Idera encountered from family members, friends, and women community in her hometown, she did not long for her big and comfortable house in London where she lived a peaceful life with her husband where no one asked about personal issues. On the contrary, she saw that her life there was “sterile.” The situation was completely different to Akunna in “You In America” as when she got annoyed she longed for her country. Worth mentioning that both of them wanted to change their situations when they were upset and

felt bitterness because of people's reactions. Akunna wished that she could change her skin colour, but she couldn't; while Idera wished that she can be pregnant, so she would be a normal woman in that society, and women would not mock her, and she could.

Re-assimilation in the Nigerian society needs effort from Idera. Her mind changed completely. At the beginning she went with her aunt Yeye to the Ifa priest just to satisfy her, but she did not have any intention to do what he asked for. "she told herself she had merely gone to the babalawo to please the superstitious Yeye. She could not imagine going to some shrine in order to conceive; it was ridiculous." However, as a result of the continuous talk that filled the ear and the head, she started to think in a different way, she actually went to a religious place in order to meet the Orisa who is a religious leader. "Idera was awake most of the night, rolling the babalawo's divination around in her head. How foolish to have scoffed at his words, she thought bitterly."

Idera could not reach the "orisa" and on her way back home she got lost and she found herself in front of the river Indigo, she was about to wash her hands and face to freshen up when she heard a young clear voice saying: "Take off your shoes." It was a young girl about twelve years old who told her that it was a sacred land and that the river was sacred too. Idera did not know about Indigo and the girl informed her, "Indigo is a medicinal, you can drink it. Everything flowers with it. When you're in love with your husband, you wear Indigo... People come here to seek all sorts of things. Fortune, children...Why wash face and hands alone when you can bathe in the living dye, as many have done before you?" Although Idera did not intend to bathe in the river, she did. Although she was educated, travelled, and "lived an enlightened life", she believes in the Nigerian beliefs, and so is Wood. "Idera wondered what had come over her. But she felt reassured by the rush of dark water on her skin, and gave in to its spell." When she came back home and told her husband about what had happened, they agreed on naming their coming daughter Indigo.

Molara Wood declared it obviously in an interview that she believes in 'magical realism', which is a style in

literature in which imaginary images or events are depicted in a sharply realistic manner. In her opinion, everything in life needs imagination to happen. This is applied clearly in the symbol “Indigo” as the heroine achieved her dream just by bathing in the river. The use of myth and religious allusions throughout the novel as well can serve the same point of magical realism as the Orisa, and the babalawo.

The theme of belonging to one's homeland is obvious in the two short stories, but it has different degrees. As Oyebade Dosunmu mentions, Wood has “spiritual inclination towards home,” and as mentioned above, she believes in magical realism, which occupies part of the Yoruba's life. Most of her stories have this mingling of the Yoruba's faith and religions that is connected to the lands, rivers, and nature in general. The spiritual inclination “drives her characters to seek native soil, however far, or long they've travelled.” This can be seen in Idera and Jaiye who “have recently relocated to Nigeria” when their story begins (Dosunmu). In the short story “Indigo” Wood mentioned the Ifa religion represented in the babalawo, and the orisha, that Idera sought to find a solution to her problem, and finally the river Indigo. Wood is presenting the cultural beliefs of her ethnicity the Yoruba, which she actually believes in, with pride.

On the other hand, Adichie believes in the realistic fiction. She talks about problems that people face in real life. At the same time, she is proud of her origin like Wood, and she presents parts of the culture and the Nigerian traditions, but in a different way, like that of the child in the restaurant, and the leftovers of food that were mentioned above. Adichie used her native language as well as in the name ‘Akunna’ ,and she introduced the culture through the Nigerian food.

Although the two writers used different points of view in narrating their stories; yet, both of them highlighted the theme of belonging and homesickness adequately, and they were successful in displaying the emotional development on the side of their female characters through the magnificent use of language as well as the use of flash back and interior monologue techniques.

Adichie used the rarest technique in telling a story which is the second person point of view, and Wood used the third person omniscient point of view; yet, both of them have peered into the characters' minds and report the content from their own point of view. As for the interior monologue technique, Akunna wished to have a lighter colour like honey, she remembered home while she was alone, she wanted to write to every person she knew like her family and friends, but she did not write. The reader would not have known this if the writer did not apply the interior monologue technique and so, take the reader through the mind of the character. The flashback technique can be seen in "Indigo" when Idera remembered her big house in London, and the four rooms in it, and how it was empty and quiet. Another technique that they both used is the use of language, but it is seen more in "Indigo" than in "You in America". In "Indigo" there is massive use of Yoruba language and religious expressions that are not clear to a reader who has no background about Nigeria. There is also use of proverbs and idioms which characterizes the Nigerian literature.

The two stories tackle the gradual steps of assimilation. In "Indigo", at the beginning, Idera refused to follow the traditional beliefs, she refused to follow the norms of her society, and so they considered her and her husband abnormal. When she subjugated to their calls her husband blamed her "I thought you went to school, travelled, lived an enlightened life. How could you go seeking juju practitioners for an ailment you would not even admit? How could you compromise us like that?" Then he collected his clothes and went to his mother's house. However, when Idera came to him at the end of the story and told him she was pregnant; he hugged her and said "We'll call her Indigo". One can say that their assimilation to their own society was not that difficult because they are originally Nigerians. It is easier for them to assimilate back to their own indigenous culture, mainly because they did not live for a long time away from it. On the other hand, Akunna in "You in America" was a Nigerian who faced a complete different culture from hers, and she was not accepted easily even if she could adapt and ignore the silliness of the American society.

There is an aura of intimacy and deep sense of belonging to the Nigerian culture implied in the two stories. Although there is change in the behavior and ideas of the protagonists from the beginning to end, they both end up going back to their homeland. Both writers are proud of their ethnicities and language and they show it. Both writers know very well that there are deficiencies in their country and they want to reform it. Both stories suggest that the human can adapt and assimilate if he wants that. The title of Adichie's story "You In America" is so straightforward to explain a condition of Nigerian in America, while the title "Indigo" was not that explicit as the story implies other cultural and religious beliefs that are confined to a group of people in Nigeria and they need more explanation.

The tone of loneliness and homesickness dominates throughout the two stories. Akunna is in America for the first time, and she feels as if she is an expatriate through the different situations that shows the refusal of the American society to her, despite that, she insists to mingle and ends the story by a promise to come back. She could assimilate gradually in the American society by the help of her white American friend, which means that the society needs to accept the newcomers first and welcome them in order to help them to assimilate easily. Idera in "Indigo" felt the same feelings of loneliness at the beginning and she missed her home in London, and blamed her husband for bringing them back to Nigeria; yet, in the end she could assimilate.

The Nigerian society in "Indigo" could not accept Idera and her husband as they are. They mocked and annoyed them till they were obliged to either avoid being in the gatherings of that society or assimilate and change their minds and their behavior completely, and that is what they did. The need for acceptance is crucial, one could feel how Idera and Jaiye were not comfortable in their own society until they assimilated. On the other hand, the American society is characterized by openness. There are different ethnicities who live together, but still they lack the concept of acceptance. It is not about the Africans, and the Americans as the story focuses on here, but it includes all other ethnicities as the

Arabs, the Indians, and the Chinese. Anyone who does not look like the white American man is considered abnormal. In "You in America" the one who represents the idea of acceptance is the white American friend. He is the one who helped Akunna to live in that society and assimilate, he encouraged her to come back. Thus, the concept of acceptance is required in all countries around the world, it is crucial to help the different others to assimilate.

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