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# Migration In African Literature: A Study From Selected Hausa Novels

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## Migration In African Literature: A Study From Selected Hausa Novels

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### ABSTRACT:

Migration is a common phenomenon that everybody in the society contributed to its reduction; the government, the civil societies, the NGO's and the African writers. Migration can be seen as something that is becoming an overwhelming issue all over the world, as such writers in Africa in their literary works portrayed the effect of migration from Africa to Europe. African writers like Chika Unigwe (The Phoneix 2007, On Black Sister's Street 2010) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Purple Hibiscus 2004, Half of a Yellow Sun 2006, The Thing Around Your Neck 2009, The Thing Around Your Neck 2013) showed how migration affected young Africans that travelled to Europe for survival. Hausa writers in their part contributed a quarter in their contemporary writings towards reducing migration and the effect it has in Africa especially route from Nigeria through Niger republic (Maradi, Zinder). Through a critical and stylistic analysis, this paper aims to show how Hausa writers portrayed stylistic and aesthetic handling of migration in their works that deals with the theme of migration from rural to urban areas or from within African countries and Africa to Europe. Theories and methodological framework of this research is on international migration theories and socio-criticism. The novels to be examine are Kowa Ya Bar Gida (Bambale, 1994) and Mace Mutum (Rahma Abdulmajid,2004).

**Keywords:** Migration, African Writers, Contemporary Hausa Novels, Literature, Phenomena.

### الهجرة في الأدب الإفريقي: دراسة لروايات مختارة من الهوسا

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### ملخص:

هناك الكثير من المحاولات على مستوى الأفراد والمجتمعات المدنية والحكومات والمنظمات غير الحكومية للحد من ظاهرة الهجرة. ونظرًا لانتشار هذه الظاهرة على مستوى العالم يحاول الكثير من الكتاب الأفارقة تصوير تأثيرها في أعمالهم الأدبية. ويأتي على رأس هؤلاء الكتاب تشيكا بوني جوي وشيماندا نيجوزي أديشي. لذا يحاول كتاب الهوسا الحد من الهجرة وتأثيرها في إفريقيا بدءًا من نيجيريا وحتى جمهورية النيجر. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على تناول كتاب الهوسا للعناصر الجمالية والأسلوبية في أعمالهم التي تناولت هذه الظاهرة من المناطق الريفية إلى المناطق الحضرية أو من إفريقيا إلى أوروبا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهجرة ، الكتاب الأفارقة ، روايات الهوسا المعاصرة ، الأدب ، الظواهر.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Writers in Africa conceptualized many theme in their literary activities which the society is expected to emulate, in other words, writers portrayed different type of themes in their novels that is expected to touch or represent real life happening so that the society will see and learn something to be of use for the society. Immigration of African youth is one theme that is not left out for African writers. Some of writers like Chinue Achebe and Soyinka did not only write on migration, rather, experienced forced migration for survival, some of them continued producing literary works while in exile. Just as (Andre Kabore, 2016) put it, even at that time, in or outside the boundaries of their own countries, they tackled social issues, including migration.

Thus, migration is not only free flow of people and goods in Africa and around the world, several divergent factors complexly define and intensify various patterns of migratory movements, despite observing that migrations occur in different patterns including forced and voluntary paradigms, Falola et al. (2008) as stated by (Ladele and Omotayo, 2017) further note that there are cultural and spiritual dynamics of migration in Africa and the African diaspora. African writers have themselves for long been caught in the flux and flows of migration. Particularly in the period of the ferment of patriotic and nationalist calls for self-rule and independence, many writers had to seek safe havens in neighboring countries or in distant lands in Britain, Europe and America. Thus, from about the late fifties a tradition of exilic writers began to emerge. Writing from the diaspora, such writers were Ngugi waThiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Bessie Head, Buchi Emecheta, Doris Lessing, Alex La Guma, and Dennis Brutus among several others. Characterizing their literary productions were motifs and tropes of alienation, isolation and aloneness. This alienation has recently resurrected in NoViolet Bulawayo's agony as she watches in pain and anguish Africa's "children leave in droves" and which we find as a poignant epigraph to this essay. This research therefore, is going to be a critical evaluation of the Hausa Novel Kitsen Rogo (All that Glitters is not Gold) by Abdulkadir Dangmabo 1976, on how poverty forced a young man to migrate from village to city to get wealth which will cater for his daily need.

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Migration is not only to migrate from Africa to Europe or elsewhere, it can also be seeing from village to cities because the reasons for migration is all the same.

## **2.0 Concept of Migration in Africa**

Migration has been a topic of discussion for scholars, researchers, novelist and from all other angles. Africa has a long history of population movement aimed at restoring ecological balance and, more important, of individuals in search of subsistence food, better shelter and greater security. In the pre-colonial era, movements now regarded as international migration occurred over a wide area, restricted only by warfare (Adepoju, 1997). Migration has been in the increase in Africa; mainly directed towards Europe; and driven by poverty and violence. Representations of extreme poverty, starvation, warfare and environmental degradation amalgamate into an image of African misery. Irregular migration occurring from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb to Europe has also increasingly been defined as a security problem associated with international crime, trafficking and terrorism (Marie-Laurence Flahaux, 2016). Ojaide (2008) also an émigré writer, makes the crucial point that, African writers have become part of the worldwide phenomena of migration and globalization with the attendant physical, sociocultural, psychic, and other forms of dislocation, which permeate their individual writings. Migration, globalization and the related phenomena of exile, trans nationality, and multilocality have their bearing on the cultural identity, aesthetics, content, and form of the literary production of Africans abroad. (p.43).

Many scholars define migration on there on perception. (Aina, 1997) for instance, define it as a spatial residential relocation over a relatively long period of time is an aspect of population movement. It includes international migration which is movement across national boundaries, and internal migration which refers to international more or less permanent (or long-term) changes of residence. With the above definition therefore, one can simply define migration as the movement of people from one place to another with the intent to settle or migrate after one achieved what he wants to achieve. Based on the common perception that poverty and income gaps between

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poor and rich countries are the ‘root causes’ of migration, and faced with the ineffectiveness and perverse effects of increased border controls, the frequently proposed long-term ‘solution’ to this phenomenon is to stimulate development in origin countries through aid, trade, or remittances (De Haas, 2007). Immigration is never solely an individual action, in which one moves from one place to another. It is always already mediated by systems or sets of conditions that shape or even interdicts one’s movements. For some scholars, “...migrations do not simply happen. They are produced. And migrations do not involve just any possible combination of countries. They are patterned.” Labor migrations, for example, “are embedded in larger social, economic, and political structures, and... they are consequently bounded in their geography, duration, and size. There is a geopolitics of migration and there is the fact that migrations are part of systems: both set parameters for migrations... [We should] accept the fact that migration is not simply an aggregation of individual decisions, but a process patterned and shaped by existing politico-economic systems (Foster, 2015:17) (Samir Amin, 1997) Classified migration into different classification as the one of place of origin and of destination: rural–rural, rural–urban, urban–rural, internal and international migrations. In those parts of the world that are already heavily urbanized the urban–urban flow will form the main part of the migratory phenomenon (as in present-day Europe). In Africa the migratory phenomenon is still essentially a flow from one rural region to another, towards cities, or out of the country. The duration of the migrations constitutes another classification criterion. When it comes to migrations that are mainly rural, it is essential to know whether or not the migrants take part in the seasonal cultivation in the areas they are leaving. This criterion will allow us to take into consideration the fact that today a significant group of migrants in Africa are merely temporary migrants. The migratory process involves a multiplicity of patterns. Some migrants go directly to their destination, others utilize step-migration moving from smaller settlements to larger ones up the urban hierarchy, while some operate what has been called multiple-migration which involves the search for opportunities in towns either large or small. In the case of non-metropolitan internal migration, these different steps are more or less taken in search of

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opportunities in rural areas and small and intermediate settlements. Rural–rural migration operates to a great extent and has been studied by some scholars. In the Nigerian case, the situation is characterized by farmers and other agriculturally-based peoples moving from areas of land-hunger, or different ecological zones such as the savannah or Sahel region, into the forest belt. The arrangements of production that these enter are quite complex. They include that of pure wage-labour, farm-tenancy, sharecropping, etc. Although rural–rural migrants at times operate as traders, craftsmen and artisans, there is a consensus that most moves of this kind are based on the attraction of fertile land for farming (Adepoju, 1976:18; Olusanya, 1976; and Udo, 1975) as presented in (Aina, 1997). In some cases, the migrants do not operate as independent producers but rather as laborers. In these cases, they are employed as agricultural labor on farms, and plantations. The sizes and scale of the farms vary in different regions. Some are large-scale, formally organized farms, while others are the farms of medium-sized or medium-income farmers. Again, duration and employment relations vary. In some medium-sized farms, labor is engaged only seasonally during the harvesting or planting period, while the migrants are involved in a complex combination of relations that include sharecropping and farm tenancy.

These occur in the cocoa-belt of south western Nigeria. In the cases of some of the large-scale farms and plantations, while there might be a core of long-term waged labor, there are also seasonal hands during planting and harvesting periods. While the emphasis is on wage-Labour, it is not uncommon to find migrants utilizing or leasing the company or landlord's land for their own crops.

Other types of migrants who are not laborers can be found in the context of rural–rural migration. These include traders, fishermen, transporters and prostitutes. All of these particularly the traders, transporters and prostitutes provide their own brand of services, although these tend to be found more in small and medium-sized towns. Also migrant bands of beggars, destitute, itinerant minstrels, beauticians and entertainers are often found in different African settlements.

The rural–urban, or urban–urban non-metropolitan migration that occurs is often to small and medium-sized towns. In the small towns, the

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range of opportunities and activities depends on the size, location and functions of the settlements. The presence of migrants is often a question of scale and needs in relation to these either in rural areas or in medium-sized towns. These vary extensively depending on their sizes, locations and functions. Generally, the medium-sized towns are more heterogeneous than the rural settlements and small towns. They are also often better serviced with utilities and infrastructures. Opportunities for employment in them range from the public and private formal sectors to, in some cases, agro-based or mineral-extracting industries, commerce and an extensive informal sector. There is a greater division of labor in these settlements and as Okafor (1988) has pointed out in Nigeria, further political and administrative decentralization in the form of state creation in Nigeria in 1963, 1967, 1975, 1985 and 1991 have resulted in 30 state capitals, all of which are some form of regional administrative headquarters. These are being developed through construction of offices, provision of services and infrastructures so that they can play their official roles effectively. They also become sites of employment creation in a wide range of social and economic sectors. Therefore, many African writers of the first generation, namely, Achebe, Soyinka, Ngugi, etc. experienced forced migration for survival. While in exile, they continued producing literary works. The impact of this migration on their productions remains to be investigated. Yet, even at that time, in or outside the boundaries of their own countries, they tackled social issues, including migration. Migration has been a topic of discussion for African writers for long, as we have seen, some of them write about migration while on exile, while others portrayed the theme and how it affected Africans at home (Kabore, 2016). Similarly, in Arab countries, writers found themselves into migration. Especially when they realized that Egypt became the center of culture and exposure of the Arab world. Many scholars from different Arabian countries that ran away from the atrocities of their government found their way into Egypt seeking asylum in 1870. Ya'qub Sarruf, Faris Nimr, Bishara, Salim Taqla, Zaynab Fawwaz, Labiba Hashim, Mayy Ziyada and many others that contributed in writings all came to Egypt (Sabe, 2016).

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### 3.0 Hausa Novels and Migration

Hausa novelist were not left behind in writing their novels on the theme of migration. Since 1978 to date, writers portrayed how youth left their villages and towns for cities in order to have influence to the society and have wealth. This can be seen from the novel of Karshen Alewa Kasa by Bature Gagare, 1982 which emerged as a result of writing competition set by Federal Department of Culture of Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1982; the novel won the third prize and has 342 pages.

The novel tells a story of a young boy Mailoma who was prostrated by the intimidation of their animist traditional ruler. These intimidations led to the death of his wife and mother, as such he left their village Tsaunin Gwano on exile to city of Kano. After being well brought up and trained by his master in Kano, he killed the master because the master caught him seducing his wife. From there he went to Lagos and joined the Nigerian army, but left the army before the end of civil war of 1967 and form an armed robbery team, which he called "Best Five". For some years, Mailoma and his 'best five' team were pushed away from Lagos by the security forces. That made him to run back to his village and form a big school of armed robbery to take revenge on their leader, Sarkin Arna. He tries to take revenge from their village ruler who killed his wife and destroy what they worship (Paganism).

In this novel, as we can see there is forced migration which was caused by their traditional customs and belief, Mailoma migrated from there village due to the power of their ruler which resulted in killing his wife and mother. When he was well brought-up and capable of taking revenge, he now returned to the village and executed his plan on taking revenge. This novel portrayed rural-urban migration whereby, the character was forced to go out and finds a means of taking revenge on what has been done to him. In the novel of Shehu Umar by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa 1933, there is also an element of migration. The characters in the novel, especially Shehu Umar's mother suffer and migrate from one village to the other in the quest for her son. This migration took her a lot of time to find her son and at the end she died after locating him. This type of migration is called the rural-rural migration just as (Samir Amin,



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1997) stated. This migration is not for money or seeking for some material benefit, but for quest for a lost somebody. Therefore, Hausa writers since in the 1930's down to 1980's portrayed migration from rural-rural area or rural-urban area as we have seeing in the novel of Karshen Alewa Kasa.

### **3.1 Causes of Migration in Hausa Novel**

For Hausa writers, there are a lot of causes of migration that affect Hausa society and that is what they concentrate to portrayed in their novel. But for the purpose of literary works, Kabore (2016:3) stated that migration theorists such as Dustmann and Weiss (2007) say that throughout human history, “economic motives for migration, and motives related to natural disaster or persecution (...) are the two main reasons why individuals migrate.” (2). In fact, for ages, people have been migrating because of poverty, natural disaster or social unrest. Upon examining post-colonial African literature that deals with migration, one comes to the understand that the migration story for African that migrate from one place to another has to do with poverty or war. Believably, hunger and crises are the main reasons that made Africans to migrate from their country or from one place to another for shelter and protection. The Hausa novelist just like their other novelist provided and depend on those causes of migration in their novels.

That was why Mailoma was set to migrate from their rural area to urban due to maltreatment which was close to war that broke between their family and Sarkin Arna's family. Similarly, one can say hunger or poverty and economic hardship is what made their leader to handle them the way he did.

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#### **4.0 Effect of Migration in the novel of Kitsen Rogo (All that Glitters is not Gold)**

The novel of Kitsen Rogo (All that Glitters is not Gold) was published by NNPC in 1978 the book was written by Abdulkadir Dangambo with 75 pages. The book narrates the story of young boy Ibrahim who is the main character in the story. Ibrahim migrated from their village (rural area) to the city of Kano (urban area), in Kano Ibrahim change his name to Musa Dan Kunama in order to hide his identity, since he don't get any job to do in the city. Ibrahim left his village for city in anticipation of having good job, unfortunately, he ended up in prison due to associating himself with bad guys. The main theme of the novel is to address the problem of migration from rural to urban area. Ibrahim ran-away from the village in order to get a new work which will earned him money without doing much or suffering. That was why he abandoned farming which is their main occupation and way of living in the village. While in the city, he struggles to have job, but due to low qualification, he could not get any, he finally ended in prison. While in prison, he regretted leaving his village in the first place and equally regretted involving himself with the errand boys, but, it's too late for him. The writer portrayed how youth in their young age decided to leave their origin, to abandoned their agricultural activities that is full of wealth and ran into cities to look for something that is not real and fall into trouble. Ibrahim, while in prison, found himself blaming and regretting what he did, while thinking in the prison, one can clearly understand his remorse: "What made me to left our village, Kademi? What are my benefit in city? These are unanswered questions he kept asking himself. He continued, I could have been in our village with my occupation, agriculture. I could have not found myself in this ugly situation. He now testified to the Hausa wise saying... "Having wealth without peace of mind is better to have peace of mind and stay poor" (Kitsen Rogo: 2).

This is just a portion where the main character of the novel regretted his deeds when it is too late for him to cry. Most of the migrants from Africa regret their deeds when it is too late for them, this

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novel is a clear example of how African writers portrayed such theme and our analysis is going to buttress that point.

The novel *Kitsen Rogo* bring out the bad situation and the critical condition villages as one of the main reason for youth to leave rural area to urban area. This is one of the reason that forced Ibrahim to migrate to city so that he can have social amenities since he cannot have them in the village. Likewise, he will get enough money and rise capital which will earned him respect and to do whatever he wants to do, to go wherever he want to go, unlike in the village where there's none, this is what he thinks while in the prison: "Each and every blessing day youth are flowing to the city from their villages. Some of the villages are even worse than mine. No schools and there is no clean drinking water. Some don't even have wall, no buildings and some remote areas don't have a market. In some of the villages, no one can even understand a simple English, (*Kitsen Rogo:17*).

From the above quotation one can come to understand that Ibrahim is now regretting leaving his village that is more than some of the villages and yet, youth from that village stayed and concentrate on their daily activities without bothering their selves on having social amenities.

Ibrahim decided to leave his village after hearing about his friends that are leaving in the city and how they enjoyed life in the city. That is what forced him to join them in the city so that he will go to the cinema as his friend Bala used to go, he can as well go to any club he so wishes without any hesitation, this is what he thinks in his flashback while in the prison: "He thinks of his neighbor in the village Bala, who is enjoying his life in the city and became rich, the other one of his friend who is also in the city also became rich and he works in a company.... No is not a company, is a government agency.... (*Kitsen Rogo: 4*). This is the type of thinking forced Ibrahim to leave the village in order to become rich as his friend and neighbors gotten, unknown to him, the situation in the city is not like that, it is just like the wise saying All that Glitters is not Gold meaning whatever one forecast is not the reality, all the expectations one foresee is not always the real happening. For Ibrahim, he saw how his friends enjoyed

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and got a lot of wealth in the city and he decided to joining them and have whatever they are having, unfortunately for him, he fell into a trap and ended up in the prison. Ibrahim in his flashback remembered how life was so simple with him in their village and how he thinks of his girlfriend who he realized was forced to prostitution in the city after she was married against her wish:

“He really regretted leaving his village. He could have been in the village by now in confidence. What about my girlfriend, Mairo? I could have married her... no, he re-think that she was now a prostitute in the city. May be if he has stayed home he could have marry her. She was forced to marry somebody that was she left her matrimonial home for prostitution (Kitsen Rogo: 37).

This type of thinking is what disturbed him as he now in the prison serving punishment, he doesn't have anything to do in the prison than thinking of the old good days. He again thinks of his girlfriend and remembered that somebody told him she is now an international prostitute, meaning she excel in the profession and has been championing in the field:

“Where is Mairo now? He once heard from his friend she is now a prostitute in Shagamu. But somebody told him that he saw her in a hotel in Gusau. He remembered how Mairo was a pious girl, in their village, Kademi, nobody will think Mairo will turn to a prostitute because of her good habit, now they are in the same ball, no, may be his own case is more than hers, who knows? (Kitsen Rogo: 5)”

Another effect of rural-urban migration as portrayed by this novelist is how those that migrated from the rural area will end-up becoming a criminal in the cities if they did not have any tangible or meaningful job. This is what happened to Ibrahim who changed his name to Musa in the city. He came to city to have better a job so that he can earned money which will made him to become rich, but he ended-up to becoming criminal because he could not have a job of his choice. He met some bad friends Ado, Boss and co who involved themselves in theft, burglary and all sort of criminal offense, Musa don't have any choice than to join them. It is this act that led to the capture and imprisonment of Musa by the Nigerian Police and was sentence to one hundred and ten months in prison. While in prison for the second time,

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Musa exhibited good character, though sometimes he thinks of how to escape from the prison, but he remembered how the first escape made his punishment to be hard on him for the second time. As we have seen earlier, Ibrahim suffered a lot while in the city and could not achieve his desire of becoming rich and enjoy life to the fullest. He paid for what he did and regretted when it is too late for him. But, his obedient and working hard in the prison earned him respect to the prison officers and was released before he completed his serving term. This made him to change his life while back in the village, he became so good that everybody loves him, that made Alhaji Kyauta to appoint him to oversee his farmland as the farm manager, and later became the manager of a company established in the village. Though, Ado tried to take him back to the criminal act, but he refused to join him back.

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## 5.0 Summary and Conclusion

This paper analyzed the effect of migration of African origin to Europe and other countries for better life and earning. Though, when people migrate due to poverty will end-up suffering in wherever they found themselves. This type of hardship is what Africans are facing while they migrated

to Europe or other countries. They don't have higher qualification nor official visas that will allow them to move freely and on top of all these, they will not find a good job that will take care of them, as such, one will find that they are involve in all sort of criminal act; prostitution, drug-abuse, theft, rubbery and so on. In fact, Africans faced a lot of challenges and problems while they migrated to Europe as we have seen in this novel, is just a replica of what is happening with our brothers and sisters elsewhere. The best for Africans is to stay home, contributed in the socio-economic development of their villages, town, cities and the county at large. Each country has its natural resources which if utilized will benefit the entire populace and will attract foreign investors that will have to come and develop and make use of our natural resources, instead of Africans migrating to their countries and found themselves in to trouble.

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