

PROFILES OF SEX -TRAFFICKING AND VICTIMHOOD IN DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON* AND UNIGWE'S ON *BLACK SISTER'S STREET*

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ABSTRACT

*This article is a study on the profile of Sex trafficking and Victimhood in the African novel, using Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street* as case studies. The choice of the authors is aimed at revealing the viewpoints from two different societies to make for a wider picture of sex trafficking practices. The choice of two female authors also gives a different view of a problem that affects fellow women. The Reader Response Theory is adopted for a comparative analysis of the phenomenon in the selected texts. This work is a textual analysis of *Beyond the Horizon* and *On Black Sister's Street* as primary texts while the internet, reviews, articles, books and the library serve as additional resources. Findings reveal that both authors utilized different styles of writing to portray the condition of abuse and exploitation of African women as well as the motivations behind sex trafficking in their individual societies. This study sheds more light on the tragic personality alterations that affect human trafficking victims, resulting in the victim's compliance to trade their bodies for money. The debate over women's abuse is not new, but this study sheds more light on existing fictional portrayal of the problem through more graphic accounts of the extent to which African women have been harmed.*

Keywords: Sex trafficking, Victimhood, Women, Exploitation, Victims, Fiction

INTRODUCTION

Socially, the term victim can be associated with a strong stigma and may attract blame, derogation, Shame and vulnerability. The word "victim" means sacrifice in Latin. Victim, according to Cambridge dictionary, is "A person or thing who has been injured, harmed, or killed, or someone that has suffered as a result of another person or thing's actions, or as a result of fate. The definition of the word "victim" in the preceding paragraph is straightforward, but it may not be sufficient to clarify what it means to be a victim. A constant feeling of loss, powerlessness, and lack of command, pessimistic thinking, remorse, humiliation, contrition, and anxiety should all be part of the victimization mental profiling. As a result, to comprehend the idea of victimhood, one must first define what a victim mentality is.

Rahav Gabay defines victimhood as "A recurrent feeling of becoming a victim that can occur in a variety of relationships, Victimization becomes rooted in the person's personality as a result." (Gabay et al 4). People who have a strong victim mind-set tend to have an "external control locus," in which they feel that their lives are completely under the control of forces outside of themselves, such as circumstance, fate, culture, or other people's mercy. Human trafficking for the purpose of Sex-trafficking refers to sexual abuse, which involves forced prostitution, and that is a type of modern enslavement. A victim can be forced into a condition of dependency on traffickers in a variety of ways, subsequently exploited by these traffickers for carnal practices to customers. Sex trafficking crimes can take many forms, including procurement, transportation, and violence.

Another common form of human trafficking, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is sexual abuse (79%). Sexual assault is predominantly experienced by women and girls. Surprisingly, according to the percentage of nations that provided statistics on traffickers and their gender,

women constitute more than half of traffickers. Trafficking of women is prevalent in many regions of the world. Forced labour (18%) is the second most prevalent type of human trafficking, but this figure may be misleading since forced labour is less commonly observed and documented than trafficking for sexual abuse. The data for children comprises of at least 20% of the date for human trafficking nationally and internationally. This is particularly in certain areas of Africa (100% in of West Africa)

In 2003, according to United Nations (UN) Protocol Against Trafficking in Persons body, came up with relevant and effective policies in this field. According to the study, in the last few years, the number of States seriously considering implementing the Protocol has vividly increased (54 to 125 out of the 155 States enveloped). A lot of nations, however, still don't have the necessary judicial tools or democratic might. (Global Report on Trafficking In Persons). Based on this research above human trafficking is a serious problem across most African countries and women are majorly the target in terms of sex-trade. The authors of the primary texts for this project give insight to this predicament and factors that influence these concepts. Data reveals that several studies on different topics such as Gender, Feminism, Corruption and Child abuse have been carried out after much study by browsing online. While researching on each of these concepts one would realise society has influenced these concept. An aspect in society that hasn't been given enormous attention is sex-trafficking. According to African Center for Strategic Studies, "About 3.5 million Africans are trafficked and majority of whom are women of various ages for sex labour. (The Africa Center for Strategic Studies). Many have been made victims of sex trade and in turn lost their freedom, sense of dignity and their lives. In hopes for a better life many women have fallen victim to sex trafficking they are subdued into mental and physical objectification and unfortunately not a lot has been done to crop this situation. Billion dollar organisations have emerged from this bizarre occupation. Trafficking of humans is a \$13.1 billion annual enterprise in Africa according to African Center for Strategic Studies. There are numerous causes of sex trafficking Poverty remains the most significant reason for sex trafficking, in the quest for greener pastures women are forced into the world of sex trade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Victim mentality is an acquired personality trait in which, in the face of contradictory proof of certain circumstances, an individual appears to recognize or regard himself as a victim of other people's negative acts, and to behave as if this were the case. The attitude of the perpetrator relies on logical thinking processes and attribution. In some cases, those with a victim mind-set have actually become the victims of others' misconduct or have otherwise experienced tragedy through no fault of their own. The victim mentality is primarily based, for example, on family members and situations during childhood. Likewise, criminals frequently engage in victim mentality, believing themselves to be virtuous and engaging in crime only as a response to an unethical society, and often feeling that they are wrongly branded by authorities for persecution. It is important to note there have been victims as long as there have been humans relating to each other. According to Richard Quinney a victim is both a definition of fact and an event's object. All parties involved in any series of acts construct the truth of the situation. (Quinney 314) Therefore, any person involved in an event or circumstance is a victim, based on this definition. As long as an individual has contributed to a situation, they become victims and should be handled accordingly, but our innate thoughts have created a different view or opinion on a situation in which the victim should be treated in most cases. Richard Quinney's article 'WHO IS A VICTIM' stated "We all build 'the crime,' 'the suspect,' and 'the perpetrator' in a broader social context. In any case, we have a mental picture of whom or what is the victim. Simultaneously, we exclude other potential victims from our victim image".

The argument here is that while anyone and everything can be part of events, how these entities, groups or resources are characterized is a matter of imagination. In the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985), "Survivors are persons who have been harmed in any way, such as mental and physical damage, psychological distress, financial damage, or substantive deprivation of civil liberties, as a result of behaviours or inactions which does not necessarily require the violation of state codes but of globally recognized conventions towards fundamental civil rights, whether publicly or privately.," according to the definition. What methods should we use to inspire victims, to acknowledge their pain without reducing them to powerless victims without accountability, and to

acknowledge the injustice and inequality of the economic structure that victimizes them? As these designations vary with time and the distinction between them blurs, there aren't always straight lines between the victim and the suspect. Victims can transform into offenders and then be re-victimized, or victims can be perpetrators at the same time. (Enns 11) A survivor is someone who has been injured or abused, something that most of us tend to prevent. With this term, some individuals hit others over the head. Some seem to enjoy victimization; others almost fight for who is the greatest victim.

Women have been exposed to mental and physical violence, and culture has classified them as the weaker component between men and women. They've been victims of a number of social structures, including human trafficking for sexual exploration, which is one of the most bizarre and dehumanizing situations they've encountered. The bulk of women's publications identify with victimhood, or at least try to make references to it. The decision of the work's subject is generally clarified by cultural and contemporary conditions. Marriage is among the most popular types of oppression mentioned in female literature. The father normally chooses the partner, and based on the suitor's family history as well as the volume of the bride price, he can accept or disapprove the requests for his daughter. Black women in America are still being exploited by colonial patriarchy, subjected to a sexist framework that has become institutionalized. The black female slave isn't a slave at all. She was victimized not only because she was black, but also because she was a woman at the time, and therefore inferior to men. "Trafficking of human beings" includes coercion, torture, kidnapping, bribery, fraud, abuse of power or a place of weakness, or the offering or accepting of rewards or incentives to gain the cooperation of individuals in charge of some other individual. At the very least, Human smuggling can include recruitment of people for sex trade, slavery, subjugation, or decriminalization, to name a few examples of exploitation." (OHCHR | Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons,)

Therefore, human trafficking involves illegal act of shipping or coercing people in order to make a profit from their labour or service, usually through forced labour or sexual abuse. A research carried out by International Organization for Migration which was essentially between Nigeria to European states:

A large number of Nigerians have migrated to Europe, with many relying on human traffickers and many being victims of human trafficking in the process. The terms "migration," "human laundering," and "enslavement" are all used interchangeably. It's normal to think of them together when discussing Nigerian migration to Europe. Smuggling operations and human trafficking may or may not be associated with organized crime.(Carling 9)

The aim of this study is to focus primarily on sex trafficking which is; a type of human trafficking. Sex trafficking is an offence when individuals (women, men and/or children) are forcibly engaged in sex trade (prostitution/pornography). Any minor under the age of 18 who engages in sex trade in the United States is immediately considered a victim of sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is estimated to impact 4.5 million people worldwide.

Lies and deceit are a common way for criminals to lure and subjugate their victims both adults and juveniles – all over the world. Native people and those living in extreme poverty are frequently politically and economically oppressed; as a result, they often lack fundamental rights and services, such as education, making them especially susceptible to sex trafficking.

People from these areas are often given fake job prospects in metropolitan areas. Male victims are sent to work in construction and forestry in other countries, but they are also forced to commit commercial sex acts. Models, housekeepers, hostesses, and performers can be given jobs to women and young people. Some human traffickers function under guise of border dating agencies. Upon entry, however, these people are exploited, harassed, and sold into the sex trade. Over the last decade, human trafficking, particularly of women into sexual servitude (sex trafficking), has gotten a lot of attention.

Between 1907 and 1913, an increase in cross-border movement of women disturbed the wealthy, middle classes, and elite, increasing public fears about forcing white skin European ladies into sex trade against their own will. (Saunders and Soderlund 16) According to the United Nations, Trafficking is a multi-billion dollars organisation and the cost of a slave today is much lower than what it was during antebellum of the united-states. Africa has been the centre of the Atlantic slave trade for decades, and although slavery as

we know it is no longer practiced, it has evolved into “modern day slavery,” the exploitation of women and children for both commercial and domestic purposes. The consequences of modern-day slavery continue to have disastrous effects for those who are victims.

According to a UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre; Poverty and the vulnerability of ladies including minors are mainly the contributors of sex trade. Deep-seated gender disparity at the group level leads to a societal climate where sex trafficking is considered socially acceptable. Enlistment and disappointment is another force on the sex trade. (Rossi et al 5)

The high incidence of overall violence in internal and external sectors towards women can be linked to the smuggling of females, which occurs often in situations of violence and deprivation. (Rossi et al 5). In certain cases, women voluntarily exchange their bodies for the sake of survival, not just for themselves but also for their families. Women contact smugglers who can move them illegally from one country to another, and they are asked to pay in instalments. This organisation serves as intermediaries between women and brothel owners, also known as pimps. Manipulation has played a significant role in the trafficking of women. Women are persuaded to engage in sex labour by those they trust and depend on, such as family members, sexual partners, or husbands.

As economic and political insecurity increases women's vulnerability to crime, coercion, and exploitation, their human rights continue to be impacted. In the absence of a welfare system and the continuing disparity between third world countries and poor African countries, human trafficking seems unavoidable. A nation like Nigeria has served as prominence in the fight against human and sex trafficking over the years. The country not only acts as a breeding base for sex slaves, but it also serves as a powerful operational hub for mafia activities that specialize in trafficking young women to Europe and other parts of the world for the sex trade.

One significant reason that has fuelled the participation of Nigeria in sex trafficking is bad leadership. Nigeria has had a long history of inadequate, uninspiring leadership that has led to the struggle for economic survival within its shores. The issue has given rise to dubious minds who have devised a means of profiting from one of the world's most vicious organizations. The Ghana-United States State Department maintains that the Ghanaian administration is not completely compliant mostly with basic requirements for combating smuggling of humans; however there have been notable preparations to eradicate this problem. Ghana maintained the Tier 2 since the administration has shown an improvement by creating measures to solve the issue in contrast to previous reports. (Ghana - United States Department of State)

The Ghanaian administration therefore provided means to finding more potential trafficking victims and also provided a shelter with extensive provisions to sex trade survivors. In identifying and protecting kids from smuggling, community agencies, police, and democratic institutions have worked together. The state has begun to enforce standard operating procedures (SOPs) for reporting and referring victims of human trafficking in certain areas. A few of the methods used by traffickers to lure victims are: posing as distant or near relatives of victims is one of the tactics used by sex traffickers in Ghana to attract their victims. The use of witchcraft in sex trafficking has been extensively documented in Ghana, Nigeria and other African countries. (Siegel and Deblank 436). It is worth remembering a number of Ghanaian female traffickers are former victims who took control of the trafficking system to become recruiters. They go as far as working with their victims and working with male pimps to hire their victims. Common routes used by traffickers in Ghana include bus transport through the Sahara Desert, Morocco and Libya, particularly for victims who are trafficked without valid documentation. (Internal and Cross-Border Adult Sex Trafficking in Ghana - | IOM Online Bookstore)

Most writers in postcolonial African literature attempt to map out the discourse of colonialism and its serious consequences. These authors address disturbing and depressing topics such as abuse and inequality as means for physically, emotionally, culturally, and politically subjugating indigenous peoples. Novels, plays, and poems use the interplay of characters to express and convey these realities. People's present and future are connected by past events or points of view about social, cultural, or political acts in society. Most of the material in the novel is based on true yet stressful events that occurred. It's an effort to criticize the postcolonial discourse that focuses on a single individual as inferior to another.

There have been various literary works that have been written by African contemporary authors on sex trade, exploitation of women and children. Prominent writers have centred their novels on sex trafficking as a major theme. Such writers and books are as follows: Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* published in 2008, Abidemi Sanusi's *Eyo* published 2009, Ifeoma Chinweuba's *Merchants of Flesh*, Ikechukwu Asika's *Tamara* and Bisi Ojediran's *A Daughter for Sale*.

According to Ezeigbo "long strike activities lead to young people's increased participation in certain meaningless social events that put them together. They have a good deal of time to listen to the traffickers' sweet tales, which they use to persuade their victims of their validity. They become more vulnerable to distractions from their peers if they don't actively participate in academic projects to keep themselves occupied, which an aspect that promotes sex trade". This was seen in Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* in characters of Neoma and Efe.

The two young ladies are drawn into foreign sex trade through their desire for economic equality. Desiring to gain employment and earn money in foreign currency so they and their families can live better lives. Neoma and Efe discover that both stories are identical when re-enacting their ordeal in *Trafficked*.

The traffickers display what causes the girls to be worried when they imagine the money they will make in the United Kingdom. They discover that they are not just refunding the money paid by the smugglers to obtain their passports and plane tickets but also taken to herbalist, make covenants and even take potions, in which they are told what will happen if they ignore the conditions of the deal flout them or are cut off without paying their debts. Neoma recounts how she was made to walk in the street of Roma by their madam but still was never able to raise the money to pay her debts, she's later sold to a man called Baron who turned out to be the devil himself, he would keep her locked up in a room bring in other men and rape her brutally in turns, whenever she refuses to perform oral sex he would beat her almost to the point of death. Efe also shares her experiences walking with madam Gold who pimps her out every night and eventually sold her to her "new owner" a white man. (Ezeigbo 99-100)

The thrill and relief the girls experience after telling their story is what the writer uses to make the readers aware of the emotional release that leads empowerment. They feel relieved from the shame of dying in isolation by disclosing the conditions that contributed to enslavement and the suffering they experienced in Europe.

The author's trait in this narrative is that of a visionary writer. The two characters express their feelings in other to reveal their plight to light as a result of the traffickers taking advantage of them. The traffickers' motivation is to benefit their wallets by exploiting these girls who have found themselves in unfortunate situations. In this light they can even be seen as ritual killers. The author advocates for change, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's uses this novel to reflect vision, which is a way of looking at life with the aim of changing people's lives through the medium of art. Bisi Ojediran's *A Daughter for Sale* is a remarkable piece set in a movie like manner, the author uses a detective approach in tracing the sex trafficking trade's contours down to the last detail. The novel offers a beautiful and touching blend of accurate style and detective/thriller sensibility. The outlook of the book establishes that combating human trafficking necessitates far more than world body declarations, government condemnations and statements, and religious leaders' warnings. To be defeated, the answer to such a well-organized global crime must be strategic, investigative, and intelligence-driven.

In Ojediran's *A Daughter for Sale*, an investigative journalist Peter Abel for zodiac, one of the leading newspaper in Nigeria, sets out on a journey to save a trafficked child to whom he grows an emotional attachment. The other reason responsible for this risky dive is to avenge the horrific death of fellow Zodiac journalist a comrade who is slaughtered in cold blood for writing a story about sex trafficking in the country. The journalist tries to uncover the evil cartel behind the illicit trafficking of young girls and bringing them to face the law.

Abel soon learns that he is up against bloodthirsty demons that will stop at nothing to keep their company afloat. As he attempts to save the young girl (Alice) from smugglers, Abel's informant is brutally assassinated, and he barely avoids assassination himself. He expands his investigation globally when he discovers that the powers are much more powerful than he had expected. Abel pursues the smugglers to the Canary Islands in Spain, Mali in West Africa, London in the United Kingdom, and eventually Washington,

D.C. in the United States before finally snatching Alice from their clutches. This book exposes the deadly and well-connected nature of human smugglers, who operate large-scale operations protected by corrupt government officials. A man's tenacity has forever changed the life of a child, rescuing her from the clutches of her oppressors.

African literature isn't just based on books, it centres on books, poems and prose and even movies. Another story that based on sex trafficking is *Òlòturé* a 2019 Nigerian crime film directed by Kenneth Gyang and produced by Ebonylife Film, starring Sharon Ooja, Bervely Osu and Omawumi. It tells the story of a journalist who disguises herself as a prostitute in order to expose sex trafficking, but she discovers a world of abused women and brutal brutality instead. *Oloture* is a film set in Nigeria about a young, inexperienced Nigerian journalist who goes undercover to expose the shady world of human trafficking. Oloture finds comfort and friendship with Blessing, Linda, and Beauty, the prostitutes she lives with, despite the harsh world, which is crawling with ruthless traders and pimps. She, on the other hand, becomes engrossed in their way of life and finds it difficult to cope. She pays the ultimate price in her search for the truth, one that leads her to the point of no return. She accompanies the prostitutes to a private party hosted by a Nigerian politician while undercover. She is raped by a politician, who strengthens her resolve to bring down the organization responsible for exporting women to Europe to serve as sex slaves, but she is unable to do so. She is forced to take an oath before being abducted and taken to the Benin Republic with a group of women.

Critical Review of *Beyond the Horizon*

There have been a lot of reviews and analysis of this book. So many scholars have given their opinion and constructed different narratives from the novel. Amma Darko does an excellent job of evoking readers' emotions through her raw writing style! She expertly introduces readers to the horrifying realities of powerless victims of male exploitation; you'd think she was a survivor herself. Her writing reviews a lot of hardship and struggle women are subjected to. In this paper there would be a review of different scholarly approaches to the novel. This paper will highlight the opinions of literary experts and individuals of the book and the Author.

Charles Marfo, Philomena Abeka Yeboah and Lucy Bonku describe Amma Darko's novel as Exploiting the Exploited. The aim is to question African societies' preconceived notions about motherhood in the novel. What tactics do females use to survive in such a violent world, how do they thrive in such an exploitative and dysfunctional society? ... Pregnancy, sexuality, submissiveness, and exploitation are all intertwined survival tactics used by women. The painful truth is that the essence of the achievements in such hardships sometimes diminishes and devalues women. Darko et al. (Marfo et al 281).

According to Koumagnon A Djossou *Beyond the Horizon* he examines the subject of alienation and how the central character manages to overcome it. Throughout the story, she keeps reinventing herself. Alienation, also known as self-alienation, has been depicted in a variety of ways. When a person's illness is caused by another person, the person feels alienated. The research focused on the kind of alienation which results from a loss of identity as a result of another culture's invasion. (Koumagnon 1). Koumagnon connects the story of Mara to that of the African people during the time of colonialism and how they felt alienated. Alienation has a partner in the form of aggression and vice, all of which serve to delegate and submit individuals. The colonizer's preferred tactic is violence. It enables the colonizer to separate himself from his victim. The colonized are constantly trodden underfoot; for the colonized to be under his influence and fully subdued, she must be in excruciating pain. When given the chance, African bodies are depicted as sexualized, medicalized, disciplined, and talking bodies throughout the colonial era. (Koumagnon 1. Ngwaba Ann Ijeoma gave an insight to the writer, her paper stated the complexity of these interactions and their representations in the world are often exposed through literary representation. Darko is a member of a third generation of authors, many of whom are now considered diasporic writers. (Ngwaba 112)

According to Kammampoal Bawa, the writer wants to confront patriarchal tendencies that lead to the dehumanization of women, particularly in modern times. She concludes that human and sex trafficking have devastating psychological consequences. Her female protagonists' emotional and physical well-being as they become entangled in the web of sex smugglers. (Kammampoal 2). Asempasah Rogers and Sam Christabel

described the novel as ‘reconstituting the self’. A careful attention to the literary representations of Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* is consequently vital to the story of waking and restoration of identity in the novel. Her initial disappointment and hopelessness drives her into seeking redemption and restoration from her oppressor. (Asempasah and Sam 164)

According to Zanou Laure et al, *Beyond the Horizon*’s depiction of male characters is a tool for Amma Darko to deconstruct male societal domination and highlight the vileness and avarice of African male writers, regardless if they live in Africa or Europe. (Zanou et al 120)

Aiyetoro et al, claims the book’s portrayal of trafficked females, particularly Mara, is accurate in terms of their imposed passivity, second-class status, and degradation. Because male gratification appears to be intimately linked to victimizing, hurting, and exploiting, different acts of brutal sexual intercourse are understood as displays of masculine authority”. (Aiyetoro et al 36). According to Annin Felicia, Darko’s feminist portrayal in *Housemaid* and *Beyond the Horizon* is justified. Darko’s literary work, she believes, is targeted toward combating gender inequities in Ghana. According to her, these inequalities have further pushed Ghana’s impoverished and needy women into a social ghetto. (Annin 3). Udogu Christiana O, stated Amma Darko sees it as her responsibility to voice out against the violation of women’s sexual rights, which often results to prostitution, and to reaffirm women’s strength through resistance. Female novelists rewrite masculine portrayals to express the heroines’ difficulties as women. (Udogu 159)

Critical Review Of *On Black Sisters Street*

According to Umezurike, female protagonists in Unigwe’s novel are compelled to play the pre-determined roles of sex objects in the stereotypical tradition of prostitution. Their sexuality is shaped by male sexuality, and they are exposed to it. This is due to patriarchal systems creating circumstances under which a man is entitled to publicly express his desires while a woman’s sexuality is patrolled and silenced. (Umezurike 156). The lead female character is known as Sisi in the novel. Her initial act of defiance was to quit her job as a prostitute and restart her life with her Belgian boyfriend, Luc. Once Madam the brothel owner comes to see why Sisi hasn’t gone to work at her stand in the Vingerlingstraat yet, she informs her she’s on her cycle. After recording her victory against madam she decides to go further by failing to pay her monthly payment to the pimp Dele. This is her latest act of defiance. Sisi had never failed to pay her bill prior to this rash decision. Unfortunately the rebellion led to the demise of Sisi but her decision showed that she was ready to regain her subjectivities and fight of objectivities.

So many analysis has been carried out in this text one important theme to notice in this book is the process of migration and identity change. This is explained critically by Ladele A Omolola and Omotayo E Adesunmbo. They stated it is reasonable to infer from this analysis that certain migrant experiences are gender-specific, which has been a concern of Unigwe, which has been shown in this essay. For example, it is rare to find male immigrants who are sex workers, and the book doesn’t indicate any of such instances. (Ladele and Adesunmbo 55). The presumption of a false identity strengthens their pimp’s grip; they somehow become anonymous and faceless without any constitutional rights. Sisi is subsequently killed, and because of her illegal culpability, the crime remains unsolved, denying her justice. The author uses Joyce, who is not Nigerian, to emphasize the global nature of sex trade. Joyce was born Alek and grew up in Sudan, where she was a survivor of civil war and rape. Mr Dele changes Alek’s name to Joyce before she is transported to Belgium, a name he finds more glamorous than the former.

According to Tunca Daria the fact that three of the four women decided to become prostitutes prohibits any easy categorization of them as helpless, docile women overwhelmed by the combined horrors of African men and European customs. Instead, Unigwe’s portrayal of her characters, as well as their indigenous and host civilizations, is defined by complexity, which needs to be discussed more. (Tunca 4). Umezurike Peter Uchechukwu discovers, although being immersed in ideological practices, the young women in the text were more or less victims of the world’s prevailing ideology. Men sexually objectified them as objects, and they became the mechanism by which this ideology sustained and reproduced itself. (Umezurike 9). *Publishers Weekly*, in its review describes the novel as powerful and a must-read because of the author’s raw voice, unwavering eye for detail, ability to create a compelling argument, and affection for her characters.

According to Jones P. Edward, *On Black Sisters Street* by Chika Unigwe is a magnificent, compassionate, and poignant work of art. The best literature succeeds when it allows the reader to open a door, enter another world, gaze about, and finally remark, "I feel and know this place and these people as if I've been there many times before." With all of the characters in her new work, Ms. Unigwe has delivered it for us. We owe her a great deal of respect and thanks. (Jones n.pag). Egbuta Otuu Chinyere and Lekwa Anya Iro illustrate the situation of migrating women, whose stories reflect the wide range of experiences of women who are victims of human trafficking. It is one of the excellent works that capitalize on the now-global phenomenon of human trafficking and international sex trafficking. The fascinating story follows African prostitutes in the Diaspora who are cruelly abused by human traffickers, their agents, and even the men to whom they sell sex. (Egbuta and Lekwa 43). The lifestyles and circumstances of these migrant women before and after the Diaspora reveal the socio-political, cultural, racial, and historical characteristics that distinguish them as third-world women. In other words, Unigwe demonstrates the amount to which imperial legacies impact the decisions of these ladies their experiences are identified by such indicators from a post-colonial feminist perspective.

The Reader response theory is adopted because analysis is entirely a subjective experience that is generated by the reader's unique relatability to the narration. Reading therefore, generates a "conceptual, symbolic universe." Reading, in other words, is the development of meaning by symbolism. Bleich's definition of a literary text is crucial to understanding how there is no literary text outside the meanings established by readers' perceptions. In the same vein as many other reader response critics; he distinguishes between what he refers to as "reality" and "symbolism." Things that exist in the physical world are called "real objects." The pages of a piece of literature are real objects, but the experience that is formed when a person studies them is a symbolic object because it takes place in the reader's mind. Austrian philosopher Karl Bleich coined the term "symbolization" to describe the process of reading. As a result, as we evaluate the meaning of a text, we are actually analyzing the meaning of our own symbolization: the conceptual experience we constructed in reaction to the text.

Beyond the Horizon centres on a Ghanaian village girl Mara, who is forced into an arranged marriage by her father for monetary gain with a man referred to as Akobi, a city dweller who works at the Ministry. As Mara eventually comes to the city to live in Akobi's unkempt one-bedroom apartment, he assaults her excessively and regularly. Mara, a typical village girl who is naïve and meek, unused to city life, and very silly, does all the daily activities to keep the apartment going, she cooks, cleans, and engages in petty trade at the market in order to help Akobi while enduring his beatings, psychotic-sexual desires, and sleeping on a mat on the concrete floor while Akobi sleeps on his badly shaped mattress.

Akobi travels to Europe with the aid of a man in order to gain funds so as to improve his social status in the region. Being the first person to travel out of the country in their village he is celebrated and honoured by the villagers. He is regarded as a man of great Honour. Mara on the other hand tries to rebrand herself into the ideal city girl in hopes of Akobi falling in love with her. Surprisingly Akobi eventually arranges for Mara to join him, which she is overjoyed about because she never imagined she would ever leave her village let alone go to Germany. However, her life in Germany is full of deception and misfortune. She's stranded and loses her sense of identity and worth.

In Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* the opening scene of the novel gives an image of a sad, pitiable, battered woman who stares at her image in disbelief of what her life has turned into. Many years of abuse and exploitation has left her doubting her own identity. Mara the main character starts the novel by staring at her image in the mirror.

I am staring painfully at my image. My image? No!- what is left of what once used to be my image. And from my left and right, all about me, I keep hearing chuckles and paintings, wild bed-spring creaks, screaming oohs and aaha. They are coming from rooms same as mine where the same things are done as they are mine and in all of them there are pretty women like my-self waiting to be used by strange men. (BTH 1)

From the excerpt above, we begin to wonder what situation would lead a woman into a life of subjugation and sexual slavery. Mara's life has been one filled with exploitation from her family and incessant mental and physical abuse from her husband and men in general. Mara comes from Naka a small village located in the rural parts of Ghana. Poverty plays a major tool that leads her family particularly her father into debts and the only solution he sees is marrying her off to a well to do farmers son who was called Akobi. This decision clearly illustrates how some African fathers have used their daughters as a means of escaping poverty or settling a score. This selfish act has led many women into terrible and heart wrenching marriages where they are exploited and Mara is no different in fact her case can be seen as one of the most bizarre and inhumane conditions a woman or anyone can survive.

Mara is well conscious of her situation, but since women in Naka village are voiceless, she stays silent and can only recall how her father found her a husband, as she says.

I remember the day clearly. I returned from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when my mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wetness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut and breathlessly told me the "good news". Your father has found a husband for you', she gasped, a good man! (BTH 4).

This clearly demonstrates that women are not able to choose who they will marry and must instead accept their fathers' choices. Their mother is supposed to deliver the news to their daughters with complete confidence that it is in their best interests. Women in the traditional Naka village are manipulated by their lack of voice; it forces them to embrace anything that comes their way, even if it is to their detriment. It also demonstrates that objectification stems from the African custom of selling one's daughter as a commodity. Life with her husband is quite sad and depressing Akobi repeatedly hits her at the slightest provocation; the living condition he provides is far from being conducive. Beyond the Horizon depicts the various shades of injustice and objectification in Africa. Mara is voiceless, As Akobi's wife, she is subjected to domestic violence, humiliation and objectification. She only sleeps in bed while Akobi is in need of sexual gratification, and then she is discarded. Even in her husband's house, she is treated as a punching bag and sex object, which is a form of objectification and abuse.

... Though heard him I feign a deep sleep, when suddenly I felt a painful kick in my ribs. Astounded at the point of foolishness, I jumped up in confusion... 'I stared at him..... 'I refused to work for Mama Kiosk?' I asked. 'shut up' he roared, landing me a slap on one cheek... I understood the world no more....(BTH 11)

The excerpt above was the first of many incidents where Akobi raised his hands on Mara; another chilling scene was when she informed him she was pregnant. Mara proving to be a very hard-working lady just like most African women starts to help neighbours especially Mama kiosk throw their dumps in-exchange for food items. She proceeds to start selling eggs at the park, Akobi lends her money to start but insists she must pay him back with interest this provides her with a bit of a financial standing but this does not go without him claiming a refund with interest.

It is important to note when a woman starts to have a suitable form of income the amount of power and influence a man has over her is sufficiently reduced she becomes independent and therefore a threat to egoistic Men who use their money to override their partners. Mara became self-sufficient, no longer bothering him about money for their daily meals or other necessities, purchased her a pair of slippers, and began to grin and sing once more. This enraged Akobi her happiness concerned him because he had begun to lose power and influence over her. An exploiter is suddenly terrified by independence and newfound self-confidence, he preferred to make her feel ashamed, rejected, and subjugated in order to further dominate and manipulate her.

Most African families have little sympathy for women who leave their husbands they are stigmatized as problematic, intolerant, un-submissive and egoistic, very few people bother to listen to their problems, there is already a conclusion that a failed marriage is as a result of a woman's inability to satisfy her husband's desires. This leaves Mara at a disadvantage she realises they wouldn't understand her pain and agony she will seem as a disobedient wife who has let the life of the city women influence her, once again she is voiceless, she's violated by her husband but yet she can't speak up for herself. The option of leaving Akobi isn't made available as she knows she would be rejected by her family which is very common to African

families, a woman can be mistreated, abused and exploited yet she is expected to endure it all without complaining. A good wife must be submissive, diligent put her needs last, take care of her husband's needs without complaining. Mara's father is a classic example of a man with no sense of morals, shame or intelligence. A Father, who uses his daughter to clear a debt and earn money for him solely, ignores his family and their state of suffering.

However, Mara returned to the village and stayed until the birth of her son Kofo, and for the first time since she left the village, Akobi and his father paid her a visit, and his father presented her with a box of high-quality gold jewellery. He insisted on taking these items, as well as the garments presented to her as dowry, the next day for "safe-keeping." Mara returns to the city after a ten-month absence, the first thing she looks for is her jewellery, which she can't find. She asks Akobi for it, but he ignores her request.

Akobi, I said on the Sunday morning, yesterday 'I searched for my jewellery, clothes and other things but I didn't find them. Did you put them here?' No, he replied curtly. 'You said you were bringing them for safekeeping', I went on desperately. 'Because it is not here' he replied off-handedly, his face searching the corrugated-sheet ceiling. 'Where are they?' I said last. 'I've sold them' he replied still looking at the ceiling....
(*BTH* 32)

He has clearly manipulated Mara because he believes she won't be able to do much to him, he abuses her trust and uses her money without remorse. However, he tries to appease her by telling her of his plans to travel to Germany to earn money and give her a better life. He manipulates her vulnerability by cajoling her to help him sort for more money for him to travel; he promises her a better life one with a beautiful house, a business that would earn her lots of money. Mara begins to imagine all these and slowly falls for his tricks, she is clearly still a naïve village girl who still holds the believe of her and Akobi making a beautiful home with their son she throws reason into the wind and clouds her mind with the illusion of Akobi loving her and treating her like his wife. This is a classic example of how men control women selling them falls stories about the love they have for them or how well they will be taken care of if these women do whatever it is they want. Women are known to be emotional bodies this known fact is repeatedly used against them by people particularly men they influence their decision with the guise of being in love with them and exploit them of their money and possessions.

I am going to Europe to leave there just for a year or two most, he began, and to work. Mara, do you know that there is so plenty factory and construction work waiting to be done there in Europe but we so little people to do them? That is why I sold your things, Mara in a year, in just one year, you will see for yourself. I will make so much money that I can buy us everything! Everything, Mara! Television, radio, fridge, carpet, even car! (*BTH* 34)

Akobi just like some African men has proven time and time again to be irresponsible, petty and self-centred, a man with almost no conscience. Your wife exists solely on the basis of how much money she can earn and the degree to which she can satisfy your sexual desires. Her naivety is the biggest tool he uses to deceive and lure her into a life of permanent misery. Naïve women are easily wooed into a life of misery. He finally began his journey to Europe, leaving her in Ghana for two years without any contact, but he wrote her a letter telling her that he wanted her to come to Europe. Mara's trip to Europe allowed her to meet Akobi's friend, a man named Osey, who people pay to bring their wives to Europe. . Subsequently, she's first introduced to the life she would be leaving in Europe when Osey questions her on what she's wearing underneath her sweat shirt and jeans he further to informs her of Akobi's new name and circumstances under which he agreed to bring her to Europe. If Akobi cannot pay his money in full, he will have to sleep with Mara for free.

It shows how cruel and mean men can be, using women as collateral to pay for their selfish actions, bringing Mara to Europe was his idea, yet she has to be the one who suffers and sacrifices more. Mara will be the victim of sex slavery. Life in Europe is a million times worse than in Ghana. There have been a long range of African men who have married white when in other to get residence without the knowledge of their wives back home in Africa and unfortunately Mara isn't left out of this sad reality. She finds out that her husband is married to a white woman and forces her to dress up as his sister and treats her like a housekeeper and also for his sexual gratification whenever his new wife is away. He turns her into an object whose sole

purpose is to serve him and do whatever he wants, she begins to lose her identity and live like his clone even with all this suffering, she still hadn't discovered his true evil intentions. There have been so many women who have fallen into the world of sex trading and shockingly in some cases their partners act as their pimps or agents. They bring men to these women and end up taking a higher percentage of the money. Osey's girlfriend Vivian just like Mara, are victims to this outrageous acts done by their partners they take advantage of their dependence and use it in ruining the lives of these women without giving them their full income. Hell hits for Mara when Akobi decided to take her out one night, he took her to a building outside their city in Europe. This place has a large room with dim red lights, Akobi offers her a glass of wine and after drinking, she suddenly loses consciousness but seems sober enough to see a large group of naked men entering the room

“...i felt strange and happy and high so high that I was certain I could fly free. Then suddenly the room was filled with people, all men, and they were talking and laughing. They were completely naked! There must have been about ten men for what I saw was at least twenty images.”(BTH 111)

The nature at which men perform sexual acts on prostitutes shows how they hold little value for them. There can be as many as eight to ten men on a single lady spreading her legs apart and taking rounds. In most cases it is brutal and there is a large case of violence some are tied up, chained, whipped, and subjected to the use of dangerous objects in their private areas. African women are to a large extent victims of these form of torture their bodies are abused and damage and their mental state is left in a messy condition some women even consider suicide while some end up hating themselves and seeing themselves as mere object with no sense of value, worth or dignity. For Mara, these men spread her legs apart and used her all night and in exchange Akobi was offered money for her services. In other to tame her further he reveals a tape of her naked with several men thrusting into her and fondling with her body he threatens to send the video to her family if she doesn't agree to do as he says. The gateway to the world of prostitution is open. She was to leave Ghana only to be made a sex slave by a man who should protect her and take care for her instead he uses her as his meal ticket in Ghana and Europe. Trauma is “an injury sustained on the mind rather than the body, in which “understanding and not understanding are intertwined in the language of trauma” (Wolfreys 2). Mara's alienated body repeats her sex task several times during the day this is now her new reality. This exemplifies the sense of betrayal and desperation felt by the naive and changed Mara. Despite the money she receives from prostitution, she sees herself as broken, exploited, and abused. She also highlights the suffering of most women, who are seen as objects of gratification and then discarded. She acknowledges that she has been used and that she will continue to be used.

...The situation was this: the three of us were watching a video film that showed me completely naked, with men's hands moving all over her body. Then some held my two legs wide apart while one father the other men, many men, while, black, brown, even one who looked Chinese, took turns upon me...this was what Osey and Akobi blackmailed me with so that I agreed to do the job at peepy (BTH 115)

The world is indeed a very cold place inhabited by two groups of people, the exploiters and the exploited. It is a sad reality for some African women, who are forced into sexual slavery, trapped and treated like animals. Women's objectification has been a long-standing tradition that appears to be resurfacing in various forms in modern times. Objectification also causes women to experience negative emotions such as guilt and anxiety. It can lead to psychological issues in the long run. Humanity is lost once the search for money and controls over powers our desire to be humane. This novel is a revelation of how African women are exploited in their families, what is interesting is that most of the women in this novel are exploited, from Mara's mother who has little say on who her daughter should marry to Mara whose existence is tied to a wicked husband and Akobi's white wife Gitte who was deceived into thinking he married for love and was building a home in Ghana for them whereas he just needed her for his residence in Germany. Another notable character who was exploited was Osey's girlfriend who was deeply in love with him but unfortunately was also turned to a prostitute and ended up drowning into a world of drugs and suicide.

In conclusion, this book gives a chill to the body, as a reader you put yourself in these women's shoes and begin to imagine the extent of objectification, manipulation, and exploitation they were subjected to and how their destinies have been altered for life with no means of redemption or victory even when the main

perpetuator (Akobi) was sent to jail. So many African women have faced abused and exploitation from their male partners, fathers even their mothers. It is important to note that abuse is not only physical but also emotional, the worse form of abuse and sadly African women are facing this sad situation. In this book, ingrained misogyny, patriarchal gender roles, domestic abuse, European racist immigration policies, and internalized misogyny are all examined with a critical eye. Sisterhood is ephemeral and temporary; women help and harm each other in turn. While Akobi is abusing Mara, his white wife has been lied to and exploited by him but unfortunately feels more confident in their relationship. Other pimps are the only way to get away from violent husband-pimps.

Exploitation

In African society women are socially programmed to embrace patriarchal concepts and ideals that devalue them, affirm their supposed inferiority to men, and expose them to violence and exploitation. The character Mara has long been a victim of socio-cultural exploitation. Mara was denied rights to education as a child, which would have provided her with valuable skills. She would have had the experience, expertise, and self-confidence to engage actively in modern society. Rather, her father drives her into an early marriage, abusing her by marrying her to the son of a rich man in their village. She is transported to the city, where she begins her responsibilities as a wife, having been taught to recognize her husband as supreme and therefore deserving of her worship and obedience. In the midst of her husband's mistreatment, Mara faithfully performs the role of the ideal woman, which finally results into domestic violence. Mara needs to believe that her partner is truly concerned about her well-being.

Mama Kiosk, her mentor and confidante, attempts to convince her that her husband is mistreating her and that respect should be reciprocated, but she stubbornly insists he is right no matter what. Mara's cultural conditioning prohibits her from challenging her husband's intentions or behaviour. To her detriment, Akobi only marries her as part of a calculated scheme to benefit from her ignorance, naivety, and subordination. Mara is raised to value male power and superiority, and to see marriage as the peak of a female's accomplishment.

Akobi manipulates and exploits her for his personal gain. He becomes enraged when she announces her pregnancy since the arrival of "her baby" will diminish his fortune and interfere with his plans for a better life, which, oddly, does not involve Mara. To put an end to this kind of exploitation, African women must seize all chances to raise awareness, speak up, and halt their complacency, and aspire to be recognized as human beings worthy of the same dignity and respect as men. Mara would not have succumbed to early pregnancy if she had been educated. She would have become more informed and assertive as a result of her sisterhood with Mama Kiosk. She would have also insisted on her rights to be treated with respect as a legally married woman. In the book, sexual abuse is portrayed as an expansion of economic exploitation. Mara becomes a survivor after Akobi has her smuggled to Germany with the help of an orchestrated smuggling organization under the guise of reuniting them. His goal, on the other hand, is to financially exploit her through prostitution. Mara is also carelessly told that Akobi has married a German woman for the sake of convenience and citizenship papers, and that she will be living with them as his "sister." Since polygyny is tolerated in African culture, she is supposed to embrace this without complaint as an African wife. As a result, she embarks on a journey of deception and sexual exploitation for the profit of Akobi. *Beyond the Horizon* portrays two styles of sexual abuse: personal and customer sexual exploitation. The first occurs during Mara's marriage to Akobi, and the latter occurs when she is duped into prostitution to make money for him. Mara is used for sexual pleasure by Akobi, who has no affection or admiration for her.

African societies accept value structures that commercialise women, economic exploitation is rampant. It takes the form of women being manipulated for financial gain or pleasure. As a result, another major form of exploitation seen in the book is economic exploitation. A lot of African women, like Mara, are not given opportunities that would allow them to confront and resolve discrimination against women and marginalization. As a result of their poverty and desperation, they are exposed to economic abuse. Mara's father marries his daughters with his wife's full support, despite the fact that she, like the daughters, is aware of their manipulation for financial gain. Akobi sees Mara as a "commodity" that his family purchased with the dowry he paid to marry her. This allows him to abuse her by neglecting her, subjecting her to domestic service, and exploiting her financially. He marries Mara in a coldly crafted scheme to profit as much as

possible from her labour after being rejected. He is putting his plan into action as he pushes her to replace the minimal sum he provides for their upkeep. Later, he gives her money to start a business on the condition that she repays him with interest. As Mara's trading profits grow, Akobi's "more essential objectives" become evident: he ceases to provide financial support and, in order to solidify his travel plans, sells Mara's valuable possessions - clothes and jewelry - to secure a visa. Akobi seems to manipulate Mara economically in order to save money for his trip to Europe, as well as subjecting her to domestic violence in order to maintain power over her. In the presence of co-workers, he often ignores and fails to acknowledge her. If Mara hadn't been so ignorant and consumed with her cultural obligations, these acts may have raised red flags for her.

Prostitution and pornography

Darko's compelling and detailed work depicts and criticizes the sexualisation of African women through prostitution and pornography in African and European society. The book represents the story of an ignorant woman who faces emigration to Germany and is coerced into prostitution by her own spouse. The novel strongly condemns and surprisingly cries out for the struggles of African women who are traumatized and sexually exploited in European brothels.

As any European newspaper's classifieds section would reveal, a female's skin colour (preferably black or mulatto) is still highly prized and sought after as an exquisite gem or product. Given the erotic market's demands in Europe, it's no surprise that the novel's protagonist ends up in prostitution and pornography. There really aren't enough options for naive, uneducated, and attractive young remote African women like the protagonist of the novel in Europe's prostitution and pornography industry so naturally they have few choices. Prostitution and pornography are prohibited in contemporary Ghana; however, it is important to note there are a variety of activities that led to prostitution due to socio-economic factors. Prostitution and pornography walk hand in hand. Pornography is the physical description of any sexual activity that may seem degrading. It is used as a tool in the novel to kill the African primitive culture embedded in the protagonist. Mara faces her fight shocking and humiliating experience when she is made to watch pornography and subsequently drugged and raped through a calculative dubious plan by her husband.

Synopsis of on Black Sister's Street

On Black Sisters Street is a compelling tale about four diverse ladies who have left their African country in search of riches and a better life in Europe (Germany precisely), Unfortunately their lives take a tragic turn which ultimately leads them to form a sisterhood their changes their stories forever.

These women stand outside Antwerp district every night offering to fulfil the fantasies of their customers. They share an apartment but nothing else, as they are enslaved to the ruthless Madam and a powerful trafficker named Dele. They try to be as obedient as they can be in order not to attract heavy consequences for disobedience. They expose their bodies to people, not their souls, each concentrated on making enough money to pay their debt and send money to their families as well as save for the future. And, out of nowhere, their lives are shattered by a murder. The women are brought together by tragedy and the death of one of their own, and they must choose between their secrets and their protection. Their revelations expose the image in Efe's hidden portrait, Ama's lifetime quest for a father, Joyce's true identity, and Sisi's mysterious plans their stories are filled with terror, displacement, and love, culminating in a chance encounter with a charming, mysterious stranger.

On Black Sister's Street is a novel that portrayed the reason and effect of sex trafficking and violence on women. African women as seen in the novel are left in situations where they are physically and mentally violated. Sex trafficking has led to dangerous injuries on women. Victims are generally detained in extremely close and unhygienic areas during transit, which can lead to illness outbreak and transmission. Unintended pregnancies are also frequent (owing to the prevalence of unprotected sex), and the outcome is never to benefit women: even when victims have the option of having an abortion, access to secure and safe health care is probably withheld from them. There're a large number of sex workers who live in constant fear of the unknown some have resigned themselves to the fate of forever being a sex worker while others have tried to redeem their image by leaving the profession but unfortunately most of them are murdered by their pimps or men they have sexual relations with. Sex workers are often condemned, shamed and treated with no empathy a certain aspect which should be considered is the motivation behind the decision to be a sex

worker and the mental state and capacities of these victims most of them battle addiction, anger, depression and eventually commit suicide. This book introduces the readers to four young women who found themselves in the world of sex trafficking, it's important to note that each of these women were not necessarily cajoled into this life rather their personal circumstances which streamed from poverty, rape and abandonment led to the decision of them becoming prostitutes.

One of the characters Sisi who is also known as Chisom reminisces on why she left Nigeria to Belgium due to the terrible financial state of her family and the lack of a suitable employment. She loses hope on ever making it in Nigeria so when she got the offer from Dele (a pimp) to travel to Belgium-Antwerp to work as a sex worker and make lots of money for her family she takes it.

“...Chisom dreamed of leaving Lagos. *This place has no future*. She tried to imagine another year in this flat her father rented in ogba. Walls stained yellow over the time time-the colour pap-that she could no longer stand, their yellowness wrapping their hands around her neck...” (OBSS 9)

However, life in Antwerp isn't all roses she's made to stand on the road looking for clients and has to take about five clients a day in order to make enough for herself, family and her agent. She describes Antwerp as a “botched dream” she was desperate to leave Nigeria in pursuit of a bigger dream but unfortunately she left to be treated as an object which holds no value.

“...Sisi learned the rates pretty quickly. She always had a head for figures. Fifty euros for a blow job...Twice the price for half an hour of everything: P&S, French kissing, and full penetration with a condom, without condom the clients paid thirty Euros extra” (OBSS 11)

This is the life of most sex workers who have lived a life filled with poverty and disappointment; they lose hope in their dreams and aspirations because a dream without resources is useless. Some women see their bodies as a quick and easy means into making money and in the world of today sex is glamorized and sex in exchange of money is seen as a wise prospect. However, this profession comes with great consequences and for Sisi she pays the ultimate price. The life of sex trade is no longer sufficient for her and the contributing factor to this was her relationship with a man called Luca, she suddenly see's hope as she's able to fall in love and feel loved therefore, the longing to leave her profession increases but one cannot easily cut ties with this world and for Sisi her consequences for trying to run away from the life she chose will be death. Sisi is murdered cold-bloodily and left lifeless on the streets of Belgium. There has been one too many stories of women particularly black African women who have been killed by their traffickers and pimps for either trying to run away or steal from them. The sex trafficking industry is a scary place filled with heinous crimes being committed with little to no form of justice against the perpetrators. Poverty is a dangerous drug that can lead to desperate resolutions. The quest for money is a never ending journey, most people want to make money fast and as ladies they're been told the fastest way to earning a lot is by prostitution especially in European countries.

There are other factors that determine why women go into sex trading and for Efe it is merely just not valuing her body enough, long before she joined prostitution, at the age of sixteen after the demise of her mother she had already been involved in sexual immoral acts with an older man called Titus one could say she was in love, while others could say she was in love with the things he was able to provide for her which she used to cater for herself and family. The relationship with this man has exposed her into seeing sex as a commodity, an exchange for something in return. Young girls in their teenage years especially in homes where there's no form of parental guidance are at risk of being victims of sexual exploitation just like Efe and the consequences of these makes them de-value themselves. They aren't taught the important of self-dignity, self-worth and integrity. Child neglect is an issue that affects so many Africans, some irresponsible parents leave their children to the hands of society without teaching them the right ethics to follow in life while others leave huge responsibilities on their children. The child becomes the sole provider for the home and this has led to children getting into dangerous crimes like; robbery, kidnapping, cyber-crimes and prostitution. According to the book, Efe is unfortunately impregnated by Titus although he denies the pregnancy and leaves his wife to chase her out of their home. Taking care of a child with no financial assistance is a recipe for disaster and having younger siblings to provide for makes it worse, she's left with

the little savings she had. Having been exposed into sexual immorality way too early, blinded by the gifts and money she receives, there's no one to caution her rightly she has single-handedly ruined her future. However, she had a resilient spirit, she would go through any length to provide for her son and give him a good life one better than hers. Efe became a cleaner for Dele so when she was offered a job to travel abroad to become a sex worker she's unable to refuse. Belgium. A country wey dey Europe. Next door to London...if I wan' go abroad, Oga dele? Anybody dey ask pikin if de pikin wan' sweet?"(OBSS 14).

Some African women are victims of Child neglect and an early sexual activity which has led them to choose a life of prostitution as a means of survival, they place no value in their bodies so it is easier to have sexual intercourse with several men and not feel worthless or used. Poverty, sexual immorality and child neglect have been one of the many reasons identified in this novel as the cause of sex trafficking of African women. However, there are other motives stating in this book which are Rape and Asylum. Ama which is the third woman identified according to this book was a young girl who ran away from home due to the constant abuse she faced from the hands of her step-father and her mother's nonchalance towards the situation. She's described to come from a Christian home, her step-father was a minister and an active member of the church however, behind his Christian imagine lays a monster that rapes a young teenage girl who he calls daughter. So many women have been victims of rape especially from their close relations and are unable to speak out due to fear of rejection, denial and stigma.

“...her father floated into her dark room in his white safari. Ama thought he was a ghost and would have screamed if he had not pre-empted her by covering her mouth with one broad palm smothering the scream in her throat. With the other hand he fumbled under her nightdress...” (OBSS 20)

They see themselves as damaged beings, broken and worthless so they fall prey to pimps who come in disguise as messiahs they start of as being causal friends to these ladies then later expose their hidden agenda when they've built a certain bond with them. Vulnerabilities has led to many lives been ruined the ability to manipulate a vulnerable comes in handy in this line of work and in most cases Rape victims are easily targets. Women with troubled background are sadly prone to a life of misery and agony they are either the author of their misfortune or victims of their circumstance and for Ama one could say she falls in both category. After being rape and made to stay quiet for years she carried a hidden anger and bitterness towards life in general. That anger never quite left her even as she became an adult her past always left her feeling lost. Dele proposes for her to become a sex worker abroad because she deserved better than selling food and she accepts because this time she wasn't going to be raped or violated it would base on her own terms and that thought empowered her. Some sex workers see their job as a form of power and authority the thought of them being the reason for someone's pleasure gives them a sense of importance. They get paid for just laying on their backs with their full consent, they feel valued for the first time because their previous sexual experience gave them agony and nightmares.

Asylum is another condition that can lead to sex trafficking for women. As an immigrant it is hard for most people to earn well-paying jobs especially if the person is an illegal immigrant. The majority of women in third-world nations are displaced and wind up seeking assistance in hazardous and humiliating environments. Joyce, also known as Alek, is one of the female prostitutes who have been enslaved by the world of sex trafficking. Her narrative, however, is heart-breaking and distressing; she was born in Sudan but had to abandon the country owing to conflict and insurgency; her entire family was slain, and she was raped by troops. She was the only one of the four young ladies who was led and deceived by her male boyfriend into becoming a sex worker. During the war, she fell in love with a Nigerian soldier and was forced to reside in an internally displaced persons camp (IDPs), but her boyfriend sold her to Dele the pimp in exchange for money. War is a significant component that leads to harmful conditions for women, such as rape, murder, harassment, and slave trading. Some of the troops sent to protect the villagers, like as Polycrap, a Nigerian soldier Joyce fell in love with, end up doing terrible things to them. African women are duped into believing that they will be seeking refuge in European countries, whereas the plan is for them to become prostitutes. They lose their right to exist; they become things used to make money. These displaced women are easy targets since they have no family or home to flee to, leaving them at the mercy of their pimps.

When Alek got her passport from Dele via Polycrap and saw that she had indeed been renamed Joyce, she did not say or what. She did not even ask Polycrap why...she was beyond asking questions, beyond asking Polycrap to explain anything... (OBSS 26)

Finally, the goal of this study is to uncover the circumstances that lead African women in particular to a life of sex slavery. These women are frequently humiliated and stigmatized by society, even when they reinvent themselves by accepting decent occupations; their mental and physical states of mind are not taken into full consideration, and they are gradually constrained and choked up by society. Ama and Joyce were able to leave their jobs as sex workers and gain freedom.

The themes of this novel are closely related to that of Darko's novel but one prominent theme that stands out in the novel is Sexual Objectification closely followed by Poverty and Self-enslavement.

Sexual objectification

The body of a woman is objectified, and she is led to think that she is an object, a sex commodity for the man to use, and a commodity that can be sold through sex smuggling. The female protagonists are also stereotyped, despite their ground-breaking characteristics. On Black Sisters' Street, exposes how women are viewed particularly as the ideal image for sexuality. The Characters are all sexually exploited in their new country, demonstrating the dynamic interactions between their sense of self and the objectification to which they are subjected. The main characters Ama, Sisi, Joyce and Efe were portrayed as promiscuous, they are perceived as women who engage in sexual orgies without any sense of integrity or intent of marriage. In the novel, the stereotype of women as sex objects and commodity is heavily established. Ama's past is full of examples. She is, unfortunately, seen as a sexually satisfying object even as a little child. She became a victim of sexual assault by her father (Brother Cyril) at the age of eight. He portrayed himself to be a religious man who despised anything that didn't glorify God but beneath this façade lays a rapist who preyed on his own child. He longer saw her as his child but a sexual gratification tool her innocence striped away causing her life to take a sad dramatic turn. The sad reality with sex workers is the uncertainty of life, in search for a better life some women decide to leave sex trade but unfortunately this comes with a higher price most times they are killed and their pimps don't seem to care because they are known as a viable object their death echoes the business's inevitability of casualties. They are seen as nothing more than slaves, prostitutes, tools who should not be recognized they are subjects, not human beings. Deceit and disillusionment, optimism and assurances all come with sexual objectification. Dele the trafficker is seen as salvation and a helper, one who can rescue them from her poverty and stagnant existence, but all that is used as an instruments to lure and deceive the women into prostitution. On Black Sisters' Street, a novel by Chika Unigwe, explores the sexual objectification of women and the forces that can lead to their victimization. Women are exploited as a result of men's dominance in society. Men are an integrated component of the oppressive political, economic, and cultural structure that forces women to make choices that are incompatible with their core identities.

Poverty

This is a powerful force that affected the protagonists' decisions and circumstances. Economic stagnation can lead to both good and bad decisions. For example, poverty can drive people into a "get rich fast" mindset, which can lead to fatal circumstances, as seen in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street*. Unemployment and poor governance in some African countries, such as Nigeria, have resulted in high crime rates. The need for financial security pushed characters like Sisi and Efe into the hands of human traffickers. Shattered dreams and aspirations led them to believe that Africa was a lost cause, and that the only way to improve their living conditions was to migrate abroad and engage in commercial sex to meet their basic needs and those of their families. Poverty is a pill that no one wants to take, but since no one has control over their fate, life will drag them down into sad and humiliating realities. Poverty breeds hunger and it there's no legitimate resource to feed on one starts to look for other illegal means to survive. This analogy best describes these characters.

Self-Enslavement

Many Africans have been mentally enslaved by the African ideology of leaving their country and seeking high-paying jobs that would allow them to make a lot of money and send it to their families right away. They believe that European countries are the solution to all of their problems, especially financial ones, which has led them to make risky commitments that put them at the mercy of European policies and people. They end up living like prisoners, primarily because they entered these countries illegally, limiting their mobility and speech. Most women are only suitable for housekeeping jobs or prostitution, as depicted in the book, while men are tailored to construction jobs that require long hours of work. They are trapped; their only chance is to marry a European, which would make them objects to prey on for their European partners incidentally. In relation to the novel, Efe is given false hopes by an old rich man called Titus he eventually abandons her with the burden of a child. The connection between Titus and Efe is meant to represent how migrants embrace the devaluation of black existence by unrestricted and indisputable slavery. Although it may be stated that the protagonists are left with no viable options as a result of their previous failures, they are often seen to succumb completely to the obstacles that they face as the story unfolds.

Self-enslavement is depicted as a result of each character's decisions within the framework of the story. It entails a number of decisions that black people tend to be forced to make, which are mostly often the product of an initial assessment of the white man's society. The enormity of such a blunder comes at the expense of relinquishing one's citizenship for the United Kingdom or the United States in particular, amongst many other Western countries.

Comparative Analysis Of *Beyond the Horizon* and *On Black Sister's Street*

Beyond the Horizon and *On Black Sister's Street* have both effectively highlighted the tendencies of women who have been victims of sex trafficking and exploitation. Both books' authors have focused their narratives on women and socioeconomic ills that plague both African and European countries. Two African countries, Nigeria and Ghana, as well as two European countries, Germany and Belgium, are included in the books. They go into the realm of sex trafficking and how African women are drawn into it, using female protagonists to bring this subject to light. Some women are enticed by their spouses, while others have experienced poverty, rape, or ignorance. These novels looked at the lengths to which men will go to satisfy their sexual and selfish wants. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara's husband deceives her about the purpose for her joining him in Germany; she believes he asked for her so they could live as a family, but he had other plans, and his ultimate goal was to turn her into a prostitute. Vivian Osey's girlfriend was also seduced into prostitution after being duped into believing he was in love with her. She did whatever he asked of her and became his money generating machine, which led to her being a drug addict. Their partners also assaulted these ladies physically. Due to various reasons, Sisi, Ama, Efe, and Joyce become prostitutes in *On Black Sister's Street*. Sisi was apparently looking for a way to survive due to the state of Nigerian unemployment, which led her to meet Dele and agree to become a prostitute abroad, while Ama and Efe were also apparently looking for a way to survive, which led them into the hands of Dele, the link that connects all the ladies together and for Joyce one could say she faced the most bizarre circumstance the murder of her parents and brother, brutal rape and having to live at a refugee camp, thinking she has finally found hope in her lover Polycrap who she would make a beautiful family with only for her dreams to be dashed by him and there after sold to Dele without her knowledge on the kind of service she would be running in Belgium. These women were drawn into sex trafficking and sex objectification by societal vices; they saw their bodies as their only means of survival, the only way they could truly make money and care for themselves and their families, but Sisi's death would shatter their illusions and make them realize the life they were living was a sad and unsatisfying one. The women in both books were able to reclaim their freedom from their pimps and partners, and while some remained sex workers, they were able to break free from those who were oppressing them, giving them a sense of independence. The other ladies left the line of work and went into decent occupations. The books also have similar themes such as sexual objectification, poverty and culture shock etc.

In terms of organization, style, language use, and characters, there are some distinctions between these two books. Mara, the protagonist in *Beyond the Horizon*, is the narrator who tells her narrative. While *On Black Sister's Street* was narrated in third person, there were several intertwining from the past to the present that

could be confusing. Although the author used flashbacks and a blend of foreshadowing in describing this amazing story, the distinctiveness in terms of story-telling cannot be denied. *Beyond the Horizon* by Amma Darko was simple and straightforward in terms of language use; there were no complicated vocabulary, no confused sentences, and the book was easy to read and flow with. On the other hand, the wording of *On Black Sister's Street* was convoluted and unclear. The protagonist of *Beyond the Horizon* was a single character, whereas the protagonists in *On Black Sister's Street* were four women. In contrast to Mara, who was naive, timid, and a little too submissive and diligent, the characters in *On Black Sister's Street* were not timid or shy. Sisi, Ama, Efe, and Joyce were tough, self-aware women who weren't as naive as Mara. However, Mara did grow as a character towards the end, which resulted to her oppressor (Akobi) being imprisoned. Despite the fact that Ama and Joyce were able to escape prostitution and establish a new life at *On Black Sister's Street*, there was no justice for Sisi's murder; no one was arrested, and the prostitution ring continued as if nothing had happened. Her employers quickly forgot about her; there was no sorrow from her Madame or Dele, and they went about their business as if Sisi's execution had never been ordered. Mara was able to bring Akobi to jail in *Beyond the Horizon*, which was a sort of justice served, but the ending was still a little unsatisfying because she is unable to return to Ghana and start her life over.

Conclusion

In African countries, women are disproportionately victims of sex trafficking, abuse, and exploitation, according to this research. It has been demonstrated that these vices are harmful influences that should be eliminated from society. The women depicted in the works are subjected to brutality of mankind, and their bodies are used for profit. Women who have worked as prostitutes have been stigmatized, leading to depression and suicide. Sex workers have come to believe that they are worthless and unworthy of love and affection. *Beyond the Horizon* by Amma Darko addressed the theme of victimhood through the life of the main character, who is condemned to a life of suffering and anguish as a result of her family's abuse and exploitation. *On Black Sister's Street* by Chika Unigwe delves into the living conditions and motivations of sex trafficking victims. It depicts the difficulties these ladies experienced and how, in order to live, each character creates a unique bond with one another. Poverty and other social ills should be addressed by generating jobs, infrastructure, and social amenities for citizens, and parents should be actively involved in their children's lives. The government should also offer security and safety so that citizens do not feel compelled to seek asylum in other countries. Since marriage is based on a relationship and partnership rather than ownership, women should be treated as partners rather than objects or properties utilized for sexual gratification. There should be no judgment of sex workers, particularly those who have decided to change careers and start a new life.

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