

**THE “OTHER” AS REPRESENTED
IN THREE SHORT STORIES BY
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE**

«الآخر» كما تم تجسيده في ثلاث قصص قصيرة

للكاتبة تشيما ماندا نجوزي اديتشي

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المخلص

ان واحدة من القضايا الإشكالية التي تواجه البشرية في عصر ما بعد الحداثة هي التمييز والوصم الاجتماعي الذي يؤدي إلى ابعاد الإنسان ما يؤدي إلى اغترابه. إنها حالة الخراب والشعور بالغربة في مجتمع لا تنتمي إليه جسديًا وروحياً وعقليًا واجتماعيًا. تحاول هذه الدراسة التحقيق في حالة الآخر التي تظهر في الأدب النيجيري، كما تنعكس في الرواية القصيرة لشيماماندا نجوزي أديتشي. أديتشي، روائية نيجيرية وقصة قصيرة وكاتبة غير روائية، توصف بأنها "الأبرز" في "موكب من المؤلفين الشباب الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية الذين نالوا استحسانا كبيرا والذين نجحوا في جذب جيل جديد من القراء إلى أفريقيا". الأدب" (كوبنال، جيمس، الملحق الأدبي للتايمز، ص ٢٠). وستتناول الدراسة "تجربة خاصة"، و"مرتبو الزواج"، و"شارع الجودة"، حيث تظهر بوضوح تأثير الحياة العصرية والحمل على الفرد، خاصة أولئك الذين يحملون معهم تسمية "الآخر". والخاتمة سوف تلخص نتائج الورقة و ما توصل اليه الباحث من نتائج التحليل. و يبقى "الآخر" مفهوما عميقا له مسارات و معان متعددة و اشكال مختلفة جميعها تؤد الي معاناة الانسان

Abstract

One of the problematic issues that face mankind in the postmodern era is labeling and social stigma that results in cornering the human being into the circle of Otherness that results in his alienation. It is the state of desolation and a feeling of estrangement in a society that you do not belong to physically, spiritually, mentally, and socially. This study attempts to investigate the state of otherness that is pictured in Nigerian literature, as reflected in the short fiction of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Born 15 September 1977, Adichie is a Nigerian novelist, short story and non fiction writer who is described as "the most prominent" of a "procession of critically acclaimed young Anglophone authors [who] is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature" (Copnall, James, The Times literary Supplement,p.20). The study will tackle "A Private experience", "the Arrangers of Marriage", and "Quality Street", as they clearly show the impact of modern life and conception on the individual, especially those who carry with them the label of an "Other". The conclusion will sum up the findings of the paper. The first short story analyzed is "A Private Experience" introducing two women with different culture, religion and education estranged from their society. However, they managed to achieve human solidarity breaking all chains and restrictions imposed on them. The second story is "The Arrangers of a Marriage", the story of Nigerian guy travelled to America and isolated himself and his wife from Nigerian culture; he failed and lost everything. The last short story is "Quality Street", the story of Sochinne who was studying in America, but still attached to her original society in Nigeria. Unlike her mother who alienated herself from her society criticizing everything, Sochinne kept contacting people of her country. By the end of the story, she managed to achieve solidarity with the whole society while her mother was self-alienated.

Key words: otherness, desolation, alienation; attachment; Private experience; Arrangers of marriage, Quality Street.

Introduction

A Widely-respected Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie (1977-) is known for her award winning novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). She was born in Nigeria, and later on she moved to America to receive her education. She managed to achieve great success in her writings in a very short time that she is referred to as “the third generation of influential and representative African female writer” (Habila 7). However, her short stories collection *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009) has many tales of the Nigerian national imaginary and the case of Nigerian society after colonialism that needs to be analyzed. Throughout her short stories, Chimamanda Adichie depicts the characters as well as the cases of her society at this time: “her works charted a new course in the evolution of the African short story. Adichie’s “short fiction is a window into live experiences of contemporary African women expressed in fresh and compelling prose” (Sackeyfio 2013, 104). In writing her stories, Adichie emphasizes: “it’s important for me not to think in terms of themes, because I’m interested in writing realistic fiction set in the Nigeria that I know. I tried very hard to keep it as true to what I’ve observed and sometimes what I’ve imagined” (Forna 51). Susan Andrade comments: “in fact Adichie’s writing makes clear that the hesitancy of that earlier moment of women’s literary history in Africa no longer defines female-authored novels [...] She illustrates that in the hands of some, the realist novel in Africa can take some very interesting turns” (92). Depicting the real problems of her society, Adichie introduces solutions throughout her works.

As part of Post- Colonial Africa, the Nigerian society was suffering from many problems rooted in African societies: ethnicity, egoism, identity politics, and the problem of class distinction. Fear becomes a sort of friendly technique that compensate for his\er feeling of insecurity and dreariness. Isolation and deep feelings of alienation were natural consequences of this fear. Adichie digs deep in the human psyche, in an attempt to search for a way out of this boiling pot s/he is living in, in her journey she designs a strategy to lead him/er towards a safe haven in which harmony is achieved.

Otherness: An Overview:

The word “Other” is used to refer to the other human being and differentiate him\er from the Self. Thus, “The Other” is dissimilar to the Self in every possible way. The Other possesses a distinctive, identified identity, and held a position in the society that is referred to as a full individual who initiates relationships with others of his\her same personal interests.

Otherness is a state in which the individual finds himself different and out casted from the social identity that other individuals are described as having around him. Philosophy defines Otherness as the state of identifying the characteristics of who? And of what? Of the Other from the real. The Who/and What? Refer to the abstract order of things, while the Real is the unchangeable. It is to make borders to distinguish the Aesthetic from the Political, the Social Identity from the Self. Social Otherness, then, is the state of detachment and non-conformity to the social norms of a society; a disenfranchisement or political exclusion influenced by the social or governmental institutions. An individual is alienated by his social environment and labeled as an “Other” who is marginalized and neglected deliberately by the surrounding social milieu.

Otherring somebody is to label him an Other and practice a reductive action against him identifying him as a subaltern native; someone who is excluded because s\he does not fit to the norms of the social group, and displace him\er to the margins of society where the mainstream social norms do not apply to him\er.

Jacques Derrida argues that there is a compromise in saying that there is an absolute alterity of the other. It is because the person whom we describe as an Other is in fact other than the Self and the Group. He adds that the mere logic of alterity (otherness) is negative. It is a fact that the native Other is denied ethnic priority; he is not treated as a person with the right to participate in the geopolitical discourse to decides the colonial fate of the homeland of the Other (43).

“Why do they hate us?” a rhetorical question raised by President G.W. Bush (2001-2009) and was used as a political prelude to the War on terror (2001) which is a negative representation of the Middle Eastern Other as Derek Gregory describes it in his book *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq*(2004, p. 24). The speech reveals the ugly face of Otherness, two different kinds of identities are being addressed through these five words; the non-Western other, and the Western Us. The Us -and- Them mentality shaped the American relations for decades with the Others of the Middle East. In his book *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2000), Edward William Said says; “To build a conceptual framework around a notion of Us-versus-Them is, in effect, to pretend that the principal consideration is [epistemological](#) and natural—our civilization is known and accepted, theirs is different and strange—whereas, in fact, the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed, and situational.” (p.577)

Alienation vs. Human solidarity in Adichie’s stories

Religion and ethnicity were the main categories that shaped post-colonial Nigeria; the north where Hausa Fulani occupied the land, the east where the people of Igbo lived, and the west that was controlled by Yoruba. This division created many problems among which is isolation, corruption, and otherness; “man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problems [...] a conviction of isolation , randomness, and meaninglessness in his way of existence” (qtd. in Abdulsaleem 3). In his essay “A Measure of Alienation” G.A. Nettle defines alienation as “A psychological state of an individual and alienated is the person who has been estranged from, made unfriendly toward his society and the culture it carries” (2). Thus Otherness and the decision to be detached from your own social environment resulted in the absence of self-awareness or even a complete loss of it. Erich Fromm considers self-alienation “Pertaining to feelings” (qtd. in Abdulsaleem 8).

Nigerian authors responded to oppressive post-colonial structures with works that encouraged Self-awareness and social bondage .Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of those writers who wrote about these experiences in her literary works.

Though she studied and lived in America, but her roots keep calling feelings of nostalgia towards Nigeria, her motherland's influence was obvious in her writings due to deep feelings of Otherness that she felt during her stay in America. She asserts that "I've never felt; and I know I never will feel, American. I am a Nigerian who spends time in US." (Kara2). She explains that she likes to be out of Nigeria sometimes "I actually feel the need to be away from Nigeria I'm writing about. I need a certain detachment to write to see it clearly" (Forna54). Hegel clearly explains this emphasizing the importance of self-realization and detachment, and its overcoming. The Palestinian writer and critic Edward Said rightly explains that: "Exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of triumphant ideology or a restored people" (141).

Adichie writes about the subaltern Nigerian females who are intentionally marginalized saying that she is "interested in writing about women who are weak, who are not independent, who make poor choices [...] this is the reality of their lives" (Forna57).She intended to shed light on the life of those women who are discarded by their society only because they are poor Others. Adichie managed to depict her characters and employ them in a perfect way to serve her ideas. She depicted different characters with different attitudes, some managed to overcome their alienation and achieved human solidarity being one of "the larger I"¹, and others did not manage to adapt and were out-casted.

¹This term is my own coinage. It indicates that the whole society is like one body with different organs that cannot be separated. If man manages to achieve human solidarity and be one of society, he is going to be a part of this body that moves as one piece and each organ helps and supports the other one.

This study highlights three different levels of relationships drawn by Adichie; first, the relationship between two women of counters cultures, education, and religions in “A Private Experience” representing cultural otherness. Second, social Otherness represented in the relationship between husband and wife and how they failed to achieve harmony. The wife was out-casted within the American society as it is clear in “The Arrangers of A Marriage”. Finally, anthropological alienation in the relationship between mother and daughter; the mother insisted on alienating herself while the daughter insisted on social solidarity in “Quality Street.”

Cultural Otherness

The first short story, “A Private Experience” is the story of two women of counter cultures and religions in Nigeria who escaped a violent riot in the street and took refuge in a deserted small store. Chika, a young Christian Igbo, and the other is Muslim Hausa who was not given a name “to evoke an identity based on biology rather than ethnicity” (Campbell15).

Adichie starts the story by creating two different worlds: one inside the shop with two women of different religious groups, and the outside world with battles, violence and riots in the street. The riot started because of a Christian man who ran over a copy of the Holly Quran and Muslims immediately cut his head. So, we have Chika inside the store as a representative of Christians, and the woman as a representative of Muslims. Adichie chose two characters that are not involved in any struggles and put them together in the shop to give them a chance to enter the world where they can speak and recognize each other. She detached them from the polluted world of conflict and hatred to a new world where they can achieve human solidarity.

Differences are clearly drawn from first sight of the two women; the first is described as “a Northerner, from the narrowness of her face, the unfamiliar rise of her cheek bones; and she is Muslim, because of her scarf” (44), while the other is described as she looks Igbo and without scarf. This is deliberate

by the writer to give feelings of Otherness that is clearly reflected through their physical appearances which reflect their Identity politics and what background they both represent. The events of the story take place in the city of Kano, a place where Muslims, Hausa, and Igbo meet and which is described by Salamone as a “vital [link] in the state and even international” (2) This is where Chika went with her sister to visit their aunt and were shopping, the same place where The Woman was selling onion in the market.

When the riot started, Panic exploded everywhere; Chika was shocked and frightened. She dropped her bags and ran away. She did not know where to go as everyone around her was running and crying. When she passed the small shop, the Muslim woman asked her to enter the shop. She tried to calm her by few words “them not going to small-small shops, only big-big shop and market [...] this place safe” (44). Chika was afraid at the beginning to be avenged by the Muslim woman as she is Christian. The woman’s few words conveyed a lot of messages to Chika, messages of safety and security. She realized that she will not be alienated in danger at this place with that woman. The woman managed since the beginning to establish a good start with Chika; her words managed to segregate them, even for a while, from the outside world of destruction and suffering. Chika did not ask the woman about her name as “she does not want a conversation of naming names” (49). Though they have counter cultures, but the woman realized very well that both of them are attached to the highest rank represented in humanity. To her nothing is important but being human.

Both Chika and the woman established a kind of bond. They have things in common now as they have their families out side. Chika has her sister Nnedi, and the woman has her daughter Halima. The two have the same fate as the riot never distinguishes Igbo or Hausa, Muslim or Christian, “It will strike her that she cannot tell if the partially burned man is Igbo or Hausa, Christian or Muslim, from looking at the charred flesh” (53). All are equals and even in death all bodies achieve human solidarity as humans and nothing but humans. The woman told

Chika that her sister is going to be O.K .and that Nnedi was not lost in the riot, but would be safe somewhere (47). Chika then felt she was not alienated any more. She had someone else to care for her and her sister's fate even if she was from a counter culture and religion.

The two women fall in line with their shared fear and formed bondage. They sought safe haven and it is obvious that they are going to share it for some time. A sort of solidarity that is contrapuntal to the raging madness outside the dusty; smelly abandoned space that has become their place of refuge from danger. (TTAYN 9)

After this conversation between Chika and the woman, their affinity had more than one side: first, Physical association when the woman showed her breast to Chika having ascertained that Chika is a physician. The woman was complaining of severe pain “my nipples is burning like peppers” (49).Uncovering her breast, the woman conveyed a message of trust and peace to Chika “a willingness to engage with the other [...] aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences” (Hannerz 239).The woman needed sympathy and creating this connection raised hope of being identified to somebody who does not look at her as an Other; she is looking for another one to belong to, not to be alienated. Chika forgot about her study and she told the woman that her mother had the same problem after her five children, so no need for her to worry. Though Chika was lying as her mom did not have five children, nor did she suffer in her breast as Chika claimed, but she did not want to lose this chance to achieve attachment with the woman. Chika felt that she owes the woman a favour after the woman's words about her sister. She wanted to pay back the favour through her unreal story to calm the woman down. There is this feeling of awareness that hit both women; though they do not express it but they realize that Otherness will bring to mankind nothing and cause him to live in an ocean of insignificance. Man is going to be separated even from the closest people to him.

Another form of association between Chika and the woman is social affinity. After this kind of physical connection, Chika and the woman “created a bond” (51). Again, human allegiance is stronger than cultural or religious boundaries; the Muslim woman prayed for the Igbo Christian, “Allah keep your sister and Halima in safe Place” (51). The time passed and the two women overcame their alienation and they started to melt in the crucial of humanity where no religion, tribe, or ethnic group required.

The woman’s scarf is employed in the story in a very professional way by Adichie. It is described as “long, flimsy pink and black, with the garish prettiness of cheap things” (44) giving a description to the economic case of the woman. It indicates her great poverty and shows her identity as a Muslim. The woman is out-casted in her society and her alienation could not be overcome, as Marx states, unless social and economic status has been repaired. Adichie indicates that economic status of Igbo is better than other parts in Nigeria. This economic segregation led to social and cultural segregation as well.

The woman used the scarf for two purposes; first, it is traditional for Muslim women to wear it because it is one of the obligations in religion. Second, sometimes she used it on the ground to pray in the dusty store. Being upset and worried about her daughter and being hurt in her breast, she insisted on telling her prayers on time, but the scarf had a new job that was not made for; when Chika went out of the shop before the end of the riot looking for her lost sister, she was injured. She returned immediately to the shop bleeding, and the woman did not hesitate to wet her scarf and use it to clean the wound of Chika. She also tied the scarf around Chika’s leg to cover her wound. The woman sacrificed the symbol of her purity and religious identity to make it play another role. She knew that she would not be able to pray on the scarf again, but she cared for her new partner more than anything else. Her strong desire to achieve solidarity and her insistence on being one of “the larger I” tempted her to sacrifice what was on her head to be on other’s leg if it would be more useful. Though the scarf was old and

tattered, but it was the woman's tool to play her social role required in the process of self-development and realization. Knotting the scarf around Chika's leg is in fact bonding the two hearts, cultures, and religions. Both revived themselves as human beings again.

The woman kept the chain of humanity that knits together all the innumerable hearts; it is the chain of fidelity, love, and tolerance. Chika and the woman managed to achieve human solidarity and they managed to live in "the larger I" breaking the chain of Otherness though they came from opposite cultures. Campbell emphasizes "Adichie's characters bond because of their expressions of mothering, compassion, and generosity" (24).

By the end of the riot, the woman opened the window of the shop to be sure that it is suitable to go out. Everything stopped and she had to go out looking for her daughter. Chika asked the woman "may I keep your scarf" (57), and the question was not expected by the woman. Chika wanted the scarf to keep her connection with the Other culture. She wanted to stress her attachment to humanity regardless of all other aspects preventing this affection. For the woman it was dangerous, Adichie comments "there is perhaps the beginning of future grief on her place, but she smiles a light, distracted smile before she lands the scarf back to Chika and turns to climb out of the window" (57). The future grief about which Adichie speaks is that one caused by going outside the store without her scarf. The woman will be without head cover that refers to her religious identity. She will be thought Christian not Muslim. This will increase the danger that she will be hurt by Muslims themselves. Masquelier is in the right track in explaining that the scarf is something "safely anchor their selfhood" (2016). In her comment, Carly Campbell emphasizes that:

The women show us that while cultural and social constructions of other sin society are inescapable, we all have the freedom to recognize the limitations and dangers of structures and can consciously choose how to respond to them. (32)

The last words of the woman to Chika “wash your leg well-well. Greet your sister, greet your people” (60), besides Chika’s request to keep the woman’s scarf are clear evidences that Chika overcame the idea of alienation. Her feelings moved as if taken by hand to “the larger I”, and she realized the fact that she is one of many. Her speech changed to suit the culture of a poor ignorant woman. Catherine Acholonu elaborates that Chika displays a desire for “love, tolerance, and service rather than antagonism and violent confrontation” (111), the two women work in “partnership...co-operation...and tolerance” (112). The two women managed to break the chain of Otherness physically, spiritually, and socially. They broke all barriers of alienation, hatred, ethnicity, and struggles. The two women kept then noble values of love and fidelity because “we are all in this together” (Arana277).So, both Chika and the woman overcame cultural Otherness and restored themselves to humanity.

Social Otherness

The concept of social otherness is clearly discussed through the second short story “The Arrangers of a Marriage”. Adichie draws three lines of relations: first, the relationship of Dave and America after he left Nigeria. Dave insisted on penetrating the American society and American culture sacrificing everything and abandoning his own culture. He believed that Americans are superior in everything. He even changed his name from Ofodile into Dave, and he believed that the only way to fit in America is “to talk LIKE American’s, eat like them, drink like them, use their words and erase any cultural differences” (168), otherwise he would be rejected in society and treated like immigrants. Confronted with both cultures as in Zimmermann’s two-dimension alethnosizer, there are four distinct combinations of commitments migrants can choose; assimilation, integration, marginalization, or separation. Zimmermann emphasizes, “The more migrants become similar to natives, the more they relinquish and abandon their own culture” (5). Dave fell a prey to marginalization which is

described as “a weak dedication to or strong detachment from either the dominant culture or the culture of origin” (Zimmermann 6). In the case of Dave, he detached himself from his native culture and even rejected it completely. He married an American woman to get the Green-Card, and he did not tell anyone about this marriage even his wife later Chinaza. Dave isolated himself completely from his own Nigerian culture, and as Fahim explains “Sometimes, man’s attempts end in failure that result in an exalted feelings of further alienation which cannot be escaped for being a fate” (52). Though Americans could understand him now, and he was more polite speaking the language of America, but alienation from his culture, language and customs made him ignorant, close minded, and he looked so artificial. He broke the sacred chain of fidelity and patriotism to his native land.

The second relationship is that of Dave and Agatha. After getting the Green-Card, Dave decided to marry a Nigerian girl and take her to the states. Chinaza accepted to marry him after her aunt and uncle told her about his life in America: “a doctor on America! It is like we won a lottery for you” (170). Chinaza had her vindications to accept this marriage as she was looking for better life out of slavery of Nigeria, and as Edward Said states “Exile is sometimes better than staying behind or not getting out: but only sometimes” (141). Unfortunately, her dreams went away. The husband she was told to be a doctor was only a resident and he makes very little money. She knew about the ex-wife of Dave, and discovered the real personality and selfishness of Dave who did not take care of her needs. He even forced her to go by her English name, Agatha, though she did not like it “my English name is just something on my Birth Certificate. I have been Chinaza Okafor my whole life.”(175) Dave was an ego, and the ego cares for no one but himself. He was gradually separating her from her rooted culture imposing the American culture on her mind. He forced her to use some words instead of others, like “cookies” not “biscuits” and “elevator” instead of “lift”:

You should say “Hi” to people here not “you’re welcome” I’m not called Ofodile here, by the way. I go by Dave...the last name I use here is different, too...it’s Bell...if you want to get anywhere you have to be as main stream as possible...if not, you will be left by the roadside. You have to use your English name here. (172)

Affrev Ijah is in the right track in explaining:

Disappointments in this short story are twofold: the insecurity, the callous and deceitful machination of the arrangers of marriage and the entire deceptive appearance and illusion of America, and the highly pretentious nature of Ofodile’s behavior completes the picture of emptiness of entire America concept. (17)

Dave’s oppression to Chinaza turned to be also indoor; he did not even want her to cook the Nigerian food not to be smelled by neighbors. She was like the pawn used and moved by him regardless of her own feelings or requirements. When a neighbor liked the food of Chinaza, Dave was upset to be known as not American. In her essay “of French Fries and Cookies: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Diasporic short Fiction” Daria Tunca explains “The woman’s clumsy comments seem to reflect ignorance more than hostility, but the single fact of being singled out as an outsider is too much to take for Ofodile” (303). Tunca stressed on him as Ofodile not Dave in order to stress his attempts to alienate and detach himself out of his roots. The woman’s speech proves his failure to be accepted in the American society and to sly himself out of his Nigerian identity. Otherness is deeply rooted in him to the extent that he believes his only way to escape it is through pretending to be someone else and this disguise will spare him the pain of being out-casted.

Dave destroyed his life because of egoism, and egoism is the inside real cause of disaster. He destroyed the chain of faithfulness and love with his wife, the chain that knits together all the innumerable hearts. He betrayed her feelings of

security and trust and instead of protecting her he was the main cause of her suffering. He aimed at turning her into an American machine or they would be rejected by society:

Look at the people who shop here; they are the ones who immigrate and continue to act as if they are back in their countries [...] they will never move forward unless they adopt to America. (175)

After the great self-destruction and disgruntlement from society with Dave, Chinaza was like the lost ship in the deep wide sea of frustration, lassitude, and estrangement. Dave alienated her completely from her society, her people, her culture and even herself. Iris Young states that this kind of marginalization “also involves the deprivation of cultural, practical, and institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction” (20). Edward Said asserts that “exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation” (140). Now, she is in bad need of belonging and she has to be restored to “The Larger I” once again. She was thinking about returning again to Nigeria, but she was not fully convinced with the idea. Though she did not fulfill her wishes in America, and her life is not better than that in Nigeria, but she had not to be blamed for anything. Tunca asserts:

In Nigeria, she was not allowed to pursue higher education and was forced into a loveless union with Ofodile [...] towards the end of the story; she realizes that she can't go back to Nigeria, because her relatives would condemn her choice. Her prospects in America are equally limited, since she cannot support herself. (305)

She suffered from alienation till she recognized her Afro-American neighbor Nie; a Nigerian girl who immigrated to America with her husband and children long time ago. Nie became an American citizen, but she did not deny or forget her Nigerian origin and she insisted on keeping it. Nie is among individuals who

Actually do not have the aspirations to abandon their roots and habits while living in the new country and re-negotiate language and cultural practices by using multilingual communication (English, Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin English) or creating spaces for identifiable community of Nigerian or Africans (barber shops, beauty and hair salons, grocery shops with so called, 'African' food). (Koziel 101)

Nie and her family achieved human association with Chinaza. They constituted small society and she restored herself again. Chinaza felt for the first time that she loves and is beloved not used or exploited by others. So, unlike Dave who failed to be part of his new society, his neighbors and his wife, Chinaza managed to unite and be identified with each other. She managed to achieve human solidarity with Nie and her family and she succeeded in restoring herself again. Dave sunk in his fears from Otherness till he became its prey.

Anthropological Otherness

The last short story analyzed is "Quality Street" where Adichie discusses the issue of otherness through two characters: Mrs. Njoku and her daughter Sochinne. Mrs. Njoku is a rich aristocratic Nigerian woman who did her best to isolate herself from her society. She sent her daughter to study in America with the desire of being Americanized. Njoku believed in western society and its culture blindly. She is one of the groups who "claim to be considered more Western and educated and come back to home country in order to be given a name "Americanah" by their compatriots" (Koziel101). She believed that Nigerians and Nigeria are inferior to Americans and America.

Unlike her mother who alienated herself from her original society, Sochinne insisted all the time to keep herself close to Nigerian culture. Despite her study in America, she was not involved in the American culture. She returned to Nigeria on vacation to prepare for her marriage to a Kenyan guy, not American one. This isolated her mother even from Sochinne

herself; Fahim emphasizes “man’s alienation from other people results in an alienation from himself as well. He refuses to take an active part in society even if this will be for his own good.” (53-54) According to Hegel’s perception, Njoku failed in the process of self-alienation and self-reconciliation. She failed to overcome her alienation and she could not redeem her ‘fallenness’ (Sayers2009). Njoku created her own world of loneliness that she even could not leave. She alienated herself from the real world of her society for the sake of an imaginative one. She alienated herself from her daughter, her culture and her society, and at the same time she could not live in the world she sought. She chooses to be an Other who practices Otherness towards people around her. She keeps feeling that she should not be part of the society that she is from a different social milieu, and she might tolerate this situation until she is admitted to be part of the one she desires. She is another face of ‘J.Alfred Prufrock,’¹ a Prufrock who longs for belonging but refuses the chance to belong where he might fit.

Sochinne’s character derives many characteristics from Nigerian girls in real about whom Adichie says: “I’m interested in writing realistic fiction set in Nigeria that I know” (Forna52). Though her mother wanted to split her from her original Nigerian society, but she rejected all attempts and reinforced her identity through her association with her native people. Ian Watt asserts “It is solidarity which gives both the individual and the collective life what little pattern of meaning can be discovered in it” (270). Through solidarity man is able to distinguish between right and wrong. Among the four distinct combinations of the concept of ethnosizer defined by Zimmermann, Sochinne chose integration. Integration is “achieved when an individual combines, incorporates, and exhibits both strong dedication to the origin and commitment and conformity to the host society” (5). Her insistence on achieving solidarity is represented in many situations: First, when she refused to drink the imported

¹ The reference here is to Prufrock the speaker in ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ by T.S. Eliot.

milk that was not drunk by people of her country. Though she had money, but she was attached to her poor community. Second, she decided to marry a Kenyan guy against the desire of her mother who wanted her to marry American one, and she made her wedding party in The Country House. Third, she discarded her mother's behavior when she gave money to the bank employee who did not need them "Mum, in my opinion is unethical and you don't have consideration [...] Don't you think about the people who really need that money" (3). Fourth, she denied the maltreatment and disregard of her mum to the beggars who were asking for money to eat "Don't you think about the beggars who made their ways from car window to car window in the traffic." (4) Fifth, Sochinne's request for the driver to get down of the car and eat with them at Chicken Republic is a clear indication of her belief in social solidarity. She could not imagine eating with her mother while the driver who was working the whole day waiting for them hungry. Her mother's speech:

You think if you take the driver into chicken republic to eat at the same table as you then you have done a good thing for him but you have not because it is not about his own well-being but about your own well-being [...] you will only make him uncomfortable and you will change nothing in his life. (5)

This speech indicates the great arrogance, superiority and discrimination Mrs. Njoku believes in. Again, she decided on marginalization, alienating herself from the whole society. She was ashamed even to speak the Igbo language and she was only speaking English.

In a final attempt to restore her mother again, Sochinne reminded her mother with few memories in their past holidays with her dead dad, but Njoku hated those days because "their friends were in London while her husband insisted they stay at Amarachi" (7).

Adichie depicts two characters, that of Njoku who alienated herself from her daughter, her friends, the driver, and poor people of her native land. She imprisoned herself in western world mentally and spiritually, and the character of Sochinne who refused to be Americanized and managed to keep herself close to her society. She achieved human solidarity with her poor friends and the whole community. Sochinne managed to be a member of “The Larger I”.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, the researcher has attempted to explore the concept of Otherness in three modern short stories by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as a famous post-colonial writer in Nigeria. The paper starts defining Otherness according to different philosophers. The stories chosen here draw different lines of relationships and provide various types of Otherness including cultural, social and anthropological otherness.

The first short story “A Private Experience” is about two out-casted women with different colors, religions, and counter cultures. However, they managed to overcome their alienation and achieve human solidarity. They succeeded in constructing what their society deconstructs. Each one sacrificed for the sake of the other. They broke all barriers before them and created a bond, a human bond where no religion, color, or culture required. They managed to be human again.

The second story “The Arrangers of a Marriage” provides another type of Otherness represented in social estrangement. Ofodile, the protagonist, failed to conquer himself and he lived in a big circle of Otherness. On the contrary, Chinaza restored herself to her national society again. Being out-casted for a long time in America by Ofodile’s egoism and his desire to be Americanized, Chinaza was in bad need of belonging and she managed to achieve it with her Nigerian neighbor Nie and her family. So, the hero was a prey to otherness, while the heroine managed to achieve belonging and restored herself again.

In the third story “Quality Street”, the researcher analyzes anthropological otherness through two characters in this paper, Mrs.Njoku and her daughter Sochinne. The mother detached herself from her original society and culture denying her people. On the other side, the daughter kept attached to her strong connections with her people and her original culture. The result was that, the mother lost everything even her daughter, while the daughter gained everything and the most important of the whole is gaining herself.

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