


Sojourning in a Strange Land: Fictionalising the Evils of Human Trafficking in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Migration and trafficking of African men and women started about 1441. As time went on, over the years, it developed into sex trafficking and sex slavery of women, children and girls into Europe. In Nigeria today, many women and girls have been victims of trafficking and exploitation. Most of them are deceived into thinking that jobs are waiting for them in Europe and so, they willingly accept to migrate only to discover later that it is all a ruse. This is a blatant violation of the fundamental rights of these individuals who face untold hardships and various levels of exploitation and torture. Many countries in the world, including Nigeria, have risen to fight this ugly phenomenon. One of such efforts of the Nigerian government to eradicate this canker worm is the approval of various NGOs like WIN, WRAPA and WOTCLEF to rehabilitate the deported victims and reabsorb them back into the Nigerian society through various skills acquisition. Most Nigerian writers, especially novelists, have continued to document this contemporary reality in their fictions.

Methodology: This paper attempts to discuss in detail, how Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo has fictionalized the issue of sex trafficking and sex slavery and their evil repercussions in her novel, *Trafficked* and how she has shown the efforts of one of the NGOs, Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development (OYCSD) in the fight for the elimination of sex trafficking and sex slavery.

Findings: The paper reveals that the author, through the novel, has educated and informed her readers on the danger of this anomaly and the need to desist from it.

Conclusion: It is also discovered that trafficking or sojourning to the foreign lands is not only for sex trafficking, but willingness on the part of Nigerians to seek good lives and greener pastures and escape insecurity and inhuman treatments meted on them by the misruling political leaders.

Keywords: Migration, Sex trafficking, Rehabilitate, Psychological trauma, Sojourn.

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Introduction

Nigeria fiction writers have continued to document the prevailing social and political occurrences in the country in their works. Allwell Onukaogu Abalogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu put it succinctly when they conclude that “our novelists have proven to be very good historians and chroniclers of experience that have been strategic in the history of the Nigerian nation” (121).

The Nigerian novel, especially of the twenty first century, has witnessed different thematic preoccupations. The writers have fictionalized and continue to do so, the Nigerians’ historical and cultural experiences. Examples are: colonialism, wars, domestic violence, historical, urban and contemporary realities, pre-colonial culture of the people, Niger-Delta crisis, sexuality and trafficking, to mention a few. This paper attempts to explicate the theme of migration and its attendant negative effects which include sex trafficking, dehumanization, shame, loss of integrity, torture, denial of freedom, to mention a few. Some Nigerian writers that have fictionalized the above theme include Bisi Ojediran in his *A Daughter for Sale* (2006), Chris Abani in his *Becoming Abigail* (2007), Jude Dibia’s *Unbridled* (2007) and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo in her *Trafficked* (2008). Playwrights too have resonated this evil malaise in their plays. An example is Chukuma Anyanwu in his *Traffickers* (2021). However, as pointed out earlier, the main thrust of this paper is to explicate the evil effects which migrating to the UK has caused the innocent and unsuspecting girls as fictionalised by the author.

Human Trafficking and Reasons for Migrating

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be from one town to another or from one country to another. It manifests in two major types: immigration and emigration. Migration in Africa to Europe started fully during the Atlantic Slave Trade which began when the Europeans, especially the Portuguese and the British came to Africa to hunt for human beings! G. T. Stride and C. Ifeka explain the circumstances that led to trading in slaves in 1441. According to them, Prince Henry ordered Antam Goncalves to “hunt sea-lions along African shores for their valuable skin and oil”. As revealed by Stride and Ifeka, Goncalves obeyed and set out to search for the journey and that: “A few miles inland, he and nine companions came across a lone male with his camel. This moor, probably a Sanhaja Berber, fought desperately until he was wounded and taken captive..... they sought more captives. Altogether, twelve desert people were captured and taken to Portugal” (178).

Stride and Ifeka further reveal that “the baser motive of capturing men for profit became evident” (179). After the event, many Africans were taken to Europe mostly as slaves to work in the various plantations of the colonial masters or as domestic slaves. All these resulted into sex abuse, dehumanization, rape, torture and all forms of debilitating consequences on the blacks.

As time went on, the colonizers introduced Western Education which gave Africans the opportunity of sojourning abroad. Consequently, human trafficking developed and gained ground in Europe. It takes the form of sex trafficking, promise of a job opportunity abroad, and other forms. In *Trafficked*, the UNICEF Director that had come to address the twenty four girls at Oasis Youth Centre, left some posters. One of them defines human trafficking as:

Human trafficking is the movement of the people from place to place withing and across borders and through force, coercion or deception and into situations involving their economic and sexual exploitation (56).

In Abuja and especially Nigeria today, the population of those that have migrated to Europe in whatever reason, are more than ten million.

There are other reasons that make people to travel abroad. Among these is the bad condition of the citizens due to the inefficiency of government. The author fictionalizes this through a woman who has come to make a call to someone in London. The woman says:

I am travelling next Monday ... Ike Agugwom. I am tired of this country, nothing works...constant power cuts; infernal heat; robbery with violence; bribery and corruption; strikes; student unrest, religious riots. O di e gwu; it's terrible ... No. I can't stay any longer. It's enough. I had planned to stay two months, but one month in this hell is already too long. It will be a long time before I come back here again (196 – 197)

The insensitivity of government towards the plight of the rioting students is also one of the reasons why people migrate abroad. In one of their meetings, members of the panel set up to probe the activities of the students and what led to their protest, discuss the issue of government's lack of foresight. Dr. Okehi says that:

But if the government actually planned to increase tuition and accommodation fees, I think the students were justified in protesting. Why are we surprised that so many young people want to leave this country? Is it a wonder that all these girls end up getting trafficked? (178 – 179).

This condition always leads to the desperation of some Nigerian youths to travel abroad. Dotun is one of the desperate Nigerians who migrated to Britain. According to the narrator,

Dotun had migrated to Britain in his early twenties, using the passport of a cousin, who had been born in London but had died in his teenage years while visiting Nigeria. Its impersonation, which was condoned by his cousin's parents, was never discovered by the authorities. (158)

Nneoma's and Efe's Sojourns to Europe: The Beginning of the Trafficking

Nneoma was eighteen years old when she was trafficked to Italy by Baron. She is deeply in love with Ofomata but is not ready to marry him simply because she would not want to marry a man who is expected to take over from his father as a palm tree climber. She is very much interested in furthering her education. She completed National Certificate of Education and taught in a Nursery School. Because of her love for education and not traditional matters, she tells Ofomata;

"I won't marry you if you are going to become the next Ozon nkwu. I will not live the rest of my life trapped in Ihite-Agu by an outdated tradition. I will despise you for it" (78). The narrator then reveals that "they had parted that day and never saw each other again before she fled the country" (79).

As pointed out by the narrator, Nneoma fled home because of her intention to be a teacher or at least further her education. Her desire for the teaching profession leads to her sojourn to a foreign land. In her discussion with Efe, she reveals the circumstances that lead to her journey abroad:

For personal reasons, I flew from home one Friday morning without telling my family. A friend and classmate had told me some weeks before that some people had helped her secure a teaching appointment in the United Kingdom and she would introduce me to them and I could come with her ... So I head for her hometown, which is near mine, to find out if the invitation is still open. It is, and we travel to Lagos together to meet her sponsors. In no time, they get passports and flight ticket for us, and keep them. They show us pictures of the schools where we will be teaching and give us appointment letters signed by people with English names (126 – 127).

From Nneoma's explanation above, it is clear that she is an innocent and ambitious girl whose quest to become a teacher made her develop interest to go abroad. The "sponsors" quickly arrange her passports together with those of the other victims and all that is needed for them to travel and "work" abroad. She is happy that at last, her 'chi' has answered her prayers. She says further:

"We are six young women between the ages of seventeen and twenty. They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money. While in Lagos, we relate with just two people, Eddie and Maria. Everything seems normal. I am so happy and thank my chi. I am already thinking of the money I'll make in the United Kingdom" (12)

Efe's reason for wanting to travel abroad is different from that of Nneoma. In her own case, her family is poor and she needs to make two ends meet. This corroborates Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye's conclusion that;

"there are socioeconomic, socio-political, cultural, historical, and environmental circumstances that encourage girls to become victims of sex slavery and trafficking such as poverty, excessive materialism, lack of good parental background..." (40).

While relaying her story, Efe says:

I was born in Benin where my parents had lived all their lives ... my family was poor; it was a struggle to put our meals on the table. Only my elder sister and I went to college. My three brothers dropped out before they finished primary school... One day I saw an advertisement in a newspaper while I was on a visit to my cousin in Lagos. It asked young men and women who wished to work abroad to come to a certain address to be interviewed. You know how people longed to leave the country ... Anyway, before long, all the girls –ten of us–were given a travel schedule. (98-99)

While poverty is what is making Efe to want to travel abroad, her quest for employment is the case for Nneoma. Both girls are not suspicious of the danger that lies ahead. Even when men and women attended the interview, Efe reveals that, "None of the men who were interviewed was taken. That should have alerted me to danger, but I barely gave it a thought". Before their various departures, the two girls are subjected to oath taking and threatened of the dangerous consequences if the girls disregard the terms of the agreement. Nneoma is given a Bible and an image of an *arusi* to swear while Efe and the other girls are taken to a shrine between Lagos and Ibadan.

Nneoma's and Efe's Sojourns in Europe: The Effects of the Trafficking

Nneoma and Efe recount their harrowing experiences in Europe. This is a far cry to their expectations before leaving the country. Efe regrets ever accepting or wished going abroad. She says that, "The experience nearly finished me" (126). Nneoma is surprised that the agents have not kept to their promise. That is her first baptism of deceit by the traffickers. She recounts that; "At Murtala Mohammed International Airport, we are met by a man and woman who travel with us instead of Eddie and Maria" (128).

It is at the airport they get to know that they are Italy bound. Nneoma explains that, "For the first time we hear we will get to Italy before travelling to Britain" (128). Efe agrees with Nneoma when she quips: "That was my experience too: you hardly know where you are until you get there" (128). Right from there, the evil effects of trafficking have started to manifest through the deceptions of the traffickers. Life in Europe starts in Italy for both girls. The life they encounter in that strange land is a different one from the one they are used to in Nigeria. Nneoma is not aware of the fact that she has been trafficked until she gets to Italy. According to her;

"In Italy, I discover I am trafficked. I have no say in the matter. There is a woman called Madam Dollar---nothing comes between her and money. She owns us and the man, whom we learn to call Captain, is her bodyguard. (128)

Nneoma discovers that she has been sold to Madam Dollar, contrary to her reason for going abroad. She recounts her gory experience when she says that;

“Madam Dollar keeps us prisoner in her flat. Life is hell in Rome” (128). Efe too discovers that she has been trafficked to Italy. According to her, “...we were taken to Italy and ended up in Palermo. It was terrible. I was sold to a woman called Madam Gold, a Nigerian. She was vicious. She used us shamelessly, made us walk the streets every night” (99).

Now in Europe, they both become victims of sex slavery. Odinye explains that;

“Trafficking and sex slavery have become so rampant in Africa and in the world today ... Currently, sex slavery and human trafficking are among the most lucrative and fastest growing sources of income for some girls and secretly organized criminal organizations all over the world” (39).

The girls are forced into prostitution which they never envisaged. After making Efe “walk the streets every night”, she is sold to a white man after working for Madam Gold for four years. Efe spends two years with her new owner before fleeing to Verona to “work” for another one year. Nneoma recounts how she was used as a sex slave, a prostitute, in the house of Madam Dollar. According to her, “we are always walking the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners” (129).

Apart from being reduced to sex slaves, the trafficked girls are always sexually harassed. Sex, no doubt, is a good thing approved by God. Oluchi Joyce Igili posits that;

“The fact that man has the innate capability to experience and express sexual emotions is incontrovertible. Sexual relationships or copulation is fundamental to procreation and by extension, to the continuation of the human race” (217).

Igili agrees with the fact that God ordained sexual relationships and there is nothing wrong with that. J. A. Afolabi explains that different shades of opinion abound about sex. He says that some see it as “nature’s highest source of physical and psychological gratification” while others see it as “the original crime committed by man, the forbidden fruit that warranted the exile of Adam and Eve from the Euphoric garden of Eden, and so engendered all the problems of humanity today” (233).

We can deduct from Afolabi’s assertion that sex is both good and bad. It is bad because it can lead to some problems for humanity. It is in this light that human trafficking, especially sex trafficking is seen as an ill wind that blows no good to the victims. Nneoma is subjected to sexual harassment by the man who had saved her from the sexual slavery she encounters from Baron and other men. Just as she was sexually harassed at the teachers’ training college,

It had been the same in London when she lived in Dimgba Anadu’s room in a badly maintained house where another Nigerian, Dotun Anibaba, had a room... Both men had tried to lure her to bed but she had resisted with vigour (156-157).

In one of the occasions, Dimgba had told Nneoma, “Why will you not allow me to have sex with you, yet you continue to shelter in my house... in this terrible British cold we can warm each other” (157). Instead of caving in for this harassment, Nneoma, in that condition, begs, “please, give me time. I have been hurt badly in the past four years by men. I am prepared to pay for my board as soon as I find work” (157).

Another effect of the human trafficking as experienced by Nneoma, Efe and the rest of the girls, is torture. The girls are subjected to both physical and psychological torture. The physical torture they suffer include beating and rape while the psychological torture they are made to pass through include depression, guilt, shame and fear.

In her sojourn in Europe, Baron subjected Nneoma to physical torture even during sex. He beats and rapes her at will. While Nneoma listens to Efe’s story of how she ends up in Italy, the narrator reveals that, “Nneoma relapsed into thought and she remembered the times Baron had asked her to plait his thick, glossy hair. Each time she did it, he would have an erection. After she had completed the task, he would grab her and rape her” (95). Before being raped, Nneoma first undergoes moments when she is beating

up, especially if she tries to avoid sex or try to prove difficult. These men who beat her up often inflict injuries on her body. She tells Efe, “When I am difficult, the men beat me and throw me out of their cars or kick me out of wherever they have taken me” (129). It seems the beating and the raping come simultaneously. Nneoma suffers these from the men, especially Baron. She complains that, “Baron is a sadist. He rapes and beats me. I refuse when customers demand oral or anal sex and insist they use condoms and I’m sometimes assaulted for this” (132).

Most times, these physical tortures often end up in humiliation, especially when Nneoma tries to fight back or insist that the men should use condoms before sex. The narrator recounts one of Nneoma’s harrowing experiences in the hands of the men who brutalise and humiliate her because of sex: “There were a few occasions when she was overpowered and they had their way. Her resistance occasionally earned severe beatings and other forms of humiliation” (203).

The trafficked girls also face some psychological challenges. Odinye reveals that Adimora-Ezeigbo’s “Clear depiction of the girls’ journeys from trafficking to forced prostitution or sexual slavery in an unfamiliar environment captures the psychological trauma associated with those bizarre experiences” (45). One of the psychological tortures the trafficked girls face is shame. Inside the plane when the twenty four girls are returning to Nigeria after being deported, Nneoma thinks of many things. She remembers the time she left Nigeria and now, returning home with shame. The narrator expresses Nneoma’s condition in the following words: “She had left with so much hope and aspiration; now she was returning home in shame and hopelessness” (12).

When they arrive at Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Lagos, “Nneoma glued her eyes to the floor and tried to hide in the middle of the group of young women as they hurried past immigration and customs officers” (17). At the arrival of the deported girls to where they are to be rehabilitated at Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development (OYCSD), the narrator says that Nneoma is “cocooned in the middle of the crowd of deportees, bent on maintaining anonymity, she climbed into the bus, and exhaled the air of shame and anger that welled up” (23).

Apart from the psychological torture of shame, the trafficked girls, especially Nneoma, face some trauma of fear, anxiety, depression, guilt and hopelessness. When Nneoma is arrested in London, she is being questioned by the police. The questioning session was traumatic for her as she remembers her experience in Italy. The narrator reveals that, “the questioning sessions had been traumatic. She was sure her responses had been garbed by fear and panic. The horrors in Rome, the disorientation and savagery in the London flat, the humiliation of arrest and detention plagued her mind” (14). Anytime she remembers her experience, she is always lost in thought and broods over it. In one of the occasions when Efe is recounting her humiliation in Italy, “Nneoma relapsed in thought and she remembered the times...” (95). Efe notices this and complains, “You are off again ... You are so lost in thought you don’t even know that I’m still here, Nneoma, na wa for you” (95). Efe explains to Nneoma that, “Nneoma we are all broken inside” (97). She reminds Nneoma, “I know we have both been hurt. Terribly hurt. I see it in your movement, in your silences. I am sure you also see it in me, however much I pretend all is well” (97). Efe’s statement shows that both of them are undergoing some psychological torture. Tears run down Nneoma’s eyes as a result of the evil effects that trafficking caused her. The narrator says, “Nneoma saw that Efe’s story was very similar to hers – they had both been forced to sell their bodies to all comers. Tears ran down her face and she took Efe’s hand” (100). The fact that Nneoma is shedding tears shows how depressed and terribly devastated she is. She tells Efe that ‘Life is hell in Rome’ (128). After crying a while, she stops and battles to control herself, before she continues the story of her escapades. She tells Efe that, “I am completely devastated by the life I’m forced to live: hit the night street, waiting for customers, winter, spring, summer and autumn; come back at dawn, wash, eat and sleep till it all begins again at nightfall” (129). Efe concludes the discussion when she compares her own experience with that of Nneoma. She tells Nneoma, “Your experience was even more horrible than mine, and you were trafficked twice in two different countries” (136).

The effects of human trafficking are not only felt by the victims. The families of the trafficked also feel the pain. Nneoma continues to have nightmares about the mental torture her family may likely be passing through in Nigeria. The narrator says:

“She often imagined their shock at her disappearance. All the time she was away in Italy and Britain, she had nightmares about their terror, frustration and hopelessness at her. The uncertainty about her whereabouts must have been a torture that would disorientate them and steal away their sleep (20)

Ogukwe, Nneoma’s father, feels the pain more as he thinks all the time, about the whereabouts of his daughter. He whispers to himself, that, “*Aka ji ya; she is a captive somewhere*” (42). As the narrator reveals, Ogukwe “had lost her at the height of her youth and beauty: a ripe maiden of eighteen. Curses and doom would pursue the man or woman that had abducted his daughter” (42).

Another effect human, especially sex, trafficking has on the victims is the stigma of being called “prostitutes”. This always leads to insults, humiliations and loss of jobs. Alice and Fola, two of the twenty four deported girls from the UK have a quarrel. Fola is a victim of human trafficking but never used as a sex slave but as a domestic servant. In trying to vent her anger on Alice she stigmatises her by calling her “*Ashawo*”. According to her, “I have not finished with you, witch...Prostitute! I’m glad I was trafficked as a domestic servant and not as a sex slave like you. *Ashawo*” (137). Nneoma loses her job when her employer, Chidi Amadi, gets to know that she was once a prostitute. He informs her:

“Don’t try to deny it because I got my information from a genuine source, the reporter who interviewed you at the airport...You know, nothing is hidden under the sun...Our sins will always catch up with us. You are a good worker and a talented tailor, no one can deny that. But I cannot keep someone with your background here. So I’m terminating your appointment with immediate effect.” (273)

The narrator comments on the humiliation this causes Nneoma: ‘She would have had to resign in a month or two anyway. But that didn’t take away the humiliation she had to suffer. Chief Amadi had called her a prostitute. That had hurt, badly’ (280). When Nneoma calls Efe on phone to relay the news of her termination of appointment, she tells Efe that her boss, Chief Amadi, “got to know I was trafficked, so I had to go” (287).

Homelessness is another evil effect of human trafficking as fictionalized by Adimora-Ezeigbo. The author though tries to play down the importance of this because it is a universal phenomenon. According to the narrator, “There were also many homeless people in Lagos. Homelessness was not a phenomenon of exile or illegal migration... It was universal” (242). However, it is clear that those trafficked abroad always have an issue of homelessness to deal with. This lack of a home has its own devastating consequences on the victims. The narrator reveals that:

On her first night of homelessness in London, after escaping from Baron, she had searched for a place to pass the night but the first protected spot she found, close to Euston Tube Station, was already taken by a homeless man with a red face, stretched on his back, ensconced in a sleeping bag.

The trauma of getting a place to stay in a foreign land is always a hard nut to crack. After another rigorous effort, Nneoma finally gets a place, “a church with a tower and stained glass windows, girded by a low, spiked iron fence painted black” (24).

Eradicating Human Trafficking: The Deportation

Many countries all over the world, including Nigeria, have devised different means of eradicating human trafficking especially sex trafficking and illegal organisations or cartels involved in the business of trafficking humans, especially girls and women abroad for profit. Many awareness has been created to educate the people about the horrendous and harrowing experiences of the victims of human trafficking.

Mathias O Nder explains the various groups and NGOs that have risen up to fight sex trafficking and slavery. According to him,

In Nigeria, Women in Nigeria (WIN) a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) has continued to champion the struggle for the total liberation of women at both the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres. It is, however, interesting to note that the bold efforts of WIN have continued to be complemented by several other women focused Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Women's Rights, Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) and Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), among others (20).

Adimora-Ezeigbo has succeeded in fictionalizing the great efforts being made by the Nigerian government in curbing all forms of sexploitation and sex slavery. Due to the collaboration of the UK government, all the trafficked girls are deported back to Nigeria. They are twenty four in number as announced by the newscaster: "About twenty four young women deported from Italy and the United Kingdom arrived Murtala Mohammed International Airport yesterday" (59). As soon as they arrive, they are taken to Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development (OYCSD), a rehabilitation centre for trafficked women. It is an NGO owned by four women. The NGO is recognized by the government, private and religious organizations. The NGO has also received financial moral supports from these bodies because they have keyed into the need to eradicate human trafficking. Uchenna David Uwakwe describes the efforts of these NGOs as "a palliative to the shortcomings of the government in power" (135).

Two days after the arrival of the twenty-four young women from Europe, the Commissioner for Women and one of the directors of UNICEF come to speak to the deported young women. This is one the ways to show that government recognizes the NGO and its efforts in eradicating human trafficking. Delivering her speech, the Commissioner says;

"The condition of Nigerian women and children has worsened especially in the past two decades, and as a result of military rule. Violence, brutality and all forms of abuse have multiplied. But the present government is fighting these evils – this is what democracy is all about: safeguarding the rights of our people. We have declared war against slavery, child abuse, the international sex trade and HIV/AIDS. We want to stamp out prostitution from our society; we want international prostitution to stop. The trafficking of our girls is despicable and this evil trade must be eliminated...We are addressing the social and cultural issues that force our girls to consider prostitution as a means of livelihood. It is commendable that bills have been passed against the trafficking of children and women, as well as female genital mutilation... (55)

Speaking through the Commissioner for Women, the author has succeeded in educating and informing the readers of the efforts made by government to eliminate human trafficking because it is an ill-wind that blows no good to anyone, especially the victims. Among the causes of the increase in the rate of murders in the country, human traffickers are listed. According to the narrator, "Politicians were often blamed for the increase in murders. Human traffickers were said to be culpable too" (111).

The activities of the human traffickers are highlighted through, Baron, Madam Dollar and the rest. Baron "bought women and sold them regularly as if they were merchandise" (135). Despite the activities of the traffickers especially Baron, Nneoma and Efe decide to report him to the police. Efe tells Nneoma, "After all, there is a law against trafficking" (168).

Now that the girls are back home, they are engaged in different skills like tailoring, hair dressing and so on. Government also continues to sensitise the nation on the negative impact of human trafficking and other vices. According to the newscaster,

The opening ceremony of the international conference on HIV/AIDS, which was held at the International Women Centre in Abuja, was attended by many dignitaries from Africa

and other parts of the world. Among them were Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of Health and Women's Affairs, the Executive Director of UNICEF and ECOWAS officials on major inter-governmental actions. Issues that will be discussed in the course of the conference include; the HIV/AIDS control programme, child trafficking and labour and the international sex trade (203).

Conclusion

In Nigeria, there is an alarming rate of the blatant violation of an individual's fundamental human rights. Human trafficking is one of such human rights being violated. Through that, the individual is denied of his or her freedom. As Donald U. Omenukor puts it, "human rights are rights which human beings have for the very fact that they are humans" (258). Human trafficking has for long been in existence and up to now, humans are still being trafficked either through sex trafficking, domestic work or other means. Many Nigerians too are desperate to migrate to Europe due to the poor conditions at home. These conditions include government's insensitivity to the plight of workers which often lead to strikes, corruption, poor economy, unemployment, desire to study abroad, desire to work genuinely abroad and find greener pastures, to mention a few. Unfortunately, when they get abroad majority of them are disappointed by what they see because the traffickers have deceived them. The trafficked people then face difficult times like homelessness, torture, humiliation and all sorts of psychological trauma.

Like other writers, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo has been able to capture the issue of sex trafficking and the evil effects in the novel, *Trafficked*. As explained by Odinye, the novelist "gives an insight into the lives of young girls who are trafficked and forced into prostitution. In depicting the traumatic experiences, she carefully and craftily details the plight of girls who are forced or lured into prostitution outside the shores of their countries with the hope of having a better life and the painful efforts those young characters make to escape from the neurotic modes of experiences. (45)

Government rises to eliminate human trafficking. The girls are deported to have a new life. "Nneoma embraces a new life after she is repatriated from Europe alongside other girls who have been victims of sex slavery" (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 131). All these are fictionalized in the novel by Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo.

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