



Literary Art as Countercheck to Women Trafficking: An Explication of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*

Adedoyin Aguru, PhD

Associate Professor

Department of English, University of Ibadan

Abstract

Trafficking has been described as all activities that entail, sheltering and trade in humans within or across national and international boundaries through deceit, kidnap, or other forceful means with the intent of engaging victims in forced services or labor. Trafficking, particularly of women and children, is considered by the international community a fast-growing global avarice. Dominant features of the trafficking trade include: domestic servitude and prostitution which is different in comparison to the context of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. This study takes on prostitution in trafficking, engaging the inherent potential and the existing influence of the literary writer to redefine and reposition the society. This is done by examining portrayals of character-types, development of the plot and depths of the thematic preoccupation and literary elements which have contributed immensely to the re-definition of Africa in Africa, and Africa before the international community. This paper employs Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, novels that thematically dwell on this global concern. It critically engages national and international postures in examining dimensions of trafficking like industry and cartel, prostitution as a vocation for the trafficked, portrayals of the stakeholders, portrayals of the victims, value systems that promote the desire of young women to live and earn money abroad, and psychological, physiological, and sociological import of being trafficked and serving as a sex-slave. *Trafficked* and *On Black Sisters' Street* are Nigerian literary templates that serve as deterrence for the class of women this new tool of trade targets.

Keywords: *Boundaries, deterrence, trafficking, deceit, and prostitution*

Introduction

By the end of the last millennium and beginning of the new one, national and international agencies and pressure groups began to report gruesome findings on trafficking as a global crime. More startling was the extent to which the global avarice had become trafficked and pressure groups began to decry the industry and its cartel bringing forth to the center its implication on the international community as a whole. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) by 2007 provided detailed information on this crime that reportedly shames human existence (United Nations 2017). Among several

definitions of the trade is the much favored and quoted United States Government definition in Miko and Park:

All acts involved in the transport, harbo[u]ring, or sale of persons within national or across international borders through coercion, force, kidnapping, deception or fraud, for purposes of placing persons in situations of forced labo[u]r or services, such as forced prostitution, domestic servitude, debt bondage or other slavery-like practices. (United Nations 2017)

Other definitions consider cases of minors and the polemics of consent and lack thereof by the trafficked persons and their relations. The dimensions of trafficking that become evident in this engagement include the well-established, cartel-controlled agencies and industries that are rooted deeply as international enterprise. The consistent rise in trafficking in people, a flourishing international crime activity across continents, belies accurate statistics because it is a clandestine criminal activity. Roughly, about 700,000 people are victims of trafficked each year mostly in the South East and South Asia, former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa (Miko and Park 4).

The trade flourished due to the manifold crises of the 20th and 21st centuries like large displacements from wars, stark poverty, induced misplacement of priorities in governance, youth unemployment, and migrants seeking greener pastures. Besides, poor families traded and pawned their children for other reasons as well. The extreme low risks associated with trafficking, particularly inadequate legal instruments to combat the enterprise and its perpetrators spiked trade further. The other attraction lies in the huge tax-free profits generated from the same persons over a long period.

Traffickers lure victims by offering phony jobs, or lucrative ones abroad, or kidnapping them. Miko and Park observe that there are no universal stereotypes about recruiting victims (4). Age, however, seems to be a common denominator because victims range from early, mid and late teens to adults and elderlies. This is understandably so because:

The fear among customers of infection with HIV and AIDS has driven traffickers to recruit younger women and girls, some as young as seven, erroneously perceived by customers to be too young to have been infected. (Miko and Park 4)

The Polemics and Economics of Trafficking

Reports of several agencies including Miko and Park portray prostitution as the most profitable vocation for both traffickers and the trafficked (4). Other publications succinctly capture the economics and the politics of prostitution as the preferred vocation of the trafficking agency globally. However, Miko and Park is most germane to this inquiry (4). It reported that victims are subjected to "cruel mental and physical abuse" so as to keep them subdued and servile (4). Narratives of battering, confinement, rape and sexual abuse abound. All categories of victims are on arrival to their destination have their travel documents collected by the agents of the agencies that facilitated their migration. Very many are forced to endure unprotected sex with large number of partners, working very long hours therefore "... suffer mental break-downs and are exposed to sexually-transmitted diseases..." (Miko and Park 4).

In 2013, Abiodun Oluwarotimi wrote of the United States of America's report on Nigeria being a major contributor to human trafficking (13). The report noted that the Nigerian government neither particularly responsive to the menace of trafficking in Nigeria nor its consequent effect on other nations.

According to the U.S Secretary of States, "Nigeria was a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking" (Oluwarotimi 13). The reports implied that as at 2013 Nigeria had not fully complied with the minimum standard for the elimination of trafficking despite demonstrating a fair attempt in engaging the anti-trafficking laws with which the country had prosecuted twenty-five traffickers. The country had embarked on the training of several agencies and personnel to address the extensive rate of trafficking. Nigeria was reported as responsible for supplying women and girls for forced prostitution in most parts of the world. It was also established that young as well as mature females "primarily from Benin City in Edo State – are subjected to forced prostitution in Italy..." while those from other states served as forced prostitutes in other parts of the world (Oluwarotimi 14).

Plambech's seminal paper on "Sex, Deportation and Rescue: Economies of Migration among Nigerian Sex Workers" opens up vistas in trafficking in Nigeria (138). It corroborates U.S report on the location most Nigerian trafficked women came from, but not on their being subjected to forced prostitution. Plambech's ethnographic study uncovers the politics and economics of migration among Nigerian sex workers (138). It observes the active time line for the Edo migrants began in 1986 as a response to the National Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The Edo people of Benin had prior to that time been reputed for taking high level risk migration through the Sahara deserts and across the Mediterranean Sea or relocating to Europe with false travel documents ultimately fitting into European sex agency. The evident push and pull factors were largely influenced by SAP in Nigeria and high demand for sex workers in Europe.

The Benin experience however negates the single sided narrative and empirical realities of "victimhood" in trafficking and migration. Plambech therefore captured the reality of contracted labour: Most of the participants in the trade:... did not know all of the conditions and hazards involved in their job in Europe, yet all but one knew they were going to sell sex (139). They also knew they would work under a "madam," and they anticipated and accepted two to three years of hard work while repaying the debt. By then, they hoped to have repaid their madams and to have started working for themselves. Thus, in most cases it seems more precise to conceptualise the processes in the Nigerian context as indentured labour (Plambech 139).

Most Nigerian women migrants to countries like Italy are "self-recruited," members of their families consult with persons that can facilitate travel documents as well as reliable "madams" they can depend on even when they are or become exploitative. Chika Unigwe's four characters fall within this category (113). They know before setting out that they will have a relationship of dependency on their Madams. Bettio, Giusta and Di Tommaso describe this pattern as:

...“informed” enrolment into a system of indentured sex work migration, choice of occupational choice identity within the sex work industry, access to credit, or more general ability to make economic choices under constraint. (2)

This largely makes a clear distinction between "trafficking" and "illegal" migration. Plambech observed that as the boundary policing in the last two decades became tighter, established migrants inhabiting Europe set up a comprehensive agency to facilitate passages and practice earnings from such restricted territories (Plambech 140). In Plambech's words:

...migrants already in Europe began to recruit and practice the migration of women from Nigeria, fronting the money for travel, providing temporary accommodation and job brokering, and creating a system of indentured sex work migration. (140)

The value system that promote the desire of young women to live and earn money abroad are numerous. The four characters in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street* had been pushed to the wall. Sisi, a graduate, was driven by her hopeless state of unemployment and even a future bleaker than her parents. Ama is child raped by her "father" for several years before discovering that her mother had lied about her who her real father was, strangely her mother was willing to send her away the minute she opened her mouth to accuse her mother's husband of the rape he did commit. Efe loses her mother at a tender age, her father slips into a state of drunkenness and she ends up with a teenage pregnancy having been lured by a married man who refuses to accept his child. Joyce is a victim of war. Sudanese born girl who witnesses the wiping out of her entire family and who is at the same time, gang-raped by the same soldiers. She is temporarily given hope, consoled and comforted by a soldier who creates to her an impression that he could marry her. At some point he is sternly warned off Joyce by his mother, and he is quick to relieve himself of her burden by registering her with the indenture agency. Dele, the Lagos agent, we are told is "... the common denominator in their lives." The lives of the four women (Unigwe 113).

Plambech who actually lived among the returned sex workers in Edo State observed that the families of the deported victims that she studied claimed that their families were poor due to under or unemployment and had to skip one or two meals a day. Migration for them is a quest for business opportunities. They all, upon migration, became sole providers for their families through remittances (Plambech 144).

The agency established for the purpose of such migration is described by Plambech as 'the facilitation economy' (Planbech 144). The chain consists of young male contacts in Benin who characteristically have established female relatives -Madams- in Europe. These networks make up the facilitating agency for the migrants. The Madams most of whom would have served in states of indenture and are able to pay off and invariably take up the 'madam' or supervisory roles of a madam. The migrant women often voiced ambiguous moral perspectives about their madams in which they simultaneously viewed them as role models, mother figures, and exploiters (Kastner 18; Plambech 144). It is crucial to look at the many ways in which the "job" of facilitating women's journeys to Europe emerges as a business opportunity and how it is related to the political economy of men's unemployment and immobility in Benin. The villainous evolving role of the Madam in the agency is understandable. The trafficked and deported victim who still holds her in high esteem does so because she remains a bundle of unforgettable emotions and experiences conditioned by the totality of the agency.

The Writer and her Art as Countercheck

Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chika Unigwe have, through their narratives, placed deliberate restrictions on the actors of the trafficking and sex work migrant agency. Both writers from different perspectives portray innocent victims or a deliberate participants who are the victims in the trafficking agency. The ethnographic economics reveals this much.

While Adimora-Ezeigbo leans towards precaution and advocacy. Her narrative style is laced with instruction for the youth who may be at risk and for the mature woman who still stands the risk of being trafficked. Her thematic preoccupation lies mainly in the narrative of Nneoma and Efe two out of fifteen deported sex slaves, the stigmatization they suffer and the effort of the government and Non-governmental bodies in Nigeria put in to rehabilitate the victims, and prosecute the agents of the cartels that deceive the victims into slavery. Adimora-Ezeigbo takes every opportunity to raise the hydra headed Nigerian problems that triggers most forms of migration. She subtly introduces a pleasant ending, which is unlikely to be plausible, for Nneoma. Nneoma secures admission into the university after her rehabilitation and runs into Ofofata, who she had been engaged to be married to before her unfortunate adventure to Europe, on her first day on campus. Adimora-Ezeigbo writes about and for the pre-teens and the work is published by Lantern Books which dominantly publishes for young readers. It is clear that the thematic preoccupation in *Trafficked* leans heavily towards precaution and advocacy for rehabilitation and reintegration in to the society without consequences or practice.

Unigwe moves from the popular and politically correct narrative that practice all categories of participants in the sex-trade to support ethnographic findings that portray the reality that most of the actors know precisely what the trade entails and what it requires of them. She acknowledges the fact that these participants may not have the exact details of full implication of what being a sex migrant entails nor the risk of being deported or the psychological or physiological implications of the trade. She, however, does make it clear that the participants do understand the terms of reference and that the trade in contemporary times needs very little or no deception. Her characters deliberately decide to go with the proposals and protocols of the agency having considered the implication of all the information that was made available to them. Ama, for instance says, “I made this choice. At least I was given a choice. I came here with my eyes wide open” (Unigwe 114).

Adimora-Ezeigbo and Unigwe paint portraits of different experiences. While, Adimora-Ezeigbo portrays the agency and the operators of the cartel, who run the trafficking cartel as villains and the trafficked as the innocent and unconscious victims – which is the side of the story possibly narrated to deter the “innocent”. Unigwe’s narrative deters in a different type of way. It painstakingly narrates the challenges that leads to the choice of the migrant indentured sex worker who is “knowingly” “trafficked.” She also shocks the reader with the pain and torture of the characters undergo. Sisi on her first date at work thinks she is a woman sinking, a woman required to smile while she sank (Unigwe 208) as her client caresses her she sat still... her heart heavy with a sadness that was close to rage” (Unigwe 212). She is so miserable and pained as her client “inaugurates” her “into her new profession” that ...she “baptised herself into it with tears hot and livid” (Unigwe 213). Unigwe’s women’s narratives give a sharp distinction between “willingly” or “knowingly” participating in the trade. Unigwe neither celebrates the characters: their actions and inactions nor takes up an air of a condescending omniscient narrator. She, instead, allows the reader to encounter and come to terms with the harrowing realities of the trade. This approach to narrating sex work is on its own deterring.

Advocacy for Agencies of Restoration and Integration

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo paints a close portrait of two deported trafficked sex workers the structure of the plot is similar to Chika Unigwe’s. Of the fifteen girls that make the trip back. Adimora-Ezeigbo, as Unigwe does, narrates the experiences of two; Nneoma and Efe through the omniscient

While Adimora-Ezeigbo leans towards precaution and advocacy. Her narrative style is laced with instruction for the youth who may be at risk and for the mature woman who still stands the risk of being trafficked. Her thematic preoccupation lies mainly in the narrative of Nneoma and Efe two out of fifteen deported sex slaves, the stigmatization they suffer and the effort of the government and Non-governmental bodies in Nigeria put in to rehabilitate the victims, and prosecute the agents of the cartels that deceive the victims into slavery. Adimora-Ezeigbo takes every opportunity to raise the hydra headed Nigerian problems that triggers most forms of migration. She subtly introduces a pleasant ending, which is unlikely to be plausible, for Nneoma. Nneoma secures admission into the university after her rehabilitation and runs into Ofofata, who she had been engaged to be married to before her unfortunate adventure to Europe, on her first day on campus. Adimora-Ezeigbo writes about and for the pre-teens and the work is published by Lantern Books which dominantly publishes for young readers. It is clear that the thematic preoccupation in *Trafficked* leans heavily towards precaution and advocacy for rehabilitation and reintegration in to the society without consequences or practice.

Unigwe moves from the popular and politically correct narrative that practice all categories of participants in the sex-trade to support ethnographic findings that portray the reality that most of the actors know precisely what the trade entails and what it requires of them. She acknowledges the fact that these participants may not have the exact details of full implication of what being a sex migrant entails nor the risk of being deported or the psychological or physiological implications of the trade. She, however, does make it clear that the participants do understand the terms of reference and that the trade in contemporary times needs very little or no deception. Her characters deliberately decide to go with the proposals and protocols of the agency having considered the implication of all the information that was made available to them. Ama, for instance says, “I made this choice. At least I was given a choice. I came here with my eyes wide open” (Unigwe 114).

Adimora-Ezeigbo and Unigwe paint portraits of different experiences. While, Adimora-Ezeigbo portrays the agency and the operators of the cartel, who run the trafficking cartel as villains and the trafficked as the innocent and unconscious victims – which is the side of the story possibly narrated to deter the “innocent”. Unigwe’s narrative deters in a different type of way. It painstakingly narrates the challenges that leads to the choice of the migrant indentured sex worker who is “knowingly” “trafficked.” She also shocks the reader with the pain and torture of the characters undergo. Sisi on her first date at work thinks she is a woman sinking, a woman required to smile while she sank (Unigwe 208) as her client caresses her she sat still... her heart heavy with a sadness that was close to rage” (Unigwe 212). She is so miserable and pained as her client “inaugurates” her “into her new profession” that ...she “baptised herself into it with tears hot and livid” (Unigwe 213). Unigwe’s women’s narratives give a sharp distinction between “willingly” or “knowingly” participating in the trade. Unigwe neither celebrates the characters: their actions and inactions nor takes up an air of a condescending omniscient narrator. She, instead, allows the reader to encounter and come to terms with the harrowing realities of the trade. This approach to narrating sex work is on its own deterring.

Advocacy for Agencies of Restoration and Integration

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo paints a close portrait of two deported trafficked sex workers the structure of the plot is similar to Chika Unigwe’s. Of the fifteen girls that make the trip back. Adimora-Ezeigbo, as Unigwe does, narrates the experiences of two; Nneoma and Efe through the omniscient

voice, strong authorial voice, flashback and biographical narratives. Efe, as Unigwe does with her four characters, initiates the process of ‘telling’ as therapeutic purgation. Efe says ‘Look, why don’t we just tell each other what happened to us? Perhaps finding our voices will help us heal (Adimora-Ezeigbo 97). Efe tells of her birth in Benin. She is raised by a poor family that struggled to put meals on the table she and her elder sister had gone to college while three of her brothers are unable to complete primary education. In her words “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 (Adimora-Ezeigbo 99) it was during the military regime when things were really chaotic in Nigeria and people sought for opportunities to work abroad.

She responds to the advert without her cousin’s knowledge and was interviewed along with a group. She noted much later that none of the men had been recruited and the ten persons who had been recruited were shortly given a travel schedule. They were made to take an oath and to work for the agency until the debts incurred on processing passports tickets and so forth had been paid.

They were taken to Italy, and settled in Palermo and sold to a certain Madam Gold (Adimora-Ezeigbo 99) who she claimed used them ‘shamelessly’ and made them ‘walk the streets every night’ (Adimora-Ezeigbo 99). After four years of hard labour Madam Gold Sells Efe to a White pimp, from whom she eventually escaped after working for another two years. Efe flees to Verona teams up with a prostitute and works independently for another year hoping to save up money and return home. Shortly after this, the police intercepts and deports her (Adimora-Ezeigbo 100).

Nneoma, Adimora-Ezeigbo tells us, is able to relate with Efe’s misfortune because of her personal experiences in Europe. She tearfully takes Efe’s hands upon practice...They had both been forced to sell their bodies to all comers” (Adimora-Ezeigbo 100). Nneoma in her case had rebelled against the status quo, her would-be husband, Ofomata, is to take a traditional role she cannot imagine him occupying in the society because of the sociological implications. She flees from home and without telling her family to a friend who had informed her that an agency had assisted her in securing a teaching job in the United Kingdom. She travels to Lagos with her and in no time the sponsors arrange passports and flight tickets for them. To make the offers plausible to the six of them that were processed simultaneously Nneoma recalls:

They show us pictures of the schools where we will be teaching and give us appointment letters signed with people with English names. They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money... I am so happy, I thank my chi. The only thing that worries me is that we have to take an oath and they tell us that the consequences will be severe if we disregard the terms of agreement, disobey them or cut links without settling our debts... (Adimora-Ezeigbo 127-128)

It happens that Efe also has similar experience, while Nneoma was made to take an oath with a bible and the image of an *arusi* (idol), Efe’s team take their oaths in a shrine between Lagos and Ibadan (Adimora-Ezeigbo 128). Adimora-Ezeigbo as earlier stated would create a happy ever after for her characters after they are rehabilitated. It seems not plausible, for instance, that in a real context Nneoma will find the love in the hands of the same man she had fled from and who finally runs into her in the university campus after she is restored.

Portraits of the Agency and the Agents

Nneoma in *Trafficked* relates with Efe and Maria, Nigerian contacts for the agency. These contacts remain warm and friendly treating their recruits like their younger siblings before handing them to unknown fellows, a man and another woman, they explain that they are the foreign owners of the agency who are traveling with them from the Muritala Mohammed International Airport. From that point onwards the plans change. Nneoma along with others are informed they will travel to Britain enroute Italy. Nneoma as matter of fact states; ‘In Italy I discover that I am trafficked’ (Adimora-Ezeigbo 128) without having a say in the matter.

Dele in *On Black Sister’s Street* is the Nigerian agent and source for all the characters portrayed as sex workers in the text. Referring to himself as Senghor Dele, he lives a very flashy and flamboyant life with lace suits and makes a show of his wealth in a bid to entice the girls he desires to recruit. Madam in Europe is full of accolades for him,” Dele was right about you, Ah that man knows his stuff. He never disappoints. He has the best girls on show...” (Adimora-Ezeigbo 128). However, the portrayal of his encounter with Ama is the most exploitative and remarkable as it helps her define her posture as a sex worker before she leaves Nigeria.

Ama, had initially turned down the offer of being indentured and spits at Dele for insulting her. The realities of her subsistence makes her eat the humble pie and apologetically goes back to him to accept the offer. Dele accepts her apology but with a pacification request:

You be fire. I shall sample you before you go... but I must sample you... I must, I swear! Ama stood still in front of his table. She knew what was coming and did not move her hand away when he pulled it towards his crotch... (Unigwe 168)

A satisfied and very pleased Dele insists:

You be real fire’ he drawled and smiled at her she also smiled back. Her thoughts already on a new life far from here, earning her own money so that she could build her business empire. And once she was a big woman, people would respect her, even Brother Cyril. This was the dream that spurred her on in Antwerp; the men she slept with were like Dele, just tools she needed to achieve her dream. And her dream was big enough to accommodate all of them. (Unigwe 168-169)

Dele says he is deadly, he proves it when he instructs Madam and Segun to kill Sisi. The structure of the receiving agents follow a pattern. A madam and her bodyguard or henchman.

When Nneoma meets her Madam, Madam Dollar, she is disgusted, her opinion of the woman she describes in white heat:

...nothing comes between her and money, she owns us and the man, whom we learn to call Captain, is her bodyguard she keeps us prisoner in her flat... 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. (Adimora-Ezeigbo 129)

Their job description was repetitive; always walking at night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners. ‘I hate Madam Dollar’ she says.

Unigwe deliberately paints the picture of Madam, in *On Black Sister’s Street* as a person to be respected yet dreaded, she drops hints of these all over the canvas of the work imagery created in the work... madam was dreaded (Unigwe 4) would not tolerate rough hair, lateness to work and her decisive

responses (Unigwe 5), would not attend the party if she was invited (Unigwe 5) you don't want to be in Madams bad books she had dealt with Efe by kicking her out of her booth for one week! Ama, the hothead, does not mince her words: "I don't like Madam. She's a bitch." Madam in Antwerp is really sophisticated. She introduces herself to Sisi authoritatively 'I am your Madam,' light-skinned, round and short as Sisi expected, she had a Master degree in Business Administration from the University of Lagos and spoke impeccable English and Dutch (Unigwe 116). Her hardness manifests in getting rid of Sisi yet playing innocent by disposing her things and burning an incense.

Madam's bodyguard is Segun. Seemingly uncoordinated, but fixes furniture and stuff around the house. He is the surveillance person who tracks and kills Sisi. The bodyguard in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* is violent often assaulting Nneoma for refusing to cooperate with the customers or not delivering the expected amount of money. He beats her up when she returns empty handed but ensures that she is not disfigured. Madam would remind her that the less money she brings the longer she would have stay with her. Nneoma and two girls are bought by Baron who commences fresh transactions with them. She eventually escapes having stolen his money. Worthy of note is the semiotic implication of the cover page of the narratives. Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* has the painting of a young frail looking skimpily dressed subdued woman in a room that is fast secured by metal bars and a padlock while Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street* is the picture of the back and backside of a curvaceous black woman sitting on a bathtub creating an erotic setting.

The Soul as Countercheck to Sex Trade

Man is in tripartite dimensions: spirit, soul and body. It is apparent that the arguments from ethnographic and other critical studies on trafficking and prostitution focus on the victims of the trade. Having established two types of participation: the forced sex work and the indentured sex work, what comes to the fore is that there are different dimensions and levels of victimhood in both contexts. Common denominators remain the economics of the trade, the practice of the tools of the trade by the agencies of the trade, the practice and labelling that pursues the tools of the trade long after they are rehabilitated.

The first condition is an absolute situation where the ideals of the worker who had prepared for legitimate work and psychological impact brought about by the deception and assault of the forced sex slavery are deepened by the lack of preparation or readiness on the part of the trafficked person. The act of forced prostituting and the psychological and physiological consequences of the same is portrayed by Adimora-Ezeigbo as she portrays Nneoma as almost always unwilling and uncooperative.

Sometimes I refuse to cooperate with the customers, especially when thy demand for positions I find despicable or when they refuse to use a condom or make one of the other nasty demands ... (Adimora-Ezeigbo 129)

Baron is a sadist he rapes and beats me. I refuse when customers demand oral or anal sex and insist that they use condoms and I'm sometimes assaulted for this. (Adimora-Ezeigbo 132)

The other context is that of the 'persons' who appear to be prepared for the enterprise until they are faced with the realities and the consequences of the trade until they practically engage in the enterprise. Unigwe the omniscient narrator portrays characters that are psychologically distressed and

ravaged at the realm of the soul. The same characters carry on as though they are contented with the indentured sex work, the consistent upward review of their indebtedness to the agency and the proceeds from their slave hood. While Adimora-Ezeigbo's dominant characters are rehabilitated and have regrets over being deceived into the trade.

Unigwe's characters are contrastingly portrayed as challenged and broken women who pursue their career as sex workers with all the dignity they can muster. Unigwe does not condemn them but engages them as a deterring agency by portraying the sorrowful soul and depression they consistently live with. Unigwe's masterstroke is in dropping these details when the reader least expects thereby portraying consistent bitterness overlaying whatever impression of joy or fulfilment the characters display. For instance, Ama is consistently angry while Sisi, the most educated and who seemed to be the most prepared to take up the indentured sex slave role, remained the most troubled and discontented. Unigwe revealing the circumstances of her death to the readers and not her housemates is a very loud authorial statement. She refuses to condemn but wills the reader the introspection of the consequence of living such fashion. The cartel is portrayed as an agency that is intolerant of disloyalty and will do anything to protect and uphold its "integrity."

Conclusion

Trafficking remains a global avarice and the dimensions of the trade; the agency which includes the ruthless traffickers, the madams and the categories of indentured sex workers continue to be the concern of the international community. Most of those enrolled in indentured relationships, do so without full understanding of the realities of the trade. Their immediate consciousness leans towards the economics of the trade and perceived opportunities. They, however, go ahead with the terms when the agencies alter the agreements, looking to the time they would be free to start the life they desire when they got committed to the indentured sex work.

The persistence and viability of this trade opens up growing theoretical and literary discourse on trafficking. Literature has, in several ways and across continents, served as countercheck to trafficking. Biographical writings, novels, documentary narratives and practice texts that capture the syndrome abound. The purpose they serve must be practiced, for instance as biographies they grant entrance into the ordeals of individuals who have experienced the trade while as documentary narratives they give practice historical views of the same. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chika Unigwe's works are fictional and documentary in several ways. By portraying the gory experience of the indentured sex workers they offer a counter check.

Works Cited

Adimora-Ezeigbo, Akachi. *Trafficked*. Lantern Books, 2008.

Bettio, Francesca, Maria Giusta, and Maria Di Tommaso. "Sex Work and Trafficking: Moving Beyond Dichotomies." *Feminist Economics*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2017, pp. 1–22.

Collins, Patricia. "New Commodities, New Consumers: Selling Blackness in a Global Marketplace." *Ethnicities*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2017, pp. 13–21.

- Kastner, Kristin. "Moving Relationships: Family Ties of Nigerian Migrants on Their Way to Europe." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2010, pp. 17–34.
- Miko, Francis T., and Grace Park. "Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response." 2002.
- Munsey, Sarah, Heather Miller, and Tia Rugg. "Generate Hope: A Comprehensive Treatment Model for Sex-Trafficked Women." *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, vol. 15, no. 4, 2018, pp. 420–31.
- Niekerk, Charmaine. "Interrogating Sex Trafficking Discourses Using a Feminist Approach." *Feminist Economics*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2018, pp. 1–21.
- Oluwarotimi, Ayo. "Nigeria: U.S. Human Trafficking Report Indicts FG, Judiciary." *AllAfrica*, 2013, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201406230355.html>.
- Plambech, Sine. "Sex, Deportation and Rescue: Economies of Migration among Nigerian Sex Workers." *Feminist Economics*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2016, pp. 134–59.
- Unigwe, Chika. *On Black Sisters' Street*. Vintage Books, 2010.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Human Trafficking." United Nations, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html>.