

Review Article

Characters in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract: In this article, the main purpose has been the characterization of characters in the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. To carry out the task, the research has been conducted through the lenses of the deconstruction approach. Through the completion of the task, the characters have been divided into three groups namely major characters, the minor characters, and other characters. At the end of the investigation, it has been discovered there are two major characters in the novel. As for minor characters there are two characters as well. When it comes to other characters, although in this article their number has shortened to two characters, it should be mentioned that there are more characters who should belong to this last group of characters. This short number of characters belonging to other characters has been due to the constraint of the article size.

Keywords: Character, Major character, Minor character, Plot.

I. INTRODUCTION

Like movie whose success or completion depends mainly on the types of roles comedians or actors have to play during its shooting, a novel is alike. As a result, although it is a written opus, the success of a novel revolves around roles each character has to perform. Thus, characters' appearances in a novel are based on what place they occupy in a literary work. Accordingly, characters, who are recurrent in a novel, are said to be major characters, the ones who appear from time to time are minor characters and the ones, who are scarcely painted, are other characters. Thus, What characters can be characterized as major in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel entitled *Americanah* ? Which characters can be called minor in the novel under scrutiny ? and which ones are said to be neither major characters nor minor ? Before delving into this Chimamanda's novel to find out the place each character occupies, it is worthy shedding light on what other scholars have argued as far as characters in literary works are concerned.

Tackling the issue of characters, in his article entitled *Distribution of characters in Chinua Achebe's No longer at ease*, its author Epounda Mexan serge has divided characters of the novel under scrutiny into three groups. The first group is that of traditionalists, those who refute change. Second group of literates, the ones that have benefited from the advantages provided by the white people. Third group is composed of illiterates, those who can neither read nor write.

Dealing with the issue of characters, in his thesis whose title is 'The study of plot, character, and setting to convey the theme as seen in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*', MG. Lia Rosaria I spotlights the importance of the interplay between characters and the setting when it comes to understanding the plot of literary work. Accordingly characters' behaviour and the setting enable the readers to grasp the plot painted in the novel

In this article entitled 'The true meaning of character' based on the film *Invictus* about Nelson Mandela, its author Ryan M. Niemiec shows another meaning of the term character that he calls character strength. To carry out his

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task, the author argues that character is the way that someone makes calculations to fulfill his aim despite other people's disagreement with the idea. As a result in the article Ryan paints the way that although South Africans did not agree with Nelson Mandela's idea of implementation reconciliation by means of a Rugby match, he went on and did it. At the end of the article, Ryan argues that character strength is inborn in humans. Other words, all human beings possess character strength in them.

In this literary work entitled 'Analysis of Characters and Characterizations in the Compilation of Malay Poetry 'Mirror'', its author Kartika Peni Sarwasti posits that the characters, depicted in the poems under his scrutiny, are painted like human beings. The similarity between the human beings and characters makes the poems easy to understand. Accordingly, the characterization is carried out through the characters' mind, actions, speech and others. Apart from what has been stated above, basing his inspiring on what is said in the poems, the author of this literary work dissuades people from judging people on basis of their appearances. Most of time, somebody's appearance has nothing to do with his personality or innermost.

In this article entitled 'Function of a character in literary fiction', its author Benami Barros Garcia argues that there is a change in a character's life in a literary work. At first readers recognise a character through what it says, what it does to name just a few. In doing so, the character tries to find itself a task to carry out. Once the character's task has been carried out, the character will cease to be considered fictional to become a real being in the mind of a reader. As a real being, a character thinks. Thus, from that time on, readers keep track of the character by what he says. The relationship between the character and its discourse plays a crucial role when it comes to the analysis of a literary work.

In this article, 'Analysis of main character, plot and Conflict in the novel The Witch of Portobello by Paulo Coelho, its author Hanisa depicts the way the main character of the novel called Athena implements courage to fulfill her aim in life. To make her aim possible, Athena overcomes different types of conflicts namely with her family, with the church, and with her society. In painting Athena's success which has been possible because of courage, the author of the novel shows the readers how courage is important in a human being's life.

After the literature review related to literary characters through which no scholars has dealt with characters in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, it is worthy tackling the characterization of characters in the novel under scrutiny.

The completion of this work will be carried out through the deconstruction approach.

Poststructuralism and deconstruction are virtually synonymous. Deconstruction arises out of the structuralism of Roland Barthes as a reaction against the certainties of structuralism. Like structuralism, deconstruction identifies textual features but, unlike structuralism, concentrates on the rhetorical rather than the grammatical...

Deconstruction views texts as subversively undermining an apparent or surface meaning, and it denies any final explication or statement of meaning. It questions the presence of any final explication or statement of meaning (H.C, A, L, 176).

Through the passage above, one can tell that while using deconstruction approach, the interpreter has to focus on the meaning he gives to the text instead of the grammar. Apart from what has been stated above, according to deconstruction, a text does not have an unchangeable meaning. Consequently, the meaning of a text endlessly varies depending on the one who does its interpretation.

As it has been mentioned earlier, the work will be organized into two parts as follows : Major characters, minor characters and other characters.

II. MAJOR CHARACTERS

Before getting to the purpose of this section, given the pertinence of the term major character, it is germane to shed light on the meaning of major character. Thus, what is a major character ? the url :[unm.edu/hookster/elements/20 of /20Fiction.Pof](http://unm.edu/hookster/elements/20of/20Fiction.Pof), defines the major character as :

An important figure at the center of the story's action or theme. The major character is sometimes called a protagonist whose conflict with an antagonist may spark the story's conflict.

According to the passage above, the major character is the one who plays the main role in the novel. That is, if the novel is about marriage, the major character or major characters are the ones who get married in the novel. Accordingly, as the plot of Chimamanda's novel under scrutiny is about two young people who are first in love in Nigeria and then they decide to leave dictatorship of Nigeria to go to the western world. Once in the western world, the female one called Ifemelu witnesses the hardship black people go through in America in spite of her Academic success. In contrast, the male one called Obinze undergoes a risky and hard life of undocumented person in London. After fifteen

years abroad, they get together one more time in Nigeria where they renew their dating. As a result, who are the major characters? Are Ifemelu and Obinze the major characters? how many major characters are there? and what makes them the major characters?

As the investigation in this section will focus on the two characters whose names appear in the summary of the novel namely Ifemelu and Obinze, this section is divided into two subsections : Ifemelu's life in America and Obinze's life in England.

1.1-Ifemelu's life in America

Ifemelu is one of the characters mentioned in the summary of *Americanah*, the novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Is she Ifemelu one of the major characters of the novel? If yes, what makes her the major character? These are the questions that underlie the scrutiny through this subsection.

Right at the beginning of the novel, there is the depiction of Ifemelu's life in Princeton which is a city in New Jersey in the following terms:

Princeton, in the summer, smelled of nothing, and although Ifemelu liked the tranquil greenness of the many trees, the clean streets and stately homes, the delicately overpriced shops and the quiet, abiding air of earned grace, it was this, the lack of a smell, that most appealed to her, perhaps because the other American cities she knew well had all smelled distinctly. Philadelphia had the musty scent of history...(A, 3)

Through this passage above, Ifemelu who used to be in Nigeria has left her home country for the United States of America. By perusing this passage above, one can tell the difficulties of a new life that Ifemelu goes through abroad. Thus, as a foreigner in the USA, Ifemelu encounters new realities that she did not face at home. As the summary of the novel mentions the name Ifemelu, besides that it talks about the fact that Ifemelu comes to the United States, she seems to be one of the major characters of the novel. The probability related to the characterization of Ifemelu as the major does not limit in the passage above. Apart from this fact, there is another passage that depicts Ifemelu's first year in the United States in the following way:

During her first year in America, when she took New Jersey Transit to Penn Station and then the subway to visit Auntie Uju in Flatlands, she was stuck by how mostly slim white people got off at the stops in Manhattan and, as the train went further into Brooklyn, the people left were mostly black and fat ? She thought of them as 'big', because one of the first things her friend Ginika told her was that 'fat' in America was a bad word, heaving with moral judgement like 'stupid' or 'bastard,'...(A, 5)

Like the one above, this extract sheds light on the new experience Ifemelu goes through in America. Thus, contrary to what she used to see back home, in the United States Ifemelu realizes the difference between whites and blacks in shapes. That is on one hand white people are slim and the other hand black people are fat. In addition to the difference between whites and blacks in shapes, Ifemelu remembers the language to be used when it comes to describing people shapes for fear offend them. As a matter of fact, her friend Ginika told her not to use fat while talking of people's weight because in America fat was considered a bad word. Instead of fat, while referring to people's weight it is better to use big. Besides taking into account Ifemelu's new life in the United States of America, when Ifemelu goes to an African beauty salon where she meets other Africans who come from other African countries. Later, one of the Africans, Ifemelu meets on the spot, starts talking about African negative realities such as tribalism and so on as follows:

'Igbo men take care of women real good.' Aisha repeated. 'I want marry. They love me but they say the family want Igbo woman. Because Igbo marry Igbo always.'

Ifemelu swallowed the urge to laugh. 'You want marry both of them ?'

'No Aisha made an impatient gesture. 'I want marry one. But this thing is true ? Igbo marry Igbo always ?'

'Igbo people marry all kinds of people. My cousin's husband is Yoruba. My uncle's wife is from Scotland.'

Aisha paused in her twisting, watching Ifemelu in the mirror, as though deciding whether to believe her.

'My sister say it is true. Igbo marry Igbo always,' she said.

'How does your sister know ?... (A, 15)

Through this passage, Ifemelu faces what anybody is likely to encounter when they go abroad. As a matter of fact, although Aisha is african, she accuses Igbo people to be endogamous. They do not marry people from other tribes apart from their own. When Ifemelu notices that what Aisha says is a hoax, Ifemelu reacts as follows to Aisha : far from being endogamous, Igbo people can marry anybody. As a matter of fact Ifemelu has proof from her own family. As a matter of fact in Ifemelu's family people have married people from other tribes. Apart from Ifemelu's new experience in the America from which some people disappointed her by telling what is not true such as Aisha, Ifemelu met people with whom they had many things in common as follows:

Ifemelu and Jane laughed when they discovered how similar their childhoods in Grenada and Nigeria had been, with Enid Blyton books and Anglophile teachers and fathers who worshipped the BBC World Service. She was only a few

years older than Ifemelu. ‘ I married very young. Everybody wanted Marlon, so how could I say no ?’ she said, half teasing. They would sit together on the front steps of the building and watch Dike and Jane’s children. Elizabeth and Junior, ride their bicycles to the end of the street and then back. Ifemelu often calling out to Dike not to go any farther (A, 111)

Although this passage proves that Ifemelu is a major character because of the recurrence of her name through the novel. Besides what shows that Ifemelu is a major character, the novel also depicts how third world people live similar lives. This similarity exists mostly when it comes to their habits and customs. As a matter of fact, Ifemelu and Jane live in the similar way even if they are not from the same country. Accordingly, they watch their children playing. They call out children and so on.

After it has been proved that Ifemelu is one of the major characters first because of the recurrence of her name throughout the novel. Second because the role she plays in the novel matches with the summary of the novel. In the following part, the novel will be scrutinized to find out whether or not Obinze is also one of the major characters of Chimamanda’s novel. This is because there is a mention of Obinze in summary of the novel as well.

1.2-Obinze’s life in London

Like Ifemelu whose life has been under scrutiny because of its mention in the summary of the novel, Obinze’s life has to be investigated as well. As matter of fact, is Obinze also a major character in the novel ? if that is the case, what makes him a major character? and why?

Obinze whose name, is mentioned in the summary of the novel, leaves Nigeria for the United Kingdom. When in the Western World, Obinze encounters new realities which are depicted in several passages in the novel. Among the problems Obinze faces in London, there is the desire to improve his living conditions in London. To fulfil his will, Obinze acts as follows:

‘I just wanted to know that you’re sure about doing this,’ he told her, and then, worried that he might frighten her away, he added, ‘I’ m very grateful and I won’t take too much from you-in a year I’ll have my papers and we’ll do the divorce. But I just wanted to meet you first and make sure you are okay to this (A, 228).

This extract paints what third world people do to live legally in the Western World. They opt for what they cannot do back home. Thus, to live legally, someone, who does not have papers, has to have a sham marriage with another who has document. They do it so that the one who does not possess document can get it by means of marriage. Since the summary of the novel talks of undocumentation, this passage is a hint related to the fact that Obinze is one of major characters of the novel. The problems that Obinze goes through in London do not stop at arranging a marriage of convenience. He goes further, in fact, he does dirty works he could never accept to do back home in the following way : Everyone joked about people who went abroad to clean toilets and so Obinze approached his first job with irony, he was indeed abroad cleaning toilets, wearing rubber gloves and carrying a pail, in an estate agent’s office on the second floor of a London building. Each time he opened the swinging door. Of a stall, it seemed to sigh. The beautiful woman who cleaned the ladies’ toilet was Ghanaian, about his age, with the shiniest dark skin he had ever seen. He sensed, in the way she spoke and carried herself...(A, 236).

Like the precedent one, this passage paints the hardship Obinze goes through in London. In this extract, in reading the depiction of Obinze’s hardship in London, one can tell that Obinze is one of the major characters of the novel under scrutiny. This proof of the Obinze’s characterization as one the major characters is due to the fact that his life in London matches with the plot of the novel. That is the summary of the novel talks about living an undocumented life in the Western World, by the same token Obinze struggles with getting document in London as well. Apart from the fact that the depiction of Obinze’s life in London sheds light on his characterization, the author also tells fellow Africans that the Western World is not the only place they can get rich. Thus, instead of going to the developed countries, African youth should stay at home. In arguing in this way, the author wants the African youth to start being wise while thinking of improving their living conditions. They should not always take the West World as an eldorado. Money does not grow on trees overthere. Consequently young Africans should stay at home to develop their home countries. The youth’s departure for the Western countries is an obstacle to the development of the African continent. The young people’s emigration causes the braindrain to Africa. To some extent, they might go and study to bring their diplomas back home to build their countries in particular and Africa in general. Always for the sake of improving his life, Obinze had to use someone else’s NI number as follows :

‘This is business, innit, but I’m helping you. You can use my NI number and pay me forty per cent of what you make.’ Vincent said. ‘It’s business innit. If I don’t get what we agree on. I will report.’

‘My brother.’ Obinze said. ‘ That’s a little too much. You know my situation. I don’t have anything. Please try and come down.’

‘Thirty –five per cent is the best I can do. This is business.’ He had lost his accent and now spoke Nigerian English. ‘Let me tell you, there are many people in your situation...’(A, 250)’

This extract, apart from depicting Obinze’s hardship in London in search of a better of life, portrays Chimamanda’s endless will to dissuade Nigerians in particular and Africans in general to go to abroad to improve their lives. Through this passage one can notice the difficulties of living abroad. Thus, to get a job, one has to go through several tough situations. For instance, someone has to work under somebody else’s name by using their IN number. In doing so, the person, who uses someone else’s name, has to pay the owner of the card an amount of money charged by owner of the IN number. Apart from what has been stated above, there are several difficulties a foreigner faces in the Western World:

The little boy had a delightful curious face. ‘Do you live in London?’ he asked Obinze.

‘Yes,’ Obinze said, but that yes did not tell his story, that he lived in London indeed but invisibly, his existence like an erased pencil sketch; each time he saw a policeman, or anyone in a uniform, anyone with the faintest scent of authority, he would fight the urge to run (A, 257).

One more time, this passage displays Obinze’s painful life abroad. To illustrate what she means, the author paints Obinze’s life in London where he lived like a fugitive. Ready to run whenever he saw a police officer or anybody in a uniform. In fleeing anytime, this jeopardizes somebody’s life. The jeopardy is due to fact that in running across a street the person can be run over by a passing car. In addition to painting Obinze’s life, Chimamanda continues with her dissuasion of Africans when it comes to leaving their home countries to go abroad in search of a better life.

After the investigation of Obinze’s life in London, it is worthy stating that in addition to Ifemelu who has been found out to be major character of the novel, Obinze is one of the major characters as well. Obinze’s characterization as one of the major characters of the novel is due to the fact first his life matches with the plot of the novel, Second it is because Obinze’s name appears several times in the novel. As it is mentioned in the main introduction of this article, in the following part, the scrutiny will be based on the hunt for minor characters.

III. MINOR CHARACTERS

Before getting further on the purpose of this section, for the sake of clarity, it is worthy defining the term Minor Character. Accordingly what is a minor character?

According to [unm.edu/hookster/elements/20 of %20Fiction.Pof](http://unm.edu/hookster/elements/20%20of%20Fiction.Pof) :

Minor characters are the ones whose function is partly to illuminate the major characters. Minor characters are often static or unchanging. They remain in the same place from the beginning of a work to the end.

In the light of this definition, who are minor characters in Chimamanda’s *Americanah*?

As it has been defined in the extract above, minor characters are Secondary or Supporting characters that serve to complement the major characters and help move the plot events forward. Minor characters do not change, they do not accompany major in the whole novel. After the qualities of a minor character have been specified, in the following part, the investigation will be based in pinpointing minor characters in Chimamanda’s *Americanah*.

2.1-Aunty Uju’s life in Chimamanda’s *Americanah*

Aunty UJU is one of the characters of Chimamanda’s *Americanah*. Her name does not appear in the summary of the novel and her role in the novel does not directly depict the plot of *Americanah*. Thus, what is Aunty Uju’s characterization in the novel under scrutiny?

Aunty Uju, after living in her home country Nigeria where she gave birth to a boy called Dike, she goes to the United States of America. While living in America with her son Dike, Aunty Uju asked Ifemelu to join her overthere in the following terms:

‘Honestly, you should come and study here. I am sure you can easily get a scholarship. And you can help me take care of Dike. I’m telling you, the small money I make is all going to his babysitter. And by God’s grace, by the time you come. I will have passed all my exams and started my residency (A, 99).’

As Aunty Uju lives in America, she invites Ifemelu to join her overthere. This act by Aunty Uju, although not directly related to the plot of the novel under scrutiny, Aunty plays a secondary role in the completion of the work. As a matter of fact, it is because of Aunty Uju that Ifemelu goes to the United States. As a result, Aunty’s act has an impact in the novel because the summary of the work talks about Ifemelu who leaves Nigeria to live in the United States. Aunty Uju’s contribution, when it comes to the plot of the work, does not limit at her mere will to invite Ifemelu to America.

Aunty Uju keeps her word, eventually, Ifemelu joins her in the United States following Aunty's invitation. As soon as Ifemelu arrives in the United States, she expresses her surprise as far as American realities are concerned as follows: 'Dike, come and lie down. Let your aunty sleep.' Ifemelu could not sleep, her mind too alert to the newness of things, and she waited to hear Aunty Uju's snoring before she slipped out of the room and turned on the kitchen light. A fat cockroach was perched on the wall near the cabinets, moving slightly up and down as though breathing heavily. If she had been in their Lagos Kitchen, she would have found a broom and killed it, but she left the American cockroach alone and went and stood by the living room window... (A, 106)

This passage features how Aunty helps the major character in playing his role. In fact, it is Aunty who enables to go to the United States of America. To prove that it is Aunty who has helped Ifemelu in going to America. The author depicts Ifemelu's surprise when it comes to American life. She did not expect to see cockroach on the wall. In Ifemelu's mind, while going to America, she could never imagine to see disgusting insects like cockroaches in an American kitchen. Thus, the fact of seeing a cockroach was something she never expect to witness. Albeit, through this passage the author talks about Ifemelu's surprise in the United States, in this passage Chimamanda also opens minds . The author wants Africans to know that although the Western countries are said to be rich, there are things that disappointment foreigners. As a minor character does not play roles directly linked to the plot of the book, Aunty Uju helps Ifemelu in acting as the major character. She contacts someone so that Ifemelu could get a job as follows :

I talked to one of my friends. I don't know if you remember Ngozi Okonkwo ? She's now an American citizen and she has gone back to Nigeria for a while, to start a busines. I begged her and she agreed to let you work with her Social Security card.'

'How I'll use her name ? Ifemelu asked.

'Of course you'll use her name.' Aunty Uju said, eyebrows raised...(A, 106)

Like the precedent, this extract features how Aunty's participation is secondary to the plot of the novel. Accordingly, albeit the novel talks about the hardship in the United States of America, Aunty is not the one who faces difficulties but she only helps the major character in overcoming hard times. In addition to providing Ifemelu with tips about how to earn money, Aunty Uju informs Ifemelu about American habits and customs in the following words :

Aunty Uju turned to Ifemelu. 'This is how children like to misbehave in this country. Jane was even telling me that her daughter threatens to call the police when she beats her imagine. I don't blame the girl, she has come to America and learned about calling the police (A,109).

As Ifemelu has just arrived in the United States of America, Aunty Uju cannot help telling her some of habits and customs of the country. Accordingly, she informs Ifemelu that contrary to Nigeria in particular and Africa in general where one can spank their children freely, in the United States, children can call the police on their parents. In doing so, as a Ifemelu is a new comer and foreigner, Aunty warns her about what to do and what not to do when it comes to children's upbringing. In reacting like that, Aunty Uju helps Ifemelu in two ways : first she informs Ifemelu so that she cannot fall in problems. Second, in informing Ifemelu, Aunty Uju teaches her American habits and customs of the new countries.

In conclusion, after investigating Aunty Uju's life in Chimamanda's Americanah, it has been discovered that Aunty Uju is a minor character. Aunty Uju's characterization has been labelled as minor because she does not play the main role in the novel but she helps Ifemelu in palying her role as one if the major character of the novel. As a matter of fact, it is Aunty Uju who invites Ifemelu to the United States. As stated in the novel, the following hunt will based on Vincent's life in the novel under scrutiny.

2.2 -Vincent's life in Chimamanda's Americanah

Vincent is one of the characters in the novel under scrutiny by Chimamanada Ngozi Adichie. Thus, as Vincent's name appears in the novel, can it be argued that he is a minor character because of this fact ?

As a matter of fact, although Vincent does not appear in the summary of the novel under scrutiny, he is helpful to Obinze in fulfilling his actions as follows :

This is business innit, but I'm helping you. You can use my IN number and pay me forty per cent of what you make.' Vincent said. ' It's business innit. If I don't get what we agree on. ' I will report on you.' 'My brother.' Obinze said. 'That's a little too much. You know my situation. I don't have anything. Please try and come down.'

'Thirty -five per cent is the best I can do.....' That evening as dusk fell, she sky muting to a pale violet. Obinze became vincent (A, 250).

Through this passage even though Vincent helps Obinze by means of money, what he does enables Obinze to get a job. The IN number is a useful document for anybody living abroad. As a result, since Vincent provides Obinze with the IN number, he enables Obinze to afford his daily food and most of things he might need. Consequently, even if

Vincent's name does not appear repeatedly in the novel, given the impact of the IN number in Obinze's life in London, Vincent is a minor character.

As Vincent and Obinze cannot strike an agreement as far as the issue of IN number is concerned, Obinze's cousin Iloba who is an intermediary and Vincent have the following conversation:

'Vincent, my brother here is trying to save money and do his papers. Thirty – five is too much, o rika, biko. Please just try and help us.'

'You know that some people take half. Yes, he is in a situation but all of us are in a situation. I am helping him but this is business.' Vincent's Igbo had a rural accent. He put the National Insurance card on the table and was already writing his bank account number on a piece of paper/ Iloba's mobile phone began to ring. That evening, as dusk fell, the sky muting to a pile violet. Obinze became Vincent(A, 250)'

Through the passage above, one can notice how Obinze struggles in search of improving his life. Thus, as Obinze knows that IN number is very useful when it comes to be employed in the western world, he goes to negotiate with Vincent who has the document. Luckily for Obinze, he has struck a deal with Vincent through which Obinze has temporarily acquired IN number.

After it has been found out that Auntie Uju and Vincent are minor characters in *Americanah* because each of them has supported one of the major characters. Consequently, in the following part, the investigation will focus on other characters.

III-Other characters

The term, other characters, includes characters who are neither major nor minor. They are mentioned a few times in a literary opus and their actions do not have substantial impact in the unfolding of in a literary work. That is their actions are not directly related to the plot depicted in the novel. Accordingly, who are other characters in this Chimamanda's *Americanah*?

3.1-Aisha

Aisha is one of the characters of Chimamanda's *Americanah*. Like most of characters of the novel under scrutiny, Aisha is from Africa. After leaving her native country, Senegal, Aisha goes to the United States of America where she is a hair dresser. Thus, to what characterization does Aisha belong? Is she neither major nor minor character?

In the United States of America, when Ifemelu wanted to have her hair dressed, she went to beauty salon where she met African girls namely Aisha and Halima. While in that beauty salon, Ifemelu and Aisha held the following conversation:

Finally, Aisha finished with her customer and asked what colour Ifemelu wanted for her hair attachments.

'Colour four.'

'Not good colour. 'Aisha said promptly.

'That's what I use.'

'It look dirty. You don't want colour one?'

'Colour one is too black, it look fake,' Ifemelu said, loosening her headwrap. 'Sometimes I use colour two, but colour is closest to my natural colour.'

'Aisha shrugged, a haughty shrug, as though it was not her problem if her customer did not have good taste. She reached into a cupboard, brought out two packets of attachments, checked to make sure they were both the same colour.

She touched Ifemelu's hair. 'Why you don't have a relaxer?'

'I like my hair the way God made it.'

'But how you comb it? Hard to comb,' said Aisha said.

Ifemelu had brought her own comb. She gently combed her hair, dense, soft and tightly coiled, until it framed her head like halo(A,12)

This conversation between Ifemelu and Aisha depicts the kind of oddjobs African women do when they go to Western World. Through this conversation above, Chimamanda paints the reality related to the kind of life the African youth leads in the Western countries. In doing this, the author wants any African who is interested in travelling to be aware of the type of life expects him or her overthere. Apart from the awareness of the Western World, the author exhorts the African youth to like the way they look. They should be proud of their appearances as blacks. To be black should not be something shameful. As a result, they should not use cosmetics or whatever to dye their hair or bleach their skins.

Through this passage above, by reading the conversation between Aisha and Ifemelu between the lines, it is worthy arguing that Aisha is characterized as part of other characters in Chimamanda's *Americanah*. This is first because her name does not appear several times in the novel. Second because Aisha's action is not directly related to the plot of

the novel. Third Aisha does not help the major character in the unfolding of the main plot of the novel. After Aisha who has been labelled as other character, are there other characters who are part of this characterization as well?

3.2-Obinze 's mother

Obinze's mother is one of the characters of Chimamanda's *Americanah*. Although she is Obinze's mother, her name is neither in the summary of the novel nor it does appear several times in the novel under scrutiny. As a result, is Obinze's mother part of other characters ?

When Obinze's mother knew that Obinze was dating a girl called Ifemelu, Obinze's mother invited Ifemelu at their home. While Ifemelu was at their place, Obinze's mother talked the two lovers in the following way ;'If anything happens between you and Obinze, you are both responsible. But Nature is unfair to women. An act is done by two people but if there are any consequences, one person carries it alone. Do you understand me ? (A, 72)'

Through the conversation between Obinze's mother and the two lovers, Obinze and Ifemelu, Obinze's mother plays the mother's role. Although, she is not Ifemelu's mother, she advises Ifemelu about the bad side of being pregnant. In doing so, she says prevention is better than cure. As a matter, she informs Ifemelu about what may happen to a girl while dating. She warns Ifemelu to pay attention while dating Obinze. Obinze's mother reacts in this way because, when two young people date, in case of pregnancy, the one who suffers is the girl. The girl suffers because she carries the pregnancy. Sometimes the boy denies the pregnancy and the girl has to raise the baby alone. As Obinze's mother's function is not either related to the main plot or partially illuminates the major character, Obinze's mother is part of the other characters.

After the scrutiny of Obinze's mother's life in *Americanah*, Obinze's mother has been pinpointed as part of other characters of Chimamanda's *Americanah* because first her name does not appear many times in the novel. Second because her role does not directly impact theme of the novel.

In conclusion after the investigation related to other characters in Chimamanda's *Americanah*, it is worthy mentioning that as far as this work is concerned there are two other characters namely Aisha and Obinze's mother. Their choice has been possible because they do not either appear several times in the novel under scrutiny or impact the plot of the novel. However, it is germane to posit that the choice of Aisha and Obinze's mother as the only other characters is due to the article size constraint. This work could have more characters belonging to this characterization as Chimamanda's *Americanah* is teeming with characters who belong to this characterization.

IV-CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is germane to posit that the purpose of this article has been to tackle the characterization of characters in Chimamanda's *Americanah*. The research has been carried out through the lenses of deconstruction approach and the work has structured around three sections namely major characters, minor characters and other characters. At the end of the research, it has been discovered that in *Americanah*, concerning major characters : there are two major characters namely Ifemelu and Obinze. These two characters have been labelled as major because their actions are directly linked to the plot of the novel as described in the summary of *Americanah* and their names appear several times throughout the novel. When it comes to minor characters : there are two minor characters as well namely : Aunt Uju and Vincent. These two characters have been characterized as minor because their actions are not directly related to the plot of the novel. They only help the major characters into playing their main roles in the novel. Other characters, in this type of characters, there are two characters namely : Aisha and Obinze's mother. These characters have been characterized as other characters because they are neither major characters nor minor ones. Their names only appear a few times in the novel. However, it should be stated the list of other characters is not exhaustive. Other characters have been limited into two characters because the length of the article constraint. If not this length constraint, the list of other characters would have been longer since the novel has several characters who might belong to this last group of characters.

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