

THE INNER TURMOIL OF MIGRATION: THE COLONIAL LEGACY, LINGUISTIC FRAGMENTATION & PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this essay is to amplify the reader's understanding of how migration can profoundly affect the psyche through Brian Chikwava's novel, *Harare North*. Using a psychological lens to break down migration theory, the objective of this essay is to investigate disillusionment, linguistic breakdowns, assimilation, precarity, and alterity that are the result of migration. Using Ernest Cole's migration theory, Burke and Stets's identity theory, and postcolonial frameworks advanced by Tyson and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o to enhance the textual evidence from *Harare North*, which follows a man grappling with the realities of migration. This essay provides ethical information necessary for considering immigration and serves as an intervention to pathways that leave them vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation. In conclusion, there is more to migration than the socioeconomic processes in which migrants face, which is the psychological experience which is faced by institutionalized colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

The psychological effects of immigration is an evolving topic in field science and literature. What it means to be a migrant and the identity behind it, are both critical factors in understanding the development of the human psyche during the process of immigration. Striving to locate the internal and external stressors of the migrant upon arrival in the migratory country and how disillusionment can have severe negative effects on the psyche, this essay will explore the stages of migration as depicted in Brian Chikwava's novel, *Harare North*. Beginning with arrival and diving directly into disillusionment, westernization, and potential assimilation is critical for migration theory. Moreover, this essay aims to set-up proper identity theory comprehension in order to understand the background of the novel. This aids in exploring the migrant's psyche upon arrival and the navigation of a new, unknown world. By doing this, it allows readers to navigate the novel *Harare North* as a warning sign for migrants, to dissuade them from migration *if* they are unaware of what can happen when put in a situation of precarity.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Within illegal immigration stems many issues for migrants who believe they will be able to provide not only for themselves, but also for their family who either travelled with them, or are back home in Africa. The biggest of these, specifically in *Harare North*, is that these migrants are often exploited for the gain of *other* migrants, thus putting them in a state of unknown and ultimately subjugating them to instability, intense fatigue, and chronic stress levels leaving them in a cycle of despair. This is what leads to the deterioration of the migrant's psyche. In previous articles, research allegedly shows that migration is incredibly beneficial to the economy of the migrating country, "First, a country's foreign student share has a positive association with the country's economic growth rate" (Mhemet Huseyin Bilgin et al. 11), and that migrants heavily contribute to innovation and creativity specifically in relation to new businesses and startups:

There is also an indication that the foreign student share may work through new business startups. The foreign student share has a stronger association with the economic growth if business regulations do not substantially raise the costs of starting and financing a new business. This finding is consistent with the recent evidence supporting a close link between immigration and innovation (Mhemet Huseyin Bilgin et al. 11). While these studies are true, there is not much research done on the positive effects that immigration has on a migrant's psyche, and even less research on an illegal immigrant's psyche when positioned in a place of precarity and uncertainty. Migration can affect not only a person's mental state, but physical changes in the body such a cortisol (hormones), and syntactic link alteration (depending on the complexity of the link itself): "Stress and anxiety have intertwined behavioral and neural underpinnings" (Daviu Nuria et al. 1). Knowledge of how migration can affect said

immigrants is imperative to those who are willing to risk their life in order to attempt to create a better one.

Migration theory, as expounded by Ernest Cole in his work *Migration and Return in Modern African Literature* explores migration on three separate levels to interpret literature through: departure, arrival, and return. To understand the migrant, it is critical to examine the way Africans and Europeans interact culturally. Cole writes, It must be noted that the journey of African migrants to the West did not start yesterday. A historical trajectory of African migration reveals that African mobilities started as a response to the disillusionment of post-independent African societies in the mid-1960s...these newly independent societies were filled with high hopes of success...However, within a very short time, it was clear that the honeymoon was over and the much bandied-about promises of success were marred by a reversal of expectations anchored in disillusionment and discontentment (Cole, 14).

Cole's line of reasoning here coincides with the engagement of African culture with eurocentric ideologies formulated pre-independence Africa that conform to the West's standards of success, contorted by the new post-independant leaders in many African countries, and resulting in civil wars and death. Thus the fad of migration appears within Africa, regarding both intra-immigration and extro-immigration. Within this essay, departure and arrival will be the main focus of exploration. To follow the themes of *Harare North*, it is important to dissect what each one of these systems means through a migration lens. The first system, departure, takes a look at *why* the migrant is departing from their homeland. This could be for a number of things: war, poverty, unjust government systems, hunger, lack of employment/job opportunities, lack of resources, etc.. Arrival surveys the migrants emotional and physical state when landing in the country in which they are migrating to. Many times, the arrival of the migrant is predicated by ambivalence.

It may create some uncomfortable or negative emotions/feelings such as disillusionment (realities in the West turn out to be different than the expectations of the migrant; assumptions are either exaggerated, misplaced, or misconstrued), abandonment, fear, anxiety and panic. This is accompanied by a whirlwind of thoughts, wondering where the migrants will stay, what kind of job they will be able to land, and how they will survive in this "new" world. Arrival also can be faced with incredible optimism and potential naivety, unaware of the dangers of being in a foreign place and the exploitation that may be faced upon arrival. Return, however, can be categorized as quite jarring to the migrant. As previously mentioned, Cole in his work *Migration and Return in Modern African Literature* argues that the return for the African migrant is not as simple as one may believe it to be: "He takes on the responsibility of providing for his people and sees migration as a burden that well-meaning people undertake on behalf of their families. He feels entrusted with a mission that he has to accomplish at all costs" (Cole 85). There is a certain level of responsibility that each and every individual faces when migrating to a

new country, especially when the African culture revolves around doing whatever one can in order to provide for their family. However, because of the lies being spread by other immigrants (as seen in Alain Mabanckou's *Blue White Red*), and the media's positive narrative about the West's ability to create a better life for all (considered to be "the Dream"), there is a clear disillusionment, and an ultimate fear of return due to the potential of letting down family and community members. The country of origin has experienced a process of evolution; the system, structures and discourses have been altered since the beginning of the migrants departure. Since cultural and systematic changes have occurred, the migrant needs to re-integrate, which will be complex and frustrating with no guarantee of success. These changes stand to reason that the migrant can return to their country of origin and yet still be an outsider. The migrant himself has also changed, having gone through social transformation since he left his country of origin, calling for re-adjustment of the self as well as for society. Moreover, there is the idea of perpetual liminality, where once an individual steps away from their original home environment for a certain period of time, it is impossible to find a place where they will truly belong in the same way that they once did in their homeland. Due to perpetual liminality, movement and migration as a whole may be confusing when attempting to place their identity in an ever-changing world.

Identity in migration theory and *Harare North* is imperative to understand the migrant's psyche by addressing the motivation for departure from their native land (Africa, in this context). Domination, under postcolonial theory, is what the colonizers strived for when they began their "outreach" in Africa. This turned into cultural imperialism and eurocentric ideologies that were then implemented into the education system in Africa: "to be considered a great work, a literary text had to have "universal" characteristics and themes. However, whether or not a text's characters and themes were considered "universal" depended on whether or not they resembled those from European literature. Thus, the assumption was that European ideas, ideals, and experience were universal, that is, the standard for all humankind" (Tyson 420). Westernized schooling in Africa implemented English language classes, and this was just one way of separating Africans from their identity on a national level: "That so many people formerly colonized by Britain speak English, write in English, use English in their schools and universities, and conduct government business in English...is an indication of the residual effect of colonial domination on their cultures" (Tyson 419). Moreover, colonialist ideology has led to the perpetual perception of Africans—intrinsically and extrinsically—as being inferior and savage-like: "The colonizers believed that only their own Anglo-European culture was civilized, sophisticated, or...metropolitan. Therefore, native people were defined as savage, back-ward, and undeveloped" (Tyson 419). This narrative—that Africans were subhuman—was taught through the education system by stripping away African culture and identity, while implementing a eurocentric ideology.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in his book titled "Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature", recounts how in school he was forced to speak only English, and was actually shamed publicly when he, in his later years, began only writing in his mother tongue, *Gikũyũ*: "The very fact that what common sense dictates in the literary practice of other cultures is being questioned in an African writer is a measure of how far imperialism has distorted the view of African realities" (Thiong'o 103). Stripping cultural identity and infusing it with westernized ideologies and social structures to further the narrative of alterity amongst Africans compels ideas of migration, as mimicry in many minds is the only solution to attempt and dissolve the sense of inferiority due to colonization.

Brian Chikwava, author of *Harare North*, created his novel with language in mind; the entirety of the novel is written in broken English. This can be analyzed in a multitude of ways; the first of which is to consider that the broken English serves as a way to push back against the dark realities African citizens have faced through colonization—it is the reclamation of their identity through language use. Chikwava may be using the colonizer's language as a way to persist the horrors that they have burdened African natives with by stripping away their language and coercing them to believe that they are inferior, then shaming them when they decide to migrate. Migration—or not to migrate—for Africans, then, is a double-edged sword.

Moreover, Chikwava could be utilizing broken English to employ the colonizer's own language against them. In this way, Chikwava would be establishing dominance over eurocentric ideologies, meaning native Africans are soliciting the colonizer's language to forward their own ideals and push back against the westernization of Africa. To offer an alternative argument for Chikwava using broken English, though, is that it is being used to serve a purpose to the readers; to continue the narrative of alterity and precarity by extending the disillusionment and confusion of a new world towards the readers, directly alongside the narrator throughout the whole story: "When the past always tower over you like a mother of children of darkness, all you can do is hide under she skirt. There you see them years hanging in great big folds of skin and when you pop your head out of under the skirt you don't tell no one what you have seen because that is where you come from " (Chikwava 75). This quote illustrates the broken English eloquently, and expresses to the readers that the naivety of the narrator has hindered his migration. He is fearful. The language reflects that of almost a child's, which furthers the notion of precarity by illuminating how daunting a new world can be. When one is a child, they are inexperienced in the world and unsure of their surroundings, especially when they do not have the luxury of being guided by a parent, or someone who is "well-versed" in the world. This is not to say the narrator has the mentality of a child by any means, but Chikwava is using the linguistic technique to further the idea of confusion for a migrant who has entered into a new, unknown space. As a further matter, Chikwava may be utilizing broken English for the narrator as a shield; a way to hide from

citizens of London, where he can be overlooked and isolated in accordance with the stereotypes of otherness engendered by colonialism. This theory of “double play” is beneficial to the narrator, as he can use the broken English to diminish his fear of being caught while simultaneously allowing him to be empowered to act with little chance of being understood, by the citizens of London—or the “majority” so to speak—which in turn allows him to play the fool strategically. Chikwava’s linguistic technique offers multiple perspectives: disorientation and confusion, or empowerment and strategy.

To frame the narrative, it is important to begin with the arrival of the main, unnamed character in *Harare North* that finds himself in London, England. When he arrives, he catches the bus to stay with his cousin Paul and his wife, Sekai. Both Paul and Sekai are migrants from Zimbabwe as well, though there is something that has changed within them, and more specifically, Sekai, since their arrival to London. They do not seem to welcome the narrator with open arms: “If he come out and tell me straight and square that me living inside they house is making things funny, me I will not hold grudge” (Chikwava 7). The narrator uses the term “funny” often throughout the novel to illustrate something being unusual, or “off”. Chikwava could be using this term to symbolize the naivety of the narrator, as he does not immediately have a negative perspective on Sekai, nor the place that he is staying. His inability to capture proper language is a persisting reminder of his situation. This inability to verbalize his thoughts and feelings properly deepens the sense of alterity in a new world, his “otherness” reflects off of his language, thus setting him apart from the natives of London. In the moment where the narrator is trying to determine the lay of the land while living with Paul and Sekai, this is one example of how “the migrant” struggles; he lacks a solid ground to stand on in this new country—he has no real home, thus making his emotional and physical platform unstable from the beginning.

Since you cannot build a house on sand, this is a less-than-ideal set-up for the main character. As the narrator’s language begins to deconstruct and speed up towards the end of the novel, this then solidifies his breakdown internally, but also reveals his external instability. In an article titled, “How Anxiety State Influences Speech Parameters: A Network Analysis Study from a Real Stressed Scenario”, Qingyi Wang et al. states: “Individuals with anxiety disorders exhibit heightened activation of the sympathetic nervous system under stress, which directly influences speech production through various pathways” (Qingyi Wang et al. 2). Anxiety, along with displacement, disorientation, and general stressors, indicate that this linguistic breakdown is subsequent to a psychological or nervous breakdown. Heightened anxiety, corresponding with heightened cortisol levels, suggests that these signs of static, perpetual anxiousness can be attributed to both the nervous and linguistic breakdown.

To return to Sekai, she has become a “lapsed African” according to the main character (Chikwava 5). Meaning she has exchanged her original ways of African hospitality and mannerisms for a more westernized notion

of selfishness and hostility: “I go out and sit at the doorstep...But Sekai follow me and ask me to look down on our street and tell she if I see anyone sitting on they doorstep? Me I don’t get the score what this is all about until she tell me that this is not township; I should stop embarrass them and start behaving like I am in England” (Chikwava 13-14). The difference between township and England is unknown to foreign readers, though it’s simple to theorize what Sekai is saying here. She is putting England on a pedestal and discouraging the narrator to act the way that he did back in Zimbabwe, which is a clear indication of what Robert Tyminski coins as “assimilation”: “Assimilation, a kind of psychosocial colonization, comes from high social participation with native culture groups and relative disregard for the immigrants’ cultural heritage” (Robert Tyminski 10). Sekai has left her heritage of Africa and traded it for a westernized, or more specifically British, ideology. This is one example of how the psyche can change throughout the course of migration. This change of identity is tied back to psychological stress; immigrants are forced to choose between keeping their inherited identity—their countries and cultural background— and creating a whole new persona, one that fits in with the societal standards of the new country one finds themselves in; they have to make the choice to assimilate or not. There is fear behind choosing not to assimilate, as the migrant is unsure on how they will be viewed if they choose against it, therefore, we see Sekai has opted to play it “safe”, and leave behind her culture. Her transformation can be seen as an act of survival, but also internalized colonialism. There is a high likelihood of Sekai being taught to act against her culture and embrace eurocentrism, which leads to her assimilation. Sekai’s culture is adjacent to the idea of a social structure, which is critical for understanding one’s identity: “Culture and social structure are mutually constitutive. Flowing through social structure is culture that provides meaning and guidance for behavior...identities are internalized sets of meanings” (Burke & Stets 3). There is a sense of external pressure on migrants to re-define themselves in order to succeed in their migration, which is what happened to Sekai.

To assimilate for Sekai, though, means destruction for the narrator. Choosing not to help him throughout his process of migration, the narrator finds himself struggling to live under her roof, so he decides to leave (Chikwava 41). This creates a dilemma for the narrator, who now finds himself in a state of precarity and disillusionment, that also heightens his lack of identity, as he now is losing his only sense of family that he had when migrating. Burke and Stet write, “Some [social] structures are recognized, but harder to point to, such as “the working class” or “undocumented immigrants” who do not have a legal status, specific location, or residence” (Burke & Street 5). Due to this lack of structure for our narrator, he finds himself staying in a decrepit, vacant building with other migrants. This is problematic for a variety of reasons, but the biggest of which is that these migrants, including our narrator, have no permanent residency, legal documentation, or proper jobs. The reason these things are

an issue is because of the subjugation to precarity that these migrants will now face.

In *Harare North*, the narrator gives us a painful insight into how other migrants will exploit the weaker of them: “Me I got \$2.45 an hour. Eight hours per day. Five days per week. That make \$98 per week. But after they do emergency tax code it comes to about \$68” (Chikwava 49). The exploitation of the migrant, by the migrant, is a concept that is not talked of often, though it should be. Our narrator is being exploited by people who are still in the same position as him, at the same level as him in the grand scheme of life and migration, and yet, they are using him to try and earn more money. What is exceptional about this, though, is that they are still living under the same roof as the narrator, which means even by exploiting others, they cannot achieve what they are trying to achieve, and this points towards something much deeper and darker brewing through migration. The situation suggests that when put in situations of precarity in a Westernized civilization, African migrants will feel as though they are pitted against each other. The disillusionment that follows the arrival of the migrant may alter their perception of what it is to be a migrant. It is possible that the migrant will believe that he has to be the *best* of them all, coming to terms that not all of them will succeed in achieving “the dream”, and therefore pushing this migrant to instead exploit his own countrymen to try and get ahead of the others. This can make the migrant’s headspace become negative, as this is not only constant competition, but also forces the migrant to undergo extreme poverty with no way out, and is yet *another* example of an external stressor that the narrator is perpetually experiencing.

To pivot from the precarity and disillusionment that a migrant faces upon arrival, it is important to also understand the alterity and general stress that can be felt during the migration process. There are two types of stress: Internal stress —such as incompatibility of values, goals, attitudes, needs, or desires— originates from within the individual, the marital dyad, or parent–children or sibling relationships. Externally triggered stressors are those originating from the workplace, social and environmental circumstances, such as financial national crisis, a social environment characterized by discrimination, a poor neighborhood, or issues in the extended family (Berger 15).

The main character faces the majority of these things in *Harare North*. He juggles the internal stress of wanting to succeed in London, though is presented with several obstacles that result in external stress; work (or “graft” as he calls it) is a huge stressor for our main character: “I spend tons of days interneting for graft when Sekai is not around but me I can’t find no graft. There is nothing on Internet for someone who want to swing the hammer or pickaxe or push the broom” (Chikwava 24). The use of the word “graft” in this novel is interesting to note, as the author easily could have just used the term “work”. To graft something means to permanently fit something into something else, usually used in a negative connotation. It also can mean corruption, or to gain something in a bribing

manner. The work that these migrants have to do is not legal, it doesn't feel right, and it's exploitative—so graft, truly, is the better term for the work that the narrator has to do. Moreover, those who he is surrounded by in his community also struggle to find work. They are all, including the narrator, poverty stricken: Shingi appear just when me I am thinking that I should go back to Paul and Sekai. I am with Tsitsi in the kitchen. He is very hard to recognize after such long. His boots is covered with mud. Looking through his thick-rim owl glasses he blink in a funny way when he see me. Whatever Harare North have do to him, I have no way to tell (Chikwava 35).

This is a constant cycle of despair perpetuated by the mindset—and potential truth—that there is limited escape from this lifestyle for these migrants. Their labor is treacherous and ignored, yet they still cannot find means to survive properly. There is a list of rules that lies in Shingi's house, most of which say that if you do not buy the food in the house, then you cannot eat it (Chikwava 30). This is a common way of claiming territory when put in situations of precarity, as you can hardly afford to feed yourself, let alone others as well. This is also a way to induce motivation amongst the people who live with Shingi to try and work despite not only struggling to find jobs, but to also keep any sort of money for themselves, due to the “emergency tax code” previously mentioned. All of these struggles induce heavy levels of cortisol release in the body—also known as *stress*.

The stress levels that the migrant faces because of the precarity they are exposed to during migration is called *acculturative stress*. Maria Hernandez coined this as, “the psychological distress arising from unfamiliarity with cultural and social norms,” (Tyminski 9). Along with unfamiliarity, it is hard for migrants to express themselves properly due to potential language and social barriers as well: “In a study of immigrants stopped at the US border...they mentioned considerable social barriers for immigrants and refugees to obtain mental health intervention, circumstances including isolation, unemployment, limited English proficiency, stigma and racism....spoke about economic hardship, fears for their safety, trauma...feeling low status...problems with acculturation” (Tyminski 11). This, though in response to U.S. immigration, is unanimous across migrant experiences all over the world.

Stress can lead to dissociation: “Memory becomes compromised...as a result there are holes in the fabric of experience, and in between them there are no meaningful connections...It is as if fragmentation imposes various psychic realities on them, and this distortion controls what they communicate” (Berger 40). In *Harare North*, our narrator struggles deeply with insomnia, which does not help with dissociation. Both dissociation and lack of sleep can stem from intense stress: “I sleep. I wake up. Me I sleep. I see Shingi in one dream. I wake up. I sleep. This Shingi thing now sit tight inside of me. I also have to catch up on graft soon” (Chikwava 210). To be so overwhelmed by worry, fear, and lack of sleep, is enough to make anyone slowly fall into psychosis and paranoia, or disassociate to

the point of almost watching your days go by as if you are not in your own body.

An out-of-body experience can be found at the very end of *Harare North*. The main character lists his days in summary form. This summary analysis could suggest disassociation: “Tuesday night. I am almost nodding off when the rat appear at kitchen doorway...On morning Wednesday, I am in a good mood...Thursday morning. I wake up and there is not one rat *kaka* anywhere. I am over the moon...Friday morning. I wake up. I expect the smell of the rotting rat, but there is no smell in the air...Saturday morning. Still no rat droppings nowhere...Sunday morning. I am scared stiff...Sunday evening. I reason up some way of finding out what happen to the rat” (Chikwava 216-217). His entire day revolves around hunting and killing a rat while slowly losing his mind. The correlation of the rat to the narrator's mood should not be overlooked—when he is in a bad mood he sees the rat, and when he is in a good mood he does not, but begins to become suspicious the longer he goes *without* seeing the rat. The rat also suggests obsession, which can parallel symptoms of psychosis and is adjacent to that of paranoia. The paranoia is furthered when he suggests to himself that he should rip up the floorboards of the house because he has not seen the rat, nor had he smelled a dead rat, therefore he believes it is hiding in the floorboards (217). These summary analyses also give way to paranoia seeping into the narrator's mind. The narrator says, “I sleep with the screwdriver under my pillow” (Chikwava 208). Sleeping with a screwdriver under your pillow can be an example of losing touch with reality, or being so fearful that he begins to take unnecessary precaution: “Even if I feel like I have fever inside my head I sit on the stair on the ground floor waiting patient holding my screwdriver and claw hammer” (215). Here, the narrator has not only taken his screwdriver he had been sleeping with, but also a claw hammer, as he sits in waiting to catch a mouse that most likely does not even *exist*, though if it does, it has been personified, and made out to be a villain in the eyes of the narrator: “I have one rat to kill or else I die in this foreign place. I have to get the source of the problem before I get overwhelmed. I sense it coming. The rat want to keep me in London now” (216).

The concept of the rat in *Harare North* is Chikwava's way of symbolizing the narrator's fragmentation. Moreover, the rat itself may be a metaphor for everybody that he has met while in London; those who have scammed him, taken his money, and ultimately left him to have a nervous breakdown. This is substantiated by his drive to kill the rat, because if he kills the rat, he feels as though he can leave London, because only the *rat* is keeping him in London (216). This is a clear parallel and call-back to when the narrator mentions that he is being exploited in his rent payments (Chikwava 49), leaving him with no money to save in order to further his life post-migration. He is not of his right mind; he has found himself in an inescapable, problematic situation. He believes some days the rat has left, and other days he is convinced that the rat is, instead, hiding from him. The narrator's comment regarding the rat wanting to “keep him in

London” may symbolize the people who have exploited him and destroyed his chances at a better life, and that they are essentially taunting him. Ripping up the floorboards advances this idea also; the floorboards represent the protagonist's mind. The rat runs around beneath the floorboards, and he believes that ripping them up is the only way to find this rat. The floorboards in this scene can be seen as a metaphor for the narrator's psyche. By tearing up the floorboards, he is de-constructing his mind, essentially fragmenting it. This insight into the protagonist's mind is imperative to focus on when understanding psychosis; he has begun to spiral, due to precarity that he has faced since his time in London and a full lack of social structure such as homelessness, proper work, and perpetual uncertainty of what is to come. In *Identity Theory*, the authors write, “Mind, itself, arises and develops out of social interaction processes. Mind is the mechanism that controls the meanings that govern our responses to the environment...The ability to pick out meanings and to indicate them both to the self and to others gives control to humans. This control is made possible by language” (Burke & Stet 9). To break down this psychosis, we must return back to the idea of language forming a barrier between the people in London and our narrator, or arguably, between the reader and the narrator (as a metaphor for the disconnect between the two). If our narrator is in a foreign country, unable to find a steady job, struggling to properly communicate, and stripped of a proper support system while being continuously exploited by those he works with, this is good cause for psychosis onset by stressors and trauma.

To structure the psychosis and identity crisis Chikwava's narrator is facing, it is imperative to also examine the lack of a name for the narrator. To create a protagonist—who also narrates the novel—with no name, is a unique writing technique. By allowing the narrator to rename nameless, this progresses Chikwava's potential warning to migrants that this is not just happening to the narrator, or one man, but *many*. To lack a name means to speak for a community, or a group of people, thus Chikwava is speaking to the reader through the nameless narrator. Moreover, to have no name may also mean to lack importance. It doesn't matter who this narrator is, because it could be *anyone*. Not only will this happen to several more people, but nobody in London will bat an eye to this, therefore being nameless can also be symbolic of not being seen. This alienates the migrant, leaving them at a disadvantage with poor reflected appraisal. Reflected appraisal is, “rooted in the ‘looking-glass self’ in which people see themselves reflected in the reactions of others to them” (Burke & Stets 141). When somebody does not seek the proper validation from those within their surroundings, they will try and change things. However, this is near to impossible when there is already a prejudice against you as an individual, thus creating a cycle of being overlooked and uncared for when already in a situation of precarity.

CONCLUSION

Throughout *Harare North*, Brian Chikwava illustrates a clear picture of the perils that are obtained when becoming a migrant; the alienation, alterity, precarity, and disillusionment that one faces is enough to not only erode identity, but sanity itself. *Harare North* showcases the assimilation that occurs within some migrants, trading their culture for another. However, the novel also brings light to the other side of the coin: migration is treacherous. The education that colonization brought to Africa is that there is superiority amongst eurocentric ideologies. Though, when African natives are searching for the westernized “dream” that colonization praised, they are kicked to the curb. Though there are promises made to them, whether it is from another migrant or from the media itself, exploitation and disillusionment are ongoing dilemmas that Chikwava has brought to light: there is a mental toll for migrants, and once they migrate, they are trapped between worlds, unable to fully immerse themselves in either one of them.

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