

## The Homeland-in-the-immigrant: Familiar and Strange Lands in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's "A Stranger in a Foreign Land" and "When the Sea Swallows People"

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### Abstract

Migration is a phenomenon fraught with tension. While the emigrant longs for better living conditions, migration experience confronts them with challenges that reshape their consciousness and worldview, even as the sensitivity to homeland sticks to them like leeches. This paper examines how the homeland within the immigrant, along with the interplay of familiarity and strangeness of new lands shapes the migrant's negotiation of existence in select poems of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo. The poems, "A Stranger in a Foreign Land" and "When the Sea Swallows People," from *Broken Bodies, Damaged Souls & Other Poems* (2022), are selected for their thematic engagement with migration tensions. In addition to addressing the dynamics of familiarity and strangeness, the paper examines Adimora-Ezeigbo's aesthetic deployment of flashback and elegiac tone as modes of engagement. The study employs the theoretical principles of Psychoanalysis to investigate the immigrant's psychological responses. The paper contributes to the corpus of critical ecopoetic exposés in migration literature. It concludes by maintaining that the 'homeland-in-the-immigrant' is at the centre of the immigrant's split-personality as they grapple with the realities of familiar and strange (new) lands.

**Keywords:** Homeland, Psychoanalysis, Immigrant, Split-personality, Poetry

## Introduction

Within the framework of transnationalism, the traditional definition of 'home' as a fixed and irreproducible place is increasingly rendered obsolete (Klinkenborg, 2012). Some scholars argue that 'home' flows with the tide of time and space, guaranteeing that immigrants find home in their host lands (Atilade, 2021, p. 45). But the idea of home as "the range of one's instincts" (Williams, 1990, p. 907), according to Terry Tempest Williams, specifies 'the home' as culture-bound, since one's instincts are smeared by one's socio-cultural specificities. Beyond debates on 'home,' this paper interrogates the notion of 'the homeland-in-the-immigrant,' which, while related to 'home', specifically deals with the homeland, – defined as "a native country: the country where somebody was born or where somebody lives and feels that he or she belongs" (Microsoft Corporation, 2009). This invokes the idea of nativity and belongingness. The homeland-in-the-immigrant suggests that an immigrant's place-consciousness, which defines their personality and worldview, sticks to them like leeches, and thus, remaining central to their sensitivity to familiarity and difference. The homeland-in-the-immigrant, according to Dreese (2002),

affords the immigrant a differentiation of the homeland from others.

Williams' (1990, p. 908) assertion that "each of us harbors a homeland, a landscape we naturally comprehend" is an acknowledgement of 'the homeland-in-the-immigrant' hypothesis. The sensitivity is innate, being part and parcel of the self. Dreese's (2002) point also underscores that knowing or familiarising with the home landscape is effortless or natural. The particularities of the homeland become known and prized through the self's bond with it over time. Such a bond the 'self' shares with the homeland is a life-cord as seen in William's (1990, p. 904) assertion after a survey of the Serengeti Plains of Kenya: "The Mara belongs to the Maasai or the Maasi to the Mara. The umbilical cord between man and earth has not been severed." Williams' point is that the people and their indigenous land are inseparable, for they are bound by a life-cord. It seems to hint that while the people live in the land, the land lives in the people. The humanity of the people atrophies outside the land, while the essence of the land diminishes without the people. The current paper maintains that while immigration displaces a person or a people, the person or their "sense of place" (Dreese 2002, p. 115) – the

homeland-in-the-immigrant – is never displaced or dispossessed.

The reality of nostalgia in migration experiences indicates that migrants carry their culture-specific selves from the homeland into the host land. Ben-Rafael (2013, p.844) highlights this point when he opined that the idea of "transnational diaspora" designates migrants who retain "bonds with their original homelands" (*Current Sociology Review*, p. 844).

Diasporic narratives, therefore, is marked by the opposition of familiarity and difference. Hence, this paper interrogates immigrants' imaginings of their home and host lands (Leitner & Ehrkamp, 2006), including how the reality of familiarity and difference affects their "true identity" and "new identity" (Odueme, 2017, p. 10). Odueme's maxims of 'true and new identity' function as figurations of eco-consciousness. They mark the distinction between past and present, with the notion of 'true identity' aligning with the homeland-in-the-immigrant hypothesis. Usher (2017, p. 212) maintains that "a strong attachment to place" is an important factor in identity formation. The immigrant, therefore, faces the dilemma of identity – nourishing the homeland-in-the-immigrant and/ or forming a "new identity." Williams (1990, p.904) speaks

to the dilemma of the transnational migrant when she maintains that "the burden of a newcomer is to pay attention." Therefore, the formation of a "new identity" (Odueme, 2017, p. 10), encompassing a new sense of things, new meanings, idiosyncrasies, and relational consciousness (ecological and otherwise), becomes a burden for immigration. This burden is tasking because it requires no distraction of any kind as the transnational migrant must "pay attention" to the new land and people as both educate or form the "new identity." The dilemma of immigration, as maintained in this paper, arises when the homeland-in-the-immigrant interferes with the attention required for the formation of the "new identity." Consequently, immigration becomes a site of struggle as the immigrant develops a split personality. Immigration, therefore, raises critical questions on the wholeness of the 'self' outside its homeland. The current paper, thus, investigates the effect of the homeland-in-the-immigrant on the personality and psyche of immigrants as they negotiate identity between two lands.

Brah (1996) introduces yet another twist in the dilemma of identity formation discourse. The author asserts that "identity ... is simultaneously subjective

and social, and is constituted in and through culture" (p. 21). Especially at the initial stages of immigration, the immigrant suffers the burden of self-subjectivity and societal subjectivity. Self-subjectivity begins when, on entrance, the migrant psychologically designates himself/herself a stranger or a foreigner in the host land. This is the beginning of the natural opposition of familiarity and difference. The burden thickens when, in time, the immigrant begins to perceive himself/herself as managing to blend with the land and people in some aspects but still differentiated in other aspects. This "ever shifting subjectivity [that] defines the lives of subjects in the diaspora" (Fongang, 2017, p. 138) is the central focus of this paper.

The immigrant, confronted by the dilemma of societal subjectivity in struggling to situate the self, responds to what Fongang (2017, p. 138) calls "structural inequalities" in "race," "nationality, ... "language and dominant hegemonic ideologies." The nuanced manner in which Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo recreates this "structural inequalities" ... and dominant hegemonic ideologies" (Fongang, 2017, p. 138) is given critical attention in this paper.

The problematics of "new identity" formation (Odueme 2017, p. 10) are further complicated in Brah's (1996, p. 21) point that the structure of identity formation "is constituted in and through culture." This is the liminal point of identity formation in the immigration phenomenon (Bhabha, 1994). The immigrant strongly desires and strives to blend with the cultural realities of the host land but confronts the daunting reality that the cultural ingredients of a place are hardly acquired like goods and services; rather they are acquired through a sort of aboriginal imbrication or rootedness to a place – a place "where one is part of a community of beings" (Gaard 2010, p. 546). This paper argues that the difficulty or seeming near-impossibility of blending with the host culture, especially in the short run, deeply affects the immigrant's psyche and intensifies nostalgia to a possessive degree, as exemplified in the selected poems.

The immigration process with its ambivalence imbues the immigrant with a growing awareness that every place or land embodies both "comfort and estrangement" simultaneously (Taylor 2014, p. 278). Such knowledge can be both novel and shocking. This paper also examines how such growing awareness

contributes to resolving migration and return tensions, as recreated by Adimora-Ezeigbo. Therefore, this paper extends the frontiers of migration literature by illuminating how postcolonial deconstructive binaries function as a dominant poetic strategy in recreating contemporary migration and return tensions.

The principles of Psychoanalysis are used to investigate the interface between migration and the immigrant's homeland, and to evaluate the immigrant's psychological responses to the push, pull, and counter-pull forces of migration.

Psychoanalysis is a psychiatric theory propounded by Sigmund Freud, an Austrian Psychiatrist. Investigating the human psyche is at the centre of Psychoanalysis. In *Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Webster (2001) avers that, the Freudian theory, "attempts to provide universal models and explanation for the drives which underpin the way people behave" (p. 88). He maintains that Psychoanalysis "has been normalized as a way of understanding the mind" (p. 87). To account for the drives, Freud develops a model of the human psyche to consists of the unconscious, subconscious, and the conscious levels. He partitions the human psyche to include the ID, the Superego,

and the Ego. While the ID is the unconscious region of the human psyche that banks our unlimited wants and emotions, including our likes and dislikes, the Superego is the part of the human psyche that demands or imposes the highest level of piety on every human's wants and emotions, including our likes and dislikes. The Ego is the conscious self or part of the mind that acts to refine and balance the extremes of both the ID and the Superego. The intervention of the Ego is the result of the limited reality available to a person in a specific situation or society.

The current study, therefore, also examines how the severance of the migrant from his bond/ kinship with his homeland affects his psyche in his new place, including how his longing to reconcile with his roots affects his personality and his 'dreams.' The study traces the development of the migrant and "the various phases of arousal and awareness which he/she passes through" (Webster 2001, p. 87). It argues that the shock resulting from the immigrant poet persona's knowledge of "the limits imposed by reality" (Webster 2001, p. 320) in their new places, stresses their psyche to the point of responding to the forces associated with migration, and this response manifests in a constant journey

towards the homeland, either physically or psychologically. The research sees the poems under study as physical and creative expressions of the poet's inner pressures towards the circumstances of the personas as migrants. The poet engages poetry as a means through which the crises of migration and the attempts to resolve them are given physical expression.

In the sections that followed, the paper proceeds to problematise Adimora-Ezeigbo's use of the theme of homeland-in-the-immigrant in the poems under study to foreground many issues related to migration. In the aesthetic dimensions of the poems explored, the paper deals with the authors' use of the persona's retrospection and elegiac tone as smacks of the homeland-in-the-immigrant hypothesis.

#### **Aspects of the homeland-in-the-immigrant in Adimora-Ezeigbo's "A stranger in a foreign land" and "When the sea swallows people"**

Adimora-Ezeigbo utilizes the sense of the homeland-in-the-immigrant thematically and aesthetically to chart a course in the recreation of the inherent opposition of familiarity and difference in migration. Thematically, the author portrays how the migrant persona's culture-specific sense

of place shapes the quest for meaning in the experience of immigration. In "A stranger in a foreign land" (Adimora-Ezeigbo 2022, pp. 49-50) – a poem that deals with migration and strangeness – Adimora-Ezeigbo creates a persona who narrates the burdens of immigration. The title of the poem is instructive, pointing to the persona's self-appraisal of the migration experience. "A stranger in a foreign land" designates the persona's awareness and acceptance of difference from what has hitherto been familiar terrain and circumstances. Two ingredients stand out in the persona's statement of difference: "a stranger" and "a foreign land" (p. 49). The binary opposites in the title become a statement of familiarity: 'an indigenous dweller' and 'a homeland.' The ingredients "a stranger" and "a foreign land" (p. 49) designate the persona's psychological exclusion of the self from any familiarity and belongingness in the new place. It accentuates the poet's persona's ability to differentiate their homeland from others and to know or become familiar with its uniqueness (Dreese 2002, p. 115). It also bears the persona's self-subjectivity in the circumstance, which, according to Fongang (2017, p. 138), "defines the lives of subjects in the diaspora."

The first stanza begins with the persona's description of a shocking experience with an ecological feature of the host land: "The winds are visible, even palpable / As they buffet the few leaves / Hanging on bare branches" (p. 49). The persona's description of the winds as "visible, even palpable" underscores a shocking difference with what the persona has known and has been familiar with in the homeland. Also, watching the winds strike against tree branches and violently defrocking them of leaves, signals the persona's victimhood in the circumstance. The persona's reaction to the strangeness is shock and dread: "I brace up, dreading the cold raging winds./ Ready to defend myself, to protect my chest" (p. 49). This scenario is similar to an encounter with a foe. The persona's feelings of victimhood heighten with the submission: "The air is brittle like a twig in the harmattan. / Then the rain comes down in sheets, as sharp as razor. / I am badly dressed, wearing the wrong clothes" (p. 49). Within the limits of the persona's ecological experience, they could only compare the brittleness of the air to "a twig in the harmattan" – a weather condition unavailable in the hostland but found in the homeland of the persona. Also, the migrant persona becomes self-subjective – resorting to self-criticism: "I am badly dressed, wearing the wrong

clothes." Therefore, the present reality compels the migrant to recognise and accept their incompatibility with the present environment. Indeed, to moderate the persona's high expectations from the diaspora, engineered by the ID and the Super Ego, the limited available societal reality, engineered by the Ego, confronts the immigrant (Webster 2001, p. 87).

Consequently, the homeland-in-the-immigrant ignites the migrant's retrospection of the homeland. The persona submits thus:

Thinking of the thunderstorm back home,  
I smile.  
What brought me here? What you seek,  
you find!  
Here, winter kills, especially when you are  
poor.  
At home, neither thunderstorm nor  
harmattan kills.  
Even the heat only makes you hide in a  
shade,  
Or remove some items of clothing,  
fanning yourself.  
It makes you uncomfortable but cannot  
kill you (49).

To quantify the difference and situate the self in the circumstance, the persona meditates on the homeland in comparison with the hostland. In the binary opposition of the ecological

circumstance in both the home and host lands, the persona places the homeland as the numerator and the host land as the denominator. The immigrant thus privileges the homeland over the foreign land: "At home, neither thunderstorm nor harmattan kills" (p. 49). This act of weighing the homeland and the host land in the balance increases the dilemma of the persona, as they slide into another level of self-subjectivity. The persona questions the reasons for migration: "What brought me here? What you seek, you find!" (p. 49). The question and its subsequent answer bear the undertone of self-blame and a loathing of whatever propels the movement, including the hostland.

Further, the persona's attention turns to the question of 'home' for immigrants in the host land. The persona owns a flat in the heart of the host land, but it lacks the ingredients of home, as it is incapable of "offering complete familiarity and comfort, a place that we either leave and long for, or we move towards, for security and identity" (Taylor 2014, p. 278). The persona laments: "I am more a stranger than he who owns no house" (p. 49). Therefore, the idea of home for the persona goes beyond a physical structure to a sense of belongingness, community, kinship, or familiarity with the ecological

reality of a place. The situation also accentuates Klinkenborg's (2012, p. 20) position that while it may be possible to "feel at home in other places ... there's a big psychological difference between feeling at home and being at home", for a home is "a place we can never see with a stranger's eyes for more than a moment." This prevailing situation raises the dilemma of the persona's desire and efforts to situate the self in the foreign land. Granted, Klinkenborg's "psychological difference" or perceptual difference could be subjective or emotive, but what is important here is that one's perceptivity is molded from one's familiar environment or experiences, which is the core of the homeland-in-the-immigrant theory.

Further, the persona's lament increases in tempo in the process of appraising the inherent burdens of immigration, thus:

I journeyed far from my ancestral home  
Where my roots were deep but unstable,  
My homeland created the demons that  
pursued me.

Making me abandon my heart and my  
hearth.

I want to go back, yet I want to stay (p.  
49).

The situation turns the persona into a dirge singer, at best. Because the

persona's laments centre around the impacts of the immediate environment in comparison with those of the homeland, the laments could be described as 'eco-dirges.' In the laments, the persona speaks to the issue of roots, rootedness, or belongingness and rootlessness. The persona locates rootedness in the homeland: in "my ancestral homeland / ... my roots were deep" (p. 49). However, the persona laments the dispossession of the homeland that engendered migration: "my roots were deep but unstable, / My homeland created the demons that pursued me" (p.49). The circumstance accentuates Taylor's position that a given place offers both "comforts and estrangement, simultaneously" (Taylor 2014, p. 278). It also corroborates Ojaide's (2018, p. 83) position that "there is an imperfect universe everywhere."

However, the positions of Taylor (2014) and Ojaide (2018) are more peculiar to the circumstance in the current study. The persona's realisation of the existence of discomforts or ingredients of dispossession in both the homeland and the foreign land comes through experiences in the foreign land. It signals the persona's growing consciousness. The persona's consciousness growth has some strong ties with the homeland-in-the-immigrant hypothesis. It is that "sense of

place" (Dreese, p. 115) which sticks to immigrants like leeches that activates their sensitivity to familiarity and difference. It is also important that at this point the persona's blame shifts from self-criticism to a criticism of the dispossession of their ancestral homeland. It is the ambivalence of migration that plays out in this circumstance. This also seems to be the persona's means of achieving some sense of relief from the self-guilt that characterises the dilemma of the immigration experience.

The semantic import of abandoning one's roots in: "Making me abandon my heart and my hearth" (p. 49), may not have had the same weight and psychological import on the persona in the homeland as it now has in the foreign land. My "heart and my hearth" is a metaphorical allusion to one's prized ancestral homeland with which one has an affective tie or innate bonds. The point here is that during the actual immigration experience, the perceptive and critical antenna of the immigrant seems to become especially sharpened to situate various things and events around life and living. However, such super-sensitivity has its own dilemma. While it helps the immigrants to properly situate the destruction or dispossession of their indigenous

homeland, especially in economic and political grounds, it also makes them to draw a difference between the situation in the homeland and the viable economic and political status of the foreign land, which they have become familiar with. At the same time, the immigrants are able to properly situate the viable and familiar ecology of the homeland, their rootedness or belongingness to it, the communalities with kits and kins, the familiar culture that defines their personality, etc, even as they draw a difference with all that in the foreign land. The result of these plays out when the migrant persona in the data under study laments: "I want to go back, yet I want to stay" (p.49). This statement portrays a psychological battle.

Such an inner battle to reconcile the self in two worlds that holds out both gains and pains simultaneously imbues the immigrant with a split personality. The desires are polarised in "I want to go back, yet I want to stay" (p.49). But beyond such conflicting desires is a psychological journey to the homeland. This journey has a therapeutic effect – a psychological healing. The journey portends a spiritual connection with the homeland. The immigrant is, thus, at the centre of the opposition between the homeland and the host land.

The binary opposition in the structuring of the statement: "I want to go back, yet I want to stay" (p.49), is important in another way. It connotes a privileging of the former over the latter. This privileging is further confirmed by the melancholic tone that marks the persona's next line: "Big dilemma: up is not reachable, down is unstable". The unreachable up is the persona's metaphor for the foreign land, while the unstable down refers to the homeland. The expression heightens the atmosphere of despair and liminality described by Bhabha (1994). Thus, the persona faces a trauma that engenders the realisation of being "a stranger in a foreign land."

On the other hand, "When the sea swallows people" (Adimora-Ezeigbo 2022, pp. 52-3) is a poem on illegal migration that recreates the hurdles of illegal migration and the shocks of actual immigration. Beyond the politics of the delineation of legal and illegal immigrants, the experience of shock, subjectivity, and regret is similar. However, the illegal migrants are conscious of their status of illegality from the very point of departure. They struggle with that burden from the homeland.

The persona in "When the sea swallows people" (Adimora-Ezeigbo 2022, pp. 52-3) is "a Prince" (p. 53) in his homeland.

The homeland admires and celebrates him. He manages to emigrate, after thick and thin, but laments: "I found myself in Italy, one of the floatsam of this world. /At home from where I set out, a Prince;/ In Italy, a nonentity and unwanted immigrant (Adimora-Ezeigbo, p. 53).

Accordingly, the burden of being insignificant and unwanted thickens for illegal immigrants upon entry into their destinations. The self gradually loses its status, atrophies, or loses essence. The humanity of immigrants is negotiated the moment they become illegal immigrants.

For illegal migrants, emigration becomes a site of struggle, even a battlefield. The looming victimhood of the illegal emigration phenomenon is evidenced when the persona laments thus:

I discovered that drowning at sea was perhaps preferable  
To living as an unwanted entity, a dog in a foreign country.

Both are despicable: the former ends your misery permanently.

The latter though hopeless, does leave a flicker of hope.

I was one of the few that survived the mishap to tell their story  
(Adimora-Ezeigbo 2002, p. 53)

The joy of surviving a sea mishap and reaching the West - imagined as a land

of greener pastures – is short-lived as shocking discoveries emerge. To underscore their perpetual search for selfhood, once intact in the homeland but now lost to migration, the persona cries out: "I discovered that drowning at sea was perhaps preferable / To living as an unwanted entity, a dog in a foreign country. / Both are despicable: the former ends your misery permanently" (p.53). This is a sort of ninety-degree turn in the migrant's reconfiguration of the migration experience in the face of emergent realities of immigration. The persona, therefore, concludes that illegal migration and normal immigration are a site of "misery" (p. 53), a burden of perpetually reconfiguring the self, the migratory experience, and the host land.

The shattering of expectation by the harsh realities of migration is reflected in the persona's hopelessness, thus: "The latter though hopeless, does leave a flicker of hope" (p. 53). It is the trauma of coming to terms with the reality that the entire horrible experience of his passage and survival into the West leaves only "a flicker of hope" (p. 53). The migrant's dreams and hopes finally became a scam. This is evident in the self-blame: "Severe self-criticism accosts the illegal migrant as a way of loathing his decision to emigrate". The persona further laments:

"An errant son, leaving familiar ground for a strange land" (p.53). This alludes to the sense of the prodigal – a strayed or straying son. It also reflects the opposition of familiarity and difference or strangeness.

The persona also speaks to the opposition in the ecological metaphysics (eco-metaphysics) of his familiar and strange lands:

I had called Obizi and Agwazi to save me and give me a chance.

An errant son, leaving familiar ground for a strange land.

Perhaps they heard my prayer and threw me back to land.

Now I am in a new place. Do the gods of this place know me?

Will they cooperate with my local gods to protect me? (p.53).

In the foregoing extract, the persona expresses a kind of connectedness to the ancestral gods of their land. There is the question, too, of whether or not one's ancestral gods are still active in a foreign land? Again, do the gods of a foreign land know the immigrants? These doubts combine to traumatisise the immigrant and constitute pointers to the immigrant's search for selfhood in the diaspora, which goes beyond what is physically present in the environment to metaphysical

considerations. The line: "Will they cooperate with my local gods to protect me"? (p.53) underscores the persona's conviction that the gods of his homeland would not abandon him. That conviction serves as a counterforce to migration, pulling the persona back toward the homeland, which is at first psychological, but over time may turn physical.

Moreover, the weight of self-blame in the lines: "The gods of my fathers are distant; I drove the away;/ I severed the cord that bound me to them" (p. 53), shows the degree of psychological trauma that attends the migrant persona. Such lamentation over the disconnect between the poet persona and the gods of their homeland also indicates that their humanity is incomplete without that sense of connection. It is also important to consider how the persona "drove them away" (p.53). The answer lies in the lament: "I severed the cord that bound me to them" (p. 53). Therefore, for the persona, migration is at the centre of dishonouring and severing the affective ties with one's homeland and gods. It may also suggest a dishonouring of one's selfhood, since, as evidenced above, immigration atrophies one's selfhood, especially in the short run. The immigrant, thus, seems to remain in a perpetual search for the self.

Recounting his survival through the illegal emigration experience, the persona hints: "Perhaps they heard my prayer and threw me back to land" (p. 53). By this token, the persona expresses his thankfulness to the gods of his homeland for rescuing him from the incident he encountered. It bears a statement that the illegal emigration experience is the survival of the fortunate, not of the fittest. Consequently, the persona's reflection of the entire process of illegal emigration and his subsequent normal immigration fills him with utter regret. He cries out: "In search of freedom that kills, freedom of the lost/ freedom of a lost course. I rue the day I sold all I had/ To take the route that led to the North and to the desert" (p. 53). In the circumstance, the immigrant proclaims his prodigality. The prodigal in the Biblical account left his homeland with everything he had for a foreign land, but sooner than later finds out that he has turned out to be a lost child, pursuing a lost course. So, he rues his course yearning and seeking a return to his homeland.

Given the shades of subjectivity that "defines the lives of subjects in the diaspora" (Fongang 2017, p. 138), and their desire for liberation, the immigrant asks: "What is my fate in Europe?/ Only

time will tell" (53). This poser signifies the search for selfhood and the burdens that come with it. It implies a dash of hope for existence and availability of greener pastures for the immigrant. And subjecting or leaving the answer to "Only time will tell" (p.53) proves the immigrant's helplessness in the circumstance.

### **Flashback and Elegiac Tone as Stylistic Hallmarks in Adimora-Ezeigbo's Poems**

In the poems under study, Adimora-Ezeigbo delineates the persona's use of flashback and the elegiac tone as tools of engagement to confront the dilemma of identity in the opposition between familiar and strange experiences in both the home and foreign lands. Memory is one of the eco-poetic motifs that the poet uses skilfully to recreate the nostalgia of migrants and their strong desire to return to their homeland.

Memory in the poems is facilitated by the strategy of flashback, which helps the poet to manipulate plots in order to interpolate narratives of the past (Abrams & Harpham 2012). In the poems under study, memories are creatively conjured to make eco-conscious statements with regard to dwelling, belongingness, and place-consciousness. For instance, the title of the poem "A stranger in a foreign land", thrives in flashback, expressing the

persona's memory of their former status in the homeland prior to the present status in the diaspora. It accentuates the persona's consciousness of difference with what was and what is, and their identification with or preference for the former. The persona comes out clearly in retrospect, saying: "thinking of the thunderstorm back home, I smile./ What brought me here? What you seek, you find!" (p. 49). Flashback succeeds as an eco-poetic strategy by igniting the opposition of difference between the realities of the homeland with those of the foreign. In the circumstance, also, the migrant persona is able to delineate their leaning in the opposition. In the flashback above, the persona is filled with self-blame for ever leaving the homeland.

Further, in the poem, "When the sea swallows people", there is a recourse to flashback when the poet persona flounders to swim out of a sea mishap. The persona, far away from the homeland, reports: "I clutched at every straw, calling out to Idemmili./ "Gods of my fathers, save me," I cried again and again (p. 52). This circumstance portends a looking back at the homeland and a conviction that the metaphysical powers of the homeland are capable of rendering assistance in one's dire moments. Such looking back in time succeeds in making

the immigrant nostalgic: "At home from where I set out, a Prince;/ In Italy, a nonentity and unwanted immigrant" (p. 53). The persona, therefore, takes to saying that while the homeland nourishes his/her humanity, the foreign land atrophies it.

Another navigating strategy employed by Adimora-Ezeigbo's is the elegiac voice. Elegies are "poems generally written for the dead or to mark very sad occasions" (Emezue 2002, p. 113). However, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham give more insight when they trace the rise over time of the meanings of 'elegy.' Prior to its now 'limited' usage as "a formal and sustained lament in verse for the death of a particular person," 'elegy' incorporates lament occasioned by "loss" and change (Abrams & Harpham 2012, p. 101). The elegiac tone, therefore, is used here to refer to the mournful voice and atmosphere that characterise the migrant's attempt to negotiate their split personality in the immigration experience. Helen Cousins and Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo's position that "ideas of strangeness... distress and disgust" are givens in migration and return discourses seems a recourse to the elegiac tone that permeates the phenomenon (Cousins & Dodgson-Katiyo 2016, p. 2). The elegiac tone captures the sad moments of the

poet persona while in their homelands; the sad moments that accompany some unexpected and unimagined changes of realities in the diaspora, including the mournful atrophy of selfhood that confronts them. For instance, in "A stranger in a foreign land", the poet persona invokes the elegiac tone to create a general atmosphere of lament over their predicaments. Likewise, in "When the sea swallows people", the persona laments: "The Gods of my fathers are distant; I drove them away; / I severed the cord that bound me to them" (p. 53). The navigating strategy of the elegiac tone, therefore, allows Adimora-Ezeigbo to succinctly represent the vagaries of the homeland-in-the-immigrant in the poems under study.

### Conclusion

The current paper tries to establish that the homeland-in-the-immigrant is at the centre of the immigrant's double personality in a foreign land. This is presented through the analysis of two poems written by Akachi Adimora-

Ezeigbo. From the analysis, it is obvious that the force of the homeland-in-the-immigrant, which encompasses the immigrant's deeply rooted consciousness of place, is at the centre of the split-personality of both legal and illegal immigrants. It is at the centre of immigrants' acute sensitivity to familiarity and difference or strangeness in the environments where they negotiate existence. It is, therefore, the immigrants' consciousness of the reality of familiarity and difference between ingredients of the home and the foreign lands that makes them homesick or nostalgic. The migrant, therefore, feels a sense of loss, which is compensated with a heightened desire to reconnect with the homeland, psychologically, at first, and physically, over time, even as they may be grappling with the urge to emigrate once again. This paper holds, therefore, that the abode of 'greener pastures' is not any foreign land but elsewhere, forcing immigrants to a constant journey, and placing them in a sort of reciprocal nostalgia for their homelands.

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