

Deconstructing the Theme of Unfaithfulness in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* and Ngugi WA Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*: Infidelity or Fidelity to Reality?

Redzie Peter Nko¹ 

¹Lecturer 2, Department of English and Literary Studies, Bingham University, Karu Nasarawa State, Nigeria
Correspondence: redzie.peters@binghamuni.edu.ng¹

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This is a fresh perspective on the thematic concern in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and the theme of unfaithfulness in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*.

Methodology: The study seeks to unravel some of the hidden realities portrayed in the works using realism and deconstruction. Because of its commitment to the portrayal of the society exactly as it is; not as we'd love it to be, and because of its didactic inclinations, realism is regarded as a moralistic method in critical discourse. Deconstruction is an aspect of formalism. Through qualitative content analysis, the theme of unfaithfulness is ex-rayed from different viewpoints.

Findings and Conclusion: It is observed that the two writers were faithful to reality in the portrayal of the events and characters in their works. However, while providing motives for their characters' actions; they inadvertently deconstruct the theme. It is concluded that unfaithfulness is a huge aspect of the character and relationships of human beings, especially when personal interests and distance set in.

Keywords: Deconstructing, Theme of Unfaithfulness, Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*, Ngugi WA Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*.

Introduction

While it is true that *Americanah* and *A Grain of Wheat* have attracted lots of critical attention from scholars internationally, it is important to observe that the concerns of most scholars, though largely thematic, are not exactly the same as what is explored in this study. Thus, this paper presents a fresh perspective on the thematic concerns in these works. The most dominant/attractive themes in *Americanah* are migration and cultural shock/variation. This paper reveals that despite the dominant themes in *Americanah*, it is still possible to find sub-themes, one of which is infidelity; the most dominant theme in *A Grain of Wheat* is betrayal.

Again, the very fact that the works here considered have attracted various critical attention lays credence to the truism that every text is subject to multiple interpretations. The thrust of this work is that it presents

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a somewhat unprecedented theoretical perspective to the novels. One searches through preponderant literature and finds that no other critical perspective is based on realism and/or deconstruction.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to contemplate the theme of unfaithfulness in two African novels: *Americanah* by Adichie and *A Grain of Wheat* by Thiong'o. the specific objectives are:

1. To consider the works mentioned above from a perspective completely different from previous ones.
2. To contribute to knowledge on literary theory by exploring and providing exemplifications on research papers that are based on deconstruction.

Scope of the Study

This work actually focusses on only one theme that is common to two novels, both of which were written by Africans: *Americanah* and *A Grain of Wheat* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, respectively. The analysis is based on deconstruction.

Theoretical Framework

The leading figure of deconstruction is Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is a post-structuralist literary theory. In his 1967 publications, Derrida explored deconstruction by doing a powerful critique of Husserl's phenomenology, Saussure's linguistic perspectives, and the structuralist perspectives of Levi Strauss.

Derrida argues, against the postulations of structuralists, that linguistic units are usually inadequate in signifying and restricting meaning. Thus, language is unstable. While trying to convey a meaning using signs, the sender in a communicative process inadvertently signifies more than the intended meaning, or rather, the receiver of the sign can actually deduce more than what is intended. It is for this reason that Derrida invented a concept known as *sous rature* meaning 'under erasure'. The idea is that since a sign (a word, phrase, clause or sentence) is inaccurate or inadequate, it is crossed out; since it is necessary, it remains legible. So, the sign is written and crosses in such a manner that it is still readable.

Therefore, a deconstructive reading of a literary piece requires the interpretation of the piece by showing how the text fails itself in trying to signify meaning in restrictive terms. It observes for contradictions in the meanings that are explicitly and implicitly projected.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Synopsis of Americanah

Ifemelu was not from a wealthy home, but she had wealthy friends. She and Obinze met at a party where a friend attempted to match Obinze up with a girl called Ginika. Obinze had admired Ifemelu from afar since transferring to their school, and they immediately fell in love. They dated all through secondary school and through the start of university. However, ASUU strikes kept closing the universities, and Obinze and Aunty Uju encouraged Ifemelu to apply to school in America. Ifemelu was accepted and quickly approved for a student visa. She and Obinze planned to one day reunite in America. Unfortunately, Ifemelu's student visa did not allow her to work, and without a full scholarship and stipend, Ifemelu must find a source of income. Despite having an aunty there, she saw hell trying to survive as an immigrant; trying not to be a burden to her aunty. She applied for jobs using a family friend's social security card to no avail. In desperation, she agreed to work for a shady tennis coach as his "relaxation assistant," which involved allowing him to touch her sexually. After one meeting, she never went back. Out of shame and self-loathing, she stopped replying Obinze's messages and emails.

Ifemelu's luck changed when Ginika introduced her to Kimberly, a white woman who needed a babysitter. The steady work offered her a chance to focus on her studies. She met Kimberly's wealthy

cousin, Curt, who immediately fell in love with her. They started dating, and when Ifemelu graduated, Curt helped her get a job and subsequently, a green card. For the job interview, Ifemelu needed to have her hair relaxed so that it will look professional according to American standards. The relaxer burned her scalp, and her friend Wambui encouraged her to try wearing her hair natural. At first, Ifemelu thought her hair was ugly, but soon loved it. One day, she ran into a friend from Nigeria, who asked her what happened between her and Obinze. She gave him a cold shoulder, and was upset the rest of the day.

Meanwhile, Obinze lived as an illegal immigrant in London. His American visa application was rejected because of anti-terror panic after the September 11, 2001 attacks. His mother had offered to bring him as a research assistant on a trip to London as a way to get him into Britain. Obinze's friend linked him up with a fellow Nigerian; in fact a fellow igbo man, Vincent, who was willing to let him use his national insurance card in order to work if Obinze would give him a percentage of his income. Obinze found a job in a warehouse with the insurance card. Eventually, Vincent demanded more money. Obinze refused, and the next day his boss told him that someone reported him as an illegal immigrant. He had to run away from that job. Desperate, he tried to find someone to arrange a green card marriage for him. Through all the struggles, he was depressed, and to find relief, he had sex with an acquaintance. The day his wedding was to take place, he arrived to the courthouse only to find the police awaiting him. Obinze was deported.

Ifemelu cheated on Curt and ended their relationship. After she wrote an email to Wambui detailing her frustration with Curt's inability to understand the necessity of *Essence* magazine in a world of beauty magazines catering to white women, Wambui suggested that Ifemelu should start blogging. Ifemelu started a blog focusing on her observations on race in America as a non-American black woman, and her clever posts soon led to its popularity. She began to earn from the blog. At a conference for minority bloggers, she ran into Blaine, a black American professor at Yale whom she had met years ago as a co-passenger in a plane. They began dating, and she moved in with him. When Ifemelu failed to attend a protest that Blaine organized against the university's racial profiling of a black staff member, they had a major fight and almost broke up. However, Barack Obama's presidential candidacy reunited them until the election, and Ifemelu's subsequent decision to leave the United States.

Ifemelu got her hair braided in preparation for her return to Nigeria. She had closed her popular blog, and uprooted her life because she felt weighed down. When she thought of returning to Nigeria, she couldn't help but think of Obinze, her first love, now a wealthy man in Lagos with a wife and daughter. Upon receiving an email from Ifemelu, Obinze became distracted. He had stumbled into wealth after his cousin introduced him to a well-connected man. His wife, Kosi, was beautiful and adoring, but they never connected on the emotional level that he and Ifemelu did. That night, he listened to the music he and Ifemelu used to listen to when they made love.

Upon getting the information on Dike's attempted suicide, Ifemelu rushed to be with him. In Nigeria, Ifemelu slowly found her feet. However, she was hesitant to contact Obinze. Finally, she sent him a text and he didn't delay in meeting up with her. Their attraction was still undeniable. When Obinze asked her why she cut him off, Ifemelu told him the story of the tennis coach, surprised at her own tears. Obinze held her hand, and she basked in the safety she felt. After more dates, Ifemelu awkwardly rekindled their sexual relationship, although she did not want to be his mistress. They argued, and Ifemelu called Obinze a coward for not divorcing Kosi. Shaken, Obinze thought about Ifemelu's accusation, and found truth in it. He asked Kosi for a divorce. Kosi tried to ignore his request, reminding him that he has a duty to his family. Days later, he showed up at Ifemelu's flat telling her that he has left Kosi, will continue to be present in his daughter's life, and wants to be with Ifemelu. Ifemelu invited him in.

Synopsis of *A Grain of Wheat*

In the days of Kenyatta's nationalist struggle for political independence in Kenya, Mugo, a former detainee of the colonialists was going to his shamba, his farm. He hailed from Thabai, a big village jealously guarded by the colonialists against the infiltration of the *Mau Mau* fighters who were in the forest. He passed by the house of a lonely old woman whose only family, her son, Gitoto, had been killed

by the colonialist armed forces during the emergency. He went back home without doing much work. In the evening of that same day, he was visited by a group of elders sent by the party, the movement. The movement was a resistance, a peaceful yet deadly party whose membership included almost every native. Its origin was traced to the coming of the Whiteman, first as a missionary, and later as a ruthless colonial master. The movement is traceable to brave resistance from the days of Waiyaki who was buried alive by the Whiteman, to Harry's who was imprisoned after a massacre of one hundred and fifty natives who went to the state house to demand his release from detention, to Kihika's who was hanged in public on a Sunday, and the natives were driven from all nooks and crannies to go and see the dangling body of the rebel, and learn. The elders, led by Gikonyo (a carpenter and an astute businessman who became very successful after detention), wanted Mugo to lead the sacrifice and ceremonies to honour those who died for the struggle on the day of Uhuru (independence celebration). They also wanted him to become their new chief. Some of the elders believed that it was Karanja who betrayed Kihika by telling a secret which helped the Whiteman's forces to know Kihika's whereabouts. The plan was to lure Karanja to the uhuru celebrations, disgrace him and kill him. Gikonyo went home to his wife after the meeting with Mugo, but he wouldn't have anything to do with her.

Karanja was a library staff at Githima. He usually ran errands for Mr. Thomson and Mrs. Dickinson. Mr. Thomson was an administrative officer. Karanja heard rumours that the man was soon going to fly back to England; Karanja hoped it was not true. A dog belonging to Dr Lynd, a plant pathologist at the station, almost devoured Karanja and other Africans. She blamed them for throwing stones at her dog. She had had a terrible experience which plagued her life. A houseboy whom she was nice to had a touching friendship with her dog, but someday the boy, accompanied by others, came and killed her dog right in her presence. There were investigations and two men were arrested and hanged; the boy was never caught. Margery was cheating on her husband, Thomson, with Dr. Van Dyke. Van Dyke was later killed by a train.

Mugo wondered why he, among other great fighters, was chosen to lead the Uhuru celebrations. While in detention, Gikonyo's wife, Mumbi, cheated on him with Karanja and a child was birthed. Mumbi was Kihika's sister. Gikonyo desperately needed someone to talk to; he had never been the same since his discovery of that act. He went to Mugo to pour out his heart. Before his marriage to Mumbi, and before his detention, he and Karanja were friends and rivals. Each wanted Mumbi, but Gikonyo eventually won and married the girl. Karanja never recovered from that loss, and while Gikonyo was in detention and life became unbearably difficult for Mumbi due to her husband's absence, Karanja who was then a homeguard, a dog eating crumbs from the Whiteman's table and enforcing his brutal laws, took advantage of her.

At the podium set for him, an honour for him to speak to his people at the uhuru celebrations, Mugo shocked everyone by announcing that he was the one who betrayed Kihika. Karanja who had attended the ceremony against Mumbi's warning was greatly relieved to discover that he was free from a deadly trap that had been set for him. As part of the oath sworn by members of the movement, Mugo was tried and killed by the elders for treachery.

A Deconstructive Reading of *Americanah* and *A Grain of Wheat* *Americanah* (2013)

Ifemelu

Ifemelu, the principal character in *Americanah* is a very blunt, beautiful girl from the Eastern part of Nigeria who lives with her struggling parents and schools in Lagos. She has a boyfriend called Obinze whom she loves dearly. Like many of her friends, she leaves Nigeria in search of greener pastures; her destination is the United States of America. Before she leaves, she and Obinze plan to reunite in future. They are actually forced to leave the country because of the incessant university lecturers' strikes that threatened their hopes. Overseas, despite having an aunt there, she experiences severe economic privation due to her inability to secure a job. And that threatens her fidelity to Obinze. After numerous interviews, depression sets in. To pay her bills she finds herself being sexually involved with a disgusting Tennis

coach. Though it happens just once, she finds it difficult to forgive herself. Self-loath and guilt cause her to cut off communication with Obinze and things never remain the same.

While some would argue that Ifemelu's act of cutting off communication with Obinze is a way of breaking-up with him, there are those who believe that until one or both parties in a relationship state that the relationship has come to an end, there is still a relationship. Going with the latter, it can be argued that Ifemelu cheated on Obinze in America with three men; first with the tennis coach, then with Curt, a wealthy white American who made her living standards much better, and then with Blaine, a black American Yale lecturer who was strictly principled. In fact, it was four men. The fourth was a rough neighbour whom she was curious about. While still in a relationship with Obinze who was still in Nigeria and later went to UK, she had a sexual affair with a tennis coach, became Curt's girlfriend, broke-up with Curt after a fleeting infatuation with a neighbour, and then dated Blaine. Was Ifemelu, by dating Curt, sleeping with a neighbour, and dating Blaine, being unfaithful to Obinze or simply being faithful to reality? Is it possible for a lady, a migrant in a completely strange land who is suffering from intense poverty to remain faithful to a broke boyfriend who is very far away? Even if he was close-by, was he financially capable enough to help her life? While expounding the theme of infidelity, Chimamanda's text deconstructs itself by triggering the questions above and many more. While one may argue that Ifemelu could have put an end to her unfaithfulness to Obinze by being content with the babysitting job she eventually got through Ginika, since the job was sufficient enough to pay her bills, one must also remember that it was through her relationship with Curt that she got her papers. Otherwise, she would have lived with the constant fear of being found out by the immigration officers, and deported.

However, one is confronted with the reality that no matter the circumstances, a woman who wants to cheat will still cheat. For Ifemelu lacked nothing while she was dating Curt, yet she cheated on him with a riff-raff! And what would she say about that?

“It meant nothing. It happened once and I am so sorry.”

“stop playing” he said, but she knew, from the unbelieving horror that was deepening the blue of his eyes, that he knew she was not playing...

(Adichie, p. 332)

Obinze

Obinze is Ifemelu's boyfriend from secondary school to the university. He, unlike some of his secondary school friends who succeed in leaving the shores of Nigeria, attempts numerous times but fails. He however gets an opportunity to travel to England with his mum as her research assistant, and wants to use that opportunity to become a citizen through marriage but he doesn't succeed. He is caught trying to do an arranged marriage and is deported.

Before the England opportunity, Obinze who had planned to reunite with Ifemelu is unfaithful to her by “sleeping with impressionable young students” (p. 270). That is one of the things he does to keep himself sane, as life in Nigeria is beginning to make no meaning to him due to the excesses of the government. In England also, he has an affair with Tendai, a Zimbabwean lady.

...Then quite suddenly, a sexual urge overcame him. A tide of lust. He wanted to fuck somebody. He would text Tendai. They had met at a party Nosa took him to, and he ended up, that night, in her bed.

(Adichie, p. 298)

Not long after Obinze returns to Nigeria, he becomes wealthy, and because Ifemelu had shut him out, he gets married to a beautiful woman called Kosi. But as soon as Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, as soon as he meets with her, he begins to cheat on his wife with Ifemelu. Now, he and Ifemelu are more in love with each other than they were before the migration. At some point he begins to regret marrying Kosi. For he declares "I married her when I was feeling vulnerable; I had a lot of upheaval in my life at the time." It was a marriage of convenience. His infidelity against his wife reaches its climax, so much that he becomes emotionally detached from her; when she offers herself to him one night, and reaches down to take his penis in her hand, he can't even have an erection (Adichie, p. 520).

The story ends with an ex-girlfriend taking someone's husband. For Ifemelu, having observed that Obinze still loves her, manipulates him into divorcing his wife by showing him clearly that she can't be a side-chick, and denying him access to her until he takes the step she wants. This causes one to begin to contemplate the power of an ex!

A Grain of Wheat (2008)

Mugo

Mugo is the principal character in Wa Thiongo's *A Grain of Wheat*. He is a traitor during the struggle for colonial emancipation in Kenya, but he is not the only one, neither is he without remorse. In fact, he experiences great and psychologically disturbing circumstances which influence his decision. First, he is a very lonely and broken man. Here are two excerpts to buttress this point.

Today this thought was uppermost in his mind, as he again felt another desire to enter the hut and talk to her. There was a bond between her and him, perhaps because she, like him, **lived alone...**

(Thiong'o, p.6; emphasis mine)

Mugo's father and mother had died poor, leaving him, an only child in the hands of a distant aunt. Waitherero was a widow with six married daughters. When drunk, she would come home and remind Mugo of this fact... Oh God, see what an ungrateful wretch is left on my hands. **You would have followed your father to the grave, but for me.** Remember that and stop laughing.

(Thiong'o, p.7; emphasis mine)

While Mugo is staying with his aunty, she continually worsens his state by inflicting emotional pain on him. It is with her that the first thought of betrayal, of murder, crosses his mind.

Again, he experiences great and psychologically disturbing dilemma before finally resorting to treachery. He is a man hunted by fear, the fear of being imprisoned or killed for harbouring Kihika, a wanted terrorist. Kihika had destroyed the Mahee police station and is desperately wanted by the colonial government. Then one night, he kills the district officer popularly known as Tom the terror. And that is the night that he seeks refuge in Mugo's hut. Mugo feels suffocated, feels dragged into trouble. *How could Kihika who had everything, a family, drag him into such trouble?* The instinct for self-preservation

manifested. After Kihika left his hut, he went to D.O John Thompson and snitched on Kihika. That Ngugi committed a considerable amount of time and space exploring Mugo's state of mind is evidence enough to believe that the writer never intended to blame or crucify the man. In fact, it is easy to believe that Ngugi wanted to exonerate him even while showing the dangers or repercussions of treachery. Because of his impeccable charisma, despite his very difficult and deprived upbringing, no one ever thought he was the one who betrayed Kihika. In fact, the elders wanted him to champion the Uhuru celebrations; they also wanted him to be their new chief. The prime suspect of the betrayal was Karanja.

Margery

For Margery, it is not the kind of marital unfaithfulness that is caused by physical distance; it is caused by emotional distance. The man is there but he isn't giving her the kind of attention that she required as a woman. These are some of the things that cause marital unfaithfulness in many families. The partner is physically there but the other feels lonely! As can be seen from the excerpt below, his priority is his work and the promotion he has his eyes on.

...she hurriedly collected the remaining things and went to the kitchen. Perhaps it was the work that had taken him away. For as he became engrossed in the daily business of administration with his eyes on promotion, his vision seemed to fade and she had found it increasingly difficult to penetrate his inscrutable face till it became eventually painful to summon even a minimum of emotion and tenderness for him.

(Thiong'o, p. 54)

Margery cheated on her husband not once, not twice. Her mouth would say no but her heart said yes. And so, it was impossible to be assertive. Since she could not summon a minimum of emotion and tenderness for her husband, it was only natural that the emotion be transferred to someone else.

'Be gentle-' she cried, and her words were interrupted by the thrust of his body; she clung to him, fearing the car and the whole world would give way beneath her. The silence in the dark, the incessant buzz in the forest added to the moment. After it, she wept, wondering how she could ever face her husband.

(Thiong'o, p.56)

She wept because being unfaithful was not something she really wanted. If only her husband didn't give more attention to his work and promotion; if only he didn't neglect her! She waded through the nightmare of guilt and self-hatred!

...It could not be denied that John had a hold over her, that it was to him that she really belonged...at such moments, wading through the night-

mare of guilt and self-hatred, she would feel tender towards him. The impulsive desire to confess, to clean her breast, was very strong.

(Thiong'o, p.57)

It is really difficult for a careful reader to simply dismiss Margery as a bad woman after reading the excerpt above, but it becomes easy when one pauses to ask if she ever made an attempt to talk her husband into giving her more time and attention and he failed. Was she being unfaithful or simply being faithful to reality?

Mumbi and Karanja

Mumbi is only a devastated woman who falls for the cunningness of Karanja. Naturally, she loves her husband and wouldn't have cheated on him. But circumstances get the best of her. The homeguards, in obedience to the colonialists, had destroyed the old village setting and forced the natives to move into a new village; Mumbi's huts were set ablaze and there was no man to help her build a new hut except Karanja. For six years she holds on, being faithful and hoping for the return of Gikonyo, her husband. And for six years, Karanja keeps giving her favours and helping her to see that her husband will never return. Even when it is announced on radio that the detainees would never come back, she never stops thinking of her husband (p. 160). But Karanja, in his cunningness, suddenly stops the frequent visits. It is a calculated move. Then he joins the homeguards, and in the depth of her privations and hunger, he brings her food. But she hates him for betraying the cause and rejects the food. Karanja is consistent in trying to soften and penetrate her heart by giving her food, and even when she eventually accepts it on a latter day, it is not without shame.

Take this maize-flour and bread, or else you will die. I did not betray Kihika, I did not. As for carrying a gun for the whiteman, well, a time will come when you too will know that every man in the world is alone, and fights alone, to live... Somehow I believed him, what he said about my brother. But even if I had not, I would still have taken the food. I am sure I would – though his words made it easier for me. When I went inside, I felt ashamed, even in the midst of my hunger and I could not tell Wangari Where I got the food.

(Thiong'o, p. 159)

Food is man's greatest need. And self-preservation is man's greatest instinct. At his breaking point, in starvation, apart from water food is probably the only thing that man can accept from a sworn enemy without a second thought. Ngugi also observed that a number of women secretly and voluntarily offered themselves to the soldiers for a little food. Mumbi was so faithful to her husband that taking food from Karanja, though she had not slept with him then, made her feel ashamed (p. 160). She held on even in despair, in hopelessness. And Karanja knew that if hopelessness couldn't soften her, then hope should! The weapon that he used to penetrate her was the news of her husband's imminent return. In her excitement, she stopped thinking straight, and then, Karanja had his way (p. 164). Karanja was a great manipulator! Here, we see Ngugi's theme deconstructing itself again. In trying to balance the events in

the work, he more or less justifies Mumbi's action by showing that she's only human. Was she being unfaithful or simply being faithful to reality?

Gikonyo's reaction upon returning and discovering his wife's unfaithfulness was natural, but he took it too far. In fact, he was selfish; he saw things only from his own perspective. A great person would have tried to see things from the woman's perspective as well; six good years of distance from a wife and yet he expected absolute fidelity!

Karanja did not only betray his friend, Gikonyo, but also betrayed the cause, the natives' fight for freedom. For "...He led other homeguards into the forest to hunt down the freedom fighters..." (p. 161) but when one thinks of crucifixion as the most ideal punishment for him, one sees Ngugi giving him the capacity for strong and logical arguments in justification for his treachery. In his defense against Mumbi's reproach, Karanja asserts: "...The Whiteman is strong. Don't you ever forget that. I know, because I have tasted his power...". He goes ahead to support his argument with proverbs: "...The coward lived to see his mother while the brave was left dead on the battlefield. And to ward off a blow is not cowardice." (p. 162) Where is the lie in Karanja's arguments? Hasn't history taught postcolonial Africa that the Whiteman is indeed strong and that being loyal to him assures access to political power? To say that African counties were only given flag independence is to be kind enough in the deployment of euphemism. Ngugi himself shows, in *Devil on the Cross*, how the *Uhuru* for which brave men like Kihika sacrificed their lives was hijacked by inglorious and greedy natives who, like their colonial masters, made the lives of their fellow blacks worse. Was Karanja being unfaithful to the cause or simply being faithful to reality?

Conclusion

Observing the infidelity of Ifemelu, Obinze, and Mumbi, one cannot but conclude that distance was the major causative agent. If Ifemelu and Obinze had not been separated by thousands of kilometres, would they have been unfaithful to each other? If Mumbi had not been separated from her husband, Gikonyo, would she have had anything to do with Karanja? Humans are sexual beings, and considering the fact that these characters lived in the uncertainty of what the future held, should it be averred that they were unfaithful, or they were simply being faithful to reality?

It is however noteworthy that the theme of infidelity in the novels of Chimamanda and Ngugi deconstructs itself by suggesting the otherwise, by providing instances where people cheated on their partners not on the basis of distance, but for some other reasons. For instance, Curt was not far from Ifemelu when she decided to have sexual relations with a neighbour. Margery's husband was not far from her when she decided to have an affair with Dr. Van Dyke. Well, it may be argued for Margery that there was an emotional distance between her and her husband.

Having observed the events and characters in these literary works, it is important to observe that Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o were faithful to reality in their representation of events and characters. It is commonplace that when physical distance comes in between people for too long, it is almost impossible to remain faithful to the partner on the other side. It is also true that for personal reasons, people are prone to betrayal. To completely trust and expect absolute fidelity from a fellow is to be unrealistic, wallowing in a pool of self-deception; it is to open oneself to torturous betrayal! Without expectation, there is no disappointment; and without disappointment, there is no emotional pain.

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ORCID

Redzie Peter Nko ¹  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5210-8193>

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