

## MIGRATION AND CRISIS: A REVIEW OF AMMA DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

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### **Abstract**

Migration is a complex phenomenon that transcends mere geographical movement, profoundly affecting the social, psychological, and economic lives of individuals. In many instances, it induces crises that disrupt identity, relationships, and personal stability. This study examines the interplay between migration and individual crisis in literature, with a specific focus on *Beyond the Horizon* by Amma Darko. It investigates how migration exposes women to vulnerability and marginalisation, as well as its profound psychological and social implications. Against this backdrop, the study employs objectification theory to critically analyse the experiences of female characters in the selected novel, highlighting how patriarchal structures intersect with migration to shape their crises. The findings reveal that migration, while often represented as a pathway to freedom and opportunity, simultaneously exposes women to systemic oppression, identity struggles, and social alienation. By examining these literary portrayals, the study underscores the need to recognise the gendered dimensions of migration and its far-reaching consequences on individual lives. It concludes that migration and its accompanying crises mark significant transformations in women's economic conditions, social positions, and sense of self-worth.

**Keywords:** migration, crisis, objectification, sexual-objectification, body surveillance

### **Introduction**

Literature is an essential human endeavour, offering a window into the complexities of human experience, emotions, and societal transformations. Through narrative and creative expressions, literature allows individuals to explore identity, culture, history, and human conflict. It serves not only as a reflection of society but also as a critique, providing insight into the struggles, aspirations, and contradictions that define the human condition. The power of literature lies in its ability to transcend boundaries, convey universal themes, and resonate with readers across different cultures and times.

In contemporary times, one of the most pressing themes explored in literature is migration, a topic that speaks to the movement of people across borders in search of better opportunities, safety, or self-discovery. Migration, as presented in literary works, is not simply about physical relocation but represents a profound journey of transformation; psychologically, socially, and culturally. Writers use migration as a lens to explore complex issues such as identity, belonging, displacement, and the intersection of cultures. Migration literature becomes a medium through which individuals and communities tell their stories of struggle, survival, and reinvention in the face of adversity.

In this context, migration has become a defining feature of globalization, with millions of people moving across the world in response to economic necessity, political instability, environmental changes, and social unrest. According to Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, "migration is not just a demographic phenomenon but a force that shapes the global order, resulting in transnational identities and the formation of multicultural societies" (9). Literature serves as a crucial means of humanizing the migration experience, offering intimate portrayals of the psychological and emotional tolls that migration can exact.

African literature, in particular, engages with migration as a central theme, reflecting the historical and political contexts that drive many people from the continent to seek new lives abroad. Bill Ashcroft et al. emphasizes that "migration in African literature often serves as a metaphor for exile, alienation, and fractured identity. This is especially significant in the postcolonial and neocolonial period, where characters in African novels are forced to flee political instability, economic hardship, and gender oppression" (113). African writers such as Chika Unigwe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, and Amma Darko have explored how migration is linked to broader historical forces like colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism, which shape the movement of individuals across borders.

In his *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues that colonialism "alienated Africans from their cultural roots" (45), producing a lasting sense of displacement that continues even after migration. Similarly, in *The*

*Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha introduces the concept of the third space which highlights the migrant's liminal condition of existing "between two cultures" (37), never fully belonging to either. These frameworks enrich our understanding of migration not only as physical relocation but as an experience of psychological and cultural transformation.

*In Black Women, Writing and Identity*, Carole Boyce Davies proposes the idea of migratory subjectivity, asserting that migration initiates "continuous shifts in identity, shaped by cultural, gendered, and geographical dislocations" (15). Sarah Gendron likewise maintains that literary portrayals of migration often reflect "inner psychological ruptures caused by trauma and loss," (22), making migration a deeply emotional and existential experience. Together, these scholarly views present migration as a dynamic and enduring process rather than a one-time event, affecting both individual identity and collective memory.

A recurring theme in African migration narratives is the notion of the false promise. According to Megan Behrent observes, "African migrants frequently idealize the West as a land of opportunity, yet for many, the reality is fraught with hardship and exploitation" (37). The migration dream often turns into a nightmare, especially for undocumented migrants, women trafficked into sexual slavery, and racially marginalized individuals who encounter systemic barriers in foreign societies.

Gender plays a crucial role in the literary depiction of migration as female migrants not only face displacement; they also face vulnerability to sexual violence, exploitation, and cultural isolation. Migration, here, is portrayed not as a break from oppression, but as a continuation of it, marked by gender-based marginalization and struggle. Within this critical and literary discourse, Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* stands out as a key text exploring the entanglements of migration and crisis.

*Beyond the Horizon* follows Mara, a Ghanaian woman deceived into migrating to Germany, to be trafficked into prostitution. Mara's ordeal becomes a pointed critique of the gendered violence and economic desperation that many African women face.

In the novels, migration is represented as transition of crisis; not just during the physical journey, but also in the emotional and social disintegration that follows. The migrant is not romanticized as a triumphant figure, but rather portrayed as someone caught between hope and despair; self-discovery and loss. As Tosin Ojuola rightly observes, migration in African literature often symbolizes "the broken promises of postcolonial nations and the enduring resilience of the human spirit" (511).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent decades, migration has become one of the most compelling subjects of scholarly inquiry across disciplines, driven by global economic inequalities, political instability, and social unrest. However, the dominant discourse on migration often focuses on structural or policy-level concerns, such as border control, labour dynamics, and national security, leaving the psychological, emotional, and existential tolls of migration on individuals comparatively underexplored, especially within African literary narratives.

While some scholars have explored the theme of migration in relation to broader political or economic paradigms, less critical attention has been paid to the internal crisis migrants, especially women face, such as cultural dislocation, identity fragmentation, and psychological trauma. This research seeks to address this critical gap by focusing on how individual characters are shaped, burdened, and often broken by the crisis embedded within migratory experiences in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. The novel presents a rich narrative that portrays migration not as a mere geographical shift, but as a profoundly personal journey fraught with alienation, exploitation, and the negotiation of selfhood in unfamiliar and often hostile environments.

The study also examines how literary representations of migration in African women's writing illuminate the complex emotional, psychological, and cultural crisis that individuals endure, while also exploring the significant influence of gender in shaping these crises.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The critical theory preferred for this study is objectification theory, a somewhat extension of feminist theory. Being a feminist migration Bildungsroman, objectification theory is found germane for the criticism of the work as a migration novel and the attendant crisis typical of beyond the borders narratives.

This theory, which was first proposed by Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts in 1997 "articulates the range of ways in which sexual objectification can manifest in day-to-day life" (R. M. Calogero 574). According to

the duo, it encapsulates a number of situations such as gazing or leering at women's bodies, sexual comments about women's bodies, whistling or honking the car horn at female passerby, taking photographs of women's bodies and body parts with a cell phone, exposure to sexualized media imagery or pornography, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape; and it constitutes "part and parcel of broader sexist ideologies that perpetuate the culture-wide gender status quo" (574-5). In "Objectification Theory and Psychology of Women: A Decade of advances and Future directions", Bonnie Moradi and Yu-Ping Huang explain the objectification as "an integrative framework for understanding how women's socialisation and experiences of sexual objectification are translated into mental health problems; mainly, eating disorders, depression, and sexual dysfunction, each of which is more prevalent among women than men" (377). The concept is synonymous with sexual objectification, which "occurs when a woman is reduced to and/or treated as a body or collection of body parts available for sexual use" (1). Objectification or sexual objectification theory is essentially relevant in critiquing social, cultural and political perception of women's body; and it offers insights into the mental wellbeing of the objectified.

## II

The novel traces Mara's journey from adolescence as an innocent rural girl in Naka, Ghana, to a disillusioned and exploited woman in Europe, charting a tragic trajectory shaped by betrayal, migration, and the harsh realities of survival. The narrative is a trace of the protagonist's development from adolescence, encased in the cultural perception of her as an object – a mere commodity – to satisfy certain wants. At the outset, Mara is portrayed as a naïve and dutiful young woman, whose life is defined by traditional expectations and obedience. Her marriage to Akobi, arranged without her knowledge, but the sole approval of her family, is initially seen as a step towards stability and a better future. However, this union quickly becomes the catalyst for her suffering. The greenhorn, the "Johnnie-just come" began his new education in the city after migrating from the village of Naka, in a slavish way that defines her as Akobi's acquired object for self satisfaction. Her acceptance of her objectified position stems from her socio-cultural milieu. She grudgingly accepts every shit from Akobi on the cultural indoctrinated norm of submitting and "worshipping" her husband. This typifies Calogero's observation that "self-objectification as the first psychological consequence to emerge among girls and women as a result of living in a sexually objectifying cultural milieu" (575). She admits that she accepts to be that naïve and slavish because of the mental conditioning prescribing such naivety for a wife. It is this Calogero refers to as "adopting a third-person perspective on the self as opposed to a first-person perspective such that girls and women come to place greater value on how they look to others rather than how they feel or what they can do" (575). Mara recounts:

...after I had woken up first at dawn, and made the fire to warm up water for Akobi, and carried a bucketful of it with his sponge bag to the public bathhouse for him, and returned to wake him up to tell him his bath was ready – it was natural that I also had to stand outside while he bathed just in case some soap suds should go into his eyes and he should need me. Moreover, it was me who always carried back empty bucket and the bathing accessories and saw to drying his towel ready for next morning since he hated wet towels touching his skin. It was natural, too, when he demanded it, I slept on the concrete floor on just my thin mat while he slept all alone on the large grass mattress...to ensure his well-being, which included his pleasure (12-3).

Her failure at anytime is punished accordingly to remind Mara of her status, not as a wife but an object – "Akobi's bundle." She states thus:

"When I didn't bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee. When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap in the face. And when the napkin was not at hand when he howled for it, I received a knuckle on my forehead" (19).

A comparative analysis of Akobi's relationship with "his three women" – Mara, Gitte (Akobi's German wife), and Comfort – indicates that two are mere objects, commodities for pleasure and acquisition of wealth; the other is a respected human with fully bestowed human dignity – a goddess per se. Ab initio, Comfort is his woman of choice. However, she declines his hand for marriage, preferring a financially stable man. Akobi now "acquires" Mara, through his father, for the purpose of libidinal satisfaction; that is making her an object for his sexual pleasures and a ladder to climb his strongly sought social and economic high status. Bartky had argued in Moradi and Huang that sexual objectification is experiential thing "when a woman's sexual parts or functions are separated out from her person, reduced to status of mere instruments, or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her" (377). It is no doubt that Mara completely represents this idea to Akobi. From the point of her marriage in Naka through the city to Germany, she never had any conjugal consummation as to prove her a wife except that she thinks so and acts like one because, "Akobi was a closed man" (21). For instance, on Mara's first anticipated day of love from Akobi for working very hard to repay him the money he loaned her to trade eggs, she received a hurtful and surprised beating even as she is heavy with pregnancy. She runs out of the house to Mama Kiosk. But what happened when she returns home an hour later?

Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him... Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned me back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone. (22)

The case is not different from that of Osey and Vivian – “The beating over, Osey pushed his wife into the bathroom, taking with him the cassette player which they turned very loud” (74).

In other words, Mara and Vivian are mere instruments for venting out self instincts. For Bartky, “to be dealt with this way is to have one’s entire being identified with the body” (Moradi & Huang 377).

When Akobi secures an opportunity to travel to Germany, Mara’s life takes a decisive turn. She remains in Ghana at first, enduring loneliness and financial strain, while trusting in her husband’s promises to send for her. Eventually, Akobi arranges for her migration, filling her mind with visions of a brighter future abroad. Yet, upon arrival in Germany, Mara is disillusioned. Instead of a welcoming husband and a stable home, she is confronted with a cold and exploitative reality. The bizarre reality of her husband being more emotionally distanced from her; the reality of becoming a maid and having no husband at all; the reality of having no friends and relations to confide in; the reality of strange social, cultural, and economic environment; the reality of losing her identity for a new and fake one; the reality of a disappointed vision; in fact, the reality of confusion. She is no longer Akobi’s wife but “Akobi’s bundle” (71) that just arrived from Africa, waiting to be put up for transactions. Mara’s body becomes a commodity, her dignity eroded as she navigates the streets and clubs of an unfamiliar city. This forced descent into sex work is punctuated by moments of bitter reflection.

Darko unfolds Mara’s experiences through a lens of stark realism, detailing the emotional toll of her exploitation and the psychological weight of her dislocation. As the narrative progresses, Mara’s sense of hope diminishes, replaced by resignation. Her dreams of a better life beyond Ghana’s borders dissolve into a grim awareness of the cost of migration and the depth of Akobi’s betrayal. The story closes without a triumphant escape or dramatic redemption; instead, it leaves Mara standing on the metaphorical and literal margins, her journey emblematic of countless untold stories of women whose search for opportunity leads them into the shadows of exploitation.

The novel shows how migration deepens the oppression women face by trapping them in exploitative systems that strip away their agency and identity. Mara’s move to Germany is more than a physical journey; it marks a violent loss of autonomy. The promise of economic opportunity quickly gives way to the harsh reality of sex work, which commodifies her body and silences her voice. As Bell Hooks observes, “agency is often constrained, but it is never fully erased” (145), yet Mara’s attempts at control are repeatedly blocked. Chandra Talpade Mohanty describes the third world woman as a “contested space of colonial histories and capitalist exploitation” (68) – a description that fits Mara’s experience of being confined and controlled within intersecting systems of gender and economic power. Her forced use of a foreign language and imposed dress codes symbolize the loss of cultural and personal identity. While sending money home maintains an appearance of success, it hides the deep loss of freedom and self-worth caused by migration.

One major danger associated with sexual objectification is emotional/psychological crisis and pain. Moradi and Huang opine that “sexual objectification experiences and resultant self-objectification can lead women to separate themselves from their own bodily sensations and functions” (388). That explains the sharp pain Mara experienced when Akobi “entered” her at Osey’s place on arrival. Having been disillusioned on her newly acquired demeaning and ridiculous status and identity as Osey’s sister and she in whirl of emotions, lost the long craved passion for Osey. The fact that the duty-like quickie is strange to her and the manner in which it occurs fill her with shame as she “emerged from the bathroom feeling embarrassed and ashamed” (85). It concurs with Moradi and Huang who assert that “body shame is the emotion that can result from measuring oneself against an internalized or cultural standard and perceiving oneself as failing to meet that standard” (378). The psychological disintegration of Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* is most powerfully articulated through moments of self-alienation, where the body becomes both the site and symbol of crisis. In “Objectification Theory, Self-Objectification, and Body Image”, R. M. Calogero avers that self-objectification, an aspect of the objectification theory, leads to “several psychological or experiential consequences that are known to occur at a disproportionately higher rate among girls and women” (575) in the form of shame, appearance and safety anxiety, diminished awareness of internal bodily states, and reduced concentration on mental and physical tasks. He identifies self-objectification as being responsible for self or body surveillance (internalized view of self as object), which leads to a lot of other consequences including body shame, appearance anxiety, and mental health risks (such as eating disorder, depression, and sexual dysfunction). Findings above offer adequate insight to the experiences of Mara as portrayed at the end of the narrative, even though forming the first chapter of the novel, using the *medias res* technique.

I am standing here before my large oval mirror...starring painfully at an image. My image? No! – what is left of what used to be my image...I feel so cold because this coldness I feel does not grip my body so much as it does my soul... (1)

The migrant crisis is not merely an external set of socio-economic challenges but an internalized corrosion of selfhood, where the body is commodified and the soul is numbed in order to endure systemic exploitation. The bodily and mental crisis are both symptoms of patriarchal and capitalist structures that reduce Mara to an object of exchange; her identity reconstructed through the gaze of others and the demands of survival. Mara's perception of her own reflection as something alien underscores the destructive convergence of gendered oppression and displacement, in which migration becomes not a gateway to opportunity but a passage into sustained vulnerability. This disembodied awareness is a crisis of being — an existential fracture where memory of the self before migration stands in stark, painful contrast to the new individual that have emerged by the violence of the migratory experience.

The novel shows that migration is not only about physical movement but also about losing the sense of belonging that once shaped a person's life. For Mara, leaving home means slowly losing touch with the people, traditions, and memories that made her whom she was. This comes through with haunting clarity in her quiet confession: "I have decided to stop thinking about ever going home. I just don't belong there any longer" (139). These words hold more than sadness, they carry the realisation that home is no longer the safe and familiar place it used to be. The journey has changed her so much that the life she left behind can no longer fit her, just as the new world refuses to fully accept her. Mara's situation mirrors what Chandra Talpade Mohanty describes as the "double colonisation" (5) of migrant women: being pushed to the margins not only by patriarchal systems but also by foreign social and cultural structures. The severing of ties to her homeland strips away one source of identity, while the rejection she faces abroad denies her another. Without the comfort of shared customs, language, and community, women like Mara are left to build a life in places that often see them as outsiders, while also knowing they can never truly return to what they once had. This kind of displacement is quiet but deep, it is felt in the absence of familiar voices, in festivals no longer celebrated, in foods no longer cooked the same way. By letting go of the thought of going back, Mara protects herself from the pain of longing, but she also accepts that a part of her life is gone forever. In this way, *Beyond the Horizon* makes it clear that one of the hardest parts of migration is not the journey itself, but living with the feeling of having no real place to call home.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, Darko exposes how women's lives are often shaped by crisis rooted in patriarchal systems that commodify their bodies and erode their agency. Mara's departure from her home is not framed as a choice, but as a transaction:

But that was before I was given away to this man who paid two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewelry and two bottles of London Dry Gin to my family, and took me off as his wife from my little African village, Naka, to him in the city (3).

This exchange captures the way economic hardship and cultural traditions converge to reduce women to tradable possessions, setting the stage for a life defined by subjugation. Mara's situation reflects a crisis of autonomy and identity, her future predetermined not by her will, but by the price her family accepted. The "payment" (3) not only objectifies her but symbolically ties her to an unspoken debt, ensuring her entry into a new environment already steeped in inequality. The crisis begins before she leaves her village; it is embedded in the very act of being "given away" (3). By foregrounding this transactional language, the novel critiques both the local customs that permits and legitimise such exchanges and the wider socio-economic structures that sustain women's unpaid labour and sexual vulnerability. Mara's experience becomes a vivid case study of gendered crisis, where displacement is not an escape, but a deepening entrapment within the structures of oppression.

Darko crafts Mara as a character, whose silences are laden with meaning. Even in moments of extreme humiliation, the narrative shows her withdrawing into herself, choosing not to confront her oppressors directly. This quietness is not the absence of will, but a survival tactic that allows her to endure. However, a Bildungsroman, it is a technique by which the novelist, "ignorantly" reveals the ill, scares and dangers inherent in a system and cultural space.

Mara's loss of voice is as quiet as it is profound. Early in the novel, she reflects on her marriage with resignation, "polygamy was inherent in my upbringing and tolerance was the code word here" (41). That calm acceptance is not empowerment of polygamy or patriarchal system; it is the learned silencing of self. Later, in a moment of painful clarity, she asks: "Why couldn't I take control of my own life? If I was sleeping with men and charging them for it, it was me giving myself to them. The body being used and misused belonged to me..." (118). Mara stakes a claim on her own body, asserting agency where very little remains. This is a moment of anagnorisis leading to the reversal of Akobi's fortunes.

One major risk of sexual objectification is that it heightens self-objectification, which reduces interest in sexual behaviour. Again, the attendant body shame leads to “non-assertive and risky sexual behaviour, greater appearance concern during sexual intimacy, and lower reported sexual pleasure and arousability” (Moradi & Huang 389). The lived experiences of Mara authenticate the above theoretical assertion. Her monologue shows loss of sexual arousal stemming from, perhaps, risky sexual behaviour such as rough and frequent intimacy that have left her with both internal and external bodily harms in addition to the psychological ones. She acknowledges, for example, “I fear what I see when I look at myself. I shiver at the sight of my sore cracked lips” (2). She has drifted from being Akobi’s bundle to becoming Oves’ property that yields money for him. She admits, “This man I call Oves. Formally, to others, he is Overseer. He is my lord, my master and my pimp... I am his pawn, his slave and his property. What he orders, I do” (3). So when she can no longer withstand the pains, “Oves gives us ‘snow’ to sniff, to make us high” (139). She continues because she is compelled to ensure satisfaction of her customers and make higher earning for herself and her people in Naka. Her appearance before her oval mirror is for body surveillance which, as an integral aspect of self-objectification, is for reassurance of her sexy appearance. Unfortunately, however, it creates body anxiety leading to devastating mental health; and that has already set in here as Mara is seen in a flood of uncanny thoughts of regrets.

Tears are building up in my eyes. They always do when I stare at what is left of me. I may be dirty, old and overused but I can still feel emotions. I sit here alone before my large oval mirror and stare painfully at this bit of garbage that once used to be me and I cry (3).

The honesty of this moment forces the reader to face Mara’s fractured sense of self while reminding us that she is the one telling this story on her own terms. Rogers Asempasah and Christabel Aba Sam note that the first-person narration “foregrounds the subjectivity of the female migrant, allowing for a nuanced portrayal of her internal conflicts and resilience” (10). By letting Mara speak directly, Darko grants Mara full narrative control. She is not only a homodiegetic voice; she is also an autodiegetic narrator as she closes the gap between readers and herself, by revealing her innermost thoughts and feelings.

Darko’s novel is saturated with images that operate on both literal and symbolic levels, turning Mara’s physical body into a contested site of meaning. From the beginning, her body is commodified, she is referred to as “his pawn, his slave and his property” (3) a phrase that encapsulates the economic and sexual exploitation at the heart of her migrant experience. Metaphorically, the relationship between German (European) citizens and immigrants designate as patriarchal figures and their subservient – husbands and wives – where the wives are objectified. According to Rachael Calegero, Afroditi Pina, Lora Park, and Zera Rahemtulla, “The intended focus of objectification theory was to explicate the consequences of sexual and self-objectification for women’s lived experiences” (2). All immigrants (male and female) pay money to the aboriginals of Germany, who secure marriage certificate for them, not because they truly want to marry them, but to offer them a new status that enables them to live and work – stay in Germany – by obtaining relevant permit. It is certain that marriage offers a woman the right of indigenisation/citizenship of a place of marriage; it the same function that the arranged marriages perform for the immigrants. Similarly, it becomes a patriarchal system that enables the citizens enrich themselves and satisfy economic desires. In that case, immigrants are their bundles. It applies to Osey, Vivian, and Akobi who marries Gitte. They all paid a native “who married them” in order to obtain relevant permit. It could be inferred that objectification embraces transaction of human relations for economic survival. However, this transaction occurs between opposite genders and is transnational, or in the least, beyond borders.

### **Conclusion**

Migration, even within cultural and national boundaries, is far from a simplistic endeavour; it is often accompanied by inherent crises. These challenges become even more pronounced when migration involves crossing national and continental borders. For women in particular, the reality of migration is often far more unsettling than it is imagined to be.

Beyond the commonly acknowledged challenges of migration—such as racial prejudice, linguistic barriers, and cultural and identity crises—the protagonist, Mara, must also contend with a patriarchal system that denigrates her humanity. Her predicament is further compounded by her marriage to Akobi, a lazy and ungrateful husband who exploits and objectifies her.

Beyond the Horizon by AmmaDarko can be read both as a feminist *Bildungsroman* and as a work of migration fiction. However, its most striking leitmotif is the representation of the woman as an object for the attainment of social and cultural status, the acquisition of wealth, and the gratification of base desires. This perception of women is deeply rooted in both African and European patriarchal social and economic structures, which are portrayed as constraining, exploitative, and profoundly inhumane.

The novel serves as a call to cultural custodians, policymakers, and society at large to re-examine cultural norms and socio-economic policies in order to ensure the protection of women and other vulnerable groups. More importantly, it functions as a call to consciousness for women worldwide—to recognise their rights and assert their agency in the face of systemic oppression. Women must be empowered to make decisions about marriage, challenge dehumanising treatment, and reject the entrenched belief in their subservience to men.

Ultimately, the tragedy of the novel lies not only in Akobi's objectification of Mara, but also in Mara's internalisation of this objectification—seeing herself as his property, whose primary responsibility is the satisfaction of his ego.

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