

The thing around your neck by chimamanda ngozi adichie: themes of hope and relent...

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



1. Made a clearer thesis statement.
2. Changed and omitted a few examples
3. Tried to make a more logical transition between the two part of the argument.

Interiority and mobility are characterized as the key features of the “modern” youth in various Bildungsroman works as discussed by Moretti in “The Bildungsroman as a Symbolic Form”. In his work, he has also stated:“(...)the selfsame process gives rise to unexpected hope, thereby generating an interiority not only fuller than before but also (...) perennially dissatisfied and restless” (4). In the quote mentioned, the author considers the most prominent results of mobility and interiority, respectively, are “hope” and “restlessness”. Adichie’s work, “The thing around your neck,” which recounts the story of a young Nigerian woman- Akunna, and her struggles as she migrates to America clearly reflects these two important aspects.

The story opens with Akunna’s departure to the US, which was strongly implied to have not been out of her desire for an adventure or wonder. The “American visa lottery” might be the start of her inner restlessness as the author chose to put great emphasis not on Akunna’s reactions, but on those of Akunna’s family and relatives. She left home with the anticipations from her family to achieve the American dream: “In a month, you will have a big car. Soon, a big house”(115). These expectations act like invisible baggage that was holding her down, always reminding her the weight of her journey and how much it meant not to her, but to other people. After escaping from

her uncle's home, she felt as there was " a thing around her neck", keeping her up at night - this imagery frequently repeats throughout the story, symbolizes Akunna's anxiety and helplessness, the lack of self-control and her inner restlessness in this foreign land. One experience that contributes to her psychological burden was the battle with stereotypes and generalizations. Stereotypes and generalizations are familiar features of all immigration stories as of how common they are. Stereotypes put people in defined boxes and alienate them from others, taking away one's complex identity and the control of one's own image. Akunna was met with ignorant questions and condescending attitudes from people when talking about her home country or her relationship with a white man. These stereotypes emphasize differences, abnormality as Akunna's backgrounds and perception of the world can be considered polar opposites compared to other's. This aspect is highlighted strongly throughout her romantic relationship (" useful gifts," " cottage,"...), which leads to an ambiguous ending as these inner conflicts haven't been resolved.

But Akunna's departure to the US is not solely defined by anxiety or struggles, but also by hope and change, similar to many " modern" youth stories as talked about by Moretti. Even when her psychological burden hasn't disappeared entirely as the story moves forward, we can still feel Akunna's strong character development as well as her desire to finally create a sense of belonging to this foreign land. Akunna, as a youth on her journey to maturity, gradually gained self-control and a personal perspective. From being " invisible", helpless, Akunna gained the inner strength and confidence

to tell Juan she didn't want to serve that table, to appreciate a stranger's knowledge of Nigeria. Our protagonist started to develop emotional attachments, where she loosened up and appeared vulnerable, but now she also possessed a sense of independence and assertiveness, as she challenged her partner's "self-righteous" view. She got back in touch with her family, something she was hesitant to do before as she feared her life in America would be a disappointment to loved ones. She didn't want to be dependent on her new American boyfriend, refused his offer to cover the expenses for a trip back home, after finding out that her father has passed away. This moment is instrumental, as it is the bright example of the "give and take" relationship, of what she has to lose in order to fit in this new environment. The ambiguous ending implies important decisions Akunna would have to make, whether or not to return to America, and to make up her own mind about the relationship. This ending suggests a new beginning where she takes more control of her life, not having to comply with other's needs or expectations.