5. AFRICAN HYBRIDS: EXPLORING AFROPOLITANISM IN *GHANA MUST GO*

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Abstract
This article explores the representation of Afropolitanism in Taiye Selasi's debut novel *Ghana must go* (2013). The purpose of the article is to explore Afropolitanism using Selasi's (2005) essay "Who is an Afropolitan?" as a benchmark. Selasi blends the words 'Africa' and 'cosmopolitan' in her essay, which discusses the fashion, dance style, and nationality of the Afropolitan, but she does not discuss themes in literature. She coined the term because she was never satisfied with the answers she gave when she was questioned about her identity. This article draws on two main theoretical approaches, the first being the diaspora and transnationalism theory, addressing concerns of people who have re-patriated in search of self-development through work or studies; the second theoretical approach is the hybridity as creolisation theory, which addresses the concerns of people born in Europe or the West to purely African ancestors or with one of the parents of a different ethnicity. The article reveals the following themes that pertain to Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go* (2013): cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation and an African bond, thus demonstrating that Afropolitanism does not relate only to fashion, dance style and art, but its exploration is also relevant in literature. This article contributes to knowledge of the world as a global village, but more specifically the international integration of cultures as expressed in literature, not only in the African diaspora, but in Africa as well.

Keyword: African literature, Afropolitan, Afropolitanism, Selasi, hybridity, diaspora, transnationalism, identity formation

Introduction and background
Afropolitanism is a term originally coined by the Nigerian-Ghanaian (writer, dancer, photographer and documentary filmmaker), Taiye Selasi. She defines the term as "not being citizens but Africans of the world" (Selasi, 2005, para.3). She was born in London, raised in Boston and studied at Yale and Oxford Universities. In Otas (2012), Selasi explains that she coined the term Afropolitanism because while growing up, when asked where she was from she was always lost for words, and even if she did respond, people were never satisfied with the answers she gave. She explains that being Afropolitan is not an exclusive identity because she wrote the essay based on her experience. The response that emanated from her essay led to the writing of her debut novel, *Ghana must go* (2013), in which she captures the identity and roots of the Afropolitan.

Selasi (2005) states, "you will know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics and, academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, for example Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss, others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos" (para.3). However, scholars such as Gikandi (cited in Wawrzinek and Makokha, 2011, p. 79), defines Afropolitanism from a more cultural perspective where he asserts that "[t]o be afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time." While Mbembe (2007) asserts that Afropolitanism is an artistic and specific expressiveness of the world. It is being comfortable anywhere in the world whilst

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refusing to take an identity of a victim, which does not imply a lack of awareness of the injustice and violence inflicted against Africa and its people. Afropolitanism is rather a political and cultural stance in relation to nation, race and difference in general.

Selasi's (2005) essay "Who is an afropolitan?" describes the fashion, dance style, and nationality of the Afropolitan, but not the appearance of Afropolitanism as a thematic motif in literature, or more specifically, novels. In response to this problem, this article seeks to explore the theme of Afropolitanism in Selasi's debut novel *Ghana must go* (2013*)*, using Selasi's (2005) essay Who is an afropolitan? as a benchmark.

Defining Afropolitanism
Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitans are:
>   the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you.[…] Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue and speak a few urban vernaculars. There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands, and the various institutions that know us for our famed focus. We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world (para.3).

It is evident, from the quote above that there are several characteristics that Selasi (2005) links to being an Afropolitan. She mentions the careers, fashion, ethnicity, multilingualism and self-expression of the Afropolitan but also that they have a bond with both a country in Africa as well as one of the industrialised countries of the G8 which are all economically leading countries. Afropolitans thus do not have a rooted identity, but rather maintain a fluid concept of the self and can draw upon either appropriate cultural identity.

Similarly, Mbembe (2007) asserts that:
>   Afropolitanism is not the same as Pan-Africanism or *négritude*. Afropolitanism is an aesthetic and a particular poetic of the world. It is a way of being in the world, refusing on principle any form of victim identity – which does not mean that it is not aware of the injustice and violence inflicted on the continent and its people by the law of the world. It is also a political and cultural stance in relation to the nation, to race and to the issue of difference in general (p. 28-29).

Correspondingly, Gikandi (as cited in Wawrzinek & Makokha, 2011, p. 79), states that
>   [t]o be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; … to live a life divided across cultures, languages and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time.

The definitions given by Gikandi (2011), Selasi (2005) and Mbembe (2007) share three aspects of similarity: the first aspect is that an Afripolitan may be an African who is living or has lived outside of the continent. In her definition, Selasi (2005*)* speaks of "not citizens but Africans of the world" (para.3). Gikandi (as cited in Wawrzinek and Makokha, 2011, p. 79) states that it is "to be of Africa and other worlds", and Mbembe (2007) states it is "being comfortable anywhere in the

world" (p. 28-29). This similarity in all three definitions places the African that is being discussed in context. Thus, these Afropolitans find themselves wavering amidst multiple homes and multiple cultural points. The belonging to "Africa and other worlds" reflected in these definitions demonstrates the lack of rootedness Afropolitans may have to any one locus."

The second aspect of similarity is that of Africans that identify with Africa. In relation to identity, Selasi's (2005) definition speaks of an 'African ethos', while Gikandi (2011) says it is to be 'connected to knowable African communities' (p. 79). Mbembe (2007) takes his definition further and adds that Afropolitans are those Africans that are 'aware of the injustices inflicted against Africa and its people' (p. 29). Therefore, Afropolitans retain a strong link to their African roots.

The third aspect of similarity in the definitions is cultural hybridity. Selasi (2005), states that Afropolitans are "ethnic mixes, for example Ghanaian and Canadian" (para.3). Gikandi (2011) reiterates the same sentiments when he posits that it is to "live a life divided across cultures" (p. 79). Mbembe (2007) advances that Afropolitanism is a "political and cultural stance in relation to nation, race and difference in general" (p. 29).

In this article Afropolitanism will refer to Africans born in or outside of the African continent, whether purely African or ethnic mixes, who strongly identify with Africa and want to invest in Africa.

Theoretical frameworks

This article uses the diaspora and transnationalism theory and the hybridity as a creolisation theory as critical lenses for the exploration of Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go* (2013). McLeod (2000) states that theories of diaspora which address hybridity and difference are not always on par with the actual experience of being different as experienced by diasporic people. These theories emphasise new ways of thinking about identity as it relates to fluidity and hybridity and "these often clash with dominant ways of representing cultural difference in Western locations" McLeod (2000, p. 227). Bhabha (as cited in McLeod, 2000), also states that the process of identity formation for the migrant "brings with it trauma and anxiety" as the migrant is forever torn between losing his/her home identity and never quite being able to fully assimilate to new cultural expectations (p. 220).

A. Diaspora and transnationalism theory

The diaspora and transnationalism theory (Faist, 2010) addresses the concerns of people that have moved from their home countries in search of self-development through work or studies. There is currently an extensive movement of people, money and even culture across different countries and this is referred to as transnationalism.

The diaspora and transnationalism theory refers to the events of a specific social context. First, the theory emphasises the fact that immigrants always have strong connections or a bond with what they consider to be their motherland. The term "Afropolitan" itself reflects this link by incorporating "Afro" as part of its essence and, futher, as Gikandi (as cited in Wawrzinek & Makokha, 2011) explains, means to be "connected to knowledgable African communities." The

second emphasis is that increased transactions across borders are not necessarily an indication of global cosmopolitanism (Faist, 2010). There is thus a distinction between diaspora and transnational as opposed to global and world theories.

B. Hybridity theory

Ang (2003) problematises hybridity as lines of distinction in the world have become blurry and it is not easy to distinguish between what is different and the same, or here and there or between us and them. She further argues that "hybridity foregrounds complicated entanglement rather than identity, togetherness-in-difference rather than separateness and virtual apartheid. It is also a concept that prevents the absorption of all difference into a hegemonic plane of sameness and homogeneity" (p. 2). Thus hybridity does not imply a harmonious fusion between people who are different, but it makes them aware of the difficulties that can be encountered when living with such differences.

This article distinctly uses the hybridity theory as a creolisation theory because it accommodates the concerns of people born in Europe or the West to purely African parents or one in which the parents are of different races. It also examines how people who live across different continents adopt a new culture, how they maintain the two cultures and whether they remain loyal to one as opposed to the other.

Prahbu (2007) asserts that the theory of hybridity as a creolisation theory is concerned with the current state of diasporan communities in their adopted space, living away from their homeland. This theory addresses the concerns of how the diasporan communities develop themselves without losing their identity whilst preserving differences. These diasporan communities aspire to connect first with their home countries and secondly with other diasporans like themselves. The two theories summarise the essence of Afropolitanism and that there is a shared culture between Afropolitans and others from their adopted space and that there are also significant differences.

Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go*

This article uses Selasi's (2005) essay "Who is an Afropolitan?" as a benchmark for the exploration of Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go* (2013). She discusses, in no particular order, five main areas that define the Afropolitan namely: cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond of which only four will be discussed in this article, excluding self-expression.

This section provides a short summary of the novel; *Ghana must go* (2013) and thereafter discusses the above-mentioned themes benchmarked in Selasi's essay.

Summary of *Ghana must go*

Ghana must go (2013) is a story of a Ghanaian heart surgeon named Kweku Sai and his Nigerian wife Folasadé Sai, (born Savage), who dreamt of becoming a lawyer. They migrated to the United States of America in search of better education and career opportunities. Folasadé has a Scottish heritage because of her Scottish grandmother. In the United States, the couple had five children in

the following order; Olukayodé Sai the firstborn son, the twins Taiwo and Kehinde Sai and Folasadé (Sadie) Sai the last born. Kweku Sai is a renowned heart surgeon who works hard to give his family that which he never had. His wife is a housewife who also arranges and sells flowers in addition to taking care of the children. Unfortunately, Kweku Sai is unfairly dismissed from work because a wealthy patient dies in his operating room and the family of the patient refuses to accept his death. Kweku also refuses to accept this dismissal and pretends for eleven months that nothing has happened until his second-born son Kehinde comes to the hospital unannounced while he is being thrown out by the security guards. This leads to Kweku abandoning his family and returning to Ghana to start afresh. Fola is left with the responsibility of raising the children by herself, which she does successfully because the first born, Olu, becomes a medical doctor. Kehinde becomes a renowned artist, while his twin sister becomes the editor of a legal magazine. As the novel closes, the last born is still undecided as to her career path. Though the children are academically brilliant, they are not without emotional problems due to being raised by a single mother. Kweku remarries and settles in Ghana where he starts his own practice. Fola moves back to Ghana after all the children leave the house. Years later, Kweku dies of cardiac arrest and this brings the family together again in Ghana for his funeral.

Cultural Hybridity

The first theme Selasi (2005) discusses is cultural hybridity and, apart from generally discussing this theme, she presents a young generation of Africans that are cultural hybrids on four levels. Firstly, they are ethnic mixes. Secondly, she explains that the Afropolitan feels at home in many places and not necessarily one. Thirdly, the dress sense of the Afropolitan is a blend of clothes from Africa combined with low-cut jeans or any other item which would be considered fashionable in a cosmopolitan space. Finally, the Afropolitan is multilingual because he or she can speak and understand English, a Romance language, some urban dialects and a native language.

The characters themselves reflect a general cultural hybridity. Although born and raised in America the children are also very African in their mannerisms, which speak of a strong African bond. Simultaneously, these children are not oblivious to the flaws of their own African cultures, but they actually identify and question these flaws. Selasi, speaking through Taiwo, (2013, p. 233) writes:

> … and wonders why all of them do this, still now, even now, the African Filial Piety act? Lowered eyes, lowered voices, feigned shyness, bent shoulders, the curse of the culture, exaltation of deference, that beaten-in impulse to show oneself obedient and worthy of praise for one's reverence of Order (never mind that the Order is crumbling, corrupted, departed, dysfunctional; respect must be shown). She loathes them for doing it, herself and her siblings, the house staff, her African classmates. Quite simply, she isn't convinced that "respect" is the basis, not for them the respectful nor for them the respected. Most African parents, she'd guess, grew up powerless, with no one on whom to impose their own will, and so bully their children, through beatings and screaming, to lighten the load of postcolonial angst.

In the above citation, the twin girl expresses her frustration with the way Africans, including herself, speak and behave all in the name of upholding a culture. Though Taiwo does not verbalise it, it is a clear example of what Selasi (2005) refers to as the African expressing themselves by criticising or celebrating Africa. This quotation implies that this is one aspect of

the Afropolitan that has not been affected by the American culture because, even though the children were all born and raised in America, they continue to act as described in the quotation above. Thus it would be safe to assume that the previous scene in which the father and son were conversing was influenced more by the father's abandonment than it was by cultural hybridity, because if Taiwo questions the "[l]owered eyes, lowered voices, feigned shyness, bent shoulders" (Selasi, 2013, p. 233), then it means her brother Olu will ordinarily not address his father the way he did.

A. Ethnic mixes

One of the elements that Selasi (2005) stresses in "Who is an Afropolitan?" is the fact that some Afropolitans are ethnic mixes and this she discusses further in *Ghana must go* (2013). Her explanation of ethnic mixes is spelt out as people born from two different ethnic groups, more specifically of an African parent and a European or American parent.

Although Folasadé features as a diasporan mother, it is interesting to note her heritage: her grandmother was a Scotswoman and her grandfather an Igbo man (Selasi, 2013). The knowledge of Folasade's heritage explains the twins' appearance. The Sai children are thus ethnic mixes because Olu, the eldest son, although dark-skinned, resembles his mother who is Yoruba; the twins resemble their Scottish grandmother; Sadie, the youngest although she is light-skinned resembles her father who is Ga but she also has Ethiopian eyes, Native American cheekbones, black hair and blue eyes. Thus the children's appearance is an outward reflection of mixed cultures. This multi-cultured appearance is however more a curse than a blessing to the children. Olu, the eldest wishes that he could be handsome like his young brother Kehinde. While Kehinde wishes that he could just be black or white and not a blend of the two. Taiwo, although very beautiful, resembling her Scottish grandmother, wishes that she had straight hair like a white person. Sadie, on the other hand wishes that she was white because she hates everything about herself, her facial features and body.

B. Dress sense

Selasi (2005) describes the Afropolitan as having a dress sense that adopts from both worlds, something African combined with something from their adopted space. This element of cultural hybridity is not presented at length in *Ghana must go* (2013). There are only three instances in the novel in which this type of dress style is explained and two do not even refer to Afropolitans but to the diasporan parents, Kweku and Fola. Fola "wore bell-bottom jeans and a wraparound sweater… A gold-flecked asooke, the Nigerian cloth" (p. 53) while Kweku wore "Flintstones-looking flip-flops from the airport in Ghana (whence the crazy MC Hammer pants in gye nyame print)" (Selasi, 2013, p. 40). However, Kehinde their Afropolitan son was described to have been wearing what he always wore to work: "spattered sweatpants, an NYU T-shirt, Moroccan babouches" (Selasi, 2013, p. 161).

The above mentioned are typical examples of an Afropolitan dress style, even though Fola and Kweku are not Afropolitan, but rather diasporan parents. They both fit the description of the Afropolitan dress sense when Fola wore a jean with an asooke, while Kweku wore MC Hammer pants but one that had a Ghanaian print on it and Kehinde rounded off his artist Afropolitan look with Moroccan babouches. Their dress sense is significant because it is representative of the different spaces they identify with as home; not entirely African or American.

C. Geography

Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitans "belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many" (para. 2). Thus for the Afropolitan, home can be America, Africa or anywhere else they may identify as home. Geography in an Afropolitan/hybrid situation is complex because it refers to the physical home space, proxemics and nostalgia because the physical hybrid space creates an emotional one in the form of nostalgia. The characters in *Ghana must go* (2013), reflect this physical hybridity as they all consider many places to be home. For instance, when a cab driver asked Taiwo where she was from because she sounded English, to which she responded that she studied in England, thus considering it another home (Selasi, 2013). Although they were in New York, the radio was playing an Afro-pop hit by a Sierra Leonean artist. Similarly, Kehinde her twin brother had won the Fullbright to Mali, had worked as a waiter in Paris and then started showcasing his paintings in London (Selasi, 2013). He too considered the many places he had been to as home. Thus songs, personal names, surroundings and even accent contribute to creating a hybrid citizen. These elements stir up feelings of nostalgia for an absent home, leaving the characters feeling partially connected to any place in which they reside.

For the Afropolitan there is thus a 'here' and a 'there' and the Afropolitan must identify with many cultures as explained by Selasi that "[w]hile our parents claim one country as home, we must define our relationship to the places we live" (Selasi, 2013, para.8). Unlike, their diasporan parents in *Ghana must go* (2013), the Afropolitans cannot define their home as just America because they were born there, but home for them is all the places they have lived because of studies or work.

D. Multilingualism

Selasi (2005), states that most Afropolitans are multilingual. They can speak English, a Romance language, an urban vernacular and they can understand an indigenous language. However, this is one aspect of cultural hybridity that Selasi's novel *Ghana must go* (2013) does not dwell on in depth.

There are only three instances where Selasi alludes to language and only two of these instances relate to the Afropolitan as she has described in her essay. The first instance is when Fola, who is not an Afropolitan thinks about how she has not yet told her house staff that she can understand their gossip of her in Twi. In a different scene, Fola speaks to Olu, her eldest child, in an indigenous language, demonstrating that Afropolitans can understand an African language. The other instance was when Taiwo engaged in a discussion with the Dean and tried to impress him with her knowledge of Latin and Greek (Selasi, 2013) and this evidently shows the ability of the Afropolitan to speak a Romance language.

Careers

The second theme Selasi (2005) discusses is Afropolitan careers. She asserts that, unlike in the past when the parents of the current diasporans strived to become medical doctors, engineers, lawyers and bankers, the Afropolitans are venturing into fields like media, politics, music, and design without being shy to express their African influences in their work. Thus this section looks at the different careers explored in *Ghana must go* (2013) and whether they relate to Afropolitanism in any way.

Kweku who had moved as a diasporan in search of better career prospects became a brilliant surgeonwith diasporan ambitions, which were to provide for his family the privileges he did not enjoy. This example is significant because Kweku was an artist, not in the sense of a sketcher or a painter, as he would have thought of himself but more of a 'surgical' artist because he was renowned for his work as a surgeon. Mr Lamptey had asked Kweku how he could have become a surgeon when he was obviously an artist (Selasi, 2013) because the picture of the house he dreamt of building was drawn as if by a sketcher, Given his artistic abilities, Kweku would most probably have followed an Afropolitan career if his circumstances or the political climate of his time had allowed it.

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Kehinde became a renowned artist whose works sold at huge amounts. Taiwo almost followed her mother's dream of becoming a lawyer but when she realised it was not what she wanted to do, she ended up being an editor for the *Law Review*. These careers are what Selasi refers to as the careers Afropolitans are venturing into (Selasi, 2013) as they veer away from the more traditional paths laid out by their parents. The extended number of career choices open to Afropolitans suggests a financial security that surrounds these Afropolitans, as they are able to attain education and take up careers in the arts. It also suggests that the global movements of African migrants around the world who take menial work are excluded from the title of Afropolitans.

Identity formation

The following theme, which is also presented the most by Selasi (2005), is identity formation. The Afropolitans must form an identity on the following three levels. The first level is nationally, because they have to define their relationships to the places they currently live. The second is racially, because though others might consider themselves black, others biracial, or none-of-the-above; there are also those who don't consider themselves as black. Nevertheless, Selasi explains race is a "matter of politics and not of pigment" (Selasi, 2005). Finally, they must form an identity on a cultural level because the culture with which they identify the most is influenced by the place they consider to be home more than others.

All the characters went through a process of questioning their identity and eventually making peace with who they are. Identity or a lack thereof, is significant in diasporic settings because it affects the individual's sense of home. This section thus examines the four characters, the children, who fit the definition of Afropolitanism.

Taiwo

Taiwo, the twin girl, struggles with identity issues on two levels; she feels unloved by her mother and has issues with being black. The twins "were extraordinarily good-looking" (p. 219) without a doubt because of the Scottish blood that ran through their veins. Taiwo inherited her mother's model like figure, which her younger sister desired. Despite her good looks, Taiwo had issues of identity because she felt that she was the unloved daughter. It seemed as if her mother loved Sadie more not just because she was the last born, but because she had complications when she was born. This caused a divide between them which became worse when her mother sent them, to

Nigeria to live with her brother, Uncle Femi. This confirmed Taiwo's fears of not being wanted by her mother even more and led to them being estranged (Selasi, 2013).

The following citation is evidence of the identity issues Taiwo is dealing with. She admits to having grown dreadlocks because she wanted to 'fit in' with the white girls at her 'predominantly white college' (p. 138). She wants to fit in by being able to run in the rain, like the white girls. A black girl will naturally or with extensions not be able to run in the rain because it will mess up her hair.

> Think about it. Barring Rastafarians, the real ones, religious ones, what kind of black girl grows locks? Black girls who go to predominantly white colleges, that's who. Dreadlocks are black white-girl hair. A Black Power solution to Bluest Eye problem: the desire to have long, swinging, ponytail hair. The braids take too long after a while, the extensions. But you still need a hairstyle for running in rain. Forget the secret benefit from affirmative action; this is the white woman's privilege. Wet hair. Not to give a *shit* about rain on your blowout. *I'm serious*". (Selasi, 2013, p. 138)

Interestingly, Selasi (2005) states the Afropolitans have to define themselves as black or white and this depends on whom they grew up with, whether it is in the close proximity of other black people or in the close proximity of white people. This explains Taiwo's confusion with regards to race, because although she was raised by black parents, she went to a predominantly white school, which has left her feeling or wanting to be white rather than black. Thus, Taiwo has concerns with feeling neglected by her mother and being black; the latter forces her to want to conform to looking like the white girls.

Olukayodé

Olukayodé, the eldest son, grapples with their father abandoning them and then finding his own identity as a man. Firstly, Olu has always been the model son who idolised his father. His father dreamt of starting his own practice called Sai and Sons and to help realise this dream he followed in his father's footsteps and became a surgeon (Selasi, 2013). So when his father leaves them he is left with a lot of questions.

On graduation day, instead of attending graduation, Olu travels to Ghana to see his father for the first time after he had abandoned them. Kweku reprimands Olu, "[y]ou can't do that…" his father said, weakly now, and faltering. "Give up when you're hurt. Please. You get that from me. That's what I do, what I've done. But you're different. You're different from me, son-" (p. 253). However, Olu always felt that he was just like his father, thus he is left torn between the person he had internalised and his new identity as "different" from that internal image (Selasi, 2013, p. 120).

In another example concerning Olu, he faces discriminatory stereotypes often put on African men, despite having grown-up in the United States. His wife's father confronts Olu about being just another African man. How could he be sure that his daughter, Ling, will not be abandoned like many other African men were in the habit of doing?

You know, I never understood the dysfunctions of Africa. The greed of the leaders, disease, civil war. Still dying of *malaria* in the twenty-first century, still hacking and raping, cutting genitals off? Young children and nuns slitting throats with machetes, those girls in the Congo, this thing in Sudan? As a young man in China, I assumed it was ignorance. Intellectual incapacity, inferiority perhaps. Needless to say I was wrong, as I've noted. When I came here I saw I was wrong. Fair enough. But the backwardness persists even now, and why is that? When African men are so bright? as we've said. And the women, too, don't get me wrong, I'm not sexist. But why is that place still so backward? I ask. And you know what I think? No respect for the family. The fathers don't honor their children or wives. The Olu I knew, Oluwalekun Abayomi? Had two bastard children plus three by the wife. A brain without equal but no moral backbone. *That's* why you have the child soldier, the rape. How can you value another man's daughter, or son, when you don't value your own? (Selasi, 2013, p. 119-120)

Dr Wei, Ling's father, expresses his stereotypes towards African men and how he has reservations about his daughter's happiness. He plainly tells Olu that, as an African man, he is not different from any other he has encountered. He restates Olu's father's failures by reminding him how his father abandoned his wife and children and that Olu is exactly like his father. This creates fear in Olu because what if he turns out to be like other African men? Similarly, he wished that his family had photos or he knew their lineage because his parents never talked about their grandparents or showed them any photos. This proves Selasi's (2005) point when she states that the "modern adolescent African is tasked to forge a sense of self from wildly disparate sources" (para.8).

Kehinde

Kehinde, one of the twins, also deals with feelings of inferiority, failure and questions of identity. Firstly, Kehinde felt inferior for having failed his father. He was haunted by thoughts of whether his father would have stayed with the family if it was Olu instead of him who saw their father for the last time before he abandoned the family. His father's dream had been to start Sai and Sons, a medical practice but he, unlike Olu, did not become a medical doctor and thus felt like he failed his father. Kehinde never liked mathematics and science at school and feels guilty because if he had done so he would have been accepted by his father and brother (Selasi, 2013).

Secondly, Fola had never spoken about her parents and had left Kehinde wondering why he and Taiwo looked different from his other siblings, but Uncle Femi told them about their grandparents while they were in Nigeria and showed them a portrait of their grandmother. Seeing his grandmother awakened feelings of aversion for her because now he understood where they got their looks from. He felt this way because she was the direct cause of his identity crisis. He was neither black nor white, had no past or history he could relate to and thus felt he did not belong to a specific group of people.

In summary, Kehinde experiences what Selasi (2005) explains in her essay, that Afropolitans are "[b]rown-skinned without a bedrock sense of 'blackness,' on the one hand; and often teased by African family members for 'acting white' on the other – the baby-Afropolitan can get what I call 'lost in transnation'"(para.8).

Sadie

Sadie, the last child of the Afropolitan children, battles with her looks and her weight. Sadie was born prematurely and thus weighed very little as a baby. Her mother, out of worry, overfed Sadie who grew up disliking her body and her facial features. She wished that she had her sister's looks or could simply be Philae, her white friend. She expresses this when she says that they "are ethnically heterogeneous and culturally homogenous. She doesn't want to be Caucasian. She wants to be Philae" (Selasi, 2013, p. 146).

In addition, Sadie did not like her body weight and wished she looked like her mother or sister, who both had figures like those of models. This desire leads to her developing an eating disorder called bulimia. The disorder causes her to overeat and then make herself vomit in order to avoid gaining weight. Whether her eating disorder is simply because of her weight is questionable since Sadie also feels that she was not planned and also that she is very different from her siblings who are all gifted at something and very beautiful. Sadie however comes to an understanding of her identity towards the end of the story when she meets her father's sister. She is astonished by the resemblance they share, she feels as if looking at herself in a mirror and refers to it as the 'joke of genetics' (Selasi, 2013, p. 264). However, she still wants to be white and beautiful.

In conclusion, Selasi (2005) states that the Afropolitan must form an identity along three levels, which is national, racial and cultural, and the evidence shows that the identity formation that these Afropolitans go through in their personal lives is indirectly linked to nation, race and culture. It is evident in *Ghana must go* (2013) that the migrant characters experienced some sort of trauma, anxiety and even pain in forming their identities.

An African bond

The last theme Selasi (2005) discusses is the African bond. Firstly, Afropolitans strongly identify with a specific motherland in Africa and thus they have a desire to engage with Africa. Secondly, they want to both criticise and 'celebrate' the parts of Africa that means the most to them. Finally, they want to understand the cultural complexity of Africa whilst honouring the intellectual, spiritual and cultural legacies that have sprung from Africa.

Selasi (2013) discusses the African bond of the parents more than the African bond of the Afropolitans. This could be because of the plot of the story as the author makes us aware that the children never lived or were brought to Africa to visit, with the exception of the twins who lived in Nigeria for a brief period. In the following excerpt, for instance, Selasi (2013) reveals the strong African bond of the mother in the story. "Fola had established sovereignty over naming years back (first name: Nigerian, middle name: Ghanaian, third name: Savage, last name: Sai)" (p. 18) and she became even more proud of her Yoruba heritage when she became "*iya-ibeji*, a mother of twins" (p. 13). She kept narrating the Yoruba myth of *ibeji* to Kweku that (twins) are two halves of one spirit, a spirit too massive to fit in one body, and liminal beings, half human, half deity, to be honored, even worshipped accordingly" (p. 83).

In a different scene, Fola was not just proud of being African but instilled the same in Sadie, her youngest daughter. One day Sadie "wrapped herself up in the kente, delighted, and marched to the kitchen, I'm a Yoruba queen!" (Selasi, 2013, p. 153). This had made Fola so proud to see her

daughter recognising her African heritage. A heritage which she must have spoken of or taught to her children, otherwise Sadie would not have known about it.

Ironically, even though Fola had such a strong bond with Africa, she never took her children to Africa. Sadie asked Kehinde why their parents never brought them to Africa, to which he responded that it was because they were hurt (Selasi, 2013). The parents were hurt by the political climate that prevailed during their time and thus found it difficult to return. Their father abandoned his family and returned to Ghana because of the shame of having lost his job, whilst Fola never had the economic means to come to Africa because she had to take care of the children and put them through school.

At the end of the story, while they are in Ghana, Sadie also bonds with Africa because she had always sought after her gift and discovers it in Africa when she is led by the local girls and discovers that she has the gift of dancing. She learned to dance in a few minutes and was amazed at the ease with which she learned. She cried because in Africa she had discovered what her gift was and thus questioned why her mother had never brought her back.

In summary, Selasi (2005) discusses the Afropolitan's bond to Africa as being a desire to return to Africa and make a positive impact or contribute to Africa from somewhere else in the world or to simply identify with Africa as a place of heritage by way of ancestors. The examples above have all shown the latter, identifying with Africa because of heritage, even though Fola the character who most closely shows this bond is not Afropolitan.

Conclusion

The different themes Selasi (2005) presents in her essay were explored and discovered in *Ghana must go* (2013), although not all the themes were presented at equal length and detail. Selasi focused more on identity formation and an African bond. Selasi (2005) states how some Afropolitans are ethnic mixes who dress in a certain style and are multilingual. These elements of hybridity were not presented in depth and it could have been because of the plot of the story.

Selasi (2005) states that "the Afropolitan must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between" (para.9). Selasi (2013) thus presents identity on a more racial and cultural level. The characters in *Ghana must go* (2013), as evidenced by the research findings struggled with issues of identity formation.

The characters also had a strong African bond but whether it was because they knew Africa is questionable because the parents, Kweku and Fola, had strong African bonds because they were born and raised in Africa. Selasi (2005), states that Afropolitans have strong ties with Africa because they want to plough back into Africa. However, the bonds that the children had with Africa were not because they wanted to plough back into Africa, but because their mother was from Africa and their father had moved back to Africa. Thus, their lives were inherently linked to their African roots.

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