

AN EXPLORATION OF AFROPOLITANISM IN TAIYE SELASI'S *GHANA*  
*MUST GO* AND CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of the representation of Afropolitanism in Taiye Selasi's debut novel *Ghana must go* (2013), and Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013). The purpose of the study was 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, *Who is an Afropolitan?* which discusses the fashion, dance style, and nationality of the Afropolitan, but not themes in literature. She coined the term because she was never satisfied with the answers she gave when she was questioned about her identity. In the exploration of Afropolitanism in the two novels, the researcher used the content analysis method. The study used the diaspora and transnationalism theory which addresses the concerns of people that have moved from their home countries in search of self-development through work or studies as well as the hybridity as creolisation theory which addresses the concerns of people born in Europe or the West to purely African ancestors or one of the parents are of a different race. The study revealed the following themes that pertain to Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go* (2013) and *Americanah* (2013): cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation and an African bond. The theme of self-expression was explored only in *Americanah* (2013). For example, in *Ghana must go* (2013) the twin boy struggles with his identity because of his Scottish heritage which gives him a skin complexion that is neither black nor white and he does not know what nationality to consider himself. In *Americanah* (2013) the main character's cultural hybridity is highlighted when she finds herself missing America while at the same time loving being in Nigeria. The study concluded that Afropolitanism does not only relate to fashion, dance style and art, but its exploration is also relevant in literature. This study

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.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is a dedication to my children, Joshua and Zoey, my sisters and my brother. God is changing the ~~#~~Gawas destinies. I love you all!!!

## DECLARATION

I, Emelda Uaundjua /Ucham, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

#### 1. 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by discussing the orientation of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the organisation of the study.

#### 1.2 Orientation of the study

Afropolitanism is a term originally coined by the Nigerian-Ghanaian (writer, dancer, photographer and documentary filmmaker), Taiye Selasi, who combined the terms *African* and *cosmopolitan*, in her 2005 essay in which she defines the term as “not being citizens but Africans of the world” (para.3). Selasi, was born in London, raised in Boston, studied at Yale and Oxford Universities, and resides in Rome.

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, tenets 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).

As Afropolitanism is a relatively new term, reviews of Chimamanda Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013) have alluded to the theme of Afropolitanism in the novel, and thus the present researcher was interested in assessing the exploration of the theme in both novels *Ghana Must go* (2013) and *Americanah* (2013). However, scholars such as Gikandi (cited in Wawrzinek and Makokha, 2011, p. 79), define 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”.

Mbembe (2007) asserts that Afropolitanism is an artistic and specific expressiveness of the world. It is being comfortable anywhere in the world whilst 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 the nation, race and difference in general.

The gap in the knowledge is that Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013) has not been explicitly linked to Afropolitanism and this gap is what the researcher seeks to explore.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The study aims to examine the exploration of Afropolitanism in Selasi's *Ghana must go* (2013) and Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). The essay *Who is an afropolitan?* (Selasi, 2005) discusses a younger generation of Africans that live on various continents other than Africa. It describes a national, cultural and racial identity of the afropolitan. According to Selasi (2005), afropolitans are not shy about expressing their African influences in their work. Thus Afropolitanism must be explored diversely and not be limited to aspects that has to do with nationality, fashion, language and career.

However, Afropolitanism is a relatively new concept and scholars such as Mbembe (2007) have explored this concept from a more cultural perspective, whilst Gikandi (in Wawrzinek and Makokha, 2011) has explored the political dimension. Selasi's essay *Who is an afropolitan?* (2005) describes the fashion, dance style, and nationality of the afropolitan, but not its themes in literature, or more specifically, novels.

In response to this problem, given that Selasi's essay is not exhaustive, the researcher seeks to explore the theme of Afropolitanism in two novels: Selasi's debut novel *Ghana Must go* (2013), and Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), using Selasi's essay *Who*

*is an afropolitan?(2005)* as a benchmark. The researcher chose Adichie's novel because she is referred to as one of the prominent afropolitans in Selasi's essay.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- What is the relevance of Afropolitanism in exploring African literature?
- How does Selasi reveal the theme of Afropolitanism in her novel *Ghana Must go (2013)*?
- How does Adichie's novel *Americanah (2013)* relate to the idea of Afropolitanism as benchmarked in *Who is an Afropolitan? (2005)*

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study contributes to novel, nuanced and current trends in literature, whilst providing fresh insights for analyses in future research exploring Afropolitanism. This study also contributes to the knowledge depicting 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 also in Africa as well.

#### **1.6 Limitation of the study**

Afropolitanism is a new term that has not been widely explored in literature. Despite the dearth of literature on Afropolitanism, this study has allowed the researcher to do an in-depth analysis of Selasi's novel *Ghana must go (2013)* and Adichie's novel *Americanah (2013)*.

### **1.7 Outline of chapters**

The study comprises five chapters, subdivided into subtitles. The first chapter provides the introduction, orientation, statement of the problem, significance and the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 provides the literature review and theoretical frameworks, where the diaspora and transnationalism as well as the hybridity as creolisation theories are discussed. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology used for the study. Chapter 4 discusses Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)*, followed by a summary of the discussion of the two novels. The final chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explores Afropolitanism in two novels, Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana must go* (2013). The study explores Afropolitanism as benchmarked in Selasi's (2005) essay *Who is an Afropolitan?* This literature review focuses on the research questions as outlined in the previous chapter, discusses the key concepts, gaps in the literature and the theoretical framework.

This research further explores the new definitions that have emerged after Selasi's (2005) essay. The definitions lead the discussion of the study into whether Afropolitanism is relevant in exploring literature and if it is, how are the themes of Afropolitanism unearthed in the selected novels. Importantly, the study uses two theoretical frameworks; the diaspora and transnationalism theory, and the hybridity as creolisation theory, as critical lenses to ascertain the relevance of Afropolitanism.

#### 2.2 DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS

In order to foreground the study, a definition of key concepts is given in this section.

##### 2.2.1 AFRICAN DIASPORA

According to Okpewho, Boyce and Mazrui (1999), Africans living in the diaspora lost their pride because they no longer believed in themselves and their cultures.

They considered their cultures to be lower than others. Thus, for many years, the identity that the Africans had of themselves was one they had received from others. However, due to living in the diaspora, Africans started realising that they were not accepted and this realisation started the Africans' ambition for emancipation and equality.

After the need for a cultural renaissance arose, Fanon (1965) (in Okpewho et al., 1999) asserts that Africans are affirming themselves by embracing the cultures and traditional beliefs they had once rejected because they are consciously reconnecting with their heritage.

Fanon's (1965) observation is an indication of how Africans in the diaspora began to re-adopt their cultures and traditions which they were ashamed of because of indoctrination from colonisers. However, since the focus of this study is not the African diaspora as a concept, the researcher only examined one definition of the African diaspora which Harris (as cited in Alpers, 2001, p. 8) presents as a concept that incorporates the following:

[t]he global dispersion (voluntary and involuntary) of Africans throughout history; the emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social condition; and the psychological or physical return to the homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, continuous, and complex phenomenon stretching across time, geography, class, and gender.

The definition given above, though befitting does not encompass everything Selasi wishes to address regarding a new generation of Africans in the diaspora. A significant difference is the ‘involuntary dispersion’ of Africans, because the Africans whom Selasi (2005) refers to as Afropolitans have moved and are still moving voluntarily. They are a generation born from the Africans that were dispersed involuntarily. The definition, however, also addresses two key issues which Selasi (2005) also focuses on, namely identity and strong ties with Africa.

### **2.2.2 AFROPOLITANISM**

This section discusses the contextual background of the concept of Afropolitanism and examines three definitions of Afropolitanism. Finally, a definition to guide the rest of the study is discussed.

Although the concept of African diaspora was introduced in the 1960s, it does not incorporate everything Selasi (2005) wants to state regarding a new identity for Africans living in the diaspora. Thus, it is decades later that Selasi (2005) in her essay titled *Who is an Afropolitan?* coins a new term combining the terms ‘African’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ to form Afropolitan. Selasi (as cited in Otas, 2012) states that she wrote the essay because she needed a new way to think of who she was and where she was from, because whenever people had questioned her about her descent she was never satisfied with the answers she gave. This in turn led her to feel like she had an “identity that was somewhere in the crack, an unconventional, national and cultural hybridity” (p. 38). It was this grappling with identity formation that led to the essay ‘*Who is an Afropolitan?*’ (2005).

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. You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. 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.

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”.

Eze (2014) concurs with other scholars when he states that:

[a]n Afropolitan, in my understanding, is that human being on the African continent or of African descent who has realized that her identity can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa. Afropolitans claim that they are no longer just X as opposed to Y; rather they are A and B and X. Their realities are already intermixed with the realities of even their erstwhile oppressors. It is not possible to go back to their native place, since they are all mutts, biologically or culturally (p. 240).

The definitions given by Gikandi (2011), Selasi (2005) and Mbembe (2007) share three aspects of similarity: the first aspect is that of Africans living outside 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.

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).

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).

According Wawrzinek and Makokha (2011, p. 79) it is evident that there are numerous attempts to define and clarify the concept of Afropolitanism at different levels because

[t]he V and A Museum in London ... hosted a series of events aimed at celebrating the Afropolitans. The highlight of that particular summerfest, which lined up activities that included fashion, film, photography, textile exhibitions, and music, was a discussion that aimed at providing answers to a fundamental question: 'What is an Afropolitan?' ... it became clear that Afropolitanism means different things to different people – for some, *African* is the more important element of the term; for others, *cosmopolitanism*. However, there was acquiescence that an Afropolitan is someone who vests part of his or her identity in the African continent.

Cotter (2008) refers to Afropolitanism as “the modish tag for new work made by young African artists both in and outside Africa. What unites the artists is a shared view of Africa, less as a place than as a concept” (para. 1). In contrast to the other definitions that have been examined above, Cotter (2008) refers specifically to African artists who live in the United States or Europe and were born in Africa after 1970. He singles out these artists because before the 1980s, African artists did not participate in the European or American art world.

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

### **2.2.3 PAN-AFRICANISM OR NEGRITUDE?**

Mbembe (2007) in his definition states that Afropolitanism is not Pan-Africanism or Négritude. Thus, it is appropriate to look at both definitions in order to ascertain the accuracy of what Mbembe states.

According to Geiss (1969), “[a]lthough it is talked about a great deal, Pan-Africanism is one of the least known political movements or concepts of our time” (p. 187), because the concept is historically complicated and has never been sufficiently examined.

Bankie and Mchombu (2008) assert that:

Pan-Africanism was originally conceived in the New World, rather than Africa itself. Reacting to the brutality of slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean, people of African origin naturally yearning for their ancestral homeland and the dignity and freedom it represented, thought of creating a forum through which they could state their grievances and pave the way for a return to Africa (p. 31).

Bankie and Mchombu (2008) further state that the Pan-African movement was led by African-Americans and was not owned by Africans until 1945. The movement addressed different issues relating to Africa, for example, unity, liberation, development, peace and progress. However, it is not clear who the actors are on the Pan-African agenda of today.

The definition by Chrisman (as cited in Nantambu, 1998, p.562) is more elaborate because he asserts that:

the Pan African vision has as its basic premise that we the people of African descent throughout the globe constitute a common cultural and political community by virtue of our origin in Africa and our common racial, social and economic oppression. It further maintains that political, economic, and cultural unity is essential among all Africans, to bring about effective action for the liberation and progress of the African peoples and nations.

Similar to Pan-Africanism, Thompson (2002) states that there is no consensus regarding the definition of Négritude and this lack of definition has led to Négritude being described as an outdated concept. Irele (as cited in Thompson, 2002, p. 144) states that “[i]t is no service to African culture to cling like an oyster to notions overtaken by history. The concept of Négritude which was revolutionary in the forties and fifties is today only fit for the museum of literature.”

Thompson (2002) further states that these types of assertions require a re-examination of the earliest definitions of Négritude. Senghor (1974) states that the term was coined by his friend Aime' Cesaire, and according to Thompson (2002), since Senghor was among the first to define Négritude, his best definition was that “it is the totality of civilization and its values within the black world” (p. 144).

However, Senghor (1974) also pointed out that the relation of Negritude is first to politics as expressing community mindedness, while in the field of arts it relates to “rhythm and the symbolic image” (p. 270).

Baron (1966) posits that:

Négritude has always been a literary-cultural movement, a movement more potent in the realm of intellect and ideas than in terms of concrete political activity, and it might even be argued that its net effect is more detrimental than helpful to the Pan-African aim of political union on a continental scale’ (p. 267 ).

It is evident from these definitions that Pan-Africanism and Negritude are political movements whereas Afropolitanism is a concept that relates to identity. Thus the researcher agrees with Mbembe (2007) when he states that Afropolitanism is not Pan-Africanism or Négritude, because neither refers to or even alludes to the characteristics of an Afropolitan.

#### **2.2.4 COSMOPOLITANISM**

This study will be incomplete without an examination of what is considered to be cosmopolitan. Hannerz (2006, p. 5) offers the following examples:

“Cosmopolitan” can stand, or has stood, for a number of things, at different times and in different places, in the vocabularies of different people – it may be someone with many varied stamps in his or her passport; or a city or a neighbourhood with a mixed population; or, with a capital C, a women’s

magazine, at least at one time seen as a bit daring in its attitudes; or an individual of uncertain patriotic reliability, quite possibly a Jew; or someone who likes weird, exotic cuisines; or an advocate of world government; or, again with a capital C, a mixed drink combining vodka, cranberry juice, and other ingredients.

Although the explanations provided by Hannerz (2006) are factual, they are also very general and thus insufficient because they do not encompass other scholarly definitions.

According to Waldron (2000, p. 227), Roger Scruton, an English conservative, defined 'cosmopolitanism' as:

[t]he belief in, and pursuit of, a style of life which... [shows] acquaintance with, and an ability to incorporate, the manners, habits, languages and social customs of cities throughout the world ... . In this sense, the cosmopolitan is often seen as a kind of parasite, who depends upon the quotidian lives of others to create the various local flavors and identities in which he dabbles.

Conversely, arguments have risen from historians from Egypt, "that cosmopolitanism is in essence a Mediterranean concept, because of its origins as a term in the world of the ancient Greeks, among the Stoics who invented the idea of the world as a super-city, with citizens of the world" (Sluga & Horne, 2010, p. 371).

Eze (2014) states that being cosmopolitan does not imply abandoning one's ethnic heritage or history. Hollinger (as cited in Eze, 2014) adds that cosmopolitanism is concerned with a person who belongs to different communities at the same time.

Hanners (as cited in Eze, 2014) elaborates even further on cosmopolitanism when he states that:

[i]t includes a stance towards diversity itself, towards the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience. A more genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experience, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity (p. 242).

Appiah (2006) affirms Hanners' sentiments when he states that cosmopolitanism has two aspects. Firstly, cosmopolitanism requires us to impact the lives of other humans and not just our immediate families or our countryman, because a cosmopolitan is a citizen of the world that believes that the human race is one. Secondly, it is to take interest in others with regards to what they believe, practice and how they live as well as to learn from our differences.

Thus, in my understanding, cosmopolitanism refers to any city around the world which is inhabited by people from different parts of the world whilst with regards to the individual; it refers to a person who is acquainted with different cultures and languages. Therefore, in my opinion, there are many cities in the world that can be considered as cosmopolitan and they are not limited to the West. For example

Johannesburg in South Africa can also be considered a cosmopolitan city because of the cultural diversity of the people who live there.

### **2.3 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

Markwei (2013) criticises Afropolitanism as a term on three aspects; firstly, he argues that the term has different connotations to different people. Secondly, he says Afropolitans do not have anything in common that they all share, and lastly Markwei (2013) questions whether the term elevates those who have been exposed to living outside the continent more than those who have been born and raised in Africa, but are still in touch with the global world.

The researcher agrees with Markwei's (2013) first critique because for some people the emphasis of the term will rest on the word African, whilst with others it will rest on being cosmopolitan. The current definitions also seem to lean more towards being African than being cosmopolitan, although the latter is also a problematic term. It is problematic because it is not clear which meaning applies to it; multi-ethnicity, internationalism or being sophisticated, just to mention a few. The researcher however disagrees with Markwei's (2013) second criticism which claims that there is nothing that unites Afropolitans because the fact that they were either born in Africa or their ancestors were born in Africa is a unifying element.

Another question raised by Markwei (2013) with reference to how others have described Afropolitans to be "urban, culturally savvy" people is whether

Afropolitanism excludes rural or indigenous Africans and by so doing isolates them from identifying with the concept.

Afropolitanism, in the researcher's opinion, could apply to the African continent, as long as the individual referred to is both African and lives in a cosmopolitan city. However, this would not suffice because the definition speaks of 'Africans of the world' and Africa cannot be described as the world.

#### **2.4 EXPLORING AFROPOLITANISM IN LITERATURE**

According to Gikandi (2011), Afropolitan writers creatively write for and about Africans. The writers focus on sharing their experiences of living abroad as well as in Africa and their movement between the two. They also write about the cultural diversity that they experience abroad. Finally, the Afropolitan writer writes regarding new ways to think about the African identity on different levels.

Both novels; Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Selasi's *Ghana must go* (2013) present the transnational migration phenomenon as posited by Gikandi (2011) because Adichie was born in Nigeria, though she lives in America and travels regularly to Nigeria. Similarly Selasi, though she does not only travel to Africa, travels throughout the world. Similar examples of migrant writers would be "Nigerian Londoner Ben Okri; Amitav Ghosh, Indian but based in the United States; Jamaica Kincaid; the black British writer from the Caribbean; the South African exile in London, Laretta Ngcobo; Vikram Seth, who writes about Delhi and San Francisco" with equal skill, to mention a few (Boehmer, 1995, p. 233). Selasi (2005)

explicitly states that she had to craft an identity for herself because she was not satisfied with her own definition of herself. This proves that Selasi was thinking, at different levels, about what it means to be African and live a cosmopolitan life.

However, apart from being Afropolitan themselves, the two writers examine Afropolitan characters in the two novels. In Selasi's novel *Ghana must go* (2013), Kweku Sai is a respected Ghanaian surgeon who lives with his Nigerian wife, Fola in America. They have four children; Olu, the twins Kehinde and Taiwo and the last born Sadie who were all born in America. All the characters find themselves moving between spaces, which they identify with as home. In Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013), two teenagers Ifemelu and Obinze, both Nigerian, fall in love in secondary school. They aspire to study in the US but only Ifemelu realises her dream of studying in the US, while Obinze is refused a visa by America, shortly after 9/11. However, he ends up in London and later returns to Nigeria where he becomes a successful businessman. Years later, Ifemelu decides to return to Africa in order to invest in Africa. Thus the examples above prove that an exploration of Afropolitanism in literature is possible.

Mbembe (in Orlando, 2013, p. 276) states that Afropolitanism offers a theoretical framework that:

disassociates itself from past literary moments which today have little relevance for global societies. He clarifies that the significant literary movements after decolonization – anti-colonial nationalism, African socialism, pan Africanism – no longer qualify as helpful frameworks through

which to study the position of authors who live between continents, cultures, and modes of creativity.

The use of the word ‘disassociate’ is inappropriate, in the researcher’s opinion, because in order for this framework to separate itself completely from literary works of the past, it would need to be completely new, which it is not. Thus the researcher thinks that the appropriate assertion to make would be that it is an eclectic framework that builds on what has already been contributed in the past by, *inter alia*, Pan-Africanism.

Events that have not only affected one specific area but the world, such as 9/11, which influences the African author and the literature they write (Orlando, 2013).

## **2.5 BENCHMARK - WHO IS AN AFROPOLITAN?**

This study uses Selasi’s (2005) essay *Who is an Afropolitan?* as a benchmark for the exploration of Afropolitanism in the two novels. The researcher will examine the focus areas of the essay so that it may be clear what exactly is being explored in the two novels. Selasi (2005) discusses, in no particular order, five main areas that define the Afropolitan in her essay namely: cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond.

### **2.5.1 Cultural Hybridity**

Selasi (2005) discusses a young generation of Africans that are cultural hybrids on four levels. Firstly, they are ethnic mixes, for example, Nigerian and Swiss.

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 a low-cut jean 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 as well as a native language (Selasi, 2005).

### **2.5.2 Careers**

Selasi (2005) asserts that, unlike in the past when the parents of the current diasporans strove to become medical doctors, engineers, lawyers and bankers, the Afropolitans are venturing into fields such as media, politics, music, and design without being shy to express their African influences in their work.

### **2.5.3 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 those who don't consider themselves as black. Nevertheless, it 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.

#### **2.5.4 Self-expression**

According to Selasi (2005), Afropolitans are not shy to express themselves in all areas and this expression is also evident in their work. They also have a readiness to both criticise and praise the parts of Africa that they relate to most.

#### **2.5.5 An 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, 2005).

The researcher identified five major themes, namely cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond, as the aspects of Afropolitanism that will be explored in *Americanah* (2013) and *Ghana must go* (2013). However, the researcher has also identified minor themes which will be explored under the major theme of cultural hybridity, namely ethnicity, geography, dress sense and linguistic prowess.

### **2.6 AFROPOLITANISM IN *GHANA MUST GO***

It was the reception of Selasi’s (2005) essay that inspired her debut novel *Ghana Must go* (2013) in which she captures the identity and roots of the Afropolitan. She emphasises five themes in her essay *Who is an Afropolitan?* (2005.) The themes are cultural hybridity, careers, forming an identity, self-expression and an African bond.

The following are examples of some of the themes Selasi discusses in her essay. The onomastic of the children, Olukayodé, Taiwo, Kehinde, Folasadé are an example of parents that have a strong African bond, even though they live in America.

In another scene, the father addressing the son is an example of cultural hybridity. Olu, the elder son has adopted a new culture (American) in which it is acceptable to tell his father that he does not want to look at him and even walks away when the bell rings. Not looking at elders or walking away while they speak to you would not be acceptable in many Africa cultures. This is succinctly captured in the following incident when the father (Kweku) talks to his eldest son (Olu).

“Where is your mother?”

“She doesn’t want to see you.”

“Look at me when you’re speaking to me.”

“I don’t want to either.” Olu looked down, gripped the straps of his bag. Kicked the ground. Another bell. “I have to go.” Walked away. (Selasi, 2013, p. 88).

Similarly, under cultural hybridity, Selasi (2005) mentions a new dress sense.

“... Flintstones-looking flip-flops from the airport in Ghana (whence the crazy MC Hammer pants in *gye nyame* print)” (Selasi 2013, p. 40). The pants described here are worn by Kweku Sai, the father in the story. Below is the ‘*gye nyame*’ symbol which signifies the supremacy of God and means “except for God”. It is almost everywhere in Ghana and it is popularly used for decoration.



Adopted from: <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm>

Kweku, the father in the story, contrasts the identities of his daughter and mother as follows:

And this sight and this sound, these two sense-of his daughter, (a), a modern thing entirely and a product of *there*, North America, snow, cow products, thoughts of the future, of his mother, (b), an ancient thing, a product of *here*, hut, heat, raffia, West Africa, the perpetual past-wouldn't otherwise touch but for Ama (Selasi, 2013, p. 52).

It is evident that for the diasporan father, the geography he would like to find himself in is 'there' and not 'wherever'. These are what Selasi (2005) describes as the parents who left Africa in order to acquire accolades. The father attaches a lot of value in practising "there" – "there" being the United States of America as it is evident in the following scene.

"You can practice wherever."

"I was wrongfully dismissed. I should be practicing *there* –"

Kweku heard himself and stopped. He sounded like a teenager, a recently dumped girlfriend still desperate to be back in her tormentor's arms. (Selasi, 2013, p, 70)

Afropolitans according to Selasi (2005) are multilingual. This is aptly captured when in the following scene the mother (Fola) speaks to Olu, her son in Yoruba:

Only yesterday he'd noticed that she made this face with Olu, too, whenever he was wailing to communicate a complaint. The brows knit together, the head slightly sideways. "Okunrin mi," she'd say. My son. "I know, I know, I know. It hurts (Selasi, 2013, p. 55).

This scene describes the Afropolitan's linguistic abilities as expounded by Selasi (2005). Apart from speaking an indigenous African language, Afropolitans also speak a Romance language. "They spoke for an hour politely, pro forma (the usual thing, her unusual past, the twin brother the artist in London, how impressive, a Rhodes, how outstanding, the Latin and Greek) and she spun the tale lightly..." (Selasi, 2013, p. 132).

The following quote demonstrates how Taiwo, the twin girl, despite her mother's insistence that she becomes a lawyer became the editor of a law review. A typical Afropolitan career, as opposed to the traditional careers Selasi (2005) describes. "Regardless, when the press learned, they made it sound natural: a tale old as time, beauty, power, and sex, dean of law school in love tryst with editor of *Law Review*, BEAUTY AND THE DEAN!" (Selasi, 2013, p. 129).

A prominent emerging theme in *Ghana must go (2013)* is pain. All the characters experience pain in their personal lives because of past experiences or struggling with forming an identity. For instance, the youngest sibling suffers from bulimia - an eating disorder, and she feels like she has never been part of the family because she

looks different from everyone else. She feels she is the odd one out because she does not have the beautiful physical traits or intelligence her other siblings possess (Selasi, 2013).

## **2.7 THE RELATION OF *AMERICANAH* TO AFROPOLITANISM**

The Nigerian novelist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her third novel, *Americanah* (2013) inadvertently writes about many of the Afropolitan attributes Selasi (2005) describes in her essay. For Adichie's (2013) characters, the Afropolitan experience takes place in the United States of America as well as the United Kingdom, but it is not just a story of victory but also one of cultural and racial tensions.

*Americanah* (2013) has examples of Afropolitan careers, for example a lifestyle blogger, which is not a typical diasporan career as explained by Selasi (2005). The following quotation is an example of an Afropolitan career.

If they asked what she did, she would say vaguely, "I write a lifestyle blog," because saying "I write an anonymous blog called *Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*" would make them uncomfortable (Adichie, 2013, p. 4).

Selasi (2005) explains that Afropolitans always have a strong bond with Africa and have the desire to invest in Africa. Evidence of this is found in the following example:

She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a music production business, a fashion label, a magazine, a fast-food franchise (Adichie, 2013, p. 6).

*Americanah* (2013) has examples of cultural hybridity. In this scene it is evident that Ifemelu, the main character wants to keep her African identity by keeping her natural hair but also lives up to her newly adopted American culture by eating differently.

“It’s not hard to comb if you moisturize it properly,” she said...

Aisha snorted; she clearly could not understand why anybody would choose to suffer through combing natural hair, instead of simply relaxing it (Adichie, 2013, p. 12).

“Your hair take long. You need food,” Aisha said.

“I’m fine. I have a granola bar,” Ifemelu said. She had some baby carrots in a Ziploc, too... (Adichie, 2013, p. 39).

One of the emerging themes in *Americanah* (2013) is what the researcher has termed as ‘unspeakables’. Ifemelu has the boldness to voice her opinion on everything, especially thoughts that people usually just think but never have the boldness to articulate.

Ifemelu and Kimberly looked at the page together: a thin white woman, smiling at the camera, holding a dark-skinned African baby in her arms, and

all around her, little dark-skinned African children were spread out like a rug.

Kimberly made a sound, a hmmm, as though she was unsure how to feel.

“She’s stunning too,” Laura said.

“Yes, she is,” Ifemelu said. “And she’s just as skinny as the kids, only that her skinniness is by choice and theirs is not by choice” (Adichie, 2013, p. 162).

## **2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

Two theories informed this study. The theories are the diaspora and transnationalism theory, and hybridity as a creolisation theory.

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 diaspora people in the countries in which they reside.

Diaspora 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).

### **2.8.1 DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONALISM THEORY**

The diaspora and transnationalism theory 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.

Sanchez (2001), who writes from her personal experience, states that 'binational' as a term seems to refer to two nations between which an individual moves. But on the contrary, it also seems static because compared to the term 'transnational', it brings up an image of one who "embodies two nation-state identities" (p. 376). She further states that 'binational' as a term "seems bounded and is thus not helpful but transnationalism unbinds binationalism, through a more complex understanding of global economic, cultural, and political processes" (p. 376).

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. This in the researcher's opinion is strongly reiterated by all three definitions of Afropolitanism the researcher has examined. 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.

### **2.8.2 HYBRIDITY THEORY**

Ang (2003) states the importance of hybridity because 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).

The researcher agrees with Ang (2003), who states that the purpose of hybridity is not to erase boundaries but rather to problematize them. 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 study distinctly used 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 of the parents are of a different race. It also examines how people who live across different continents adopt a new culture and 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.

In conclusion, the two theories summarise the essence of Afropolitanism, that there is a shared culture between Afropolitans and others from their adopted space and also that there are significant differences.

## **2.9 SUMMARY**

The chapter examined the concept of African diaspora in its historical and current context. It also studied three definitions of Afropolitanism and it has made one distinction between the two concepts. The emphasis of Afropolitanism is on the voluntary dispersion of Africans whilst the concept of African diaspora incorporates both voluntary and involuntary dispersion.

The gaps in the literature revealed that there is no unifying element that Afropolitans share in common. The term also seems to elevate those Africans that live outside the continent, thus excluding those in the continent as well as those in the rural areas of the continent. The definitions examined have not given sufficient clarity of who is referred to as an 'African', what 'cosmopolitan' means and what the word 'world' refers to. Another issue that has emerged is whether Afropolitanism is applicable in Africa. However, the fact that Afropolitanism is a new concept cannot be reiterated enough.

The review further examined the relevance of Afropolitanism in exploring literature. Gikandi (2011) explains that Afropolitan writers write for, to and of the African self. The question of relevance in literature could not be answered without dissecting the essay in which Selasi (2005) first coins and discusses Afropolitanism. Thus the review discovered the four main elements of Afropolitanism according to Selasi (2005) namely, cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond.

The examination of the benchmarked themes led to a discussion of whether Afropolitanism is revealed in *Ghana must go* (2013), and whether *Americanah* (2013) has any relation to Afropolitanism. Both novels have enough to qualify them to be studied as works by Afropolitan writers or novels that explore the Afropolitan phenomenon.

Finally, this chapter discussed the theoretical frameworks for the study, which are a combination of the diaspora and transnationalism theory, and the hybridity theory as creolisation theory. Although Afropolitans may have similarities with the people they share their adopted space with, they also have significant differences. The Afropolitan's movement between many spaces does not imply a loyalty to all those spaces because in the end, the Afropolitans have intense ties with what they consider to be their motherland.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the research design and strategy adopted to address the research questions.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study used the qualitative research design. The qualitative research design relies on the collection of non-numerical data such as words. This design was appropriate for this study because the data collected were in the form of texts or words.

There are three characteristics by which to identify a qualitative research problem. If the concept is undeveloped, perhaps due to a lack of previous research, then it can be a qualitative research problem. Similarly, if there is a perception that the existing theory might be inaccurate, incorrect or biased, then there might be a need to explore the phenomena with the aim of developing theory. Finally, if the nature of the phenomenon is not suited for a quantitative study, then it can also be a qualitative research problem (Creswell 2014). The research was a desk-top study which was non-disruptive because it did not have human participants.

It is with this knowledge of qualitative research that the study was conducted through a qualitative, exploratory research, which allowed for the investigation of the phenomenon of Afropolitanism. According to Marshall and Rossmann (2011), in qualitative studies, the actions of humans cannot be understood unless the thoughts,

beliefs, feelings, values and assumptions that preceded those actions are understood. This study was qualitative and not quantitative because qualitative research entails the study of “things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, as cited in Biggam, 2008, p. 221). I consider this study to be a qualitative case study because of the social and psychological nature of the texts that were examined.

### **3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

The population of the research was African novels written in English that address Afropolitanism because they represent the total set from which the sample was chosen.

Purposive sampling was used to select the two texts, *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)*. Bui (2009) defines purposive sampling as the researcher’s choice for example, in people who are representative due to meeting specific requirements for the study. Biggam (2008) adds that purposive sampling has three important uses - representation, uniformity and to establish particular comparisons to explain the reasons for differences between settings or individuals.

The two novels *Ghana must go (2013)* by Taiye Selasi and *Americanah (2013)* by Chimamanda Adichie were selected by means of purposive sampling. The researcher used purposive sampling because the two novels, as explained by Biggam (2008) have an element of representativeness and uniformity, and they explain reasons for differences.

Both *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)* have Afropolitan representation in terms of their characters. The definition adopted for this study states that Afropolitanism will refer to Africans born in and outside of the African continent whether purely African or ethnic mixes who strongly identify with Africa and want to invest in Africa. The characters of *Ghana must go (2013)* are diasporan African parents that moved to the United States of America and had their four children in America. These children according to the definition are Afropolitans. The characters in *Americanah (2013)* are also Afropolitans because although they are both Nigerian born; the other one moves to the United States of America to study whilst the other moves to London in search of a better life.

There are also similarities in the setting of the two novels. *Americanah (2013)* is set across three continents; Africa, Europe and North America. Similarly *Ghana must go (2013)* is also set across three continents; Africa, Europe and North America. This particular dimension in settings qualified the two novels as a sample because the characters identify with more than one location as home.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Qualitative data were collected primarily through reading the texts. This created an opportunity to first examine Selasi's (2005) essay, *Who is an Afropolitan?* which was used as a benchmark for the exploration of Afropolitanism in the two primary subjects Selasi's debut novel *Ghana Must go (2013)* and Adichie's novel *Americanah (2013)*. The analysis of the essay *Who is an Afropolitan (2005)* allowed

for the extraction of the main themes Selasi discussed that relates to Afropolitanism. This was followed by an in-depth reading of the two novels with the specific aim of identifying the themes discovered in the essay. Appendices 1 and 2 show the data collected on the different themes as benchmarked in Selasi's (2005) essay.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher used the content analysis method to make inferences concerning Afropolitanism in the two novels by discussing the following themes as they were benchmarked in Selasi's essay; cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, and an African bond. The content analysis method focuses on "the presence, meanings and relationships of ... words and concepts and then make inferences about the messages" (Marshall & Rossmann, 2011, p. 161).

The researcher first completed an in-depth reading and literary analysis of Selasi's essay *Who is an Afropolitan?* (2005). The following themes were discovered to be prominent in Selasi's essay; cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond. Cultural hybridity had four smaller sub-categories namely; ethnicity, clothes, home and language.

The researcher read the two texts for a general impression and made notes on the margins of key ideas. The research questions were revisited in order to keep the analysis focused. The researcher then read the two texts again and bookmarked, with small white notes, the themes that were identified in the essay as well as those that

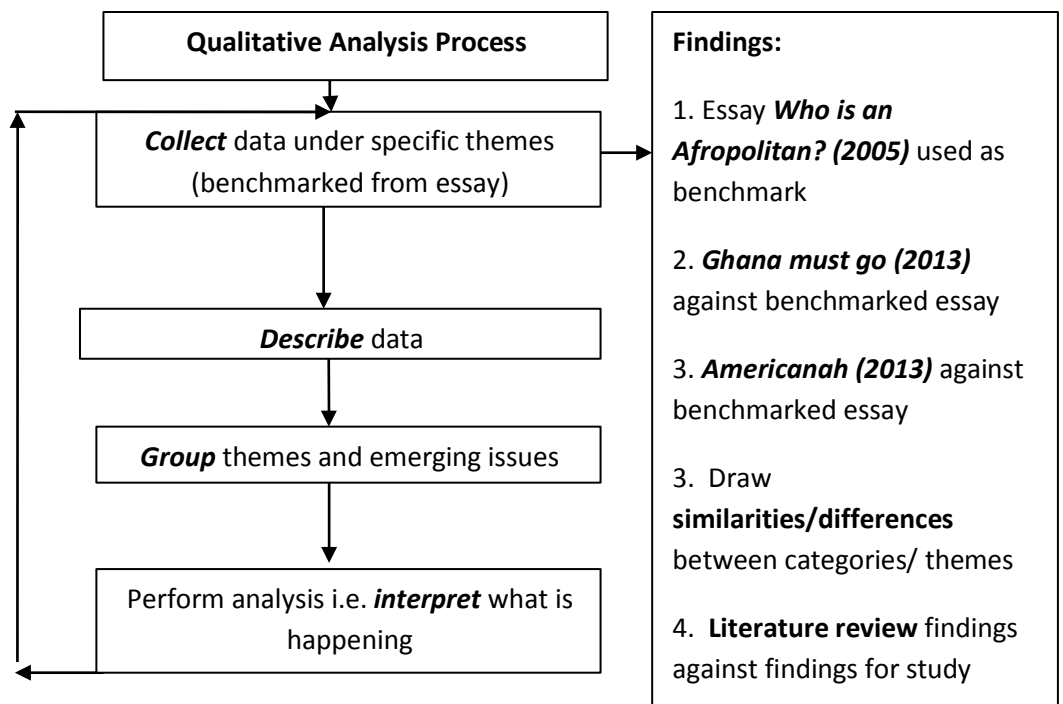
were noted as emerging in the novels. The themes were identified both explicitly as well as implicitly in the two texts.

Starting with *Ghana must go (2013)*, the researcher categorized the bookmarked information, through sub-headings according to the identified themes of cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond. The researcher completed the same process with *Americanah (2013)*.

The researcher then started to analyse the patterns in the categories as well as between the categories. For instance, the researcher analysed which theme was more prominent under the topic of 'cultural hybridity' which is the only theme with sub-themes, for *Ghana must go(2013)* and then examined which of the four broader themes; cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond was more prominent. The same process was repeated with *Americanah (2013)* with regards to the sub-themes and all the major themes.

Having identified the patterns in and between the different categories, the researcher then started with interpreting the data. The interpretation was done by linking the findings with the literature review and the theoretical framework and answering the research questions. The analysis of the two texts was informed by the two theories as stated earlier: the diaspora and transnationalism theory and the hybridity theory as a creolisation theory.

Figure 1 adapted from Biggam (2008), illustrates graphically the data analysis process that was used for this study, based on description, analysis and interpretation of the data collected as it relates to extracting and understanding emerging themes. In addition, the researcher drew similarities and differences between the themes and linked the literature review findings to the findings from the texts.



**Figure 1. An illustration of the data analysis process for this study**

### 3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher acknowledged all the sources used in the study in order to uphold the ethics required of an academic, to maintain transparency, as well as to remain objective by being aware of possible personal biases. The researcher evaded personal biases by reporting different perspectives as well as contrary findings.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter described the research methodology that was adopted for this study. The research design is a qualitative one and clarity was provided as to why the study had to be conducted qualitatively. The population, sample and sample procedures, research instruments, data collection, data analysis, as well as ethical considerations were also discussed and motivated in this chapter. The next chapter presents the analysis and discussion of Afropolitanism in the two texts.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **AFROPOLITANISM IN *GHANA MUST GO* AND *AMERICANAH***

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an analysis of Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go* (2013) and *Americanah* (2013). The chapter starts with a synopsis of each novel before discussing the findings according to the benchmarked themes, followed by emerging themes and finally relates the information to what was discovered in the literature review. The findings of the two novels are discussed independently.

#### **4.2 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 dreams of becoming a lawyer. They migrate 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, Taiwo and Kehinde Sai the twins 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. The last born is still deciding what she wants to become. 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.

#### **4.3 AFROPOLITANISM IN *GHANA MUST GO***

This section examines the portrayal of Afropolitanism in *Ghana must go (2013)* according to the five themes benchmarked in Selasi's (2005) essay, *Who is an Afropolitan?* The discussion is focused on the following five themes:

- Cultural hybridity with sub-themes of ethnic mixes, dress sense, geographic location and multilingualism;
- Careers;
- Identity formation;
- African bond and
- Emerging themes of self-inflicted pain, generational occurrences.

### 4.3.1 CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

Selasi (2005), apart from generally discussing cultural hybridity also discusses different elements of cultural hybridity such as ethnic mixes, dress sense, geography and being multilingual in her essay. This section discusses the evidence of general cultural hybridity in *Ghana must go* (2013).

The first example of cultural hybridity is Kweku's assimilation to both the British and American cultures whilst retaining his African identity. It is captured in the scene where Kweku, though African, had British aspirations to eat a breakfast of croissants and drink expensive coffee, while reading the newspaper, served by a domestic worker whom he addressed in a British accent. His children asleep in what he called the Bedroom Wing, a cook preparing breakfast in the Dining Wing and his wife doing her morning laps in the swimming pool (Selasi, 2013). This example is significant because, apart from conveying Kweku's cultural hybridity, it also speaks of dreams that he has as a diasporan parent. A dream of giving his family better living conditions than he had. Growing up, he did not have a croissant breakfast served by a domestic worker neither did he have a swimming pool.

In another scene, the general cultural hybridity is again showcased when Kweku Sai was talking to his eldest son, Olu, asking about his mother. His son answered him but refused to look at him and told him straightforward that he did not want to look at him neither did his mother wish to see him, and then he walked away (Selasi, 2013). It is evident that he expected his son to respond the way he, as an African, would have responded to an elderly person by looking at the adult, not answering for

another adult that is not present and worse not walking away. This can be interpreted as the influence of the American culture because although Olu was raised by diasporan parents; he was raised in America and has learnt the American way of being or expressing himself or it could have been anger towards a father who abandoned them. Kweku expected his son to relate to him as dictated by African culture but Olu did exactly the opposite, and defied his father's expectations.

Again in another scene, an example of cultural hybridity is shown when the house workers of Folasadé are shocked by several of her characteristics; she cuts and arranges flowers instead of pounding yam. She smokes, she wears shorts and she greets, as well as thanks them for their work. For Folasadé's staff members, this behaviour was weird because it was not what they were used to or would expect from their employer or an African woman (Selasi, 2013). The African women these workers were exposed to; were those who did not smoke, wear shorts or greet their workers. The workers also did not expect to be greeted or thanked for *their* work. Folasadé, though aware of her workers' stereotypes continued to live as if she was unaware because of her experience of living in America; she was now living in Africa as though she was still in America. Folasadé's blatant disregard for African cultural expectations emphasizes the way that, in situations of cultural conflict, people will resort to behaviours which feel natural. Cultural hybridity thus breeds a new form of what is normal or natural – illustrating that culture is flexible and always changing.

On the eve of the children's return to Ghana for their father's funeral, the author shows us another example of cultural hybridity. Fola prepared *Joloff egusi*, a West African dish which was not strange to her American born and raised children (Selasi, 2013). Just like they were used to eating American food, the children were comfortable eating *Joloff egusi* because it was not a new meal to them as it had always been prepared by Fola, even in America. Similarly, as exemplified in the following quotation, the children are also very African in their mannerisms which speak of a strong African bond, but it also highlights the fact that they are not oblivious to the flaws of their own African cultures but they actually identify and question these flaws.

... 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... (Selasi, 2013, p. 233).

In the above citation, Taiwo, 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.

#### **4.3.1.1 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). Selasi's (2005) 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 why the twins look the way they do. 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 son 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.

#### **4.3.1.2 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)" (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.

#### **4.3.1.3 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. Below follow examples of the different places the characters in *Ghana must go (2013)* have considered as home.

One of the scenes in the book shows how Fola, though living in America, has two other homes which is Nigeria, her birth country and Ghana, her husband’s birth country. When Kweku and Fola received a letter from Ghana that informed them that Kweku’s mother was ill, Fola was forced to use the last money they had in order

to go visit her brother in Nigeria in order to borrow some money from him which would enable them to travel to Ghana to visit Kweku's mother (Selasi, 2013).

When they arrived in Ghana, Kweku compared the proximity of people in Ghana to America. He warns his wife to be careful for her purse not to be snatched but she responds by saying "[m]y friend I'm from Lagos. Never mind your small Ghana" (Selasi, 2013, p. 56). He makes this comparison because he got used to America where people kept a specific distance from each other. The proxemics, apart from speaking of geography also points to cultural hybridity because Kweku had adopted a new culture. Thus concepts of personal space are challenged through cultural hybridity because what is applicable with regards to proxemics in America might not be applicable in Africa.

Although Fola was born in Nigeria, Ghana was also her home by virtue of her being married to Kweku who was from Ghana. Thus they had travelled to Ghana once to see Kweku's mother and show her their firstborn, even though it was too late because she had already died. Kweku had always known the importance of bringing a child home.

Another example of the many locations Afropolitans feel at home in was 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.

Although on an abstract level, the reconciliation of Sadie with her mother after a long silence between them was also symbolic to her returning home as Selasi (2005) also states that home can be an aunt's kitchen for some. Thus songs, personal names, surroundings and even accent contribute to creating a hybrid citizen.

For the Afropolitan there is thus a 'here' and a 'there' and the Afropolitan must identify with many cultures as explained by Selasi (2005) that "[w]hile our parents claim one country as home, we must define our relationship to the places we live" (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.

#### **4.3.1.4 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, which demonstrates 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.

### **4.3.2 CAREERS**

Selasi (2005) distinguishes between traditional careers such as “doctoring, lawyering, banking, engineering which were sought by diasporans as opposed to the new careers Afropolitans were venturing into such as “media, politics, music, venture capital” amongst others. 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 an “exceptional surgeon” (p. 7) with 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. 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.

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.

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).

#### **4.3.3 IDENTITY FORMATION**

Identity formation was the theme the researcher identified as discussed the most by Selasi (2013) in *Ghana must go (2013)*. In her essay, she explains that Afropolitans need to craft an identity on three levels: “national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between” (Selasi, 2005, para. 9). All the characters went through a process of questioning their identity and eventually making peace with who they were. Selasi (2005) further explains that Afropolitans need to define whether they are black or white, African, British or American and which culture they relate to and what that culture means to them. 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.

#### 4.3.3.1 Taiwo

Taiwo, the twin girl, struggles with identity issues on three levels; she feels unloved by her mother, has issues with being black and also questions her sexual behaviour.

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, the twins, 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) says the Afropolitans have to define themselves as black or white and this depends on who 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 white school, which has left her feeling or wanting to be white rather than black.

Taiwo also defends her sexual behaviour, when she ends up having an affair with the Dean of the law school who is a married man. Everybody, including her psychotherapist, thinks it is because she has an Electra complex where the girl is in competition with her mother for her father's affection. Others attribute her affair to the fact that she misses her father, since her lover is an elderly man. Selasi (2013) points out that Taiwo's last sexual encounter was with Kehinde, her brother, when he was forced by their Uncle Femi to have sexual intercourse with her using his finger. Uncle Femi threatened that if he did not do it, his guards would rape her. Victims of sexual abuse most of the time end up in inappropriate sexual relationships and Taiwo's relationship to the Dean can be attributed to the sexual abuse she suffered in Nigeria.

Thus Taiwo has concerns with feeling neglected by her mother, her sexuality and being black and the latter forces her to want to conform to looking like the white

girls. The Electra complex is usually considered to be resolved when the girl child starts to identify with the same sex parent or the mother. Thus, if it was the Electra complex, then Taiwo by the end of the story successfully resolves her issues when she has a confrontation with her mother that leads to them reconciling.

#### **4.3.3.2 Olukayodé**

Olukayodé, the eldest son, grapples with their father abandoning them, their father dying, feeling insecure towards his younger brother and finally his own identity as a man.

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 realize 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.

The day he was supposed to graduate, Olu instead of attending graduation, 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, 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 and was proud of it (Selasi, 2013, p. 120).

Olu in trying to deal with the pain of his father's death interrogates himself.

*How* is the question (does an exceptional surgeon just die in a garden of cardiac arrest?). How, when his whole life he's sought to be like him, has forgiven the sins in the name of the gift, has admired the brilliance and told of the prowess, general surgeon without equal, remembered even now (Selasi, 2013, p. 113-114).

Olu questions how his father could have missed the symptoms. He questions if his father knew what was happening to him but had simply given up on life. He is left with questions that no one can answer. The author uses dramatic irony to inform the reader that Kweku knew that he was dying and it is interesting that Olu brings forth this question even though it is part of him dealing with the issues he has regarding his father's death.

On a different level Olu feels insecure in his relationship with his wife; Ling, not because of something she did wrong but because he is jealous of his young brother's handsomeness. People always said that "one got the beauty, the other the brains" (p. 218), referring to Kehinde as the beautiful one. He is jealous because he has seen Kehinde look at his wife and fears that if they have to compete for Ling's heart, he would lose her because Kehinde is so handsome (Selasi, 2013).

Then Ling's father confronts Olu about being just another African man. How could he be sure that his daughter 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).

#### **4.3.3.3 Kehinde**

This section examines Kehinde, one of the twins, who deals with feelings of inferiority, failure, guilt and issues of identity. Firstly, Kehinde felt inferior because he felt inferior for having failed their 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 felt guilty because if he had done so he would have been accepted by his father and brother (Selasi, 2013).

Secondly, Kehinde feels guilty because he was forced to have sexual intercourse with his sister, Taiwo, using his finger. This act that had caused his guilty conscious happened while they were in Nigeria. Uncle Femi demanded that he has sexual intercourse with his sister, using his finger or else his guards would rape her. He had to protect his sister by doing as he was told or let her be raped by other men. The thought of which he could not bear. This had haunted Kehinde and scarred their relationship because his body responded, and he became sexually aroused, and his sister saw it and assumed it was because he was enjoying it (Selasi, 2013).

Finally, 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 his 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).

#### **4.3.3.4 Sadie**

Sadie, the last child of the Afropolitan children, battles with her looks, her weight and making a career choice. Sadie was born prematurely and thus weighed very low 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).

Secondly, Sadie did not like her body weight and wished she looked like her mother or sister, who both had figures such as 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.

Finally, Sadie compares herself to her siblings academically and feels pressured because she thinks that they are more gifted than she is. All she has is a photographic memory and she still does not know what career path she wants to follow. However, in the end she discovers her gift of dancing when she goes to Ghana for her father's funeral (Selasi, 2013).

#### **4.3.4.5 Discussion on identity formation**

This section briefly discusses the theme of identity formation which is explored the most in the novel. According to Selasi (2005), the Afropolitan has a daunting task of crafting an identity for themselves because unlike their "parents who can claim one country as home; we must define our relationship to the places we live". Meaning that the Afropolitan's identity is directly linked to the different places they might consider as home. Selasi (2005) further states that some Afropolitans "choose which

bits of a national identity (from passport to pronunciation)” they “internalize as central”. This is evident in the three of the Afropolitan characters explored above namely; Taiwo, Kehinde and Sadie, because the girls are both light in complexion and wish they were white, whereas Kehinde feels that he would have preferred to be either black or just white and not “lost in transnation” as Selasi (2005, para.8) explains. He would have preferred to be a Scotsman or African, but not a hybrid of the two.

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. Bhabha as cited in McLeod, (2000), states that the process of identity formation for the migrant “brings with it trauma and anxiety (p. 220) and this was evident with the characters in *Ghana must go (2013)*.

#### **4.3.4 AFRICAN BOND**

Selasi (2005), states that Afropolitans have a strong African bond. The following quote reveals the strong bond she talks about: “[t]here is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self” (para.3). The researcher discovered that *Ghana must go (2013)* discusses the African bond of the parents more than the bond of the Afropolitans. This could be because of the plot of the story because the author makes us aware that the children never lived or were brought to Africa to visit except the twins who lived in Nigeria for a brief period. The following are scenes of a strong African bond.

The following is a scene in which Selasi (2013) shows us a 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).

When the owner of the house they were renting insisted that they call him Charlie instead of Mr. Charlie “they couldn’t call him by his first name, so well steeped were he and Fola in African gerontocratic mores” (p. 66). Fola and Kweku, although living in America, were still upholding the African culture of respecting elders and thus they could not call Mr. Charlie just as Charlie.

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!” (p. 153). This had made Fola so proud to see her daughter recognizing her African heritage. A heritage which she must have spoken of or taught her children otherwise Sadie would not have known about it.

This strong bond with Africa is also seen when both Kehinde and Olu, on two different occasions, thought of Ghana as ‘familiar’ when they arrived for their father’s funeral. Olu found the smell of Ghana familiar because of his visit to his father in 1997, whereas Kehinde just found it familiar although he had never been in Ghana (Selasi, 2013). This is an indication of a bond with Africa because Ghana is the country of his paternal heritage.

Ironically, even though Fola had such a strong bond with Africa, she never took her children to Africa. Sadie questioned 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 came back to Ghana because of the shame of having lost his job and abandoned his family, 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

[s]tarts dancing. Slowly at first, with her eyes on the ground, on the feet of the girl, which she follows with ease · then a spark, something clicking, a logic inside her, a stranger inside her that knows what to do, knows this music, these movements, this footwork, this rhythm, the body relaxing, eyes

trained on the feet, she is moving, not looking, afraid to stop moving, afraid to look up at the small cheering crowd, she is moving, she is sweating, she is crying..."My daughter's a dancer, *ehn?*" (Selasi, 2013, p. 270).

She discovered that she had a 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 conclusion, Selasi (2005) discusses the Afropolitan's bond to Africa as being a desire to come back to Africa and make a positive impact or contribute to Africa from somewhere else in the world or simply identifying 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 that mostly shows this bond is not an Afropolitan.

#### **4.3.5 EMERGING THEMES**

There are two major emerging themes in *Ghana must go (2013)*; self-inflicted pain and generational occurrences. Selasi's (2005) statement that the "Afropolitan must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between" (para. 9) is evidenced in the following emerging themes. Although these themes have been identified separately, they are linked to the major theme of identity formation.

#### 4.3.5.1 Self-inflicted pain

This section examines three characters in *Ghana must go* (2013) that engage in self-inflicted pain; Sadie the youngest daughter has an eating disorder, while the mother Fola smokes and Kehinde self-mutilates.

Sadie the youngest has an eating disorder called bulimia in which the victim overeats and then purges. She struggles with this disorder because of her dissatisfaction with her body. She has always desired to have a body like her sister's but yet cannot seem to stop herself from eating. She "accepts that the media are to blame for her bulimia, her quiet, abiding desire to be reborn a blond waif; vigorously castigates Photoshop as a public health threat; has examined and condemned her childhood taste for white Barbies" (p. 265). Again this citation shows what Selasi (2005) states about the Afropolitan having the daunting task of forming an identity when they are not sure where they fit in. Selasi (2005) further states that the proximity of those you have been raised with determines whether you see yourself as black or white or biracial.

The second character Selasi (2013) brings forth with self-destructive behaviour is Fola, the mother. Although she knows that she should not because she was married to a doctor, she smokes and argues that it does not make a difference because whether you smoke or not, in the end everybody dies irrespective of living healthy lives. Again this is linked to identity because Fola started feeling unimportant because those she had taken care of no longer needed her or had died.

The last character, Kehinde, inflicts physical pain on himself as a means of dealing with the emotional pain. After the sexual abuse ordeal in Nigeria, Kehinde started slitting his wrist. The self-mutilation started as an attempt to express the emotional pain that he was going through. What made it worse was that he could not share his emotional agony with his sister, the one person he had shared everything with because it was about her and what he had done when he thought he was protecting her (Selasi, 2013).

In conclusion, Bulimia and self-mutilation can be linked to the Afropolitan having to deal with two cultures. Although these disorders may be present in Africa, they are considered taboo and are thus not discussed. Thus the presence of bulimia and self-mutilation could be because of the influence of American culture on the Afropolitans, a culture that encourages different liberties.

#### **4.3.5.2 Generational occurrences**

This section will explore three generational occurrences namely; Fola's smoking, the gift of art and Kweku leaving.

The first generational occurrence is Fola's smoking even though she knows it is bad for her health. Her daughter Taiwo also smokes but whether it is generational or more an act of rebellion because she craves the mother's attention is questionable.

The second example is Kweku's father who was described by the villagers as a brilliant artist who had built his family a hut that stood out amongst the others. This gift of artistry was pointed out in Kweku when Mr Lamptey whom he had asked to build his dream house asked him why he was a doctor and not an artist. Similarly,

Kehinde was a gifted artist who sold sought after paintings. A villager asked Kehinde what his profession was and when he said he was an artist, the villager laughed and said “you are a Sai then” (p. 298). However, Kweku became a surgeon and so did his first born son Olu (Selasi, 2013), which is yet another generational occurrence or merely a son who was trying to fulfill his father’s dream.

The same villagers also spoke of how Kweku’s father one day just packed up and abandoned his family. He did not explain anything but simply left. Kweku followed in his father’s footsteps when he abandoned his family in America and returned to Ghana (Selasi, 2013). Was this a generational occurrence or just his choice?

In the last example, Fola while in the garden surreally engages in a conversation with Kweku, who Kehinde had drawn on the ground the previous day.

*Why did I ever leave you?*

“I also left you.”

“We did what we knew. It was what we knew. Leaving.”

*Was it?*

“We were immigrants. Immigrants leave.”

This ironically links with Afropolitanism, because Afropolitans according to Selasi’s (2005) definition do not stay in one location, but they ‘leave’. Thus even though Kweku and Fola were diasporan parents, aiming to give their children a better future, they end up displaying Afropolitan behaviour of not staying in one location.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION OF AFROPOLITANISM IN *GHANA MUST GO***

The different themes that Selasi (2005) presented in her essay were explored and discovered in both novels although not all the themes were presented at equal lengths and detail. The expectation of the researcher was that Selasi (2013) would present all themes, she has addressed in her essay in *Ghana must go (2013)*. However, 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 presets 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 father was from Africa and their mother had moved back to Africa.

One of the emerging themes in *Ghana must go (2013)* was self-inflicted pain, but this could have emerged because of the absent father who had abandoned his children and not because the children were grappling with issues of identity formation that were related to being Afropolitan.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY OF *AMERICANAH***

*Americanah (2013)* is a love story of two Nigerian teenagers Ifemelu and Obinze who aspire to further their education in America. However, after high school only Ifemelu gets a visa to go to America while Obinze is refused. Obinze ends up going to England with the help of his mother, hoping to go to America from there but his dreams don't work out. He struggles in England because he never gets citizenship or a proper job and is in the end deported to Nigeria. Ifemelu stops writing and calling Obinze after an ordeal of exchanging her body for money out of desperation with a man she did not know. Ifemelu becomes a successful writer who blogs about issues of race in America as well as about life in Lagos. After many years Ifemelu and Obinze meet up in Lagos where they rekindle their love and have to make serious decisions about what they want.

#### **4.6 RELEVANCE OF AFROPOLITANISM IN *AMERICANAH***

This section examines the relevance of Afropolitanism in *Americanah (2013)* according to the five themes benchmarked in Selasi's (2005) essay, *Who is an Afropolitan?* The discussion is focused on the following five themes:

- Cultural hybridity with sub-themes of ethnic mixes, dress sense, geographic location and multilingualism;

- Careers;
- Identity formation;
- African bond;
- Self-expression and
- Emerging themes of hair, stereotypes and struggles.

#### **4.6.1 CULTURAL HYBRIDITY**

This section discusses different examples of cultural hybridity in a general sense before discussing the specific sub-themes pertaining to cultural hybridity. This section discusses eating habits, weight issues, an American accent, urban vernaculars, culture, children's liberties, relationships, money, conduct and a club called the Nigerpolitans in Nigeria.

The first example of cultural hybridity is when Adichie describes the Afropolitans as having changed their eating habits after they have been to America. Rayinudo, was telling Ifemelu to come back to Nigeria and join the American returnees who carry bottles of water wherever they go, as if they are going to die of thirst (Adichie, 2013).

Another example of the Afropolitan's eating habits is when Ifemelu was doing her hair at a salon, she refused to order chicken like the rest of the ladies in the salon because she had a "granola bar" and "some baby carrots in a Ziploc" (Adichie, 2013, p. 39). The element of hybridity comes out strongly because when she first arrived in America, Ifemelu found American eating habits peculiar. They would eat corned

beef sandwiches for lunch whilst Dike could not understand why she was eating her bananas with peanuts. American eating habits were weird for Ifemelu because she expected lunch to be a warm plate of home-cooked food like they would eat in Nigeria. Ifemelu had thus adapted to her new culture that is why she could eat a granola bar and carrots as opposed to chicken.

Another example that is directly linked to the eating habits of Americans was when Ifemelu met an old friend in America and was shocked at how much weight she had lost that she could not help but ask “[w]hen did you stop eating and start looking like a dried stockfish?” Ginika replied that she lost weight because being thin in America was the trend while in Nigeria it was a bad thing (Adichie, 2013). Ifemelu is an example of a cultural hybrid Afropolitan that adopts American eating habits, living a healthy lifestyle and drinking a lot of water.

The adoption of the American accent is another example of the cultural hybridity of the Afropolitan. When Ifemelu’s friend Ginika left for America, her school mates teased her that she would come back speaking like an American for example “adding a slurred *r* to every English word she spoke” (p. 65). However, upon arriving in America, Ifemelu understood this desire of Africans to assimilate because even her Aunty Uju when she spoke to Dike in the midst of other white American people would speak with an accent. Like once in the supermarket when Aunty Uju told Dike to ‘*poo-reet-back*’ (Adichie, 2013, p. 108) which means to put it back. Selasi (2005) states that some Afropolitans adopt an “American accent, European affect, African ethos” (para. 3) and this statement is evidence of why this element of cultural

hybridity comes out so strongly in the examples given above. Similarly, at her first African Students Association meeting, the African students were forewarned that they would soon start to adopt an American accent because they would not want people to keep asking them to repeat whatever they had said (Adichie, 2013).

Selasi (2005) states that the Afropolitan apart from English can speak a Romance language, an indigenous language and some urban vernaculars. The following example focuses on how Ifemelu had to learn American urban vernacular. In her quest to understand and learn her new American culture she had moments when she would interpret what was being said differently from what it actually meant in America. For example, when Americans said “we’re getting a bite to eat, [c]ome with us!” they meant let us all go but everyone will be responsible for paying their own account, which was not the practice back in Nigeria because it sounded like an invitation for which somebody else was going to pay (Adichie, 2013). The Afropolitans thus have to learn urban vernaculars, like Ifemelu had to in order to be functional in their new adopted space without constant misunderstandings or being misunderstood.

Adichie (2013) gives a good example of cultural hybridity when she describes Aunty Uju, who in my view is an example of a diasporan and Ginika an example of an Afropolitan. For Ifemelu, Ginika had adapted more to the American culture than Aunty Uju had because Ginika was young and adaptable and had thus quickly learnt the American culture and way of doing things. The knowledge that Ginika had of America made Ifemelu envious because “[s]he hungered to understand everything

about America, to wear a new, knowing skin right away” (Adichie, 2013, p. 135). This citation shows Ifemelu’s desire to learn about her new culture and not necessarily forgetting or abandoning the Nigerian culture but because she is in America.

Another instance that relates more to race than culture is when Adichie (2013) addresses how Americans avoid speaking of anything that relates to race but are comfortable talking about culture. In the following example, Ifemelu learnt that Americans shy away from speaking about issues that relate in any way to race. When she and Ginika had gone shopping, the lady at the till wanted to know who had assisted them and naturally Ifemelu would have answered by referring to race and saying black or white but both Ginika and the shop assistant did not refer to race. “Why didn't she just ask '[w]as it the black girl or the white girl?’” (p.127). Ifemelu asked as she is puzzled by how they were trying to point to who had helped them through everything else except colour. “Because this is America. You're supposed to pretend that you don't notice certain things” (p. 127), Ginika responded. According to Selasi (2005), the Afropolitan has to form an identity on a racial level ‘with subtle tensions in between’ and the American attitude, showed in the story, of avoiding to talk about race, contributes to what Selasi terms as the ‘subtle tensions’.

A similar example of Americans speaking about culture rather than race is found in the following example: Elene, one of Ifemelu’s housemates, once asked Ifemelu if not liking dogs on Ifemelu’s part was a cultural thing because she had never seen Ifemelu pat her dog (Adichie, 2013). Elene, like the shop assistant in the example

above is simply avoiding to ask whether it is a black thing for Ifemelu not to pat her dog but uses the word 'cultural' in order to avoid speaking about race.

Another aspect under cultural hybridity is the liberties that Americans give their children. Ifemelu was shocked at the liberties that Americans give their children when the woman whose children she was baby-sitting's sister kept asking her four year old daughter whether she wanted the "yellow or the blue or the red" (Adichie, 2013, p. 167) of something which is not specified. She compares American culture to Nigerian culture where you would just pick one and give a child because making them choose would be too much of a burden. This relates to the Afropolitan because Ifemelu had to learn, however annoyed, to relate to the American children she was taking care of in the way they had been raised and not enforce her African values on them.

Apart from the liberties given to children, one of the practices Ifemelu found strange was the freedom young people had when it came to relationships and choosing partners. However strange, after some time Ifemelu adopted the practice herself and was telling her father that "she was moving in with a man to whom she was not married" (Adichie, 2013, p. 314). This she only did because she lived in America because if she had been in Nigeria she would not have told him or he would not have tolerated it.

*Americanah* (2013) deals with two Afropolitans: one is Ifemelu in America and the other is Obinze, Ifemelu's boyfriend, in London. The following are some examples

of how he experienced cultural hybridity in London. When Obinze had some financial difficulties he asked his friend, Emenike who was now a British citizen to help him with some money. When they met and Emenike gave him the money he was shocked because he expected Obinze to count the money which was not normal practice in Nigeria because you would only count the money or even look at it after the person who gave it to you had left. You would simply receive the money with thanks that is almost waved away (Adichie, 2013). This is evidence of Emenike's cultural hybridity because he has adopted a new culture even though he knows how money is given in Nigeria; he chooses to give it in the manner of his adopted culture. Another example of Emenike's cultural hybridity is in his demeanour. He acted Nigerian in the way Obinze was used to when they were alone but when his wife arrived and they had to decide on a restaurant to go to, he changed. "His voice had taken on an unfamiliar modulation, his delivery slower, the temperature of his entire being much lower". (Adichie, 2013, p. 267) In summary, Emenike, such as a true Afropolitan has two cultures and behaves differently in the midst of fellow Africans as opposed to British people but ironically he behaves in a British way when he gives Obinze the money while they are alone.

The last example of cultural hybridity is captured in the following citation. When Ifemelu returned to Nigeria, she had joined a group who called themselves the Nigerropolitans, who were returnees from America with whom she shared the "same references" and they could "list the things they missed about America" (p. 408). Ifemelu missed "fresh green salads and steamed still-firm vegetables" (p. 409) that

she got used to eating in America, but she also “loved eating all the things she had missed while away, jollof rice cooked with a lot of oil, fried plantains, boiled yams” (p. 409). This by far is the most explicit explanation of Ifemelu’s cultural hybridity. She is both African and Nigerian.

#### **4.6.1.1 Ethnic mixes**

The following section discusses the first sub-theme under cultural hybridity which is ethnic mixes. Selasi (2005) states that “[s]ome of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos” (para.3).

Adichie (2013) does not discuss this aspect a lot and there are only two places in her novel in which she refers to ethnic mixes. The first instance is where Ginika was telling her friends about how people who had her light complexion were experiencing a lot of racial issues in America whereas in Nigeria she was chased after. The second example is the woman Obinze wanted to marry in order to get British citizenship and who told him that “[h]er black Angolan father had left her white Portuguese mother when she was only three years old, and she had not seen him since, nor had she ever been to Angola” (p. 230). Selasi’s (2005) description of the Afropolitan suggests that not all Afropolitans are ethnic mixes because she uses the word some. Thus the Afropolitans in Adichie’s novel are Afropolitans by virtue of other aspects of her definition and not because they are ethnic mixes.

#### **4.6.1.2 Dress sense**

The second sub-theme under cultural hybridity is the dress sense of the Afropolitan. In *Americanah* (2013), Adichie describes the American dress sense extensively but the researcher could also identify a few instances where the Afropolitan's dress sense is described. Ifemelu describes what Ginika is wearing when they first meet in America, which suggests Ginika's cultural hybridity because she was wearing a very short dress with straightened hair, with blonde highlights that "she kept tucking behind her ears" (p. 123).

The second example of dress sense that relates to Afropolitans is where Adichie (2013) describes the dress sense of the Nigerropolitans. She describes them as "chic people, all dripping with savoir faire, each nursing a self-styled quirkiness · a ginger-coloured Afro, a T-shirt with a graphic of Thomas Sankara, oversize handmade earrings that hung like pieces of modern art" (p. 407). The example above describes the Afropolitan because Selasi (2005) describes the dress sense of the Afropolitan as "Cultural Hybrid: kente cloth worn over low-waisted jeans" (para.1).

#### **4.6.1.3 Geography**

This section discusses the sub-theme of geographic location because Selasi (2005) discusses what the Afropolitan considers to be home. "Home' for this lot is many things: where their parents are from; where they go for vacation; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year)" (para.2).

The first example of this aspect of 'home' is seen in the following scene. After Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, her father takes comfort in the fact that she is now an American citizen and can return to America anytime, if she wants to. On the other hand; Obinze, the other Afropolitan in the story, who had been refused a visa as a young student; for him access to America was no longer a challenge because he was now a wealthy businessman (Adichie, 2013).

After Ifemelu had returned to Nigeria, she was struggling to adapt but after a while she felt home and no longer had to ask Ranyinudo what to do and where to go buy essentials (Adichie, 2013). Selasi (2005) succinctly sums up the examples above "[I]ike so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many" (para. 2).

#### **4.6.1.4 Multilingualism**

The multilingualism of Afropolitans as explained by Selasi (2005) is not extensively discussed by Adichie (2013). Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitans speak English, a Romance language, an urban vernacular and understand an indigenous language. The following are some examples of the multilingualism of Afropolitans.

The first example is a situation whereby while in America, Ifemelu attended the African Student's Association meeting, then Wambui a Kenyan student shouted something in Swahili, which was evidence that though in America, Afropolitans still used their indigenous languages. Ifemelu was proud to defend the fact that she could speak Igbo, to Aisha the hairdresser (Adichie, 2013).

The second example is when Obinze on a train to Essex noticed that all “the people around him were Nigerians; loud conversations in Yoruba and Pidgin filled the carriage” (Adichie, 2013, p. 259). This is evidence that even though in an English speaking country, when Afropolitans meet with people from their home country, they freely speak their indigenous languages, which is also a sign of a strong bond with Africa.

Another example Adichie (2013) discusses are the language habits of some Africans who, now that they have become British or American citizens will not speak their own language to their children. An example of such an African is Nicholas, Obinze’s cousin who spoke only English to his children even though he spoke Igbo to his wife. He feared that Igbo might influence the British accents of the children. Similarly, Aunty Uju also reprimanded Ifemelu when she spoke Igbo to Dike because she felt it would confuse him (Adichie, 2013). Ifemelu however, was adamant that they also grew up speaking English and their mother tongue but did not become confused.

In addition, Adichie (2013) spends a great deal on exploring American urban vernacular. The following are some examples: Ifemelu had not thought of Americans as “fat” but as “big”. Ginika upon her arrival had already told her that “fat” in America was a bad word, heaving with moral judgement such as “stupid” or “bastard” and not a mere description such as “short” or “tall” (p. 5). She told Ginika that she was “thin with big breasts.” To which Ginika responded that she was ‘slim’ and not ‘thin’ (p. 124).

She also found the American use of the phrase “I know” peculiar, because it stated agreement and not knowledge. Furthermore, when she started teaching Dike

mathematics, he called it ‘math’ whilst she called it ‘maths’ to which they agreed not to shorten the word (Adichie, 2013).

The evidence suggests that some Afropolitans, such as in the examples above, lean more towards maintaining the British or American language more than they do their African languages and also learn the urban vernaculars of their adopted cities.

#### **4.6.2 CAREERS**

This section examines the theme of careers which is not discussed at length in *Americanah* (2013). The following three are the only examples in which Adichie (2013) explicitly speaks of careers.

Ifemelu’s career started as a lifestyle blogger who blogged about “*Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*” (p. 4).

Then she received a Princeton research fellowship “she was expected to live in Princeton and use the library and give a public talk at the end of the year. It seemed too good to be true, an entry into a hallowed American kingdom” (p. 354).

The last example is when Ifemelu returned to Nigeria; she started working as an “editor for a leading women's monthly magazine” (p. 391) which was called Zoe. When she became bored with the monotonous nature of the job she decided to start a blog called *The Small Redemptions of Lagos*.

Lifestyle blogger then Princeton fellow and then Editor are all examples of Afropolitan careers Selasi (2005) discusses in her essay.

#### **4.6.3 IDENTITY FORMATION**

As mentioned earlier in this study, according to Selasi (2005) the Afropolitan has to form an identity on three levels; national, racial and cultural. This section thus discusses the theme of identity formation through examining several examples.

The first example of identity formation as it relates to the Afropolitan is when Ifemelu has to form an identity when she arrives in America because Americans did everything differently from what she was used to. Their speaking sounded as if they constantly used the exclamation mark, they had a lot of shower gels but no sponge in their showers and this in itself made her feel like a foreigner (Adichie, 2013). This is linked to the Afropolitans' cultural hybridity because although it is strange at first, the Afropolitan adopts the same way of life.

The second example of identity formation as it relates to the Afropolitan is when she felt isolated from her parents and friends and found it difficult to adapt to her new environment. In a different scene Ifemelu felt insulted when the student that assisted her on campus, in not so many words, insisted on her English being bad. She had spoken English all her life and had even led the debating society in secondary school. But in the "following weeks, as autumn's coolness descended, she began to practise an American accent" (Adichie, 2013, p. 134). Ifemelu had been forewarned at the

African Students Association that she would want to develop an American accent to avoid people asking her from repeating everything she said. The example above proves what Selasi (2005) states; that as part of their identity formation, the Afropolitans end up with an American or a British accent.

As her identity formation and cultural hybridity progressed, Ifemelu stopped faking her American accent because a telemarketer told her that she sounded totally American and she thanked him after which she asked herself why it was an accomplishment to sound American. She knew that if she was in terror or jerked awake at night she would not remember how to use her American accent (Adichie, 2013). She realised that she was not being true to herself and did not mind repeating what she said so that people could understand her. Ifemelu, although a cultural hybrid, decides to remain true to her African identity while in America.

Attending university in America was an enriching experience for Ifemelu because American students were different from African students or to what she was used to in Nigeria, and she concluded that, “Americans were taught, from elementary school, to always *say something* in class, no matter what. ...They never said “I don't know” (p. 134). This habit of Americans affected Ifemelu’s confidence in a positive way because she “spoke up in class, buoyed by the books she read, thrilled that she could disagree with professors and get, in return, not a scolding about being disrespectful but an encouraging nod” (Selasi, 2013, p. 136), all of which she would never have done in Nigeria. This also links to the self-expression of the Afropolitan as discussed by Selasi (2005).

On the other hand, she didn't like the way some Africans, like Mariama the hairdresser related to her customers. Even if she thought a customer was a trouble maker and was asking her to re-do perfect hair, she agreed because of her new American culture of customer service, but once the customer left she would complain about how Americans were spoiled (Adichie, 2013).

Another example of identity formation is regarding Dike; Ifemelu's cousin. He was born and raised in America but was also dealing with issues of identity formation. His mother, Aunty Uju always spoke Igbo when she was scolding him and thus he did not know whether to like or hate the language. Dike, much to his mother's dismay, wrote in a school essay that he did not know his identity and that his name was difficult to pronounce. His mother however waved it away as American culture (Adichie, 2013).

Ifemelu reminded Aunty Uju of how when Dike had referred to himself as 'black folk' she had told him that he was not black. "You told him what he wasn't but you didn't tell him what he was" (p. 380). This is evidence of the identity formation process Selasi (2005) speaks of because as an Afropolitan, Dike is in the process of knowing whether he is black or not, African or American. Ifemelu on the other hand was pleased to hear from Ranyinudo that "[y]ou are no longer behaving like an Americanah!" (p. 395). As an Afropolitan, Ifemelu wants to behave such as an African in Nigeria, even though she also identifies with America as home.

#### 4.6.4 AFRICAN BOND

The section discusses the different examples of African bonds that are portrayed in *Americanah* (2013). Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitans have a strong bond with Africa because they are either returning to Africa to make an impact or contribute in one way or the other to Africa's development. She further states that Afropolitans “[r]ather than essentialising the geographical entity, ... seek to comprehend the cultural complexity; to honor the intellectual and spiritual legacy; and to sustain our parents' cultures” (para. 7).

The first example of an African bond in *Americanah* (2013) is at university. Ifemelu felt at home with her fellow African students from Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Congo and Guinea. She enjoyed the sound of their different accents as well as how they mocked Africa because they “felt safe to mock, because it was mockery born of longing, and of the heartbroken desire to see a place made whole again” (Adichie, 2013, p. 139).

The second example of an African bond was how Ifemelu felt “living abroad, not knowing when she could go home again, was to watch love become anxiety” (p. 152) and she missed Nigeria a lot. When she met Ginika for the first time in America, they “hugged, looked at each other, said all the things people said who had not seen each other in many years, both lapsing into their Nigerian voices and their Nigerian selves, louder, more heightened, adding "o" to their sentences” (p. 222). The above are examples of how Afropolitans have a strong bond with Africa because they long for and share about Africa when they meet others who are also from Africa.

Another example of a strong African bond is of one of the Ghanaian students – Kofi. The leader of the African Students Association always uses Kofi as an example because Kofi came to America when he was two years old with his Ghanaian parents but he still visits Ghana every year (Adichie, 2013).

Even Aunty Uju had a strong bond to Africa although she had chosen to give birth to Dike in America instead of Britain so that he could get automatic citizenship. She gave him an African name and later joined the African Doctors for Africa who were volunteering to go on two-week medical missions to Africa in an effort to plough back into Africa (Adichie, 2013).

*“I recently decided to move back to Nigeria”* (p. 19), Ifemelu told Obinze in an email. Upon her arrival in Nigeria she felt nostalgic and melancholic, “a beautiful sadness for the things she had missed and the things she would never know” (p. 388). She felt this way because so much had changed and she had missed it, but what was important was that she was home.

All the scenarios above are examples of how Afropolitans keep their connection with Africa by engaging with friends, returning to Africa, volunteering in Africa or even giving their children African names to maintain their bond to Africa.

#### **4.6.5 SELF EXPRESSION**

The last theme Selasi (2005) discusses in her essay is self-expression and this section discusses the different examples of self-expression by Afropolitans in *Americanah* (2013). Selasi (2005) further states that Afropolitans are not afraid of expressing themselves because “what distinguishes this lot... (in the West and at home) is a

willingness to complicate Africa – namely, to engage with, critique, and celebrate the parts of Africa that mean most to them” (para.7). Afropolitans are not afraid to ask questions of relevance in their celebration or critique of Africa.

The first example is linked to the theme of career because Ifemelu had what Selasi (2005) calls a ‘famed focus’ career in which she was a lifestyle blogger that helped her to express herself about America whilst in America, and she expressed herself about Nigeria when she moved back to Nigeria. This section primarily discusses the different issues Ifemelu blogged about.

According to Selasi “the Afropolitan must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between” (2005, para. 9). Thus one area that took up a lot of the blog space for Ifemelu was the issue of race in America and below follows some examples of how she expressed herself with regards to issues of race:

“Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now” (p. 220).

Another example is at a dinner party that Ifemelu attended with her African American boyfriend, the guests and hosts (a French couple) were discussing race and Ifemelu said “I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America. But we don't talk about it” (Adichie, 2013, p. 291). She expresses how she was never conscious of

colour while in Nigeria, until she came to America. Race was an issue that Americans avoided talking about. Ifemelu also blogged that a “lot of folk - mostly non-black - say Obama is not black, he's biracial, multiracial, black-and-white, anything but just black. Because his mother was white” (p. 337).

However, she had no inhibitions to express exactly what she thought of how Americans avoid the issue. This is an example of the self-expression that Selasi (2005) alludes to in her essay.

The second example is one in which Obinze also expressed his views regarding class and race in Britain. “I think class in this country is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place” (Adichie, p. 275). In Britain if a white boy and a black girl, both working class date, then race will not be of much importance whereas in America race will be crucial. This is once again an example of the ‘subtle tensions’ Selasi (2005) speaks of when Afropolitans have to craft their identity.

Obinze also expressed himself on a different issue from race; that at first he was excited about Facebook because he thought it was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends but he began to lose interest when he discovered that people were using it to show off their status, for example, wife and children. Facebook pictures were taken strategically, with specific items in the background which individuals wanted to show off (Adichie, 2013).

One of the first posts Ifemelu had put up, on her new blog in Nigeria, was about how people, especially those in the Nigerpolitan club; including herself, were comparing

Lagos to New York. “Lagos has never been, will never be, and has never aspired to be like New York, or anywhere else for that matter. Lagos has always been undisputably itself” (Adichie, 2013, p. 421).

Ifemelu was angered by her friend Ranyinudo’s response when she told her about Dike’s suicide attempt because Ranyinudo called it ‘foreign behaviour’. To which Ifemelu burst out “[f]oreign behaviour? What the fuck are you talking about? Foreign behaviour? Have you read *Things Fall Apart?*” (p. 425).

All of the above are examples of Afropolitans expressing themselves without hesitation. It is possible that Ifemelu is confident in expressing herself because of her experience of going to university in America where students were encouraged to express themselves. Either way, she fits the definition of Selasi (2005), that of Afropolitans who express themselves even in their work. Ifemelu has used her work of blogging to bring forth her views.

#### **4.6.6 EMERGING THEMES**

This section discusses the different themes that have emerged in Adichie’s novel *Americanah* (2013) and how they are linked to Afropolitanism. The themes are hair, stereotypes, religion and struggles; these are the four major themes that were discussed.

#### **4.6.6.1 Hair**

The theme of hair in this novel was strongly linked to identity. The following are examples in the story where hair is linked to identity.

The story began with Ifemelu's visit to a hairdresser that specialized in braiding African hair. The hairdresser questioned why she had not relaxed her hair to which Ifemelu told her "I like my hair the way God made it" (p. 12).

Others such as Aunty Uju and Ginika had conformed to relaxing their hair and thus found it weird that Ifemelu refused to relax hers despite her hair being kinky and difficult to manage. Aunty Uju told her that natural hair was untidy. When Ifemelu had to go for a job interview in America, she was advised to relax her hair if she wanted to get the job and so she did. The hairdresser told her that it was "[j]ust a little burn. Wow, girl, you've got the white-girl swing!" (p. 203). This little burn was not so little after all, because it turned into sores and Wambui advised her to cut off her hair and let it grow afresh.

Ifemelu was relieved when her hair grew back because even though other Africans such as Aunty Uju did not want to admit, there were people who admired natural African hair. Once, while she was in the grocery store with her boyfriend, an elderly white woman said "[y]our hair is so beautiful, can I touch it?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 313) and Ifemelu agreed.

At a Nigeropolitan meeting in Nigeria, Ifemelu was quite pleased with what she heard when she eavesdropped on a conversation between two ladies who were complaining about hairdressers in Nigeria who were struggling to comb natural hair “as though it were an alien eruption, as though their own hair was not the same way before it was defeated by chemicals” (Adichie, 2013, p. 407).

Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitan women ‘show off enormous afros’ and it is evident from the examples above how Ifemelu has fought to maintain her afro despite people advising her to apply relaxer to her hair in order to soften it. Ifemelu ties her hair to her identity and feels that if God wanted her to have differently textured hair, he would have made her with differently textured hair, thus she will keep the hair she received from God.

#### **4.6.6.2 Stereotyping**

Stereotyping is one of the strongly emerging themes in Adichie’s novel *Americanah* (2013) both in Nigeria as well as in America and it is relevant to Afropolitans because it is linked to the theme of self-expression. This section discusses different stereotypes and how they led to Ifemelu, who is an Afropolitan, expressing herself regarding them.

The first example is how Ifemelu was pleasantly surprised when she saw a boy urinating against a wall in America. She thought something like that would only happen in Nigeria. In another scene, whilst watching television with Aunty Uju and

Ifemelu, Auntie Uju's boyfriend Bartholomew said "[a] girl in Nigeria will never wear that kind of dress, look at that. This country has no moral compass." Ifemelu told him "[g]irls in Nigeria wear dresses much shorter than that o" (Adichie, 2013, p. 116).

Ginika, Ifemelu's friend, told her when she was looking for a job with someone else's name that "[y]ou could have just said Ngozi is your tribal name and Ifemelu is your jungle name and throw in one more as your spiritual name. They'll believe all kinds of shit about Africa" (p. 131).

Apart from expressing herself on her blog, Ifemelu also expressed her opinion boldly about everything wherever she went to whoever she encountered. At one time she was speaking to Kimberly the lady whose two children she was taking care of; Kimberly while browsing through a magazine stopped and said:

"Oh, look at this beautiful woman," and pointed at a plain model in a magazine whose only distinguishing feature was her very dark skin.

"Isn't she just stunning?"

"No, she isn't." Ifemelu paused. "You know, you can just say 'black.' Not every black person is beautiful" (Adichie, 2013, p. 147).

Similarly, in a different scent, Kimberly's sister Laura was showing Kimberly and Ifemelu a picture of a celebrity who went to Africa to adopt children.

Ifemelu and Kimberly looked at the page together: a thin white woman, smiling at the camera, holding a dark-skinned African baby in her arms, and

all around her, little dark-skinned African children were spread out like a rug.

Kimberly made a sound, a hmmm, as though she was unsure how to feel.

“She's stunning too,” Laura said.

“Yes, she is,” Ifemelu said. “And she's just as skinny as the kids, only that her skinniness is by choice and theirs is not by choice”. (Adichie, 2013, p.

162)

Ifemelu blogged about a woman from Kenya who visited her doctor whose prognosis was that she was experiencing panic attacks.

‘On the Subject of Non-American Blacks Suffering from Illnesses Whose Names They Refuse to Know.’ ... she refused to accept the diagnosis of panic attacks because panic attacks happened only to Americans. Nobody in Kinshasa had panic attacks. It was not even that it was called by another name, it was simply not called at all. Did things begin to exist only when they were named? (Adichie, 2013, p. 158)

Similarly Ifemelu had also refused to accept the same phenomenon when Ginika told her “I think you're suffering from depression” (Adichie, 2013, p. 157). Ifemelu, shaking her head said depression only happened to Americans. She was not suffering from depression” but was merely tired (p. 157).

All stereotypical issues had led to Ifemelu expressing herself regarding them and this is how this theme is linked to that of self-expression for the Afropolitan.

#### **4.6.6.3 Struggles**

This section discusses another emerging theme of struggles. This theme links to the Afropolitan because Selasi (2005) states that the Afropolitan has to form an identity on three levels with subtle tensions in between, thus the struggles Ifemelu, Obinze and Dike face in their adopted space refers to the 'subtle tensions'. The following are examples of the struggles they experienced.

Both Ifemelu's stay in America and Obinze's stay in London did not come without struggles. Ifemelu was jobless but had to pay rent and her housemates were putting pressure on her, so she had to sell her body in order to make money to pay her rent.

Although it was not struggles of a financial nature, Dike as an Afropolitan also had his fair share. Dike's school had accused him of hacking into the school's computer network but eventually the headmaster came back and apologised. His friends always asked if he didn't have some weed and then they would laugh heartily about it. Even the pastor at the church greeted all the other children with 'hello' but greeted him with 'what's up bro' (Adichie, 2013, p. 349). All these incidences made Dike feel like an outcast. Dike's struggles relate more to the Afropolitan's identity formation with regards to issues of race.

On the other hand, Obinze's mother had to lie for him in order to take him to London as her research assistant, because though in Nigeria, his heart was in America. His visa expired without him getting a job and he looked at others with longing eyes thinking "[y]ou can work, you are legal, you are visible, and you don't even know

how fortunate you are” (Adichie, 2013, p. 227). Eventually when he got a job it was to clean toilets.

#### **4.6.7 DISCUSSION OF *AMERICANAH*'S RELATION TO AFROPOLITANISM**

The researcher explored all the benchmarked themes in *Americanah* (2013) although not all the themes were discussed at equal lengths in the novel. Similar to *Ghana must go* (2013), the researcher discovered that *Americanah* (2013) discussed the theme of identity formation the most, followed by self-expression, which is a theme Selasi (2005) mentioned when she stated that Afropolitans do not shy away from expressing themselves at all levels and they refuse ‘any form of victim identity.’

Adichie (2013) did not present the dress sense of the Afropolitan at great length because she only presents one example that relates to the Afropolitan’s dress sense. She discussed the element of language both with regards to multilingualism and speaking ‘urban vernaculars’. The theme of identity formation and self-expression correlated because they were primarily linked to issues of race and being able to be different in America while appreciating the similarities.

Interestingly, Adichie (2013) had what she called Nigerpolitans in *Americanah* (2013) who were returnees from America and Britain who met regularly to reminisce about what they missed in America and what they were loving about Lagos. They confirmed what Hollinger (as cited in Eze, 2014) stated, when he said that cosmopolitans belonged to different communities at the same time. The Afropolitans in *Americanah* (2013) have a much stronger African bond, perhaps because they

were born and raised in Africa but went for studies or work in America or Britain, meaning that they know Africa more. This is so when compared to the characters in *Ghana must go (2013)* where only the diasporan parents show a strong African bond and not the Afropolitan children.

There were several emerging themes in *Americanah (2013)*; hair, stereotypes and struggles but the most prominent that was linked to identity formation was hair. Adichie (2013) uses the theme of hair to craft a strong identity for her main character Ifemelu.

According to (Faist, 2010) the diaspora and transnationalism theory emphasises the fact that immigrants always have a strong connection or a bond with Africa and this is evident in both *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)*. Ang (2003) states that the hybridity as creolisation theory examines how people live across different continents, adopt a new culture and how they maintain the two cultures. Characters from both novels live across continents but Adichie (2013) problematizes this fusion between people more than Selasi (2013) does because she addresses having to adopt a new ‘American’ culture whilst used to another which is ‘Nigerian’.

#### **4.7 SUMMARY**

The aim of this chapter was to analyze the findings according to the themes benchmarked in Selasi’s (2005) essay as well as examine emerging themes and their link to Afropolitanism. The major themes that were identified in *Who is an Afropolitan? (2005)* were cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-

expression and an African bond. All the benchmarked themes were explored in both novels, although *Americanah* (2013) discussed an additional theme of self-expression which Selasi (2005) mentions in her essay but does not present it in *Ghana must go* (2013). This chapter discussed what the findings yielded in relation to Afropolitanism.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this research was to explore the concept of Afropolitanism in two literary texts, *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)*. The study was necessitated by the fact that Afropolitanism is a new concept that has not been broadly explored. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relevance of Afropolitanism in exploring African literature?
2. How does Selasi reveal the theme of Afropolitanism in her novel *Ghana must go (2013)*?
3. How does Adichie's *Americanah (2013)* relate to the idea of Afropolitanism as explored in Selasi's *Ghana must go (2013)*?

The study used Selasi's (2005) essay *Who is an afropolitan?* as a benchmark because Selasi was the one who originally coined the term in her essay. The general literature on Afropolitanism discusses nation, fashion, art and career; leaving a gap in areas such as creative literature. Thus the problem the researcher examined was whether Afropolitanism can be explored in literary texts such as novels.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

##### 5.2.1 AFROPOLITANISM IN EXPLORING AFRICAN LITERATURE

The first research question posed by this study was; what is the relevance of Afropolitanism in exploring African literature? This study has shown that

Afropolitanism is relevant and its discovered components can be studied in African literature in English.

This study revealed that Afropolitan writers write for and about Africans. They focus on three areas, namely; sharing experiences of living both abroad and in Africa, the cultural diversity they experience while abroad and finally new ways to think about their African identity. The Afropolitan writer is inspired by global events and not just events in Africa.

As expressed above, both Adichie and Selasi do not only write about the transnational migration experience but they are both emigrants because Adichie lives in America and travels to Nigeria regularly, similarly Selasi lives in America but travels across different continents. Thus both writers also discuss Afropolitan characters in the two texts; *Ghana must go (2013)* and *Americanah (2013)*.

The overarching themes identified in the different definitions of Afropolitanism were that Afropolitans live outside Africa, strongly identify with Africa and are cultural hybrids. Thus the definition adopted for this study was – Afropolitanism refers to Africans born in and outside of the African continent, whether purely African or ethnic mixes, who strongly identify with Africa and want to invest in Africa.

The literature that Afropolitan writers write is not influenced by events that affect a specific area only but events, such as 9/11, that impact the world (Orlando, 2013).

This assertion is affirmed in Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) when she writes about the American presidential elections that were taking place at the time in which President Barack Obama was elected as the first black president of America.

The researcher has concluded that both Adichie and Selasi are Afropolitans by definition, as discussed in this study, and their emigrant experiences have contributed to their writing about and for Africans. Both, Adichie and Selasi are born from purely African parents but they are cultural hybrids by virtue of the different countries they consider as home. Their novels; *Ghana must go* (2013) and *Americanah* (2013) have characters that through their experiences make the reader understand the emigrant experience. Thus writing about and for Africans would not be a complete task if the writers did not have the emigrant experience because they would merely be writing about unfounded information.

### **5.2.2 AFROPOLITANISM REVEALED IN *GHANA MUST GO***

The second question that this study aimed to answer was; how does Selasi reveal the theme of Afropolitanism in her novel *Ghana must go* (2013)?

Again the study used Selasi's (2005) essay *Who is an Afropolitan?* as a benchmark. Selasi (2005) discussed cultural hybridity, careers, identity formation, self-expression and an African bond as attributes that make up the Afropolitan. The sub-themes Selasi discussed under cultural hybridity were ethnic mixes, dress sense and multilingualism. The researcher wanted to gauge if all the characteristics identified in *Who is an Afropolitan?* (2005) would be evident in *Ghana must go* (2013). However,

Selasi (2013) mostly focused on identity formation followed by an African bond. The sub-themes and the theme of self-expression were not presented in great detail. However, Selasi (2013) extensively presented two themes that were linked; the theme of cultural hybridity in a more general sense and the theme of identity formation.

One of the prominently emerging themes was self-inflicted pain, which in my opinion is a theme that is stereotypically thought of as not being relevant to Africa or Africans but it has emerged strongly in the texts. This was indicated through a mother that smoked even though she knew it was bad for her health because she had been married to a medical doctor and was also a mother to one, a daughter that was bulimic and a son that self-mutilated. A woman that smokes, bulimia and self-mutilation, although they might be present, are not topics that are discussed with liberty in Africa. Similarly, Adichie (2013) explicitly presented areas such as suicide and depression that are also not associated with Africa or Africans.

The researcher has concluded that although Selasi's (2005) essay might have encouraged the writing of *Ghana must go* (2013), it is not an absolutely comprehensive expansion of Selasi's (2005) ideas on Afropolitanism as shared in her essay. The researcher has also concluded that transnationalism leads to cultural hybridity because the individual belongs to two worlds. In turn, cultural hybridity leads to a questioning and formation of identity, because the individual has to create and adopt an identity that is representative of both worlds. Therefore cultural hybridity also leads to individuals assimilating with the different cultures they have

to adopt which means cultural hybridity breeds a new form of what is normal or natural – illustrating that culture is flexible and always changing. Ang (2003) argues that hybridity “foregrounds complicated entanglement rather than identity” (p. 2) but the researcher disagrees because as evidenced in the findings of *Ghana must go* (2013), hybridity also focusses on forming an identity.

In summary, *Ghana must go* (2013) presents the Afropolitan Selasi (2005) discusses in her essay. She presents Afropolitans who are ethnic mixes, are multilingual, have ‘famed focus’ careers, have an African bond and are not afraid to both question and celebrate Africa. The researcher has thus concluded that *Ghana must go* (2013) presents how Selasi reveals the theme of Afropolitanism even though not all themes discussed in her essay are presented equally.

### **5.2.3 RELATION OF AMERICANAH TO AFROPOLITANISM**

The last question this study aimed to answer was; how does Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013) relate to the idea of Afropolitanism as discussed in Selasi’s *Ghana must go* (2013)?

The researcher used the benchmarked essay to answer the research question. The findings showed that Adichie discussed identity formation the most, followed by self-expression, and this was conceivably the case because the two themes are linked. Although not at great length, she also discussed the sub-theme of multilingualism and urban vernaculars. The theme of hair emerges significantly in *Americanah* (2013) and it is also closely linked to identity formation.

Selasi (2005) states that Afropolitans are not afraid of expressing themselves, which is evident, even in their work. Self-expression is a theme that is presented at great length in *Americanah* (2013) because Adichie presents what the researcher has termed the ‘unspeakables’ which includes stereotypical thinking.

The researcher has concluded that Adichie’s novel *Americanah* (2013) captures the characteristics of Afropolitanism because she has presented many of the themes that were discussed in Selasi’s (2005) essay, although not all of them are presented at equal length. Adichie presents hair and self-expression at great length and these two themes are related to identity formation.

The researcher has also concluded that Adichie’s novel highlights what Prabhu (2007) states when he says that the hybridity as creolisation theory addresses how diasporan people develop themselves without losing their identity, while preserving differences. Prabhu’s (2007) statement is revealed in *Americanah* (2013) because the characters travel abroad to develop themselves through studies and work and while they assimilate with their new culture they also consciously maintain their identity.

In summary, *Americanah* (2013) relates to Afropolitanism because Adichie (2013) presents the Afropolitan Selasi (2005) discusses in her essay. She presents Afropolitans who are cultural hybrids, are multilingual, have ‘famed focus’ careers that allows them expression, have a strong African bond and are not afraid to both question and celebrate Africa. The researcher has thus concluded that *Americanah*

(2013) relates to Afropolitanism even though not all themes discussed in Selasi's (2005) essay are presented equally.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study revealed that Afropolitanism is a concept that can be explored in literature just as it is in art, culture and fashion. The researcher recommends the following areas for further investigation:

- Further research to be conducted of other novels in order to determine if the same attributes of Afropolitanism will be discovered in other texts.
- The two texts have demonstrated that identity formation was a prominent theme. How is identity formation difficult for the Afropolitan and does their cultural hybridity raise issues that are normally not considered to be African?
- An examination of whether Afropolitan writers purposefully use their writing as a platform to express issues that would normally be considered as taboo in Africa in order to explain the emigrant experience.

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**APPENDIX 1**

<b>GHANA MUST GO</b>		
<b>THEME</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>QUOTE</b>
<b>1. MAJOR THEME: Cultural Hybridity</b>	22	And the life that came with it: getting out of bed every morning, coming to sit in his little sunroom with the paper and croissants, sipping fresh expensive coffee served by a butler named Kofi to whom he'd speak in a British accent (somewhat inexplicably), "That will be all"...
	38	...an improbable picture: an African family playing alone in the snow.
	88	"Where is your mother?" "She doesn't want to see you." "Look at me when you're speaking to me." "I don't want to either." Olu looked down, gripped the straps of his bag. Kicked the ground. Another bell. "I have to go."
	100	The staff, whom she inherited along with the house and its 1970s orange-wool-upholstered wooden furniture, sort of tiptoes around her poorly masking their shock. That she moved her alone. To sell <i>flowers</i> .
	101	That she greets them in the morning with this same odd "How <i>are</i> you? and thanks them as bizarrely for doing their jobs.
	101	That she smokes. That she wears shorts. That she wanders around the garden in these shorts and a sun hat with cigarettes and clippers, snipping this, snipping that, hauling her catch into the kitchen, where she stands at the counter, not pounding yam, not shelling beans, but arranging <i>flowers</i> .
	166	Olu a darker-skinned Fola, classically Yoruba, Sadie a lighter-skinned Kweku, classically Ga. Ethiopian eyes, Native American cheekbones, the black hair/blue eyes of the Welsh, Nordic skin: it's a record of something, he thinks, a visual record of the history of a People, capital <i>P</i> , in the world.
	232	"Eat," and they do. <i>Joloff, egusi</i> .
	233	...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 it). 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...
<b>Cultural Hybridity Subtheme -Ethnic mixes</b>	103	Local celebrity in Kaduna, Igbo father as famous for his post in the North as for plucking one rose from the grounds of the mission and marrying her, a Scotswoman, auburn-haired Maud.
	235	Those eyes— which she'd found so unnerving, in the beginning, having only ever seen them in a painting, unblinking— now stared at her, heartbroken, heartbreaking, accusing: a dead woman's eyes on a baby girl's face.
<b>Cultural Hybridity Subtheme -Geography/ Home</b>	56	...that day spent the last of her cash on a ticket to Lagos to visit a louse, younger brother Femi...
	56	Then Ghana, and the smell of Ghana, a contradiction, a cracked clay pot: the smell of dryness, wetness, both, the damp of the earth and dry of dust..."My friend I'm from Lagos. Never mind your small Ghana."

		He ducked as he entered, forgetting his height. Or its size, this small shanty, his childhood home. He carried his son, half asleep, six months old then, the American-born boy-child, to her. 58
	126	"You sound English." "I studied in England." England."
	127	The radio plays softly, Wagadu-Gu, "Sweet Mother," the merry Sierra Leonean Afro-pop hit.
	176	... won the Fulbright to Mali, waited tables in Paris, started showing in London, and never came home. She, too, got a scholarship to study in England, two years she had lived there, in Oxford, not far, but he never suggested she visit in Mali, nor the next year in Paris, never said he was there.
	199	<i>If anything ever happens, take the baby to Ghana. Don't leave her in Nigeria,</i> her father had said.
	204	The smell of her mother— so instantaneously familiar, the smell of baked goods and Dax Indian Hemp, Fola's twenty-year-old hair product, green with brown speckles like something she uses for gardening, too— and the <i>feel</i> of her mother, so impossibly yielding, the skin on her arms and her hands like a child's, are a welcome too warm, undiluted, wide open for Sadie to bear it, to feel she deserves it. She buries her face in her mother's soft shoulder and grips her waist tightly.
	253	"You should be <i>there</i> in New Haven, not <i>here</i> —"
<b>Cultural Hybridity Subtheme -Dress sense</b>	21	... wifebeater and MC Hammer pants,
	53	She wore bell-bottom jeans and a wraparound sweater, both care of the Goodwill, a scarf in her hair. No, not a scarf, he saw, looking more closely. A gold-flecked asooke, the Nigerian cloth.
	40	"... Flintstones-looking flip-flops from the airport in Ghana (whence the crazy MC Hammer pants in gye nyame print)"
	161	He is wearing what he always wears to work: spattered sweatpants, an NYU T-shirt, Moroccan babouches.
<b>Cultural Hybridity Subtheme -Multilingual</b>	9	"mother of twins," <i>iya-ibeji</i> ,
	55	"Okunrin mi," she'd say. My son. " I know, I know, I know. It hurts."
	101	She hasn't yet told them that she once lived in Ghana, that she speaks and understands all they say in hushed Twi about her flowers, flowered nightdressed, distressing eating habits like pulling out and eating the weeds (lemongrass).
<b>2. MAJOR THEME: Careers</b>	7	An exceptional surgeon
	30	Mr. Lamprey laughed harder. "But why would you do that?" Kweku stopped laughing. "Do what?" "Become a doctor. You're an artist."
	47	<b>Diasporan ambition</b> - His devotion to his profession kept a roof over their heads. It wasn't comparative, a contest, either/or, job v. family. That was specious American logic, dramatic, "married to a job." How? The hours he worked were an expression of his affection, in direct proportion to his commitment to keeping them well: well educated, well traveled, well regarded by other adults. Well fed. What he wanted, and what he wasn't, as a child.
	129	...editor of <i>Law Review</i> ,

	132	<b>Geography</b> ...the twin brother the artists in London, how impressive, a Rhodes, how outstanding, the Latin and Greek...
		"I don't want to be a lawyer," she said, with some bite.
<b>3. Identity formation</b>	28	Custom: boy child Gets Out, good at science or soccer, dies young, becomes priest, child-soldier or similar. Nothing remarkable and so nothing to remember.
	52	<b>Geography</b> - And this sight and this sound, these two sense-of his daughter, (a), a modern thing entirely and a product of <i>there</i> , North America, snow, cow products, thoughts of the future, of his mother, (b), an ancient thing, a product of <i>here</i> , hut, heat, raffia, West Africa, the perpetual past-wouldn't otherwise touch but for Ama
	58-59	It was a well-structured hut, however minimal. Rounded clay walls with the massive thatch roof sixteen feet at its peak, a triangular dome. His father had built it. An artist, they told him, a Fante, a wanderer, a "genius like him."... "He left," said the villagers simply. Thereafter. Just packed up his things, walked away, as he'd come.
	73	To be worthy of Fola, to make it worth it for Fola, he had to keep being Successful.
	82	"But why am I so <i>small</i> ?" Because Mom says she always has to be the bigger person."
	91	It was all he was after in the end, a human story, a way to be Kweku beyond being poor. To have somehow unhooked his little story from the larger ones, the stories of Country and of Poverty and of War that had swallowed up the stories of the people around him and spat them up faceless, nameless Villagers
	107	Whether this house or that one, this passport or that, whether Baltimore or Lagos or Boston or Accra, whether expensive clothes or hand-me-downs or florist or lawyer or life or death – didn't much matter in the end. If one could die identityless, estranged from all context, then one could live estranged from all context as well.
	113-114	<i>How</i> is the question (does an exceptional surgeon just die in a garden of cardiac arrest?). How, when his whole life he's sought to be like him, has forgiven the sins in the name of the gift, has admired the brilliance and told of the prowess, general surgeon without equal, remembered even now.
	119-120	<b>Stereotype</b> - "You know, I never understood the dysfunctions of Africa. The greed of the leaders, disease, disease, civil war. Still dying of <i>malaria</i> 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. <i>That's</i> 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?"
	120	"I'm just like my father. I'm <i>proud</i> to be like him." Just barely a whisper through Olu's clenched teeth. "He's a surgeon like I am, the best in his field,"...

	100	She is a woman, first; unmarried, worse; a Nigerian, worst; and fair-skinned. As suspicious persons go in Ghaana, she might as well be a known terrorist.
	136	...that she, Taiwo, had inherited and maintained with no effort the model-esque figure that Sadie so craved – and from Fola, who, frightened by the baby's low birth weight, had overfed Sadie and babied her sick. (The disorder. Unmentioned. Though all of them saw it.
<b>Hair</b>	138	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 <i>shit</i> about rain on your blowout.
	146	They are ethnically heterogeneous and culturally homogenous, per force of exposure, osmosis, adolescence. She accepts without anguish as the price of admission. She doesn't want to be Caucasian. She wants to be Philae
	149	The Man from the Story. How he valiantly saved her.
	172	He found the woman ugly, overwhelmingly ugly; knew ugly things would happen on account of her face; and he hated her, her appearance, her milky-white pallor, he hated this woman, neither African nor white, who belonged to no People, no past he had heard of, who sat on the wall, cold with death, cut from ice, the only member of their family they had ever vaguely looked like, this pale, hateful beauty entrenched in wrought brass.
	173	One should know where one comes from, don't you think? It's important. They should know about our family, how we all came to be.
	215	And there's she. Baby Sadie. A good decade tardy, arriving in winter, a cheerful mistake, with her grab bag of competencies– photographic memor, <i>battement développé</i> , making lanyards– but lacking entirely in gifts.
	219	It wasn't the first time he'd noticed the difference between the reaction of others to Kehinde and to him. They were extraordinarily good-looking, his two younger siblings, and <i>twins</i> ; ... To him they seemed frail, not just younger but weaker, thin-wristed and -waisted, his brother the more. Compared to his body, athletic and solid, his brother looked fragile.
<b>Olu</b>	223	...so it was true, he was lesser than ... Jealous of Kehinde.
	251	He'd tour their homes aching with longing, for <i>lineage</i> , for a sense of having descended from faces in frames. That his family was thin in the backbench was troubling; it seemed to suggest they were faking it, false. A legitimate family would have photos on the staircase. At the very least grandparents whose first names he knew.
<b>Kehinde</b>	242	I was supposed to be the doctor, the boy, the other son. That was the dream, Sai and Sons, family business. Except for...I hated them." "Who?" "Math and science." ..."See, I know they didn't mean to, but I hated how they <i>looked</i> at me, like I was the break in the chain, Dad and Olu, like I was a stranger, which maybe I was to them, maybe I was to myself, I don't know. I just wonder, you know. Being her, seeing Olu, I ask myself, what if it was him in the car? Instead of me, that night with Dad. Would this whole thing be different? If it happened like that, with the good son, you know?"
	253	"You can't do that..." his father sai, weakly now, 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–" "I'm just like–"
	253	"This? This is what I come from."

Sadie	264	Sadie can't look back down, for her shock at the striking resemblance. She could be her mother, this heavysset Naa, with the same angled eyes ("half-Chinesey," per Philae), same stature, short, sturdy, same negligible eyebrows, round face, rounded nose, like a button for coins. The joke of genetics. That of all his children it should have been she who inherited this appearance, the one who would spend the least time with their father and come to so loathe his particular features.
	265	Most of the time she herself can't be bothered to sort through the reasons the world doesn't see her. It all seems a bit too cliché, melodramatic, for a girl with her sarcasm and level of education. She accepts that the media are to blame for her bulimia, her quiet, abiding desire to be reborn a blond waif; vigorously castigates Photoshop as a public health threat; has examined and condemned her childhood taste for white Barbies; and so on. Isn't stupid. Can see the thing clearly. But the fact remains: she is invisible. Unpretty.
4. African bond	13	She's become kind of precious about her Yoruba heritage after becoming <i>iya-ibeji</i> , a mother to twins.
	18	...Fola had established sovereignty over naming years back (first name: Nigerian, middle name: Ghanaian, third name: Savage, last name: Sai).
	59	"I told you," he mustered. "I told you I'd return—"
	66	But no matter the man's insistence, they couldn't call him by his first name, so well steeped were he and Fola in African gerontocratic mores.
	83	...recited again with great jingoistic pride the Yoruba myth of <i>ibeji</i> . The myth: <i>ibeji</i> (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.
	153	She misses her mother. The simplest of feelings, a low-throbbing longing, though a few minutes pass before she knows what it is, and a few minutes more before she catches her breath and lies back, crying, tired, on her old kente throw. (Rather, Fola's old throw— threadbare, faded and soft, with the blacks turned to grays and reds turned to pinks— but her favourite thing, Sadie's...She'd wrapped herself up in the kente, delighted, and marched to the kitchen, I'm a Yoruba queeeen!"
	167	As they'd crossed the bridge, leaving the island of Ikeja for the mainland, Lagos Island, he glimpsed a large sign: THIS IS LAGOS.
	208	This is familiar. (Ghana)
	218	He is thinking that the smell is familiar, though strange, the thick/sweet combination of sap and humidity and burning and sweat and dark reddish-brown oil. He knew it the moment he alighted the Mercedes and stood in the pebbled drive breathing it in and was seconds from placing it (1997, Accra)...
	239	"If she wanted to do the whole thing, back to Africa, then why not Nigeria? At least she's from there."
	240	"Jesus. I've never been to Africa, I know, but come one."... "Our parents never brought us when we were kids." "Why?" "They were hurt... Their countries hurt them."
Sadie	270	Starts dancing. Slowly at first, with her eyes on the ground, on the feet of the girl, which she follows with ease— then a spark, something clicking, a logic inside her, a stranger inside her that knows what to do, knows this music, these movements, this footwork, this rhythm, the body relaxing, eyes trained on the feet, she is moving, not looking, afraid to stop moving, afraid to look up at the small cheering crowd, she is moving, she is sweating, she is crying... "My daughter's a dancer, <i>ehn</i> ?"

<b>Emerging themes</b> Hair	135	"A world. Yours isn't" – touching her dreadlocks– "horizontal." "You don't like my white-girl hair?" "Don't like your <i>what</i> ?" "My dreadlocks. My white-girl hair."
<b>Self-inflicted pain</b>	141	She is kneeling at the toilet bowl, fingers down throat. Out comes the alcohol, followed by the birthday cake, followed by a thimble of thin, burning bile. She pulls off some soiled roll, wipes off her mouth with this.
	180	He looks at her hand on his arm. She squeezes harder. His shirt has slipped back from the scars on his wrist.
	203	But pulls down his sweatshirt sleeves, covering his wrists with them, worried that Fola has noticed the scars.
	224	The wrist-slitting scrambled his memories, rearranged them.
	184	Fola sits smoking at the edge of the lawn in a beach chair she's lodged by a palm in the shade. She knows that she shouldn't– she was married to a doctor and raised one; she knows that it's foolish at best– but she puffs with great relish, an act of defiance, or acceptance, complicit with the riddle of death. To do or not to do this or that to live longer, as if longevity might be purchased with exemplary health, this is foolish, she thinks. Surely vegan nonsmokers get struck by stray bullets and cars all the time?
<b>Generational occurrences</b>	199	"The baby will hear you," he scolded. <i>The baby</i> . What her father always called her, even then, and his friends.
<b>Kweku</b>	251	"He did the same thing as me."
	250	My father never rented, see, designed his own property.
<b>Grandfather</b>	293	"No. He left."
	298	"I'm an artist," says Kehinde. The man starts to laugh. "An artist." Pronounced <i>ah</i> -teest. "You <i>are</i> a Sai then."
	316	"We did what we knew. It was what we knew. Leaving"... "We were immigrants. Immigrants leave."













APPENDIX 2

AMERICANAH		
THEME	PAGE	QUOTE
<b>1. MAJOR THEME: Cultural Hybridity</b>	14	"Lagos is now full of American returnees, so you better come back and join them. Everyday you see them carrying a bottle of water as if they will die of heat if they are not drinking water every minute," Ranyinudo said.
	39	"I'm fine. I have a granola bar," Ifemelu said. She had some baby carrots in a Ziploc, too, although all she had snacked on so far was her melted chocolate.
	65	"She'll come back and be a serious Americanah like Bisi," Ranyinudo said. ...a girl in the form below theme, who had come back from a short trip to America with odd affectations, pretending she no longer understood Yoruba, adding a slurred <i>r</i> to every English word she spoke.
	67	"You look like a black American" was his ultimate compliment, which he told her when she wore a nice dress, or when her hair was done in large braids.
	107	"There's corned beef so you can make sandwiches for lunch," Auntu Uju had said, as though those words were perfectly normal and di not require a humorous preamble about how Americans at bread for lunch.
	108	"Dike, put it back," Auntu Uju said, with the nasal, sliding accent she put on when she spoke to white Americans, in the presence of white Americans, in the hearing of white Americans. <i>Poo-reet-back</i> . Because the cashier was watching, Auntu Uju let Dike keep the cereal but in the car she grabbed his left ear and twisted it, yanked it.
	112	The conviction lodged in her head that American children learned nothing in elementary school, and it hardened when he told her that his teacher sometimes gave out homework coupons; if you got a homework coupon, then you could skip one day of homework.
	113	Once, Dike said, "Why are you doing that? Eating a banana with peanuts?" "That's what we do in Nigeria. Do you want to try?" "No," he said firmly. "I don't think I like Nigeria, Coz."
	117	"Igbo Massachusetts Accountant"
	122	"When did you stop eating and start looking like a dried stockfish?" Ifemelu asked.
	124	"Do you know I started losing weight almost as soon as I came? I was even close to anorexia. The kids at my high school called me Pork. You know at home when somebody tells you that you lost weight, it means something bad. But here somebody tells you that you lost weight and you say thank you. It's just different here," Ginika said...
Diasporan vs Afropolitan	125	There were codes Ginika knew, ways of being that she had mastered. Unlike Auntu Uju, Ginika had come to America with the flexibility and fluidness of youth, the cultural cues had seeped into her skin, and now she went bowling, and knew what Tobey Maguire was about, and fund double-dipping gross.
	127	"I was waiting for her to ask 'Was it the one with two eyes or the one with two legs?' Why didn't she just ask 'Was it the black girl or the white girl?'" Ginika laughed. "Because this is America. You're supposed to pretend that you don't notice certain things."
	128	When Elene asked why Ifemelu had not petted her dog, or scratched his head in the week since she moved in, she said, " I don't like dogs." "Is that like a cultural thing?" "What to you mean?" I mean like I know in China they eat cat meat and dog meat." "My boyfriend back home loves dogs. I just don't."
Cultural Hybridity Subtheme - <i>Language</i>	129	"Hey, we're getting a bite to eat. Come with us!" and she thought it was an invitation and that, as with invitations back home, Allison or one of the others would buy her meal. But when the waitress brought the bill, Allison carefully began to untangle how many drinks each person had ordered and who had the calamari appetizer, to make sure nobody paid for anybody else.
Identity formation	135	She hungered to understand everything about America, to wear a new, knowing skin right away...
	136	...she had come to see this, the heaping of dirty underwear, as normal. She spoke up in class, buoyed by the books she read, thrilled that she could disagree with professors and get, in return, not a scolding about being disrespectful but an encouraging nod.

		<p>"Please do not go to Kmart and buy twenty pairs of jeans because each costss five dollars. The jeans are not running away. They will be there tomorrow at an even more reduced price. You are now in America: do not expect to have hot food for lunch. That African taste must be abolished. When you visit the home of an American with some money, they will offer to show you their house. Forget that in your house back home, your father would throw a fit if anyone came close to his bedroom. We all know that the living roo was where it stopped and if absolutely necessary, then the toilet. But please smile and follow the American and see the house and make sure you say you like everything. And do not be shocked by the indiscriminate touching of American couples. Standing in line at the cafeteria, the girl will touch the boy's arm and the boy will put his arm around her shoulder and they will rub shoulders and back and rub rub rub but please do not imitate this behaviour."</p> <p>140</p>
Language		<p>"Very soon you will start to adopt an American accent, because you don't want customer service people on the phone to keep asking you 'What? What?' You will start to admire Africans who have perfect American accents, like our brother here, Kofi."</p> <p>140</p>
		<p>"Do you want this one, sweetheart? The yellow or the blue or the red? Which do you want?" Just giver her one, Ifemel thought. To overwhelm a child of four with choices, to lay on her the burden of making a decision, was to deprive her of the bliss of childhood. Adulthood, after all, already loomed, where she would have to make grimmer and grimmer decisions.</p> <p>167</p>
		<p>Her black Angolan father had left her white Portuguese mother when she was only three years old, she told him, and she had not seen him since, nor had she ever been to Angola.</p> <p>230</p>
		<p>To be given money in the Nigerian manner was to have it pushed into your hands , fists closed, eyes averted from yours, your effusive thanks– and it had to be effusive– waved away, and you certainly did not count the money, sometimes did not even look at it until you were alone. But here was Emenike asking him to count the money. And so he did...</p> <p>266</p>
		<p>"Oh, that's a bit tatty," Emenike said. He had changed. His voice had taken on an unfamiliar modulation, his delivery slower, the temperature of his entire being much lower.</p> <p>267</p>
		<p>Ignoring him, even telling him that she was moving in with a man to whom she was not married, was something she could do only because she lived in America. Rules had shifted, fallen into the cracks of distance and foreignness.</p> <p>314</p>
		<p>Other people joined them, all encircled by a familiarity, because they could reach so easily for the same references. Soon they were laughing and listing the things they missed about America.</p> <p>408</p>
		<p>She was comfortable her, and she wished she were not. She wished, too, that she was not so interested in this new restaurant, did not perk up, imagining fresh green salads and steamed still-firm vegetables. She loved eating all the things she had missed while away, jollof rice cooked with a lot of oil, fried plantains, boiled yams, but she longed, also, for the other things she had become used to in America, even quinoa, Blaine's specialty, made with feta and tomatoes. This was what she hoped she had not become but feared that she had: a "they have the kind of things we can eat" kind of person.</p> <p>409</p>
Cultural Hybridity Subtheme - <i>Ethnic mixes</i>		<p>"I have met a lot of people here with white mothers and they are so full of issues, eh. I didn't know I was even supposed to <i>have</i> issues until I came to America. Honestly, if anybody wants to raise biracial kids, do it in Nigeria."</p> <p>124</p>
Cultural Hybridity Subtheme - <i>Geography/ Home</i>		<p>"At least you are now an American citizen, so you can always return to America," her father had said.</p> <p>17</p>
		<p>He had been refused a visa years ago, when he was newly graduated and drunk with American ambitions, but with his new bank statements, he easily got a visa. On his first trip, at the airport in Atlanta, the immigration officer was chatty and warm, asking him, "So how much cash you go?" When Obinze said he didn't have much, the man looked surprised. "I see Nigerians like you declaring thousands and thousands of dollars all the time."</p> <p>27</p>
Stereotype		<p>"I read American books because America is the future, Mummy. And remember that your husband was educated there."</p> <p>70</p>
		<p>"I've decided to move to Massachusetts at the end of this term."</p> <p>142</p>

	264	"We've just come back from America. Man, you need to go to America. No other country like it in the world.
	411	She thought: I'm really home. I'm home. She no longer sent Ranyinudo texts about what to do— <i>Should I buy meat in Shoprite or send Iyabo to the market? Where should I buy hangers?</i>
	123	There was a metallic, unfamiliar glamour in her gauntness, her olive skin, her short skirt that had risen up, barely covering her crotch, her straight-straight hair that she kept tucking behind her ears, blonde streaks shiny in the sunlight.
<b>Cultural Hybridity Subtheme - Dress sense</b>	128	Ifemelu pulled on her slim-fitting trousers and a halter-neck blouse borrowed from Ginika. "Won't you get dressed?" she asked her room-mates before they left, all of them wearing slouchy jeans, and Jackie said, "We <i>are</i> dressed. What are you talking about?" with a laugh that suggested yet another foreign pathology had emerged.
	129	<i>When it comes to dressing well, American culture is so self-fulfilled that it has not only disregarded this courtesy of self-presentation, but has turned that disregard into a virtue. "We are too superior/busy/cool/not-uptight to bother about how we look to other people, and so we can wear pajamas to school and underwear to the mall."</i>
Blog	407	...chic people, all dripping with savoir faire, each nursing a self-styled quirkiness— a ginger-coloured Afro, a T-shirt with a graphic of Thomas Sankara, oversize handmade earrings that hung like pieces of modern art.
Language	4	"I know," that peculiar American expression that professed agreement rather than knowledge.
	pg.5-6	She had not thought of them as "fat", though. She had thought of them as "big", because one of the first things her friend Ginika told her was that "fat" in America was a bad word, heaving with moral judgement like "stupid" or "bastard" and not a mere description like "short" or "tall".
	40	"Of course I speak Igbo," Ifemelu said...
	71	"Trunk is a part of a tree and not a part of a car, my dear son," his mother said. When Obinze pronounced "schedule" with the <i>k</i> sound, his mother said, "Ifemelunamma, please tell my son I don't speak American. Could he say that in English?"
	109	"Dike, <i>I mechago</i> ?" Ifemelu asked. "Please don't speak Igbo to him," Auntie Uju said. "Two languages will confuse him." "What are you talking about, Auntie? We spoke two languages growing up." "This is America. it's different.
	113	...she began to teach him mathematics—she called it "maths" and he called it "math" and so they agreed not to shorten the word.
	28	"You must send her to the French school. They are very good, very rigorous. Of course they teach in French but it can only be good for the child to learn another civilized language, since she already learns English at home."
	124	I was telling them about back home and how all the boys were chasing me because I was a half-cast, and they said I was dissing myself. So now I say biracial, and I'm supposed to be offended when somebody says half-caste.
	124	"You're thin with big breasts." "Please, I'm not thin. I'm slim." " Americans say 'thin'. Here 'thin' is a good word." "Is that why you stopped eating? All your bum has gone. I always wished I had a bum like yours," Ifemelu said.
	140	Wambui shouted something in Swahili
Multilingual	239	He spoke to them only in English, careful English, as though he thought that the Igbo he shared with their mother would infect them, perhaps make them lose their precious British accents.
	259	Later on the train to Essex, he noticed that all the people around him were Nigerians, loud conversations in Yoruba and Pidgin filled the carriage, and for a moment he saw the unfettered non-white foreignness of this scene through the suspicious eyes of the white woman on the tube.

<b>2. MAJOR THEME: CAREERS</b>	4	"I write a lifestyle blog,"
	340	By the time Boubacar told her about the new humanities fellowship at Princeton, she had begun to gaze at her past... "You must apply. It would be perfect for you," he said. "I'm not an academic. I don't even have a graduate degree." "The current fellow is a jazz musician, very brilliant, but he has only a high school diploma. They want people who are doing new things, pushing boundaries. You must apply..."
	354	She got an email from a princeton.edu address and before she read it, her hands shook from excitement. The first word she saw was "pleased". She had received the research fellowship. The pay was good, the requirements easy: she was expected to live in Princeton and use the library and give a public talk at the end of the year. It seemed too good to be true, an entry into a hallowed American kingdom.
	391	...editor for a leading women's monthly magazine".
	395	Later Ranyinudo told her, "You are no longer behaving like an American!" and despite herself, Ifemelu felt pleased to hear this.
	421	But Ifemelu was full of sanguine expectations for <i>The Small Redemptions of Lagos</i> , with a dreamy photograph of an abandoned colonial house on its masthead.
<b>3. MAJOR THEME: IDENTITY FORMATION</b>	111	There was a stripped-down quality to her life, a kindling starkness, without parents and friends and home, the familiar landmarks that made her who she was.
	111	"They are like us; he has a good job and he has ambition and they spank their children," Auntie Uju said approvingly.
	128	She was standing at the periphery of her own life, sharing a fridge and a toilet, a shallow intimacy, with people she did not know at all. People who lived in exclamation points. "Great!" they said often. "That's great!" People who did not scrub in the shower; their shampoos and conditioners and gels were cluttered in the bathroom, but there was not a single sponge, and this, the absence of a sponge, made them seem unreachably afloat to her.
	128	"Let's go get some," about whatever it was they needed – more beer, pizza, buffalo wings, liquor – as though this getting was not an act that required money. She was used, at home, to people first asking "Do you have money?" before they made such plans.
	134	Ifemelu shrank. In that strained, still second when her eyes met Cristina Tomas's before she took the forms, she shrank. She shrank like a dried leaf. She had spoken English all her life, led the debating society in secondary school, and always thought the American twang inchoate; she should not have cowered and shrunk, but she did. And in the following weeks, as autumn's coolness descended, she began to practise an American accent.
Cultural hybridity	134	It had to be that Americans were taught, from elementary school, to always <i>say something</i> in class, no matter what. ..They never said "I don't know." They said, instead, "I'm not sure," which did not give any information but still suggested the possibility of knowledge. ... they did not say "Ask somebody upstairs"; they said "You might want to ask somebody upstairs." When you tripped and fell, when you choked, when misfortune befell you, they did not say "Sorry." They said "Are you okay?" when it was obvious that you were not. And when you said "Sorry to them when they choked or tripped or encountered misfortune, they replied, eyes wide with surprise, "Oh, it's not your fault." ...
	172	The last time Ifemelu visited, Auntie Uju told him, "I will send you back to Nigeria if you do that again!" speaking Igbo as she did to him only when she was angry, and Ifemelu worried that it would become for him the language of strife.
	173	Ifemelu decided to stop faking an American accent on a sunlit day in July, the same day she met Blaine. It was convincing, the accent. She had perfected, from careful watching of friends and newscasters, the blurring of the <i>t</i> , the cream roll of the <i>r</i> , the sentences starting with "So", and the sliding response of "Oh really", but the accent creaked with consciousness, it was an act of will. It took an effort, the twisting of lip, the curling of tongue. If she were in a panic, or terrified, or jerked awake during a fire, she would not remember how to produce those American sounds.

		<p>"How long have you been in the US?" "Three years." "Wow. Cool. You sound totally American." "Thank you." Only after she hung up did she begin to feel the stain of a burgeoning shame spreading all over her, for thanking him, for crafting his words "You sound American" into a garland that she hung around her own neck.</p> <p>175 Why was it a compliment, an accomplishment, to sound American?</p>
		<p>"No problem, I will do it again," Mariama said. She was agreeable, and smooth-tongued, but Ifemelu could tell that she thought her customer was a troublemaker, and there was nothing wrong with the cornrow, but this was a part of her new American self, this fervour of customer service, this shiny falseness of surfaces, and she had accepted it, embraced it. When the customer left, she might shrug out of that self and say something to Halima and to Aisha about Americans, how spoiled and childish and entitled they were, but when the next customer came, she would become, again a faultless version of her American self.</p> <p>188</p>
		<p>He was always thinking of what else to do and she told him that it was rare for her, because she had grown up not doing, but being.</p> <p>207</p>
		<p>"Have you read the essay your cousin wrote?" "Yes."</p> <p>217 what he is? Since when is he conflicted? And even that his name is difficult?" "How can he say he does not know"</p>
		<p>"I think he wrote that because that is the kind of thing they teach them here. Everybody is conflicted, identity this, identity that. Somebody will commit murder and say it is because his mother did not hug him when he was three years old. Or they will do something wicked and say it is a disease that they are struggle with."</p> <p>217</p>
		<p>It had given her pleasure, buying chocolate bars from the news-stand, cheap bars filled with sugar and chemicals and other genetically modified ghastly things. "Oh, so because you are quarelling with Blaine, you are now earing the chocolate he doesn't like?" Aunty Uju laughed.</p> <p>348</p>
		<p>"Although if he wins, he will no longer be black, just as Oprah is no longer black, she's Oprah," Grace said. "So she can go where black people are loathed and be fine. He'll no longer be black, he'll just be Obama."</p> <p>356</p>
		<p>"Do you remember when Dike was telling you something and he said 'we black folk' and you told him 'you are not black'?" she asked Aunty Uju... "You know what I meant . I didn't want him to start behaving like these people and thinking that everything that happens to him is because he's black." "You told him what he wasn't but you didn't tell him what he was."</p> <p>380</p>
		<p>"Americanah!" Ranyinudo teased her often. "You are looking at things with American eyes. But the problem is that you are not even a real Americanah. At least if you had an American accent we would tolerate you complaining!"</p> <p>385</p>
		<p>"I was actually going to tell you about it. It's called the Nigerpolitan Club and it's just a bunch of people who have recently moved back, some from England, but mostly from the US? Really low-key, just like sharing experiences and networking? I bet you'll know some of the people. You should totally come?"</p> <p>405</p>
		<p>She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a music production business, a fashionlabel, a magazine, a fast-food franchise.</p> <p>6</p>
<b>4. MAJOR THEME: African bond</b>	18	<i>I recently decided to move back to Nigeria.</i>
	pg.84-85	"Of course you will deliver abroad," and asked which she preferred, America or England...But Aunty Uju chose America, because her baby could still have automatic citizenship there....She called him Dike, after her father, and gave him her surname...

		<p>Nigerians, Ugandans, Kenyans, Ghanaians, South Africans, Tanzanians, Zimbabweans, one Congolese and one Guinean sat around eating, talking, fuelling spirits, and their different accents formed meshes of solacing sounds. ...And they themselves mocked Africa, trading stories of absurdity, of stupidity, and they felt safe to mock, because it was mockery born of longing, and of the heartbroken desire to see a place made whole again. Here, Ifemelu felt a gentle, swaying sense of renewal, Here, she did not have to explain herself.</p> <p>139</p>
Theory		<p>Kofi's parents came from Ghana when he was two years old, but do not be fooled by the way he sounds. If you go to their house, they eat kenkey every day. His father slapped him when he got a C in a class. There's not American nonsense in that house. He goes back to Ghana every year. We call people like Kofi American African, not African American, which is what we call our brothers and sisters whose ancestors were slaves."</p> <p>140</p>
		<p>To be here, living abroad, not knowing when she could go home again, was to watch love become anxiety.</p> <p>152</p>
		<p>each other in many years, both lapsing into their Nigerian voices and their Nigerian selves, louder, more heightened, adding "o" to their sentences.</p> <p>222</p>
		<p>265 "I miss Naija. It's been long but I just haven't had the time to travel back home.</p>
		<p>299 She had joined African Doctors for Africa, volunteering her time on two-week medical missions...</p>
		<p>388 ...she ached with an almost unbearable emotion that she could not name. It was nostalgic and melancholy, a beautiful sadness for the things she had missed and the</p>
<b>5. Self-expression (blog)</b>		<p>" Sometimes in America, Race Is Class" <i>It didn't matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked. In America's public discourse, "Blacks" as a whole are often lumped with "Poor White." Not Poor Blacks and Poor Whites. But Blacks and Poor Whites. A curious thing indeed.</i></p> <p>166</p>
		<p>In America, tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds—class, ideology, region, and race.</p> <p>184</p>
		<p>Professor Hunk has a visiting professor colleague, a Jewish guy with a thick accent from the kind of European country where most people drink a glass of antisemitism at breakfast. So Professor Hunk was talking about civil rights and Jewish guy says, "The blacks have not suffered like the Jews." Professor Hunk replies, "Come on, is this the oppression olympics?" Jewish guy did not know this, but "oppression olympics" is what smart liberal Americans say, to make you feel stupid and to make you shut up. But there IS an opprossion olympics going on.</p> <p>205</p>
		<p>Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now.</p> <p>220</p>
		<p>"What I've noticed being her is that many English people are in awe of America but also deeply resent it," Obinze added.</p> <p>271</p>
Obinze		<p>"I think class in this country is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place. Even the people who are angry about class have somehow accepted their place," Obinze said. "A white boy and a black girl who grow up in the same working-class town in this country can get together and race will be secondary, but in America, even if the white boy and black girl grow up in the same neighbourhood, race would be primary."</p> <p>275</p>
		<p>"The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it's a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America. When you are black in American and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it.</p> <p>291</p>

Hair	297	Ever notice makeover shows on TV, how the black woman has natural hair (coarse, coily, kinky, or curly) in the ugly "before" picture, and in the pretty "after" picture, somebody's taken a hot piece of metal and singed her hair straight?
	307	This is for the Zipped-Up negroes, the upwardly mobile American ad Non-American Blacks who don't talk about Life Experiences That Have to Do Exclusively with Being Black. Because they want to keep everyone comfortable. Tell your story her. Unzip yourself. This is a safe space.
	329	"Does nobody see how absurd it is to ask people if they are ready for a black president? Are you ready for Mickey Mouse to be president? How about Kermit the Frog? And Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?"
Race	337	So lot of folk—mostly non-black—say Obama's not black, he's biracial, multiracial, black-and-white, anything but just black. Because his mother was white. But race is not biology; race is sociology. Race is not genotype; race is phenotype. Race matters because of racism. And racism is absurd because it's about how you look. Not about the blood you have. It's about the shade of your skin and the shape of your nose ad the kink of your hair...Imagin Obama, skin the color of a toasted almond, hair kinky, saying to a census worker— I'm kind of white. Sure you are, she'll say.
	346	Why must we always talk about race anyway? Can't we just be human beings? And Professor Hunk replied— that is exactly what white privilege is, that you can say t hat. Race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier. Black folks don't have that choice. The black guy on the street in New York doesn't want to think about race, until he tries to hail a cab, and he doesn't want to think about race when he's driving his Mercedes under the speed limit, until a cop pulls him over.
	369	He had first been excited by Facebook, ghosts of old friends suddenly morphing to life with wives and husbands and children, and photos trailed by comments. But he began to be appalled by the air of unreality, the careful manipulationof images to creat a parallel life, pictures that people had taken with Facebook in mind, placing in the background the things of which they were proud.
Afropolitans	421	Lagos has never been, will never be, and has never aspired to be like New York, or anywhere else for that matter. Lagos has always been undisputably itself, but you would not know this at the meeting of the Nigerpolitan Club, a group of yng returnees who gather every week to moan about the many ways that Lagos is notike New York as though Lagos had ever been close to being like New York. Full disclosure: I am one of them.
	423	There are many young women in Lagos with Unknown Sources of Wealth. They live lives they can't afford. They have only travelled business class to Europe but have jobs that can't even afford them a regular flight ticket. One of them is my friend, a beautiful, brilliant woman who works in advertising. She lives on The Island and is dating a big man banker. I worry that she will end up like many women in Lagos who define their lives by men they can never truly have, crippled by their culture of dependence, with desperation in their eyes and designer handbags on their wrists.
Emerging Themes	425	"Foreign behaviour? What the fuck are you talking about? Foreign behaviour? Have you read <i>Things Fall Apart</i> ?" Ifemelu asked, wishing she had not told Ranyinudo about Dike. She was angrier with Ranyinudo than she had ever been...
Hair	12	She touched Ifemelu's hair. "Why you don't have relaxer?" "I like my hair the way God made it." "But how you comb it?" "Hard to comb," Aisha said.

	41	Ifemelu had grown up in the shadow of her mother's hair. It was black-black, so thick it drank two containers of relaxer at the salon, so full it took hours under the hooded dryer, and, when finally released from pink plastic rollers, sprang free and full, flowing down her back like a celebration. her father called it a crown of glory. "Is it your real hair?" strangers would ask, and then reach out to touch it reverently. ...Through the years of childhood, Ifemelu would often look in the mirror and pull at her own hair, separate the coils, will it to become like her mother's, but it remained bristly and grew reluctantly; braiders said it cut them like a knife.
	pg.202-203	When she told Ruth about the interview in Baltimore, Ruth said, "My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair. Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job." Auntu Uju had said something similar in the past, and she had laughed then. Now, she knew enough not to laugh.
	203	"Just a little burn," the hairdresser said. "But look how pretty it is. Wow, girl, you've got the white-girl swing!"
	208	Wambui was so sure, so convincing. Ifemelu found a pair of scissors. Wambui cut her hair, leaving only two inches, the new growth since her last relaxer. Ifemelu looked in the mirror. She was all big eyes and big head. At best, she looked like a boy; at worst, like an insect.
	216	Auntu Uju scoffed. "Okay, you can speak English about it but I am just saying what is true. There is something scruffy and untidy about natural hair."
	313	Weeks before, an older white woman standing in line behind them at the grocery store had said, "Your hair is so beautiful, can I touch it?" and Ifemelu said yes. The woman sank her fingers into her Afro. She sensed Blaine tense, saw the pulsing at his temples. "How could you let her do that?" he asked afterwards. "Why not? How else will she know what hair like mine feels like? She probably doesn't know any black people."
Afropolitans	407	...both of whom had natural hair, worn in a twist-out, a halo of spirals framing their faces. They talked about hair salons here, where the hairdressers struggled and fumbled to comb natural hair, as though it were an alien eruption, as though their own hair was not the same way before it was defeated by chemicals.
Stereotypes	29	Sometimes, like now, he felt like an intruder in his new circle, of people who believed that the latest schools, the latest curriculums, would ensure the wholeness of their children.
	33	People often told him how humble he was, but they did not mean real humility, it was merely that he did not flaunt his membership in the wealthy club, did not exercise the rights it brought—to be rude, to be inconsiderate, to be greedy rather than to greet—and because so many others like him exercised those rights, his choices were interpreted as humility. He did not boast, either, or speak about the things he owned, which made people assume he owned much more than he did.
	77	It startled Ifemelu, how much a relaxer retouching cost at Auntu Uju's hair salon; the haughty hairdressers sized up each customer, eyes swinging from head to shoes, to decide how much attention she was worth.
	104	She was startled, most of all, by the teenage boy in a baseball cap standing near a brick wall, face down, body leaning forward, hands between his legs. She turned to look again. "See that boy!" she said. "I didn't know people do things like this in America."
	116	"A girl in Nigeria will never wear that kind of dress," Bartholomew said. "Look at that. This country has no moral compass." ... "Girls in Nigeria wear dresses much shorter than that o," Ifemelu said.
Humour	131	"You could have just said Ngozi is your tribal name and Ifemelu is your jungle name and throw in one more as your spiritual name. They'll believe all kinds of shit about Africa."
	106	If she had been in their Lagos kitchen, she would have found a broom and killed it, but she left the American cockroach alone and went and stood by the living room window.
Unspeakables	147	"Oh, look at this beautiful woman," and pointed at a plain model in a magazine whose only distinguishing feature was her very dark skin. "Isn't she just stunning?" "No, she isn't." Ifemelu paused. "You know, you can just say 'black.' Not every black person is beautiful."

		<p>"How are you finding the US so far?" Kimberly asked. Ifemelu told her about the vertigo she had felt the first time she went to the supermarket; in the cereal aisle, she had wanted to get cornflakes, which she was used to eating back home, but suddenly confronted by a hundred different cereal boxes, in a swirl of colours and images, she had fought dizziness. She told this story because she thought it was funny; it appealed harmlessly to the American ego.</p> <p>147</p>
		<p>I don't do any television at all with my daughter. I think there's too much violence. I might let her do a few cartoons when she's a little older." "But there's violence in cartoons, too," Ifemelu said. Laura looked annoyed. "It's cartoon. Kids are traumatized by the real thing."</p> <p>148</p>
		<p>shook her head and turned to the window. Depression was what happened to Americans, with their self-absolving need to turn everything into an illness. She was not suffering from depression; she was merely a little tired and a little slow. "I don't have depression," she said.</p> <p>157</p>
		<p>"How you get your papers?" Ifemelu was startled into silence. A sacrilege, that question; immigrants did not ask other immigrants how they got their papers, did not burrow into those layered, private places; it was sufficient simply to admire that the papers had been got, a legal status acquired.</p> <p>363</p>
Blog		<p>"On the Subject of Non-American Blacks Suffering from Illnesses Whose Names They Refuse to Know." ...she refused to accept the diagnosis of panic attacks because panic attacks happened only to Americans. Nobody in Kinshasa had panic attacks. It was not even that it was called by another name, it was simply not called at all. Did things begin to exist only when they were named?</p> <p>158</p>
		<p>Ifemelu and Kimberly looked at the page together: a thin white woman, smiling at the camera, holding a dark-skinned African baby in her arms, and all around her, little dark-skinned African children were spread out like a rug. Kimberly made a sound, a hmmm, as though she was unsure how to feel. "She's stunning too," Laura said. "Yes, she is," Ifemelu said. "And she's just as skinny as the kids, only that her skinniness is by choice and theirs is not by choice."</p> <p>162</p>
Identity formation	pg.183-184	<p>"My group leader, Haley? She gave sunscreen to everyone but she wouldn't give me any. She said I didn't need it." "You wanted her to give you the sunscreen, too, right?" "I guess so," he said with a shrug. "I just want to be regular."</p> <p>206</p>
		<p>"I can't place your accent. Where are you from?" "Nigeria." "Nigeria? You don't look African at all." "Why don't I look African?" "Because your blouse is too tight."</p> <p>206</p>
Religion		<p>She watched her mother walk around their flat, collecting all the Catholic objects, the crucifixes hung on walls, the rosaries nested in drawers, the missals propped on shelves.</p> <p>41</p>
		<p>But, after that afternoon, her God changed. He became exacting. Relaxed hair offended Him. Dancing offended Him. She bartered with Him, offering starvation in exchange for prosperity, for a job promotion, for good health. She fasted herself bone-thin: dry fasts on weekends, and on weekdays, only water until evening.</p> <p>42</p>
		<p>And so her mother left the church and began to let her hair grow again...</p> <p>43</p>
		<p>"Let us pray and cover the roads with the blood of Jesus," she had said, and he replied that the roads would be safer, less slippery, if not covered with blood. Which had made her mother frown and Ifemelu laugh and laugh.</p> <p>48</p>
Struggles		<p>"I can't have sex," she said. Her voice felt squeaky, unsure of itself. "I can't have sex with you, she repeated. "Oh no, I don't expect you to," he said, too quickly. "Just come here and lie down," he said. "Keep me warm. I'll touch you a little bit, nothing you'll be uncomfortable with. I just need some human contact to relax."</p> <p>153</p>
		<p>Sometimes he would stop outside a tube station, often by a flower or a newspaper vendor, and watch the people brushing past him. They walked so quickly, these people, as though they had an urgent destination, a purpose to their lives, while he did not. His eyes would follow them, with a lost longing, and he would think: <i>You can work, you are legal, you are visible, and you don't even know how fortunate you are.</i></p> <p>227</p>

	227	It was at a tube station that he met the Angolans who would arrange his marriage, exactly two years and three days after he arrived in England; he kept count.
	234	"I'm going to put your name on my British visa application as my research assistant," she said quietly. "That should get you a six-month visa. You can stay with Nicholas in London. See what you can do with your life. Maybe you can get to America from there. I know that your mind is no longer here."
	236	Everyone joked about people who went abroad to clean toilets, and so Obinze approached his first job with irony: he was indeed abroad cleaning toilets, wearing rubber gloves and carrying a pail, in an estate agent's office on the second floor of a London building.
	240	...but you know he only got his papers two years ago and so for so long he was living in feear, working under other people's names.
	279	<p>"Were you aware that your visa had expired?" "Yes," Obinze said.</p> <p>"Were you about to have a sham marriage?" "No. Cleotilde and I have been dating for a while."</p> <p>"I can arrange for a lawyer for you, but it's obvious you'll be deported," the immigration officer said evenly.</p>
Identity formation	349	"You have to blame the black kid first," he said, and laughed. Later, he told her how his friends would say, "Hey, Dike, got some weed?" and how funny it was. He told her about the pastor at church, a white woman, who had said hello to all the other kids but when she came to him, she said, "What's up, bro?" I feel like I have vegetables instead of ears, like large broccoli sticking out of my head," he said, laughing. "So of course it had to be me that hacked into the school network."