RESEARCH PAPER

Afropolitanism in Adichie's *Americanah*: A Transcultural Afrodiasporic Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explores afropolitanism in Adichie's *Americanah.* Transculturalism as a sociocultural phenomenon is an emerging area of migration studies. The transcultural lens provides researchers the ability to transcend fixed notions of identity and belonging. Transcultural humanities is not just a discourse of intercultural dialogue but of mutual transformation. Transcultural literary studies and Afropolitan discourse and perspectives go together with contemporary cultural currents as they address the transcendental nature of cultural boundaries. A transcultural perspective sees the world as fluid and considers the contingency of culture about different visions, multilocal experiences, and indeterminate scope. It can cross boundaries and blur binaries. This study seeks to redefine and reimagine Africanness via the transcultural Afrodiasporic lens of Adichie. The Afropolitan transcultural writers tend to shun the idea of a single story of Africa and deconstruct the anomaly of perception linked with African literature. This study seeks to de-essentialize Africanness via the deconstruction of stereotypes and hyperreal images of Africa painted by both Afropessimists and the West. This study takes Selasian multilocal metropolitan discourse, Adichie's notion of the Danger of a Single Story, and Ben Okri's narrative of artistic freedom and blends these ideas with transcultural notions of plurality, politics of home, and cultural flux.

Introduction

According to Dagnino (2013), transcultural identity is complex, fluid, and metamorphic. She explains this in the context of multiple ways of being. She completely rejects the use of terminologies such as *international*, *cross-cultural*, and *intercultural*. According to her transcultural perspective, these terms come from the assumption of existing boundaries between nations, and this is something that the transcultural perspective denies. Transcultural phenomenology challenges all discourse based on the fixation on race and borders. Transcultural authors seek to capture the hybrid reality of the boundary-blurring phenomenon of cultural fusion, revealing transcultural sensitivity as a method of confronting the traditional tendency to categorize culture, individuals, and even literature. Unable to locate themselves within precise ethnic, national, or cultural boundaries, transcultural writers write across cultures (Asian, European, American, English, etc.) and promote intercultural flows to overcome "the diversity of cultures, including the diversity of individuals, to achieve a broader cultural model capable of addressing not only specific minorities but also the universal potential of "transcultural understanding" (Dagnino, 2013, p.1). Afropolitanism comes from a similar idea. While Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o made their influence across the

globe as African writers of 20th century, a new generation called "Afropolitan writers" emerged as a result of defining issues of 21st century; mass migration and the dispersion of the peoples throughout the world impacting the world socially, culturally and economically. Black diaspora including Chimanda Adichie, Teju Cole, Taiye Selasi, and NoBiolet Bulawayo challenge the stereotyped and hyperreal images of Africa as war -torn, diseased and constantly falling into violence and chaos, taking a step ahead of "victim hopeless narrative" providing an antidote and a refreshing retort to Afropessimism's insistence on Africa as an eternal victim and being hopelessly chained to the past. Afropolitanism is an Africa specific post colonial form of cosmopolitanism and a glocalglobal and local space, mobilized to celebrate "not citizens, but Africans of the world", not trans "national" but multi "local" identities. Therefore, this study utilizes transcultural lens to explore Afropolitan experience in *Americanah.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a critically acclaimed Anglophone Nigerian American writer. She is often called Chinua Achebe's literary daughter for her contribution to African literature and Achebe's influence on her. As a teenager in Nigeria, Adichie was rarely seen because of the color of her skin, which first came to light when she entered college in the United States. As a black African American, Adichie faced what it means to be black in the United States. She writes about this in her book Americanah (2013). By bringing together conflicting cultural forms, this novel simultaneously transcends and celebrates "local" and transitory spaces where there is space and opportunity to view and clarify identity.

Adichie herself and her characters also reveal global inequalities and the true face of the West. Her novels are often viewed in comparison to Achebe's concerns and vision. Americanah (2013) is one such example. Adichie (2009) points out that America and the West in general have told a single story about Africa, and when you tell a story repeatedly, it becomes the truth in a post-truth world. She gives the example of the "Nkali" of the Igbo word to make people understand how the West sees Africa as just a war-torn country. All her writings inculcate the notion of Africanism and the multiplicity of stories and narratives. Her novel, which is studied in this research, is also full of the fluidity of identities and their global single story. In *Americanah* (2013), there's the politics of locality. Even characters who are not physically mobile are somewhat intellectually or socially transcultural, thanks to the increased interconnectedness and permeability. Ifemelu, before she becomes an American or physically goes to America, is already exposed to a connected world, the hair salon in America serves as a political locality because it has diverse people regardless of the state.

Similarly, Ifemelu's father struggles to speak broken English. The impact of the global presence can be understood in the characterization of Aunt Uju, who has an impact on Ifemelu's entire family when she has not even been exposed to the West. It means that Adichie represents a transcultural world where mobility affects individuals in multiple ways and where the dichotomy of native and cosmopolitan blurs philosophically. There is a negotiation of space for the diversity of Africans, and Adichie views Africa as a fluid entity that should not be generalized anyway. She argues that this generalization leads to a "single story" of Africa. It is argued that Adichie is writing back to the West in a globalized, transformed, and the transcultural world where generalization cannot be justified anyway. She claims that she does not want to be called an Afropolitan, which makes it even more interesting to study her novel against the background of Afropolitanism. As a whole, if you want to describe Adichie, there is no way to do it because she doesn't believe in any kind of fixation, just like her characters.

Literature Review

The idea this research follows has its roots in DiBattista's (2010) conceptualization of Native Cosmopolitanisms where he talks about an urban outcast who struggles to continue being among his compatriots, family, and friends while having consciousness about experiencing a sense of internal exile. He explains these individuals as Native Cosmopolitans; being trapped in a constant dilemma of being torn between city and citizenship. However, the very idea of native cosmopolitanism leads us to various other cosmopolitan experiences in the context of nativity, and this research out of those various cosmopolitan experiences focuses on mobile Afropolitan writings, only. Native cosmopolitanism explains the idea of being a citizen of the world while having roots in a specific locale. The native experience of the place a person is born in and the experience of the world both are inevitably part of a native cosmopolitan's identity (Mukherjee, et al., 2017). This whole dilemma of an act of balancing the local roots with global roots fills one with inherent anxiety. While Payal Chattopadhyay, Annapurna Rath, and Koshy Tharakan in their article *Between Aspiration and Imagination Exploring Native Cosmopolitanism in Adib Khan's Spiral Road and Muhammad Hanif's Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2017)observe the emergence of individual native cosmopolitans as post-colonial urban outcasts who are cosmopolitans in their ways despite having roots in their respective city and cultures challenging the dichotomy in the understanding of the cosmopolitan as essentially opposed to native and propose the possibility of coexistence of these aspects in these native cosmopolitans. (Mukherjee, et al., 2017). This analysis has a similar proposition that despite the criticism of the Afropolitan experience and mobility of Afropolitans, this whole dilemma can be an antidote to Afro-pessimistic approaches to evaluate African identity and challenge the stereotypical images of Africa as a mere war-torn country that needs to be saved by the West while creating space for negotiations between the sense of belonging to native cities with the conscious inclusion of the world.

While Chattopadhyay takes the South Asian cities of Dhaka and Karachi, this research takes contemporary African writing having native cosmopolitans rooted in Nigeria while having global experiences in America and England, hence Afropolitan Mobile characters. Chattopadhyay explains this phenomenon in the context of post-colonial urban outcasts, but this research seeks a Transcultural perspective as a hermeneutic and phenomenological tool to describe the Afropolitan experience and mobility of characters in Adichie's *Americanah*.

Adichie examines the influence that politics and culture have in her talk titled "Danger of a Single Story" and how these elements contribute to making a single story or narrative. Power does not only help to spread the story but also is involved in discursive exploitation via the constant retelling of it as discourse and power are interrelated. Adichie (2009) understands the role of power in imaginative exploitation, "how stories are told, who tells them, when they are told [and] how many stories are told" . Adichie explains further about this manipulation of stories and discursive narratives via her misconception about Mexican people. She claims that Mexicans who were shown as "harmful people" in Western discourse and media were not harmful. Similarly, literature has power to both generate and deconstruct stereotypes. The Western discourse and single stories are generated by imaginative manipulation and discursive exploitation, the influential Western discourse especially fiction makes people like Adichie have a limited, fixed, and inflexible idea about the characters that appear in the literature because of the absence of representation of people of color. Therefore, she claims that the first stories she wrote or imagined in her childhood had white characters only, who were playing in the snow rather than telling the story of her skin or Nigeria's way of being, as a child wrote about things that were irrelevant to her.. Adichie (2009) explains how she became enlightened by

"discovering African writers", which "saved her from the single story of what books are" and fortunately she no longer became a victim of a biased literary canon.

Adichie (2009) sums up her speech by reiterating the idea that "to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing over and over again, and that is what they become (9:25)" She concludes that to counter these single stories, the need of the hour is to present as many multiple versions of stories as possible as opposed to considering just the one told by media and biased discourse narratives. Rejecting the single story is the way to move forward in the transcultural world and it is an experience like no other. Adichie (2009) calls it "Regaining a kind of paradise" and she explains how by rejecting a single story, we can look at people with something more than just an incomplete thought.

Arianna Dagnino (2013) explains it in the context of multiple ways of being. She completely denies the use of terminologies like international, cross-cultural, and intercultural because as per her transcultural perspective, these terms originate from the presupposition of existing boundaries between nations, and it is something that transcultural perspective denies. Transcultural phenomenology challenges all the discourse based on the fixation on race and borders. She prefers the transcultural notion which stems from recent cultural theories. Transcultural authors seek to capture the hybrid reality of the boundary-blurring phenomenon of cultural fusion, revealing a transcultural sensitivity as a method of confronting the traditional tendency to place culture, individuals, and even literature in a specific category. Unable to locate themselves within precise ethnic, national, or cultural boundaries, transcultural writers find themselves writing across cultures (Asian, European, American, English, etc.) and fostering cross-cultural flows to transcend "the diversity of cultures, even the diversity of individuals, to achieve a broader cultural model capable of addressing not only specific minorities but also the universal potential of human understanding" (Dagnino, 2013, p.1).

Ben Okri (2014), too, criticizes the essentialization of African Black authors and limits them to their subjects. A certain pressure is associated with them which he calls "An anomaly of perception" (p.1). According to him, Black writers are considered fixedly attached to certain subjects. He gives an example of various pieces of literature that are free and universally acknowledged. For instance, Flaubert is known for beauty, innovation is associated with Joyce, Virginia Woolf is read for her poetry and Austen is associated with her psychology, but Black writers are known for the slave trade, slavery, poverty, war, colonial past, etc. In short, Africa and African authors are read for these particular subjects only and are not expected to inculcate other themes. If you want to read literature on colonialism or war, you are referred to African writers which is a sheer burden and hindrance to Artistic freedom. (Okri, 2014).

This artistic freedom can be viewed via the artistic lens of Kobena Mercer (1990). In his article titled "Black Art and the Burden of Representation" (1990), Mercer presented a critical debate surrounding art, race, and the problem of representation. The subject was that black art is under the burden of representation and is in crisis because somehow it has to speak for the totality of its culture. Mercer was of the view that is much similar to today's transcultural idea of fluid culture. He was of the view that the connotations of culture are misinterpreted. It is thought to be fixed. Mercer criticizes the burdenization of black art. He claims that the dynamics of representation and cultural identity have changed over time. The concerns here are similar to that of Okri's vision of the mental tyranny of the black artist. He also claims that black art has to be about some specific subjects. It has to talk about a specific culture. It is not seen outside of these lenses. Artists are under the spell of a huge burden of representing the whole culture.

Mercer provides some insightful insights into the issue of representation involved in such a scenario. He claims about artists that when they are on the fringes of the institutional spaces of cultural production, they are burdened with the impossible task of speaking as "representatives" because they are widely expected to "speak for" the marginalized communities from which they come. (Mercer 1990). Mercer calls this imperative to represent a whole culture a burden of representation.

Masood Ashraf Raja (2018) argues that the burden of representation is two-fold: the metropolitan audience and the market force writers to be "representatives" of their culture and primarily the culture also expects authors to represent their entire culture. Thus, the diasporic author of English is in a double bind: he or she must fulfill metropolitan market expectations and their pushes and pulls own primary culture.

This research is concerned with this essentialization linked with African authors. This study seeks to not only address these issues linked with African authors but also, proposes the new possibilities of negotiation of diasporic and Afropolitan identity. This research investigates Afrodiasporic texts via transcultural lens while studying the afropolitanism and mobility as underlying thematic threads. Afropolitanism is a way to be "Africans of the world" (Selasi, 2008). It is a way to reinterpret the "global positioning of Africa" (Mmembe, 2008). Afropolitanism and mobility are also used as analytical conceptual thematic threads to undercover the transcultural world in both novels. The possible interpretation of multiplicities, pluralities and fluidity of transcultural world that this research tends to explain is beautifully explained by Smith in her part of an essay 'Dream City' (Smith, 2009) as she refers to the bounds of singularity in form:

" It is a place of many voices, where the unified singular self is an illusion. In Dream City everything is doubled. You have no choice but to cross borders and speak in tongues." (Smith, 2009)

Afrodiasporic authors like Adichie explore Afropolitan Experience in 21st century and remind us of what it means to be mobile and transnational for Africans in the era of globalization still marked by inequalities. These Afrodiasporic texts critically examine the representations, transgressions, disruptions, and/or redrawing of borders and spaces in contemporary African literature and can be read under the rubric of Afropolitanism and Transcultural theory, providing a futuristic lens to reinterpret and reimagine the African identity within and across the globe invoking inclusivity against essentialism. This study primarily focuses on evaluation and exploration of characters and plot in Afrodiasphoric Literature via transcultural and Afropolitan lens in context of idea of being African of the global world and its futuristic sensibility in terms of possibilities linked with redefining and reimagining Africanness outside of narrow boundaries of nation and race.

Transcultural Discourse: Theoretical Framework

Afropolitanism; the rubric on which this study is based, makes a significant effort to redefine and reimagine the African Identity to challenge the stereotyped and ''Hyperreal" (Baudrillard, 1994) images of Africa painted by western media and discourse as an eternal victim chained hopelessly to the past and as a nest of poverty and problems and transcends itself to explain the impact of globalization and mass migration in 21st century on contemporary African literature. This challenge gives rise to new possibilities to reimagine African identities as fluid, dynamic and diverse rather than fixed and more importantly 'black' and sees Africans as worthy representators of their localities rather than race and nation; be it Africa or the places they have been to. They are as diverse as Americans, their experiences are not limited to colonial legacies, they possess as much

human possibilities as anyone in the world. They are exploring the world and contributing to it as global citizens and like Western people, these pluralities and changes can neither take away their origins nor their present global experiences rather create Hybridity. This extreme interconnectedness and permeability are aanalyzed via transcultural lens in this research.

Transculturalism can be viewed in context of cultural fluidity and the dynamics of cultural change. It can be via conflict, social and cultural dynamics, necessity, revolution, or the slow progression of digitalization, globalization and interaction. Different people and groups share their life stories, symbols, values, culture, meanings, and experiences. This whole phenomenon of sharing and constant "beaching" loosens the fixation, solidity and stability of culture as a whole and creates the conditions for transmission and transition. More than a simple "multiculturalism" that seeks to fix difference as an ontology, "transculturalism" recognizes the uneven intermingling of both Difference and Sameness simultaneously. It enables groups of human individuals to adapt and adopt new discourses, values, ideas and systems of knowledge. It recognizes that culture is always in a state of flux and constantly transforms and is always looking for new terrains of knowledge and hermeneutics.

Afropolitanism has met with mixed reactions over the past few years; a lot of concerned post colonial critics consider it an 'elite' term, having a direct connection to neoliberalism and criticise it for having its sole fixation on representation of an elite segment of society and some emphasize on its role in teaching a still xenophobic western audience in context of dispersion and mass migration as defining issues of 21st century. Even the colonial past and slave trade is set in background of African literature renaissance. The dispersion and dislocation caused by forced slave trade (the colonial legacy) and mass migration, change and globalisation in 21st century Africa both contribute to the making of a 'Multi local Afropolitan identity' (Selasi, 2005) that evokes inclusivity and deconstructs the whole idea of "African Authenticity" (Adichie 2013) that is, this study discusses, predominantly an idea emerged as a result of what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls " single story of Africa " that is told to the people of the world throughout their lives, the different versions of a single story; a single story of Africans being beasts who have no houses. This single story of Africa as a beautiful place having incomprehensible people who are fighting old wars, people who die of poverty and AIDS, and do not have ability to speak as they lack voices and need to be civilized and saved by 'Whites' has come largely and predominantly from Western media and discourse and, indirectly from Afropessimist stance that promotes victim narrative that is 'Not' untrue but rather, a single story of Africa. Like the whole world, Africa is also globalised and there are multiplicities and pluralities and diversity of experiences. This study takes Gikandi's idea of Afropolitanism as "Redemptive hermeaunatics" to engage *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and explores the multilocal experiences of the characters in the text that constitute Afropolitan identities as they're at the same time rooted in certain localities but are also beyond it; being in Africa and the other world at the same time.

Materials and Methods

This study utilizes text of the novel Americanah as a primary source and scholarly articles related to it, Afropolitan Essays, books on Transcultural theory as secondary sources. This is qualitative exploratory research that is concerned with social and thematic concerns of the novel. For Transcultural Theory is set in parallel with Afropolitanism and mobility linked with it, it takes transcultural humanities as methodological approach. Choosing this methodology is deliberate attempt to link the purpose of this research i.e.,

reimagining Africanness and proposing inclusive interpretative tools to fight afropessimism and western essentialism.

Analysis

Afropolitanism in Americanah

The whole novel revolves around the Afropolitan journey of Ifemelu. She's an immigrant who chooses to pursue her dreams in America. The Nigerian 'Ifemelu' instantly becomes "African" in America. She faces all kind of racism. She has to change herself to look like an American to get a job. The readers get to see her growing and understanding the reality of American Dream. She is a character that deserves to be called Afropolitan because she proves herself to be valuable immigrant of US, despite her terrible experiences there. She utilizes her experience as immigrant in America to bring to light the reality of America being a so-called *melting pot*. In the end, she uses her experience to expose the distorted hyperreal image of America. She negotiates her Afropolitan identity by breaking the stereotypes and perceptions about both Africa and America. In the end, she is the global citizen. She belongs to the world. She's above the place politics and is what her experiences make her.

Ifemelu's Mirror Truth

When Ifemelu returns to her residence she faces herself in front of the mirror recognizing herself. She faces the "mirror truth":

"But back home, as she stood and faced the mirror's truth, she realised that she had ignored, for too long, the new tightness of her clothes, the rubbing together of her inner thighs, the softer, rounder parts of her that shook when she moved. She was "fat" because one of the first things that 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". So she had banished "fat" from her vocabulary." (Adichie, 2013, pp. 5-6)

She slowly starts saying to herself that she has become fat funneling it back and forward. She wonders and thinks about all the things she was barred from saying in America. *"She does not want to call herself curvy or big-boned. She wants to call it fat"* (Adichie, 2013, p. 6)

While Ifemelu acknowledges and recognizes her unhappiness being an Afropolitan stranger, Ginika on the other hand projects a false illusion of being happy and comfortable in America and her Americanization. She, like the Nigerian taxi drivers in America, starts finding an escape in denial. Like the drivers don't want to be called drivers in America and tell everyone about their master's degree and how it is their second job, Ginika asks Ifemelu to not call herself fat.

Language

Ifemelu exposes through her writings that racism in America has various forms. Traditionally it is gone but it is present in various forms. She says that in America they say that the racists are long gone, but racism is still there. Ifemelu herself is an example of that. She says if you want to know who racists are, know that they are thin-lipped, white people. She says that the manifestation of it has changed but linguistically it is still there.

Language also exposes the political concerns of Adichie's narrative functioning as a marker of assimilation. Language exposes the Afropolitan experience of politics of

migration and mobility. Adichie acknowledges that speaking English is not sufficient to linguistically assimilate in foreign countries. It is affirmed by a scene where Ginika, a friend of the main character Ifemelu uses navigation of the political space of the US to illuminate Ifemelu's initial confrontation with race, language, and colorist. For Ifemelu, Ginika has a "Nigerian English" accent which is 'an overcooked version' to prove 'how unchanged she was" (Adichie, 2013, p. 124).

Not only via Ginika, Ifemelu directly experiences the politics of language when she had to register for classes at Princeton as the receptionist changed her overall tempo when Ifemelu spoke with an accent because of prejudice against migrants.

Yes. Now. Are. You. An. International. Student

"Yes." "You. Will. First. Need. To. Get. A. Letter. From. The. International. Students. Office…. I. Need. You. To. Fill. Out. A. Couple. Of. Forms. Do. You. Understand. How. To. Fill. These Out?" (Adichie, 2013, p. 133)

Nigerian Drivers

Similarly, we can see the struggle to amalgamate into American style to survive there in the characterization of Nigerian drivers and the distorted accented language of Aisha in the hair braiding Salone. Ifemelu needs the taxi, and she joins the line outside the station hoping that the driver would not be Nigerian because she knows what exactly she is going to face. She knows by now that those drivers are going to talk about their degrees after listening to her accent. They are going to aggressively explain to Ifemelu that driving is their second job and how their daughter is on the dean's list, else he would just feel humiliated. This is how Nigerians pretend or ignore in America.

The Hair Braiding Salone

In the very beginning of the novel, Ifemelu visits Mariama African Hair Braiding Salon. It was her first time there. The physical appearance of the African Salons in America shows the obvious difference between African and American life there.

"She was sure that like all other African Hair Braiding Salons she had known: they were in the part of the city that has graffiti, dank buildings and no white people, they displayed bright signboards with names like Aisha and Fatima African Hair Braiding. They had radiators that were too hot in the winter and air conditioners that did not cool in the summer." (Adichie, 2013, p. 9)

Apart from physical appearance of the salon, there's is this problem of identity associated with Africans living in America. Hair Braiding Salon in the novel serves as a political place that shows how the racism in America leads to gradual loss of identity. The obsession with being validated by the whites in America leads Africans to a life full of ambiguity and confusion as they cannot undo their roots or their current experience.

"The conversations were loud and swift, in French or Wolof or Malinke, and when they spoke English to customers, it was broken, curious as though they had not quite eased into the language itself before taking on a slangy Americanism" (Adichie, 2013, p. 9).

Ifemelu remembers how once a Guinean braider in Philadelphia had told her, "Amma like, Oh Gad, As Someh.". It took her many repetitions understand that the woman was saying, "I'm like, Oh God, I was so mad" (Adichie, 2013, Pg. 9)

Interconnectedness, Globalization, and Digital Space

Being an essential reality of the digital age, significance of digital media is now commonly found in writings of afrodiasporic authors. The protagonist in the novel, Ifemelu, establishes herself as a blog writer naming it "Raceteenth or Various Observations about American Blacks (Those formerly known as negroes) by a Non-American Black" (Adichie, 2013, p. 4)

Her blogs expose America by providing the counterpoint to the unfolding story of her migration to the United States and then her homecoming to Nigeria where she starts a new blog named "The Small Redemptions of Lagos." So, a non-American Black finds a way to write back to racist America. Ifemelu writes about the experience of becoming different, the experience of racism, experience of being essentialized in the brackets of identity. Ifemelu feels that she did not think she was different when she was living in Nigeria. She never felt different in Nigeria but as soon as she put her feet in the so-called land of opportunity, she became *Black*. She states racism was never an issue in Nigeria. She also exposes in her blog that we keep ourselves silent, we don't speak up. We don't say that we are facing racism, we rather ignore it to assimilate in America. We don't "even tell our white partners about it" because these are small things and are only nuances that we don't need to talk about. Racism has ended in America but ironically racists exist, and we have to give them another name but not racism. We have to pretend that it does not exist. Adichie writes via Ifemelu that we pretend to belong, and we pretend to be fine in front of our white partners because we are in constant fear of being nuanced for them. We are worried that they will say that we are exaggerating, or we are "overreacting." We fear being called "over sensitive" and that is the reason that we let it all pile up in our heads. We have to say that race does not matter because we have to keep up with our liberal friends and we have to make them comfortable.

These multimodal and transmedia forms of expression and communication have the role of interrupting the hegemony of writing and opening new possibilities for its hybridization with orally transmitted narratives. Internet and cyberspace blur the lines between oral and written and hence, can be used to Decolonize and re and de territorialize the world. It is a way to tell the story to the world and be a global local and come out of the Burden of representation by seeing the changes via the transcultural lens. Mary Joyce says in her essay "Blog for a Cause" (2015), that "A blog is a great advocacy tool" and explains further that it allows an individual to launch a campaign for social change having a potentially global reach.

Negotiating Afropolitanism

Dike's suicide attempt is one of the best examples of alienation and a sense of exile. Dike is Aunt Uju and General's child. While Aunt Uju is Nigerian, the General is white. He is both African and American. Aunt Uju keeps saying that he is not Black, and the American society keeps telling him that he is not White. Dike is discriminated in the school, he is blamed for something he didn't do, and he is Black in America and White in Nigeria. The sense of rootlessness is best explained by his character. Aunt Uju is always reluctant to tell him about his father which makes him even more stranded because he is not given any positive association with Nigeria too. So, Dike cannot even feel proud of his roots. He is told that he does not belong to Nigeria, but he is stereotyped as Black. He is considered a drug dealer in the school just because he is Black for them and constantly mistreated. While Aunt Uju and Ifemelu negotiate their identities and roots in the end, Dike remains complex and Adichie does not write anything unrealistic about him. Ifemelu hates the fact that Aunt Uju never considers how Dike feels and calls it a general depression that the youth go through. She understands that Dike is living a life where he is having an identity that is double negative. She blames aunt Ujo for Dike's mental health deterioration. She

says, "You told him what he wasn't but you didn't tell him what he was." (Adichie, 2013, pg. 470)

Ifemelu also realizes how the American images she was shown were so wrong and wants to correct them. She wants to tell the whole world about her Afropolitan Experience and global inequalities. She feels older and wiser than Aunt Uju and she wants to squeeze the sense out of Aunt Uju and tell her how wrong she is. How much better she deserves and how she has lost everything for this American life. She wants to wake her up so that she stops laying her hopes on the General. She wants her to stop defending him and his flaws and to know how she has lost herself and her career for nothing.

Ifemelu's return home reflects the idea of not the amalgamation of culture but the transcendence of it. Ifemelu's frustration towards Aunt Uju's situation shows that her stay at America gave her a better understanding of racism and a better platform to speak about it as someone who has experienced it first-hand. This is how Afropolitan identity of Ifemelu is negotiated.

Mobility

We are living in the world of transcultural mobility where the 'native' who hasn't experienced the global world physically is also mobilized due to physical and cultural changes. Africa today is a fluctuating entity itself. It is not necessarily the discussion of cosmopolitanism that creates complexity. It is the place itself. The blurred boundaries of race and nation, native and foreign, home and elsewhere constitute the transcultural discourse. The Afropolitan experience is just a part of it. When the whole discourse of Cosmopolitan started, it was about diaspora and their complex identities but now the transculturalism is a bigger reality and the cosmopolitan experience is just a part of it. A person with no experience of foreign land physically is still cosmopolitan because of cultural cohesion and transcultural mobility. For instance, in Americanah (2013) the characters like Ifemelu's father do not have immigration or travel experience to America but they still speak broken English. They know the standards of America via commercials, advertisements, and TV shows just like Ifemelu. When Ifemelu watches the American show that shows the lavish culture of America and the ideal life of America and the exaggerated version of the American dream, she comes to know the image of America that is hyperreal. The media itself is an example of how the transcultural world works. Mobility is in different forms and all forms of mobility make a strange, fluid and constantly changing identity that cannot be explained by past versions and interpretations.

"Flat-Lands, Aunty Uju said this section of Brooklyn was called. The street below was poorly lit, bordered not by leafy trees but by closely parked cars, nothing like the pretty streets on *The Cosby Show*" (Adichie, 2013, Pg. 106)

Stories and Exploitation

Adichie explains the importance of the stories told by parents to their children in their childhood by introducing the characters of Dike and Ifemelu. While Aunt Uju keeps telling Dike to behave in a certain way to get success in America, Ifemelu's father since her childhood told Ifemelu that American society is a place that offers different options, is like a melting pot and helps people thrive; he often tells Ifemelu, "America creates opportunities for people to flourish. Nigeria can learn a lot from them," (Adichie, 2013, p. 210). Ifemelu's father keeps influencing his daughter's view of Nigeria by making Nigeria sound like a place where Ifemelu's opportunities would decrease in comparison with America. Consequently, her father promotes negative stereotypes of his own country.

Ifemelu's father also creates a false and untrue assumption that America is a hub of job opportunities and that they are ideal. "[her] father made a sound of admiring respect. "America is an organized place and there are a lot of job opportunities"" (Adichie, 2013, p. 210). Similarly, Ifemelu's mother also shows admiration for America throughout and influences her daughter's view about the US green card when she says, "She could be an American in a few years as a citizen" (Adichie 2013, Pg. 210). Her mother portrays the wrong interpretation of life in America as simpler than that of Nigeria. Ifemelu realizes how all of it was a stereotyping of both America and Nigeria.

Deconstructing Stereotypes

The deconstruction of stereotypes about Blacks is a major part of Ifemelu's journey. Ifemelu identifies that her image of America as a country that gives lifestyle and hopes to everyone is rooted in the commercialization of the American dream. She gives an example of an American show *The Cosby Show* that she used to watch back in Nigeria. This show was all about America and its luxurious life. The houses that were shown, the roads, the environment, everything in the show was a lie and Ifemelu realized it onve she entered America and started living with Uju. She felt the darkness and hotness that was never shown in the *Cosby show*. Baudrillard (1994) calls this media play of disrupting reality and creating hyperreal images as hyperreality. He gives an example of Disney in this context. America has always used media to create stereotypes. It has created an image of America while making life in the third world as other. Ifemelu in the novel discovers that all these stereotypes keep getting recognition because they are not confronted. Travelers who go there do not tell their parents that the images they show are not true. Uju never talks about the agonizing aspects of America to Ifemelu on the phone calls. Ifemelu herself does not talk about how she gets her job by being fake to her parents. Finally, Ifemelu realizes the importance of breaking the stereotypes in redefining the image of Africa and writes back to America through the same media. She uses her blogs to tell real stories to people. Adichie argues that American films form stereotypes about white women by portraying them as smart and loving while black women are tough and undesirable. Ifemelu writes in one of her blog posts: "[i]n movies, dark black women become fat darlings mom or strong . . . while the white woman finds love." (Adichie, 2013, pg. 458)

Conclusion

The transcultural or Afropolitan discourses don't invalidate or commodify Africanness. Rather they propose inclusive narratives. They propose that the third place can be the negotiated identity that is both local and global, both African and of the world. Being of the world and Africa both has become a possibility. It's just a way forward to "writing back" in a new era of digital presence and interconnectedness. The text under consideration has countered stereotypes via digital media, interconnectedness, and afropolitanism. This study concludes that contemporary Afrodiasporic literature's worldly reimagination and reinterpretation of Africa and Africans present new possibilities for imaginatively inclusive narratives.

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