GLOBALISATION AND THE FORMATION OF LIMINAL CHARACTERS IN THE AFRICAN NOVEL

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my late Mum, my Dad and my Love.

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation constitutes a time-space transformation of human societies. This phenomenon, which affects cultural formations, has been depicted in African literature, and especially the novel. Existing studies on globalisation in African literature have focused on nostalgia, displacement, migration and disillusionment, with minimal attention to changes in cultural orientations occasioned by global flows and processes. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the representation of globalisation and its cultural forms in selected African novels in order to establish how various elements that enhance global interconnectedness contribute to a changing cultural perspective in Africa.

Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory and Arjun Appadurai's concept of globalisation served as framework. Interpretive design was used. Eight novels, two each from West Africa (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (Ghana)), East Africa (Mukoma wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat* (Nairobi) and Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones*), Southern Africa (J.M. Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* (Childhood) and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (New Names)), and North Africa (Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* (Scheherazade) and Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns* (Djinns)) were purposively selected based on their thematic concerns with cultural subjectivity in global world and gender considerations. The texts were subjected to literary analysis.

In the novels, characters' inability to integrate into the centre or the periphery portrays the irony inherent in the Otherness that subsists, even with the increasing interconnectedness of people and places. The characters are suspended within a cultural limbo, thereby creating a third space with several sociocultural interstices. The tension generated by the clash between adherents of indigenous culture and the characters within liminal zones sparks off the major conflicts that sustain the greater part of the plots of the novels. Appadurai's five major dimensions of cultural disjuncture in an increasingly globalised world are variedly depicted in these novels. Various behavioural dispositions of Ifemelu, Obinze and Olu in *Americanah*, Yasin and Leo in *Djinns* and Kweku Sai and his family in *Ghana* reveals that the 'mediascape' (global media images) and 'ethnoscape' (cross-border movement of people) stimulate in the characters a psychogenic affiliation with the West. Afro-pessimistic imprints in *Crossbones*, *New Names* and *Nairobi* explore 'technoscapes' (global movement of technology), 'finanscapes' (cross-border movement of capital) and 'ideoscapes' (global flow of ideologies) that inscribe Africa as a helpless recipient in the global cultural flux. While *Childhood* uses a lost child, David, to allegorise the liminal identity in a globalised world, *Scheherazade* projects feminist consciousness in a patriarchal African society. While *Americanah* depicts cultural dislodgement in many Nigerian families, *Djinns* concentrates on a single family lineage of Yasin. Also, *Djinns* projects women as ambassadors of the indigenous culture, whereas *Scheherazade* construes globalisation as an emancipatory phenomenon capable of reconstructing female subjectivity.

Globalisation leverages inter-cultural flux to erode indigenous cultural values in Africa. This impact, as inscribed in the selected novels, causes family disintegration, a rootless sense of self, and new cultural orientations.

Keywords: Literature and globalisation, Liminal characters in novels, Postcolonial otherness

Word Count: 477

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the study

> Caught between the anvil and the hammer
> In the forging house of a new life
> Transforming the pangs that delivered me
> Into the joy of a new song
>   . . . .
> Sew the old days for us, our fathers,
> That we can wear them under our new garment
> _____ Kofi Awonoor's *The Anvil and the Hammer*

> They can never be the same again because you just cannot
> be the same once you leave behind who and what you are,
> you just cannot be the same.
> _____ Noviolet Bulawayo (*We Need New Names*,
> 2013:146)

The above quotes combine to generate the major thrust of this work: an investigation of a people in an unabated flux of cultural change. Dehumanised by the Atlantic Slave Trade, pummelled by colonialism, relegated by neocolonialism, distraught by internal strife, the African continent remains, perhaps, the most affected in the dizzying fleets of cultural dislodgments in the last two centuries. Clear cases of culture transfers that have continued to transform the African man beyond himself remain evident in, virtually, all parts of the African continent. Having brought the continent to the very margins of the globe, this condition has continued unabated in various forms and colourations, raising critical issues about the nature and identity of the African man.

This fact has not only sprung up the creative stimulus of many African writers over the years but has also seized the hard gaze of many scholars in African studies in general and postcolonial criticism in particular. The battle lines in recent African studies appear to have been drawn between those who wish to erect walls and form an irreducible bulwark for Africa against a flooding encroachment of cultural annihilation, like Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa and Madubike (1985) and Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986, 1991) and those whose perspective are very genial to a changing world, those who see reception to change as an unalienable element of existence, a circumstance that one's sociological sinew can do

nothing or very little to withstand, like Okri (1997), Selasi (2005) and others. The latter group seems to align with the theoretical perspective of Bhabha to accentuate the shifting nature of cultural identity and the needlessness of a battle against it. Unlike the former who draws its strength from anger of the oppressed and the need to resist the proud disposition of the cultural hegemony of the West or what Said (1994) calls 'paternalistic arrogance of imperialism' (XVIII), the latter acknowledges the ever increasing blurring boundaries in the modern world and tries to situate such within the existential frame of the living. This is what Appadurai succinctly captures when he observes:

> The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation. A vast array of empirical facts could be brought to bear on the side of the homogenisation argument, and much of it has come from ... media studies (2000:295).

In other words, the modern world has been actively engaged in transfer and reception of varied cultural models in a very rapid flux. This development is obviously the attendant effects of globalisation which has been enhanced more than ever before by modern science and technology with its easy flow of man, material and idea. The claim here attempts to posit that the culture shifts and mix is not a phenomenon crisply peculiar to the African continent. It also, in no small measure, acknowledges the tension that comes with such a blend. This tension always persists because of the belief among many, intellectuals not in the least, that cultural homogeneity forms a defining emblem that identifies a people as one, and uniquely positions them at the global front. But the fact that rears its head very often is the strength of this brick wall to withstand the flooding onslaughts of heterogeneous influences in this modern world.

The myriad and complex mix of cultures that have manifested in various terminologies such as acculturation, multiculturalism, liminal space and cultural transcendence have begun to elicit scholarly interest. This awakens us to the future that is being forged before us; the rapid transmutation of humanity and changes in our consciousness beckon us to the emerging realities of globalisation. So, we are astoundingly alerted to several reactions: to absorb the staring force of globalisation whole and entire, to overtly reject it or to pioneer a different perspective to its adoption and use. This is more glaring as the centre-periphery differentiation has continued to widen. In interrogating what Appadurai refers to as 'ideoscape', Blommaert and Donckt (2002) observe that an 'ideology of mobility and

adaptation' (145) has continued to progress towards the indices of success as conceptualised by the centres of the world's cultural model: Europe, North America, as the key to success. What is also true is that such movement of ideology goes along with it varied cultural orientations which, ultimately, result in a cultural shift as well.

While the centre is associated with affluence and success, 'locality and localism are … defined as recipes for poverty and failure. This is a widespread social and cultural script that probably accounts for lots of social processes in contemporary Africa' (Blommaert and Donckt, 2002:145). Here, the major ideological frame that asserts economic categories of spaces and its resultant migration is obviously highlighted. The centres become synonymous with success while the fringes are identified with failure. What this does outright is a stimulation of convergence towards the centre and a collective abandonment of the designated peripheries, which obviously underlies the forces of migration. How this migration, spatial and temporal, which forms the basis of globalisation, contributes to injecting cultural alienation calls for intellectual interrogation in this era. In other words, an attempt to assess the ability or inability of characters in the African novels to absorb these wavering dimensions of cultural influences, how these varied tides and estuaries are integrated to form a new being assumes an important position in the intellectual space of literary studies in Africa. That is why this cross cultural fertilization and syncretism resulting from these various exposures have been identified in different terms and forms such as hybridity, transculturation, creolisation, metissage and Afropolitanism. Character formation into this cultural crossfire therefore involves multifaceted orientations that are capable of transcending individuals beyond a given indigenous culture, launching them within a liminal space. In other words, all the cultural vagaries and influences absorbed from multiple cultural influences combine to define one differently from his supposed cultural orientation.

Also, it is for this reason that identity is at the centre of the contestations that surround globalisation. This is because the eclectic personality of the modern man, which has also manifested in several and diverse hyphenated citizenry that now abound, emanates largely from this culture mix. Today, African-American citizens are not just the descendants of the slaves. Nigerian-British and British-Nigerian are some of the increasing personality formations prompted by the emergent global world. Through this development, the threshold that defines the liminal space is created. A set of individuals, whose responses to

the existential forces transcend their supposed homogenous cultural milieu, emerges as a result of this borderline identity. This thereby raises a big question on the supposed cultural binaries that usually come to mind when culture and identity are examined in postcolonial discourse. Situations of this kind project the African as a helpless receptacle of vagaries of cultures and, in the process, moulds him into a new breed that can only be best captured in the liminal space.

1.2 Statement of the problem

It has become evident that recent African literary output is growing with immense vitality. It is also interesting that this growth, especially of the African novel, is carrying along with it serious issues of modern global concerns. One of such concerns is the issue of globalisation. Within the last few decades, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of literary texts of African descent that have caught the growing realities of the globalised world. Many of such writings have stretched their scope further to bring under their creative lens how globalisation impacts on several indigenous African cultures. In other words, these modern writings have been greatly influenced by the impact of a globalised or globalising world and how it affects the identity of the African.

Many literary and cultural scholars have engaged the rising cultural conflation occasioned by globalisation. However, few have explored how the multiple facets of globalisation occasion the formation of liminal personalities as depicted in the African novel. While some of these efforts are largely in the fields of sociology economics and politics, the few in literary studies are very marginal.

Very many research efforts have been carried out in the area of globalisation, ranging from the causes and consequences (Okome, 2005), to such areas as political and economic concerns (Vaughan, 2005), information gathering and dissemination (Emeagwali, 2004), culture (Guillen, 2001), (Cameron and Stein, 2000) all of which have no link to textual explications of the import of globalisation on the indigenous African cultures and how that has influenced characterisation in the African novels in recent times. How the threatening and overwhelming forces of globalisation has submerged Africans and transcended them beyond their cultural milieu should be a matter of concern to African literary scholars. Even when Jan Blommaert and Van Der Donckt's (2002) attempted an exploration of globalisation in a Tanzanian novel, the effort is not only marginal but it focuses only on

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mobility and space which is just an aspect of the global forces, ignoring other portent elements that Appadurai (1990) has identified.

Apart from that, the growing body of researches on culture in Africa has not adequately focused on this direction. Most of such critical efforts tend to investigate the cultural binaries, focusing more on the elements of difference in the African and Western cultures without examining the points of fusion and the compelling forces that have made the convergence of cultures almost inevitable. This trajectory subsists in most researches in African culture ranging from defining the characteristic features of African culture and African personality (Osofola, 1978), and (Fashina, 2008), to cultural aesthetics in African literature (Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, 1980) and (Anyoku, 2011) as well as an absolution of African culture from the causes of its own imminent annihilation (Aligwekwe, 2010). So, the question in this case is not about the paucity of critical engagements on works related to culture in the African novel but the scantiness of works that interrogate the heavy influence of globalisation on African cultural homogeneity in the African novel even when literary works that have portrayed this situation are available across the continent. What are the cultural implications of exposing the African people to the myriads of cultural crossfire that globalisation purveys? This has become more obvious as literary creativity in this direction has continued to advance greatly. While contemporary African writings in this direction have multiplied, the critical muteness that follows has played down the significance of this phenomenon in the study of the African novel. Even the critical attentions on the selected texts largely focus on physical and material effects of migration, nostalgia and transnational crimes. Physical migration is evidently an important aspect of globalisation but that is just one factor in the entire global cultural flow. Some other critical engagements in this direction limit their enquiry within a given writer or a region in Africa. Readings of this nature do not only blur the diverse dimensions of the global cultural dynamics but also fail to give room for comparisons among texts, regions and writers. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining the conflicts and tensions arising from the global cultural mix and how varied global influences combine to transcend the characters beyond their indigenous culture into a liminal space.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to establish how the combined forces of globalisation occasion the formation of liminal characters in the African novel. In pursuance of this, some objectives have been articulated which, among other things, are to:

1. analytically assess the influence of globalisation on the African families as portrayed in the selected texts;

2. examine the depiction of Afro-pessimism and global forces in the formation of liminal self in the texts selected; and

3. explore the allegorical portrayal of global influences in the formation of liminal characters in the selected texts.

1.4 Scope of the study

This study focuses on globalisation as it influences cultural changes that lead to the formation of liminal characters in the African novel. To this end, some selected African novels form the major data for critical exploration in this study. Geographical representation is seriously taken into consideration to capture, as much as possible, the varied perspectives and experiences of the subject being examined. Consequently, two texts are chosen from each of the four major regions of the continent – West, East, North and Southern Africa. From West Africa, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* are chosen. East Africa is represented with Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat* and Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones*. From Southern Africa are J.M Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, and finally, North Africa, with Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* and Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns*. Apart from the obvious aptness of their subject matter to the issues examined in this work, the geographical and gender spreads of these texts are aimed at emphasising the ubiquity of the cultural influences that thrust the characters within the borderline of liminality in the African novel. This signifies the deep concern that globalisation and culture has resonated among African writers of different spheres and genders.

1.5   Significance of the study

The significance of this work is multifaceted. It seeks to give a new insight into the study and analysis of the African novel. It is evident that despite the growing tide of critical output on the subject of globalisation in literature and other fields, there is still a loud silence on its prodigious effect on African cultures, as demonstrated in contemporary African novels.

The quintessence of culture as the 'human software' and a strong moderator of human action run deep in the thoughts and works of African writers and critics of African literature. This is why culture has remained very central in serious scholarly discussions of African literature. It appears that Africans have never been more perplexed by the cultural nexuses that the globalised world has brought than the present time. This situation is not lost on the creative ingenuity of many modern African writers but its critical projection appears to have suffered considerably. An examination of the complex cultural forces that confront Africans and the implications that follow is, therefore, not only an imperative assessment of the present day Africa but also necessary investigation into the future of the continent and the world as a whole.

So, a thorough assessment of this situation will not only draw new critical perspectives towards this direction in African literary studies but also ease the cultural frictions that have been engendered by the multicultural interactions that have become very prevalent on the continent. It will not only identify and interrogate some of the forces that stimulate cultural changes but also enhances a better understanding of different cultural variations that often degenerate into personal clashes of interest and, in worst cases, communal conflicts and wars. The need for a better understanding of varied cultural experiences is an irreducible fact that will not only stimulate mutual coexistence among individuals of wide and complex nexus but a harmonious global peace and healthy interrelatedness among nations. It is very instructive to note that many raging conflicts in Africa and elsewhere have their antecedent in such seemingly minor misinterpretation originating from outright lack of understanding and subsequent intolerance of heterogeneous cultural forces. This will, therefore, help to engender a broader perspective that will enable us to interrogate, appreciate, assimilate, integrate, amend or reject such forces as the need may arise, and then renegotiate, constructively, to maintain a more stable and virile society. Nonetheless, a better perception of diverse and rich African culture - norms and values in the main - that

have long suffered denigration will be better assessed and new perspectives generated and shared. The study will also erect new platforms that will help to redirect perception towards more accommodating dispositions for a robust mutual coexistence. Also, the work will offer reliable extrapolation possibilities about the African continent in relation to globalisation and new cultural identity.

1.6 Methodology

The method of inquiry deployed in this work is basically literary and comparative analyses. A critical assessment is employed on each of the eight texts which are purposively selected to represent the four regions of the continent.

Specifically, the cultural indeterminacy of the characters is investigated. In other words, instances and situations that raise questions on the binary oppositions usually associated with identity are analysed. This is where the theories outlined shall be deployed for a more critical examination. For instance, Bhabha's liminality, a variant of the Postcolonial Literary Theory, will be used to examine the exilic experiences, which are seen in the migration of the characters, psychically and physically in the chosen texts. This is employed to examine the tension that is generated by the divagation of the individuals from their supposed cultural sphere.

Also, Appadurai's concept of globalisation provides a fundamental guide in the identification and the interrogation of the elements of globalisation in the texts selected. Appadurai identifies basic framework to five aspects of cultural flow in the era of globalisation. In conceptualising globalisation, Appadurai puts forward this basic framework to examine five dimensions of global cultural flow, which he calls 'ethnoscapes', 'mediascapes,' 'technoscapes,' 'finanscapes,' and 'ideoscapes'. These various 'scapes' have come to constitute the components of the globalising world. The dominant influences of these elements, as identified by Appadurai, are examined with the sole aim of finding out how they affect characters' behavioural trajectory. As a result of this reference to behaviour, it would be inescapable to involve a certain level of psychoanalysis in this study. As a result, Freud's concept of the Unconscious also helps to underscore the rubrics that form the earlier experiences of the characters and the pool of memories that has been accumulated in the characters much earlier in their lives, and come to define their responses in their later life. The unconscious, as Tyson makes us

understand, 'is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fear, guilty desires and unresolved conflict that we do not want to know about' (1999: 15). This suggests that the unconscious comprises the remote personal experiences and repressed desires. Those repressed feelings that come to play out at different circumstances and time are part of the memory pool that forms the individual unconscious. Part of these repressions combine to form early experiences and are often released at different instances, when triggered. This can also form repeated behavioural patterns, which are modelled around some cultural practices, images and symbols. The essence of engaging this perspective is to have an access into the character's earlier life, see how the behaviour is modelled, and how changes occur.

1.7   Theoretical framework

Consciously or inadvertently, critical writings have a way of identifying with or yielding to one or more literary theories in the process of analysis. Globalisation permeates the very centre of global cultural mix. It initiates culture contacts and this often results in the formation of intricate culture models. This work aims at examining these intricacies especially as they affect characters in the African novels. To this end, Postcolonial Literary Theory yields as the major theory base of this thesis.

Postcolonialism, like most theories in humanistic studies, has undergone several forms of changes and these have subjected it to multiple arrays of import. It is important at this point, therefore, to provide these shades of interpretation usually attributed to postcolonialism for a better elucidation. A better understanding of the overlapping layers of the theory not only enriches us with a better comprehension but also shows its links to the process of globalisation, which is of central relevance of this study. In his *Globalisation and Colonisation: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-first Century*, Krishna (2009) credits Alavi (1972) with the Marxist colouration of the term, postcolonialism. Alavi used the term with reference to the third world countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In that sense, he uses it to refer to countries that were once colonised and are then independent. Alavi aims at establishing that the eventual attainment of independence by the countries affected did not altogether translate to their freedom. Analysing the enduring impacts of colonialism on these countries, he argues that these societies are 'overdeveloped' in relation to the civil society. In other words, the large and often redundant workforce of the newly independent countries, the bureaucracy that goes

with such, its coercive apparatus, were relatively organised but out of proportion with the overall population. The positions within the bureaucracy were mere rewards for political patronages, while the state becomes virtually the sole producer. This colonial legacy did not stop even when the need for maintenance of law and order which was the major motivation of the colonial masters had changed to overall need to develop the modern states. Again, as the state exerted enormous power on these societies with a weak propertied class, the coercive force of the state, secretly strengthened by external powers in those decades of cold war, continued to increase. Societies were militarised, thereby resulting in the early collapse of the states through military coups.

Alavi's argument, though Marxist, is very important to the understanding of postcolonialism. It establishes the reason for unequal distribution of resources and instability of democracy in those states, thereby accounting for the basis of state failure in most former colonies. This invariably accounts for the direction of human and capital flow which are the very ingredients of globalisation. From this engagement, the crucial distinction between postcolonialism and neocolonialism is better elucidated. As Krishna observes, neo-colonialism casts the whole blame of political and economic challenges of the newly independent states on their former colonial masters without rigorously engaging how the active and passive roles of the leaders of these new states bring about the distress the countries presently face. For this reason, Alavi's conceptualisation of the postcolonial societies puts more emphasis on the 'interaction between states and elites within third-world nations, on the one hand, and Western powers and corporate interests, on the other, in their ongoing underdevelopment' (66). In other words, postcolonial criticism examines the failure of the colonised states as a result of an active involvement of the former colonial masters and their corporate interests, as well as the indigenous political elites of the states. It interrogates the reactions of the colonised to the influences of colonial powers.

To that effect, the 'post' in postcolonialism does not imply 'a living behind of colonialism but rather emphasizes the relevance of its impact on the state, politics, class formation, military, bureaucracy, economy, and other crucial parts of a third-world country's development after decolonisation' (66). So, Alavi uses the term, postcolonialism, to interrogate the lingering effects of colonialism on the colonised and not necessarily how the former colonial lords continued to directly exert economic and political power on the

new states, as the proponents of neocolonialism tend to contend. Therefore, the local and domestic forces are not exculpated in the continued underdevelopment. As typical of a Marxist, Alavi highlights the political dimension as he suggests a socialist or communist revolution that organises all 'those outside this charmed circle and captures state power', that is, the peasant and the working class, to seize power from the elite and reorder the economy. In this regard, postcolonialism bears a heavy political and economic import.

In accentuating Alavi's submission, Young (2001) broadens the concept of postcolonialism by arguing that it is the political, cultural, economic, and intellectual resistance of people in the third world to Western domination. In his own words, 'postcolonial critique (and the historical basis of its theoretical formulation) is the product of resistance to colonialism and imperialism' (15). He argues that such resistance is not new as the contact Christopher Columbus had with America in 1492 also triggered such experience with a resultant genocidal massacre of the indigenous people. From Young's view, also, the post in postcolonialism does not necessarily signify the end of colonialism, it rather shows the onset of colonialism. Young argues that the anticolonial tract written by 'Iberian Catholic bishop Bartolome de Las Casa in 1542 inaugurates the intellectual tradition out of which postcolonialism emerges' (75). In his list of the critics of imperialism and colonialism, Young traces the intellectual genealogy of postcolonialism to include Adam Smith and Edmund Burke, as well as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Stretching to the writings and actions of early twentieth-century communist revolutionaries like Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, and Antonio Gramsci, it encompasses third-world nationalists like Nehru, Gandhi, Nkrumah, Senghor and Cabral, as it does third-world revolutionaries such as Mao Zedong, Ho Chih Minh, Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon and Fidel Castro (68).

The inclusion of Karl Marx at the initial stage of this development dovetails into Young's and Alavi's views that Marxism is indispensable in the formulation and operation of postcolonial thought. Young, however, does not limit the origin of postcolonialism to Marx but expands it, in temporal and spatial terms, to include the Columbus encounter in 1492 which invariably initiated a polarized conversation between the Western and non-Western forms of knowledge. This is the divergence between the two. It is also this sustained encounter with postcolonial world that provoked the poststructural and

deconstructural analysis of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, as they subject the fundamentals of Western practices and epistemology to critical interrogation.

In a well celebrated title, *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, three Australian based professors, make a bold literary imprint on the understanding and study of postcolonialism, hence its paradigmatic significance to this current study. The trio used the term postcolonial to refer to all the literatures that emanate from:

> African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all postcolonial literatures. The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power, and the neo-colonising role it has played, its postcolonial nature has not been generally recognized. But its relationship with the metropolitan centre as it evolved over the last two centuries has been paradigmatic for postcolonial literatures everywhere (9).

The unifying indices for this category, therefore, is that they are literatures produced by people previously governed by the colonial masters and the tension generated as a result of such has modelled their literary output. Despite the justification, the inclusion of Canada, Australia and, especially, the United States in this category has, expectedly, provoked a long trail of controversies. It has been described as being too overt, if not 'myopic'. In his view, Krishna argues that such blanket classification does not take into cognisance the underlying peculiarities of these former colonies. It also describes all writings in English that do not originate from the territory of England but are from the colonies or former colonies. What this implies is that the Irish and American writing in English like that of James Joyce and Herman Melville and the writings from Canada, Australia, South Africa and the writings in English from South Asia and other regions of Africa 'were all regarded within departments of English literature as ineffably mimetic, variants on an original theme doomed to inferiority and provincial status at best' (70). To say the least, the vast categories of writings brought under this class calls to question the real intent of postcolonialism.

It is, perhaps, in response to this blanket generalisation of the thoughts that surround postcolonialism that Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in 1978. In an attempt to give a new conceptual insight on postcolonialism, Said challenges the cultural hegemony

of the West and blames it for the persistence of Orientalism. Said argues that for more than two centuries, Western knowledge about Oriental societies, especially of Islam, was usually associated with the fact of Western conquest and colonisation of such societies, and of its belief in the innate superiority of its own civilization and religion over those whom it conquered and administered. This Orientalist knowledge collected by Western scholars was presented in various disciplines – history, religion, philology, literature, linguistics, philosophy - as objective facts, or the truth, about the Orient. Said's view here marks the major departure from the previous understanding of the postcolonial assumption. The claim of cultural superiority is not just of the Orient in this case but all other entities previously occupied by the West in the business of colonisation, and so Orientalism becomes a discourse of the non-West. Said's work, therefore, captures the Western imagination of the non-West from the Western perspective, the labels and stereotypes, as well as their justifications for cultural superiority. *Orientalism,* therefore, becomes a powerful text that articulates the linkages between Western knowledge and assumptions, and perceptions about societies within the third world countries and the historical processes of colonialism and imperialism that underlie them.

From this long chain of variants, it becomes important to limit the approach of this current study to two of them, namely: Bhabha's liminality and hybridity. Even though Bhabha has popularised this concept in literary studies, the history of liminality is far much beyond him. In the first instance, Arnold van Gennep is credited with being the first to have used this term in his work 'Rites of Passage' in 1902. Irma Ratiani gives a detailed view of Gennep's term and concept of liminality.

> 'Rites de passage', in Gennep's view is an indispensable attribute of any type of change (change in place, country or social status, change in age, etc.), showing the dichotomy that exists between 'hardened' and 'changeable' structures. He believes that each process of movement or transitivity is characterised by three phases: 1. Separation, 2. Marginality or Liminality, 3.Union or incorporation. The first phase or separation implies isolation of a concrete individual form or chosen individual, so-called 'initiana' from the fixed social or cultural structures (1: 2009).

Ratiani further explains that it involves a detachment from a given time and space which leads to the ambivalent state of the individual who is referred to as the 'initiana' or the transit-traveller, and the transit to an intermediated, ambivalent social zone that can be

referred to as the 'limbo' which marks the final phase of the person's incorporation. As Ratiani explains, this marks the return of the initiand to society, but he now returns in 'a renovated status' as he tries to re-aggregate. The concept of liminality, according Gennep, exists around change, both in space and time. In other words, what becomes of an individual at the time of his separation from his original state, an instance he calls 'hardened structure', the changes which occur both physically and mentally, is what is being described as the liminality. So, these three stages of classification are of utmost concern in this research. The forces that impel separation, the changes that follow that and the ease or difficulty of reunion are combined to provide the fundamental intellectual engagements of this work. It is at the second stage that the individual develops some attitudes or dispositions that are alien or obscure to the original state. Ratiana goes ahead to trace the etymology of the word to 'limen' from Latin which means 'a threshold or boundary, a corridor between two places.' This implies that liminality is a product of certain kind of impurity; it results from the admixture of two or more forces but produces neither of them in exact wholesomeness. It is rather a different version erupting from the syncretisation, a situation that is later to be known as 'third space'.

It is actually this liminal phase of Gennep that drew the attention of Turner who transfers the theory to the place of structuralistic anthropology and stretches the argument further by insisting that detachment of an individual from a 'hardened social structure imparts to the individual not only an ambivalent social status but frees him from any laws, norms and rules of behaviour; his status is essentially ambivalent and hazy' (1969: 94). Turner further argues that

> …their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are
> expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies
> that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality
> is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to
> invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness,
> and to an eclipse of the sun or moon (95).

Liminality is therefore located within the in-betweeness of existence that underlies ambivalence, that which signifies being and not being. This is what creates the liminal space that harbours characters within borderline identities. Liminality has spawned a variegated vocabulary in postcolonial studies, including terms like 'hybridity', 'subaltern', 'alterity', 'exilic consciousness', 'otherness', 'outsider', 'unhomeliness' in postcolonial

literary theory of which liminality is an offshoot (Tyson, 1999:374). Bhabha refers to some of these conditions as 'deracination' and 'cultural heresy' (Bhabha, 2004: 322). For Bhabha, as a result of various cultural contacts, a 'third space' is created, thereby denying the individual of an absolute identity.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha begins to conceptualise the notion of liminality by considering its registers, like boundary and borders. Quoting Heidegger from his book, *Building Dwelling, Thinking* in which the author asserts that 'a boundary is not that at which something stops, but … that from which something begins its presencing' (Bhabha, 2004: 1), Bhabha begins a literary conceptualisation of the term. In the first chapter of the book, 'Border lives: The art of the present', Bhabha demonstrates the space of liminality in which people live in the contemporary times. Through this effort, Bhabha argues, 'our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the "present", for which there seems to be no proper name other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix "post"…' (1). This position brings about Bhabha's perception of postcolonialism and identity politics through the fluid insight of liminality.

For Bhabha, postcolonialism is not just to be understood in terms of the binary logic demonstrated in Eurocentric/Other or Eurocentric/Afrocentric debate, nor strictly as an offshoot from the associated theories of poststructuralist/postmodernist discourses as it is often believed. Instead, he sees postcolonialism as a broad and overarching dynamic which announces or even predates the onset of colonialism as we know it and incorporates other postmodernist discourses. In other words, postcolonialism presents to us a middle stage and the fulcrum of action. The *limen* is, therefore, a kind of displacement resulting in 'the slippage of signification that is celebrated in the articulation of difference' (Bhabha, 2004: 235). It is a certain kind of slippage that makes it almost impossible for cultural meaning to move freely and completely between any two or more systems of cultural differentiation and, consequently, calling into question the truth of cultural homogeneity. As a result, culture is subjected to a continuous flux, resulting in a limitless formation of fluid personalities. It is the duplicity or even multiplicity of living that is engendered by a contact between two or more worlds that is at the centre of this study. As a result of this, Bhabha scrutinises the complexity of nationality and ethnicity, projects their state of indeterminacy. Undoubtedly, the idea of liminality introduces countless spaces in-between, thereby aligning itself to so many other variants within this category.

It becomes important at this point to examine the theoretical conceptualisation of globalisation in relation to this work. Appadurai's theorisation has, to a large extent, put to check the vast arrays of meaning that often go with the concept of globalisation. In conceptualising globalisation, Appadurai puts forward basic framework to examine five dimensions of global cultural flow which he calls 'ethnoscapes', 'mediascapes,' 'technoscapes,' 'finanscapes,' and 'ideoscapes'. These various 'scapes' have come to constitute the components of the globalising world. By 'ethnoscapes', Appadurai means the individuals who constitute the 'shifting world' in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, guestworkers, exiles, and the other moving groups who constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics and economy of 'nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree' (297). These individuals constitute the bulk of human motion that continuously navigate a hitherto stable community and infiltrate it with the newness of their presence.

For 'technoscape', Appadurai highlights the immense fluidity that has been injected into global interactions through the use of informational and mechanical technology. Through the deployment of the instruments of technology, penetration has been made possible into 'previously impervious boundaries'. Technology is obviously very central in the globalisation processes as it has become one of the major pull factors that motivates global mobility and create overwhelming influences across the globe. Built upon these are the twin components of 'mediascapes' and 'ideoscapes'. 'Mediascapes' refers both to the distribution of the electronics capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.) 'which are now available to a growing number of public and private interests throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by this media' (298-299). Essentially, the media stands very central in creating varied perception of the world. This is because many audiences in the world experience the media in a very interconnected spectrum, mixing news, politics, advertisement and films in one platform, blurring the lines between fictional and realistic landscapes as they are portrayed, making it very difficult for audiences outside the area portrayed to understand the very realities of situations. As Appadurai further confirms, 'Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interest, tend to be image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as character, plot and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed or imagined, their own and those of others living in other

places' (299). In as much as these projected images are not totally reliable, the perceptions they create are far reaching: 'they help to constitute narratives of the 'other' and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prologemena to the desire for acquisition and movement' (299). Closely linked to the mediascapes is the 'ideoscapes' which also constitute chains of images that are often more direct than the media. As Appadurai maintains, 'they are often directly political, and frequently have to do with ideologies of state and the counter ideologies explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it.' What all these varied elements directly imply is that globalisation has an incontrovertible potency of changing perspectives, instilling new orientations and conceiving a new culture. This is why it is almost unavoidable to discuss such strong influence on cultural disposition of a people without a brief excursion into the psychoanalytical theory. A brief survey into the Psychoanalysis will therefore suffice at this moment.

An 1897 humble effort to undertake a self-analysis by Sigmund Freud has snowballed into a pivotal critical perspective with different shades and variances that has come to be known as Psychoanalytic theory. This effort epitomised a process that Freud was soon to theorise under the name of transfer. A precious insight into the elaboration of the new science which has become the universal method of studying human psyche is set out in a full-fledged form in '*The Interpretations of Dreams* (1899): the unconscious; censorship; transfer' (Michaud, 1:1998). Through this, Freud expansively delved into exploring the very obscure regions of self which can also be seen as the unconscious, the defences, dreams, dream symbols and sexuality all of which combine in different degrees to moderate the interplay of the psychological forces of id, ego and superego. The id is the origin of personality, the most basic of three systems. Id is beyond conscious awareness and is composed of whatever is present at birth, including elements relating to the satisfaction of physical drives such as sex and hunger, or primitive psychological needs such as comfort and protection from danger. Id operates according to the pleasure principle, the achievement of pleasurable feeling as quickly and immediately as possible through the reduction of discomfort, pain or tension. Id satisfies its needs through the primary process, a continual flow of infantile images and wishes that demand immediate and direct satisfaction. This is mostly reflected in the behaviour of a child. It is because of the instinctual nature of the id that the ego and the superego keep the id in check. As Allen (2006) opines, 'ego's reaction to threatening surges of instincts is to experience anxiety, a

state of extremely unpleasant emotional discomfort. To minimize anxiety, ego calls on various defence mechanisms, which are internal, unconscious, and automatic psychological strategies for coping with or regaining control over threatening id instincts' (25). This is why he has identified repression, projection, denial, rationalization, intellectualization and undoing as the often used defence mechanism.

The superego, on the other hand, is 'the representation of the society in the personality that incorporates the norms and standards of the surrounding culture' (26), which makes it operate according to a morality principle and, just like the id, is deeply rooted in the unconscious. 'The unconscious', according to Tyson, 'comes into being when we are very young through the repression, the expunging from consciousness … unhappy psychological events. However, repression doesn't eliminate our painful experiences and emotions. Rather, it gives them force by making them the organisers of our present experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us "play out" without admitting it ourselves, our conflicted feeling about the painful experiences and emotions we repress' (1999:15). This is why Allen's comparison of personality with an iceberg is very apt. Only the tip of the psychic iceberg is above the waterline, representing the part of the psyche that is available to awareness, while the psyche below the water line is available with effort, the preconscious, but the greater part of the psych is unavailable to awareness and, so, lies within the realm of the unconscious. This primarily establishes the reason Psychoanalytic theory, especially the unconscious, becomes very apposite in the analyses that this thesis is set to carry out. Considering the prime place of culture in this study and the challenges of assimilation that is anticipated, it is important to leverage the insightful provisions of this theory.

In the same breath, it is most pertinent to stress the integral connection, if not the indispensable relationship, between Postcolonial literary theory and Psychoanalysis. As Counihan (2007) observes:

> If African literature has thus far avoided any prolonged engagement with psychoanalysis, the same cannot be said for postcolonial theory in various guises and iterations, psychoanalysis permeates the practice of theorising the condition of the colonial and postcolonial subject: the subjects, formation or that failure, his response to the daily pressures and constraints of the colonial milieu, his twisting and turning efforts to run either towards or away from the temptations of colonial acquiescence emerge in and through a psychoanalytic discourse of identity and identification (2007:162).

This agrees with Felluga's position that, 'it (psychoanalysis) analyses the interiority of the self and self's kinship systems. By analysing the formation of the individual … psychoanalysis also helps us to understand the formation of ideology at large and can therefore be extended to the analysis of various cultural and societal phenomena. … psychoanalysis has been especially influential over the last two decades in culture studies …' (2011: 14).

In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon (1967) echoes this position even more stridently as he insists that 'only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the complex' (3:1967). Fanon refers to the inferiority complex of the black that denies him a confidence in himself, and makes him perpetually ape the white. With such an unequivocal disposition, the aptness of this theory to the study secures a high level of validity. It is worth mentioning the fact that different offshoots of psychoanalysis have emerged after Freud, ranging from the perspectives of Jung, Lacan, Kristeva, Hoffman to Lesser. Some of these shades of the theory may be alluded to in the process of analysis but the dominant version remains Freudian, especially the Unconscious.

It is pertinent to remark at this point that in as much as each of the theories discussed above is relevant to different aspects of this work, Bhabha's liminality theory is the central base of this study, while Appadurai's notion of globalisation is used to situate the variegated views of the concept in a proper perspective. This helps to highlight the spaces always manifest in liminality discourse.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

In the previous chapter, effort has been made to crystallise the analytical dimensions of this thesis and to situate it, as much as possible, within the critical frame of an emerging literary concern in African literary studies. It is important at this stage to review the concepts that are relevant to the study and in the process, map out the critical trajectory through which the present study situates itself among other works of valid claims. The concepts to be examined in this work are many but the most prominent and complex ones would be privileged in this review in order to clear possible obscurities that may encumber access into their meanings. It will also help us to clearly delineate the meanings of these concepts within the context of this study. These concepts are, basically, globalisation and culture in African literature.

2.1   The concept of globalisation

Globalisation is one of the most confusing and sometimes controversial concepts in the contemporary times. This is greatly owed to its perceived polysemy, which ranges from modernity, neoliberalism, internationalisation to universalism among others. Each of these terms, no doubt, is related to the concept of globalisation but cannot be adequately substituted with any. Let us attempt to examine the controversies that trail globalisation and modernity, for instance.

Giddens (1990) strongly argues that 'modernity is inherently globalising,' and that 'globalisation [makes] the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth's surface as a whole' (21). This view is vigorously advanced in what he refers to as 'disembedding' or the 'lifting out' of social relations from local context of interaction and their continued restructuring across time and space, which he considers as prerequisite for modernization. This shade of opinion has partly problematized the concept of globalisation. It is now unclear if globalisation is a continuation of a trend in modernity or an emergence of a different new era. This is because 'connection between different social contexts and regions' are the undeniable strongholds of globalisation, but whether that brings it to a semantic parity with modernity is a significant fact to examine.

Guillen (2001) proposes a distinction between these two concepts. Guillen aligns with Albrow's modernity and globalisation whem he argues that while modernity is seen as an 'imposition of practical rationality upon the rest of the world through the agency of the state and the mechanism of the market, the generation of universal ideas to encompass the diversity of the world' globality is seen as a restoration of 'the boundlessness of culture and promotes the endless renewability and diversification of cultural expression rather than homogenisation or hybridisation (2001:251).

This clarification credits globalisation with the advantage of engaging various cultures, not any in particular, in an unstoppable flux of modification, unlike modernity that attempts to impose similar changes from the centre on the weaker fringes. It then means that this continuous modification signals a certain kind of competition among nations in projecting their various cultural models in order to universalise them.

This position agrees with Aina's (1997) argument that the notion of globalisation is used in a serious manner mainly in the sense of 'globalisation as a presence of making global', 'being present worldwide, at the world stage or global arena' (8). In this sense, there is a question of global visibility, immediacy and availability. It is also possible to talk in this sense of globalisation of certain issues such as sustainable development, human right, abolition of capital punishment. Globalisation in this direction revolves around universal projection of economic items, thoughts and ideas. This agrees with the position of Cameron and Stein (2000) when they observe that as the processes of globalisation accelerate, the state is increasingly 'hollow,' because borders do no longer correspond precisely to the relevant economic, cultural, and social spaces. As globalisation proceeds, borders become more fluid, and identities multiply and change. For a good part of the last century, the authoritative reach of the state overlapped almost entirely with the economic, cultural, and social spaces of its citizenry; cultural, social, and economic borders largely converged with the political. This obviously signals the reality of the global world. The whole global communities are in a continuous and endless overlap that brings all part intimately close more than ever before. This is a phenomenon often labelled as 'global village'. The narrow enclaves that serve as different communities to several people have been submerged and continue to be submerged by the influences of events and activities outside those spheres.

Apart from that, some still define globalisation from the narrow prism of their own profession or discipline. According to Prakash and Hart, globalisation is 'the increasing integration of inputs, factor and final product markets across countries coupled with the increasing salience of multicultural enterprises' (2000:102). These authors' perception of globalisation is limited within the precincts of economics and trade, ignoring other very important aspects of this concept. This is understandable given the importance of economic activities in the process of globalisation. Ajayi (2005) however goes further to broaden the horizon by arguing that, 'globalisation can be defined as the processes leading to the growing interdependence of nation-states across political, economic and social spheres' (204). He emphasises that 'this interrelationship is characterised by massive daily commercial transactions, the homogenisation of culture worldwide concurrently with the resurgence of an emphasis on ethnic communal identity…' (204). The emphasis on commerce and economy above still follows the initial observation that they play prominent role in bringing countries and nations together. Ajayi's explanation though dominated by the idea of trade and governance strike a chord with the major concerns of this study. The idea of homogenisation of culture and emphasis on ethnic communal identity are at the very heart of this thesis. It therefore embraces the dimension that is very pivotal to this present study.

Tsai (2007), however, acknowledges the other school of thought when he notes that the second approach views globalisation as a 'hegemonic project that transnational capitals' operated in ways that promised 'few betterment for most countries' (104). This is, perhaps, why Navarro (1998) argues that 'what now passes as globalisation is a specific type of internalisation of capital, labour and knowledge characterised by unrestrained and regulated search for profits and greatly enhanced by the public policy initiated by the governments of President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher' (761). This outright indictment of America and Britain is the major suspicion that characterises the disposition of many developing countries with respect to globalisation. In line with this position Ajayi's observes that '… the prominent economic feature in this system is the policy of neoliberalisation, which becomes preeminent in the 1980s during the Reagan administration in the United States and the Thatcher government in the United Kingdom. Neoliberal economics dictate massive cuts in social spending by the state, the streamlining of government bureaucracy through job cuts' (204). These facts ultimately label the

concept of globalisation as the conspiracy of the West, hence making it less accessible to a more rigorous and objective scrutiny.

It is within these very controversial and conflicting explanations of globalisation that a more objective definition becomes absolutely necessary for the purpose of this work. We can deduce from the above elaborations that globalisation is the process of transforming or projecting local or regional phenomena beyond the confines of their immediate environment to international domains. Globalisation means going global. It entails an unrestricted dissemination of ideas, materials and frames of thought across various spheres of the world. Globalisation appears to be a process by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and made to function together in ways that are simultaneously similar and indistinct. Unification of the people of the world into a single society entails a lot. It involves bridging gaps of distant miles through technology and mass media to boost interchange of commerce, culture, government policies and ideas to enhance global world view. It is obvious that this involves competitions, hence the fear of the developing countries. The technological deficiency of the developing world and poor political visions of African leaders appear to have already put Africa at a disadvantage even before the beginning of the race. As Kalu laments, '… in the absence of visionary and committed leadership to work for the public interest, the ideological framework of globalisation only promises to further undermine the Africa's knowledge of its land and culture in preference to western consumerism without the West's productive work ethics' (2005:177).

The interaction here, however, is not strictly between the 'West and the rest of us' as we are often led to believe. The idea of Americanising or Westernising the entire universe through the instruments of globalisation is not entirely the case. Appadurai's (1990) observes:

> …it is worthy noticing that for the people of Irian Jaya, Idonization may be more worrisome than Americanization, Japanization may be for Koreans, Indianization for Sri Lankans, Vietnization for the Cambodians, Russianisation for the people of Soviet Armenia and the Baltic Republics. Such a list of alternative fears to Americanization could be greatly expanded, but it is not a shapeless inventory: for polities of smaller scale, there is always fear of cultural absorption by polities of larger scale especially those that are nearby (295).

This shows, in essence, that the powerful wave of globalisation sweeps across borders; it is, therefore, not a one-dimensional tide as such. Appadurai, in view of this, proposes an elementary framework to explore five dimensions of global cultural flow which he calls 'ethnoscapes', 'mediascapes,' 'technoscapes,' 'finanscapes,' and 'ideoscapes'. These various 'scapes' have come to constitute the components of the globalising world. By 'ethnoscapes', Appadurai means the individuals who constitute the 'shifting world' in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, guestworkers, exiles, and the other moving groups who constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics and economy of 'nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree' (297). These individuals constitute the bulk of human motion that continuously navigate through a hitherto stable community and infiltrate it with the newness of their presence. As more individuals or groups are confronted with the realities of moving, or the fantasies of wanting to move, the global perspective continues to change. Appadurai captures the instances of this movement as, for instance, from India villages to Houston and so on, representing the rural- urban shift. What is true also is that such movement also happens from Africa to Europe and had also taken a reverse shift in those days of European exploration.

For 'technoscape', Appadurai highlights the immense fluidity that has been injected into global interactions through the use of informational and mechanical technology. Through the deployment of the instruments of technology, penetration has been made possible into 'previously impervious boundaries'. Technology is obviously very central in the globalisation processes as it has become one of the major pull factors that motivate global mobility and create overwhelming influences across the globe. It also follows that technology, being both a purveyor of real and intangible products that influence attitudes far and near, has an overwhelming influence in this direction. This invariably affects the reach and spread of 'finanscapes'. As Appadurai observes, 'the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid and difficult landscape to follow than ever before as currency market, national stock exchanges, and stock exchanges and commodity speculation move mega monies through national turnstiles at blinding speed' (298). This is obviously possible because of the application of technology in financial sector, thus the interrelatedness of the two elements of globalisation above.

Built upon these are the twin components of 'mediascapes' and 'ideoscapes'. 'Mediascapes' refers both to the distribution of the electronics capabilities to produce and

disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.) 'which are now available to a growing number of public and private interests throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by this media' (298-299). The images created by these media platforms are not always neutral; their inflections are dependent on several factors which include: 'their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic/pre-electronic), their audiences (local, national and transnational) and the interest of those who own and control them'. Essentially, the media stands very central in creating varied perceptions of the world. This is because many audiences in the world experience the media in a very interconnected spectrum, mixing news, politics, advertisement and films in one platform, blurring the lines between fictional and realistic landscapes as they are portrayed, making it very difficult for audiences outside the area portrayed to understand the very realities of situations. As Appadurai further confirms, 'Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interest, tend to be image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as character, plot and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined, their own and those of others living in other places' (299). In as much as these projected images are not totally reliable the perceptions they create are palpably real and far reaching: 'they help to constitute narratives of the 'other' and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prologemena to the desire for acquisition and movement' (299).

Even though 'ideoscapes' also constitute chains of images, they are often more direct than the media. As Appadurai maintains: 'they are often directly political, and frequently have to do with ideologies of state and the counter ideologies explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it.' It consists of various elements of 'Enlightenment world-view', contains a mix of ideas, terms and images, including 'freedom', 'welfare', 'rights', 'sovereignty', 'representation', and the master term 'democracy'. All these terms, and more of such, evidently vary in their semantic and pragmatic import as the internal coherence that engineered their use in the days of Enlightenment is now loosened as a result of centuries of 'global movements,' thereby subjecting such terms to multiplicity of translations and contextual fluid. It continues to create 'new terminological kaleidoscope', as each state seeks to pacify populations whose own ethnoscapes are in motion. In reality, 'the fluidity of ideoscapes is complicated in particular by the growing diasporas (both voluntary and involuntary) who continuously inject new meaning-streams into the

discourse of democracy in different parts of the world' (300). Democracy is used here as example of one of those ideas being projected within the ranks of ideoscape whose meaning keeps changing, depending on the colouration it bears at a certain point in time. Despite the semantic indeterminacy of some of these ideologies, the enormous influences that 'ideoscapes' have on the global world have not whittled down. If anything, dispersal of ideologies from one region of the world to another has increased.

It is the interplay of these five, according to Appadurai, that forms the model for global culture flow. In simple terms, these factors, which are the core elements of globalisation, can therefore be captured as the movement of the people, money, machinery, images and ideas. For the greater part of history, this flow has been coexisting with man, but the speed, scale and volume has not hitherto received the enormous boost as we presently witness. It is this mass movement that has also resulted in continuous collapse or shift of territories or what Appadurai refers to as deterritorialisation. As Appadurai further observes, deterritorialisation 'brings labouring population into the lower class sector and spaces of relatively wealthy society…' (301). This population in turn tries to establish a link to their homeland which will eventually promote the flow of money, images and ideas in a mix. Through these kinds of activities, 'new market for film industries, art impresarios and travel agencies' will be created. It, therefore, enhances the flow of images and money, but because it 'constitutes the mediascapes of deterritorialised people', and capable of being too fantastical that they provide the material for 'new ideoscapes in which ethnic conflicts can begin to erupt.' Appadurai refers to a veritable example, the creation of 'Khalistan' invented homeland of the deterritorialised Sikh population in England, Canada and the United States.

As this happens among the Sikhs of India attempt to create a homogenous community in foreign lands, other homogenous groups in different part of the world want to take control of their own indigenous entity. For instance, as it happens among Quebecois of Canada, the Moros of Philippines, Sri Lankans, so does it happen among the Igbo of Nigeria, Somaliland in Somalia and other parts of Africa, as the several groups seek to create the states of their own or carve pieces out of existing states as a way of asserting their identity and shielding it from the swoop of the global world. While states are, on the other hand, seeking to monopolise the moral resources of the community, either by flatly claiming 'perfect coevality between nation and states or by systematically museumising and

representing all the groups within in a variety of heritages of politics that seems remarkably uniform throughout the world' (303). This method of keeping nations together has not been entirely successful as the people that feel suppressed usually vent their anger destructively, thereby creating major strife often witnessed in many parts of the world.

What has been shown so far are the major components of globalisation and how these processes affect the global world in modern time. What is missing here is the strong influence of literary texts. As shall be demonstrated later in this writing, before the present overwhelming influence of the electronic media, literature purveyed a huge mass of images in different dimensions as it still does today. So, because of its vital role in this process, literature cannot be relegated when the components of globalisation are discussed. Edward Said argues that '… cultural forms like the novel, …were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences. In sharing her experiences with her encounter with the European literature at the 2009 Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) talks in an essay entitled *The Danger of a Single Story*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reveals how she was influenced by the European stories. As a child, by adopting the European narratives, she created for herself a social cosmos with images involving people with red hair and white skin building snowmen, although snowmen and the like were entirely alien to her immediate physical environment. It was only when she read stories by Achebe and other writers like Camara Laye that she came to realise how much of an impact those children's books had had on her: 'What this demonstrates is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in front of a story' (Adichie, 2009). This experience also shows the propensity of literature in creating imaginations even beyond the sphere of its origin.

Whatever be the case, as has been observed earlier, the mass movement of people, images, finances, machinery and ideas increases with it the dangers it invariably poses to our world. Ajayi (2005) highlights the diverse dimensions of this development when he observes that the movement towards more integration among nation-states dangerously undermines the political sovereignty of the states. He observes that the 'international proliferation of violence' owes largely to globalisation, giving instances of 'aided deadly ethnic conflicts in Somalia, Kosovo, Rwanda, East Timor and Sierra Leone' (214). This agrees with Fareed Zakari's position that, 'globalisation helps terrorists … (in as much as) free trade and globalisation require the speedy movement of people and goods in and out

of the country' (2000: 37). The growing cases of insurgence in parts of Africa, Europe, America and the Middle East with the reported links among terrorist groups like Boko Haram, ISIS, Hezbollah, Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other highly dreaded organisations gives credence to this negative influence of globalisation.

On the economic front, Ajayi further laments that the benefits often cited as evidence for economic advancement are generally superficial while the consequences of the policies underlying the global economy have been devastating. On the whole, the effects of these paradoxes – coexisting privileges and marginalities – are extensive across various quality of life indices including labour, access to basic health care and education. The trend towards global integration is widening the existing social and economic inequities. Highlighting the human dimension of globalisation, Ajayi refers to the 1999 meetings of the WTO, where 50,000 people, trying to draw attention to this human dimension, protested the global contradictions in Seattle, Washington that time. Even more vociferous protests have followed ever since in Genoa and Quebec. The human dimension of globalisation centres primarily on the condition of children in a globalised world. This explanation on human dimension of the globalisation is very important to this work as the effort here will interrogate the varying degrees of global forces on the characters, including the child, in the selected prose texts. 'In 2000, the former world bank president, James D. Wolfensohn declared, 'if globalisation is going to work, it must work for the world's children' (221). Regrettably, from the records, children have not been properly taken care of in this respect. According to the United Nations Children's Fund in its 'State of the World's Children 2001', over 500 million children live on one dollar or less a day. Children living in poor households, children with poor feeding and lack of access to good education and healthcare have all increased in this era of globalisation.

This grim impact of globalisation in the United States and its contradictory effects is well captured by Lieber and Weisberg (2002) who observe that Americans have learnt since the incident of September 11, 2001, that technology, the internet, financial flow, modern technology and openness which are the major components of globalisation 'could be used to murderous effect against modern society, and public attitudes have shown the direction of more traditional cultural values' (287). Reaction to globalisation and America's role as the sign and symbol of capitalism, modernity and mass culture takes a form in large areas of the developing countries, shifting in very different and more intense form in large areas

of the developing world, and especially in Muslim countries. Here, the intrusion of modern western values as well as the crisis that come with it, fosters some bitter backlash from traditional societies in coping with economic and social change. Often, the forces of both attraction to and repulsion from Americanisation manifest at the same time, leading to what is often referred to as 'cultural schizophrenia' and its attendant violent and catastrophic outburst stemming from radically different visions and identity. Though such reactions have largely been blamed on poverty, poverty does not really explain all.

As Liesber and Weisberg observe, the United States of America may have bred the strongest resentment in this regard. In February, 1998, Osama bin Laden demonstrated his umbrage against America by proclaiming that 'the killing of Americans and their civilian and military allies is a religious duty for each and every Moslem to be carried out in whichever country they are found' (289). This statement is obviously born from a deep-seated rage emanating from the perceived overwhelming dominance of American super power over the Arab nations. As the two scholars observe, the rage has both modern and historical components. The despair and anger about the dislodgment and loss of the grandeur of their civilization that once far outpaced Europe, referring in more specific terms the 1921 eventual collapse of Ottoman Empire, are clear instances. The collapse marked the ultimate demise of the Caliphate – Muslim civil and religious rule by the successor of Muhammad which lasted for approximately 1300 years. These agitators are of the opinion that the re-establishment of the Caliphate would solve numerous modern economic problems currently facing them. Similarly, this same view is held about their fast effacing identity and cultural values encouraged by America and its allies. Their inability to reclaim these aggravates the level of their frustration and anger, which are usually manifested in violence.

Illuminating the cultural implications of globalisation, Ottokhine (2000) opines, '…there is a serious concern that a nation like Nigeria, whose contributions to the internet pool, is low may lose their identity … a sort of cultural imperialism which will seek to enslave the African mind, leaving in its wake a cultureless or culturally disoriented people may become a permanent feature of Africa' (2). In the same vein, Mudimbe (2003) argues that with the recent surge of globalisation, 'the Western space would incarnate a perfect homogenisation of economic and cultural capital. In actuality, it could be said, on the other hand, that globalisation would play back and forth the saga of European geographical and

imperial expansion' (211). These positions echo the familiar lamentations that trail colonisation and its various roles in robbing Africa of its cultural treasures. This view is even more vigorously expressed when Abdi (2010) bewails globalisation and its attending results:

> I could locate globalisation as a mostly profit-driven, historically de-conscientizing, selectively enriching, culturally alienating, politically dominating and economically attempting to create an amalgam of world economies and related life systems, all for the purpose of maintaining, mainly by design but occasionally by default, the ideological and institutional supremacy of the West over the rest (5).

As glaring and, perhaps, foreboding as these may sound, the fact remains that globalisation is an irreducible reality of the modern world that no part of the universe should ignore. As Bhabha argues, 'the demography of new internationalism is the history of postcolonial migration, the narratives of cultural and political diaspora, the major cultural displacement of peasant and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, the grim prose of political and economic refugees' (1994:5). All these groups of people form the melting point of the new world formation, bringing globalisation to the centre of cultural displacement and itinerant orientation. It appears, therefore, that we are now so interwoven with the realities of globalisation that repealing its overwhelming influences appears virtually impossible. However, globalisation and all its seemingly deadly arrows should be refashioned towards liberating humanity. As Ajayi (2005) submits, '…global integration could only be successful based on two central and mutually beneficial factors' (228). Ajayi is unequivocal in acknowledging the failure of one-dimensional track that globalisation appears to presently thrive on. The call here is as strident as it is relevant. It foregrounds the overwhelming need for a global world that does not only need to integrate states and regions but also foster a healthy orientation on broadening world view for mutual benefits. As cogent as this position may sound, the truth is that most advanced nations are not likely to initiate such mutually beneficial disposition at a time global competition is daily becoming stiffer. It behoves the individual nations to project their best brands on the global space.

The choices of freedom and prosperity worldwide largely depend on broadening the gains and eliminating the contradictions of globalisation. It is obvious therefore that globalisation, while largely driven by economic activity, is largely sustained by a progressive cultural integration which will engender mutual respect for the states involved.

Globalisation is therefore a call to register one's presence boldly on the international arena. As Moises Naim succinctly puts it, 'To its critics, globalisation is the cause of today's financial collapse, growing inequality, unfair trade, and insecurity. To its boosters, it's the solution to these problems. What's not debatable is that it is here to stay' (2009: 28). Globalisation portends danger and hope, depending on which side of the debate one stands. Some tend to see globalisation as a brakeless train crushing everything in its path, others see benefit in getting on board the train towards economic growth (Khondker, 1:2004). What has become obvious here is that globalisation broods both preys and predators, and that it is at the point when the gap between the two begins to get narrow that the impact of globalisation would be better appreciated. It is also clear that despite Appadurai's convincing argument that globalisation goes beyond the West and other parts of the world, the fear of the Western powers still persists.

This is why the concepts of glocalisation and, more recently, pluriversalism have emerged, initiating a counter-globalisation discourse. Glocalisation is primarily coined by Japanese marketing experts but popularised by Robertson (1992). It aims at shifting the macro-macro relationship that globalisation promotes to a macro-micro relation. According to Khondker (2004), with the term, the expert 'meant that products of Japanese origin should be localised – that is, they should be suited to local taste and interests – yet, their products are global in application and reach …' (3). Just like globalisation, this concept is not entirely new; it echoes the ideas in indigenisation, backward integration and local content, for instance. It was first brought into serious intellectual discussions by Robertson (2005) to interrogate the blurring line between the globe and the local, which is usually associated with globalisation. Ultimately, it proffers an interesting dimension to the concept of globalisation, as it encourages the adaptability of a global concept into a more suitable local use. This idea acknowledges local peculiarities that are usually ignored in globalisation, thereby giving a more inclusive and multiple dimensions in engagement of globalisation. This same thought is similar to that of pluriversality.

Pluriversality, according to Dasylva (2017), 'is a distinct agenda for advancing clearly defined methods of episteme for African intellectual autonomy in world cultures and knowledge production' (21). This thinking, evidently, is a reaction against the sweeping force of globalisation and its attempt to universalise western episteme to the detriment of indigenous cultures and local processes of knowledge production. It therefore brings a

broader perspective to global inclusion, encouraging cultural pluralism and resulting in what Ngugi (1993) refers to as 'creating a space for hundred flowers to bloom'. For this reason, Mignolo (2007) insists that 'pluriversality is a universal project' (452). According to Mignolo, 'the pluriversality of each local history and its narrative of decolonisation can connect through that common experience and use it as the basis for a new common logic of knowing: border thinking' (498). Dustin Craun (2013) interrogates the hegemonic knowledge production of the West on Islamic nations with this concept. To this extent, system of knowledge production transcends hegemonic origins. This, in essence, becomes a more reliable step towards resisting the imperial potency of globalisation.

It is important to note that even though globalisation as a term may be a recent development, the ideas that constitute its essence may have been as old as man's interest to live and part. This brings to mind the controversies that have trailed the start of globalisation. Guillen (2001) examines different dimensions in relation to the history of this subject. He traces the 'Circumnavigation of the earth between 1519-1821' as being very essential to the beginning of globalisation. According to him, world systems theorists, among whom Immanuel Wallerstein is on the lead, maintain that the expansion of European capitalism in the sixteenth century marked the very beginning of globalisation. Some other economic historians however maintain that the turn of the twentieth century as the 'heyday of international trade and investment' before the 'convulsions of World War 1 and the Great Depression' that threw the world into 'spiralling protectionism' (236). Robertson (1992) argues that globalisation took off between 1875 and 1925 with the 'time-zoning of the world and the establishment of the international dateline; the near-global adoption of the Gregorian calendar and the adjustable seven-day week; and the establishment of international telegraphic and signalling codes' (179). Undoubtedly, the attempt to universalize the date and time of the world sets the foundation for the global movement that was later to be radically facilitated by trade and technology. 'Nevertheless, some other historians start the analysis of globalisation at the end of the World War II which brought about the coming of the nuclear age, the emancipation of colonies, the renewed expansion of trade and investment and the economic rise of Northeast Asia' (Guillen, 2001: 238). In a broader historical sense, Robertson maintains that apart from capitalism, Christianity, Islam and Marxism have all made some global claims and harboured global pretensions.

Whatever be the case, as Khondker (2004) observes, at the beginning of the 21st century, globalisation as a concept, as a term '… is used more frequently than any other terms. In Singapore, from the inflow of foreign capital, technology, workers or "foreign talents", music, movies, popular culture, almost everything has resonance with globalisation' (1). But it is worthy to note that the English term 'globalisation' was first used around 1960 in its world-wide sense as opposed to its much older meaning of the global as something spherical, and it was actually in 1994 that *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology* has its first entry on globalisation.

It is in the sense of this historical perspective that Soley (2005) rightly observes that 'scholarship in postcolonial studies clearly recognize that the subject of globalisation must be expressed in the historical process of Atlantic slavery, colonialism, racism, and imperialism' (278). But the European imaginations and exploration of Africa obviously predates the Atlantic Slave Trade, hence, the need for a holistic study into the earliest manifestations of the concept as much as possible. As a result, it is important to explore the initial fantasies and imaging of Africa by the outside world and their subsequent encounters. This effort will equip us with the knowledge concerning the drive, the factors, that steered the navigation of the outside world, especially Europe, into the Africa continent. This is in the light of Rodney's assertion that 'the first significant thing about the internationalisation of trade in the 15th century was that Europeans took the initiative and went to other parts of the world. No Chinese boats reached Europe, and if any African canoes reached the America (as is sometimes maintained) they did not establish two-way links' (1972: 87). Commerce obviously has been identified here as one of the major elements that led to the earliest breaking of borders. As corroborated by Thompson (1979), 'The age of discovery set the pace for European westward expansion across the Atlantic Ocean, and notable among the early explorers were men from the Iberian Peninsula- from Spain and Portugal – and navigators of Genoese origin' (8). One of the remarkable accomplishments of these explorers is the 'discovery' of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 under the auspices of Spain. In seeking to develop the New World, the Europeans began to engage Africans and massively involve them in the globalisation process. Pieterse (2009) also argues in this direction when he observes that since 1800 globalisation was 'shaped and determined by North-South relations with a clear, often overwhelming dominance of the North in economic, political and cultural spheres' (VII).

This does not however preclude the earlier arrival in Egypt of the Arabs, Turks, Mamluks and Circassian invaders and the attacks and the leadership that followed same as the Axum, Zagwe and 'Solomonic' dynasties in Ethiopia and Nubia as well as some other countries in North Africa. Pieterse has, however, clearly established the route that has largely sustained global trade and cultural flow within the last two centuries.

2.2   Globalisation and the African continent

As Naim (2009) opines, 'historians … have argued in recent years that the wave of globalisation that surged in the 1990s is just a continuation of a long-term process that started as far back as when migrating pre modern human communities first encountered each other' (29). This goes with the earlier observation that globalisation's new outlook somewhat belies its early antecedents, that had manifested in various forms of migration, exploration, slave trade, and colonialism.

That is why Schneider (2003) observes:

> Globalisation first became a force in Africa with the Dutch'
> East Indies Company and other European mercantilist
> endeavours from the sixteenth through the eighteenth
> centuries. The colonial era, from approximately 1880 to
> 1960, marked a new form of globalisation in Africa (390).

Deckard (2010) takes a much deeper historic foray into the incursion of Africa by Europeans and the beginning of globalisation in Africa. In *Paradise Discourse, Imperialism, and Globalisation: Exploiting Eden*, Deckard terms the European incursion to Africa as a search for Paradise which took inspirations from the earliest writing tradition of the Classics. According to Deckard, the imagination of Africa as a source of stupendous wealth was reflected in the writings of Homer, Cicero and Horace. Perception of Africa by these classical writers however reveals a 'central polarity' between the continents as 'lost paradise' versus 'void and unformed prior to its investment with shape and being by Christian or Islamic discourse' (80). This view of Africa continued to flourish as the meteoric rise of Islam after the 7th Century prevented further exploration and exploitation of 'African spice routes' to European exploration and throughout the Medieval period of Europe, 'sub-equatorial Africa remained unmapped by European cartographers'. This further fosters the conceptualising of the continent within the imaginary space of the Europeans. It is for this reason that a strong myth filtered in with

robust acceptance during the Medieval. By the twelfth century, there was this legend of Prester John's Kindom when the Ottomans became a serious threat to the Crusaders.

As empires and cities were springing up under the great influence of the expanding Muslim world, Medieval Europe responded to the threatening wide political dominance of the Islamic empires by demonising the Saracens who were waging wars against the Crusaders. The growing dominance of the Arabs in the economic activities of the time also made the envy even far worse. As a result of this, Deckard observes, a forged letter sent to Emperor Manuel of Byzantium in 1165 triggered 'the rumour that Prester John, the legendary priest-king of a prelapsarian Christian kingdom on the borders of the far Orient, would come to the rescue of the Crusader kingdoms'. Deckard explains that there were a lot of stories surrounding the boundless reach of his wealth and might.

Prester John, from this view, is an embodiment of such abilities that come with the possibility of controlling and trouncing Islam. He became the exact projection of the European self onto the unknown. Here, instead of the other as a complete alien, the other becomes the double of European self. However, by the fourteenth century, their inability to locate Prester John's kingdom in Asia, leading to the conclusion that their exploration had been on a wrong route as a result of confusing Ptolemaic nomenclature, Europeans shifted their searchlight to the African continent, exploiting the paradise motif's innate portability in response to changing geographical knowledge. This outright turn of search light towards the shore of the African continent opened up Africa to the outside world in an unprecedented way. No part of Africa was spared in this search. So many navigators carried a letter addressed to the mythic Prester John from the king of Portugal, who hoped to establish a Christian alliance against the Islamic empire and to gain access to Prester John's immense riches. As a result of their inability to trace Prester John in West Africa, the Portuguese turned to East Africa. In 1497, Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese navigator, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and 'discovered' the Swahili islands of East Africa. Still in a furious search for Prester John, the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia was appropriated to that of Prester John and that was why, according to Deckard, the envoys of the Ethiopian King were taken for the emissaries of the mythic figure when they visited the court of King Manuel I of Portugal in 1514. From the fourteenth to sixteen centuries, 'tropical heat, equatorial geography, and remote distance were the imagined geographical

markers of "gold-land," and writings on Portuguese explorations are replete with several accounts of Africa as a house of treasure.

In many other parts of West Africa, there were also instances of the conquistadors' pursuit for the imaginary wealth of the continent. This announces the settlement of the outside world within the shore of Africa basically for economic quest that had been sustained by the earlier fantasies. It is for this reason that the adornment of the Ashanti king was mistaken to be gold, prompting the naming of the area Gold Coast, thinking that they had happened on a large deposit of gold, one of the believed allures of Prester John's kingdom. Deckard (2010) further observes that they plundered and exploited the native tribes to ship gold back to Europe. This expedition was, however, not sustained for long as they were unable to match the amount of gold coming from Spanish America and so the enterprise dwindled in West Africa. Despite this failure to maintain a strong competition with Spanish America from the golden land of Africa, the Europeans did not abandon the Gold Coast altogether. Then, the colonial imaginations had begun to take strong form.

Even as more empirical evidence emerged, and followed by disappointed hopes in West Africa, paradises never ceased to exist in Africa. Rather it took a new turn towards the southern and eastern coast of the continent resulting in the polarised perception of Africa with the condescending 'infernal Africa of the west' and the complementary 'paradisiacal Africa of the east'. Due to the widespread news of abundant gold deposit in Zimbabwe, the interior of that ancient region was mythologised as 'Solomon's city of gold, Ophir, or Prester John's lost kingdom', and so should be explored with urgency and force. Driven by this fantasy and unflinching quest for materialism, the Portuguese fortified coastal ports and attacked Swahili trading posts in an attempt to whittle down the Swahili trade monopoly. However, the Portuguese could not locate immense wealth or establish uncontested dominance of Europe in Africa. Conquistadors were faced with eliminations arising from diseases and wave of uprisings. While the Swahili, led by Ali Bey, revolted against the incursion, Omani and Shona also mounted strong rebellion against them.

This resistance threw up a new polarised perception of Africa as a continent beset with some evil forces, which prevent the advancement of civilisation. The fantasy of the 'tropical treasure house' was placed side by side with the dread of the 'white man's grave'. Thus, Barros imagines disease as divinely reciprocating upon would-be conquerors

of a forbidden paradise. The imagination of Africa as paradise must be understood from the material terms, rather than the spiritual. So, the pestilential description of Africa, having been understood in this economic sense, did not entirely discourage further in-roads into Africa as Vasco Da Gama took the wide foray into the vast eastern tropics of Kenya in search of the economic paradise. As she further notes from the Portuguese national epic, *The Lusiads* (1572), Luis Vaz de Camoes celebrates the successful exploit of the Portuguese at the eastern coast. *The Lusiads* appears to have reconfigured Dante's conception of Africa as a 'metaphysical terrain at the bottom of the world in the terms of newly acquired Portuguese geographical knowledge'. Just as *The Lusiads* tries to lionize the great feat of exploration pioneered by the Portuguese, a new reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, according to Deckard, positions it as an epic that not only credits colonisation with outlandish merits but justifies it as one of the rarest virtue of the British Empire in Africa.

Deckard's analysis of the epic shows that the other territories had become empires destined to be captured and explored, all the embedded resources tapped. This, evidently, demonstrates the legitimisation of the dominance and exploration of the African continent. Similar to his partners in Portugal, Milton constructs a global imperial imaginary of 'paradisial topoi'. In this narration, Eve is captured asleep while Adam's survey went on, suggesting the inertness of the female gender in the exploration of these new territories. It however opens up new possibilities in the thinking of the Europeans, a possibility that ultimately initiates a global sojourn. Africa is echoed further at the moment the first parents were expelled from the Garden: when the blazing sword of fire and the "torrid heat" of "Libyan air adust/Began to parch that temperate clime" (28). Africa is thereby presented as a purgatory, where the fallen parents would have to suffer, to get themselves purified before death and find themselves fit for their abode in heaven. This assumption is not unconnected with the feverish scorches of the blazing sun of the continent, which makes it look not far away from the hell fire. In spite of that, the freedom to go and dominate the earth appears to be a source of consolation to them. They are, therefore, bequeathed with an unquestionable power to go and dominate the world. Quoting from Milton's poem: 'The world was all before them, where to choose/ Their place of rest, and Providence their guide' (85).

The unconstable power to dominate the universe appears to be a direct inheritance of the European explorers from Adam, which made their dominance and conquest of any part of the continent as if ordained by providence. This seemingly divine mandate was pursued with vigour and unrelenting spirit by the British colonisers, thereby bringing the African continent to a new wave of contact with the outside world. The British, despite the challenges met in the process, were inspired by their narratives and literature of Africa which invoked varied and sometimes conflicting images of the new empire. While the then modern British perceived Africa from the prism of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade stereotype as immiserated people with wide spread infernal deserts, the early nineteenth century came up with an account of a heavily-populated continent with emerging strong commercial networks. The conquering men appeared to have been led aright by providence and then turned their navigating route toward Africa in the beginning of 19th century in a manner that combined determination for economic survival and ferocity to conquer. With the Industrial Revolution, the British saw Africa as a haven for abundant raw materials to power their emerging industries. The central regions of the continent promised an appealing abundance of minerals, jewels, metals, and savannahs watered by immense rivers, an image of paradisal fertility in sharp contrast to later Victorian views of the interior as empty, savage, and dark. Africa was a gold-mine for Europeans both literally and literarily.

Followed by Leo Africanus exaggerated narration of the sprawling wealth of an ancient Mali king, Emperor Mansa Musa in the Medieval and the mystery of African remoteness, 19th century Europeans took a very urgent step to launch into the continent. Emperor Musa was said to have been carrying plates and sceptres of gold weighing about 1300 pounds on his pilgrimage Timbuktu to Mecca in 1324. Such account further strengthens the perception of Africa as a golden continent and created the myth of the 'wealth of the Soudan' (86). The large drove for the supposed golden continent and what was often referred to as 'Timbuctoo craze', however was not too long confronted with unease as reality became more glaring. After several explorers had come and lost their lives in the process of catching a glimpse of the 'fabled city', 'in 1828, French explorer René-Auguste Caillie became the first European to visit the "mysterious city" and survive to tell the tale with a disappointing report of having seen a lot of ill-looking people and a city built with mud, not gold. This illusion-inspired and disappointing adventure is captured in Alfred Tennyson's 'Timbuctoo', a poem published in 1829, a year after Caillie's return. In the

views of the narrator in Tennyson's poem, the part of Africa yet to be explored gave hope for massive gold-land. In tune with Caillié's diary, Tennyson's poem bemoans the failure of the colonial imaginary of West Africa as a paradise because emerging empirical knowledge seemed to counter those assumptions, leading to the 'darkening' of Victorian discourse.

Just as the disappointment that followed the exploration of illusory 'gold coast' by the Portuguese was compensated by the invention of the slave trade, Tennyson's poem gives a new direction to the British failed mission in Africa. The inspiration towards colonial project appeared to have been suggested at this point. As Deckard observes: 'Tennyson inscribes Africa's void with the new fantasy of the imperial project, implying that the gross pursuit of material riches will be replaced by the more spiritual vision of the civilizing mission' (87). The transformation of the myth of 'gold-lands' in Africa may not just be as a result of Tennyson's poem, as the end of the Slave Trade which brought with it a serious economic stress in Europe may also be adduced as a major factor for this. This desire is well manifested in the 19th century with the colonisation of most countries and regions in Africa. As a matter of fact, 'By the 1930, Gold Coast, as it was officially to be called, became 'the most prosperous colony in Africa.' As the whole region of West Africa came under the firm grip of colonialist, the British, just like their Portuguese counterpart veered East searching for the mystic ophir. This shift of attention did not only end in exploring the promises of utopian wealth but also brought Eastern Africa into the firm grip of colonial enterprise. Perhaps, that was because colonialism was the easiest way to have an unrestrained access into the promised wealth. East Africa, therefore, became one of the last places to come under a direct colonial dominance in Africa. Part of the reasons was the earlier influence of the Omani Arab which dissuaded European incursions into East Africa after they had expelled the Portuguese.

With the entire continent being under the total control of the western powers, the plundering and adaptation of Africa to a new domineering regime was necessitated. The British, as featured in many of Victorian literatures, engaged in a new campaign both to justify and legitimise their rulership in Africa, taking up a new imagination against the paradisiacal luxuries earlier projected. To this effect, their discourse became more prolific and negative. They try to veil the underlying greed of colonial venture with negative

imaging of the continent. Africa was then projected with with imaginations that evoke evil, lewd sexual customs, necromancy, wizadry and all sorts of associated demons.

The narrow and self-exonerating imaging of Africa for sheer greed, as shown in this instance, inevitably accentuates Achebe's (1977) position in his well celebrated essay, 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' where Achebe is unequivocal in arguing that Conrad is a racist for his wilful dehumanising description of Africans in the text. Achebe argues that Europe had a desperate need to cast Africa as its polar opposite in other to justify their claims of being the unique source of quintessential human values which would ultimately excuse for the exploitation of the African continent. Conrad who also was among the explorers, and trading companies in the 'ivory rush' to the Belgian Congo, had a first-hand assessment of that part of Africa but chose to be dishonest both in his *Heart of Darkness* and *The Nigger the Narcissus*. But Conrad is not alone in such despicably dehumanizing description of a people. Adichie (2009) in *The Danger of a Single Story* brings up a similar and interesting tale as she refers to a quote attributed to John Locke, a London merchant who sailed to West Africa in 1561where he describes black Africans as 'beasts who have no houses' and that 'They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eye in their breasts'. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Irele (2001) categorised these kinds of earlier writings about Africa by European writers as 'literature of exoticism' which are devoid of 'imaginative sympathy' (14). This does not only mark the antipathy of these settler writers but also speaks volume about their outright indifference about the values of the continent. Edward Said, perhaps for this reason, argues that 'cultural forms like the novel … were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences… I consider it the aesthetic object whose connection to the expanding societies of Britain and France is particularly interesting to study' (1994: xii). This is why Said refers to Daniel Defoe's *Robison Crusoe* as a prototype of such novels as it portrays a European who creates a fiefdom for himself in a distant non-European territory. This is just one of the ways the colonial enterprise is muted in the fictive art.

Despite the spirited effort towards demonizing Africa with the sole intent of justifying the European exploitation and colonialism, Deckard's analysis of *Heart of Darkness* further reveals the real intent of the white man on the continent, as the comparison between the British and the sixteenth-century Spanish quest for El Dorado further puts the accent on

the reason behind their mission as grossly economic. With regard to the crude economic concern of the colonialist, the reason that lies behind the desperate efforts to project the continent negatively appears more crystal, as Deckard's observation further stretches the comparison to the Classical time. The novel appropriates the epic machinery of Dante and Virgil to represent the 'infernal machine' of colonisation and exploitation, with Africa as Hades, the great river as Acheron and Styx, and the various stations along the river as the circles of the hell.

Fanon (1967) echoes this same situation differently in what he refers to as a Manichean order. For Fanon, 'The colonial world is a Manichaean world. The colonist is not content with physically limiting the space of the colonised, … with the help of his agents of law and order. As if to illustrate the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonised into a kind of quintessence of evil' (18). Despite the fact that Marlow, the ubiquitous narrator in Conrad's tale, condemns the 'rapacious and pitiless folly' of Belgian Colonisation, he, perhaps inadvertently, reinforces the British Imperial project. Deckard (2010) opines that Conrad's writing portrays the activities of the British explorers as being commendable and then was appreciative of their effort in civilising the indigenous people. While this can be blamed on Marlow's nescience, as his inability to understand Africa beyond colonial imaginary remains very obvious, his guilt becomes glaring with the negative representation of the African subjects and the portrayal of its landscape as being infernal.

The flood gate into Africa was thrown open to not only Portuguese, Spain, Belgium and Britain, but also to other countries of Western Europe including France and Germany. They thronged to Africa with the same resolute passion in search of goldmines. Contrary to earlier speculations, mainly pioneered by Edward Said (2003), that Germany could not develop a sustained national interest towards acquiring territories in Africa, emerging evidence posits otherwise. Deckard (2010) argues that the reason for the supposed lack of interest on the side of Germany was because South America was a more desirable place for German colonial interest as a result of the difficult access to the terrain of Africa. South America was not just more accessible but also harboured more sexual fantasies as against the purported unfemininity of sub-Sahara Africa. The continent was described as 'burning hot', with vast expanse of 'desert sand', 'much more violent that the West Indian', with 'continued bloody wars'. It was alleged that the incident of the slave trade

had transformed 'many of these nations under the burning sky into wild and cruel people'. Parallel to this was the projected 'cultic riches of Spanish America'. Apart from this very discouraging depiction, another factor that seems to support this earlier assumption is 'Germany's late unification as a nation-state'. Perhaps, as a result of the problem of this national cohesion, Germany could not acquire large empires for colonial dominance until the late nineteenth century. Compounding the matter was that with the redistribution of its colonies after the Second World War, Germany began to lose its grip on the newly acquired empires. Despite their relative poor conquest of territories, some German writers wrote massive commentaries and had a lot of scholarly outputs on the exploits of other European nations, which encouraged readers to participate in colonial fantasies as "armchair conquistadors"'. Many scientific explorers like Carsten Neibuhr, Georg Schweinfurth and Heinrich Barth contributed very greatly in creating the European image of Africa.

The same goes for the European image of Spanish America with monumental body of writings attributed to Alexander von Humboldt. Sponsored by the British government, Heinrich Barth's *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* (1857) became one of the canonical writings that influenced the understanding of African during the Victorian era. The negative imaging of Africa, however, did not persist eternally as later discoveries reveal an irreducible affirmation of the German's unflinching zeal and a reckless competition to conquer the continent together with other European countries during the early part of the colonial enterprise. For instance, in the account of his expedition into East Africa in 1874, Schweinfurth rendered a story that titillated the imperial appetite of King Leopold II of Belgium, and he began to develop interest in Congo's resources. Deckard argues that Schweinfurth's story may have also, somehow, inspired Conrad's novel as well.

The need for raw materials to support the industrial expansion in Germany and a sharp increase in its population necessitated the increased need for German's quest for colonial enterprise in Africa in the nineteenth century. This interest is further strongly fuelled by the success stories of Barth, Livingstone, Robert Flegel and others who saw and reported Africa as 'promising territory for colonisation' (93). Again, the fantasies surrounding South America strengthened the imperialist propaganda in favour of large-scale colonial

expansion. The final spark of German colonial interest was ignited by Carl Peters who developed a strong passion for colonialism when he was a student in London.

But this acquisition was not an easy ride. Indeed, the indigenous people, mainly the Swahili and the Arab merchants, gave them a fierce resistance, which is why the Chancellor, Bismarck, then commissioned a full military expedition to protect the financial interest of the German traders. For about a decade, this mission of protection did not only later metamorphose into the acquisition of the Swahili coast of Tanganyika but also saw a horrendous massacre and slaughtering of Arabs and the indigenous people in the process. As the Chief Administrator of north of the acquired territory, Carl Peters, was brutal, earning him the name: *Milkono wa Damu* – the man with blood on his hands. Even though his grotesque appetite for violence and attacks on the native were condemned by the authorities in Berlin, leading to his recall to Germany, he was later exonerated by Kaiser Wilhelm and was recreated as a hero by Hitler.

In his two books, *King Solomon's Golden Ophir* (1899) and *The Eldorado of the Ancients* (1902), Peter expresses a strong envy for wealth that the British had already amassed and then argued for German colonisation of East Africa. He insisted that the success recorded by the British in Mashona-land and Manica-land (talking about the gold exploration in Zimbabwe) can therefore be replicated by the Germans. With some pseudo-scientific archaeological construction of East Africa, he alleged that such deposits couldn't have been owned by the Africans. With this high sense of racial superiority, Peter's elaborate construction of East Africa as Ophir legitimates German colonial violence against the indigenous Africans.

German's exploration and conquest of East Africa is both guided and simultaneously motivated by the works of literature at different fronts. As Deckard subsequently observes Karl May's writings were instrumental in the creation of imaginary geographies that defined German colonial praxis. May became the German equivalent of Rider Haggard but in the case May, he never travelled to the colonial locations found in his novels. Because of the fact that May relied more on the fantasies of his mind and strength of his imagination than empirical evidences, he never set foot on the continent, and some of his writings were rather misleading. The poor yield that followed deflated the hope of the German farmers and brought ridicule to the earlier glamour that attracted to it appellations

such as 'a true paradise for the German farmer', 'an African Switzerland' and so on. What emerges from this is that while creative writing facilitated global movement in the earlier centuries, modern electronic media, in their various forms, are taking its place at the present moment.

Despite their loss in the First World War, the Germans still had a strong quest for colonial dominance as Hitler declared his determination to regain 'Germany's African colonies'. The visual culture continued to produce a stock pile of exotic fantasies about Africa, celebrating their colonial heroes such as Heinrich Barth and Carl Peters within the periods after the war. All this effort is principally for economic gains. This is why the Atlantic Slave Trade and colonialism have been regarded as a pure mercantilist ventures. As Krishna (2009) posits, it was these two ventures that brought about global inequality. This is because it cannot be explained within the logic of coincidence that the rising prosperity and affluence of a handful of nations in the West occurred during the same centuries as the conquest of the New World and the colonisation of Asia and Africa. There appears to be a relationship between the discovery and plunder of gold and silver from the New World, the profits from the slave trade, and monopoly trade with Asia by the trading companies of Europe, and, on the other hand, the rising powers of the bourgeois class, and the occurrence of the Industrial Revolution first in the societies of Western Europe. It therefore becomes crystally clear that the whole idea of African exploration is simply driven by economic interest; it was for the sheer economic advancement of Europe.

Ultimately, the growing surge of interest for the dominance of the continent was finally legitimised by colonialism:

> … landmark point of colonialist determination was reached at the historic "Scramble for Africa" by the European powers in the late nineteenth century, which was informed by the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. This Conference, among other things, redefined the ethnic, geographic, historic and cultural landscapes of many African peoples in arbitrary terms, a fact which, in contemporary times, has witnessed the incident of many bitter conflicts among a number of African communities (Olusegun-Joseph, 2012: 220).

This officially inaugurated imperialism as a preferred political style of the colonialist, entrenching both human and inhuman approaches in denigrating the black man and his

culture, and stamping the superiority of the white and its hegemonic tendencies over others.

It is important to note that as the feverish exploitation continued to menacingly hold firm in various parts of Africa, the South had a slight difference. As Heywood (2004) explains, in a voyage initially thought to be purely commercial, the Dutch secured the southernmost part of the continent whole and through. Jan Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 with the mandate of the Dutch East India Company to set up a railway station for its trade route between the Netherlands and the Indies established the most remarkable contact between South Africa and Europe. Steadily, the station grew into settlement of white folk which was inexorably drawn into contact and interaction with the indigenous black population. Though, the interaction between the white settlers and the indigenous black people was characterised by acrimony and strife, the white ceaselessly continued to reinforce its dominance on the indigenous black. The early White settlers were from Netherlands. They later took on a new identity by the name Boers, and later Afrikaner. They speak a variant of Dutch language called Afrikaans. As was the case in some other African countries, especially in the north Africa where the existing colonialists were conquered, the English arrived and overpowered the Dutch colonists. Thus, bringing two white groups and the indigenous black people together to cohabit the southernmost part of the African continent.

With the ascendancy of the English to political eminence, a Union of South Africa was put in place in 1910. With this, the two white groups agreed on segregation between the blacks and the whites thus introducing the obnoxious policy called Apartheid, where the black lived at the mercy of the white. Despite series of killings and violence, prominent among which were the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 between the two major white populations, Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and Soweto Riots of 1976, the apartheid policy, continued to dominate the political and economic sphere of South Africa till 1994.

However, the subjugation of Africa was not carried out by the European explorers and colonisers alone. Driven by trade, evangelism and a conquest ambition, the Moslem Arabs, in no small measure, infiltrated various parts of the African continent. Zanzibar was one of their sources of lure and fancy. Arabs and Persians created a strong 'trade network throughout the Indian Ocean, stretching down the coast of East Africa, north to

India, and east to China. By the twelfth century, mutual interdependence on trade, intermarriage with Africans …, and … infusion of native religions with Islam, had given rise to a distinct culture, … called Swahili' (Deckard, 2010: 98). The fusion of these two cultural influences invariably generates the third-space. Despite the glaring importance of this report in accounting for the early instances of globalisation in Africa, the emergence of a new cultural experience, in this process, obviously validates the other concern of this thesis, which is that such contact brings about a culture mix, thereby elevating the people beyond their original cultural sphere and then creating liminal personalities among them. In fact, the classification of North Africa as an Arabic territory greatly owes to a similar occurrence. Faraday (2011) gives a chilling account of the destruction of the native North African population:

> Around 642 AD, when Arab invaders poured into Africa occupying areas known today as Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco, where they physically eliminated most of the native Berber population. The Berbers that escaped death ran westwards and southwards towards the Sahara. In the 11th century, fresh Arab migrants of nomadic origin migrated into North Africa to displace and drive the remaining pastoral Berbers deeper into the Sahara (1).

The experience in Zanzibar and North Africa is not different from the migration of Fulani from Sudan and Guinea into the northern Nigeria with their Arabian influences. This same experience is replicated in various parts of Africa. The Arab-Islamic atmosphere is also present in a number of Francophone communities of Africa South of the Sahara such as Senegal, the Gambia, Mali, Niger and Mauritania. As Kalu (2005) insightfully observes, 'the predatory practices of Arab Muslims and European Christians in colonial Africa fragmented, suffocated and nearly destroyed the indigenous norms, languages, customs and centres of spiritual worship…' (175). The Moslem and Christian evangelisms, early merchandise between Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as colonialism with their attending consequences is what Kalu draws attention to above. All this evidence shows the earlier recorded contacts between Africa and the outside world, hence the early experiences of globalisation on the continent.

If exploration, paradisic quest, trade, evangelism and colonialism are the major pull factors that compelled a mass movement into Africa, the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, unarguably remains the most prominent push factor that necessitated the unprecedented movement of

the black race outside the shores of the continent. As accurately observed by Bean, '…the slave trade is of great interest in itself. It was the mechanism by which one of history's greatest mass population transfers was affected - a transfer that had large impact on the subsequent economic history of four continents' (1972:409). In other words, apart from the obvious economic implication of the slave trade, its contribution to mass movement of people and the intermingling of ideas, people and cultures of mainly Africa, Europe, South America and North America remain immitigable. In effect, this necessitated one of the earliest globalisation enterprises in the African history.

Thompson, in *The Making of the African Diaspora in the Americas 1441-1990*, thoroughly explores this movement in the Americas. 'From the middle of the fifteenth century, and persistently from the mid-sixteenth, Africans were exported from their homeland to the Americas to develop and sustain a plantation system of Agriculture and to work the mine of South America in a new and unfamiliar environment' (1987:1). This inhuman exercise continued to flourish up to the end of the nineteenth century. Although, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was abolished in the middle of the century, smuggling of slaves persisted by nations that refused to accede to an international legislation that was to bring the trade to an end. After the abolition of slave trade in 1807 in Britain and 1808 in the United States, trade in human beings persisted until diplomatic activities, backed by some display of force, compelled the defaulters to abandon the trade. This did not however totally discourage some nationals of France, Portugal, Spain, Brazil and the United States from continued participation in the trade until much later. Even though there has been recorded evidence of the presence of blacks outside Africa before the slave trade, as 'the voyages to the New World of Christopher Columbus were said to have had at least one person of African origin on them' (12), the 'lawful' and 'unlawful' trade in persons, was responsible for the scattering of blacks all over different parts of Europe and America. From Spain to Portugal to Panama to Cuba to Puerto Rico to Haiti to Brazil and to Trinidad Tobago the Black man was viciously subjected to a horrendous slave labour.

African literary critics have significantly explored this development, with many vociferous voices capturing the agony of those past years. As Obiechina observes about the African slave experience:

> Africa was a vibrant reality in the soul of her expatriate
> children during the era of slave trade, a source of sensations

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in which memory was indistinguishably mixed with anguish.
From the testimonies contained in the narratives, memoirs,
letters and poems of those expatriate children, it is clear that
natal home remain deeply etched in the consciousness, not
always something as pure pleasure and joy, but as a part of
themselves, a part of their emotional and spiritual existence
without which their integrity as human being would have
simply disappeared (1986:101).

The quest for natal home evokes nostalgic feeling of myriad emotions, but the desire to go back remained locked in the hearts and minds of so many African slaves indefinitely. Few returned, many did not; but the harrowing experiences of their predicament spurred a robust creative energy in them. Necessitated by the therapeutic import of relieving pains by sharing it and the need to keep the records straight, Olaudah Equiano an Igbo ex-slave, Ottobah Cugoano of Cape Coast, Ghana and Ajayi Crowther, a Yoruba ex-slave, recounted the experiences of their capture in a tone laden with pathos and grief. At the age of eleven, Olaudah was captured with his younger sister in the absence of their parents; Ottobah and his friends were lured out of their father's house and forcefully incarcerated; while the slave masters gained in a war that prompted the collapse of the old Oyo Empire in capturing Ajayi, his mother, two sisters (one an infant of about ten months old) and a cousin. In many ways, these stories represent the various ways that many Africans began their odyssey of misery from their various African hinterlands to the slave ports of the West Indies, America and Europe. Obiechina notes, 'There were in West Africa in the four hundred years of the slave trade those symptoms of instability, insecurity and cultural disintegration which European historians designated the Dark Ages of their continent' (106).

In many ways, the experience shrouded Africa in a most sordid state where humans and materials of the continent were subjected to a merciless abuse of rapes and rapines, literally and figuratively. For this, we are again alerted to the implications of a similar contact as the feverish wind of globalisation surges in a heightened tempo. Children are always the easiest target in situations like this, hence the impacts of the global order on the child are also of interest in the present study.

The questions as to 'why slave?' and 'why Africa?' have been raised very frequently without a definite answer being provided. However, greed and gross economic concern have been variously adduced as the major convincing factors. As Thompson (1987)

opines, the Amerindian peoples of the Americas were unfamiliar with the relentless and rigorous labour demands of the conquerors, perishing in enormous numbers from disease and maltreatment. So, with the relative success already recorded with black slaves in southern Spain and Portugal, Africa became the reservoir for such labour. In the main, the activities of this trade contributed in the establishment of black communities in various parts of Europe and America as well as communities of the people of mixed descent, the *castas*. The condition of the period, in essence conditioned, the consciousness of the blacks about their mother continent of Africa. With insight into the meaning of their degradation, came a number of conflicting tendencies which gave rise to various manifestations of pan-Africanism among these people of African descent.

The growing interest in the projection of the African image, tradition and dignity was to be accentuated by the pan-African movement of George Washington Williams, W.E.B DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Frantz Fanon, Elijah Mohammed, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., whose efforts stimulated the pride in African heritage. Black apologists became ideological templates for the cause of Blackness and its difference from hegemonic White values. This tendency was to be transformed into radical movements such as the Negritude movement usually associated with Aime Cesaire, Leon Damas and Leopold Sedar Senghor. All this motivated the nationalist spirit and quest for independence of many African countries in mid twentieth century.

Besides these earlier records of movements of ideas, people and materials, the reality of globalisation has become even more palpable in Africa in contemporary times. Today, migration has taken a different dimension on the continent. The mass movement of the African people across Europe and America may not match the proportion of what slave trade prompted nor be triggered by the same factors, its impacts are nonetheless severe. Okome (2005) itemises some of the possible causes: push factors that stimulate migration from Africa include 'low pay, lack of employment, underemployment, absence of family member due to prior migration, and exposure to endemic violence, persecution and oppression' (84). With the increasing cases of unemployment, underemployment, insecurity, crises and war in many countries of Africa including Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Egypt, the veracity of this claim needs not be contested. The pull factors obviously become the possibility of meeting those challenges. These causes are by no means exhaustive, as they are all linked to evolving global trends as occasioned by

movement of trade, capital, investment and information. A country's immigration policy, exile and general political disposition of the government to the welfare of the citizens and the widening gap between the centres and the fringes are viable forces. In most cases, migration has a chain effect, as the departure of one person is usually followed by that of one or more members of the family.

Brain drain, a term coined by the British Royal Society in 1962 to describe the migration of British professionals to the United States, has become the lot of the African continent. Apart from that, the challenges of integration into the new environment often appear daunting. As Okome further observes, 'past effort to evaluate the outcome of immigration has focused on the issue of assimilation. Three competing ideologies of assimilation … are Anglo-conformity, the melting point, and cultural pluralism' (99). The necessity to conform to the dominant culture of the Anglo-Saxons in Europe and America is what Anglo-conformity connotes. As Okome notes further, 'the English only' movement has awakened a desire to divest immigrants of their native culture and merge them into the dominant one. Similarly, the ideology of 'the melting pot', which began in the eighteenth century, allowed for the blending of the European cultures and the emergent American nation into a unique and new American culture. However, unlike the southern and eastern Europe, the western and northern Europe were preferred cultures in the melting process. The idea of culture pluralism may sound very attractive but its reality is very elusive. While in the case of cultural pluralism, attempt is made to create a new cultural environment in the emigrated land, it will be difficult to erect walls against assimilation especially when the offspring of the émigrés begin to procreate. This underlies the major concern of this thesis: to examine how these immigrants grapple with the changing trends and cultural tensions that have resulted from escaping some economic and political upheavals, as is most often the case. Coupled with these facts is the ubiquitous presence of the internet and other modern information technology devices that bring the whole world together within a split of second.

These facts have overwhelmingly steered the world towards a global perspective, and literary studies have responded accordingly. As Dagnino observes, 'with the denationalizing wave of globalisation, even national literatures are under pressure to find new arrangements of form and content to adapt to a changed cultural and social paradigm' (2013:2). Dagnino opines:

> A mutation is under way within global ecumene of letters
> where new notions of belonging, as well as definitions of
> selfhood and identity are externalised through new creative
> artistic and literary processes. Within this emerging social,
> cultural, and literary scenario, scholars feel the urge to
> identify new relevant literary paradigms, especially when
> dealing with the so-called "New Literatures in English" (2).

This has unavoidably thrown the door open for transcultural and transnational theorisations, which had been seen to reside within the boundaries of cultural anthropology, philosophy, and (comparative) cultural studies into literary studies and they are rapidly gaining scholarly currency. Dagnino traces this emerging force in several nations. In Germany, for instance, a group of English scholars comprising Frank Schulze-Engler, Sissy Helff, Sabrina Brancato, and others have initiated the field of transcultural English Studies, while in northern Europe another group of scholars have given birth to The Nordic Network for Literary Transculturation Studies, drawing on Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation. Through Schulze-Engler's perspective, Dagnino explains that the transcultural studies in English should represent transnational and transcultural perceptions that should be able to accommodate:

> both the literary practice of writers who can no longer be
> related to one particular "national literary space" and the
> complex articulations that link individual works of literature
> not only to local or regional modernities with their specific
> social, linguistic, and cultural constellations, but also to the
> world-wide field of English-language literatures and specific
> forms of communicative interaction and political conflict
> engendered by it (2).

Most of these studies, though refer to literatures written in English, can be extended to other languages that have the propensity of cutting across regions and national cultures.

Similarly, in 2006, the University of Lancaster established the Centre for Transnational Writing and Research, where transnational environment is created for scholars interested in writing across cultures and studying the work of writers from the wide range of social and cultural contexts. In the same vein, the Institut d'Etudes Transtextuelles and Transculturelles at the University Jean Moulin in Lyon has created a similar environment. The Institute is also among the founding partners of the International Institute for Diasporic and Transcultural Studies, a transnational organisation incorporating, among

other academic institutions, Liverpool Hope University, the University of Cyprus, and Sun Yat-sen University (P.R. of China). Through transcultural and historicized approaches, the institute promotes studies on the specificities and changes of socio-cultures and localities in a globalised world, as well as on questions of textual and cultural representations, but also self-representations of diasporic, migrant, and transnational communities. These developments evidently foreground the palpable reality of globalisation and its tendency to cut across both spatial and cultural boundaries, and extend beyond trade and politics to literary craft.

The literary perspective did not, however, start from Germany or Lancaster. It had an earlier stronghold in the United States and Canada. In mid-1980s, The Centre for Transcultural Studies at Pennsylvania State University, according to Dagnino, heralded 'new forms of cultural understanding for a rapidly internationalising world' (3). In Canada, Janice Kulyk Keefer initiated transcultural studies with respect to literary works in the mid-1990s. All these earlier and recent attention to multicultural and transcultural studies are eloquent testimonies of the overriding influences of globalisation, not only in cultural studies but also in literature. Modern literature now transverses cultures and blur national boundaries; this is not only manifest in their transnational settings but also in the personality and identity of the characters. It explores complexities emerging from various culture pools that transcend the differences of the West and the Rest. This position panders greatly to the taste of the proponents of globalisation. It appears to create an even playing ground for healthy cultural competition among nations, from which the best model would be adopted. Such a postulation would, however, have to contend with obvious realities as some nations have stronger vehicles of cultural purveyance more than others, and so stand a better chance of pushing their own influences wider and more vigorously, thereby still retaining the dichotomy question.

Perhaps, the most prominent instance where the contending forces of cultural convergence was most taken seriously in Africa is in what has now come to be famously known as Nairobi Revolution. In 1968, Henry Owuor Anyumba, Taban lo Liyong, and James Ngugi, three young African lecturers from the English Department of the University of Nairobi, forwarded an internal memo to the then dean of the Faculty of Arts for the abolition of the English Department in the school. Despite the controversy generated by this move, one major achievement recorded as a result was the establishment of a programme in literary

studies that was ultimately global in its outlook. As Apollo Amonyo Amoko observes: 'The literature programme conceived at Nairobi was characterised as much by its cosmopolitanism as its Afrocentrism. Ngugi and his colleagues sought to ensure that during their tenure in the degree programme, students would be exposed to literature from every continent' (2010:12). As radical as the proposition, which eventually received a due consideration, sounded the trio was not unaware of the overwhelming forces of globalisation but was very concerned with registering African literary studies in the global map, rather than accepting to remain a passive recipient. This position is a valid way of engaging globalisation in a reciprocal mandate as it opens multiple frontiers of consciousness.

The fast emerging concept of Afropolitanism and its overwhelming currency on the cyberspace is another eloquent testimony that centralises the colossal influence of globalisation on the African continent in literature and indeed, virtually all spheres. A large chunk of elite Africans have formed an identity which crystallizes in the impulses and ideas of what has come to be known as Afropolitanism. A term deployed by Taiye Selasi in 2005 as a neologism to describe globetrotting, mixed-race blacks or migrant and 'newly diasporized' Africans – including herself – whose self-perception transcends geographies, nationalities, languages or time zones has recently generated a lot of intellectual responses on the internet and has begun to engender serious discussions among literary scholars. This concept has been theoretically reexamined to capture the complexity of identity in a hybrid, postmodern world where centre/periphery models have become inadequate for analysing global cultural flows, and in which African identity can no longer fit in perfectly. Scholars in the league of Mbembe (2007), Gikandi (2011), Eze (2015) and Ede (2016) agree that it is a useful concept to assess the transitional modern African in the face of global realities.

From their polyglottal disposition to transnational peregrination, the Afropolitan is continually exposed to varied socio-cultural models, metamorphosing across these vagaries in the process. In relation to literature, Achille Mbembe, one of the vociferous proponent of this concept, argues that Afropolitanism has existed ever since but only gathers a new momentum in response to the emerging global realities. According to Mbembe:

The second wave of Afropolitanism corresponds with Africa's entry into a new age of dispersion and mobility. This new age is characterised by the intensification of migration and the creation of new African Diasporas throughout the world. With the emergence of these new Diasporas, Africa no longer constitutes a centre for itself. Henceforth, it is constructed through poles, between which there is constantly a passage, mobility, and facilitation (2007:65).

Despite its being described as elitist, superficial and class discriminatory, it also cultivates a cultural landmine, a building block for cultural annihilation if Africa loses 'a centre for itself'. Susanne opines, 'Afropolitanism is a useful concept as a tool of identity politics for diasporic middleclass Africans: an idea that gives individuals who feel rooted in Africa but live across the world, a sense of belonging and enables them to maintain an "idea of Africa" at the centre of their experiences' (2016:64). This appears to have broadened the classification of the Afropolitan to include not only those Africans in diaspora physically but also those who are at home but have been exiled through the instruments of globalisation that have been earlier mentioned in this study. But the idea of being rooted in Africa is very contestable in assessing Afropolitans. If anything, the sociological formation of this category of people rather leave them dangling on the cultural hemisphere and cannot be categorically seen as being rooted in Africa in the real sense of the word. This is especially true when most of such individuals either have parentage of mixed races or are second or third generations of Africans in the diaspora. Evidently, this set of Africans has been elevated beyond African cultural milieu and are rather at the risk of being rootless.

Gehrmann identifies Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole and Taiye Selasi as African writers already in the category of Afropolitan writers especially with their literary outputs: *Americana, Open City* and *Ghana Must Go* respectively, all published in 2013. These works obviously bring the ideas surrounding Afropolitanism to the fore, thereby highlighting the immanent force of globalisation with a concentrated focus on diasporic literature. According to Lucia Artner and Achim Stanislawski, 'one of the dominant characteristics of these new narrative selves is that they are dealing with various concepts of an 'African identity,' although the different protagonists come from different countries and do not necessarily share common cultural or historical backgrounds' (2013:50). A different notion of an 'African identity' is being formed, neither biased by a Eurocentric

view nor totally African in identity, but told by a pluralist group of people with hybrid forms of story-telling and are in a bid to identifying themselves. This is also well captured by Ojaide (2008) as he observes, 'African writers have become part of the worldwide phenomenon of migration and globalisation with the attendant physical, sociocultural, psychic, and other forms of dislocation, which permeate their individual writing' (43).

Ojaide puts these writers into two categories. The first group comprises the African writers born in the 1940s and 1950s while the second group includes those born after the 1960s and those Africans born abroad. The older group grew up in Africa and went to school there. In their writings, they tend to compare their native African environment with the new Western environment. These writers view the Africa they know with a sense of nostalgia and often maintain an African identity in a foreign land. Some of these writers include Ethiopian writer Nega Mezlekia, South African author Zakes Mda of South Africa and Nigerian poet Chimalum Nwankwo. The younger group who are sometimes children of emigrants have, at best, vague memories of Africa, especially the traditional environment and society, and yet are not accepted as French, British, Portuguese, German, Dutch, or American, even when they are citizens of these countries. What these Africans write is clearly different from that of their older counterparts who had much experience of Africa. Many in this group suffer from a psychic disconnection from the continent. They belong to the category of what Pius Adesanmi refers to as 'children of postcolony'. Ojaide includes Chris Abani, Seffi Attah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Uzodinma Iweala in this category. Even though this classification may not be exhaustive, considering other African diasporic writers like Mukoma wa Ngugi, Taiye Selasi and Noviolet Bulawayo who are missing in the list, Ojaide has shown the emerging trend in new African writings and the glaring influence of globalisation on this new form. That is why he observes, 'while in the past a few African writers living abroad have written about Africa, never before now has such a large number of African writers, due to migration and globalisation, been resident outside the continent while writing about it' (46). This results from the fact that Africans have become one of the largest groups of individuals fully involved in the transcultural and transnational ordering of the globe. Consequently, the question of culture becomes a significant area of enquiry in this era.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that if globalisation involves the contact and connectedness of nations, it is clearly true that globalisation is not new to the African

continent. In fact, the earlier European writers, right from Homer, Camoes, Milton, Locke, Conrad and Cary have shown a significant global outlook in their works. Even when some of their works can be categorised as national literatures, the fact remains that they have significant evidence of transnational reflections. While this may further problematise the historicity of globalisation in literature, the focus of this work is largely limited to the African novels of the new millennium. As O'Brien and Szeman (2001) rightly observes, 'Whether one sees globalisation as a contemporary phenomenon that defines the character of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, or merely as an extension of a process initiated millennia ago, there can be no doubt that the generation of narratives about globalisation has assumed particular urgency over the last few decades' (604).

In other words, it is necessary to critically examine how the growing body of literature in Africa facilitates or reflects the global transcultural flow on the continent, the eclipse of the traditional system, the wide spread of Western liberalism and the widening gaps in economic opportunities as a result of intruding capitalist forces. Globalisation, in this regard, can be viewed as the growing convergence of nations in the transfer and acceptance of economic, political, technological and cultural models. It involves integration of nations and easy access to information as a way of universalising ideas and concepts. The globalisation, as so far discussed, has sweeping effects that have necessitated a grand reconceptualisation of the continent in all spheres, and most especially on identity formation and cultural orientations. This is perhaps why Appiah (2005) describes the global web as being 'physical, biological, electronic, artistic, literary, musical, linguistic, juridical, religious, economic, familial' (216).

It is the totality of these effects that makes globalisation an interesting area of study in the twenty-first century. It has become a crystally clear fact that globalisation could have both real and imagined negative imports as have been identified so far, but they cannot undermine the fact that it erects a platform where varied cultural models are purveyed and scrutinized. It provides a fulcrum for replacing grossly deficient cultural reproductions and the homogenisation of more enduring and time-tested models from one clime to the other and, in the process, promotes more rational and healthier society for all. Globalisation therefore involves a thorough knowledge and assessment of varied models and aims at identifying with the ones that accommodate higher feasibility trajectory. It therefore implies that all nations should be in the vanguard of purveying the best of their models for

universal assessment and possible acceptance. Literature, apparently, cannot be relegated in this global effort.

What this implies, ultimately, is that globalisation has a huge thrust on the malleability of culture. It goes with contact of cultures where, in most instances, the culture of the weaker society implodes for the emergence of a new way of life. However, it must be emphasised here that what implodes is not necessarily a weaker culture but a culture of the weak. Even as the British social theorist, Albrow (1997) observes when he argues for a major distinction between modernity as imposition of practical rationality upon the rest of the world through the instrumentalities of the state and the influences of the market, the generation of universal ideas to encompass the diversity of the world and globalisation as transition to new era, it is also a fact that this transition is not always totally impartial. What is also true is that globality restores 'the boundlessness of culture and promotes the endless renewability and diversification of cultural expression' (251). From the experiences examined, it is evident that Africa is a victim in the earlier instances of globalisation. It, therefore, becomes important to examine what this whole idea about culture really entails in the next part of this study. This would help to examine the effect of the interaction between cultures in Africa and how that has been reflected in the literary works of African writers. Beyond that, it will aid in assessing the formation of new identity that happens as a result of these interactions of culture.

2.3   Culture and literature in Africa

The discussion so far has already established how culture reflects and refracts under the heavy influence of globalisation in different climes. In other words, while globalisation on its own can be seen as a culture, a way of negotiating existential realities, it has also dragged on its wake multiple cultural models across time and space. These cultural models and the ways they change overtime are the major deciding factor in characterising individuals into the liminal space. It therefore follows that one's ability or inability to conform to a certain cultural dictates determines, to a certain extent, the liminal status of the individual. As a result of this fact, it becomes important to examine how culture and literature have interacted overtime in Africa in order to situate this study in its proper context.

For the most part, culture in Africa literature has been reflected within the purview of cultural contacts and subjugations. Ngugi (1993) argues: 'Any study of cultures which ignores structures of domination and control and resistance within nations and between nations and races over the last four hundred years is in danger of giving a distorted picture' (46). This is quite apt because much of the history of globalisation has strongly shown 'domination, control and resistance', hence the close relationship between globalisation and culture. It is on this note that an excursion into the meaning and nature of culture as well as its reflections in African literature within this period becomes vital. This will help us to understand the effects of the interactions of African culture with different cultures and how these have been portrayed in African texts. Culture and its various shades and nature need to be appropriately conceptualised at this point so that its contours and variations under the weight of globalisation would be better assessed and accurately situated.

Certainly, culture is one of those terms that are so commonly used but complex in its bounds of meanings; so blithely applied but rarely understood. It is largely so because the scope that the term covers is as wide as it is amorphous. In his Magnum Opus, *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871, the pioneer English anthropologist Tylor, explains culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. For Tylor, culture is the full range of learned behaviour. For this, Tylor further explains that culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is also a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and is easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Therefore, our written languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made items are merely the products of culture; they are the tangible products of the intangible frames of thought that inhabit the mind. This points to the fact, therefore, that there are several layers of culture. Three layers can be examined here for the purpose of this work. The most obvious is the body of cultural traditions that distinguish specific societies from others. According to Williams (1997), 'every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these in institutions and in arts and learning' (6). This invariably underlines the peculiarity of culture. It foregrounds the fact that the establishment of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions. These meanings and directions are firmly situated in and continually sustained by the cultural realities of such society and so constitute the ethos that forge what becomes the identity of

the people within the given society. This stretches from the very basic non material culture like the societal ethos, religion, language, norms and values, to the material cultural peculiarities of food, dressing, architecture, colour and so on. It is on the basis of this holistic perception of culture and its boundless impacts on the grand totality of man's essence that Falola (2003) posits:

> … culture shapes the perception of Self and the interaction between people and their environment. It explains habits such as why people respect old age, have many children, take care of their children, work hard, take to polygyny, and support male dominance. It justifies work ethics… It defines norms of behaviour, such as inter- and intragenerational relations, codes of conduct for holders of political offices, and the difference between gift-giving and corruption. It defines boundaries among people, as in the case of gender roles or relations between the poor and the rich (50-51).

In other words, apart from being the source of both written and unwritten laws that regulate man's behaviour in both old and modern societies, culture also defines the very minute impulses of man's cooperative existence in a given society, his aspirations and desires and indeed his sense of identity. This is, perhaps, what Foucault (2002) means when he argues that 'ethnology shows how, within a given culture, there occur the normalisation of the broad biological functions, the rules that render possible or obligatory all the forms of exchange, production, and consumption, and the systems that are organised around or on the model of linguistic structures' (412). Normalisation, in this context, is usually in response to the societal needs but sometimes can also be arbitrary, however the whole essence is to create order that will moderate the collective interest of the people.

The second layer of culture that could also be part of one's identity is the subculture. In complex and diverse societies like Nigeria, South Africa, the United States and elsewhere, where people have come from different parts of the world, migrants often retain much of their original cultural traditions. As a result, they could form an identifiable subculture in their new society. The shared cultural traits of such subcultures remarkably set them apart from the rest. This happens when a group of culturally homogenous people transfers its inherited cultural models to a new place of settlement. The African Americans in the United States readily comes to mind in this respect. However, in some cases, such as the Irish Americans and German Americans in the United States, the cultural differences

among these groups may be blurred into irrelevance with time due to the similarities between the two cultures. In this instance, the subculture would eventually disappear and they only then exist simply as a people with a common ancestry without a remarkable cultural difference from the host communities. This could happen because they align with the national culture and then constitute its wider mainstream.

Despite of all these, there are learned behavioural patterns that are shared by all of humanity collectively. No matter where people live in the world, they share these universal traits. These are what are often referred to as cultural universals. These include a common mode of communication, classifications based on age, gender or status, sexual division of labour, distinguishing between bad and good behaviours, child-bearing and accepted ways of raising children, playing games and engaging in arts generally, rules to regulate sex behaviours, societal leadership and so on. These identified universal traits and more are decipherable in the cultures of every society but variations occur in the ways and degrees that they are observed in different regions. It is these differences that constitute the first layer of culture discussed earlier. In other words, the culture of a people defines their collective identity and shapes their individual personalities. That is precisely why culture has always been a thing of interest to man. According to Lieber and Weisberg, 'we find that in an increasingly globalised world, culture has become a central arena of contestation. Culture takes on this pivotal position not only because of its intrinsic significance, but precisely because it has become so bound up with the most fundamental questions of human identity in its many dimensions: personal, ethnic, religious, social and national' (2002:275). They argue that this situation is even more prevalent in the less developed countries of Middle East, Southern Asia and Africa where the twin influence of modernity and globalisation have displaced the cultural structure of the people without meeting the needs of their society, hence inflaming people into 'existential rage' and unrest. This is not to forget the unease that goes with the intrusion of 'American cultural primacy' in other more developed worlds of East Asia and Latin America. Such situation brings to bare the fact that change is a very intrinsic component of culture, and of course the tension and conflict generated in the process should be of scholarly interest.

With reference to nature/culture argument Banuri (1990) views culture as a general human 'software' (77). In other words culture is, sometimes, the intangible component of man that drives the human entity. This notion has been implicit in theories of evolution and

diffusion, in which culture is viewed as, in the main, a *translocal* learning process. The idea of translocality highlights cultural heterogeneity and how cultures interact and mix with one another. It follows, then, that the predominant cultural practices of today has an irreducible impact on the cultural structures of the years to come. The implication of this also suggests that culture does not necessarily belong to the past. It is a fundamental part of human society that defines what we are today. The constant interactions of humans in a given society show that culture is constantly created and recreated; it is not an ossified code of conduct cast in the dungeon of the past. This underscores the dynamism of culture and, very interestingly, highlights the strength that culture has in shaping the future. It also shows that culture is an evolving phenomenon and in a continual flux of negotiation. It is in this line of thought that Okri (1997), lauding the accomplishments of the poststructuralist theoretical project, argues that lived reality is the central determinant of culture and as such moral certainties or categorical imperatives do not really exist. Okri's position sounds true but it is the process where lived realities confront the assumed moral certainties that conflict is usually generated. Also, these existential realities do not just happen. They are often midwifed by obvious social, political or economic changes.

It can be adduced, therefore, that culture is a very crucial pivot upon which life and living revolve. People's actions and thought are then modelled and directed within a given society by the lived experiences and forces that define culture. This also shows that a particular culture has some distinguishing elements that set it apart from others but these elements are not always cast in steel. The point here is that cultures are continuously evolving products of people interacting with one another. This highlights the undisputed reality of dynamism of culture. It is in its dynamism that cultural patterns die, wane or grow. As Williams observes, 'its (culture's) growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experiences, contacts, and discovery' (6). He argues that culture has two basic aspects: the known meaning and direction which its members are trained to, and the new observations and meanings which are offered and tested. These, in essence, comprise the ordinary process of human society and cultural development. As Ngugi succinctly and accurately observes:

> Culture develops within the process of a people wrestling
> with their natural and social environment. They struggle
> with nature. They struggle with one another. They evolve a
> way of life embodied in their institutions and certain

practices. Culture becomes the carrier of their moral, aesthetic and ethical values. (1993:44).

This widely encompassing perspective does not only embrace the vital forces that moderate culture changes and modifications but also encapsulate the attitudinal responses to such situations. Ngugi's position significantly agrees with what postmodernists have made us understand, that culture does not strictly emerge as an inviolable product of nature, culture is 'formulated or adopted by a human group to find ways to meet with the needs of and struggles of life, to interpret their world and organise means and methods of accommodating themselves in it. … it is a human product. It is a man's creation, done according to his taste, his needs, the nature of a people's history and environment' (Aligwekwe, 2010:29). This creation of man is basically articulated in response to what is called the cultural imperative, which include: to feed and look after the physical body; to educate and transmit knowledge to the young; to establish ways of keeping law and order in society; to follow a system of beliefs or thoughts or ideas that help in the formation of ideologies, moral codes or norms of a society. This ultimately establishes the very anchors upon which cultural processes are formulated. So, as the needs and desires of man change, his culture ultimately is bound to conform to the evolving trends.

Ngugi identifies the major forces that have combined to initiate significant cultural changes, especially in Africa, when he observes:

> The slave trade and slavery bringing about mass relocation of peoples; colonialism bringing about, immense economic, political, cultural and psychological violence on colonised communities, have meant that there is no culture which has not been affected adversely or otherwise by those relationships of dominance and domination (46).

Ngugi's identification of these major forces that have influenced cultural dynamism in Africa not only affirms the fact that culture changes as a result of several historical realities like the encounter of one culture and another, but also establishes the premise from where Africa culture can be viewed in a relative holistic term. King-Aribisala (1991) opines that even though the unifying bond of Africanity was broken as a result of the slave trade and colonialism, these very factors ironically 'resulted in further consolidation between African and Black West Indian diaspora' (37). This implies that prior to the contact of the slave trade and colonialism that there was a relatively cultural homogeneity

among the African people and this was not totally shattered by these experiences. The struggle against these forces rather reinvigorates the cultural similarities.

As have been noted earlier, slave trade and colonialism did not mark the first encounter of Africa and the outside world. King-Aribisala confirms that as early as the last 1000 years before the onset of the Christian era, Europeans, Greeks, Romans and Mediterranean peoples have been interacting with proportions of the African population in various ways - as traders, settlers and conquerors who made cultural impacts on the continent. Despite this relationship, 'most Africans, remained untouched by European influences for almost four centuries' (36). Many obstacles ranging from undulated topography, the Sahara, harsh climatic conditions to dreadful diseases combined to inhibit European entrance into the interior of Africa. Until advancement in maritime technology was made in the fifteenth century, the water bodies were very often non-navigable. Even on the occasions of trade, 'the borders of Black Africa, the edges of the desert and the coast were adequate point of contact. The Africans brought their goods from the interior to the periphery, and trade was affected' (36). For this, the inroad into the interior was not very necessary and so the continent was largely secured from obliterating cultural influences. This obviously helps in the retention of cultural homogeneity to a very large extent. It is perhaps for this reason that Falola (2013) observes that the African elite, irrespective of their location and sources of ideas, regard culture as the number one tool in creating a difference between Africans and non-Africans, consolidating national and ethnic identities, addressing most of the issues associated with the European encounter, evaluating the impact of foreign religions and cultures, and seeking enduring answers to contemporary problems of economy and politics.

It is very important at this point to acknowledge the wide varieties that distinguish one region, country, community and even hamlet in Africa from the others in the discussion of geography, culture and nature of Africa. Wainaina (2008) explains this in *How to Write About Africa*. In this heavily humorous sarcastic piece, Wainaina instructs:

> In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and

> warring and emigrating to read your book. The continent is
> full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other
> things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep
> your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular
> (1).

Wainaina visibly satirises the blanket description often given to Africa by the Western world as one long unbroken chain of misery and unimaginable squalor, devoid of any glimpse of brightness. He obviously detests the often presumptuously monolithic description of Africa by European writers.

It must be noted, however, that homogeneity of culture in this context cannot be said to be absolute, it does not preclude variations among various communities but it is homogenous to the extent that there are certain practices common among the African people that set them apart. As Kluckhon and Murray (1953) observe a long time ago, 'every man in certain respects is like all other men, like some other men and like no other man' (82). This implies that every man is born to experience some biological needs as a human (a generic characteristics of the human), finds himself in an environment and tries to learn and explore this environment. He imbibes life styles that will enable him survive in this environment and, in the process, share some commonalities with this community. At the same time, in attempt to excel or even survive in this community he develops some peculiarities that are shared between him and others, sometimes with no other. It is these learned attributes to live and survive in a given environment that brings about culture specifics which vary among individuals. Culture, in essence, comes to mediate between the biological man and his daily life activities. So, through this, we can draw the chain of relationship from individual to varied culture groups to African identity to universal principles and the man as a biological product. This brings to the fore the debate about African culture.

It is important to point out the argument often adduced that Africa has no single culture. The veracity of this statement is not to be contested as the complexity of the continent cannot ultimately guarantee one single undiluted way of life, as eminent anthropologists such as Murdock (1959) observes that we have more than 850 different traditional African societies, each with its own distinct culture. In fact, Selasi in her fierce argument to delete African literature from our lexicon, at the 13th International Literature Festival, Berlin, 2013, even gives a more interesting description of this diversity:

> Of all the earth's landmasses, Africa may well be the most
> culturally, religiously, ethnically and linguistically diverse.
> There are over two thousand languages spoken on the
> continent, over 400 in Nigeria alone; South Africa,
> everyone's favourite exception, has eleven official tongues.
> Of course, we tend to dismiss this linguistic complexity as a
> symptom of primitive clannishness, as if these two thousand
> languages were spoken by one hundred people apiece. In
> fact, Amharic, Swahili, Hausa and my own Yoruba, for
> example, are spoken by tens of millions of human beings—
> and soon to join Google Translate. Of all the continents,
> Africa is the least eligible for generalisation (2013: 6).

The point being made here is very clear, namely, that Africa is very diverse and cannot be congealed into one hasty bloc of generalisation. But this is also true of Europe. Africa, just like Europe, as Selasi observes, is made up of more than fifty different countries as recognised by the United Nations, defining very clearly the complexity of these two continents. Yet circumstances arise where we refer to some phenomena as European or even in a much broader spectrum, Western, hence the phobia some people entertain about Western power, Western culture and the like. It is therefore not out of place to refer to certain practices or experiences as African, despite the varied cultural experiences of Africa. This is why Fashina strongly argues that despite the reliance on a foreign language for intracontinental communication and literary expressions, 'the language of works that can really stand for African literature is not cast in European phonological, lexico-semantic and discursive patterns and standards. Rather, African literature displays the linguistic, gnomic and cultural symbols as well as oral verbalization aesthetics and convolution both of cosmic, ethereal and terrestrial space, which make it to maintain a unique identity even in its relative hybrid status' (2008: 64). Fashina, here, not only demonstrates the aptness of the uniqueness of this kind of literature but also the distinguishing elements that set Africa literature apart. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Osundare, in writing about his own practice as a Yoruba-born poet, expresses the same thought. He questions, 'if language is truly the dress of thought, how would deeply Yoruba ideas look and feel in English coat and tie? What adjustments must be made in size and style to prevent the tie from turning into a noose' (14). This is why he further remarks that:

> there are Yoruba ways of thinking which have produced a
> certain science of being, a certain blend of wisdom and
> philosophy, certain moral ideals and a certain epistemology-

certain Yoruba ways of segmenting experience and
cognizing the world (4).

Osundare's position is not just an acknowledgment of the dilemma that confronts the African writer who, grapples with varied linguistic orientations, but also highlights the overt difference in the consciousness, nuances and thought of the African writer in comparison with his non-African counterpart even when they use the same language of expression. Osundare, evidently, rechoes the long debate on the language problem in Africa literary expression and the controversies surrounding the conceptualisation of African literature that dominated the Makerere conference of 1962 as further explored by Mukoma (2018).

Immanuel Wallerstein (1990), echoing Kluckhon and Murray, argues that one of the basic building stones of social science's view of the world, just as in the humanities, most explicitly emphasized by the anthropologists, is the conviction that while all persons share some traits with all others, all persons also share other traits with only some others, and all persons have still other traits which they share with no one else. In other words, the basic model is that each person may be described in three ways: the universal characteristics of the species, the sets of characteristics that define that person as a member of a series of groups and then the person's idiosyncratic characteristics. When we talk of traits which are neither universal nor idiosyncratic we often use the term 'culture' to describe the collection of such traits, or of such behaviours, or of such values, or of such beliefs. In short, in this usage, each group has its specific culture or what, according to MacCannel (1996), Lacan refers to as 'unary identifiers' (27), To be sure, each individual is a member of many groups, and indeed of groups of very different kinds - groups classified by gender, by race, by language, by class, by nationality, among others. Therefore, each person participates in many cultures. It therefore forebodes no evil to experience a continental culture, national culture, ethnic culture and so on. According to Wallerstein:

> Culture is a way of summarizing the ways in which groups
> distinguish themselves from other groups. It represents what
> is shared within the group, and presumably simultaneously
> not shared (or not entirely shared) outside it (32).

It is for this reason that attempt is being made to investigate these features that are capable of distinguishing Africans, some the Africa's shared experiences. This is also why Mudimbe (1988) argues that any reflection on African culture and identity should take into

account the fact of three legacies: the African pasts or traditions (plural), the imports of Islam and Christianity, and the upsurge of modernity which came with colonisation and instituted the conditions of possibility for integration in the global world. From this viewpoint, to think of African identities is, first of all, to accept - indeed critically - this historical background in its specific gravity. These three categories undoubtedly define a fundamental cultural experience of the African people that its diversity cannot totally blur. It therefore demonstrates that despite an apparent lack of homogeneity, these shared experiences, nevertheless, gives a means of identification, a compelling instance which the self could be referred to. Despite this, it is also true as well that there are certain common characteristics that permeate these cultures, the common denominators of culture, so to say. As Osofola observes:

> The task of the choice of a paradigm or model of African culture is by no means an easy one. But apart from the colour of the people, there are many cultural characteristics which in there distinctiveness are peculiar and common to the Africans. The idea of common denominator of culture holds here. For these elements, ideas, and philosophies of life are common to Africans, be they the Akan of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Mende of Sierra-Leone, the Luo of Kenya, or Zulus of South Africa or any other ethnic group … . Granted that in a matter of details there may be differing manifestations, nevertheless there are common denominators, the common core of African culture (1978: XIII).

It is these characteristics that are distinctive of Africa that could be referred to as the African culture. This is very true considering the migrating patterns within Africa. King-Aribisala (1991) acknowledges, 'almost every population has come from elsewhere' (37). For instance, such tribes as Sumbwa, the Bantus Lunda and Songhai migrated either as conquerors, warriors, pastoralists or as traders to various regions and they spread and transmitted their own social cultures to those with whom they have come in contact. Indeed, migration within and among the African people ultimately helped to spread specific cultural practices that constitute the homogeneity of the African culture, a common African inheritance or what King-Aribisala calls, 'Africanity', a term she adopts to reconcile the cultural multiplicity of the African people. This is what Nelson Fashina, (2008), refers to as 'several cultural genetic factors' which foreground a 'sense of nationalism and pan-Africanist consciousness' (61). This ultimately calls for 'the need to create a theory of Africanism and Blackness, … distilled from the homogeneous pattern of

emotive and mythical interpretations of values in contrast to the European induced images and conceptions of our universe'. Fashina is reacting against such fallacious claim that the idea of African society in its continental dimension is non-existent simply because of its large geography and minute cultural differences. With these instances, African homogeneity cannot be in doubt considering several obvious realities that distinguish its world view.

The place of the land in African cosmology is one ready instance of this commonality of values; the concept of the land among Africans goes beyond its conceptualisation as a mere solid part of the earth surface. As King-Aribisala opines, 'the land is usually regarded in a mystical sense and also as a link between man and his ancestors. It is a relation which is at the very centre of African world view' (40). This perception is so grounded in the psyche of Africans that even the torture of slavery could not erase it, as 'it persisted in the New World where in African religions, offerings were made to the land and rivers in the name of American Indians who were thought to own the land'. This practice is a common one among many African cultural groups. This is why despite the distant geographical separation, black West Indian writers have continued to make actual or imaginative pilgrimages to Africa in an attempt to rediscover their ancestral roots. In as much as this establishes a cherished sense of cultural affinity, it also awakens the reality that severe them from their roots and a resultant morbid sense of loss.

The veneration of the land underlies the composite dimension of African world view. According to Igboin (2011):

> The universe from the African understanding is a composite one; a blending of the divine, spirit, human, animate and inanimate beings, which constantly interact with one another. These visible and invisible elements that comprise the African cosmology are what have been referred to as the "forces of life" or "vital forces". The vital forces are hierarchically structured in such a way that God, the creator of the universe is at the top (98).

It is within this purview that African cultural practices are modelled, values entrenched and societies thrive. It is this way of understanding the cosmic forces that the abominable and the admirable are distinguished and constantly observed in various parts of African societies. Respect for and sacredness of human life, aversion against obscenity,

communality of living and general sense of morality are all anchored within this shared view.

Osofola (1978) identifies attitude to marriage as another veritable example that signals a sort of cultural cohesion among Africans. Marriage institution in Africa 'has the characteristics of solidifying the relationship between two different families or lineages, rather than between two individuals only. ... This contrasts with Western societies in which emphasis is placed on the union of the two individuals that are immediately concerned' (6). This difference also occurs on the issue of bride-wealth. In many African societies it is usually provided by the family of the bridegroom to the bride's family and not vice versa as could be the case elsewhere. This may take different forms in different societies but it serves the singular purpose of 'giving sanction and legality to the union'. For example, among the Igbo, the Yoruba and some other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the bride-wealth is paid in the form of money. It is known as 'Iobola among the Bantus of South Africa; and the Kikuyu and all the people of Kenya in the area of east Africa … cattle serves the important purpose' (7). In some cases when the individual is unable to provide this, the members of the family are obliged to supply the cattle. Highlighting the importance of family involvement in the marriage process in Africa, Osofola further observes that in Igbo land, during the marriage ceremony, each member of the families '(seven persons from each family) is made to come forward while eating a kolanut, that woe betide him if he could see the doom of the families concerned and not take steps to avert it'. These elements of culture are not formulated to bring encumbrance into human life or to instigate meddlesomeness but obviously to create a virile and stable traditional institution that guarantees, to a large extent, a harmonious living.

Osofola identifies some other cultural commonalities of the African people to include the functionality of their music and art, their mode of dressing, the organisation and system of their governments and their philosophy of absolute justice. Osofola argues that against the Western 'tendency to compartmentalise the arts and divorce them from the aspects of everyday life' (7), the African art is integral to daily societal activities ranging from war, hunting, homage to the king, harvesting and so forth. In fact, among the Hutu in Rwanda, there are twenty four recognized general social songs as distinguished from religious songs. This is against the Western perception of 'pure' art. In clear terms, African arts are closely related to the people, they are functional; they are applied and not created for their

own sake. Achebe acknowledges this much when he affirms that his own kind of art is applied.

The idea of clothing is obviously not alien to the ancient African. This is evident in the ancient looms of Africa. As Osofola argues, 'it cannot be conceived that the cloth produced in such tasking intricate endeavours were made for the fun of it' (8). What is perhaps strange is the strict enforcement of the use of cloth by the missionaries. 'The missionary being preoccupied by sex himself had emphasized the continuous wearing of clothes and thus the concealment of sex-organs as pre-requisite for Christian conversion.' This however has not totally erased the African style of dress in that such dresses are sown to suit the climatic conditions of Africa and also reflect the African artistic design and embroideries. So, while the traditional western suit is made to conserve the little heat available in their temperate region, *agbada* and *lapa* are open on the sides to let in fresh air to mitigate the effect of the African tropic heat. In the same vein, 'whereas in Europe or in most Western societies there exists a form of legislative setting in which the government and opposition sit opposite each other, in most or all parts of the African societies having political organisation, the opposition and government sit together'. This undoubtedly highlights the major principle base of democracy and underscores it in African traditional mode of governance. This constructs a platform where the philosophy of absolute justice, of selflessness, loyalty and high morality was entrenched.

The attempt here is not to create a perfect image of Africa's past, neither is there any effort here to describe the African culture as a perfect model free of the destructive flames of human passion. As a matter of fact, the ignoble cases of internecine wars, killing of twins, burying a king with the heads of innocent victims are few of the abhorrent practices that the modern world has learned about the continent with a shudder. It is also important to acknowledge the fact that through the process of acculturation, many African cultural practices have been better refined and bad ones gone extinct as a result of contact with the other civilisations. The killing of twins, banishing of people afflicted with strange diseases are some of the cultural practices that have been corrected by these contacts. The embarrassing and inhuman treatment that sickle-cell patients were subjected to because they were presumed to be possessed by evil spirits is another example of such detestable practices. They were referred to as 'Ogbanje' by the Igbo or 'Abiku' by the Yoruba of Nigeria, and were thought to have basically set out to torment their parents. The effort here

is to simply establish the fact that Africa, complex and diverse as its peoples are, has very many elements of cultural commonality that can be distinguished as African. What is interesting in this survey, it must be emphasized, is that many of these practices that are homogeneous carry with them abiding forces of strong positive communal values that can help to maintain a stable and progressive society when wholeheartedly observed and consciously reinvigorated.

All these identified cultural models, bad or good, that run through several parts of the continent unfortunately have been roundly denigrated, demonized and torn into shreds through the combined experiences of the slave trade, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and now globalisation. All these could, in simple terms, be viewed as consequences of culture contact. What exploration and Trans Atlantic Slave Trade started, colonialism came to accomplish, thereby bringing into reality an unprecedented culture shift among many regions of Africa. Onoge's (1984) insight here is of essence:

> … the coloniser did not stop at the conquest of the pre-capitalist relations of production. The cultural superstructure was also a major target of assault in order to bring about a new collective consciousness and individual psychological habits favourable to the advance of the violent installation of the capitalist economy. This cultural assault is what today is summed up by the expression 'cultural imperialism' (463).

The process of executing this was an outright ban of traditional productions and performance of sculpture, dances, and songs on the grounds that 'they were pagan pollution in the Christian colonial theocracies'. Onoge gives some specific examples in Ranyankyusa and Agikuyu where 'Coming-out' ceremony of age groups, an important occasion for dramatic performance of democratic transfer of political power from one generation to another, was banned.

In clear terms, this long historic peculiarity of the African continent is not lost on the creative ingenuity of African writers over the years. If anything, it has stimulated their imaginative impulse as they combine the twin responsibilities of recreating the sullied images of the continent and writing back to the former colonial empires to convey the damage inflicted on the continent in this long process of contact. It is with this Afrocentric outlook that postcolonial criticism began to hold sway on the continent as a preferred platform to respond adequately.

With the short narrative of Olaudah Equiano and other ex-slaves' narratives, Thomas Mfolo's *Chaka*, Achebe's, Armah's and Ngugi's novels, African writers, at home and in the diaspora have published novels that are heavily laden with this deep historic, political and cultural significance that has become a core existential paradigm on the continent. As Booker (2009) accurately captures it:

> …. the African novel, as a whole, is more intensively engaged with politics and history than is its European counterpart. Among other things, the African novel itself received a tremendous injection of energy from the historical phenomenon of decolonisation, which infused that novel with a sense of historical urgency and a desire to contribute to the construction of viable postcolonial cultural identities for the new African nations (141).

However, this assertion does not totally preclude European novels from evident historicity. With reference to Ian Watt's account on the rise of European novel, Booker observes that the rise of the African novel has much in common with that of Europe as both are inspired by historical factors. While colonial experiences and contacts of cultures influenced the African novel, the emergence of the middle class and a set of nouveau riche following the discovery of the New World. It is this European experience that mostly provided the thematic direction that sustained the Victorian novel.

Irele (2009) observes that 'it is in Achebe's work that the African experience is brought into definite focus, and assumes its full human and narrative scope in the modern novel. His redefinition of the terms of the fictional representation of Africa established the novel as a modern narrative genre on the African continent, indeed, as an autonomous mode of imaginative life in Africa' (9). The detailed grasp and masterful depiction of Igbo ethos of communal living and individual awareness that underlies and legitimises Achebe's imaginative expression has given powerful impulse to the effort by other writers to convey the sense of a specific location in the world that his work evinces. Achebe's influence is wide and varied. The clusters of Igbo novelist that emerged after him may well constitute a school spawned by his example. As Irele observes, the names that readily comes to mind include Flora Nwapa, Onuora Nzekwu, John Munonye and, most memorably, Elechi Amadi, 'whose compelling novel, *The Great Ponds*, represents the most convincing effort deployed by this group in the ethnographic grounding of the African novel' (10). But the example of Achebe has been extended in other directions by non-Igbo writers such as

T.M. Aluko and especially Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for whom an affective bond with Kikuyu culture and traditions provides the foundation for his imaginative reliving of the Kenya Emergency in his first three novels.

Irele identifies the principal figures in the development of the short story as a subgenre along this cultural and historical sustained narrative of the African literature as Ousmane Sembene (Voltaiques) and Henri Lopes (Sans Tam-Tam) on the Francophone side, and on the Anglophone, Grace Ogot, Charles Mungoshi (The Setting Sun and Rolling Hills), and especially the South Africans, who have distinquished themselves in the genre: Nadine Gordimer, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Richard Rive, Alex La Guma, Njabulo Ndebele, Mzamane Mbulelo. Outstanding recent work includes Funso Aiyejina's *The Legend of the Rockhills* and Anthonia Kalu's *Broken Lives*, a collection that connects directly with Achebe's *Girls at War*.

Like Achebe and most of other first generation African writers, Ngugi sees history as a crucial ground upon which contemporary African writers must challenge the cultural legacy of colonialism. For the fact that Ngugi's novels seem to be more chronological in the portrayal of the devastating effects of globalisation and culture derailment in Africa, a quick recourse to the trends of his work, as provided by Irele, will suffice. Ngugi's first published novel (and the first modern novel to be published by an East African writer) is *Weep Not, Child* (1964). This novel focuses particularly on the Mau Mau rebellion against British rule in Kenya from 1952 to 1956. *The River Between* (1965) meditates on the conflict between traditional and modern values in the Gikuyu society of colonial Kenya, a conflict caused by the impact of colonisation. Following this paradigm in Ngugi's literary output include *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), and the more radical *Petals of Blood* (1977), Caitaani Mutharaba-ini (1980, this was published in English translation as *Devil on the Cross*, 1982), and Matigari ma Njiruugi (1986, English translation *Matigari* 1987). It is perhaps for Ngugi's consistent engagement of the imperial dominance that Simon Gikandi (2000) opines, 'if one wanted to understand cultural nationalism in central Kenya in 1920s, one turned to Ngugi' (23). In all these novels, Ngugi exemplifies the African writers' consistent challenge to the cultural legacy of colonialism and its reprehensible consequences. Undoubtedly, many modern African writers remain consistent with this trend, projecting, in a very vigorous manner, Africa in this recent wave of global cultural fusion. It is clear that the advent of colonialism in the continent initiated and entrenched

the ethos of white supremacy, thereby tearing these shared systems of beliefs and norms into shreds.

Ultimately, this brings us to see how the ongoing tide of globalisation has impacted several cultures. Akande (2002) blames globalisation for the extinction of 22,000 indigenous cultures in the last decade and projects that approximately 90 percent of the world's languages will disappear in the next century as a result of globalisation. From this point of view, there have undoubtedly been observable changes in Nigerian cultures, for example, in the last decade. Ogunjimi and Na'Allah (2005:36) opine that the peculiar Nigerian cultural values, like languages, are being eroded by the pop culture brought about by globalisation. Greeting norms, cuisine, appearance and dress, customs, occupations, religions and other cultural components are giving way to acculturation, 'the suppression and subjugation of African culture,' a tragic phenomenon that is fast destroying the original cultural complexion of not only the budding generation but even the adults. The individualistic trend which has pervaded several levels of society is just one of such many instances.

Oni (2005) sees Nigerian cultures as being weak when compared with western culture and, consequently, bound to lose in a battle against western culture. He laments that the situation in Africa today is so pathetic because of the gradual admittance of western culture to the detriment of African cultures. 'Africa has consequently changed from a land of culture, nature; of tradition and rural setting where the cockcrow signals the dawn of a new day. The worship and belief of gods and goddesses has been washed away by belief and worship of the one God' (1). In this argument, Oni appears to place all the blames of African failure in different fronts on globalisation, not minding the inevitable cultural dynamics that are capable of displacing certain cultural practices. Also, the question is not about African culture being weak, it is about Africans being confronted by a stronger power that displaces their once thriving cultural practises.

The negative effects of globalisation seem to be more conspicuous among the youths. Oni (2005) observes that Nigerian youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and that this could be seen in the alien culture which they portray; their bizarre dressing, dancing, language and so on which invariably affect other aspects of social life. However, this is not peculiar to Nigerian youths. Nicolaides (2012) makes a similar observation about

South African youths. The younger generation of teenagers in South Africa have, for the most part, abandoned their African culture and language, and often religion and 'try to be hip by imitating their mainly American rap artist role models who for most part display an acute lack of values and act immorally on television shows and promote promiscuous behaviour especially in the lyrics of the music they write' (123). These are the youths who are supposed to transmit the culture from one generation to the other. Therefore, it could be deplorable when they fail to imbibe the cultural heritage of their forbearers. As Bello and Adesemoye (2012) opine, teenagers and youths generally are vital segments of the society who could be instrumental in promoting African values.

The negative effects of globalisation on African culture would appear inexhaustible as several opponents of globalisation would argue. However, a balanced and unprejudiced presentation will require that it is important to also acknowledge the positive impacts of globalisation on the people's ways of life, and to also critically examine the situation to see the extent to which globalisation is actually responsible for these negativities. The important question is without globalisation, would African cultures have still been in their pristine state? Culture is never static, it evolves over time. The trajectory of this evolution is influenced by, among other things, the changes in the immediate environment in which a given group of people exists, changes in the spirituality of the people involved, which could be positively or negatively affect their perception of right and wrong. So, with or without globalisation some of these cultures may not have remained static till date. It is important to realise that some of the things that are considered to be among the negative effects of globalisation on culture may not be entirely so even when they may be alien to the indigenous people. It is also important to realize that globalisation may not necessarily be responsible for some of the bad aspects of our culture that it is being blamed for – crime, corruption, and sexual promiscuity. Some of these social aberrations usually blamed on globalisation, even if in a smaller scale, were not totally absent in African society before the advent of the white man. The multiciplity of these deviations may as well be traced to the growth in population.

Beyond these issues, African has benefited to a large extent from globalisation in various aspects of life. Prior to the modern society, the use of town criers who relied on only on the raw strength of human vocal power and a gong, was the most efficacious practice of our mass communication. The demerits and limitations of this mode of communication are

obvious, especially when compared with what can be achieved with the internet and other modern gadgets used for mass-communication today. And this suggests, ultimately, that globalisation, no matter its shortcomings, has become inevitable. It is these modern developments that have facilitated the new thinking about a global culture.

The prospects of forming or identifying an integrated global culture has been said to be impossible over the years. The reason for this position has been the lack of a single world state to drive the basic cultural frontiers. However, recent realities have proved that a world state is not absolutely necessary for an integrated global culture. As Featherstone (1990) argues:

> If we … try to employ a broader definition of culture and think more in terms of processes, it might be possible to refer to the globalisation of culture. Here we can point to cultural integration and cultural disintegration processes which take place not only on an inter-state level but processes which transcend the state-society unit and can therefore be held to occur on a trans-national or trans societal level (1).

Therefore, it is possible to point at trans-societal cultural processes. It implies, therefore that cultural formation may then begin to transcend particular cultural boundaries. The binary logic which seeks to comprehend culture via the mutually exclusive terms of homogeneity/heterogeneity, integration/ disintegration, unity/diversity, must be rigorously questioned. At best, these conceptual pairs work on only one face of the complex prism which is culture. Rather we need to inquire into the grounds, the various generative processes involving the formation of cultural images and traditions as well as the inter-group struggles and interdependencies, which led to these conceptual oppositions becoming frames of reference for comprehending culture within the state society, which then become projected onto the globe.

This is why according to Featherstone, 'Post modernism is both a symptom and a powerful cultural image of the swing away from the conceptualisation of global culture less in terms of alleged homogenising processes especially with theories which present cultural imperialism, Americanisation and mass consumer culture as a proto-universal culture riding on the back of Western economic and political domination' (2). In other words, globalisation is purveying some consciousness that cannot be totally located within a

given cultural homogeneity. It is this overtly prevailing circumstance that has brought to the fore the concept of Afropolitanism.

In her 'Bye Bye Babar!' Selasi fully identifies herself with this new identity when she observes:

> Afropolitans – 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, … others merely cultural mutts … 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. …we are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world (2005: np).

These are those she refers to as people of 'multi-locals' in her October, 2015 Ted Talk. This class of people has been influenced by multifaceted cultural influences that could qualify them as global citizens with natal and, often, traceable ancestral affinity to Africa. This is unmistakably a new identity formation that is not only midwifed by sometimes untraceable cultural flux but ultimately engineered by intractable forces of globalisation. The literary import of such hybridised personality is already being explored by the acclaimed Afropolitans themselves in the league of Teju Cole, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Selasi herself among others who have launched themselves into the vanguard of transnational literature.

It is perhaps because of the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that earlier prompted Bhabha to seek to replace historicity with temporality in inscription of political entities as he opines:

> I am attempting to write of Western nation as an obscure and ubiquitous form of living the *locality* of culture. This locality is more around temporality than about historicity: a form of living that is more complex than 'community'; more symbolic than 'society'; more connotative than country; patriotic than *patrie*; … more psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural difference and identifications that can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism (1994: 140).

Bhabha has already articulated the nexus that underlie this multifaceted identity that Selasi is attempting to define. As a matter of fact, distinguishing historicity and temporality as

Bhabha attempts to do may not really salvage the situation as both are not mutually exclusive especially with respect to issues concerning culture. Indeed, the temporal may not be well established without the historicity. However, it is important to note that where history is blurred into oblivion, temporality becomes the extant cultural model. In the main, identity formation remains pivotal in Bhabha's argument.

It is therefore germane to examine the thoughtfulness of Al-Thani's position in this argument. The Qatar born patron of artists, storytellers and film makers in her presentation on December 10, 2012 observes:

> Research has shown that the more the world is flat, … or global, the more and more people are wanting to be different. And for us young people they are looking to become individuals and find their differences amongst themselves. … We don't want to be all the same, but we want to respect each other and understand each other. And therefore tradition becomes more important not less important (np).

This does not only underlie the glaring fact of multiculturalism that has become the reality of the modern world but also highlights an instinctive nativist pride and the need for a reciprocal respect, as against a hegemonic outlook latent in globalisation. In other words, the necessity for a global world has become inevitable but the security and sense of ownership and identity that goes with local culture is equally irreducible. As the world is progressively bound together by the collective forces of globalisation the urge to differ surges even more especially among those whose homogenous cultural identity are threatened by the bigger cultures; they struggle to defy a wholesome congealing of varied cultural vagaries into an indistinct large entity. For this, she advocates what she refers to as, borrowing from Richard Wilk, 'globalising the local, localising the global', a term that centralizes Al Mayasa's argument and properly fits in as the title of the talk. This position is akin to the idea that compels the demand of thinking globally and acting locally. It also accentuates Ngugı wa Thiong'o's *Globalectics* (2012), where the challenge is for us to break out of the 'prison houses' of language, the ivory tower, and the imaginary centres. This agrees with Fashina's (2010) position when he argues that 'it is only by providing an African alternative as contribution to the global melting pot of cultural and intellectual hegemonies that Africa would not lose her own powers of identity to the politics of global negotiation' (10). Mignolo (2007) terms this de-linking. Siskind (2010) reflects this

thought by examining the position of the novel in the entire globalisation enterprise. Nativism appears to be a distinguishing emblem in Al Mayasa's, Ngugi's, Fashina's and Mignolo's arguments that can draw the distinctions despite the growing realities which have made narrowing the gap of distance in the world a universal imperative.

From the foregoing, it is evident that culture is very central in the thought and being of the human race. It is the carrier of individual and community predilections and ultimately defines their responses to existential pressures and how to navigate them. In essence, culture is everything. Most importantly, culture changes and, in each instance, meets resistance and tension. For the most part, contact of cultures becomes the most radical way of provoking new cultural models that permeate a vast mass of people. This therefore underlies the fact that culture is not necessarily just about the past or the origin of things, even though they are important considerations, but about what we are and what we have become. Globalisation does the errand for dynamism of culture in this regard. It is along this line of thought that Pieterse opines:

> Globalisation and culture is a live-wire theme in constant flux—in lifestyles, cross-cultural encounters, migration, global-local relations, music, media, movies, marketing, fashion, cuisine, and so forth. As the dynamics of globalisation change—and in the twenty-first century they are changing markedly, even dramatically—so do not just the tides but the shorelines of culture (2009: XII).

The reality emerging, so far, is that globalisation permeates virtually all aspect of our modern life: from physical and direct conquering and reign over a territory to a more subtle but increasingly pervasive approach of cultural domination. The changes, in this regard, will manifest in various cultural changes and flows over time. And with the influence of globalisation, cultural influence does not need to be one dimensional. As Pieterse further observes, 'centuries of South-North cultural osmosis have resulted in intercontinental crossover culture. European and Western culture are *part* of this global mélange' (76). This is obviously the case if we bring to mind the fact that Europe, until the fourteenth century, was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from the Orient. The implication of this fact is that the Western hegemony was a later development. As Pieterse observes, 'The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent time, from 1800 and, arguably, from industrialization'.

The tension generated in the global process, definitely, engenders a new way of life and a new form of identification. Individuals involved in this unrelenting cultural mix will be subjected to a certain kind of cultural formation that cannot be located in any specific homogenous culture. Such individuals, therefore, form different sense of subjectivity that can be located within the borderlines of liminal identification. Most of the literary expressions examined in this chapter focuse largely on colonialism as a brand of globalisation project and how it affects perceptions and cultural identification. It, therefore, becomes important to examine the critical views on the selected text for this study. This will enable us to find out to what extent critics have engaged the texts and the gap that has not been filled in this regard.

2.4 Engaging critical perspectives on the selected texts

The primary texts analysed in this research have not gained a considerable amount of critical engagement as would have been expected. This is largely because most of these texts are relatively recent. While some of the texts have attracted more critical attention than others, the evident liminal status of some of the major characters in the texts has remained largely marginal in the body of critical works available. In this sub-section, efforts are geared towards a review of some of the critical works on the selected texts in order to establish the critical intervention that this current research attempts to engage in.

Of all the texts selected for this study, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* appears to have enjoyed the most critical attention. Critics have acknowledged the transnational trajectory of the novel and its manifest global consciousness (Hallemeier, 2015), (Pahl, 2015), (Levine, 2015) (Sackeyfio, 2017), (Androne, 2017), (Cruz-Gutierrez, 2017), (Ndigirigi, 2017) and (Mcmann, 2018). Hallemeier, for instance, reads the text as a national allegory that depicts the economic realities that underlie the migratory push among many Africans and the trail of global capitalism in negotiating financial success. According to Hallemeier, 'the global capitalism that *Americanah* depicts is as a whole distinctly patriarchal in character' (238).With some transnational instances in the text, Hallemeier argues that economic success in the capitalists economies of America, United Kingdom and Nigeria is dependent on establishing relationship with relatively wealthy men. Hallemeier argues that Ifemelu's successes and her subsequent financial independence through her white male friend, Curts, projects American slightly different from a dominant patriarchal system of patronage in global capitalism. While Nigerian

patriarchal patrons demand almost life-time dependence from their beneficiaries, the patronage in Britain requires some rigorous bureaucratic negotiations. Ifemelu's financial success appears to distract Hallemeier from the persistent racism that forms a major burden on Ifemelu's experiences in the United States, an experience that inspires and sustains her blog. While Ifemelu records a substantial economic success in the United States, the question of belonging and acceptance remain persistent in her more than a decade sojourn in the United States.

It is perhaps for this reason that Pahl (2015), while analysing Adichie's and Teju Cole's works, observes that both 'describe experiences of racial discrimination in American society, but they also share an enhanced position in terms of mobility and resources, which is amplified in the differently organized virtual world' (74). Pahl focuses her critical engagement largely on the pervasive strength of the virtual world, the content of the internet and the social media, and their liberating powers and challenging dynamics. As Pahl observes, blog writing empowers Ifemelu socially and economically as it enables her to share critical perspective about diverse issues in the American society, which the chronicle of daily racial experiences dominates. While the internet is seen as a liberating phenomenon in this analysis, the democratic nature of blogging, somehow, appears to dispossess Ifemelu of her own writing. She appears restricted in her agency as a writer by the readership of her blog as the blog develops into a global arena of 'cultural debate' by her multiple and differentiated audience. Pahl's analysis gives us a good understanding of the pervasive presence of the internet and its huge influences on the global world. It is a clear testimony of the indubitable reality of globalisation in connecting people and places and subjecting cultures to interrogations.

Levine's (2015) reading of *Americanah* gives a reinvigorating insight into the understanding of the fictive art in a way that is hardly thought of. Levine attempts to connect the social structures of Adichie's text with the physical infrastructure of daily use, the work of structure and infrastructure and the relationship between them. Levine argues that infrastructures provide networks for social structures. In the world of *Americanah*, the most evident social structure, according to Levine, is racial hierarchy, a gradation 'of the skin colour that ranks white at the top with darker and darker gradations of brown indicating lower and lower status, and a stark hierarchical binary of white and black' (596). Such social structure, therefore, becomes the organized public experiences that are reflected in multiple ways in American society. Levine demonstrates how the lack of

infrastructure of electricity, road and other amenities are responsible in pushing Obinze and Ifemelu to Britain and America respectively only for them to be subjected to the social structure of racism and economic inequality. Levine's position is valid and deep. Levine is able to connect how the portrayal of the ordinary life challenges in such a realist narrative enhances the aesthetic end of the story.

While Levine is able to connect the relatedness between social structures and physical infrastructure, Mcmann (2018) centralises racism as a major social structure in the text. Examining Adichie's *Americanah* and Andrea Leavy's *Small Island*, Mcmann argues that, 'the term "black" is not a stable signifier of race, but materially and geographically contingent' (200). Mcmann examines how the idea of blackness has been reconceptualised in the era of globalisation to go beyond appearance but also include historical affinities. With the help of the mass media and popular culture, race has come to be identified with material contingency. Blackness in this context becomes a signifier of difference, a racially constructed social difference that marks out the characters as the Other. Mcmann observes that the crude categories of black and white in America are based more on the background and national culture than just the skin colour. In other words, while the colour of the skin marks the difference, the difference is beyond the physical appearance, it involves social exclusion. The black figure is therefore constructed as an image of otherness without regard to ethnic differences so that they can be situated at the last wrung of ladder in the American society. While Mcmann identifies a clear social exclusion of the protagonists in the global centre as a result of racism, the character's inability to integrate into the periphery appears to have eluded her critical assessment.

Similarly, while Adrone (2017) views Americanah as a migrant bildungsroman, Ndingrigi (2017) examines the reversal of appropriation where the usual story of a male migrant coming back to Nigeria to pick a wife and go back to the metropolitan space is reversed with Ifemelu, a female character returning to Nigeria to settle after achieving a substantial financial success in the United States. In each of these analyses, the critic focuses on the challenges of diasporic life as well as the cause of physical migration without adequate attention to their inability to reintegrate into the normative values of peripheral global culture.

In his analysis of Adichie's *Americanah* and Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Taylor (2019) brings a new meaning to the contested ground of Afropolitan literature. Using

Afropolitanism as a hermeneutic to engage the two novels, Taylor argues against 'the idea that Afropolitanism is a cultural movement that is solely fixated on representing an elite segment of society' (70). Connecting the texts with shared thematic concerns of cultural hybridity, language and racism, Taylor examines the underlining issues in Afropolitan narratives. This brings to mind instantly, Selasie's seminal essay on Afropolitanism which has been engaged in the earlier part of this work. As an adjudged prototype of Afropolitan narrative, Selasie's *Ghana Must Go* readily comes to mind in this regard. Fan (2017) closely engages Adichie's *Americanah* and Selasie's *Ghana Must Go*, establishing their Afropolitan commitment. Fan examines how the crisis of economic development in nations of Africa 'compel Afropolitan characters to self-Orientalise' (69). Cast between the horrors of failed economy in their native homes and the institutional racism in the United States the characters chart the third path. Fan exemplifies this change in direction in *Americanah,* as he observes that the African students find it easier making friends with the Asian Americans more than black or white Americans. This is further dramatized in the relationship between the African Olu and Asian Ling in *Ghana Must Go*. Through this instance, Fan identifies not only common experiences between the continent represented by the two characters but also certain kind of an Afro-Asian alliance in the new global order. While Fan engages the two texts from the perspective of this new alliance, Phiri (2017) demonstrates how Selasie creatively illuminates the 'cultural and subjective anxiety associated with the negotiation of identitatrian root' (144). Exploring the politics of body and belonging in the text, Phiri examines the Afrodiasporic subjectivity within the purview of Afropolitan contemplations. While Phiri's argument comes close to the concern of this present study, the severe and direct consequences of this phenomenon on the family and larger society hardly gain a considerable attention. Similarly, Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns* has been hardly engaged from the global influence on the formation of liminal characters. Critics rather focus on the transnational connections between Europe and Africa in the novel (Carbacos-Traseira, 2012), Majoub's portrayal of the complexity of European history as well as the evident legacies of colonisation in Africa (Nyman, 2013), Mahjoub's reconfiguring of Europe history, (Muhammad, 2015) and the father-son dyad in the struggle for nationhood, (Qutait, 2017).

NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* is one of the few texts that have received a considerable number of critical attention both as an Afropolitan narrative and a story with obvious global interconnectedness (Frassinelli, 2015), (Ndlovu, 2015), (Toivanen, 2015),

(Arnett, 2016) and (Chitando, 2016). Apart from Chitando (2016) who engages the work as an influential piece of the growing body of Zimbabwean children literature, most critics view *We Need New Names* as a narrative about massive exodus, abandonment and reinvention of heterogeneous identity in the modern global world. While Frassinelli (2015) emphasises the 'affective displacements and ruptures that accompany the experiences of migration' (721), Ndlovu (2015) examines the concept of African identity and nostalgia in the text. Toivanen's (2015) contribution brings the dimension of class in the global migrant studies. Relying on the poor background of the major character, Darling, and her global mobility in *We Need New Names,* Toivanen challenges the traditional conception of the African cosmopolitan as just the educated mobile world citizens. Arnett's focus on the consumerist culture of the poor black focusing on how the text 'offers a critical depiction of collective mourning in response to the failure of democratic elections and underscores politics' utter dependency on economics' (149) in a neoliberal world. In each of these analyses, the dynamics and challenges of ethnoscapes, Appadurai's term for physical migration, appears to dominate the critical concern with little attention to the intense penetration and the global presence in the global south through other elements of global cultural flow that Appadurai has identified.

Reading Nurudin Farah's *Past Imperfect Trilogy* from the perspectives of postcolonial critical thought, Garuba (2017) observes that Farah's Trilogy is suffused with what he refers to as 'teacherly' aesthetics. By this, he means the hierarchical passing down of knowledge from the elite to the people through various academic engagements which the novel is a part. As the concluding text of this trilogy that started with *Links* (2005) and continues with *Knots* (2007), *Crossbones* (2011) becomes part of Garuba's critical enquiry as he examines the concept of home and 'cultural citizenship' in the globalised world. This is in line with Moolla's (2014) observation that question of belonging is central to the trilogy relating Farah's adoption of realism in the text as a result of the his postcolonial thinking. Similarly, Rizuto (2017) examines the interceptions and interferences of 'transnational flow and … connections' as well as piracy as depicted in *Crossbones*. While Medugno (2018) examines the influence of Italian language in the text, McFaul (2020) centralises the exploitative activities of piracy as reflected in Somali literature. While each of these critics has contributed greatly to illuminating various aspects of Farah's *Crossbones*, the huge influence of the global power play and its influence in forming characters within the liminal edge of cultural existence, as well as the Afropessimistic

perspective generated in the process, appear marginal in their analyses. Despite a close thematic affinity between Farah's Crossbones and Mukoma wa Ngugi's Nairobi Heat, it is surprising that the latter has not gained a considerable amount of critical attention, as is seen in the former. Liam's (2014) review and Kitata's (2019) peripheral reference to the text appear to be the most conspicuous mentioning of the *Nairobi Heat* in a serious scholarly engagement. Even though Kitata did not do more than to acknowledge that the text uses 'a global Afropolitan voice in telling a story about Kenya' (2), this positions the text as a transnational narrative of an African tale.

While Kusek (2013) attempts to draw a comparison between Coetzee's earlier works and *Childhood of Jesus*, a novel Coetzee published thirty years after his earlier works, there is a general agreement among critics that much of Coetzee's works bestride allegory and self-referentiality (Bellin, 2013), (Tajiri, 2015), (Jacobs, 2017). The puzzle generated in *Childhood of Jesus* stems from the difficulty in establishing its direct references. Tajiri's view that the story attempts to shift the concept of family as not just about blood relation but love is just one of the possible ways of navigating Coetzee's puzzles in the text. While Jacob's exploration of intertextual reflections on Voltaire, Cervates and Kafka beams the depth of literary kinship in the text, his observation that the text is a migrant story lends credence to the argument of this present research. Despite the depth of their analyses, the critics have not been able to relate the text to the realities surrounding modern globalization. Similarly, Assiar Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* has gained a handful critical attention (Cooper, 2007), (Manzoor, 2017) and (Olusegun-Joseph, 2018). While these critics agree that Djebar poses a challenge to the deeply entrenched gender inequality and patriarchal hegemony through the text, they have not been able to examine the presence of global elements and how they can enhance a new vision of female subjectivity.

It has become clear that some of the texts selected for this present study have attracted varying levels of critical attention. Migration, nostalgia, transnational crime and gender inequality appear to dominate much of the critical attention in these studies. These critics have not engaged the text with the view to explicating the multiple throngs of globalisation as espoused by Appadurai. The scopes of the critical works so far reviewed are also limited. While a few of them have engaged two or three writers without recourse to geographical and gender spread, majority of these works largely focus on a single writer. This does not only deny a closer comparative view of the texts but also neglect

some regions that have literary outputs that address the thematic concern. The present study, therefore attempts to bridge the gap by engaging various elements of globalisation with a particular interest in Appadurai's five elements of global cultural flow in the texts selected. This will enable us to see how each of the elements is deployed in the texts and how each contributes in the formation of liminal characters in the text. Beyond that, the texts selected cuts across the four major regions of the continent in order to have a considerable understanding of the presence of these global realities on the continent and their transformative influences on the continent. Next chapter will engage these texts and examine how the formation of liminal character is reflected across the selected texts.

CHAPTER THREE

AFRICAN FAMILIES IN GLOBAL AND INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TROPES

3.0   Introduction

The overwhelming reality of the global order has engendered diverse consciousness among individuals from various parts of the world. With the fast penetrating global presence into the closets of different homes, the family is very strategic in negotiating the ever increasing global changes. While some families try to build a bulwark against the penetrating influence of these global realities, others adapt to them with warmth. A few families engage the global influences with rigorous interrogation, yet the helplessness, if not indifference, of some others charts another perspective among families in their responses to the emerging order. Whatever response, the global world flourishes with vigour. Family provides a platform that will enable the emergence of personalities who transcend a given indigenous culture.

It is evident that the images and ideas created by the various agents of globalisation are not always neutral; their inflections are dependent on several factors which may pander to vested interests. It is these multifaceted dimensions that best explain 'how newness enters the world' (Bhabha, 1994: 212) in this current wave of globalisation. It is the convergence and, perhaps, the competing projection of diverse cultural orientations through these Appadurai's 'scapes' that has brought about a changing perspective among the characters in the novels selected for this study. The shifting understanding of culture as an epistemological object to 'culture as an enactive, enunciatory site,' as Bhabha (1994:178) observes, has placed cultures at a position of rigorous interrogation, especially in this era of globalisation. While the epistemological is more descriptive, if not prescriptive, 'the enunciatory is a more dialogical process that attempts to track the displacement and realignment that are the effects of articulations and antagonism of culture.' The enunciatory perspective therefore fails to see culture as given, rather, it engages culture with what Bhabha refers to as 'minimal rationality' and not necessarily based on hegemonic imposition. It is on this enunciatory pedestal that varied cultural models are subjected to a more serious interrogation. The controversies generated in the process provide possibilities that would yield a hybrid and liminal form of cultural identification. The position of the family in the embryonic nurturing of cultural orientation instantly

resonates along this thought. The passive or active disposition of the family to emerging cultural orientations, therefore, lays a solid building block for cultural transcendence.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns* and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* evidently leverage the cultural contestation within the nucleus of the family to give a literary projection into the glaring realities of the global order. These realities have manifested, perhaps, in the most obvious form as cultures fade imperceptibly into one another across various distinct geographical entities. This enquiry is not necessarily to search for the very beginnings of these cultures, what Foucault calls the 'silent beginnings', but to interrogate the emergence of a new form of consciousness, 'a new type of rationality and its various effects' (Foucault, 1972:3). It is this new thinking that suspends the continuous accumulation and sustenance of a certain orientation and redirects thoughts and aspirations from one motivation to another. Through this way, mutations, breaks, thresholds and other evidence of change and discontinuity begin to emerge. The cultural mutation of the characters in Adichie's, Jamal's and Selasi's works project what Anderson (1983) refers to 'alchemic absorption,' which is beyond a conversion into religious tenet or simple acquisition of new knowledge. It is a total subsumption into a way of life that is usually perceived to be superior. The physical manifestation of cultural changes which usually results in frontal opposition to long established norms, therefore, becomes an evident symptom of long nurtured habits, right from childhood, fostered by a family's positive disposition or total indifference to a changing world. It is obvious that the family is not the only factor in the socializing process of a child in this regard; however, the influence of the family in moulding perspectives is an undeniable fact in cultural changes and negotiations. This is why Bhabha (1994) sees the family as one of the central institutions that 'articulate the meaning and mores of a tradition' (27).

It is the psychological exploration of the characters in *Americanah*, *Travelling with Djinns* and *Ghana Must Go* that brings the influence of the family as well as continuous changing articulations to the fore. The rapidly increasing global order and its strong influence on the changing perspectives about values and norms are very evident in the activities within the family circle. Family disposition to each of the elements of the new order, somewhat, signals the direction of the shift. This does not, however, rule out some dissents who would insistently go against the tie that drives the familial tide. In the main, the seminal

influence of the family in nurturing and directing behaviour of its members cannot be diminished by a few dissents. As a matter of fact, such family influence usually sustains one through childhood to adult life, forming a kind of identity that distinguishes one family from another even in a particular community. For this reason, it becomes necessary to examine how various families have responded to the global order and how cultural changes are being influenced and how liminal characters are being formed in the process within these families.

3.1   The *Nigerpolitans* in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's third novel, *Americanah,* is another confirmation of a consistent creative deftness in the fictive art of the 1977 born Nigerian author. Having won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize with her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and published her second novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), a historic fiction on Nigeria-Biafra war, as well as a collection of short stories *The Things Around Your Neck* (2009), Adichie has established her place in the art of storytelling in Africa and indeed, the world. Adichie's third novel emerged as one of the ten Best Books of 2013 by the editors of the *New York Times Book Review* (Tunca, 2015). It is this towering height of the American-based Nigerian writer that has made her one of the most discussed authors in the contemporary African literary criticism.

Americanah, no doubt, is a consummate literary piece that examines how the very forces of globalisation have influenced the myriads of characters in different parts of the story. To this end, many categories of characters are variously layered to project the various degrees of these forces. These characters could be classified by looking at the extent of their exposure to the global world and the degree to which they have been affected by such exposure, especially, in relation to their supposed homogenous culture. While some of the characters are portrayed from childhood to adulthood where the effects of these forces are elaborately examined, thereby giving a bildungsroman narrative shot on the characters, the possible consequences of the exposure to the forces of globlalisation on the other groups, however, are left within the imagination of the audience. Prominent among those portrayed within the first category are Ifemelu and Obinze while the second category, though more diverse and multifaceted, can be represented by Dike, Aunty Uju's son. Using a cyclic narrative approach consistently from the beginning to the end of the story, Adichie remarkably offers a new insight into the circumstances that surround the African

in a global world. She questions and at the same time provides explanations to the present situation through the retrospective device of flashback and stream of consciousness or what is now often referred to as 'diasporic stream-of-consciousness', which is often used in the story to accentuate the characters' unhomeliness.

Divided into seven parts, the five hundred and thirty nine page story eminently revolves around two major protagonists: Ifemelu and Obinze. It begins as Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman living in Princeton, New Jersey, prepares for her journey back home as Obinze mails her from Nigeria after so many years of silence between the two former lovers. Obinze who has been deported from the United Kingdom because of his failure to secure a working visa after a botched marriage arrangement with Cleotilde, a black citizen of the UK, has become rich in Nigeria through the influence of his cousin, Nneoma. Sometime after Ifemelu's return, she finally calls Obinze. They spend some weeks together, but later break up again because of Obinze's flourishing marriage. Obinze tries to divorce Kosi, his wife, but she refuses to accept it. Obinze finally comes to Ifemelu's house, after seven weeks of indecision, to announce the abandonment of his family.

Due to the racist frenzy palpable in the story as projected largely by Ifemelu's blogging site and all the racist labels in her blogs, critics appear to have taken racism and women in the diaspora as the only significant subject worthy of interest in Adichie's *Americanah* (Braga and Gonçalves, 2015). But beyond that, even the tripartite setting that traverses Nigeria to the United States and England evidently gives a transnational outlook to the work, thereby, designating it with a global insignia. This also confirms the cyclic nature of the narrative as events emanate and revolves around these three large forces in the three prominent continents of the world in dizzying turns. This, according to Adesanmi and Dunton (2005), 'is what ultimately positions Nigeria's third generation texts at the cross-current of transnational textualities of the Black world in particular and the global south in general' (16). The global outlook of *Americanah* is registered in the work very much early, not just from arrangement of the events in the story as we see Ifemelu already in the United States but even before the sojourn of these two major characters to these global culture capitals, the strong influences of globalisation on their minds are already rife and have remarkably developed right from primary school. A closer insight into the background of these characters would make the situation clearer.

Ifemelu is an Igbo girl who grows up in the metropolitan city of Lagos, Nigeria, where the major mediator between her and the very cultural values of her people are her parents. Unfortunately, her mother has given in to a weird religious belief system, fitfully migrating from one Christian denomination to another. This situation has subsequently turned her away from her ten year old daughter, thereby automatically displacing her motherly guide with Aunty Uju's lascivious orientation. The trouble starts immediately after the mother abandons the Catholic Church, casting her fully adorable hair and all the sacramental into a blaze. The narrator captures it thus, 'the woman who was bald and blank, was not her mother, could not be her mother. When her mother came back inside, Ifemelu backed away … .' (55-56). Even the effort on the part of the mother to hug her closely and provide explanation does not help to fill the chasm already created between mother and daughter. She rejects the hug, she rejects her mother, and the strain created begins to deepen right from this very moment. This, invariably, creates a running battle between the two and, indeed, between Ifemelu and the entire household. This is even made worse when the economic strength of her father is weakened as a result of the loss of his job making the mother the sole bread winner of the family. And the father's decisions therefore, consciously or unconsciously, tilt towards the mother's whims. At that formative age of ten, with all the doubts and confusion that confront the girl, the family fails to provide trust for Ifemelu.

This moment is critical in Ifemelu's personality development. This is the period Freud refers to as the period of identification, period where the child tries to become like someone else, usually a model. According to Freud (1913), 'identification is not simple imitation but *assimilation* on the basis of a similar aetiological pretension; it expresses a resemblance and is derived from a common element which remains in the unconscious' (645). Freud's explanation here is mostly applied to his psychiatric patients who are found behaving in a way similar to another patient who has shared an experience similar to theirs with them. However, identification has also been used for character analysis. According to Allen (2006), 'identification is the process of becoming like same-sex parent' (32). Allen uses the boy-child as an example, arguing that as the boy 'introjects his father's rendition of society's rights and wrongs – his super ego begins to form – thereby takes the final step toward resolving the oedipal complex' (32). Similarly, in Ifemelu's case, the 'aetiological pretension' is gender. Unfortunately, she can no longer identify with her supposed same-sex model, her mother. Uju has become the replacement.

The relationship between Ifemelu and Aunty Uju evidently runs deep and she practically leads Ifemelu through the minute details that transform her into a woman, teaching and guiding her through the essentials, the ludicrous, the mischievous and the mundane. Uju has taught her all she needs to know as a teenage girl. Aunty Uju brought her James Hadley Chase's novels wrapped in newspaper to hide the near naked women on the cover, talked through her menstrual period, supplemented her mother's lecture that was full of biblical quotes about virtue but have no details about pads and cramps. When Obinze shows up, Aunty Uju is the first to know and she advises: 'let him kiss and touch but not to let him put it inside' (70). A young university graduate with charm and aura, who is later to be a mistress to a general in the army, Uju has been exposed greatly to a western lifestyle and Ifemelu is the closest beneficiary. Clearly, Uju's influence is overwhelming and it does not only throw Ifemelu into the realities of the female world but brings her to the full glare of a world outside her cultural horizon, the possibilities that exist in novels, possibilities that can be experimented with and really experienced.

An influence from an older teenager on a younger one is not rare, but what has made this even more interesting is the kind of influence that Uju brings to bear on Ifemelu. Echoing Bhabha, Hron (2008) observes that the space of childhood is a space of hybridity, possibility and most importantly resistance. The precarious passage from childhood to adulthood could therefore be seen as a hybrid interstice, a situation Bhabha himself describes as 'the inter – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space that carries the burden of a culture' (38). The argument here may not necessarily be on the *tabula-rasa* state of the mind of the child but the fact that personality is constructed within a given cultural orientation from childhood. It is therefore expected that a figure who has been presented as a role model exerts a lot of influence on the child and helps the child to resolve numerous agitations that confront him or her. Such is the situation between Ifemelu and Aunty Uju. This places Adichie's narrative as a story of maturation. Uju has totally displaced Ifemelu's mother who shies away from exposing the girl to and educating her on the realities of female teenage life. So, Ifemelu finds Aunty Uju a more realistic and reliable confidant than her own mother. It is this rift in the family that prepares the intrusion of the global influences that transcends her above her supposed indigenous culture, thereby bringing her within the liminal space.

Unlike Ofunne in Uloma Azua's *Sky High Flames*, a typical African young girl whose entire destiny has been channelled and modelled towards domesticity in preparation for marriage, Ifemelu, as a city girl, is liberated from stifling patriarchy or rigid cultural encumbrances. She grows and matures with multiple possibilities lining up to embrace her destiny. Her outstanding success later in life may as well be attributed to this foundation. Unlike, Kambili in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* whose father's warped piety puts fetters around her, Ifemelu has rather been encouraged, even if tacitly, to tow Aunty Uju's footstep, at least for economic survival. In the main, Ifemelu has been nurtured with little or no cultural anchor to her indigeneity.

Indeed, it is her meeting with Obinze that brings together and makes firm all these budding fragments of her personality formation. It is Kayode's birthday party that first brings Obinze and Ifemelu together in the real sense of it. This party is very important in the narration and relevant in this analysis because it assembles and defines to a very large extent the category of the characters within the critical focus of this analysis. It is in that event, almost free from any indigenous cultural restraint, that the unbridled Ifemelu and elitist Obinze intuitively express their love and instantly become intense lovers. Such a birthday party, organised in the absence of both parents, the supposed cultural bearers, in a palatial mansion located in a highbrow area of Ikoyi, Lagos, with bottles of Brandy gin, blasting of Toni Braxton's music and the like, re-enacting of *Mills and Boon* romances, frolicking, and introducing one another's boyfriends and girlfriends does not only explain the elitist class of the characters involved, but also points to the obvious case of cultural flight manifest among them. The children are left in a high sense of excitement, allowing their passion to run free. In the absence of the father figure, with the moderating temperament of character control and possible enforcement of punitive measures, the children's id-driven self-satisfaction runs wide. Though living in Nigeria where such excesses are strongly reprehensible, their cultural orientation is fostered and driven by foreign cultural influences which differ considerably from those in their natal environment. This in essence, establishes the real influence of globalisation and its elements, involving in clear terms Appadurai's '-scapes' in a closely knitted overlap as they contribute in enhancing hegemonic dominance. The ethnoscapes, as expounded by Appadurai, involves 'the landscapes of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups'. Kayode, the chief celebrant at the birthday party, spends every vacation in his parent's

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home in London. Just like the British accented Yinka who also lives in her father's house in Ikoyi but goes on vacation in England regularly as well. This life style has created a similar behavioural pattern that has coloured the lives of these children which, in the first, instance is the major determinant for their friendship and each person's acceptance into the fold. Within a relatively homogenous culture, these characters create a new class that is better described as the third space.

Even those who have not physically made any sojourn across the borders have already culturally migrated through the ubiquitous forces of what Appadurai calls the 'mediascapes'. This image-centred medium of globalisation has a way of crystallizing real and imagined circumstances and strongly etching them into the unconscious. This prominently helps in the building of the 'imagined world' that ultimately triggers the desire for not only psychological migration but also a physical one. *Mills and Boons* represents many of those films and cartoons that do not only awaken the strong sense of sensuality, lewdness and unrestrained romantic passion in the child but also glamourises the West and automatically transfers the child from their immediate African cultural milieu, first mentally, and then engenders a fierce craving for abandonment of home and its cultural leanings.

This is Appadurai's argument when he posits:

> The lines between the 'realistic' and the fictional landscapes are blurred, so that the further away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct 'imagined worlds' which are chimerical, aesthetics, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world (299).

The utter blurring of the line between the reality and the imagined worlds does not only nurture the quest for extraterritorial sojourn but also establishes the life pattern showcased on the screen as the ideal that must be emulated. In such a way, the media entrenches a similar culture across varied continents and regions. And that is why such over glamourised display is completely demystified and gradually dissolved into a frustrating dystopia with Ifemelu's eventual arrival in the United States as she comes face to face with the rag-tag of the inner city.

Even though not explicitly mentioned in this category, literature is also an indispensable component of 'mediascape' that carries such images in the printed form. Appadurai limits the components of his 'mediascape' to newspapers, magazine, television stations, and film production studios but his inclusion of plots, characters and textual forms (the very elements of literature) in describing these components, plainly, enlists literature into this fold. This can be better understood with the reference earlier made in this work about the horrifying and despicable imaging of Africa by European authors and the subsequent perception of the continent by the Europeans in their attempt to legitimise colonialism. The 'mediascape' is therefore a modern and more graphic extension of the role of literature in the globalisation process, especially with its direct visual appeal. In *The Danger of a Single Story*, (2009), Adichie captures how her early exposure to the literature of the West creates her first perception of Europe and 'how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children'. According to Adichie,

> … at the age of seven I wrote exactly the kinds of story I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out. Now, despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria, I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about weather, because there was no need to. My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. And for many years afterwards I would have a desperate desire to taste a ginger beer (2009: np).

It is this experience that Adichie has captured and realistically dramatised in her fictional narrative, *Americanah*. The thrillers of James Hadley Chase, which are introduced to Ifemelu by Aunty Uju, are the earliest objects of charm that draw Ifemelu and Obinze close. The conversation between the two lovebirds on the first day of their meeting drives home the point as Obinze makes the first observation:

'I saw you holding a James Hadley Chase, near the lab. And
I said, Ah, correct, there is hope. She reads.'

'I think I have read them all.'

'Me too. What is your favourite?'

'*Miss Shumway Waves a Wand.*'

'Mine is *Want to Stay Alive?* I stayed up one night to finish
it.'

Yes I like that too (76).

The same way, they read Sheldon with unimaginable enthusiasm, Ludlum with a ravishing gusto, Archer with unquenchable voracity. They are glued from the beginning till the end of each of these alluring thrillers, absorbing the overwhelming influences of the stories into their unconscious. Here, the influence of the content of the stories is as strong as the categorization that goes with those who read such stories, the pride of their belongingness. It is this assumed belongingness that categorises them differently and marks their collective distance from the cultural consciousness of their indigeneity. They are the 'ajebutters', as Ifemelu would describe the children of the elites. This ultimately establishes the tie, and it is progressive; seeing her with the book pulls the first string, sitting and discussing the books stamps and confirms this belongingness and then the dramatisation of what is so often read.

Ifemelu's boldness hastens us to a comparison with other girls of her age encountered in the early African novel. Ezinma whose confident assertiveness makes her the darling of her father, Okonkwo, in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is courageous, but no where in the narrative is her boldness portrayed in such amorous display, hidden or open. Total obedience to the directives of the parents, especially by the female child, is usually portrayed as a mark of virtue in the early narratives. A practical example is Ezinma's strict adherence to her father's order not to accept any suitor while on exile in Mbanta until they are back to Umuofia. This paternal instruction and the instant compliance to it does not only contrast Ifemelu's rebellious inclination but also shows how a society gets transformed. A society that was previously run by paternal dictates has been displaced by the child's will and self-determination. This is perhaps another way that Adichie has chosen to challenge what Foucault (2002) calls *The Order of Things*, 'that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one another' (xxi). As a matter of fact, in most early African fictions most girls under the

shelter of their parents are rather self-effacing, it was considered a virtuous attribute. And even some married women who are less exposed to this global influence still carry along such girlish shyness. For instance, Kosi, the girl Obinze married after returning from England, and her friend, Isioma, also portray the courteousness that society expects of them. As Obinze observes of the latter, 'the few things she allowed herself to say were thoughtful, but she often remained silent, shrinking herself, pretending not to be intelligent, as she was to salve Jonathan's (her husband's) ego' (426).

Ifemelu is clearly of a different stock. She has been greatly influenced by a different force: the overwhelming force of globalisation, extricating herself from the docility and bashfulness that her culture tends to assign her. This also obviously marks the shift and the difference in the characterisation of the girls in earlier fiction and Ifemelu, thereby underlining the influence of a world in transition. With this, the tie Appadurai seeks to establish between the 'mediascape' and 'ideoscape' secures more credence as he argues that the 'two are closely related landscape of images' (298). While the former propagates varied images, the latter accompanies it with ideas and thoughts. It is, therefore, hegemonic. The shift in characterisation is, clearly, as a result of new ideas and perception, a changing worldview. This understanding agrees with Blommaert and Donckt's (2002) argument that 'it is one of the main assumptions of globalisation studies that multiple cultures can exist in one space and that, conversely, one culture can be produced in different spaces' (38) which, in essence, breeds a certain kind of cultural crossfire. This situation is evident in Adichie's juxtaposition of these two sets of characters: Isioma and Kosi on the one hand and Ifemelu and Aunty Uju on the other.

Aunty Uju's case is another interesting instance that demonstrates that what was once a taboo can later be exploited as an economic means of survival in the same society at different periods. According to Nwoye (2011), in most villages in Igbo land,

> … at least, in the past, if a girl became pregnant, a palm tree on the bank of a stream dedicated to women would ripen. At night, young boys and girls, in groups, would carry garbage and sing obscene, satirical songs, to the accompaniment of staccato rhythm, to the pregnant girl's homestead and dump the garbage there. Such a dance of shame is understood as a social stigma among the Igbo (310).

Such stigma is not borne out of sheer hate, it is a society's way of curbing promiscuity. Even though this is regrettably skewed against the girl child, for it ignores the boy who is responsible for the pregnancy, it checked promiscuity to some extent. Adichie uses Uju to project the new society in a different light. Uju opts for a lascivious lifestyle as an easy way to social mobility. She becomes The General's mistress and this opens a bright means of fortune for her. Ifemelu's mother insists that all the money The General splashes on Uju is a direct answer from God to the accumulated prayers of the household. Even as little Ifemelu objects to this so-called divine intervention, her mother attempts to silence her. Ifemelu's father who has maintained a repugnant distance from all the gifts and physical cash from Uju has never given a full-throated condemnation to such gestures. Indeed, he has been one of the beneficiaries. Uju has paid his two-year house rent. It is not even logical to excuse this inability to condemn the gesture on poverty because this is a man who has just lost his job for choosing the part he deems honourable. He has lost his job because of his refusal to yield to the obsequious demands of her boss. It is this silence on, if not approval of, Uju's liberated sex life that makes one wonder if it is not mere hypocrisy on the man's part to lament when Uju announces her pregnancy for The General, outside wedlock. This kind of new economic empowerment runs contrary to the portrayal of women in the early African novel.

Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* readily comes to mind in this regard. Despite the childlessness of the eponymous character, Efuru, her wealth from dint of hard work earns her prominence in a male dominated society. In a similar circumstance in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, Adah has to work and support her family because the so-called bread winner, her husband, cannot provide for the family. Despite numerous challenges she battles with in a foreign land, she must do whatever she can to preserve the dignity of her womanhood and satisfy the basic financial needs of her family. From these examples, it is evident that Adichie is projecting Uju's alternative as an undesirable one, even when the new society appears to embrace it.

It becomes important at this point to explore the return of some of these characters in the story and how their departure has helped to further distance them from their homogenous cultural orientation. Adichie's choice of returnees as major characters in this narrative provides valid instruments to test Gennep's (1960) three major phases in the formation of liminal spaces. The first phase, according to Gennep, is detachment. This is the stage when

an individual is separated from a fixed social cultural structure. It marks the beginning of the journey into the liminal. The second marks the ambivalence of the individual on a new structure and the third indicates the return of the individual 'in a renovated status' to the cultural structure he was taken away from, which is the phase Gennep refers to as 're-aggregation'. Even though Ifemelu and Obinze's psychic detachment predates that of their physical, it is actually their reintegration 'in a renovated status' that climaxes the major conflict in Adichie's story.

Ifemelu's return from the United States awakens a ceaseless feverish tension. The two friends have been inebriated in a lifestyle outside the bounds of their cultural environment very early in life through the instruments of the mediascape, but their physical detachment further strengthens such orientation that has settled within their unconscious as children and teens, thereby creating in them what Bhabha calls 'hybrid interstice'. Not even their disappointment and unhomeliness abroad has successfully erased such deeply etched orientation. Obinze's family crisis highlights the tension involved in re-aggregation. Impelled by a foreign mindset, Obinze, in a swift spur of brutal frankness, announces to his beautiful but relatively provincial wife: 'I am not happy, Kosi. I love somebody else. I want a divorce. I will make sure you and Buchi lack nothing' (2013: 531).

The rudeness of the shock on Kosi is total. She cannot cry; it is beyond tears. She tries to gather herself, and in between pleas and complaints, she sounds a voice of reason in an emotion laden tone:

> It is not about another woman, Obinze. … It's about keeping this family together! ... I am a good wife. We have a marriage. Do you think you can just destroy this marriage because your old friend came into town? Do you know what it means to be a responsible father? You have a responsibility to the child downstairs! … All because you have had an acrobatic sex that reminded you of your time in the university (532).

The implications of this action are obvious but Obinze is no longer in charge of himself. The reason goes far deeper and further than their time in the university to their earlier exposure to cultures and lives of the other climes, which has been long lodged within the recesses of their minds through books, through the media and through Obinze's mother. Okwudiba, for instance, is a fellow returnee and a university graduate as well but had a

different childhood experience and this is portrayed in the advice he gives to Obinze on this matter, 'If your wife has a child for somebody else or if you beat her, that is a reason for divorce. But to get up and say you have no problem with your wife but you are leaving for another woman? Haba. We don't behave like that, please' (533).

Okwudiba and Obinze have a lot in common. Both are good friends and fellow returnees; they share a homogenous cultural identity as Igbo. And that is what Okwudiba stresses when he observes, 'we don't behave like that'. 'We' obviously refers to the cultural identity that both belong to. But what is playing out in Obinze surpasses his conscious will. The reunion of Obinze and Ifemelu brings back the old fun memories that stimulate the libidinal impulse that not only rekindle love but also bring emotion into conflict with norms. It activates the unconscious, the repository of intuitions, long lived experiences and fleeting perceptions. Obinze is ultimately reduced to a helpless agent of wavering passion. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Freud (1966) opines: 'One of the most important educational tasks which society must assume is the control, the restriction of the sexual instinct …; it must be subdued to an individual will that is identical with the mandates of society' (273).

The rift between an individual and norms makes Obinze probe his marriage as a relationship built on falsehood and self-deceit. He refuses to accept Kosi as his truly beloved wife and 'keep seeing' Ifemelu outside his wedlock, as Okwudiba suggests. It is not only treacherous to him but also a clear case of infidelity. Outright divorce appears to be the alternative that Obinze provides for a culture that approves, even if tacitly, male infidelity. But this position seems to be an afterthought. This is because he has been living with this woman without any obvious case of rancour until Ifemelu re-emerges. After all, as Okwudiba has pointed out, divorce is not entirely foreclosed in their cultural millieu; however, it must be as a result of weightier issues, usually dispute beyond the capacity of the two families to resolve. Divorce does not arise simply as a result of mere visceral spark. It is, perhaps, based on this fact that the ancient wisdom of the Igbo insists that marriage is an affair between two families. As Ogbukagu (2008) observes, 'In … Igbo communities marriage is not an affair between a man and a woman, but rather it involves the whole Umunna (kindred men) and Umuokpu (kindred women)' (273). The idea here is not just to ensure that the families are responsible but also to create a broader platform for settling disputes when they arise in marriage, as they often do. But Obinze has a different

understanding, that he can solely contract and dissolve marriage on the spur of his own whims. Obinze, perhaps, sees family involvement in his marriage as an excessive intrusion into his private affair; after all, he is the person to live with the wife, not the family. But the Igbo culture posits differently. According to Nwoye (2011), corroborating Ogbukagu's observation above, 'marriages are arranged and regarded as family, rather than private affairs' (310). Nwoye argues that this custom still subsists even in the contemporary time and accounts for one of the reasons people travel to the village from the city for their marital engagements. Obinze is at this point split between societal ethos and gratification of an innermost passion. Bhabha explains this tension as being 'caught in-between a "nativist", even nationalist, atavism and a postcolonial metropolitan assimilation' (224). Elevated above the vestiges of his nativism, Obinze is subsumed in metropolitan assimilation.

Mekkus, one of the members of the *Nigerpolitan* club, describes Obinze thus: 'He is a gentleman. … The man reads poems and Shakespeare. Correct Englishman.' Here, Mekkus does not only further make a direct reference to his behaviour but also provides the foundation from where such attributes were modelled: Shakespeare and poems. This is what Adichie (2009) means when she talks about how 'vulnerable and impressionable we are in front of a story', how people are influenced and modelled by the prints on paper. These two references ostensibly symbolise the influences from Western literature, not excluding the thrillers and electronic media, the mediascape. Adichie's juxtaposition of Obinze with Okwudibia, as well as others that have strong rootedness in this basic cultural orientation right from childhood, points to the fact that even though they are all returnees, a difference still exists among them. And this difference hinges largely on those who had a cultural migration very early, physically or psychically, and those who migrate later in life for pure economic reasons. The latter group may occasionally be befuddled in certain cases of cultural ambivalence but knows where to draw the line and is better equipped to stem the tide of such cultural deluge and vagaries of emotion. That is why Okwudiba could be seen as Obinze's foil. Adichie, therefore, projects Obinze, and Olu, the fellow who has divorced his wife, Morenike, after badgering her repeatedly simply because she is slightly overweight, within the liminal space just like Dike, Ifemelu's little cousin who has been in the US from age one.

The event that follows Okwudiba's remark further complicates the matter. While the conversation between Obinze and Okwudiba is going on, Kosi and Buchi wait at the bottom of the stairs. And immediately the two men are through, Obinze goes down to meet his soon to be deserted family and he finds Buchi crying. The little girl has insisted that no other person must carry her but the father. And before Obinze gets to her, the little girl already has her arms outstretched waiting for her father. But this is the child that the father wants to abandon, together with her mother, for another woman. Obinze faces another dilemma: familial and, indeed, paternal love versus erotic one. More importantly, the narrator ostensibly beams light on a matter that Obinze wants to trivialise when he promises to take care of the baby and her mother, that paternal care requires more than money, food and shelter. The warmth of presence is as important, if not even more.

Obinze acknowledges the fact that the child is his responsibility, 'I want to raise Buchi, I want to see her every day. But I have been pretending all these months and one day she will be old enough to know that I have been pretending' (538). Obinze, again, aligns himself to the dictates of the heart and places frankness above a culture of pretence. But Obinze's decision is rather prompted by emotion more than frankness. He is already coping with this pretence without an obvious protest. This abrupt twist because of Ifemelu's return cannot be totally explained within the breadth of frankness. If anything, this is a typical case of defence. He is trying, albeit in vain, to rationalise his emotion-induced quest for divorce. His hesitation confirms this; it takes Obinze seven good months to make up his mind. Within this period, Obinze begins to carry out research on the children of divorced couples. He wants to prove from this research that children will live happier when their parents are divorced than when they live together unhappy. Despite his strong will for the outcome to be in his favour, most children prefer to live with unhappy parents more than with divorced ones. However, when the strong tide of passion swoops, Obinze shakes off his ambivalence, discards the outcome of his research and abandons his child and his entire family.

This marks the height of his alienation and total break from a culture that places the child at the very centre of wedlock. In a typical Igbo society, 'Igbo man's marriage without a child was seen as valueless and unsuccessful' (Isidienu, 2015:120). This perception has been explored in so many literary works of note but the one that easily comes to mind is Nwapa's *One is Enough,* where Amaka and Obiora pass through traumatic experiences

that eventually lead to the end of their marriage because of childlessness. Onitsha community in the novel sees childbearing as the seal on a marital union. Similarly, in Femi Osofisan's *Wuraola, forever*, the prime place of the child is also emphasized as the female protagonist, Wura, due to childlessness, would always be subjected to ridicule despite her education and sophistication. This perception prompts the Igbo saying that the essence of marriage is procreation. However, deeply ingrained in a culture that endorses individualism, Obinze affiliates with an orientation that places personal happiness at the epicentre of marital union.

Through this, Adichie projects the id-driven pleasure principle and a societal norm, nurtured and moderated by the superego, in utter contest. These two forces are within the zone of the unconscious and primarily result from accumulated experiences. The victory of pleasure over norm in Obinze's and Ifemelu's lives demonstrates the strength of the experience that has been lodged in their unconscious from their exposure to a culture foreign culture. Glaringly rejected by the West, his childhood fancy, the hope of the future where he feels he truly belongs, Obinze yet fails to integrate with the culture of his birth, thereby vacillating within the liminal space. As his mother notes with some air of pretentious scorn on the growing Obinze, 'This boy is too besotted with America' (88). Perhaps, the other part of the truth she fails to tell him is that he is still Obinze from Abba, in Anambra state of Nigeria, not in America or a Europe. Indeed, this is what ultimately accentuates his misadventure.

Professor Maduewesi, Obinze's mother, is projected as a prototype of a modern mother who let the children into the realities of sex life very much early, discussing safe sex and guiding the children about it. In this regard, she is contrasted with Ifemelu's mother whose inability to play this role displaced her with Uju. Adichie appears to be providing an alternative to child upbringing in Africa, an alternative that seeks to confront the child with the often avoided topic of sex. The strangeness of this perspective is captured in Ifemelu's surprise. Adichie deploys stream of consciousness technique to reveal Ifemelu's disposition when Obinze's mother demands to see her. Despite her relative exposure to western life, she understands that a romantic friendship at this time is an open secret and wonders aloud 'what sort of mother in her right mind asked her son's girl friend to visit?' (85). As the girl's emotion surges between fright and excitement, Obinze explains further:

> I remember in primary six, I took this girl to the send-off
> party and my mum dropped both of us off and gave the girl a
> handkerchief. She said, "A lady always needs a
> handkerchief". My mother can be strange, *sha*. Maybe she
> wants to give you a handkerchief (85).

This revelation is aimed at calming Ifemelu, but it also projects a new perspective in child upbringing. In essence, it reveals the background that helps to shape Obinze into what he has become. This perspective puts a vigorous argument in support of children's exposure to sex education. It provides them with necessary information about sex and how to make it safe, to avoid early pregnancy and numerous infections. Very importantly, it provides an opportunity for the parents to know their child's partners. But the other part of the argument is wheter the children have ability to cope with the emotion that goes with such early exposure to sex at such age. No doubt early sex education has a lot of advantages but the well-travelled and well educated Professor Maduewesi goes a step further to provide a secure ground for experimenting an intense romantic relationship instead of a platonic one. She appears not to be unmindful of a strong emotional attachment that is being built at such age and that the two children are still minors who have a long way to go before marriage. That is why this kind of relationship cannot be rationalised within the understanding of courtship. It is the outburst of such emotion, long accumulated, that brings Obinze's marriage to an abrupt end. Surely, this changing perspective on sex, relationship and marriage is an evident demonstration of the influence of the globalising world on the African frame of thought. The family becomes the immediate site for experimentation. While sex education appears to be the good side of what the global world is projecting, the circumstance that Adichie portrays here seems to raise caution on the uncritical absorption of this global trend.

Obinze, just like Olu, has been exposed western civilization to a great deal, through the instruments of globalisation, which have not only overturned his perception of life in his African society but also left a traumatising experience in the mind of the members of his family. While Obinze's case could be regarded as infatuation taken too far, Olu's is a psychogenic perception of the female phenotype framed from the influences of the Western media. As a result, he views the appearance of women in this media as the ideal. With the opulence of an inherited wealth, his childhood also traversed several continents, thereby helping in shaping his views to conform with the appearances of the women in the

Western media as the beauty exemplar, even when the evidence available in his Yoruba culture, and indeed many African cultures, runs contrary. As Oloruntoba-Oju (2007) posits, 'while facial attractiveness is a general desideratum for beauty, plumpness or roundness as well as a jutting backside is also a pervasive image in traditional Nigerian African construction of female beauty' (27).

This position does not necessarily ignore the fact that individuals could have varied perceptions of beauty but, ultimately, Oloruntoba-Oju highlights the point that a certain body frame bears a common mark of aesthetics in those societies. He attempts to underscore the perceptions of body and beauty in traditional African context as against the background of Western perceptions and formulations. This is the kind of beauty in Ihuoma that stuns many young men in Omokachi village and, in particular, leads to Ekwueme's mental breakdown in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*. That a rotund appearance is a mark of beauty in a particular clime at a particular time but ceases to be at another time in the same clime is an obvious evidence that beauty lies in perception. The instrument that frames perception, media in this case, becomes a powerful tool in determining what becomes beautiful at any given point in time. The Western media has, therefore engaged in blurring and totally displacing the African perception of beauty in this era of globalisation by universalising a western perception. Even though some health risks have been associated with plumpness, the reason for divorce in this case is not based on health ground but strictly on visual appeal. Interestingly, African perception of beauty is not monolithic. As Oloruntoba-Oju further observes, 'slim beauty also has her place in traditional Nigerian African culture' (15). As a matter of fact physical appearance is not all that counts for a woman in terms of marriage in many Africa societies, character is also of essence. Olu, however, already has a different understanding. A sudden slight change in physical appearance is all it takes Olu to resort to domestic violence and subsequently brings the marriage to an abrupt end. It is surprising that a concept as subjective as beauty would still be defined by the hegemonic precepts of the metropolitan capitals. Indeed, the abrupt collapse of these families is Adichie's open invitation of the audience to the lumbering danger that lurks in the shadows of globalisation within the family.

It is with a keen understanding of this sweeping psychogenic perception of the phenotype on many Africans that Adichie presents Ginika as another example of what Fanon would refer to as 'nauseating mimicry'. Ginika symbolises numerous young Africans whose

struggle to be accepted in the American society has not only subjected them to awkward imitation but also lack of confidence in their personality. She is close to having an eating disorder, anorexia nervosa in this case, in an attempt to achieve a certain level of thinness that the world approves of. From physical appearance, accent, to several American mannerisms, Ginika is engrossed in perpetual aping. As a matter of fact, it is from the preponderance of this insistent imitation, sometimes incongruous and pretentious, that the title of the novel emerges. Even before her departure to America, Ginika has got a foretaste of the situation. On the eve of her departure, for instance, her friends assemble in a mood laced with envy and admiration to bid her a farewell. Asking her to remember them when she becomes an 'Americanah'

> They roared with laughter, at the word 'Americanah' wreathed in glee, the fourth syllable extended, and at the thought of Bisi, a girl in the form below them, who had come back from a short trip to America with odd affectations, pretending she no longer understood Yoruba, adding a slurred r to every English word she spoke (82).

This does not only demonstrate the pervading American fantasy among the teenagers but also highlights the threshold of varying cultural consciousness that such exposure brings about. It brings about what Mudimbe (1988) calls 'psychological domination' that comes as a result of mimicry of social behaviour. According to him 'As a sign of psychological domination, imitation of the white man or the secret desire to become white expresses a dependence' (135). It follows that mimicry obscures ones identity and makes one's perception possible only through a lens other than his. This is why Ifemelu grows tired of this and resolves to quit, especially when she begins to receive compliment simply because she sounds American, even when she knows that she is not one. She observes a hollowness in her that prompts her to be someone else, an inner conflict that keeps her away from herself. This agrees with Bhabha's (1994) view that the 'discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference' (33). Ambivalence, according to Bhabha, suggests doubling of identity and it is adopted often for economic survival. It is the desire for survival and realisation of ambition that produces mimicry which only copies but cannot produce a faithful exactness. It therefore conceals self-worth as well as personal and cultural identity thereby creating the third space. *Americanah* is, no doubt, an excellent metaphor of different layers of mimicry. Through these instances, Adichie makes

a serious effort to extensively capture such several instances of mimicry. It is in the process of this imitation that the characters most glaringly transcend the bounds of their culture and portray a new identity.

This ultimately brings to the fore the second major set of characters under this analysis. While the consequences of globalisation have manifested in the characters discussed above, this latter set depicts even more grim future for the culture, tradition and identity of the African people. Dike is the character of interest in this category. He represents various mass of children whose early deracination subjects them to serious identity crisis and in effect exposes them to distraught psychological experiences. Taken to the United States at a tottering age of one, Dike grows into adolescence in the United States contending with the culture vagaries that daily confront him. While others are battling with adaptation in the new environment by learning the American ways, Dike has a different challenge. While the flexibility of his youthfulness has given him a seamless mastery of the American manner of speech, her mother's firm ban of the Igbo language in the house takes him further away from the depth of his being, his identity and origin. As Ngugi has repeatedly argued, language is not just 'a means of communication' but also 'a carrier of culture' (1981:13). For this reason, 'culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and transmission from one generation to the next' (15). It is the prohibition of the 'banking, articulation and transmission' of the combined heritages of language and culture that is portrayed in this narrative. The child has been decidedly distanced from the ethical and aesthetic values that the language harbours living him a free prey to the influences outside his origin.

Dike is not alone in this category. Nna and Nne, the only two children of Obinze's Cousin, Nicholas, are subjected to the same fate in Britain. As the narrator observes, Nicholas 'spoke to them only in English, careful English, as though he thought that the Igbo he shared with their mother would infect them' (276). There is a tinge of selfishness here even if not primarily intended. While the parents savour the luxury of bilingualism, the children are denied of the rich cultural values inherent in the language of their origin. In a childish ecstasy, Ojiugo, their mother, celebrates their British accent: 'You see how she sounds so posh?' Ojiugo, in an exaggerated British accent, revels in her daughter's accent, confirming the fear in allowing them to speak Igbo lest they lose the accent. Through this

way, Adichie demonstrates that language is among the veritable cultural symbols shed in the process of cultural transcendence in the modern global era.

However, if this can be understood about African children who live and grow in Europe and America and have become citizens there, it draws more serious attention when such abundantly available heritage is sacrificed on the altar of globalisation even for children who live in Africa. The conversation between Mrs Akin-Cole, one of Kosi's acquaintances, in a function in Lagos and Kosi, Obinze's legitimate wife, depicts another instance where African families encourage cultural transcendence.

> 'How is your child? Has she started school?' Mrs Akin-Cole asked. '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'.
>
> 'Okay, ma. I'll look at the French school,' Kosi said (emphasis mine) (42).

To describe European languages as 'Civilised' at the expense of African languages is not only deprecating and a demonstration of a group engrossed with class-consciousness but also establishes how deeply the western civilization and imperial forces have eroded the interior of self-awareness of the African people. No doubt, quality education is the desire of every parent for their wards and also to expand the child's chances in international competitions. However, to relegate indigenous languages to the languages of the brute and subsequently displace it is an undisguised assault on the collective heritage of a people. While English has conveniently displaced the indigenous languages as the first language for the child, French as another 'civilized language' is contending the position of the second language while the indigenous language, the language of the brute, relapses into extinction. If there is any time to take Ngugi seriously, perhaps, it is now. Ngugi echoes Fanon's concept of 'Manichean order' in arguing that:

> …the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves (3).

It is the language which carries the weight and depth of their cosmology that the foundation for its annihilation is well laid at this stage. No 'cultural bomb' possibly bears more threat than this. This is evidently what comes from globalisation and it bears enormous consequences on the child's understanding of himself and his cosmos, and ultimately lays a solid foundation for his cultural miscegenation.

Dike's situation also bears much eloquence to this concern. Having been enmeshed in this cultural conundrum for virtually all of his life, Dike is finding it extremely difficult to reconcile with himself. Without a father to give his identity a certain kind of anchor, with a mother deeply engrossed in three jobs and series of qualifying exams to become a resident nurse, and a cousin who only visits and leaves almost immediately in search of her own means of survival, Dike feels alone in a world brimming with people of all races and strata. No one to identify with, his tender mental strength can no longer bear the psychological trauma that weighs on it, he finds himself a floating species of being that has nowhere close to firm his feet and affirm his belongingness. Jung refers to this condition as 'rootless consciousness'. This type of consciousness, Jung argues, 'succumbs helplessly to all manner of suggestions and, in practice, is susceptible to psychic epidemics' (1953:156). The height of this is the boy's attempted suicide. It is for this same reason that immediately after his recuperation and some sessions with a therapist, Dike eagerly asks Ifemelu who has now relocated to Lagos for a visit. The urge for a visit in Lagos is an urge for cultural identification, it is an urge for belongingness and affirmation of identity.

Just like many members of the *Nigerpolitan* club, Dike also confronts the stiff challenge of integration. The challenge ranges from the basic necessities of language to cuisine. This is why he voices out his frustration on his first meeting with a large cross-section of people that have a more homogenous identity with him as Igbo, Ifemelu's parents. 'I wish I spoke Igbo,' he tells Ifemelu after spending an evening with her parents. Such a wistful remark does not only underline an unsettled longing that is harboured within the depth of his recesses but also his inability to fully identify with the people that are said to be his own. This frustration results from his inability to fully participate in the evening discussions dominated by the language he craves for but finds difficult to learn. Even though not as bad as his American experience, he is still split between two cultures but cannot claim a full belongingness to any.

Closely related to Dike and the others within his category are yet another myriad set widely scattered all over the soils of Europe and America: children whose birth results from sham marriages, many of them nameless in the text. However, a particular example of interest that could be used to represent this whole category is Cleotilde, the girl that has been arranged for Obinze to get married to in order to secure his papers. Cleotilde's Angolan father left her white Portuguese mother when the girl was only three years old and so has not seen him ever since. Neither Cleotilde nor her Portuguese mother has ever gone to Angola, her supposed father's country. So, no trace of him can really be established. The marriage, similar to the one Obinze plans to contract with Cleotilde, is purely business and there are already some Africans in London who have taken organising such marriages as their means of livelihood. Those are the people Obinze has consulted in his own case. The contract is purposively entered to gain security into the country and savour all the real and imagined promises of migration perpetuated largely by the media. It is a marriage entered with separation in mind. Unfortunately, before the eventual separation, a new life would be added to the two, just as is the case for Cleotilde, creating a new set of identity and cultural orientation. This is the generation of people whose identity has continually vacillated in in-betweenness, hence accentuating the shifting nature of identity as a lived reality, a social construct and not really a given social emblem encrusted in rigidity. Even when she is classified as a European citizen, that feeling of unhomeliness or what Bhabha calls 'unhomely presence' (19) incessantly nudges on her inner recess. In as much as she knows and accepts that she is a European, she also knows that she belongs elsewhere. She finds herself therefore at 'a borderline of existence'.

Unlike Ifemelu who finally gets back home to Nigeria, enjoying the homely ambience of families and relations, Cleotilde finds herself suspended in what Bhabha again refers to as 'the crossroad of history'. As she vacillates between these two beings, she finds herself in the liminal space. It is, perhaps, in the light of such circumstance that Friedman (1999) argues, 'Few things are more enraging to people than to have their identity or their sense of home stripped away. They will die for it, kill for it, sing for it, write poetry for it and novelize about it. Because without a sense of home and belonging, life becomes barren and rootless' (52). Even though Cleotilde has not taken up arms in search of her identity, her distress and confusion is obvious in this narrative. Selasi (2005) observes this about those she refers to as *Afropolitans* when she argues that 'the modern adolescent African is

tasked to forge a sense of self from wildly disparate sources'. It is such circumstance of birth in a distressed family that a new sense of identity is formed most.

Cleotilde may, however, be luckier than some other American-born children by untraceable fathers. Typical examples are the braiders at Mariama African Hair Braiding. Situated in one of the squalid areas of mostly black dominated areas of Philadelphia, the shops brim with all categories of children: 'often there was a baby tied to someone's back with a piece of cloth. Or a toddler asleep on a wrapper spread over a battered sofa' (20). These women are unmarried as the discussion between them and Ifemelu reveals. It is easy to ignore these children given the scanty attention given to them by Adichie, as the author rather focuses on the women and the difficulties that encumber their survival and integration in the new land. Adichie rather focuses on these children as the burden that weighs on the women and encumbers their freedom and striving for success. However, the import that their portrayal bears, no matter how marginal, still looms large when one considers what lies ahead of them in terms of cultural orientation and the significance of their identity. Undoubtedly, they enlarge the swelling category of children, whose in-betweenness further severs them from their roots and, in the process, creates another set of borderline identities.

3.2   Identity and cultural dilemma in Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns*

Jamal Mahjoub, undoubtedly, is one of the most multifaceted and cosmopolitan well-known figures in Sudanese literary landscape in recent times. Born in 1960 to a Sudanese father and an English mother, Mahjoub lived in England and Sudan before finally relocating to Denmark, where he now resides. Having published seven novels of high critical acclaim, Jamal Mahjoub's literary prolificacy has yielded enough recognition to place him firmly on a global literary map as a distinct voice in the annals of literary production in North Africa. Indeed, in less than a decade, Mahjoub already had four novels to his credit: *Navigation of a Rainmaker* (1989), *Wing of Dust* (1994), *In the Hour of Signs* (1996) and *The Carrier* (1998), not to count many short stories including 'Road Block' (1992), the 'Cartographer's Angel' (which won the Guardian Award in 1993), 'Hands of Lead, Feet of Clay' (1994) and 'A History of Amnesia' (1995). Apart from these earlier works, Mahjoub's creative impulse continued to wax with vigour as he further published *Travelling with Djinns* (2003), *The Drift Latitude* (2006) and *Nubian Indigo* (2006). Apart from these novels, short stories and several poems, Mahjoub also has

a number of published essays and opinion pieces which fiercely expresses his political position on the events related to the then war-torn Sudan, and which also shows another facet of his multiple personality.

Some of his earlier writings explore a historiographical project beginning with the rise of nationalism, triggered by the unprecedented popular gathering under the wing of the Muslim prophetic figure, Mahdi, and his anti-transcultural mission of the nineteenth century, followed by a struggle against the combined forces of British and Turco-Egyptian imperialism. These can be seen from *In the Hour of Signs*, where Mahjoub seeks to find the remote reasons for the failure of Sudan as a republic. In Mohsen's view (2000), Mahjoub's exploration of the past through the narratives of a diverse cast of characters, illustrates 'the manifold nature of the Sudan and provides insight into the emergence and development of the conflict tearing Sudan apart' (542). The country has finally been split between North and South as a result of the conflict. According to Kearney (2007), Mahjoub sets up a central tension between the Mahdi, and the philosopher, Hawi, who more sincerely values the downtrodden that Mahdi is said to represent, and who is open to transcultural influences. These two forces appear to characterise the tension that has ravaged Sudan, arising from emergent transcultural realities and the forces of opposition therein. These forces and the responding opposition are the major preoccupation of Mahjoub's early narratives. The obvious similarities that exist among his first three novels have prompted critics to study them as a trilogy which records the historic progression of political events in Sudan.

In *Travelling with Djinns*, Mahjoub navigates a different but closely related part as he zeroes into a more nucleus part of this whole - the family, and explores the ravaging disintegration within this nub as a discordance occasioned by multifaceted cultural assimilation. This fifth novel of Jamal Mahjoub is like a travelogue that centres on a relationship between Yasin Zahir and Leo, his seven-year-old son while on an adventurous trip. Through their journey across Europe, in a silver-blue 504 Peugeot, the internal turmoil in Yasin is revealed at intervals. Principal among which is the imminent divorce between him and Ellen, his English wife. Born in Khartoum to a Sudanese father and English mother, Yasin is, at 37, forced to face the complexity of his origins as he grapples with what tradition to pass to his son. Yasin deliberately prolongs their travels from Denmark, Germany and Luxembourg to Paris, Provence and Spain in search of his

missing self and out of fear of losing his son to his wife, should the divorce eventually happen, as it finally does.

Just as in Adichie's *Americanah*, Mahjoub employs a cyclical narrative pattern. This style does not only help to highlight the recurring diverse experiences in the journey embarked upon by the father and the son but also highlights the recurrence of similar experiences across generations and spatial length. As the past appears to dovetail into the present, the present draws vigour and registers itself very boldly on the emblem of time in an uninterrupted steadiness and frequency, traversing many miles in the process. This is seen as he navigates two major continents and several countries within them with a child of seven, alternating the past and the present in this narrative and blending the poetic with the journalistic in a constant stylistic pattern. It is the huge burden of experiences acquired in the process of these varied encounters that are being referred to as the djinns.

According to Lynelle (2010):

> Djinns are not necessarily the 'genies' of popular (Western) imagination but are in Arabic mythology – good or evil spirits or ghosts said to haunt people and influence events in their lives. The Djinns that travel with Yasin Zahir, the central character in Jamal Mahjoub's latest novel *Travelling with Djinns* are his collective memories of his mixed cultural background and personal history (112).

Despite the huge cross-cultural experiences facilitated by various elements of globalisation in this text, critics have not engaged *Travelling with Djinns* in relation to character formation. Instead of engaging the liminal personalities formed from these experiences as shown in the text, critics rather focus on Mahjoub's reconfiguring of Europe, (Muhammad, 2015) and the father-son dyad in the struggle for nationhood, (Qutait, 2017). The collective cultural memories of mixed cultural backgrounds and the personality that is formed as a result that thrust Yasin's character as well as his son, Leo, within the liminal edge. This is an awareness that weighs very much on him:

> I belong to that nomad tribe, the great unwashed, those people born in the join between continental shelves, in the unclaimed interstices between time zones, strung across latitudes. … My nation is the random list of places on the map that I have passed through, upon which I have no claim (2004: 4/5).

Yasin's meditative but self-deprecating evaluation of himself accentuates his in-betweeness, a product of multiple cultural forces which have leveraged on the immutable potency of globalisation. It is a clear testimony of a life lived on the modern impulse of crossing through many terrains and cultural spheres, wafting along periods and planes. This is precisely why culture has become an interesting area of contestation in today's globalising world. As Lieber and Weisberg (2002) opine, culture has become intrinsically 'bound up with the most fundamental questions of human identity in its many dimensions: … ethnic, religious, social and national' (275). Yasin cannot, however, be specifically identified within any of these categories; he has been disembedded from these classifications. His major mode of identity is encoded on mere documents, two passports and varieties of other papers. This shows a disconnect from whom he really is. His sense of self is far detached from the bland, lifeless letters on the papers. He obviously needs more to get an anchor, a cultural compass, to be able to navigate through these varied domains of awareness. This also explains why the controversies about culture go beyond the surface level of music, cuisine, clothing and so forth, even though, they are part of the physical manifestation of identity. He envies those people who know where they belong. As a writer, he envies 'those people who know where they belong, writers who have a language and a history that is granted them with no catches, no hooks' (4). Yasin does not belong to the people whose language he understands; neither does he understand the language of the people he thinks he belongs to. He shares in both categories but lacks the depth of any. His rudderless identity and cultural rootlessness manifest what Bhabha (1994) calls the 'aporia of consciousness' (49) which is peculiar to double identity. Bhabha's term, in this context, encapsulate the insoluble contradictions manifest in Yasin's cultural orientation and personality formation. He is not just incompletely English, he is also incompletely Arab, incompletely African or as Kearny (2007) puts it, Yasin is 'incompletely anything else' (128). The case here is beyond alienation for he has no deep belongingness from where he can be said to have been alienated or integrated into, he belongs to all these spheres that have formed a pool of his experience. Even though Africa resonates within him, a firm acquaintance of his Africanness has been sublated by long accumulation of synthetic culture.

It is important to place this cultural shift at its precise place, its origin, Yasin's family. Yasin's father is discontent with the rigid status quo in the Sudanese political landscape, he insists on bringing justice and fair play. Therefore, that should, at least, start from his

own home. Mahjoub seems to draw greatly from Franz Fanon's position that 'there are close connections between the structure of the family and the structure of the nation. The militarization and the centralization of authority in a country automatically entail a resurgence of the authority of the father. … for the family is a miniature of a nation' (1956:109). Mahjoub, through Yasin's father, turns this position bottom-up. 'We had liberal minded parents who taught us to read and write and think for ourselves, who did not abuse us, or beat us with a stick and lock us in the chicken shed. We played in the sunshine and dreamt of doing good things' (331). It is this harmless rosy beginning that makes Yasmina wonder how suddenly things 'go wrong with everyone', Yasin and Muk in particular. But she fails to understand, as Fanon argues, that the family structure is internalized in the superego and projected into social behaviour. It is the friction between the Yasin's family structure with his social structure that primarily necessitates the conflict in the story and Yasin's deracination.

The introduction of Yasin's white 'Christian' mother who ultimately initiates Yasin's yearning for a life beyond Khartoum makes this fact clearer, and ultimately traces 'where it all go wrong.' This is not necessarily because of the fact that the woman is a white foreigner but more importantly because she is a cinema freak. 'Cinema was her church.' She believes that there is no better place for expanding the mind than in the cinema. And, in a way also, she uses it to endure the absence of her incarcerated patriotic husband and other many injustices that she sees as bedevilling the world, which have coexisted with a bursting growth of religion. So, she goes there often not just alone but with the children, riding on the crest of Appadurai's mediascape as vital element of globalisation to steer the children off Khartoum: its environment and culture, even if inadvertently:

> So there we saw Paris for the first time, and Venice and Rome and Sophia Loren pouting at us (we never imagined that Fellini had awoken the wrath of Catholic Italy by making such daring film). There were the streets of London with their double-decker buses and black cabs. We cruised San Francisco's hills with Steve McQueen in *Bullit*, and wandered New York with Woody Allen. The Americans were obsessed with disasters, earthquakes, burning towers, falling aeroplanes. The British provided cumbersome dramas loaded with bizarre costumes and reams medieval history (66-67).

Indeed the amazing influences of the early exposure on the inchoate mind of Yasin and his siblings are far-reaching, and evidently subsist throughout their entire life. 'We all walked around with hunched shoulders and hands in our pockets and wished we had an excuse to wear raincoats.' This incident and other similar situations that are preponderant in this narrative foreground the building block of mimicry and its glaring oddities. In essence, through the very vehicle of mediascape in the globalisation process the very perception of the western world is created and deeply endowed with flawless perfection. 'Whatever images we had of what lay beyond the world we lived in came to us through the prism of a projector lens (69).' The lives of other people living miles away are brought very close, very immediate, through the swiftly running celluloid. And the children identify with them with an unflinching gusto. 'That is where we belonged, up there alongside Jack Nicholson and the oil derricks, or paddling downriver with Jon Voight and Burt Reynolds.' These animated scenes and the smorgasbord of western images are purveyed and consciously drilled deep into the child's unconscious by several games played, which has the ultimate task of a vivid replay or description of several of such scenes. So, whether within the four walls of the cinema hall or outside of it, the children are consistently haunted by the images of the outside world while contrasts of these images luridly register in the mind of the children once they are out of the cinema house. They come in contact with a milieu bereft of streetlights but studded with puff-fruit plants. Evidently, this palpable contrast arouses the longing for moving beyond the immediate sphere.

Mahjoub introduces Cordoba born Ines, Muk's fiancée, in faraway Spain to demonstrate the universal potency of the media as an agent of globalisation. Just as Yasin and his brother in Khartoum, Ine's travelling spree is as well propelled by the mediascape. She drops out of her philosophy class, travels to Guatemala, to Darjeeling in India, to Nepal and walks up to Annapurna base camp only to find it overcrowded and filthy. 'Everybody went to these places in search of the sacred and the sublime, she said, only to arrive there and find hundreds of other people with exactly the same idea' (318). The ubiquity of this movement is evidently demonstrated here to show that such mobility, as engendered by the instruments of globalisation, is not exclusively an African phenomenon.

Undoubtedly, the source of the memory pool that has necessitated Yasin's search for Europe, part of the reasons for his instinctive globetrotting, has been brought to the fore in this reading. He seeks to see the Europe in his childhood images. As he admits in

retrospect: 'What sends people careering off into the world like human cannonballs with no safety net is the Technicolor dream that was lodged in all of our heads long before we have learnt to write our names' (70). This is why his allusion to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* becomes very apt. 'Europe is my dark continent and I am searching for the heart of it' (58). Having been inebriated in the fantasies of the cinema, his eagerness for a search becomes unquenchable once the opportunity presents itself. Mahjoub has therefore employed another important dimension in the global cultural flow as identified by Appadurai, the ethnoscape, which is constituted by the moving group: migrants, exiles, guestworkers, tourists, refugees and so forth. Yasin and Leo are the co-travellers but, evidently, Yasin is the explorer. It is this travel that deconstructs the flawless portrayal of a society projected on the cinema. Just as Okanrende correctly observes, the travel unravels:

> The disconnectedness of European civility through encounters with experiences that expose internal institutional weakness, silenced voices and evidence of collapse. These include the escapist tendencies of a number of Europeans into alcohol as seen in Denmark, streets subcultures and incidents of sex workers as seen in France … these together with information doctoring, drug addiction, spiritist activities and dissent by disgruntled intellectuals rupture the assumption of European cultural ascendency … (2009:72).

Mahjoub's tendency to 'write back' accentuates his postcolonial disposition in this narrative. But while the argument may not stand for the 'rupture' of the assumption of European cultural dominance, an argument can be validly advanced against the assumption of its cultural superiority. The productivity of colonial power and its 'regime of truth' is therefore better elucidated through this encounter. This encounter further demonstrates how dominance, nurtured and fostered with the instrumentalities of globalisation, creates personalities of Yasin's ilk.

In line with Turner's observation that due to 'their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes', the liminal entities are represented by 'a rich variety of symbols' (95), Mahjoub uses 'djinns', '*nisse*', 'mongrel', 'mule', 'chimeres,' 'unicorn,' 'mulatto' and other hybrid and near-hybrid creatures in various parts of the text as metaphorical extensions of these multicultural characters portrayed in the text. These are intended to crystallise the liminal imagery, a situation that will be inherited by Leo and even establish a much longer train of extended lineage within these interstices. Despite this obvious in-

betwenness, the morbid prejudice of the white secures crystal eloquence in Claus, Ellen's father. Through Claus, Mahjoub recreates Western preposterous assumptions and the blindness of the white explorers to anything good in other climes that Achebe (1977) has argued in his essay: *Imaging of Africa: Racism in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. In his brief sojourn to Yemen thirty years prior, Claus's most fascinating experience worthy of recollection is that the people of Yemen 'eat the liver of the camel raw'. And this therefore holds for every Bedouin, Nomadic Arab, irrespective of their culture specifics or age. Not even Yasin's background can assuage such notion. This is what Said (1978) refers to as 'Orientalist stereotype'. It follows the same pattern of negative imaging of the continent that Achebe has argued with respect to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Bhabha (1994) describes this as 'the stereotype of the native fixed at the shifting boundaries between barbarism and civility' (31). Yasin's unease to this parochial generalisation is evident as the conversation becomes elliptical, even when he has agreed with him without much conversation. 'I could not bring myself to break the news that I was an urban child, that I couldn't with certainty tell one end of a camel from the other' (28). He understands the respect he owes his in-law. 'I would find myself describing ancient rituals of long-forgotten tribes often having to make up the details as I went along, not being schooled in such matters' (28). Yasin feels obliged to satiate this close-minded eagerness to deprecate even when facts are not within his disposal. This agrees with Bhabha's argument that the perception of otherness is 'at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity' (1994: 67). The derision that this practice has elicited in Claus is obviously linked to where it is practiced as well as the people that practise it. This view is even more apt when contrasted with the other more odious activities already identified in Europe during Yasin's exploration.

It is through this flagrant disposition of cultural superiority in Claus and indeed other members of his family that Mahjoub builds the Othering process. Mahjoub contrasts Claus with the deep-seated nativism of Haboba and even other fairly modern characters like Yasmina (especially after getting married to a deeply Islamic culture-conscious husband), Umar, her husband, as well as Haya, a Sudanese lady Yasin meets in Paris. It is through this that the binary opposition is firmly erected across gender, space and time and, in the main, inflame the major conflict that runs throughout the story. In between these binaries are Yasin and his son, Leo and Muk.

For this reason, Yasmina has insisted that Yasin's calamities can only be traced to his cultural ambivalence and the ill-advised marriage between him and Ellen, 'a Christian' and 'a European'. 'Yasin, you are my brother. I love you dearly but you must know that you betrayed your faith and your culture by marrying someone like that' (163). Yasmina echoes the cultural sentiment of the people of Northern Sudan. According to Stanford (2015), Northern Sudanese culture prefers marriages between cousins, second cousins or other family members or, in the least, between members of the same tribe and social class. But this is a cultural orientation that Yasin has lost a grasp of. Nonetheless, Yasin didn't start this, his father did; his grandfather also failed to negotiate Yasin's father's marriage, as is the demand of the culture, and that marks the beginning of the transcendence in this regard. According to Stanford, the culture demands that parents conduct marital negotiations of their children, and it is 'common for the bride and the bridegroom not to have seen each other before wedding'. It is for this reason that Yasmina argues strongly that Yasin is the architect of his misfortune. But that is to be simplistic about the matter. The major cause of the family disintegration lies firmly in the machinery of the global order that has given Yasin a different orientation. He has lived a greater part of his life in Europe, as a student and worker. For instance, the involvement of the family in the marriage contract and dissolution is as true in Igbo tradition as it is in Northern Sudan. According to Stanford, divorce is acceptable as a last resort after families have failed to assist in resolving problems. However, Yasin's family remains a very distant party in Yasin's entire marital venture. Even when the dowries paid during marriage are often returned in the case of divorce in Northern Sudan, Yasin's dowry and only son, Leo, are lost to Ellen, his English wife. Through this encounter, Jamal Mahjoub portrays a dense mass of instruments of globalisation and how their effects bear on indigenous cultural orientations.

It is at this juncture that the point is vividly made. Unable to identify with Sudanese culture and rejected by the European family, Mahjoub creates the third space in Yasmin and consequently in the little Leo, 'a mixed up sense of belonging and not belonging'. This is the second reason for his journey as it has become a twin search of Europe and that 'indestructible element of our core in which we trust … that provides an immutable centre of gravity which gives us balance and helps us to orient ourselves to know who we are' (177). In clear terms, the point raised here is identity, he is in search of whom he really is.

It is this circumstance that evokes in him the Taoist idea of the dual in a meditative search through his childhood.

> My sense of being divided, split, incomplete went back to an early recollection of my parents leaning over my crib as a baby – one dark the other pale at least I think I remember. But the image remained, whether it floated from buried subconscious was an early flash of inspiration. (87)

Yasin sees himself as a polymorphous offshoot of this miscegenation which ultimately erects a new frontier, the third space. As Bhabha argues 'it is the Third Space, … which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensures that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity'(1994:37). These spaces become 'intercultural brokers in the interstices' between nations and empires, producing counter narratives from the nation's margins to the 'totalising boundaries' of the nation. It is this circumstance that 'prevents identities from either end of it from settling into 'primordial polarities'. An instance referred to as 'the blastering of monadic moment from the homogenous course of history.' This situation is firmly captured in this discussion between father and son, as Yasin explains:

> 'Chimeres were mythological monsters that were hybrids, composed of different kinds of creatures'.
> 'Like us,' says Leo suddenly.
> 'Like us how?'
> 'You know, different kinds of mothers and fathers' (102).

This conversation does not only portray Leo as a precocious child but also reveals his full awareness of what appears to be an oddity that he and his father have found themselves, their inability to secure a definite identity, a defined belongingness. While Bhabha may be right that this kind of identity discourages primordial polarities, the Otherness that still subsists with such raises questions in this direction. It is in view of this that Yasin compares his situation to Jack Crabb, a character in Thomas Berger's *Little Big Man,* who finds himself moving back and forth, switching life with Cheynne Indians to life among the whites, the cowboys. Crabb's life is confounded by those people on both sides who insist on reinforcing the lines that he is forced to cross and re-cross to keep himself alive. Ultimately, Mahjoub has illumined the circumstances confronting these characters within the precinct of existential imperative. The necessity that prompts the negotiation of these

boundaries has been premised on the need and struggle for survival. It is a movement in search of the 'sacred and sublime'. But this is not just a question of survival, really; it is a matter of money, possession and all the fantasies that have been projected on the screen. In his defence against Yasin's upbraid for his misdemeanour, his drug dealings, Muk explains the nudging that has impelled his escape from Khartoum:

> Well you are thinking what I did was wrong, that I deserve everything I got. … Well, it wasn't wrong, everyone is at it. I just happen to cross wrong people. … No different from executive who fiddles his taxes. … they travel in style and they are treated with respect because that is all there is now, the money. Respect is money. All that stuff about learning and education values? Well that was fine for people forty years ago. That was the way the world was in those years (331).

Muk has not only explained his promptings but also revealed the reason behind the family's sudden trajectory, the slip off from a well ordered pattern of life to a trending lane of inverted values. This marks the great shift in Muk's life and indeed that of the family. The charm and allure of massive wealth that has been stored within his unconscious through the media has driven Muk to such a decadent life style that has not only taken him entirely off his supposed cultural milieu but also almost brought about his total ruin. This is what Bhabha identifies when he explains how previously unrecognized need can emerge by imposition of foreign ideas. It is for this that Yasmina, in a voice laden with lamentation and emotional outburst cries out, 'Our parents have betrayed us. Dad with his high ideas of Western civilization. You call this civilization?' (166). The betrayal, here, is not a deliberate one, it is an introjection of a supposed superior culture. The validity of this position is very firm when we see the descent of their father's life to regret and regression accompanied with several bouts of heart failure. The man's expectation and struggles have indeed derailed into despair, a classic example of colonial disillusionment.

It is very vital at this point to take a close look at Leo, a quintessential liminal character in this whole vortex. At his birth in London, his grandparents plant a neem tree in Khartoum, a tradition that does not just mark an increase in the household but also his firm belonging to the land as a true son of the family. This tree survives in arid regions because of its deep rootedness, the same belief is held of Leo in Khartoum, that though born in London the depth of his root is firm in Khartoum. But this position progressively loses tenacity until

he is finally lost from his father's passionate grasp to his mother amidst protests and complaints. Leo's loss to his mother is progressive. Ellen's subtle but passionate insistence on Leo instead of Yasin's preference, Hamdi Dandi, for the boy's name marks the very beginning. This initiates the mutual suspicion that has existed between Ellen and the rest of Yasin's family members and leads to Yasin's escape with the child for the fear of losing him to his wife, Ellen. The tension continues as Yasmina has insistently haunted Yasin with these questions: 'And how is that boy going to grow up? Did you think of that? Who is he going to be? … You will end up being a stranger to everyone, even your own children' (146).

These questions have not only established Yasmina as a formidable cultural ambassador but also highlight the lurking danger in Leo's imminent cultural ambivalence. The change of name from Hamdi Dandi to Leo is a perfect replay of Muk's Mohammed to Muk. These two incidents are obviously beyond a mere change of nomenclature, it has weightier significance that bears on the very core of man, his identity. This marks an instant shift from the origin, the very beginning of equivocation around the child's being. Who is he going to be? A stranger to everybody like his father or a stranger and drug addict like Muk? And this is a fact that even Yasin himself knows only too well. He is well-read, very knowledgeable that is why he has earlier acknowledged this fact in one of his many ruminations: 'The first fifteen years of your life stay with you forever … our sense of who we are remains rooted in those first precious fifteen years' (16). And he is very conscious of this fact having passed this road himself and witnessed others whose ruins built a foundation within this period. Leo is seven, going to eight. This is a make or mar period for him as he muses again: 'Whether he develops as a complete, rounded person or alternatively, turns out a broken wreck who blames his failures on his childhood, his selfish parents, all depends on how he emerges from these years.' The precariousness of childhood and its determinant factor in the moulding and being of a man is a strong case being argued here. And this is also the fear that has plagued Yasin, that has made him elope with his treasured child in a failed attempt to bestow on him some measures of 'gravity'. Leo's outcome doesn't need a hard prediction. Just like his father, if not worse, he has joined in the long trail of Africans in expanding 'the third space'. He is already among the intercultural brokers in the interstices between Europe and Africa, or to be more specific, London and Khartoum.

What has become manifest so far is that Mahjoub has consistently drawn from the trope of Mahdi and Hawi dichotomy in many of his narratives, but has narrowed the emerging conflict to the family unit in *Travelling with Djinns*. In a very dramatic depiction of these circumstances, Mahjoub portrays different layers that build up to transcendence of culture within this nucleus and, in all, the whole thing revolves around the pervasive wheel of globalisation. Hawi's multicultural thrust personifies itself in Yasin's father, progressively fostered in the children, especially Yasin and Muk and then to the grandson, Leo, perpetuating an unimaginable end in a long chain of what Bhabha refers to as 'cultural dissensus' (12). This suggests a most successful common paradigm in inaugurating a cultural shift in a family, starting from the father.

In constant friction with the Hawi's trope is that of Mahdi who has been personified in deeply nativist personages like Haboba, Yasmina, Umar and Haya. While Haboba's protest has waned with old age and cruel blows of fortune, Yasmina remains vociferous in her reproach against what she would refer to as her brothers' delusion. The overwhelming success of this latter group, especially Umar and Yasmina with their strong resistance to Eurocentic redefinition of their belief and culture, contrasts with the outright failure of the former suggesting that Mahjoub's narrative sanctions peripheral ideologies over that of the centre. It is within the scope of this evidence that Okanrende is right to submit that the novel 'progresses in its postcolonial intention to not only privilege the periphery but also … call the periphery to a symposium interrogating the idea of its discourse's propriety without the input of the centre' (72). This position is true considering Mahjuob's vivid portrayal of decadence that the independent Sudan has been plunged into as is evident in the first instance of Leo's return to his fatherland with his parents. Corruption is rife and from the airport, it manifests its rank pungently as bribery and nepotism remain the only guiding light. These are part of the causes of the emotional turmoil that have kept Yasin's father bedridden.

It is therefore very glaring that the continued global fluidity necessitated by movement across time and space exemplified by Yasin's wanderlust and other compelling quests of cultural/national identity combine to cast *Travelling with Djinns* among the outstanding literary outputs that are eloquent within the frontiers of globalisation and its attendant concerns. The family, symbolically represented here with the head, the father nurtures this new orientation. While Yasin's father is subdued in regret, he lacks the power to reinvent

the wheel. Mahjoub, therefore, focuses on a single family unit to weave the overwhelming influence of globalisation in the cultural mix in the global era.

3.3   Itinerant living, otherness and the search for self in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*

Taiye Selasie's entrance into the international literary scene is preceded by her essay, *Bye-Bye Barbar,* otherwise known as *What is Afropolitan?* in 2005. Ever since then, the 1979 born creative writer has had a meteoric rise in the global intellectual sphere especially in the world of literary art. She has consistently made fascinating inputs in this direction. In 2006, she wrote *The Sex Lives of African Girls* as a result of Toni Morrison's charge to write a short story that year. Published in UK literary magazine, *Granta*, the story appeared in *Best American Short Stories* in 2012. In 2013, Selasi published *Ghana Must Go,* which was selected as one of the best ten books of that year by *Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*. Born in London to a Ghanaian father and a Nigerian mother, Selasi was raised in Brookline, Massachusetts, and presently lives in Italy. Moving from London to Lagos and to Massachusetts as a child had a lot of impacts on Selasi's personality. It is perhaps due to this itinerant childhood that Selasi has turned to the literary art to meditate upon her personality formation and explore fragmented identity of individuals with similar experiences.

Ghana Must Go opens *in media res* as, Kweku Sai, a highly respected surgeon who emigrated to America from his country, Ghana, is seen on his sick-bed after his ignominious return from the United States. Kweku's gradual decline in health and his eventual death as a result of heart attack are elliptically rendered by combining the omniscient and stream of conscious technique to explore the inner psyche of Kweku in order to reveal the trauma he has undergone throughout his sojourn in various parts of the world. Through this way, the narrator recounts the births of his children and Kweku's unjust dismissal from his job in the United States. As Kweku abandons his wife, Folashade, and children in America, he returns home to Ghana and gets married to Ama, his second wife. With the absence of their father, the rest of the Sais in America continue their lives in the foreign land. Olu, the oldest, who later becomes a surgeon, gets married to Ling, a Chinese-American despite protests and suspicions. By becoming a surgeon Olu tries to relive the life his father should have lived by fulfilling his father's dream of starting his own practice called Sai and Sons but his father thinks differently. Kweku's

other children, including the twins, Taiwo and Kehinde, live far apart in different parts of America and Europe seriously making effort to make a mark for themselves and, in the process, imbibing various cultural dispositions. Fola returns to Ghana having raised the children to be independent. It is the news of their father's ill health and subsequent death that once again unites the whole family back in Ghana.

The tense complexity of *Ghana Must Go* and its fragmented plot structure, largely sustained by interior monologue, demand a careful reading in order not to lose track of the intricate sequence of events in the story, as well as its characterisation. Clearly, *Ghana Must Go* is an in-depth dramatization of Selasi's long debated treatise, *Bye-bye Barbar,* where she tries to conceptualise the fluid identity of the African in an increasingly cosmopolitan and deterritorialised world. The concept of Afropolitan becomes the direct outcome of this creative venture.

Despite the considerable controversy and backlash that this concept has generated, Afropolitan (a neologism that combines Africa and cosmopolitan), has continued to gain a wide popularity. *Afropolitan Magazine* and Afropolitan shops that trade on 'handmade and designer accessories such as jewellery , bags and shoes' (Bady and Selasi, 2015:149) are all direct outcome of this idea. The major tenets of this concept can also be examined within the conceptual framework of hybridity since both focus on mixed identity. The Afropolitans find themselves negotiating various homes and different cultural points which, in essence, deny them a firm root in any of the cultures exposed to. It is this particular experience that puts their identity into question and projects them beyond a particular indigeneity. As Selasi writes, 'We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world' (2005: np). Similarly, in an interview with Bady (2015), Selasi explains:

> …in our world, we were acutely aware at all times of our non-belonging. If I say I'm American, people say "no you're not." If I say I'm British, as I was born in the UK, people say "your accent isn't credibly British. No you're not." If I say I'm Nigerian and try to speak Yoruba, my cousins mock my horrible accent, as well they should. You're not American, you're not British, you're not Ghanaian, you're not Nigerian. Always "you're not" (2015: 158).

It is the trauma that goes with an experience of non-belonging that Selasi has depicted in this text. In a very particular way, Selasi portrays the family dynamics and the complexity

of identity that shrouds Africans in the diaspora in the global era. Straddling the three major continents of Africa, Europe and America, *Ghana Must Go* is situated within the transnational setting that has become the emblematic template of modern postcolonial novels. The peculiar experiences within these shores highlight the manifest prominence of Appadurai's forces of globalisation in the characters' cultural transcendence. This, therefore, shows that the title *Ghana Must Go* may not necessarily be a direct reference to the experiences of Ghanaians living in Nigeria in the 1980s, when Ghanaians were asked to leave Nigeria and taunted by unsympathetic Nigerians with 'Ghana must go'.

Selasi goes far to capture the very beginning of a family in the throes of disintegration. Kweku's father, an artist of the Fante tribe in Ghana, was jailed after punching a drunk English sergeant who had harassed his wife, Kweku's mother. Released after being publicly flogged, Kweku's father, who could not bear the public humiliation by the colonial official, simply disappeared without a trace. The father's absence creates an obvious gap in responsibility as 'the small genius' Kweku is left with nobody to cater for him. Having discovered the promises embedded in the young boy, the Christian missionaries help Kweku to secure scholarship to study in the United States. Through this, Selasi projects Appadurai's ethnoscape as a major driving force in establishing the influence of globalisation in this text. Ethnoscape is a key factor in today's shifting world. As Appadurai (2000) opines, the modern world is 'shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move' (297). Kweku's yearning is predicated on 'reality of having to move', a compelling necessity that would change the fortune of a poor home. Despite her mother's hesitations to allow the young boy to leave, the challenging existential realities demand his outright departure.

Unlike in Adichie's *Americanah* and Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinns* where characters' movement is largely driven by fantasies, Selasi imbues in Kweku a more realistic need. It is a quest to gain education, to acquire a skill that he cannot get at home considering his poor background and orphanhood. The movement here does not just end in moving from one end of Ghana to Accra but across nations and cities within a very short time. This is where Appadurai's technoscape is explicitly applied. The large scale of movement in the global era is made possible by the unprecedented advancement in technology. While these movements have enhanced trade and increased interconnectedness among people and

places, it has also created more diverse identity formation and rattles the comfort of social or cultural belonging. It has enhanced penetration and narrowness of territories and raises questions on the wholesomeness of nationhood. Kweku's migration to the United States instantly creates an adopted space that provides a fertile ground for the emergence of a generation that is far detached from an African cultural orientation, thereby creating a mass range of people that belong in the category that Selasi refers to as 'cultural mutts'.

In order to crystallise this detachment, Selasi makes a comparison between provincial Ama, Kweku's second wife, and Folashade's children to demonstrate the behavioural trajectory of the globally exposed characters and that of a peripheral one. This is an assessment that appears to have drawn more from Gabriel Okara's *Piano and the Drums* where Okara imbues the drum with all simplicity and naturalness and the piano with foreboding complexity. Similarly, the comparison here appears to be drawn between the complex and the simple, the bold and the self-effacing, the ambitious, the inquisitive and the contented, the anodyne. The narrator captures the comparison thus:

> Ama doesn't hurt herself. It doesn't occur to her. To question herself. … she isn't a thinker. Isn't incessantly thinking – about what could be better, about what to do next … so her thoughts don't perpetually bump into his, causing all kinds of friction and firestorms, explosions, inadvertently, collisions here and there around the house. Her thoughts are not dangerous substances. The thought of the dreamer were landmines, free radicals. With them breakfast chat could devolve into war. Ama isn't a fighter. She comes to breakfast without weapons and to bed in the evening undressed and unarmed (Selasi, 2013:49-50).

The dreamers in this narration are Kweku's daughters, the 'insatiable women', the 'un-pleasable women'. The ever agitated-minds of the diasporised characters could be explained by the instinctive multiple consciousness that they are predisposed to, unlike Ama who has never left Ghana. As a result of the multiplicity of consciousness, the diasporised characters fail to see the common social norm that moderates social behaviour, which presents culture as an epistemological object. While the liminal characters view culture with enuciatory perspective, Ama has internalised the prescriptions of her homogenous cultural demands. Therefore, Ama's description as unthinking here could be misleading. Ama is not really unthinking; rather she deploys a less confrontational method, in conformity with her culture, in achieving her quest, a ploy that has made

Kweku constantly bend to her will. 'If he raises his voice and Ama flinches, he stops shouting. Without a pause. Like a light switch. She flinches, he stops' (47). It is the subtlety of Ama's control over her husband that prompts the narrator in another instance to refer to her as a genius. She is a genius of a different kind, 'animal genius, the animal's unwavering devotion to getting what it wants. To getting what it needs, without disrupting the environment. Without tearing down the jungle' (49). While Kweku is delighted in the loyal and simple Ama, he fails to see the calmness of her ambition and quietness of her quest. It is the endowment of such restrictive emotion in Ama as against the confrontational, the glass-breaking loudness of the dreamers that Ama is centralized as the bridge between 'the perpetual past' and the future. Selasi, here, describes West Africa as the perpetual past and the future as North America. These binaries are further symbolically depicted in the text with Kweku's mother and his daughter. His daughter, 'a modern thing entirely and a product of *there*, North America, snow, cow products, thoughts of the future' and his mother 'an ancient thing, a product of *here*, hut, heat, raffia, West Africa, the perpetual past' (52). While Kweku's daughter is a product of 'there', she doesn't really belong 'there' but she has been used in this narrative to represent the indexicalities of the West. Ama, residing in Accra with her husband, Kweku, therefore, embodies a bridge between these binaries, providing a middle ground in Kweku's sharp shift from hut and heat to snow, that is, from West Africa to North America. Selasi has successfully tied settings, characters and ideas into three symbolic units in order to semiotise them, thereby accentuating the continuous metamorphosis that characterises Africa in the global era. These representations mark the different layers of progressions that remain dominant in the horizon of postcolonial meditation within this era: a movement that advances from Africa's pristine past to culture contacts and overwhelming imperial hegemony. Taking the middle ground as Kweku has done is to reflect Selasi's (2005) position that the Afropolitans have been put in the position to try to 'understand what is ailing in Africa alongside the desire to honour what is wonderful, unique' (Par. 7).

Kweku's preference for Ama and all her indexicalities is a decision born out of self-realisation. It is a realisation that juxtaposes the deterritorialisation of globalisation and the subsisting Otherness of racism. Kweku's unjust dismissal and his subsequent abandonment of his family is a reenactment of his father's experience and appear to establish a lineage that lacks a psychological strength to withstand humiliation. However, a closer reading of the text reveals that these two instances explain how an interfering

hegemonic arrogance in a people's life can bring families to ruins or what Ato Quayson (2012) refers to '… the active presence of imperial significances upon social relationships in the present' (360). Selasi accentuates the palpable racist consciousness that coexists with the constantly increasing interconnectivity among people and places and also highlights the stereotype that goes along with racism. It is for this reason that Selasi (2005) observes that 'race … is a question of politics rather than pigment'. It highlights what Bhabha (2004) refers to as 'the traumatic tradition of the oppressed' (61) and demonstrates the order of power along the colour of the skin, thereby presenting a cruel display of power and the helplessness of the powerless. More than that, it exemplifies how excellence can be sacrificed on the altar of racist ego even in a society that prides itself as the model of the world. Kweku Sai's sack is simply a case of a scape-goat that must be sacrificed to please an egocentric family. The narrator explains:

> Seventy-seven-year-old smoker with a ruptured appendix and a blood stream infection, days old. Not a chance. Jane "Ginny" Cabot – patron of research sciences, socialite, wife, mother, grandmother, alcoholic, and friend – would be dead before morning… . The only reason Kweku had even attempted the appendectomy was because the Cabot had called the president of the hospital, a family friend, to suggest very politely that in light of their donation surely a last-ditch operation wasn't too much to ask (74).

It is upon the detailed account in this circumstance that the hospital yields to the pressure but further insists that it must be handled by the hospital's best hand, Kweku Sai. Despite Cabot family's disdainful hesitation to accept a black man to handle this surgery, expressing a stereotypical presumption of ineptitude, the president insists on Dr Sai. The president assures them about him: 'Very fine surgeon. The finest we have'. The negative outcome of such an ill-fated adventure is what has cost Kweku Sai his job. The shock, the excruciating trauma of such an injustice, an injustice that a court action cannot redeem, is what haunts Kweku throughout his life. He is unable to face his wife who has sacrificed greatly to see him successful as a surgeon. A strong sense of abandonment, rejection and shame overwhelms him, and Kweku seeks a more homogenous affiliation. He returns to his home country, Ghana. It is this traumatic experience that is intermittently revealed through stream of consciousness that sustains this elliptic narrative. Just like some of the characters in Adichie's Americanah, Kweku's return highlights rejection and unbelongingness. It demonstrates Bhabha's (1994) observation that, 'the study of world

literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize … their projection of otherness' (12). While racism and rejection prompts Kweku to a homeward search for a homogenous identification, Kweku's return further complicates the matter, as he is further seen, at another level, as an exotic other among his kinsmen, 'a stranger in Accra as in Boston' (Selasi, 2013:248). The sense of rejection and unbelonging in this regard clearly highlights Kweku's liminal status and rattles the comfort of his assumed sociocultural belonging.

Ama's emergence at this point in time, therefore, serves as a bridge to connect Kweku with the past. While his yearning for home is strong, he doesn't yearn for a home of huts and heat. He has left the snow but he must not return to the heat. Selasi's adroit integration of the past and the present in Ama highlights Bhabha's (1990) observation that despite assumed certainty of origin of a given society and its cultures, 'the cultural temporality of a nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality' (1). In other words, the ever changing social realities subject cultures to a continuous transitional mode. It is, perhaps, in this era of globalisation that such transition appears most rapid. Selasi, therefore, in her reflection on the Afropolitan, projects Kwekus's children at another layer of this cultural transition.

It is clear that one of the most predominant concerns in Selasi's seminal essay is the question of identity. John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which has been pivotal in earlier meditations on the idea of identity in the Western thought, appears to have steered Selasi's interrogation on identity in *Ghana Must Go*. According to Locke (1690):

> When we see anything to be in any place in any instant of time, we are sure that it is that very thing, and not another which at that same time exists in another place, how like and undistinguishable so ever it may be in all other respects: and in this consists identity… (311)

For Locke, a thing has an identity when it becomes indistinguishable in every other aspect. In other words, a being is to be set apart by certain features for it to have an identity. It is these distinguishable features which define identity that Selasi foregrounds in the characters in the story. While Olu struggles through the crisis of identity in asserting himself as a man, after Kweku abandons them, to extricate himself from the influences of

his father, he yet faces a more intriguing crisis of identity based on race. Despite having lived all his life in the United States, Olu's Father-in-law, Dr Wei, confronts him with another demeaning stereotype of African men. The man has summed all the problems of Africa, ranging from war, disease, hunger, to obnoxious cultural practices into the fact that African men neglect their families. While his preconceived doubt about the intellectual capacity of the Africans has been corrected by brilliant performances of Africans that he has met, he concludes that the major cause of the crises in Africa is the family:

> … Why is that place still so backward? I ask. And you know what I think? No respect for the family. The fathers don't honour 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, 120)

Dr Wei's observation is not far from the prevalent reality given the fact that Olu's father has just abandoned his own family. It is a fact that deeply hits Olu, as he also begins to express some doubt about himself, whether he too is destined for the same fate. For Dr Wei to conclude that Olu Sai will tow the same line simply because one Oluwalekun Abayomi did a similar thing is to fall into what Bhabha (1994) refers to as 'the blanket assertion of individual or institutional racism' which initialises a morbid stereotypical sentiment that in essence describes 'the effect rather than the structure of the problem' (34). The cultural supremacy which inflames the racist tension that often results in abandonment of family is completely ignored by Dr Wei's assessment. He fails to engage the hegemonic forces that lead to break up of families, just as it is in the case of Sais, rather he sees the distressed state of the organic unit of society as peculiar to African. For him, this state of affairs is a deliberate choice of life that is frequently relished by the men.

Indeed, Dr Wei has proved a self-conceited character who would lump a whole continent into such a pejorative categorisation with no effort to interrogate his own dysfunctional family. As perverted as his view may be, this, however, constitutes a dominant imaging that is further used in defining the African identity and culture, including people like Olu who are not yet certain of their Africanness or as Selasi (2005) puts it 'without a bedrock sense of blackness'. What Selasi demonstrates here is how, in the words of Slemon (1987), 'the other is transformed into a set of codes that can be recuperated by reference to one's

own systems of cultural recognition' (7). Through this way, globalisation has provided a platform where negative attributes of few are projected as the generic categorisation of all, with scant effort to critically interrogate the intricate life patterns that make the situation subsist. A perception as shallow as this does not only blind the propagators to the strong attachment to family in many African cultures, but also projects this negative view as traditional to a whole continent and as the major cause for backwardness. This is, indeed, a good example of what Adichie (2009) refers to as 'a single story', the fundamental base for stereotypical construction. While the Sais are projected with this African label they, on their own, still lack the conviction about their Africanness, thereby falling into the liminal categorisation of the Afropolitans.

At another level, the children, especially Sadie, find herself in serious contest about her physical identity. Sadie's phenotype remains a stubborn resistance to the genetic transmutation that trails the family's cross-cultural contacts and gives her a definite African identity of the Sai family. This has been a constant source of envy to the twins whose physical statures are in contrast with Sadie's. Kehinde, for instance, consistently questions the authenticity of his Africanness. His doubt about whether he is really a member of Sai's family is only resolved upon their visit to Lagos, when they see the portrait of 'the face that theirs came from' (166). It is the portrait of their great-grandmother, a Scotswoman. While Kehinde's nagging doubt about his ancestry is later cleared, Sadie continues to count herself unlucky for her robust body which is different from her mother's and that of her other siblings and therefore form another pattern of Othering for herself. It is for this reason that she has to suffer bulimia which results from her irregular eating habit when she wants to slim down in order to fit into the Western accepted appearance.

Such differences in appearance explain what Selasi (2005) means when she observes that it is problematic to trace the genealogy of the Afropolitans because they 'forge a sense of self from wildly disparate sources.' Disparate sources occasioned by the modern global mix, therefore, challenges originary concept of identity and its cultural allies. In essence, this brings about what Bhabha calls 'the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customary' (37). In other words, Selasi depicts what Kristeva (1991) explains when she observes that Othering is not just the

opposite of the self but part of the self, the foreigner within us, 'and when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting the unconscious' (191). While Sadie is reflected in this mirror of representation, a reflection of a given African cultural identity, Kehinde and others who share in the so called originary concept of her identity are blurred out of the mirror. The originary identity is clearly reflected as the family returns home, and Sadie meets her father's sister, who appears to be the mirror of representation, the 'heavyset Naa, with the same angled eyes … same stature, short, sturdy, same negligible eyebrows, round face, round nose… . The joke of genetics' (Selasi, 2013: 264). The growing global mix does not only affect the material culture, other cultural identifications such as human physiognomy falls in the overwhelming reconstruction of the global force. As genes traverse across regions, new hybrid physiological structures are formed, thereby unsettling the putative sense of physical identity.

Selasi's projection of the Afropolitans as people of itinerant living is also depicted in *Ghana Must Go*. According to Selasi (2005) the Afropolitans 'belong to no single geography' (Par. 2). Usually, their place of birth, where they went to school and where they work as well as the country of their parents are different. Selasi exemplifies this in Kweku Sai's children. While Kweku is a Ghanaian citizen, the children are citizens of the world. As a result of this, there is a lack of firm attachment to any particular geographic location as home or nationality and, in the process, positioned to absorb multicultural forces. Kehinde, for instance, won the Fulbright to Mali, worked as a waiter in Paris and is now showcasing his paintings in London. This is beside the fact that his father is from Ghana his mother from Nigeria (where he spends his holiday with his twin) while he is born and brought up in America. Here, Selasi explores the complex cultural memories that are formed and the personality formations that follow as result of disparate experiences from different homes that they have lived in. According to Blunt and Varley (2004), 'As a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear, the home is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life' (3). All the various homes and the experiences therein come together to form an aporia of consciousness in these characters. While the Sais want to identify with a sense of their African identity, the varied experiences from the places they have lived in slip in at intervals. Sadie, for instance, is subsumed in American mannerisms like the overuse of '*whatever* and *like*' and his secret admiration and aping of Philae, her white friend (Selasi, 2013: 145). Taiwo has to grow dreadlock in order to fit in among the white girls in her

'predominantly white college' (Selasi, 2013:138), often sliding in and out of English and 'phrases of French' (214). This is why Selasi (2005) argues in her essay that beside their itinerancy, Afropolitans are also multilingual and multi-talented, breaking from the traditional professions of law and medicine to arts and music. They explore new grounds and come out with huge successes. In the process of living across different spaces, these characters are variedly initiated into several cultural forms without being part of any.

The ease of movement and fast social mobility that exile promises appears to suggest that Selasi projects exile as an enriching motif, but this is not exactly so as she further demonstrates some distastes of exile, as such dreams and aspirations are often short-lived. Observing the losses that exile inflict on people, Said argues that exile, like death, 'but without death's ultimate mercy,' tears 'millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family and geography' (2000:138). The separation and displacement of the Sai family members in this narrative exemplifies Said's postulation that exile creates 'unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home', which is why the 'achievement of exile is permanently undermined by loss of something left behind forever' (137). Obviously, globalisation subjects the idea of a 'true home' into a rigorous contestation. While Afropolitans assume everywhere as home, nowhere truly grants them a full acceptance. There is always something lacking, something that betrays their assumed cultural affiliation, which suggests the permanent loss that Said tries to explain. Such experience denies the family of any gravity and suspends them within the indefinite border of liminality. This, largely, accounts for the reason Selasi projects the image of grayness and shadow in *Ghana Must Go* as luminous symbols of the characters' elusive identity which is located within the hybrid realm. The images signify death and vacuum in the characters and demonstrate how globalisation is instrumental to the formation of this liminal personality.

3.4   Conclusion

It is evident that apart from the similar narrative model they share, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah,* Mahjoub Jamal's *Travelling with Djinns* and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* have also added a serious thematic concern to the intellectual corpus of the African novel. Despite the obvious cyclical style of narration which eases the oscillation between the present and the past in a single breath, and the deployement of *in media res*, flashback and stream of consciousness in the texts, the narratives leverage the instruments

of the mediascape and ethnoscape in purveying the major strides of globalisation and, then, vividly demonstrate how they form the building block for the formation of liminal characters in the texts. They also adopt a similar model of characterisation as each case of cultural transcendence draws its root from the family. Here, we see the family creating the basic enablement for transcendence beyond African cultures. The elitist status of the family provides the background for the identity formation of the children into what Selasi refers to as Afropolitans. The texts are therefore projecting a new breed of African identity based on class. With this, it becomes manifest that the new identity is predicated on a certain class of people who are most exposed to the facilities provided by Appadurai's ethnoscapes and mediascapes. Encouraged by their parents, and progressing from one generation to another, the cultural transcendence continues in other myriads of unimaginable numbers of generations that are harboured within the interstices. Dike in *Americanah*, Leo in *Travelling with Djinns*, the Sais in *Ghana Must Go* and other disparate children form this endless span, while their parents and sometimes, their grandparents lay the foundation for this existential renegotiation.

While Adichie throws a foray into multifaceted arrays of several families in Nigeria with an emphasis on Obinze's, Mahjoub and Selasi narrows the cultural disintegration specifically to Yasin's and Sai's family respectively, portraying how progressively the transcendence subsists within a single family lineage. Through this way, Mahjoub and Selasi establish a clear-cut trace of where this new cultural orientation started, as the colonial incursion marks the very beginning. And this is sustained through the fathers to the sons to grandchildren. It is this unbroken continuum, despite the frays and protests among some of the family members, that gives us a peep into the future and ultimately establishes the inevitable progression in the cultural interstices that do not only blur the primordial affinities but create multiple spaces and manifold limbos in the process.

Also, while women are projected by Mahjoub as the most vocal cultural ambassadors, Adichie has no specific gender preference for this role. However, women who identify with an indigenous cultural consciousness are rather portrayed to be in a conscious docility and a routine passivity, a depiction that tries to suggest the unfairness of the culture on the women under such condition. These women are represented as helpless bearers of the cruel burden of culture in a male dominated environment. Obinze's wife, Kosi, and Ojiugo, the wife of the London based Nicholas, are typical examples of such ever effusive

and home-minded women who seem to be weakened and economically disarmed by the values they have imbibed very much earlier in life. As a result, the only economically progressive and independent women in the text are those whose orientation is in sharp contrast to these indigenous cultural values. These are Ifemelu, Uju and Nneoma. These women are juxtaposed with Kosi and Ojiugo in a deliberate attempt to credit their economic success to their cultural transcendence, which has let them free from any sort of cultural encumbrances, and enhance their survival, at least, economically. As a matter of fact, Obinze's financial success is directly tied to the fortunes of one of those women, Nneoma. But this so-called economic liberation has not automatically translated into a paradisiac bliss. For Uju, she continues to ache and yearn, without success, for a man who would not only be a partner to her but at least be a father figure for her son, while Ifemelu continues to founder with men in America and Nigeria until she gets Obinze back to her laps, bringing a young bourgeoning family to its ruins.

In the main, what has become apparent in the texts is that regardless of the widespread growing global interconnectedness which seems to lead toward increasing cultural uniformity, there still remain some resilient voices of nativism that cannot be totally ignored. Rather, such voices should be seen as inaugurating a cultural debate, subjecting each perspective to a critical analysis by placing them on the dispassionate scale of profound rationality. Also, in the texts, childhood proves to be the most effective moment for cultural dislodgement. It is therefore observed that despite the undeniable reality of the global order and some of its favourable disposition, it still remains a strong instrument of cultural perversion, a fact that illumines the need for caution in exposing the tender psychic ligaments of the child to its overwhelming allures. Above all, it is evident that the family provides a crucial platform for formation of cultural consciousness in the global era.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRO-PESSIMISM AND GLOBAL FORCES IN THE FORMATION OF LIMINAL SELF

4.0   Introduction

The economic stagnation and political crises that have riddled the African continent in the last few centuries have engendered a pessimistic perception of Africa from within and outside the continent. While these woes have resulted in state failure, war, hunger and excruciating poverty, the conspicuous and, sometimes, subterranean global power play usually responsible for these conditions often eludes critical attention. These conflicting influences have, in this regard, affected character portrayal in the African novel. Consequently, Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat*, Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones* and Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* explore the cultural nexus occasioned by these global influences in facilitating cultural transcendence and the formation of liminal characters.

Reflections on the pessimistic perceptions of life run deep in literary scholarship. The nineteenth century English literature, for instance, portrayed a deep sense of pessimism that defined England and, of course, Europe of the time. As Goodale (1932) observes, 'the years from 1885 to 1898 have been correctly termed by Mr G.K. Chesterton "an epoch of real pessimism"' (241). Contrary to the optimistic and rationalist perception of Comte and Kant, pessimism of that era, according to Goodale, stemmed from the fact that 'the question of the value of life was on the horizon of every educated man, and developed like a storm cloud whenever the speculation chilled'. Writers in England also captured this view as great volumes of literature emerged to depict 'the idea of the world's tedium and pain'. Reinforcing the socio-political upheaval and inner contradictions of the period was the philosophical pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's philosophical perspective greatly influenced Richard Wagner's musical compositions and Friedrich Nietzsche's writings (especially in his youth). Schopenhauer argued that 'the world of objects in space and time held together by relations of cause and effect, was nothing but a representation, an illusion generated by the unending play of a metaphysical entity which he called "the Will"' (Geuss, 1999: vi). The Will, as explained by Geuss in his introduction to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy,* 'had each human individual in its grip and drove each of us on to forms of action that inevitably ended either in disgusting satiation or in frustration'. Schopenhauer observed that the very nature of life precluded the

possibility of any enduring human happiness as a result of the blind irrational will that dominates human pursuit and desire. The failure of rationality and the illusiveness of Socratic optimism are the forces that invigorate Nietzsche's philosophical contemplation on the lack of coherence and meaning in life as demonstrated in his *Birth of Tragedy*. 'The best we could hope for, Schopenhauer argued, was momentary respite from the continual flux of willing and frustration through the contemplation of art' (vii). It is this view that has prompted what Dennis Walder refers to as 'Schopenhauerian melancholy' (2011:111).

While Schopenhauer sees art as one of the ways 'of distancing ourselves from the relentless throb of the Will', African writers engage the pessimism that confronts the continent through their art. Waberi's (1998) (as cited in Thomas, 2009) summary of the generational categories of the African writers portrays this pessimistic trajectory across the continent. According to Waberi these categories are comprised as the pioneer writers of 1920–30, the Negritude movement from 1930 to 1960, decolonization and postcolonial disillusionment from the 1970s onwards and finally a fourth generation is to include the 'children of the postcolony or the transcontinental generation' (230). What all these categories have in common is lamentation. They decry the intrusion and eventual collapse of once a burgeoning continent. Nnolim writes about this in a more vivid way when he observes that the twentieth century African literature was a lachrymal one. 'It was a weeping literature, a literature of lamentation' (2006:1). This literature does not only bewail the collapse of the traditional structures but also the manifest consequences of this collapse, which ranges from famine, war, debt, poverty, corruption, diseases, crime, witchcraft to leadership failure. The Twenty First Century Africa literature has again started off in the same melancholic note simply because the same challenges that confronted the continent in the last century have subsisted, if not exacerbated. Despite the lack of a generally agreed conceptual frame to define Afro-pessimism, the challenges enumerated above have combined to generate the philosophical thrust of this concept. Afro-pessimism suggests a general lack of will or capacity by Africans to deal with their innumerable problems. It creates foreboding reflexes about the continent and its people, which has also led to the menacing concept of Afro-phobia. This accounts for the gleeful exodus from the continent despite the precarious realities beyond the shores.

The gloom on the continent is real and appears almost irredeemable. As Ndlovu (2013) observes, 'While violence has manifested itself in everyday African life in the form of wars of conquest, inter and intra-community raiding, terrorism, …, its logic remains hard to understand beyond naming and condemning' (126). From Rwanda to Somalia to Burundi, the bleeding tales of cruelty and anguish abound. Eze (2015) blames this squarely on leadership, on 'the tendency (of the political elite) to resort to the past for the benefit of the parochial present' (411), which is akin to what Fanon refers to as the intellectual laziness of the post-colonial bourgeoisie. Eager to occupy the vacated positions of the colonial masters, 'national bourgeoisie' shows itself incapable of extending its vision of the world sufficiently 'as they fall back toward old tribal attitudes, and, furious and sick at heart, … race feeling in its most exacerbated form' (Fanon, 1967: 127) triumphs. This has led to a psychic compulsion of rejection and abandonment of the continent and all that it signifies, including its identity, bringing to bare Afro-pessimistic perceptions.

Some critics, however, argue that Afro-pessimism is hegemonic. According to Momoh (2003), Afro-pessimism is 'an invented ideology'. He argues that such portrayal of Africa is 'nurtured or inspired by the western world and reproduced by local African leaders … a mere continuation of the "Dark Continent" thesis' (34). It is therefore a ploy to legitimise dominance. In the same vein, Nothias (2012) argues instances where a local event is related to Africa as a whole, and 'highlights one of the core processes of Afro-pessimism…, the essentialisation of the continent' (55). It is the tendency to generalise woes in the continent and ignore recorded successes in parts of Africa that Nothias rely on to object the accuracy of the report of the Western media about Africa. Unfortunately, it is on the pervasive lens of this media that perception, awareness, ideology and beliefs about Africa are formed and fostered most in the global era.

While it is true that African problems may not be all entirely self-inflicted, and that there are some mischievous misrepresentations as well as external contributions to the malaise, the reality is that the African continent trudges amidst woes and agonies, leading to palpable pessimism about the continent. The sense of hopelessness created by Afro-pessimism increasingly persists. This chapter, therefore, draws attention to the cultural infractions created as a result of these several calamities in African and shows how African identity consistently recedes towards obscurity in the selected texts. The

intervening cultural and global forces that induce multifaceted tensions on the continent are therefore explored in this chapter. These forces, in essence, have dislodged the African identity, thereby providing a liminal identity as an alternative. Consequently, Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names,* Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones* and Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat* are explored in order to portray the cultural nexus occasioned by these global influences in facilitating liminal identity in the texts.

4.1   Between sociopolitical nightmare and a nativitist longing in Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*

Noviolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (*New Names*, henceforth) is a tension-suffused narrative that leverages on the socio-political chaos and disillusionment of Africa (Zimbabwe) to project shared experiences of cultural pride. *New Names* appears to be an exception when Ojaide (2008) observes about the third generation African writers that: 'there appears to be a lack of realistic reflection of the place, people, worldview, and sensibility of Africa. In this regard, setting a novel in Africa becomes a convenient tool rather than a true reflection of relevant milieu toward an artistic function' (45). It is actually Bulawayo's adroit portrayal of the soul-wrenching reality of the depraved Zimbabwe's leadership, akin to Ayi Kwei Armah's Ghana in *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born*, that has prompted the barrage of criticism that has trailed the text right from the publication of the award winning short story, *Hitting Budapest,* which is later to become the first chapter of *New Names*. Seven literary bloggers expressed disappointment that NoViolet Bulawayo conforms to the stereotypes expected of African writers, accusing her of projecting the negative image of Africa, exactly the kind of writing that Wainaina (2009) lampoons in his *Granta* article.

Referring to *New Names* as 'poverty porn', some critics argue that the narrative is a mere rehash of too familiar social experiences. One of such critics, the Nigerian born writer and academic, Habila in his June 20, 2013 *Guardian Review* refers to the work as a creation of 'an African aesthetic of suffering' a condition he also appears to be accusing Caine-prize of promoting, when the book won the Cain-prize award. Habila argues that in the book, 'There is a palpable anxiety to cover every "African" topic, almost as if the writer has a check list made from the morning news from Africa' (13). But for some linguistic deftness he credits the text with, Habila dismisses it as a mere social commentary. It is this adroit use of language that Moji (2015) observes to have conformed 'to the poetics of an

"Africanized" English' (182). Habila, however, argues that the African literature should be liberated from portrayal of poverty as he queries, 'what is the purpose of suffering in literature?' This is the position of many diaspora writers, a group Selasi refers to as the Afropolitans. This position does not only rob African literature of its artistic commitment but also skews it to a very discomforting narrowness. The Ugandan Brian Bwesigye's swift response to Habila's position on November 22, 2013 in a *Journal of Art Criticism* beams more light on this. Bwesigye's question as to whether Afropolitanism is Africa's new single story raises follow-up questions. Is suffering not part of African experiences? Is African literature given boundary on what experiences to reflect? If the answers to these questions are in the negative then, *New Name*'s high literary acclaim cannot be simply dismissed by its reflection of another reality of the African society. No wonder the text was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and also won the Etisalat Prize for Literature in 2013. *New Names* simply gives another perspective of African experience that the Afropolitans lacks the courage to explore. This is why Ojaide has argued that the third generation writers are writing for mainly Western audience. In this particular text, Bulawayo simply deviates from an emerging single story of opulence and restless globetrotting that Afropolitans are already engrossed in. This ultimately makes Bulawayo's exploration of the sordid state of the continent, here blurrily represented by Zimbabwe, a bold attempt.

The gruesomeness of this experience is made real and palpable by the child-narrator technique. Darling, the child-hero, renders the story in a way that gives Bulawayo a distinctive voice in this narrative. Bulawayo's story has a lot in common with some other migrant stories in their interest in exploring the story of growth, the bildungsroman. However, the writer attempts to juxtapose the scenes before Darling crosses the border with the horrid realities at home being portrayed with intense grimness and the scene when the little girl migrates. Bulawayo represents raging hunger, fractured family life and a decaying social system in the portrayal of the setting ironically named Paradise.

Six children between ten and twelve years old: Bastard, Chipo, Godknows, Sbho, Stina and Darling, the narrator, live in the decrepit Paradise but only survive by stealing mango from Budapest, an elitist neighbouring district that is an exact contrast to Paradise. The government has demolished the people's houses and relocated them from their villages to Paradise. This brings an excruciating suffering that prompts anybody that has the

opportunity to leave the country. Darling finally leaves to join her aunty, Fostalina, in the United States where the grim reality of integration further confronts her. It is the difficulty of integration and her inability to actualize her American dream that frequently enkindles a home-ward longing in Darling despite the relative social stability she enjoys in the foreign land.

The contrast between Budapest and Paradise is evidently aimed at highlighting the lack in Paradise, the lack that makes the children long for a life beyond their own society. Darling happily announces to her friends amidst envy and jealousy, 'I am going to America to live with my aunt Fostalina, it wouldn't be long, you will see' (14). America resonates hope and appears to be a veritable solution to a long excruciating suffering that has denied the children their childhood. This is why Blommaert and Donckt (2002) observes that 'spaces are filled with symbols and attributes, and using them creates indexical ties to such places' (241). Bulawayo therefore contrasts the indexicalities associated with America with that of Paradise. While Paradise portends hunger, suffering and despondency, America exudes a hopeful solution to all that Paradise lacks. It is with this semiotic representation that Budapest becomes the closest space of hope and serves as a constant reminder for the children of a place better than home and the necessity to abandon Paradise. Beyond this, Bulawayo highlights what Michel Foucault refers to as heterotopia. Foucault uses this term to refer to all those spaces, in real life, that 'are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which . . . all other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault, 1986: 24). Budapest therefore becomes a mirror that exerts a kind of counteraction on the position that the children occupy, and therefore urges them on for a real experience of this projected world.

Budapest is the area where white settlers and the black elite, most of whom are returnees from America and Europe, reside. In contrast to their ramshackle houses in Paradise, Darling observes, 'Budapest is big, big houses with satellite dishes on the roofs and neat gravelled yards or trimmed lawns…the big trees heavy with fruit that's waiting for us since nobody around here seems to know what to do with it' (4). Siting Budapest, the capital of Hungary, in Zimbabwe has two significant implications. Bulawayo has connected the historical significance of Hungary in the independent struggle of Zimbabwe and also has demonstrated how global presence is brought to the local space. This is also

seen in the case of Shanghai and the very brimming presence of international media organisations, CNN, BBC and Non-governmental organisations. While Budapest is marked with luxury and quietude of the ancient colonial power, Shanghai represents the industrialising paradigm of the global world and another phase of aggressive dominance, now by the Chinese. Of all the items to be sold in the Chinese mall being built, none is of Zimbabwe, rather it is all 'Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Versace and so on' (46). Darling further narrates, 'It's just madness inside Shanghai; machine hoist things in their terrible jaws, machines maul the earth, machines grind rocks, machines belch clouds of smoke, … Everywhere machine. The Chinese men are all over the place…' (42). It is this mixture of geopolitical spaces with its cultural interconnectedness and divisions that gives *New Names* its global perspective at first glance. This also highlights the Otherness that exists in the settlement pattern of the aliens and the indigenous people. The wrenching poverty of the local people still signifies their status as the subalterns in their home land.

Similarly, the looming influences of the media and the subsequent delineating of Zimbabwe within what Jameson (1997) refers to as 'spectacle or image society', is a vivid imprint of the forces of globalisation in *New Names*. The children have been discomforted with Chipo's pregnancy and want to get rid of it. Chipo is the eleven-year-old friend of Darling who has been impregnated by her grandfather. This scene does not only reveal the morbid reality associated with a progressively dysfunctional society where physical displacement manifests in normative disorientation, it also demonstrates how metropolitan sensibility is transposed on the local. Sboh's exposure to an American television series *ER,* when in Harare, is what the children are mimicking. That is why she is leading this team. She believes that efficiency is in the name of the doctors in the series and they now adopt new names. 'I saw it on TV in Harare when I visited Sekuru Godi. *ER* is what they do in a hospital in America. In order to do this right, we need new names. I am Dr Bullet … you are Dr Roz, …' (82). This incident demonstrates global presence. More than that, the renaming also indicates identity transfer and the stimulation of the fantasies of the West in the mind of these children. The identity transfer does not only bequeath excellence on the foreigner, but also removes confidence in the ability of the local. It is this mental projection that ultimately stirs up the urge for migration and abandonment of the local and its cultural trappings. This is what Jameson (1997) refers to as the 'colonisation of … the Unconscious' which he attributes to 'the rise of the media and the advertising industry' (35).

Indeed, *New Names* presents the centre-periphery dichotomy in a very conspicuous way. The movement pattern signals the fact that departure from the periphery to the centre guarantees success. The movement is not only by Fostalina. Darling's father has left for Johannesburg, Makhosi, Darling's cousin first left for Madante mine to dig diamonds, was not successful, came back and went to South Africa, like Father. While these movements and the urge to move evidently signify a total loss of hope in the local and its indices, it also signifies the movement pattern in today's global world and the pervasive ideological framing that goes with such movements. The country game that the children play makes the point clearer.

> …first we have to fight over names because everybody wants to be the USA and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France ... These are country-countries. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa… . They are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even the one we live in – who wants to be a place of hunger and things falling apart (49)?

In what appears to be a roll call of successful and unsuccessful countries, Darling's narration of the country game suggests a global competition that globalisation portends, it suggests a global hierarchy of being which ultimately explains the Western trajectory that the global world has assumed. Unmistakably, it points at the leaders in the comity of nations. Everybody wants these names that signify success, which is the new names that form the title of the novel. These new names are reflected at both individual and community levels. The power of names in globalised societies is illustrated in Bruck and Bodenhorn's *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*, when they observe, 'That identities can be stolen, traded, suspended and even erased through the name reveals the profound political power located in the capacity to name; it illustrates the property-like potential in names to transact social value' (2006: 2). The children's struggle for these new names evidently underlies their craving for a new identity and a total rejection of the associated attributes of their present senses of self. Bulawayo personally explained this situation: 'I wrote the book when things were pretty difficult back home. It's my own way of saying we need new leadership, new ways of thinking and so forth' (Obioha, 2014: np). It is through this new leadership that Bulawayo believes that changing the trend of extraterritorial identification is possible.

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More than that, the country game indicates the sharp division among countries usually regarded as the first, second and third worlds and the growing inequality resulting from it. Krishna (2009) traces the history of this growing polarity when he observes: 'Historical data, travelogues, memoirs of merchants, pilgrims, explorers, and other evidence show that different parts of the world were not so unequal until around 1500 A.D., and the distribution of affluence and poverty was nowhere near as polarized as it is today' (9). This traces to about five centuries ago which is, as Krishna correctly points out, just about 'a blink of an eyelid in comparison to the length of time that human civilizations have existed'. The point that is being made here is clear. It was this century that marked the beginning of an active pervasive dominance and strong hegemonic influences of Europe. That was the period that the New World was discovered, the beginning of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which was later transformed to colonialism. This was the period that a lot of economic exploitations were carried out by Europe in Africa, Asia and South America. All these influences greatly impacted on the radical development that increasingly narrowed the gaps among climes and marks the very beginning of the thoughts that surround globalisation. Ironically, while spaces get narrower and closer, economic gaps among nations and people continue to widen, thereby designating many regions in the third world with repelling symbols of hunger and disease. It is this widening gap, the influence of more developed countries on the less developed, the craving for abandonment of the local and the displacement that follow that Bulawayo has tried to capture in this text.

The progression of the displacement and subsequent loss of cultural heritage of the people is succinctly traced by the child-narrator.

> There are three homes inside Mother's and Faustina's heads: home before independence, before I was born, when black people and white people were fighting over the country. Home after independence, when the black people won the country. And then the home of things falling apart, which made Aunt Fostalina leave and come here. Home one, home two and home three. There are four homes inside Mother of Bone's head: home before the white people came to steal the country, and a king ruled; home when the white people came to steal the country and then there was war, home when black people got our stolen country back after independence; and then home of now. … When someone is talking about home you have to listen carefully so you know which home he is referring to (191-192).

Bulawayo's portrayal of these several stages of home does not only demonstrate the sociocultural transcendence within this geographical space, but also represents the most crucial stages of Africa's collective historical experiences. These stages can be directly captured as pre-colonial and colonial eras, periods of struggle for Independence and, then, the period of postcolonial disillusionment. It is a realistic representation of the postcolonial disillusionment as against a utopic undercurrent of the earlier romantic portrayal of the continent that Irele (2001) has referred to as the New Realism. Disillusionment according to Irele is located in the 'deployment within the imaginative work of particular symbols, which register a negative apprehension of the African world and are represented as the objective historical reference of the imaginative text. The distinctive quality of this apprehension is a comprehensive somberness' (214). The symbol of this negative apprehension as deployed by Bulawayo is basic and excruciating: hunger. Rather than get drawn into such dysfunctional local dynamics in the form of militant engagement as can be seen in Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood*, precarious exile seems to be the alternative left for the characters in *New Names*, perhaps, in search of new names. The narrator observes: 'Look at them leave in droves despite knowing that they will be welcomed with restraint in those strange lands' (146). Emboldened by misery and frustration, the characters turn West, daring the consequences. It is actually this mass departure that is instrumental to loss of cultural identity and formation of liminal personality which are pungently portrayed in the text. The narrator succinctly acknowledges this fact thus: 'they will never be the same again because you just cannot be the same once you leave behind what you are, you just cannot be the same' (146).

Displacement here is temporal and spatial, a continuation of an endless shift. The mindless spree of demolition of houses by government has brought Darling and her family from their former home where Father had job, and food was available to her own home two: 'Paradise, with its tin tin tin'. Darling's humour cannot efface the bluntness of this agonising reality, at best, it is a dark humour. It is actually this this kind of humour that has situated *New Names* as a political satire. This is why Moji (2015) is right when he remarks that 'Darling's voice child enables Bulawayo to employ satire, a mode associated with political disillusionment' which in effect allows the book to lend 'itself to a double reading where humour encodes tragedy' (186). In essence, the humour does not assuage the raw anguish necessitated by this unending displacement as pulsating-painful memories becomes a constant repeat in Darling's mind even when she is already in the United

States. Each displacement marks a shift away from the culture and being of the individuals involved.

Bulawayo represents the loss of the collective heritage of the people in this endless dislocation process with the loss of Mzilawulandelwa's family stool after relocating to Paradise. The man's lamentation highlights the significance of this stool: 'My greatest grandfather Sindimba passed it on to his son Salile, who passed it on to Ngalo who passed it on to his son Mabhada, who passed it on to me, Mzilawulandelwa, to pass on to my son Vulindlela. And now it is gone! … that stool is my whole history' (74). This example does not only establish the patrilineal family structure in the story, but also establishes the value attached to a family heritage. It is a symbol of the loss of cultural identity and sense of belongingness. It is easy to question the real importance of a mere family stool that is not likely to add any material value to the wellbeing of the people. Why among all the things lost - houses, clothes and means of livelihood – it is the stool that the man laments most about? Certainly, this is a mourning of a perished past. He mourns a past of dignity and honour that vanishes as the man helplessly stares. This also symbolises the intangible heritage that give the people a proud sense of being, but which keeps disappearing with at each shift.

It is in line with this kind of thought that Taylor (1991) notes, 'I can define my identity only against the background of things that matter. But to bracket out history, nature, society, the demands of solidarity, everything but what I find in myself, would be to eliminate all candidates for what matters' (40). Taylor's argument, here, basically suggests that history, nature, society and demand for solidarity are among the things that matter in the definition of identity. It is the loss of the family history that prompts Mzilawulandelwa's lamentation. He finds himself responsible for this loss of family heritage which ultimately brings about loss of cohesion and other esteemed values. While Mzilawulandelwa blames himself, he fails to see the forces beyond him that are responsible for this loss of heritage.

This dislocation is evidently made even more prominent with Darling's travel to the United States. Necessitated by survival and quest for acceptance, Darling and her Aunt are split between the new environment and their indigenous home, bringing about what Du Bois calls 'double consciousness'. By double consciousness Dubois means a situation

where the Black subject experiences a white world – one simultaneously seeing the world and seeing one's self from the perspective of others. While Dubois refers to the black Americans who, mostly, have never left America, the present condition is about a people who have had their earlier life lived with the full awareness of their ancestry and identity but now live differently. It is through this way that Bulawayo projects language as major signifier of unbelongingness. Darling's effort in breaking the barrier of language is as humorous as it is revealing:

> …the TV has taught me just how to do it. It's pretty easy; all you have to do is watch *Dora the Explorer*, *The Simpsons*, *SpongeBob*, *Scooby-Doo*, and then you move on to *That's So Raven*, *Glee*, *Friends*, *Golden Girls*, and so on, just listening and imitating the accents. If you do it well, then before you know it, no body will ask you to repeat what you said. … I also have my list of American words that I keep under the tongue like talismans, ready to use: *pretty good*, *pain in the ass*, *for real*, *awesome*, *totally*, *skinny*, *dude*, *freaking*, *bizarre*, *psyched*, *messed up*, *like*, *tripping*, *motherfucker*, *clearance*, *allowance*, *douche bag*, *you're welcome*, *acting up*, *yikes* (194).

While Darling is attempting to negotiate through this linguistic challenge through what Fanon (1967) refers to 'sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry' (310), Fostalina has not been very successful in this regard. Apart from the fact that she has lost the youthful flexibility that will make it easy for her to adapt, she her daily job schedule does not spare her time for such things. To emphasise this point, Bulawayo dedicates about a whole full chapter to demonstrate the intelligibility failure between Aunt Fostalina and a white telesales agent during a telephone conversation on a five letter word, 'angel'. However, Darling's relative success in this regard has rather taken her further away from her identity, thereby bringing some strain in her relationship with the people in her community back in Africa. In one of such bitter encounters, her angered mother retorts, 'I see that America has taught you to speak English to your mother, and with that accent' (204). Darling is split between integration into a foreign land and detachment from her community, her identity. This is why one of her friends from home derides her in another telephone conversation, 'that stupid accent that you were not even born with that doesn't even suit you' (289). Bhabha captures this when he observes that 'identity is claimed either from position of marginality or in an attempt at gaining the centre' (2004: 177). While those in Darling's village are within the position of marginality, Darling and others

are constructing a new identity in an attempt at gaining the centre. The attempt at gaining the centre has however become an attempt at losing one's sense of identity.

Through this away, Bulawayo has demonstrated the tension that exists between translated existence and indigenous identity. Even though these characters, both those at home and those abroad largely speak English, 'a foreign language', the mother tongue has established a sort of uniqueness that codifies a strong sense of identity in this language. This is a common experience among all the characters, who are of African descent residing in America, in the second part of this story. Apart from Fostalina, Kojo her Ghanaian husband, shares in this linguistic exclusion. That is why as Darling narrates, whenever 'he finds someone from his country, everything about him is different – his laugh, his talk, his eating – it's like something cuts him open to reveal this other person I don't even know' (179). It is this switch on and out of liveliness as a result language that contributes in suspending the characters within the liminal line. It echoes the cognitive dissonance that runs through this set of characters. This is why Bhabha observes that, 'the "language" metaphor raises question of cultural difference' (177). It is the language difference that marks the cultural distinction between him and Fostalina and TK, his son, his immediate family in America and so stifles the high-spiritedness in Uncle Kojo even in his own home. Bulawayo appears to argue here that language difference does not allow for heart felt outpour of the mind and, therefore, strains relationship. As the narrator remarks, 'the problem with English is this: you usually can't open your mouth and it comes out just like that – first you have to think what you want to say. Then you have to find the words. Then you have to carefully arrange those words in your head. Then you have to say the word quietly to yourself to make sure you got them okay' (193). This situation would have been understandable for a ten year old girl who has come to America from a poor African country but for the fact that even older Kojo and Fostalina also face the same situation underscores their unbelongingness and the otherness that a language can bring about. As Darling affirms, 'In America we did not always have the words. It was only when we were with ourselves that we spoke in our real voice' (240). Bulawayo has demonstrated how these set of African have been othered through the instrument of expression.

Apart from that, the shifting imagination of the phenotype and beauty that is encountered in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* is further replicated here with an artistic adroitness. Aunty Fostalina, just like Ginika, is hell-bent on losing more pounds of flesh to

be able to insert herself into the American social matrix. 'Kick. And punch. And kick. And punch' (151) the child-narrator observes Fostalina constant drills. When her schedules become too tight, she engages in dieting. Uncle Kojo's position highlights the mimicry that is going on here. 'Look at you, bones bones bones. All bones. And for what? They are not even Africans, those women you are doing like, shouldn't that actually tell you something? … there is nothing actually African about a woman with no thighs, no hips, no belly, no behind'. This is a similar situation encountered by Ginika who has almost developed anorexia nervosa because of her strict dieting processes.

In *Culture and Weight Consciousness* (1997) Mervat Nasser observes that 'Anorexia nervosa and bulimia are among the few psychiatric syndromes with a plausible sociocultural model of causation' (i). Nasser argues that concern with slimness is becoming more prevalent in non-western cultures and ethnicities. It is this global trend that put the characters at the risk of this eating disorder. Anorexia and bulimia pose debilitating health threats that are usually ignored when the health risks of body weight are discussed. It, therefore, means that there is more to the rave for slimness than health. Indeed, it is a growing manifestation of a skewed sense of Western endorsed phenotype. While Kojo, Fostalina's husband, is projecting the indices for binary oppositions in line with this phonotypical perception, Fostalina is engrossed in what Edward Said terms 'conscious affiliation' (Said, 1984), that is, a mimicry of the centre proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed. Unfortunately, either as a result of racial consciousness or other factors that have brought about the persistent irony in the global process, this effort never absorbs these characters into the Western mainstream. Yet, it is in this process of aping for acceptance that they transcend their indigeneity and find themselves within a liminal status.

In the main, this points to the fact that culture is a phenomenon of interaction as new ways of being continues to be recreated as a result of these interactions. Kwame Appia (2005) captures this in what he terms 'invention and authenticity' of human identity. According Appia, while absolute authenticity is basically romantic, self-authored 'construction of self should be in response to facts outside oneself, things that are beyond one's own choices' (18). What this implies is that existential realities have a part to play in the construction of human identity and that insistent on a given authentic identity of an individual would simply amount to a romantic musing. While it is true that identity is invented in some

instances, Kwame has slightly complicated the matter as what is beyond one's own choice is evidently varied and indefinite. Kwame's position should also coexist with the fact that the forces that direct the invention of identity should also demand some kind of interrogation and should not be helplessly watched.

The varied confusing consciousness that goes together with cross-cultural initiation as explored in this text is what necessitates home-ward longing in Darling which ultimately underlies her unhomely life. According to Bhabha, 'To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the unhomely be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres' (9). Darling is in the United States but the crises of integration, acclimatization and acceptance continue to transport her mind and thought back home. '… we wouldn't be having enough food which is why I stand being in America dealing with the snow; there is food to eat here, all types of food. There are times, though, that no matter how much food I eat, I find the food does nothing for me, like I am hungry for my country and nothing is going to fix that' (153). This excerpt captures the very core of Noviolet Bulawayo's interrogation of diasporic ambivalence: the major survival challenges at home and the unsettled spirit in the diaspora. It is this restlessness of the mind which prompts unending musing about home that foregrounds the unhomely life in *New Names*.

Bulawayo's projection of a future sustained by a progressive cultural transcendence bears the incisiveness of her message. In last but one chapter, entitled 'How They Lived', the comic child-narrator suddenly transforms into a woman with a strident lamentation on swift passing away of treasured values before her very eyes. Giving accounts of a sustained identity shift, the narrator observes: 'And then our children are born. We held their American birth certificates tight. We did not name our children after our parents, after ourselves … We gave them names that would make them belong in America, names that did not mean anything to us' (247). This is, perhaps, the most potent way to erase identity through naming as earlier observed by Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (2006). It is evident that this is not the new name that Bulawayo tends to promote from the title of this text. If *New Names* is her own way of promoting the need for new leadership and new ways of thinking, as she noted earlier, it is obvious that this falls short of such negotiation. The new names here rather suggest the fate that awaits a society that abandons its people to the deracinating potency of the global world in the face of leadership indifference and

ineptitude of governance in Africa. If anything, Bulawayo sends a warning signal about this emerging reality. Bulawayo has centralized naming as a major vehicle of belongingness. It is a way of navigating the tall borders of extremely race conscious society as America. Naming is also an instrument of identity denial and deracination.

The whole process is, however, beyond naming. The narrator observes 'And with our parents gone we told ourselves we have no home anymore, who would we go to see in that land we left behind. We convinced ourselves that we now belonged only to our children. And those children – they grew and we had to squint to see ourselves in them. They did not speak our language' (248). The demise of their parents is the break from the homogenous link and explains the helpless lamentation of the narrator. The children's abandonment of some of the treasured traditions like marital and death rites of the people clearly signals cultural transcendence that has midwifed a new identity formation. It is this new identity that blurs the image of the parents on the children. Ironically, the abandonment of these cultural heritages has not entrusted the children or their parents within the mainstream of American social milieu. Social difference inherent in this society has not been surmounted by these factors. They are incapable of a total immersion into a constructed identity, they rather constructs new ones obscuring the supposed binary oppositions of identity in the process. This is what Bhabha describes as 'the indeterminacy of diasporic identity' (225) as these characters remain suspended within the liminal space.

Bulawayo stirs up a very crucial part of the new existential realities of the continent in the global era. Having established the overwhelming interactions of people and place in the new era, Bulawayo delves deeply into the cultural and economic implications of these contacts. While poor socio-economic condition in the homeland constitute the basic push factor of the characters examined in this narrative, their cultural attachment at home stoke a homeward craving despite the luxury of life in the diaspora. Split between the gloomy realities of the home and their unacceptability or inability to integrate in the diaspora the characters are thrust with the liminal space.

4.2   Global power play and the rise of radical consciousness in Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones*

Nuruddin Farah's consistent engagement with socio-political issues of his country, Somalia, has comfortably secured him a place among the African literary giants that he

has become one of the most eloquent literary figure in Somalia. As a writer committed to the heavy burden of the state, Farah has spent many decades outside the country on an exile which began after his criticisms of Siad Barre's regime were met with banning orders and attempts on his life. Farah describes his commitment to writing about Somalia, despite the long years of his absence, as an attempt to keep the country alive (Naicker, 2017). Hilda Strandberg (2016), discussing Frarah's novels observes that 'Firmly rooted in the geo-political particulars of Somalia, they trace the country's journey from communist rule, via dictatorship, through war, and civil war, arriving in a 2010 fictional version of Somalia featuring militant Islamism and coastal water piracy' (13).

Indeed, Farah has trailed Somali political process in relation to the family structure as well as the state right from his early novels. Beginning with *From a Crooked Rib* (1970), *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979), to *Maps* (1986) Farah has consistently interrogated the social political tension that has bedevilled the state of Somalia at one point or the order. In *Secrets* (1998), Farah explores the stresses that postcolonial Somali culture brings to bear on individuals in terms of mixed bloodlines and ambiguous ancestry. Phyllis Taoua (2009) argues, for instance, that the ambiguity of Kalaman's identity (a major character in the novel), being an issue of his mother's gang rape 'figures the multiple identity that gave birth to the modern Somali nation' (224).

He finally narrows his creative gaze on the cultural maze occasioned by the emergent globalised world, an effort he stretches into his *Past Imperfect* trilogy, as he traces the fall of Somali military dictator, General Siad Barre in *Links* (2003*)*, the rise to power amongst local warlords in *Knots* (2007)*,* and concluding with a reflection on Somali's share in the spread of global terrorism which ultimately results from the collapse of the state in *Crossbones* (2011). Farah has not only sustained the link among the texts that constitute the trilogy with repeated portrayal of the return of diasporised characters and the tenuous relation between them and their Somali home but also maintained some characters like Jeebleh, Cambara and Bile across the texts. It is through this way that Farah weaves one plot into another in a way that the three can be read as a trilogy.

While *Crossbones* can be analysed, from one end, as a conclusion of a trilogy, it can also be engaged as a lone text owing to its convincing wholeness. It is for this reason that this present study will focus on *Crossbones* as a stand-alone text for analysis. It is actually in

Crossbones that Farah reflects how modern compression of time and space contributes to the grim reality that confronts Somalia. As modern technological advancements narrow spaces and bring people closer, it sparks off some subterranean ideological leanings that does not only hold sway across distances but also creates new alliances and foes. *Crossbones* captures how global influences penetrates a people, setting them against one another, resulting in the unfortunate collapse of the state as base brutality of an endless war engulfs a country. This is why Mogadishu, Somalia's capital has always projected a global perception of an 'undiluted horror'. In an alternating narrative style, Farah portrays terrorism and piracy as the twin evils that have brought Somalia to the global map of horror. The omniscient voice alternates focus from Malik to Ahl to capture these two vices.

The story centres on the return of Malik and his older brother, Ahl, the protagonists of the novel, who are visiting Somalia for the very first time in their life. Born in Aden, Yemen, of a Somali father and a Malay-Chinese mother, their knowledge of Somalia does not come from any real, personal experience , rather their understanding of the country is only formed from the perceptions created by the media. Their return is not born out of an eagerness to reintegrate with the homeland; rather, their return is in relation to the global tension of terrorism and sea piracy. Malik is a journalist and has come to the country with the mission of producing a documentary on piracy in the Horn of Africa because the world has become interested in the growing spectre of Somali piracy. Ahl on the other hand is going in search of his stepson, Taxliil, who has disappeared from their home in Minneapolis to join Al Shabaab fighters in Somalia. While Ahl, trudging through many hurdles, unites with Taxliil, Malik narrowly escapes death.

It is surprising that despite the apparent global power play that runs through the texts critics have rather concentrated more on the didactic import, (Garuba, 2017) and the generic inconsistency of the text (Naicker, 2017). It has therefore become important to interrogate the influence of global forces that have led to the collapse of the Somali state and how these have resulted in formation of characters within a liminal space in the text. It is evident that Malik and Ahl, from the synopsis above, are interesting characters in a postcolonial literary analysis. These are the characters who have been exposed to transcultural negotiations as a result of multiple –throng global forces. Malik and Ahl are, unarguably, diaspora children, the homeland has no real, experiential existence for them.

This is why Malik acknowledges how bizarre it is for him to be back in a place to which he has never been before. It is for this reason that in preparing to go to Somalia, they have to ingest malaria tablets weekly, study maps, gather information from all kinds of media sources, and consult others on what to do, where to go and whom to contact. The narrator better describes their relationship with the homeland:

> …Ahl and Malik, born and raised in Aden, were brought up to think of Somalia as their father's land—and even the old man himself never knew or visited the place. Even so he made sure his sons spoke the language from childhood. So, although the country is unfamiliar, Somalia's troubles haven't been far from their minds (Farah, 2011:35).

It is interesting to note that despite their physical detachment, their father, who has never been to Somalia himself, has made a serious effort to sustain a linguistic thread of identity with his homeland. Bhabha identifies this instance of insisting on maintaining a cultural link as a recurring phenomenon among the 'subordinated people', the subalterns, which is deployed in 'asserting their indigenous cultural tradition and retrieving their repressed histories' (1994:9). The attachment this creates does not only resonate a remote sense of home within their unconscious, a battle against total cultural amnesia, but also underlies their unhomeliness in the foreign land, which is why 'Somalia's troubles haven't been far from their minds'. It shows that whatever Minneapolis or New York may offer, it cannot adequately substitute homeland. Bhabha's conception of the unhomely is further highlighted in this instance. 'Unhomeliness highlights the condition obligated on a split identity. As Bhabha argues, it is 'the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations' (9). It is for this reason that Farah has used the return of these characters to highlight their unbelonginess as close family ties, which is preponderant in Somalia, conflicts with their 'upbringing in an insulated nuclear family' (Farah, 2011:44). This explains how weak the single symbol of language can equip them with the huge resource of orientations that the Somali culture has got to offer. As a result, the returnees rather trudge along the blurry horizon of liminality.

While Malik and Ahl's cross-cultural initiations stem from Appadurai's 'ethnoscapes' to engender a cultural disjuncture and subversion of identity, the presence of the Union of Islamic Courts and their brazen domination of Somali terrain provides more complex tinge to the cultural dissuasions and alignment in Farah's narrative. The wide dominance of Al

Shabaab (the militant arm of the Union of Islamic Court) in the wake of state collapse, takes a deep thrust into the orientation of the Somali children. Farah's engagement with child radicalization does not only explore the phenomenon of child soldering and its damning consequences but also dramatizes the powerful force of religious indoctrination in redirecting a people's orientation. The encounter between YoungThing, one of the young boys recruited into the ranks of Al Shabaab and the septuagenarian Dhoorre, symbolizes the decline of old Somali order and the emergence, as well as dominance of a new thinking. Dhoorre, a committed muslism, was once an influential man of means in Mogadiscio but has lost all his property and wealth to the violence in the city and now lives in his son's rented apartment. While Dhoorre's personal story may represent the degeneration of a people's collective and individual prosperity and the despondency that trails such in the face of gruesome violence, the encounter between him and YoungThing brings about a breakdown of understating across generations. This stratification of understanding runs across, including those in the diaspora like Taxliil and Saifullah on one hand and Jeebleh, Ahl and Malik (among others) on the another side. It is evident that while the older generation contends with the new dispensation in Somali, Al Shabaab preys on the impressionable minds of the youths, cajoling them with blissful rewards of eternity, burying rewards for political ambition beneath divinity. As one of the characters, Qasiir, observes:

> Shabaab prefers their recruits to be … greenhorns who know no better, who haven't developed their own way of looking at the world. They concentrate their efforts on recruiting teenagers from broken homes or young boys and girls to whom they can provide a safety net, a guaranteed livelihood after training (Farah, 128).

A 'way of looking at the world' is a cultural orientation that forms the compass and anchor of one's behavioural trajectory. It is this cultural orientation that defines the perception and identity of an individual and imbues him with the thinking process that helps him navigate through existential realities. Shabaab takes advantage of the vulnerable, the child who are not yet well initiated into the civility of a given culture, to create the third space. The vulnerable characters here are at the point Bhabha refers to as the '"inter" – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space' (38) that carries the burden of culture. This is the period that enables generational dissonance that is manifest in the absorption of different cultural perspectives in the likes of YoungThing. It is for this

reason that Bhabha argues that 'The very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or "organic" ethnic communities …are in a profound process of redefinition' (5). The redefinition of 'historical tradition' becomes easier when the thought process of the child is redirected at this point. Construction or reconstruction of a cultural identity takes firm root at this stage. This is the fact Al Shabaab understands very well and uses maximally. Bile, one of Malik's respondents further explains: 'Robleh (one of the Al Shabaab members) had the habit of bringing home neophytes from the mosques, and … telling them right in our presence … to "take the vow"'. It is this act of taking vows that fundamentally initiate them into a perspective that redefines their identity and generate a new frame of thought.

This is what Dhoorre, in an interior monologue, alludes to as YoungThing confronts him, 'Perhaps this is one of the boys … the new order of youths trained for a higher cause, even though they receive their instructions from earthlings, ascribe their action to divine inspirations' (50). A reference such as this brings national or ethnic identity in conflict with a religious one. It is for this reason that Benedict Anderson classifies cultural systems into: 'religious community and dynastic realm' (1983: 12), arguing that community is actually an imagined phenomenon. In this regard, religion forms another strong platform for cultural identification. This is why the Western born Taxliil readily identifies with this new community and escapes from Minneapolis in pursuit of the new course.

Anderson's argument that nationalism has to be understood by aligning with 'the large cultural system that preceded a nation' coexists with his explanation of the religious community as being 'imaginable through the medium of sacred language and written scripts' (12-13). It is this sacred medium that establishes a 'sacral culture' that builds a link to a 'superterrestrial order of power' (13). While it can be argued that the sacred language can be part of a larger cultural system, Farah portrays a religious community contending with any other form of identity, other than the 'sacred'. Neither ethnicity nor shared political experiences qualifies for models of communal identification. It is, solely, the belief in this sacred writing and the interpretation given to it that creates a strong communal unity, if not a cultic cohesion, that constructs and defines a new form of identification. While the link with divinity and the blissful promises of martyrdom make indoctrination of the young successful, the community formed is not just that of Islam, but of a particular kind. It is another space created out of the Ummah. It is a new community

constructed out of a different strong ideological leaning. They are in deadly rivalry with both moderate or secularist Muslims and other faith lumping all of them into the impious category of kafir. The high success rate of this kind of conversion does not rest on sacred languages alone. As Anderson further posits 'though the sacred languages made such community as Christendom imaginable, the actual scope and plausibility of these communities cannot be explained by the sacred script alone: their readers were after all, tiny literate-reef on top of vast illiterate ocean' (15). The interpretations given by the literates invariably construct the ideological thrust of the vast majority and the identity formed in the process. Such interpretation may therefore be influenced to some vested interests. As Jamal Nassar (2010) opines, 'Just as there are Christian, Jewish, or Hindu fundamentalists who want to determine political action by their religious interpretations, there are Islamists who want to do the same (97).

While Farah identifies a quest for political power, control of the market and resentment of the United States and its allies as the subterranean motivations of Al Shabaab, the young recruits have a transcendental commitment to this pursuit. Religious belief becomes a strong borderline of cultural negotiation. A new culture that regulates both private and public life of each of the citizens becomes the direct result of this new order. From a strict ban on public viewing centres and strict regulation of the internet, to prohibition of female brazier, Farah's Somalia is in strict adherence to a new culture that gives rise to the emergence of characters like Saifullah and YoungThing. They form a set of people who view suicide with a delightful sense of spree, placing minimal value on the priceless sanctity of life. This is a new way of thinking that is referred to as death culture, a concept Farah credits to Bruno Etienne. Death and eagerness to die for one's belief becomes a high religious obligation. Suicide bombing consequently becomes a sure way of demonstrating this new way of being. It is perhaps as a result of this instance that Gayatri Spivak (1996) observes, 'The most important functional change is from the religious to the militant' (205).

The point that this new order is financed and sustained by individuals outside the Somali border underlies Appadurai's finanscape in the global cultural flow. Appadurai uses the concept of finanscape to describe the 'disposition of global capital' which is now a 'more mysterious, rapid and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move mega-monies through

national turnstiles at blinding speed' (298). While such transfers have brought about certain levels of economic prosperity across several parts of the globe, Nuruddin Farah portrays a very damning side of this this global phenomenon in *Crossbones*. The financial flow which could have been channelled towards transforming lives is evidently used to sponsor and strengthen life threatening ideologies of Al Shabaab. The motto: 'Goods may move freely; money, because it may be dirty, may not' is one way of monitoring the external financial support of terrorism, by the weakened Somali government. Many banks suspected to be involved in this shady deal have been closed down. While several stringent measures have been adopted by governments to check transfer of cash, more ingenious ways of sending money across the globe appear inexhaustible. Qasiir's narration is revealing:

> Someone buys a computer, a blackberry or an iPod in Abu Dhabi for export and does not pay tax. This person then sends it with someone coming here to give it to someone living here. The gadget arrives in place of cash, as money sent home has come under severe scrutiny since September 2001. This way, no cash is being transferred, and no one will bother about it' (152).

It is this fact that establishes the significance of Bakhaaraha in the narrative as well as explains the role of business men in placing premium at war. Bakhaaraha market in Mogadiscio is where the imported gadgets are sold at no tax rate at all. Most of the business men here are therefore 'keener on war and funding it than they are on peace' so that the government structure that would collect tax from them would remain paralyzed. As Qasiir further narrates, 'they receive large sums from religious charities set up by wealthy Arabs' (126). While Qasiir's last report originates from rumour, the fact remains that the Al Shaabab's strength of arm cannot be sustained by the economic doldrums of a failed state. The influence is evidently outside Somali territory.

Farah alternates his narration between the fanatic exploits of the religionists and the ravaging plundering of Somalia by Ethiopians who are sponsored by the United States. Farah chronicles the external influences that have enabled Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia:

> In the sixteenth century, Portuguese mercenaries fought on the side of Ethiopia-then known as Abyssinia-to defeat the Somali warrior Ahmed Gurey, Ahmed the left-handed. In the late 1970s, the Soviets changed sides and the Cuban intervened, chasing Somalis out of the Somali-speaking Ogaden region in Ethiopia. Will the third time mark the entry of the United States into this dark history? (174)

This alternating narrative and the direct indictment of the United States in the catastrophe faced by Somalia represent Africa as a contested space in today's global world. While the contest of colonialism wound down with the twentieth-century, Africa of the twenty-first century is grappling with a contest of a similar kind. Migration of people and cash has gradually become what Nassar refers to as 'migration of dreams and nightmares'. Beyond the underlying economic and political motivation behind this contestation, contest for cultural dominance takes a central concern as well. As Nassar observes:

> While globalisation contributes to homogenisation among peoples, economies, technologies, and cultures, it also has contributed to the concentration of power in country or, at least, in a single ideological culture: the culture of liberalisation, privatisation, and marketisation (4).

It is the protest against a single ideological culture that strengthens the conviction of the religionists in their onslaught, or at least resistance, against Western powers. The decision to ban the media and restrict Western influence is predicated upon this fault line. Somalia can therefore be synecdochically projected as Africa in a battle ground between two dominant cultures. This is what Huntington means when he observes, 'The Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe' (31). Huntington is referring to Europe but the situation is as real in Africa as it is elsewhere. However, this battle does not only diminish the essence of the African cultural perspectives but also recedes African indigenous identity to obscurity. In essence, the characters are then thrust within the liminal space of cultural identification. Farah creates various forms of characters to reflect the disjuncture necessitated by this cultural contest. While Qasiir, Fidno, Ahl, Malik and some other returnees are enmeshed within the thought frame of the Western orientation, Taxliil and Saifullah represent other faceless lots of the radicalized bent. Saifullah's rejection of his father's name, Ahmed, in preference to Saifullah 'Sword of Allah' is Farah's deliberate attempt to demonstrate the change of orientation and identity. It is a clear change from a moderate Muslim to a radicalised one.

Farah further demonstrates this by juxtaposing the jean wearing Qasiir and Keffiyeh tying Saifullah. While jeans can easily be identified with the Americans, Keffiyeh have become fashionable among Mogadiscio religionist elite lately after Arafat turned it into a symbol of Palestinian nationhood. The Arab male headdress becomes a cultural symbol used in constructing a religious identity, Arabian alignment. This stems from Nassar's observation that '*Arab* and *Muslim* are often interchanged as if they are one and the same' (97) whenever matters related to Islam is brought to the fore. As the narrator explains, Qasiir is an 'afficionado of everything America with a special fascination for eyewear of the Ray-Ban variety and Clint Eastwood westerns, which he watched so many times with his friends that he knows the dialogue from some of the movies by heart' (126). Farah beams the ubiquitous presence of Appadurai's mediascape. While American influence bourgeons through the media, the Arabians bring their sway to bear through religion and the inscrutable potency of the finanscape. It is at this point where the Americanisation and Arabanisation of the continent thrive that the African essence and identity dwindles into oblivion, thereby projecting a liminal alternative.

Farah further complicates this cultural bewilderment in YoungThing. YoungThing's relative anonymity is Farah's deliberate choice. This choice is not only to underlie the universality that has trailed the use of young people as canon folders in war times but also to illuminate the objectification of the child as a 'thing' that can be used and discarded. But beyond that, Farah illustrates a character bemused in a multiple convergence of culture. The first sentence in this narrative describes him as 'A Yankees-cap-and-Ray-ban-wearing boy of indeterminate age' (1). Without much detail about how he joined the militia, he is seen in a determined mission for the insurgents. We see a character stripped of his individuality, with absolute dependence on his cells commander as he is 'nodding his thanks' to his superiors, 'smiling' bravely and 'betraying none of his trepidation' even when he has been shown nothing but 'obvious disdain'. Hilda Härgestam Strandberg (2017) acknowledges the narrative significance of the opening chapter dominated by YoungThing as his death generates strong empathy. This is true, but Strandberg fails to establish the real cause of his confusion that eventually leads to his death. In depersonalizing the character, Farah presents a character imbued with multiple orientations.

He is caught between the surging wave of American civilization propelled by the media and a strong religious leaning sustained by sacred writings. His death on his very first mission for Al- Shabaab underlies his confusion and ambivalence. His desperate effort to spare Dhoorre's life, his hesitation to shoot the old man despite mounting orders of his superiors runs contrary to the principles that govern Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab has been notoriously identified with gruesome absurdities that are not in tandem with YoungThing's sense of humanity. YoungThing is aware that he will be killed for his delay and hesitation but he goes ahead to position the graceless heap of the old man's body as a way of paying last respect despite the fiery eyes of his commanders. Al Shabaab's baseness has been captured as they 'raze a house of worship to the ground, desecrate cemeteries, drag a corpse or kick it while dancing around it' (327). Malik, despite being sympathetic with some of their agitations, condemns their conduct outright 'because it breaks with Somali as well as Muslim tradition and departs from the norms of civilized behaviour'. This evidently signals the emergence of a new culture thriving within the enabling leverages of globalisation.

YoungThing cannot be completely captured in any of these categories of identification as he finds himself in what Bhabha calls 'disjunctions of … political existence' (1994:11), which underlies the very essence of cultural ambivalence. He lacks any sense of self. His ultimate ambition is to carry out the wish of his masters, and when he is about to be disarmed by fear, he musters all the energy to suppress it. Even when he is shown nothing but utter disdain he still maintains a strong loyal spirit with, as well as his non-resistance to punishment, even when it amounts to death. YoungThing therefore perfectly fits into Turner's (1969) explanation of liminal status when he observes

> Their behaviour is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life. Among themselves, neophytes tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism (95).

YoungThing's death is therefore not just 'constructed to evoke narrative empathy' (Strandberg, 2016:128)   but also to centralise the inbetweeness, the lack of cultural anchor that makes the liminal character susceptible to twist and turns of various ideological bents.

As Garuba (2017) correctly observes, while Jeebleh and Cambara, 'have constructed an idiom and a grammar for envisioning the future and developed a practice around it, … these young men,' who are deeply 'enmeshed in a vast global network of exploitation, profit, and death, have neither developed an idiom for understanding the world in which they are caught nor been able to cultivate a practice of freedom appropriate to their times' (26). Garuba evidently alludes to Fanon's (1967) position that language is beyond syntax and morphology, it also means 'to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization' (8). It is the inability to assume a culture that brings about the vulnerability that goes with the liminal status of these neophytes.

In this narrative, therefore, Farah does not only portray varying forms of identification and the violence it generates, he also demonstrates how the identifications overwhelm territorial boundaries through global instruments. Beyond the argument of Western hegemony that globalisation evokes, Farah also shows the influences that support counter-hegemonic forces. While some characters tend to align to each of these binaries, other characters are bemused in the cultural vagaries and in the process become victims of this power game. The outright result of these are contentions and catastrophes that do not just breed a pessimistic envisioning of the continent but that also engender a new thinking that transcends African cultural orientation. It is such thinking that continues to subordinate the African identity and gradually blurs it into possible extinction.

4.3 Global forces, transnational crimes and self-discovery in Mukoma wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat*

Mukoma wa Ngugi's foray into the fictive art marks his growing versatility in literary production. With *Nairobi Heat*, his third novel, Ngugi has also brought into focus a new dimension in the discourse of the global culture dynamics. The 1971 born Kenyan writer has launched himself into prominence with three novels: *Mrs Shaw*, *Black Star Nairobi* and *Nairobi Heat*. To his acclaim also are a book of poetry, *Hurling Words at Consciousness* and several essays. He is the founder of Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature and co-director of the Global South Project at Cornell University where he teaches. The aim of the Global South Project is to facilitate public conversations among writers and scholars from Africa, Latin America, and Asia as well as minority groups in the West. In 2009, he was shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing and in 2010 for the Penguin Prize for African Writing for his novel manuscript, *The First and Second*

Books of Transition (Mrs Shaw). The German translation of *Nairobi Heat* was named the 2014 Crime Book of the Season by Buchkultur. In 2013, *New African* magazine named him one of the one hundred most Influential Africans. Undoubtedly, Ngugi is stepping steadily into the shoe of his father, Ngugi wa Thiongo, as another brilliant star in the literary firmament of East Africa.

Nairobi Heat takes a transnational setting that cuts across America, Kenya and Rwanda. The story revolves around the narrator, a black American detective, Ishmael Fofona, who has been assigned to investigate the death of a young blonde woman found on the doorstep of a Rwandan professor, Joshua Hakizimana in Madison, the United States. Hakizimana becomes the prime suspect of the death of the girl who is later to be known as Macy Jane Admanzah but there is no strong evidence to link him to the death. With a call to Ishmael telling him that the girl's identity can only be revealed in Nairobi, Ishmael travels Nairobi, his natal home for the first time in his life. This journey becomes as a journey in search of the killer, an exploration into a misrepresented continent as well as a search for self-discovery. It is the quest and revelations that follow that direct the entire plot of the novel.

It is mainly for this reason that *Nairobi Heat* can be read as a crime fiction as well as a detective novel. Based on this fact, Lynder Oketch (2015) argues that the novel is structured along an archetypal motif of quest. Following Joseph Campbell model of quest structure, Oketch has successfully linked this narrative device to *Nairobi Heat* but fails to illustrate the global import of the narrative. It is therefore important to explore the transnational infiltration of crimes in the text and how this has not only contributed to a mired socio-cultural landscape of Africa but also enhanced the abandonment of the continent and its culture with its projected pessimism.

Ngugi's portrayal of Joshua Hakizimana is a good demonstration of indigenous collaborations that aid in perpetuating exploitation in Africa in the global era. Before relocating to the United States, Joshua has been one of the senior officials of a non-government organisation, Never Again Foundation, which claims to be aiding the victims of Rwanda genocide in a war that has marked the darkest history in Rwandan nationhood. Having been celebrated by foreign and western media, Joshua becomes an instant hero who has even been immortalised with a school named after him. The truth that is revealed, following Ishmael's diligent and courageous investigation, however, shows that Joshua

colludes with some white expatriates: Lord Thompson and Samuel Alexander, and some multinationals through the Non-governmental Organisation to swindle some unsuspecting donors, making fortunes for themselves in the process. It is actually in a bid to cover up the trails of allegations and suspicions around him that he kills the blonde lady.

Joshua is a good example of what Spivak (1996) refers to 'the indigenous colonial elite' 246. Ngugi has given this narrative a postcolonial shot as he portrays Hamza Alavi's (1972) explanation of a postcolonial society. As against the idea of neocolonialism where the primary blame for the economic and political woes of the third world nations is on the former colonies, postcolonialism according to Alavi as explained by Krishna (2009) deviates remarkably. Alavi posits that postcolonialism:

> …emphasises the interaction between states and elites
> within third-world nations, on the one hand, and Western
> powers and corporate interests, on the other, in their ongoing
> underdevelopment. It is, in that sense, a more radical and
> politically charged explanation for third-world developments
> in the decades after decolonization: it does not exculpate the
> local or the domestic forces in the continuance of
> exploitation and underdevelopment (66).

It is the strong collusion between the locals and foreign super powers in the horrific Rwandan genocide through the elements of globalisation that Ngugi brings to bear in this narrative. Exploring the intrigues of that historical dark spot in Rwanada, *Nairobi Heat* reveals the interconnectedness between Appadurai's finascape and mediascape in the projection of racial supremacy and Afro-pessimism in the globalised world.

While French, Germany and Belgium as well as some other developed nations have been adjudged complicit in their remote and overt role in the incident Nzioka (2011) Nothias (2012), Ngugi goes further to dramatise the role of other countries and even the multinationals and international agencies in the war. In his investigation, Ishmael discovers from the logbook where the donations are recorded, 'There was money coming from all sorts of organisations – the United Nations, the World Bank, … all sorts of governments, from, Britain to Syria. The Ford, Rockfeller, and Bill and Mellinda Gates Foundation, had also given money as well as Hollywood types and sports stars. This is the world trying to clear its conscience, and it was prepared to pay close to seventy million dollars a year to do it' (2009:71). The guilt here is both implicit and overt. It is about the

guilt of active involvement in bringing about the genocide and guilt of silence as horror overwhelms a people. Ngugi's narrative is an artistic representation of the Rwandan a reality. Nzioka (2011) questions why the signatories of the Genocide Convention became bystanders when such horror was being perpetrated instead of stepping in to stop or punish the perpetrators.

Karl Jasper's concept of Metaphysical guilt is evoked in this circumstance. Providing explanation to the major idea in Jasper's concept, Fanon (1967) writes:

> There exists among men, because they are men, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that-are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant. If I do not do whatever I can to prevent them, I am an accomplice in them. If I have not risked my life in order to prevent the murder of other men, if I have stood silent, I feel guilty in a sense that cannot in any adequate fashion be understood juridically, or politically, or morally. . . (67).

As moralistic as this may sound, it becomes valid given the concerted effort as well as widespread media attention to find the cause of the death of a blonde girl found in the doorstep of an African professor. The narrator in *Nairobi Heat* shares this same view as he wonders how 'one million African lives did not move the world to intervene, but the death of one beautiful blonde girl would' (73). Through this way, Ngugi raises the underlying racist consciousness that often prompts up in the discussion of the Other. Fanon strongly projects this opinion as he argues, 'The real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. Only for the white man The Other is perceived on the level of the body image …' (1967: 124). While factors other than race may be accountable for Otherness among the White as Bhabha (1994) has also suggested, Ngugi centralizes skin colour as the major reason for the abandonment of the Rwandese in such lurid moment of their history in this narrative.

Indeed, while all these donors may be implicated at different levels of the guilt, some of the senior members of these organisations make themselves direct beneficiaries of the genocide. They collude with the officials of Never Again Foundation through the instruments of the 'finanscape' in a mischief that has made war a profitable venture. The narrator further reveals, '… what was happening was that Shell would give the ten million (dollars) to the Never Again Foundation which in turn kicked six million back into the

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private account of the Shell board, keeping four million for Samuel Alexander and his subordinates' (72). It becomes a money spinning venture for these officials 'that each year generated so many millions for CEOs and wealthy philanthropists, that it might well have been legal'. As the killings, rapes, vandalism, suffering and hunger that mark the genocide rage on, these few individuals feed fat under a shambolic rescue mission of a Refugee Camp. Robert Young (1995) refers to this as 'the forces of neocolonial exploitation' which works 'through continental and multinational bodies' (240). With the cold heartedness of these beneficiaries and the huge profit made, it is not likely that they would will the end of the war. If anything, the possibility is that they would rather encourage it.

The fact, however, still remains that the success of these agencies is high because they always find Africans who are willing collaborators in their exploitative mission. It is this class which Joshua belongs that form '[t]he national bourgeoisie' which Fanon argues, is 'strung up to defend its immediate interests, and sees no further than the end of its nose, reveals itself incapable of simply bringing national unity into being…' (159). Joshua's sole interest revolves around the immediate gain of fame and wealth, not about national stability and development.

These double personal gratifications have not only empowered him to trample upon the justice system but also to use that system as instruments of subjugation against the less privileged. Such instance is, however, not true with Joshua alone. Lord Thompson, the white old expatriates, who is also a senior official of Never Again Foundation, is also complicit of the same charges. Lord Thompson's wanton longing for criminality is strengthened by the simple fact that he can get away with it. For instance, when he kills a poacher, 'he was not even booked' (42). An extrajudicial killing of a man because he killed an animal is beyond retribution. It speaks a lot on the value attached to the life of the human victim, a value that directly compares the man to that of an animal. It becomes glaring when Lord Thompson is not even summoned for this crime. It becomes an unwritten license to kill, and he keeps killing. After the poacher, he kills a game warden. Beside, these instances are other heinous activities of rapes and disappearance of people in his acquired large expanse of farm. It is this spree of crime that prompts the narrator to observe, 'white skin and wealth equals impunity' (42). It is this same unbridled impunity that prompts Lord Thompson's attempt to assassinate Detective Ishmael and his friend, Odhiambo, a misadventure that finally takes Thompson's life when the detective revenges.

Ngugi highlights the discriminating justice system here when he juxtaposes this impunity with others, the downtrodden, who are instantly taken to the hangman for crimes committed out of society-induced frustration. The compromised justice system in this instance is further underscored when we compare the poor handling of such cases with the tenacity that follows the search for the killer of the blonde girl. Through these instances, Ngugi also gives crimes and criminality a racist hue and demonstrating how they are propagated with the portent instruments of globalisation.

The grief, pain and injustice portrayed in this text are part of the major push factors that have defined Africa's recent past. It is these characteristic elements of the continent that reiterate the damning realities of Afro-pessimism. Characters like Ishmael and Muddy are few ready examples of those whose liminal status are direct consequence of such agony. While Ishmael belongs to the category of those exiled from birth, Muddy is one of the escapee from the horror of the genocide. In both cases, despondency is central in the reason for their separation from their homeland. According to Paul Zeleza (2005):

> Narratives of oppression in the homeland tend to serve as alibis for exile in that they provide a powerful moral force, political energy, and imaginative stimuli for the exile, facilitating the perpetual deferment of constructing home in the hostland, of turning the exilic condition into a diasporic condition in which the 'here' and 'there' of the original rupture are inverted as the new homeland assumes existential primacy and the old retains ontological affinity (8-9).

This situation is typical of the two characters. While Ishmael daily gleans the distressing experiences of his homeland from the media, Muddy has got hers through real practical experiences. Nevertheless, they still maintain 'ontological affinity' with the homeland. The division between this double awareness is registered deep into the characters' unconscious and in essence, defines their ambivalent status. Even though the prominence of this double awareness has created a different identity for these characters, the influence of Americanism has also infiltrated many aspects of Kenyan life through the media. Upon Ishmael's arrival to his home land, he observes: 'Americanism … had filtered into Kenya culture through movies and music videos' (30). This is the reality of Appadurai's mediascape in the era of globalisation which drives 'the disjunctive time of … (a) nation's modernity' (Bhabha, 1994: 142).

Despite this influence that manifest in adoption of American mannerism, there are still many cultural indications that hold the people together which mark Ishmael out clearly as a foreigner in their midst. Apart from the obvious common cultural symbols of music, language and cuisines, Ishmael's gait, accent and mien also classify him differently on his first visit to his homeland. He instantly becomes a certain kind of an inverted exotic Other that does not only represent the stereotypical affluence of the West but also draws a peculiar admiration from the locals. Everywhere he goes Ishmael is referred to as *Mzungu*, that is, white man in Swahili. Right from the taxi driver who took him from the airport as well as other people he encounters with in the inner city, this name defines his identity among the locals, despite his protest and insistence that he should not be so identified. Some of the locals rather insists, 'You, you *Mzungu* tourist, we want money' (40). Ishmael's liminal status is better understood when this scenario is placed side by side with his reason for becoming a police officer in the first case. 'I didn't want to become part of the black middle class with aspirations of whiteness so I had opted out and become a cop'. The underlying paradox here is that a man who is insistent on maintaining his blackness in a foreign land is thereafter taken as a white in his homeland. 'I was very tired of *Mzungu* shit, it was like been called a nigger over and over again' (54). What is evidently highlighted here is Ishmael's unbelonging to the two sides of the binaries, hence his liminal status. Mzungu, just like nigger is conceptualized within the notion of a racial difference which signifies estrangement and unbelonging. It is, however, instances like this that propels Ishmael towards self–discovery.

Part of his quest for the discovery of self brings about his interrogation of the varied cultural perspectives. Through this way, Ngugi, therefore, just like Adichie and Jamal, attempts to capture the subsisting dichotomy between the marital cultures of the metropolis and the periphery. The juxtaposition of Ishmael's marriage with that of his friend, Odhiambo, is not just a way Ngugi's way of comparing the two cultures for more insightful assessment but also helps in establishing Odhiambo as Ishmael's alter ego. Ishmael's white wife obtains a Master degree in Business Administration (MBA) at the time Ishmael is getting his badge as an officer in the force. While Ishmael goes to the street, Mo turns corporate. As Ishmael further explains, 'Street life didn't jive with her ambition … Finally she just stopped loving me' (30-31). While ambition could be seen as an innate attribute of a thriving spirit, it becomes a dangerous omen when ambition interferes with marital union. Odhiambo explains the secret that has secured his own

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marriage with Maria, from the threat of professional accomplishment 'I come home and have to be a husband no matter what. I have to leave my work right at that door' (32).

Being a husband here means that there are spoken and unspoken roles assigned to the man. The same exists for the woman for her to be a wife, and these roles are not reduced or changed by a partner's profession or status. Ishmael's case is different. Upon her professional elevation, Mo begins to show contempt and resentment on her husband, leading to their final divorce. This comes as a result of Ishmael's observation that, 'In true American spirit we wanted everything examined, laid out on the table and talked about'. Here, Ngugi evidently examines the long discussed debate on gender roles. While it is true that critical questioning of gender roles has liberated women from stifling obnoxious traditions, it has also created a breakdown in the family unit, contributing greatly to the emergence of many dysfunctional societies. Ngugi appears to be projecting these two perspectives for further interrogation. It is in a close comparative examination of these two cultures that Ngugi appears to privilege the practices within the peripheral culture. Ishmael's eventually submits to the peripheral orientation as he observes: '… surely a marriage has to have a dark basement that no one goes to – where some things are thrown and left to rot because they are toxic?' Ishmael's submission is not just a verdict against the centre, it is also the beginning of a reorientation and journey towards self-discovery.

Through this, Ishmael begins to appreciate some of the pristine values of a continent hitherto awash with negativity, what Taylor refers to as 'other-induced distortions' (1994:36). Ishmael's encounter with Africa reveals that amidst the chaos, there is the other side of the continent. This is the other side that is always ignored by the media: the values, the cuisine, a traditional justice system, the music which are the metonyms of a vibrant culture that he has witnessed. It is upon this discovery that Ishmael resigns from his job at the height of his career in the United States security service for another beginning in Africa after he has successfully killed Joshua inside his house in Madison. He wants a place where his contradictions would be reconciled. While the poetic justice achieved by Joshua's death provides a relief to the reader Ishmael's return to Africa provides a reunion with his alter ego.

4.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, it has become evident that economic stagnation and multiple shades of crises that have riddled the African continent in the last few centuries have engendered a pessimistic perception of the continent from within and outside Africa. While this has resulted in state failure, war, hunger and excruciating poverty, the conspicuous and, as it is revealed here, often times, the subterranean global power play are also responsible for the gloom and pessimism that surround the continent. In the main, the texts under study reveal how conflicting influences in this regard influence character formation and engender complex perceptions. In depicting this concept, interferences of the global forces on the continent is brought to the fore in the texts under study. While Appadurai's 'scapes' are reflected at different levels by the writers, 'technoscapes,' 'finanscapes' and 'ideoscapes' as instruments of cultural changes appear dominant. Bulawayo, for instance, portrays the internal dysfunctions replete on the continent that combine to attract pessimistic perceptions about Africa. While leadership failure and the passive followership remain dominant among the causes of these predicaments, hunger and severe poverty are seen as the immediate outcomes of these dysfunctions. These create perceptions that project a repulsive disposition to the continent which makes both indigenous and foreign characters attempt to avoid any form of cultural identification with Africa. Similarly, Farah and Mukoma portray societies subjected to gruesome experiences as a result of the intervening forces of both foreign and local authorities. While Farah portrays the insidious overreach of the Western and Arabic forces in effacing the enduring cultural legacies of the African continent, Mukoma depicts how capitalist multinational organisations hide under the cover of over publicised philanthropic gestures to unleash horror on the continent just to please some vested interests. In each of these texts, there are glaring instances of how global forces facilitate cultural infractions which consistently shift the African identity towards obscurity. These compelling realities have not only strengthened an Afrophobic perspective but have also created a repulsive reaction whenever Africa is mentioned. While the negative media imaging of the continent greatly contributes to this compulsive rejection, the gloom of the continent cannot be denied altogether. The rejection and abandonment of the continent as well as the overwhelming influences of outside forces project a complex identity in this regard. Consequently, the identities projected are split along these intervening cultural forces that have dislodged the African identity thereby projecting a liminal identity formation.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALLEGORIES OF CULTURAL LIMINALITY IN THE GLOBAL ERA

5.0   Introduction

The symbolic nature of allegories and their ability to generate multiple arrays of signification have placed allegories as one of the most preferred trope in many literary explorations. In the Greek meaning of 'allos' (other) and 'agoreuein' (to speak openly), allegory suggests that in saying one thing, one is also saying another thing. According to Slemon (1987), allegory is 'the doubling of some previous or anterior code by a sign, or by a semiotic system, that also signifies a more immediate or "literal" meaning' (4). Consequently, allegory brings about divergent directions in interpretative process of a literary text. While one level of interpretation may explore the immediate or literal meaning of a text the other focuses on the symbolic possibilities that a literary text may pose.

The African novel leverages the multiple interpretative possibilities inherent in allegory to interrogate some social and philosophical concerns on the continent. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Jameson (1986) argues that all third world literatures are national allegories. According to Jameson, '…all third-world texts are necessarily ... allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories,* even when, or perhaps I should say particularly when, their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel' (69). The reason for this, according to Jameson, is as a result of the cohesive social structure of the people's existence which makes the private individual destiny closely tied with 'the embattled situation of the public … culture and society'. This is why Irele (2009) observes that Jameson's notion of 'national allegory' is evidently derived from Lukács's designation of the epic as the representative form of 'ancient and closed communities, in which the dominance of the collective consciousness determines a vision of totality' (14). The idea of collective consciousness underlies cohesive social structure of the people, usually, demonstrated in communal living. While this assertion may be sweeping as Jameson himself also admits, it is significant because it responds to the failure of the first world literary critics in recognizing the 'constitutive presence' of narrative allegory in other parts of the world. While Ahmad (1987) and Slemon (1987) question Jameson's modalities for situating the allegorical form of the African writers within the English model, it is evident that Jameson

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has introduced another model of assessing the narrative works of the third-world writers which derives largely from their common experience of colonialism.

Slemon, in sharing a similar perspective, argues that it has become 'clear that the horizon of figuration upon which a large number of post-colonial literary texts seek to act is this prefigurative discourse of colonialism, whose dominant mode of representation is that of allegory'. Allegory therefore becomes an instrument for 'cultural forms of struggle' as 'certain forms of postcolonial writing engage head-on the interpellative and tropological strategies of colonialism's most visible figurative technology' (11). To this end, textual counter-discourse emerges from post-colonial cultures in order to contest and subvert some of the colonialist assumptions which are shown not only in their attitudinal responses in their relation with the locals but also in the literary productions of the colonialists. While the colonialists used their stories to disposes and malign, the textual counter discourse attempts to challenge and reconstruct with allegory as a vital literary tool by interrogating those notions of history that colonialism has left behind. Slemon refers to the texts within this category as 'post-colonial allegories'.

Indeed, many narratives within the African post-colonial experience fall within this class. While Irele (2001), for instance, situates Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as '… an allegory of the destiny of the society …' (134), many more other African novels have extended this preoccupation. Slemon identifies Ayi Kwei Armah's *An African Fable,* which captures the rape of the coloniser by the colonised and shows how this rape continues into the political sphere of neo-colonialism. Others are Kole Omotoso's *The Combat,* Armah's *Why Are We So Blest,* Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross,* and Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*. All these allegories provide causes and consequences of colonial experience within the post-colonial Africa. Similarly, while Wilson-Tagoe (2009) observes that the woman protagonist in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* is an allegory of the neocolonial condition in Kenya, Phyllis Taoua (2009) also identifies the image of woman as an allegorical figure in Nurudin Farah's *Secret*, where the gang-rape of a woman signifies the exploitation of a nation by multiple foreign interests. The examples shown here agree with Slemon's position that 'allegory … foregrounds the fact that history, like fiction, requires an act of reading before it can have meaning…' and that 'history must be … read in adjacency to, a fictional reenactment of it…' (12). Slemon argues that the essence of this is to stimulate new ways of formulating and responding to the past. It is evident, from foregoing, that allegory has remained pivotal

in the literary imagination of the African writers, but allegory is not used just to reconstruct the past but also to interrogate the present in order to construct the future.

This chapter, therefore, focuses on two texts with the aim of exploring the allegorical portrayal of the characters in relation to their portrayal of the formation of liminal characters as occasioned by modern global instruments. John Maxwell Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* are the two texts that have immensely explored the symbolic representation of allegory in this study. This chapter attempts to demonstrate, therefore, how the symbolic representation of the characters in these texts distances the common experience of the global realities in Africa. In other words, it will be of interest to explore the universal appeal that such representation can stimulate and the new level of meaning that can be ascribe to the representation. Coetzee's focus on the character of the child and Djebar's attention to the peculiarities of the woman experience provide diverse perspectives to this allegoric point of view. These views are expected to generate a more universal perspective on the question of globalisation and culture.

5.1 Globalisation and the allegory of a lost child in John Maxwell Coetzee's *Childhood of Jesus*

J.M. Coetzee, evidently, has a special place in South African literature and indeed the development of the twentieth century novel genre. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, on February 9, 1940 to an English mother and an Afrikaner father, J.M. Coetzee grew up in Karoo, a vast semi-desert area of Cape Town Province where he had his earlier educations. Later, Coetzee proceeded to the University of Cape Town where he studied English and Mathematics and completed his undergraduate work in 1961. In 1963, he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in English from the same university, after working as a computer programmer in the United States. In 1965 Coetzee moved to the University of Texas at Austin, where he completed his doctorate dissertation on the works of Samuel Beckett in 1969. In 1974 Coetzee's first novel, *Dusklands,* was published. According to Head (1997) *Dusklands* is 'a new fictional engagement with the problems of colonialism, at the level of discourse' (9). Beyond that, *Dusklands* also challenges the aesthetic dominance of realism in the South African fiction by distancing the geographical and historical settings of the novel from South Africa. This does not only give Coetzee a distinct voice in his writing but also integrate African story telling device of myth and

allegory into his craft. Irele (2009) acknowledges Coetzee as among African writers who have adapted the oral narrative culture of Africa story telling in their works, basically, for this reason.

Indeed, *Dusklands* establishes Coetzee's thematic and stylistic trajectory in the fictive art as most of his subsequent works maintain the same pattern. Even though, such traces are there in his second novel, *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), it is in his third, the multiple-award-winning *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) that Coetzee's imprint is further confirmed. Slemon (1987), for instance, identifies the text as an allegorical counter-discourse which situates allegory as a veritable tool for interrogating cultural changes. This trend remains constant in many of Coetzee's subsequent works, namely: *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), *Foe* (1986), *Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), *The Lives of Animal* (1999), *Disgrace* (1999), *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), *He and his Man* (2004), *Slow Man* (2005), *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007), *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013) and *The Schooldays of Jesus* (2016). Owing to this amazing density and mass of his literary productivity, it was not surprising when in 2003, John Maxwell Coetzee was announced as the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, the fourth African to be so honoured. Indeed, it confirmed Dominic Head's anticipation in 1997 that 'he (Coetzee) must surely be a prime candidate for the Nobel Prize for literature at some future stage' (2).

Even though allegory has remained a major technique of choice in many of his narratives, Coetzee poses clear and direct questions about life and human nature in his texts. He presents sophisticated intellectual and philosophical challenges to his audience through a trend Wright (2015) refers to as 'dialogical philosophy' (77). As Wright observes, Coetzee engages in different kinds of social debate that 'might prepare the way for some sort of activist change'. While Coetzee's other allegories are sustained by traceable clues to his country, South Africa, *The Childhood of Jesus* (*The Childhood*, henceforth) appears strange and esoterically elusive.

The story is a simple plot narrative of a strange man who meets a strange boy in a strange land. The man, Simon, and the boy, David, move across Lethean waters to another strange land, called Novilla from Belstar, in order to have a new life. The two characters have been washed clean of all their memories, encouraged to let 'go of old attachments'

(Coetzee, 2013:24) bearing new names, and are taught the rudiments of Spanish, the language of the people of Novilla, at a refugee camp. David has been separated from his parents on a journey, and so remembers nothing of them, but Simon feels it is important to seek out the child's mother, whom he is sure David will recognize by instinct or impulse once they meet, even without any memory of her. Once they finally settle in an apartment, Simon is able to get a job as a stevedore. The challenge of fitting into the new society becomes a daunting task as Simon continues to interrogate many practices in Novilla. Simon finds it difficult to fulfil his primary urges, ranging from sex, diet to coping with the complacency of those around him; he engages in a serious probing dialogue with the people of Novilla. Having failed to find the boy's mother, Simon meets Ines whom he entrusts David under her care. Ines is asked to give the little boy some motherly care. The boy eventually grows intransigent, rebelling against his schoolteachers, his step- father, Simon and indeed any one that attempts to direct him to appropriate ways of conduct. When David is threatened to be taken to a school for special children, David and Simon leave once again for another new life elsewhere.

Its simplicity of plot structure and lucidity of diction belie the interpretative complexity of *The Childhood*. In a review of the book, (Bellin, 2013) argues that the text lacks any definite sensation upon the reader aside puzzlement. The strangeness of the story makes critics like (Tajiri, 2016) identify some postmodernist pastiches with the text. Tajiri further observes that Edward Said's idea of Late Style is also employed in the text which accounts for the mysterious, dreamlike terrain of the novel. Drawing from Coetzee's own metaphor of fiction as a bridge over a gulf between the real and imaginary world, Jacobs (2017) argues that '*The Childhood of Jesus* is located in, and constitute a passage from, an unspecified past to an indeterminate future' (59). While critics are in agreement that the work can best be read as an allegory, they also agree that this is a strange kind of allegory. It is an allegory without the clarity of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, it lacks the transparency of Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* or the coherence of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. In comparison to Coetzee's earlier allegories *The Childhood* still stands apart which is why Wright (2015) further argues that the novel 'offers an affront to the previous readings of Coetzee's works' (78). It is perhaps for this reason that critics have failed to articulate the cultural break occasioned by modern elements of globalisation around this text.

The characters and the setting first bear the bold imprint of the strangeness of the story and the complexity in its interpretation. In the first instance, while the title appears eponymous, there is no clear connection between the Jesus in the title and any character in the story. Expecting to see Jesus, David, the child protagonist in the novel, emerges instead. Apart from the Spanish language, Novilla lacks any unique description that can be linked to any particular geographical entity. This is why Wright, is right when she argues that Novilla can be referred to as 'no villa or no village' (2015:84), 'an invented indeterminate location' which Simon himself calls 'limbo' (Coetzee, 2013:23). This invented sphere is typical of Coetzee's art which helps not only to differ from the dominant realism of the South African novel but also to underlie the universality of his fiction.

Describing the boy as being in limbo is a direct way of accentuating Coetzee's mission in this particular text. 'The child is motherless. He is lost' (23), Simon continues to explain about the boy. The loss here creates the double meaning that is embedded in allegory. To read the loss here only on the literal understanding of a child losing his mother on transit is to miss the allegorical level of signification that the story embodies. Simon is fully aware of the boy's displacement, which is why he has made the vow to reunite him with his mother, hence the ceaseless frantic search for the mother. The search for the mother is evidently a search for identity, the motherland, a search for a reunion with one's cultural essence in a dispersed and dispersing world. An era that has been described as the 'epoch of … the dispersed' (Foucault, 1984:1), a 'liquid age' (Dagnino, 2013: 3). It is a period when people leverage the multiple throngs of globalisation to facilitate mass mobility, a period of ceaseless transition from anywhere to everywhere. In Novilla there are always 'plenty of new arrivals' (169). This is why Bellina (2013) suggests that the use of Novilla, a Spanish territory is appropriate because 'Spanish is the language of a postracial mestizo state', a country that does not just known for a 'common good will' but live above the pettiness of race. Coetzee's narrative, therefore, attempts to allegorise the constant peregrination largely occasioned by the modern global world by projecting a child trapped in a cultural and philosophical limbo. Wright agrees that Novilla symbolizes a limbo, but that 'such limbo exists between philosophy about an action and actual action' (84). While Wright's observation sounds true, it fails to establish the necessary background that prompts the endless row of interrogation on everything, including the chairness of chair and 'pooness of pooh'. Having been encouraged to be detached from their previous

cultural memory, the characters lose a social system of value that will serve as an anchor in navigating through the social conventions of their new settlement. Simon's quest to satisfy his primary urges constitutes the major conflict in the plot. Everything becomes subject of contestation, questions of 'philosophical disagreement' (141). The situation is further complicated by the philosophy class that Simon and other stevedores begin to attend. Coetzee employs dialogical logic in expounding his thoughts on myriads of issues in the text, contesting the artificiality of laws and in the process dissolves into certain absurdities.

An attempt to demonstrate the primacy of love over norms in the constitution of a family may explain Coetzee's reason for bringing three strange fellows, by mere streak of chance, to form a family. The improbable insistence by Simon that he will recognize David's mother, a woman he has never met or heard her name, once he meets her marks a high sense of absurdity in the story. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Simon insists, '… I will recognise her. I am confident of that' (23). When Ines appears, Simon insists, out of mere intuition, that she is the child's mother. If Coetzee is trying to capture the Biblical family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, considering Joseph the step-father of Jesus, according to the Biblical account, as Simon, the two stories are not exactly the same. While Joseph and Simon may share the same status as foster-fathers, same cannot be said of Ines and Mary. While Mary passed through the pangs of childbirth to have Jesus, David is simply entrusted with Ines. The resistance to accurate similarity or comparison helps to make Coetzee's allegory a more complex one. In any case, considering what appears to be a seamless coexistence of these strangers, Coetzee appears to be arguing here that love, not necessarily marital laws and rites, is what it takes to make a family. At least, this is what, it seems, Simon appears to be experimenting. If this is true, the outcome of this marriage is not an admirable one.

David has virtually turned all the nuances and stipulated conventions within this geographical entity to objects of contestation. Wright refers to David as a 'spoiled child of Novilla' basically for this reason. The reason for David's deviation from the norms is not far to seek. A similar case has been encountered in Adichie's *Americanah* when Ifemelu's deviation from the norm was being established. David, just like Ifemelu, if not worse than her, is at the stage of personality development, a stage Freud (1913) refers to a period of identification, a period when the child attempts to be like someone else. Allen (2006)

describes the stage as a stage a boy, in the case of a boy child, 'introjects his father's rendition of society's rights and wrongs' (32). In this case the father is likely to be the child's object of identification. In attempting to internalize the social norms that the father embodies, the boy identifies with the father or any father figure and then resolves the oedipal complex in the process. David, evidently has a father figure in the person of Simon, but this father figure has washed off all cultural memory and attachment he ever had and then believes that believes that 'not everyone will agree' (203) on anything one has to decide for oneself. It is the influence of Simon's philosophical interrogation which does not anchor on any prescribed cultural dictates that rubs off on David. David is utterly in a world of strangeness. Bemused by Simon's philosophical inquiry, he refuses to adhere to any form of agreed norm or law. He grows more headstrong, asks questions about virtually everything, placing high value on a waste like broken cup, 'not a day passes without an argument' (199). He contests why money should be earned instead of getting it directly from the mint. While some of these may easily pass for child naivety, it is evident that there is more to that. Even when it is thought that taking him to a formal school would help to moderate his odd curiosity and imbue in him some sense of an organised set of social conventions, David's case is rather aggravated. Neither the scientific exactness of mathematical facts nor the immortality of the stars makes any sense to him. The child contends the mathematical fact of two plus two being equal to four. He sees cracks in all the conventional rules and sees them as wholes that he will not want to fall into.

With all these instances, it is clear that Coetzee aims at interrogating the distinction between liberal individuality and the restrictive societal norms. He questions social assumptions and their weaknesses, the cracks in them. 'What if the mad are really sane and the sane are really mad (Coetzee, 296)?' Who frames the platform upon which social constructs are erected? It is not therefore surprising that the two major institutions of the school and the family, which are fundamental in the upbringing of a child and instilling of social norms, are subjected to scrutiny. These institutions are part of what Bhabha (2004), echoing Stuart Mill, would refer to as 'metaphors of authority' (94). It is by engaging these institutions of authority with the innocence, if not the naivety, of the child that the strong-rooted tradition that they project and protect may be brought under scrutiny. This is evident in the text because it is at the point of questioning ideas that have been encrusted as an unquestionable fact that one of the stevedores, Eugenio, begins to think differently as well. Eugenio begins to agree that the school system is 'very rigid, very old-fashioned',

and then argues 'for more practical and more vocational kind of schooling' that would not 'need higher mathematics' (297). At the level of allegorical metaphor that this text has been appropriated to be, the school constitutes a pivotal force in formulation of cultural habit, and therefore embodies all other spheres that nurture orientations. Coetzee appears to be testing Mill's assumption, as quoted in Bhabha (1994) that 'steady communal habit of correcting' one's 'own opinion and collating it with those of others' is the most remarkable sign of civility. This is so because David's greatest undoing is his inability to acknowledge other's opinion or to review his own stand in line with the majority. He appears to be a victim of what Mill (1909) refers to as 'tyranny of the majority' (9), which suggests an inherent weakness in the will of the majority. In this case, his failure to align his mental position with the dominant practice makes him a misfit, thereby creating the space of the other, the third space. The young David is hereby thrust within the disjunctive line of liminality. It is for this reason that he is considered unfit to be in class with the other students and must be sent to a special school, an idea that Simon rebuffs and then decides to leave the city of Novilla with David.

If the controversy that David generates in the text is Coetzee's way of reflecting how the Biblical Jesus confronted some popular views of his time, the similarities are not very fitting. While Jesus assumed some transcendental authority, David merely insists on his illogical childish convictions. The child's insistence that he can read a copy of Don Quixote by merely looking at the pages, moving his lips, making up stories from his head is another instance of childish obstinacy. This time, Don Quixote is not written by Miguel de Cervantes as we know it, but by Senor Benengeli in the world of Novilla. As Bellin (2013) observes, 'Cide Hamete Benengeli, was the fictional Arab author' but the story of Don Quixote has never been attributed to him. If this is another textual counter discourse that Coetzee is trying to engage in, it is therefore a very remote kind. What is clear, however, is the non-conformist viewpoint of the little David which, evidently results from aporia of experience. While David's interrogations and worldviews can be viewed from two extremes of childish naivety and intellectual sophistication, the underlying fact remains that they are weird to both the fictional world of Novilla and our real world experiences. It is, therefore, evident that the eccentricity of David's personality stems from a disoriented world-view where a child tries to form his own realities in negation to accepted norms. It is an outcome of the failure to integrate into a given system of value

which not only signifies postmodernist orientation but also marks the disjuncture that is symptomatic of the 'liminality of migrant experience' (Bhabha, 224).

It is in this regard that the indeterminate cultural reality of a migrant experience is clearly portrayed. Coetzee appears to credit the modern globalisation with the propensity to rattle certain behavioural codes of a given cultural experience by creating voices of dissent coming from the outside. The people of Novilla represent Bhabha's observation which is in line with Mill's argument that to maintain cultural cohesion, individuals need to align their mental position with those that think differently from them. It is their inability to make sense out of the illogicalities of David's position that the people maintain their age long tradition, a position that further estranges David and his step-father. The estrangement therefore perfectly positions the young protagonist, David, within the cultural limbo that has become characteristic of a liminal experience of Africans within the borderline of cultures.

David, therefore, is not only a symbol of a modern African child trusted within the liminal borders but also represents the shredded soul of the continent. Coetzee uses the boy child in this text to depict how far Africa has lost track of itself, its values and its identity as a result of accumulated varied experiences. Just like the child, the continent has become in an endless search for itself without any anchor to reconnect itself from a long derailment caused by multiple influences. The Childhood can therefore be read as a story about a lost continent, a continent that has lost its cultural anchor and then thrust into a state of restless derailment. This derailment, which is basically occasioned by endless peregrination of African people, is also reflected in David's endless sojourns.

5.2   Allegory of the unveiled woman in Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade*

Over the years, the veil, as both cultural and religious symbol, has assumed important and diverse levels of signification. While some critics assign to it a strong symbolic meaning of invisibility and subjugation of women, others argue that the veil is simply a mark of differing realities of gender, a mark of innocence. Even though, its origin may have no definite link with the Islamic world, the veil has undoubtedly become a preeminent symbol of the female gender among the Muslims. According to Varisco (2005), 'The penchant for unveiling … females for a Western gaze is … entrenched in those academic disciplines that concern themselves with Islam' (88). This suggests that the attempt to

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unveil is out of the eagerness to discover the potentialities behind the veil. This is mainly because, as Varisco further observes, this piece of fabric is viewed as a disparaging and stifling object, especially, in the western imagination.

According to Daphne (2003) the veil is often 'stereotyped as a signifier of female enslavement or as a means of controlling and confining women's space' (61). Daphne also argues that apart from the concepts of harem and polygamy, the veil is also part of what some European writers use to designate 'Islamic inferiority' because it also marks 'the subordinate status of the woman'. Bullock (2010) observes that such opinion constituted part of the strategies deployed in the justification of colonialism in Arab nations by the Europeans. While the veil has been strongly attached with the image of seclusion and loss of individuality among the female folk, Mernissi (1991) argues that the idea is not to punish women, rather it is a 'symbol of protection, dignity and a desire to rise above the commonplace' (97). Deep respect for modesty, especially in the public space, rather than seclusion, therefore, appears dominant in the Islamic consideration of the veil. As clear as this may appear the veil continues to recur as an object of cultural and religious contestation in many parts of the world. Daphne further observes that the veil is not exclusive to the Islamic tradition; it is also one of the rigid codes of conducts obtainable among the adherents of Hinduism. Parduah, just as the Arabic harem, and the veil as restrictive instruments in Hinduism are meant 'to limit access to women since sexual activity was thought to sap men's strength, in much the same way as a disease' (65).The veil was therefore considered a useful instrument for protecting men from the luscious lure of the female body so that the men may stay strong and fit for more rewarding demands of their daily life. Apart from that, the women were also thought to be incapable of taking care of themselves and so should be entrusted with their father, then husbands and then, much later, their sons. Many more people, still, justify the use of the veil as a strict religious obligation with a lot of spiritual import. Some of these assumptions have sparked off a raging controversy between the traditionalists/religionists and the feminist in relation to the use of veil. Bartkowski and Ghazal (2003) refer to the class of feminists who try to challenge or reconstruct some of scriptural assumptions that relegate women as 'evangelical feminists'. This category, which runs across most of the major religious beliefs, contends with some unfavourable scriptural interpretations and proffers more female friendly explanations, aiming at liberating the women from readings that encourage stifling religious injunctions.

The inclination to always dwell on these two major lines of thought, that is, associating the veil with some disparaging references to a particular culture or religion and insistent defence of the veil based on its religious significance, often blurs a more universal signification of the veil as object of purity. Based on this level of meaning, wearing of the veil becomes a ritualistic necessity during marriage ceremonies in different societies across many religions and cultures. Daphne explains that the 'sole right' to gaze on the bride's face by only her husband symbolizes the man's 'unique ownership of her sexuality and the right to remove the bride's purity' (70). It is in this understanding that Derrida (1981) associates the veil with the hymen which is both token of virginity and symbol of marriage. While the idea of subjecting only the women to the test of purity can be questioned, purity is, undeniably, part of the assumptions that Islamic tradition associates the veil with. The veil therefore assumes a multifaceted essence. It does not only signify restriction and oppression, gleaning from the Orientalist and colonial discourses of the object, but also represents decency, piety and purity, depending on which pedestal the object is viewed. Basically, the veil is a symbol of cultural adherence and to unveil is to fly in the face of a long established tradition. To unveil becomes a practised aimed at subjecting a particular cultural practice into scrutiny. It is at the level of this symbolic essence that this work attempts to examine the processes that prompt the desire to unveil. If unveiling signifies a protest against a tradition, it is significant to explore some of the variables that contribute to such protest. This brings the veil at the central point of feminist and patriarchal contest as the concept of veiling has been inscribed with a notional frame of patriarchal dominance.

Assia Djebar's writings bear enormous essence in the contest against the gnawing pangs of patriarchal dominance in her country, Algeria. Born in 1936 in a small coastal town of Cherchell, near Algiers, to an Algerian Arab father and a Berber mother, Djebar's contending tendencies to a patriarchal dominated society started when she got enrolled to an all-boys primary school where her father was a French teacher. Young Djebar's journey to school severed her attachment with the harem dwellings where her mother resided and also introduced her to the French language. She completed her secondary school education in Algiers, studied at the Lycee Fenelon and thereafter became the first Algerian woman to be admitted to the Ecole Normal Superior, an elite high academic institution in France. Despite her exposure to the West, Djebar did not totally breakoff from the culture of her people, which her mother personified, neither was she automatically transmuted into a

French woman. Residing in this in-between location made it possible for her to assess the culture with the passion of an insider and the objective distance of an observer. This privileges her as the voice for her voiceless women folk; she could speak with courage on issues that many women have for long endured. Djebar's feminist leaning was established early in her first novel, *La Soif* (Thirst), 1957, which portrays women's quest for emancipation. The circumstances linked to the publication of this first novel, especially the fear of her father's disapproval, made her part with her original name Fatima-Zohra Imalayen, and then adopt pen-name, Assia Djebar.

Beyond being identity marker for a personality that has bourgeoned big in the literary landscape of Algeria, 'assia' and 'djebar' have some emancipatory underpinnings. According to Zimra (1980), while djebar is one of the praise names of Allah which has been interpreted to mean 'intransigent' or 'healer', assia actually is Asia in standard Arabic which is the name of the Egyptian princess who rescued Moses and is well honoured in Algerian lore as 'Pharaoh's sister'. These two references, therefore project her as both a saviour and a healer of wounds. This self-assigned mandate as a rescuer continues in her second novel, *Les Impatients* (The Impatient), 1958, which, like the first, projects the quest for women emancipation. While the young emerging author was being applauded by the French media for her excellent writing skill and her commitment in championing the course of women in colonial Algeria, the Algerian nationalists condemned her for her indecency. She was further accused of abandoning the greater course of national liberation for the struggle for that of the self. She, however, argued that a search for a feminine self was an important part of revolution which will eventually make the women active participants in the war for independence. This is why in her next two novels, *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde* (Children of the New World) 1962, and Les Allouettes Naives (The Naive Larks) 1967, Djebar speaks of the war heroines and their dual liberation quests: the 'selves' and that of the 'nation'. With an abiding passion to drive her critique of the Arabic/Berber culture to both the elite and the masses, Djebar ventured into film making and won the International Critics Prize at the 1979 Venice Film Festival. Shortly after that, Djebar continued in her fictive art with the publication of *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Apartment* (*Women of Algier in their Apartment)* (1980) closely followed are her quartet: *L'amour, La Fantasia* (*Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*), 1985, *Ombre Sultane* (*A Sister to Sheherazade*), 1987, *Loin De Medine* (*Far from Madina*), 1990 and *Vaste Est La Prison* (*So Vast is the Prison*), 1995. In all these,

Djebar has been consistent in interrogating the two major cultures of her indigineity, Arab/Berber in relation to Western languages and cultures. In recognition of her outstanding contributions in the literary art, Djebar has received many international awards. In 1996, she won Neustadt Prize for 'transcending the cultural bigotries of ethnocentric appeals'. She also won Yourcenar Prize in 1997, became a member of the Academie Royale de Langue Francaise de Belgique (Royale Academy of Belgian and France) and in 2005 a member of the French academy, the second African to be so honoured after Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal.

A Sister to Scheherazade is Djebar's decided attempt to further engage different aspects of phallic ideologies that Algerian women have been confined in as a result of some cultural practices and beliefs. Dorothy Blair's choice of Scheherazade for the title in her translation of this novel from its original French title, *Ombre Sultan*, is an obvious allusion to the character narrator in *The Arabian Nights*, an Arabian classical tale which is, later, to be refashioned by Naguib Mahfouz. The consistent reference to Scheherazade (Shahrahzad) in some narratives of North Africa extraction is beginning to figure Scheherazade as a metaphor of the Orient/Maghreb woman. Scheherazade now assumes the figure of the suppressed woman. *A Sister to Scheherazade* is the story of the relationship between an unnamed man and his two wives. His liberated first wife, Isma, divorces him after returning from the foreign land because both can no longer coexist as a result of her unfulfilled desires. The man, then, marries a second wife, the naïve and provincial Hajila who has been arranged by Touma, her own mother, and Isma herself. The lure of affluence is significant in convincing Touma to facilitate this marriage arrangement which liberates Hajila from the desolate slum and confines her into the man's massive mansion. Hajila lives to raise two children from the man's broken marriage. After six months without pregnancy, the man is constrained to forcefully have sex with Hajila, an act that rather sets off many more conflicts in the story, as the girl, through the intervening narration of Isma becomes more brazen and then prepares for her eventual unveiling.

While critics have engaged the narrative techniques employed in this work (Brabhu, 2002) as well as its feminist commitment (Daphne, 2003), effort has not been adequately made to examine the underlying forces that yield to the cultural disjuncture in this text. The discontentment of returnees with dominant cultural practices has been earlier identified in this thesis as a major cause of cultural dislocation in Adichie's *Americanah*. This same

trend is sustained here as Isma's inability to reintegrate with her Algerian culture upon her return from 'the foreign land' sets her against her people and brings about the collapse of her marriage. As Isma returns, her stealth urges to rebel as child receives a brazen stimulus and tries to individuate herself from the collective signification of the female folk in her society thus, establishing her right from the start as the very symbol of the unveiled woman. She interrogates a culture that prioritizes the invisibility of the women folk over a culture of equality. Her insight from the foreign land equips her for this purpose: 'Here in this country, they annihilate you by shutting you up behind walls and windows hidden from view. No sooner do you set foot outside than you feel exposed! Over there no one looks at me, no one really has eyes!' (80) Isma's juxtaposition of the homeland and the foreign land, where she just returned from, in the above quote is Djebar's attempt to hold the binary opposites up for interrogation. While the predominant Algerian culture as represented by the husband's view consigns women to the normative assumptions of being within the walls of the home just 'to look after the house and the children', Isma has got a different orientation. She believes that women can also work, in her own case, she wants to teach. This job will not only empower her economically, but also make her a strong instrument of liberation for other women from a culture that overwhelmingly credits male dominance and sees female docility as a virtue. It is an attempt to contrast the affiliating and antagonising cultural engagements that Djebar presents the self-effacing Hajila as Isma's alter ego, thereby projecting the constituent narrative of Other which is an essential component of the postcolonial discourse.

Djebar underscores Hajila's silence by denying her a voice in the greater part of this narrative and then transfers the human gift of expression to Isma. Isma, in her role as the narrator, becomes ubiquitous. She is the only voice that expresses her own predicaments in the first person narrative technique and that of Hajila in the second person and the collective experience of the sisterhood in the third person. The use of the second person according to Prabhu (2002), 'appeals to Hajila and also to the reader, who stands in for Hajila during the reading process' (74). In other words, the second person 'you' engenders a psychic involvement of the reader, who unconsciously assumes the 'you' and then actively participate in Hajila's challenges. Through this way a vicarious experience is established, making the reader a co-traveller in Hajila's world. While Prabhu describes this as manipulative, it is a manipulation for a distinct course. It is Djebar's adroit use of the literary art to champion a feminist agenda. The attempt here, therefore, is to evoke an

emancipatory desire that is not only directed at Hajila but also the reader. To achieve this is to juxtapose Isma's freedom with Hajila's confinement. Isma declares her freedom and visibility in the first person narrative technique, 'O! This sunshine, these walks, my body sailing along –time and time again, I find my body floating in a sea of eyes, all staring at me'. The strictures that confine Hajila's life are captured in the second person thus: 'You are imprisoned by these bare walls' (7). 'You find a seat, in the shade of a cedar. …You're like a posed photograph in an album. On a glossy paper' (33). Image of stillness as seen in this instance is constant in figuring Hajila's personality. This does not only demonstrate her idleness and unproductivity but also denies her of humanness. She is in want one of the basic attributes of a human: mobility and sight. 'You sit rigid', 'you cannot look'. All these signify silence, invisibility and passiveness which point to the signification of the veil. These instances do not only create the impression that the female are shrouded in obscurity but that they are also denied of any sense of individual desires and aspiration. This stifling experience in a man's lonely mansion is created to justify Hajila's tender urges to explore the world outside the immediate environment and in the process challenge the normative assumptions that create her confinement. A flower garden easily becomes the closest association that she can use to activate the muted desire of living 'how other people live in foreign countries, according to the television' (32). Djebar's reference to the 'mediascape' lends credence to Appadurai's argument about the potency of the media in influencing perspectives and desires in the global world. The media in this instance becomes a vital instrument in stimulating 'extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations' (Bhabha, 1994:9), which ultimately characterises the liminal personality.

Djebar does not pretend in her commitment to rigorously interrogate her society in order to redefine it. This is why she pointedly identifies economic empowerment as being very central in the social-cultural conditioning of the women folk. Djebar uses the unfortunate death of Hajila's father in an accident and the instant downward spiral of the family's fortune to demonstrate the poor economic status of women in her society. Touma's inability to secure a decent living for the household necessitates her insistence that Hajila should quickly get married to a wealthy man to fight against the injustice done to them and then get them out of their 'miserable hovel' (45). Through this way, Djebar has not only associated wealth and freedom with masculinity bus also assigned voice to the natural incident of gender. Zalhi (2008) explains that the ambition to unite the Algerian people with the standard Arabic, rather denied the illiterate women access to the language thereby

making it an exclusive preserve of the male. According to Zalhi, it is 'A masculine language, not only in view of its status as the language of power, but especially because the vast majority of Algerian women were illiterate people, alienated by the standard Arabic of the media and political discourse, which were almost exclusively male domains' (92). The inability of women to negotiate through the hierarchies of power without a man is what Djebar attempts to dramatise with Touma in this text. Djebar distinctly delineates two categories of character to demonstrate this point. While Touma is stuck with this old order, Isma's wide exposure equips her to break from the bounds of culture. While Touma insists that Hajila should maintain these cultural strictures and remain tied to them, Isma encourages Hajila to shed off the encumbrances of culture and embrace the freedom of the liberated woman. Touma sees the culture as a shield but Isma sees it as a burden. It is as a result of her strong conviction in this regard that Isma divorces her husband and takes up teaching to get herself empowered. This marks a new negotiation of place of women in the social cultural landscape of the people. This obvious split in cultural orientation confirms Bhabha's position that:

> The enunciative process introduces a split in the performative present of cultural identification; a split between the traditional culturalist demands for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meanings and strategies in the political present as a practice of domination, or resistance (1994: 35).

Touma's state as a victim of a cultural practice does not dissuade her from her strong attachment to the certitude of this culture which Isma has come to negate. Isma's entrance into this cultural scene therefore signals the new articulation which does not only construct a counter knowledge but also attempts to court followership by dangling the new choices before Hajila. Hajila's rebel against the old order demonstrates the penetrating power of the global forces and their evident potency in creating cultural disjuncture by subjecting the old order into intense scrutiny. Hajila has been firmly foisted in-between the two cultural spaces. She is not sure if, in adherence to the culture symbolised here in the figure of her mother, to continue as a 'doll kept in luxury' (57) or to embrace the liberating allures of the global world as represented and presented by Isma.

Despite Brahbu's claim to Djebar's objective narration, it is obvious that in her effort to portray the culture-induced suffering of the women, Djebar rather appears sensational in

some parts of the narrative. Even the supposed pleasurable experience of marital consummation is portrayed with foreboding sexual images. Isma narrates Hajila's encounter, 'when the man's penis ruptures you with one rapid sword-thrust, you scream out in silence, breaking your own silence, No! … No!' you struggle against him, he castigates you …' (58). The imagery here does not only transfer the whole pleasure of sex to the male character but also portrays the veiled woman as an object of subjugation that has been solely made for a cruel savour of the male folk. While the bed is here included in the unrestricted dominance of the man, the woman remains a subservient recipient of the brutish man. This point will be made clearer when Hajila's experience is closely contrasted with the sexual encounter of the unveiled woman, Isma, as she further narrates: 'I, for my part, take my time, a courtesan dallying in foreplay. No precipitous haste, no urgency of passion. We exchange slow caresses. Waves of drowsiness flood over us … and my legs – ah my legs! – become a diver's dream' (37). In this instance, Isma is in charge; she is an active participant in their marital consummation. Djebar is obviously bringing to the fore the possibilities that lie across the borderlines of her culture. Transcending this culture, in Djebar's view can, therefore, assure the transformation of the passivity of the female folk into active partners who share in a mutual relish of love-making.

It is evident in this analysis that Djebar has used the figure of Scheherazade, an enduring metaphor of the Orient/Maghreb woman, to reconstruct female subjectivity in this narrative. From economic empowerment to social freedom of interaction, Djebar imbues the vital elements of globalisation with emancipatory potency. While strict adherence to the veil is seen as a total submission to a culture that thrives on the inconsiderate wave of male dominance, unveiling connotes liberation and a distinct individualisation of the female folk. Unveiling here also suggests bringing to bear the individual potentialities of the women which does not only inculcate in them some new perspectives about themselves but also equip them with the necessary capacities to renegotiate their place in the society they find themselves. Djebar's narrative is therefore, not just a story of the Maghreb woman alone but can also be seen as an allegorical projection of how the female folk can break away from the restrictive cultural practices that inhibit a full realisation of their potentials in many parts of Africa through the instruments of globalisation. In other words, riding on the crest of cultural borrowing and transfer as facilitated by the multiple

throngs of globalisation, Djebar appears to redirect a new course in the existential realities of the women on the continent.

5.3 Conclusion

It is evident in this chapter that African writers have also explored the potent use of allegory to portray the palpable influences of globalisation on the cultures and lives of the African people. Having focused on two texts of African descent has attempted to explore their allegorical portrayal of characters that the global forces occasion their cultural transcendence. Taking a critical look at J.M Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade*, it is revealed that the symbolic representation of the characters in these texts distances the common experience of the global realities in Africa and gives the stories a universal appeal. While Coetzee's narrative focuses on the character of the child, Djebar's attention falls on the changing perspectives of the woman's experiences in the increasingly globalised world. These two texts help to give different portrayals to the allegorical point of view as used in the portrayal of this global trend.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work has closely studied the multifaceted elements of globalisation by engaging eight novels of African extraction in order to explore the permeating influence of the global world in transcending various cultural practices in Africa. While these texts, at various degrees, purvey strong artistic elements in, they also reveal differing impacts that globalisation brings to bear on the various parts of the continent. The analysis, thus far, has come with some fascinating outcomes. Evidence emanating from the exploration of the texts shows that globalisation does not only affect the material culture of the continent but also contributes largely in forming new orientations that have manifested in new personality formation. That has not only enhanced the new personality formation but also trigger conflicts within families and various societies at large. Despite the wide, and sometimes, the controversial perspectives that surround the concept of globalisation, Appadurai's five major dimensions in cultural disjuncture in the globalising world has provided an anchor for the concept of globalisation in this study. The research shows that these elements of globalisation, as espoused by Appadurai, are variously featured in the selected texts.

In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, Mahjoub Jamal's *Travelling with Djinns*, and Taye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* Appadurai's 'mediascape' and 'ethnoscape' appear dominant elements in the formation of the psychodynamics of the families in the texts. The media and the itinerant life, which has become an inseparable part of the global era, greatly stimulate the psychogenic affiliation of these characters with perspectives that are predominantly Western. While these narratives largely progress elliptically, stream of consciousness technique is employed to juxtapose the multiple consciousness that influence the behavioural formations and changes in the characters. Most of the conflicts that form the greater parts of these narratives stem from a clash between metropolitan orientations and indigenous cultural leanings. While these three texts make use of transcontinental settings that straddle three major continents of Africa, Europe and America to reflect the overriding influence of Appadurai's ethnoscape in the global world, each of these texts also has its own peculiarities.

For instance, even though Adichie's *Americanah* focuses largely on Obinze's family, many other Nigerian families living in Nigeria and other continents are also closely portrayed in order to highlight the extensive impact of the global order. The families of Olu, Nicolas, Jonathan and Okwudiba are all well captured in this regard. While Olu's family breaks up like that of Obinze, Nicolas' children, Nna and Nne, remain detached from their indigenous root. The same situation is applicable to several other faceless African children with absent fathers in the United States. While Adichie's style of representation of these characters may be described as lateral, Selasi and Jamal appear to take a more vertical approach in portraying a similar experience. Selasi, in *Ghana Must Go,* and Jamal, in *Travelling with Djinns,* concentrates on a single family lineage, tracing the beginning of the cultural dislodgement in three generations, identifying colonialism as its exact point of entry. While, in *Ghana must Go*, Kweku's father's disappearance is occasioned by his inability to bear the Whiteman's humiliation in his own village in Ghana, Yasin's grandfather shifts his orientation from the indigenous orientation as a result of his engagement with a white man, a colonial officer, as a servant. This shift is to be later sustained by the children and the grandchildren who, with the enablement of the modern technology, especially with the overwhelming influence of popular images, begin to traverse the globe, acquiring diverse orientations in the process. It is at the point that the characters begin to feel integrated into the social mainstream of the centre that some subliminal divisive markers begin to manifest in the form of racial discrimination and its inseparable ally, stereotype.

For this reason, the idealistic promises of globalisation become closely confronted with their cruel realities. The rejection of Obinze in *Americanah*, Yasin in *Travelling with Djinns* and Kweku in *Ghana Must Go* despite their convinced commitment, if not obsession, to the global possibilities bears much credence to the underlying inconsistencies that the global world attempts to blur. The outcome of these, glaringly, becomes a projection of detachment and loss of a cultural anchor. Having lost from the cultural ambience of the centre that nurtured them, the characters are suspended within a liminal zone where peripheral cultural dictates are incapable of determining or accommodating their behavioural trajectory. In essence, globalisation has facilitated their transcendence from the indigenous culture but fails to accommodate them within the mainstream culture. The characters, most of who have been alternated with their appropriate foils in the story, become culturally ambivalent and unfit for the centre or the

periphery and in the process create a new form of identification that has come to be known as Afropolitanism. Not only does this new identity set these characters against long tested values of their supposed indigenous cultures, evidence emanating from the texts examined shows that it also destabilises the nuclear families and leave some members of the family to the unbridled sway of global forces.

Similarly, the loss of hope in Africa occasioned by the throes and woes of the beleaguered history of the continent has prompted the bleak term referred to as Afro-pessimism. It is in depicting this concept that the overt and covert interferences of the global forces on the continent is brought to the fore in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Nurudeen Farah's *Crossbones*, Mukoma Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat* by exploring the predominant reflections of Appadurai's 'technoscapes,' 'finanscapes' and 'ideoscapes'. Through this way, the internal and external influences that project Africa in such gloomy light and how they lead to cultural transcendence are also closely examined in these texts. Bulawayo, for instance, portrays the internal dysfunctions pervasive on the continent that combine to attract pessimistic perceptions about Africa. While leadership failure and the docility of followership appear primary among the causes of these predicaments, hunger and excruciating poverty are presented as the immediate outcomes of these dysfunctions. These create perceptions that project a repulsive disposition to the continent, and which makes both indigenous and foreign characters attempt to avoid any form of cultural identification with Africa.

Darling and other six children who are the major victims of the sociopolitical nightmare in *We Need New Names* are perpetually in waiting for any opportunity that will take them out of their country. This condition obviates the comfort usually associated with home. Bulawayo uses juxtaposition of settings and characterisation to depict the causes and different levels of cultural transcendence. While Paradise is imbued with indexicalities of poverty and suffering, the White dominated neighbourhood, Budapest, represents affluence and hope. The semiotic portrayal of setting in this instance does not only portray the penetrating global presence in Africa but also triggers off a longing for physical migration, with the conviction that there could be a better life outside Paradise. Bulawayo, just like Adichie, also portrays the ineffectual use of mimicry in negotiating social acceptability. While Darling is able to escape the horror at home, her inability to fit into the mainstream American culture, despite her conscious and painstaking mimicry, rather

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creates a homeward longing, which continues to underlie her unhomeliness. Even when the gory realities of home are brought to her mind through stream of consciousness, the desire for a cultural affiliation still persists. The luxury and abundance in America still leaves her with the hunger for home. However, Darling, just like many other migrants, further detaches herself from their indigenous cultural orientation with several American nuances that she has imbibed through mimicry. Through Darling, Bulawayo projects the in-between existence of the global world and, like Adichie, further projects into the future by highlighting the liminal status of myriad of African characters who are children and grandchildren of the diasporised Africans. Unlike Darling, these set of characters have no indigenous cultural experiences to long for.

Similarly, Nuruddin Farah's exploration of the global presence on the African continent further elucidates the cultural disjuncture occasioned by the new wave of globalisation. Farah's narrative reveals a broader perspective in the discourse of global influences on the continent. While other writers limit this to the encounter between Africa and the West, Farah tries to interrogate the Arabian influence in the global potpourri of the continent. In doing that, he attempts to examine the mechanisms deployed in disorientating Africans from indigenous cultural consciousness. Using Somalia, his own country in this exploration, Farah's characterisation is split into two major models of representations. While Dhoorre may represent the old generation Muslims who would establish the difference that exists in religion, politics and culture, YoungThing depicts the child victim who is goaded into violence as a result of some vested interests of his principals hidden under the cover of religion. While the like of YoungThing are radicalised through the Appadura's technoscape and finascape in Africa, Farah pairs this group with the migrant Taxliil and Saifullah who have got similar commitment in the United States. In the same vein, Farah's portrayal of Ethiopia as an ally of the Western forces aimed at wreaking havoc in Somalia does not only depict the complicity of Africa in the global power play that engender the pessimistic notion of the continent but also places Africa as a contested ground in the global competition for power and dominance. It is Africa's position as a passive recipient of these multiple influences that blur the African identity and project them within the deracinated image of Arabian or Western personality. There is no doubt that while cultures interact there is bound to be some undeniable influences but when the African personality is shrouded by these multiple impulses made possible through popular images and direct infiltration of the continent, it does not guarantee acceptance into the

imposed identity nor save African identity from receding into oblivion. Rather, it leaves the victims within a liminal horizon of cultural negotiation.

In the same vein, Mukoma Ngugi, in *Nairobi Heat*, continues with the same pessimistic perspective by exploring how multinational organisations and Western interest collude with African elite in causing chaos and sowing seeds of disaffection on the continent. While members of this elite gain fortune and project themselves with some messianic disposition through their shady philanthropist gestures, the trails of woes that follow their orchestrated havoc become the catchy images of the Western media. It is from such gory images that identification of and contemplations on Africa are largely drawn. Through this way, Mukoma gives a clinical account of how the foreboding imaging of Africa is created and dispersed. While failure of leadership may be added to the possible causes of these crises, Mukoma's clear portrayal of earlier penetration and dominance of the continent by the Western forces makes it difficult to exclude external forces from the frequent distress that the continent endures. The characterization of Ishmael as a character split between African and Western orientations aligns him within the dominant paradigm of liminality portrayed in the other texts studied in this work.

The allegorical projection of liminality is also depicted in differing degrees in J.M Coetzee's *Childhood of Jesus* and Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade*. In Coetzee's narrative, a lost child becomes a symbol of the liminal identity in a globalised world. Coetzee anchors this loss in Appadurai's ethnoscape where the boy's parents are lost in transit. With an obvious lack of cultural anchor, the child's migrant life and his inability to coexist with the rules of the new environments that he finds himself positions him within a cultural limbo. Similarly, Assia Djebar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* allegorically interrogates the cultural significations of the female gender in a given African cultural sphere. Djebar contrasts the self-effacing Hajila with the Western-oriented Isma to project the affiliating and antagonising cultural engagements in the narrative. Having been liberated from the cultural insularity that Hajila finds herself, Isma becomes the symbol of a new African woman that Djebar projects. In essence, while Jamal Mahjoub projects women as ambassadors of the indigenous culture, Djebar presents globalisation with an emancipatory potency capable of reconstructing female subjectivity.

It is evident in this study that while the epoch of colonialism with its brazen territorial dominance and physical control of men and materials in African wound up with twentieth century, twenty-first century Africa appears to face a related challenge as the realities of globalisation have a subtle but, definitely, more pervasive sway on the continent in this present era. The ubiquitous access to the modern technology has not only influenced a wide range of knowledge production but also affected behavioural changes in diverse ways. Riding on the tide of modern technology, globalisation attempts to narrow cultural perspectives, idealizing, universalising and centralizing supposed dominant views, especially from the centre, with genuine or ulterior motive. As evident in the texts analysed, this breeds tensions that cut across many families and societies. Ultimately, the tension, which results from conflicts between forces of cultural change and resistant forces, builds up a new frontier of cultural perception, creating personalities within the borderlines of cultural identification. The attempt to create a monolithic concept of human subjectivity brings perceptions from the centre into constant clash with peripheral ideologies. This has led to non-normative orientations which are persistently registered on an individual's unconscious and thereby transcend him beyond his supposed cultural affiliation.

While globalisation is able to disseminate ideas from the centre to diverse interior peripheries, the overwhelming sway of the global force appears to achieve exact opposite in some quarters, as its effort to subsume thought patterns into a unilateral cultural consciousness receive stiff resistance. The reason for the resistance against the global force is not just the wish to retain indigenous culture but also the failure of globalisation to keep to its promises. Despite the loud acclaim to oneness and emphasis on efficiency credited to globalisation by its apologists, emerging realities reveal that globalisation is fraught with enormous pitfalls. While the interconnectedness of people and places gives credence to the bridging capacity of globalisation, the evident growing case in the mode of differentiation that is associated with globalisation demonstrate the fault lines therein. Beneath the utopic homogeneity usually propagated by globalisation lurk strong centrifugal forces that not only threaten peaceful coexistence but also further subject human race into multiple stratifications that result from one's appearance, nationality and mode of worship. Such divisions project race and identity to prominence. It is evident, from this study that the contestations that surround identity owe largely to the nexus enabled by the increasing global mix. This is why the concepts of otherness, indigeneity

and subalternity and liminal status dominate in this critical exploration. It is evident that glaring cases of discrimination occasioned by false assumptions of stereotyping prompt the African characters in these texts towards the quest for self-discovery and indigenous identification. While identity gradually loses its cultural fixity, the outcome becomes cultural ambivalence that leads to various crises as evident in the texts studied.

It has become clear that character formation now defies the traditional cultural binaries that hitherto characterise identity formation and articulation usually seen in postcolonial studies. Globalisation constitutes an existential reality that does not just create a platform for cultural introspection and ideological contemplations, but also creates an environment for a continuous cultural shift and differing identification on the continent, which result in deracination and cultural loss and, in other words, signify a sense of liminality. Beyond that, the tension generated in the process of this transcendence and the effects of being transcended do not only lead to collapse of family units but also generate violence and distraught that unsettle different parts of the continent right from the nucleus unit of the family. It is therefore clear that if the beautiful promise of globalisation would succeed, the promises of oneness of mankind should be promoted over the fault lines of racism, tribalism and religious differences. Globalisation should therefore embark on a reciprocating errand by projecting the values and cultures of the people within the cultural periphery. In other words, five elements of globalisation that have been identified by Appadurai's should be closely engaged in this enterprise. Through this way, different cultural practices may be better assessed and appreciated.

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