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Editorial

La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* (RILLiCC) est une revue à comité de lecture en phase d'indexation recommandée par le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). Elle est la revue du Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation Anglophones (LaReLLiCCA) dont elle publie les résultats des recherches en lien avec la recherche et la pédagogie sur des orientations innovantes et stimulantes à la vie et vision améliorées de l'académie et de la société. La revue accepte les textes qui cadrent avec des enjeux épistémologiques et des problématiques actuels pour être au rendez-vous de la contribution à la résolution des problèmes contemporains.

RILLiCC met en éveil son lectorat par rapport aux défis académiques et sociaux qui se posent en Afrique et dans le monde en matière de science littéraire et des crises éthiques. Il est établi que les difficultés du vivre-ensemble sont fondées sur le radicalisme et l'extrémisme violents. En effet, ces crises et manifestations ne sont que des effets des causes cachées dans l'imaginaire qu'il faut (re)modeler au grand bonheur collectif. Comme il convient de le noter ici, un grand défi se pose aux chercheurs qui se doivent aujourd'hui d'être conscients que la science littéraire n'est pas rétribuée à sa juste valeur quand elle se voit habillée sous leurs yeux du mythe d'Albatros ou d'un cymbale sonore. L'idée qui se cache malheureusement derrière cette mythologie est que la littérature ne semble pas contribuer efficacement à la résolution des problèmes de société comme les sciences exactes. Dire que la recherche a une valeur est une chose, le prouver en est une autre. La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* à travers les activités du LaReLLiCCA entend faire bénéficier à son lectorat et à sa société cible, les retombées d'une recherche appliquée.

Le comité spécialisé « Lettres et Sciences Humaines » du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) recommande l'utilisation harmonisée des styles de rédaction et la présente revue s'inscrit dans cette logique directrice en adoptant le style APA.

L'orientation éditoriale de cette revue inscrit les résultats pragmatiques et novateurs des recherches sur fond social de médiation, d'inclusion et de réciprocité qui permettent de maîtriser les racines du mal et réaliser les objectifs du développement durable déclencheurs de paix partagée.

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

Professeur Ataféï PEWISSI,
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Ligne éditoriale

Volume : La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 4500 et 6000 mots. Format: papier A4, Police: Times New Roman, Taille: 11,5, Interligne 1,15.

Ordre logique du texte

Un article doit être un tout cohérent. Les différents éléments de la structure doivent faire un tout cohérent avec le titre. Ainsi, tout texte soumis pour publication doit comporter:

- un titre en caractère d'imprimerie ; il doit être expressif et d'actualité, et ne doit pas excéder 24 mots ;
- un résumé en anglais-français, anglais-allemand, ou anglais-espagnol selon la langue utilisée pour rédiger l'article. Se limiter exclusiment à objectif/problématique, cadre théorique et méthodologique, et résultats. Aucun de ces résumés ne devra dépasser 150 mots ;
- des mots clés en français, en anglais, en allemand et en espagnol : entre 5 et 7 mots clés ;
- une introduction (un aperçu historique sur le sujet ou revue de la littérature en bref, une problématique, un cadre théorique et méthodologique, et une structure du travail) en 600 mots au maximum ;
- un développement dont les différents axes sont titrés. Il n'est autorisé que trois niveaux de titres. Pour le titrage, il est vivement recommandé d'utiliser les chiffres arabes ; les titres alphabétiques et alphanumériques ne sont pas acceptés ;
- une conclusion (rappel de la problématique, résumé très bref du travail réalisé, résultats obtenus, implémentation) en 400 mots au maximum ;
- liste des références : par ordre alphabétique des noms de familles des auteurs cités.

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Il n'est fait mention dans la liste de références que des sources effectivement utilisées (citées, paraphrasées, résumées) dans le texte de l'auteur. Pour leur présentation, la norme American Psychological Association (APA) ou références intégrées est exigée de tous les auteurs qui veulent faire publier leur texte dans la revue. Il est fait exigence aux auteurs de n'utiliser que la seule norme dans leur texte. Pour en savoir

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Le comité de rédaction exige APA (Auteur, année : page). L'utilisation des notes de bas de pages n'intervient qu'à des fins d'explication complémentaire. La présentation des références en style métissé est formellement interdite.

La gestion des citations :

Longues citations : Les citations de plus de quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme longues ; elles doivent être mises en retrait dans le texte en interligne simple.

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Résumé :

- ✓ Pour Pewissi (2017), le Womanisme trenscende les cloisons du genre.
- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

Résumé ou paraphrase :

- ✓ Ourso (2013: 12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

Exemple de référence

- **Pour un livre**

Collin, H. P. (1988). *Dictionary of Government and Politics*. UK: Peter Collin Publishing.

- **Pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif**

Gill, W. (1998/1990). "Writing and Language: Making the Silence Speak." In Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company, Fourth Edition. Pp. 151-176.

- **Utilisation de Ibid., op. cit, sic entre autres**

Ibidem (Ibid.) intervient à partir de la deuxième note d'une référence

source citée. Ibid. est suivi du numéro de page si elle est différente de référence mère dont elle est consécutive. Exemple : ibid., ou ibidem, p. x. **Op. cit.** signifie 'la source pré-citée'. Il est utilisé quand, au lieu de deux références consécutives, une ou plusieurs sources sont intercalées. En ce moment, la deuxième des références consécutives exige l'usage de op. cit. suivi de la page si cette dernière diffère de la précédente.

Typographie

-La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* interdit tout soulignement et toute mise en gras des caractères ou des portions de textes.

-Les auteurs doivent respecter la typographie choisie concernant la ponctuation, les abréviations…

Tableaux, schémas et illustrations

Pour les textes contenant les tableaux, il est demandé aux auteurs de les numéroter en chiffres romains selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Chaque tableau devra comporter un titre précis et une source propre. Par contre, les schémas et illustrations devront être numérotés en chiffres arabes et dans l'ordre d'apparition dans le texte.

La lageur des tableaux intégrés au travail doit être 10 cm maximum, format A4, orientation portrait.

Instruction et acceptation d'article

A partir du volume 2 de la présente édition, les dates de réception et d'acceptation des textes sont marquées, au niveau de chaque article. Deux (02) à trois (03) instructions sont obligatoires pour plus d'assurance de qualité.

Sommaire

LITTERATURE

Rethinking Cultural Differences in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*

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Abstract:
This study rethinks the concept of cultural difference in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. It argues that the Ghanaian and Nigerian characters' failure to assimilate differences in cultures occasions their psychic and social troubles in both their homelands and the host countries which set them in holocaust, melancholia and grievance. Using Bhabha's concept of cultural difference, the study reaches the conclusion that the Ghanaian, and Nigerian characters' failures to assimilate the differences in cultures sets them in psychic and social troubles.

Key words: Assimilation, cultural difference, grievance**,** holocaust, melancholia, tribalism.

Résumé:
Cette étude apporte une nouvelle réflexion sur le concept de la différence culturelle dans *Ghana Must Go* de Selasi. Elle soutient que l'échec des personnages nigérians et ghanéens d'assimiler les différences culturelles occasionne des troubles psychiques et communautaires aussi bien dans leur pays qu'à l'étranger ; ce qui suscite leur holocauste, mélancolie et grief. En utilisant le concept de la différence culturelle de Bhabha, le travail conclut que l'échec des personnages nigérians et ghanéens à assimiler les différences culturelles suscite des troubles psychiques et communautaires.

Mot clés : Assimilation, différence culturelle, grief, holocauste, mélancolie, tribalisme.

Introduction

Through her concept of Afropolitanism in "Bye Bye Babar" (2005), Selasi is known for appraising African cultural hybridity in the 21st century. In this essay, Selasi describes the homeliness of the African immigrants in the world. For her, though the African people who work and live in cities around the globe do not belong to a single geographical space, they feel at home in many of these spaces. Since then Selasi is

recognized as an Afropolitan writer among others as Birgit Neumann and Rippl contend:

> In the last fifteen years or so a considerable number of diasporic African literatures have made their entry into the world literary space, reminding us once again of the complex and volatile dynamics underlying the making of world literatures. Comprising authors as diverse as Teju Cole, Taiye Selasi…, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, NoViolet Bulawayo and Dinaw Mengestu, these 'young and creative cosmopolitan African immigrants' … have readily been subsumed by critics under the label 'Afropolitan' (2017: 159).

Selasi is perceived as a novelist who writes about African people's mode of being familiar with many cultures and at ease in any part of the world because her concept of Afropolitanism denotes African mode of being cosmopolitan. With critics' and Selasi's appraisals of Afropolitan culture as homeliness for the African immigrants, what needs to be emphasized is, as Neumann and Rippl contend, "whether Selasi's 'self-congratulatory' celebration of mobility and glamorous life-style can do justice to those who live in places not of their choosing and who experience mobility as a site of radical uncertainty rather than a liberating jet-setting experience" (2017: 164). Even if many are the Africans who willingly migrate to the colonizer's world, many others are those who migrate "colonial atrocities, racism and the brutal experience of ethnic conflict" (Neumann et al., 2017: 172).

Written by Selasi, *Ghana Must Go* is a novel published in 2013. As Neumann and Rippl write, "Born Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu" (2017: 159) in London, United Kingdom, Selasi is classified as a British-American woman writer with Nigerian and Ghanaian origins. In her novel, the Yoruba Fola who flees the Biafran war and the Ghanaian Kweku who flees the Ghanaian poverty get married and have their children in America. Several years after losing his job and returns alone in Ghana where he dies, the family reunites in Ghana for the father's funeral and feels unhomely. This story attests the migrants' troubles occasioned by their failure to assimilate differences in the cultures. It is such a context that gives rise to my interest in the following topic: "Rethinking Cultural

Differences in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*". To preclude any misunderstanding on this topic, it is of paramount importance to define culture.

If for some critics culture is a "tradition" (Ojaide, 2012: 9), "a product of a peoples' history" (Ngugi, 1993: 60), and even "whatever people do" (Ashcroft, 2004: 210); for others, "race is a social construction, not a biological datum" (Walker, 2001: 47). The stake in bringing the critics' different view is to consider in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* the Nigerian and Ghanaian characters' stories, traditions, knowledges and races as their cultures. Their failure to assimilate the differences that exist in these cultures sets them in social and psychic troubles.

If as Wallinger puts it in structuralist linguistics context with Sarup terms, "'The story is the content, or the chain of events. The story is the 'what' in a narrative, the discourse is the 'how.' The discourse is rather like a plot, how the reader becomes aware of what happened, the order of the appearance of the events'" (2018: 209); therefore, Selasi can be said to convey her story in a discourse of a failed cultural difference. The rhetoric of connecting the concepts of Nigerian, Ghanaian, transnational and Afropolitan cultures to the conflicts of the Sai family points to a meta-level of a failed cultural difference that highlights the troubles inherent in cultural contraries. Thus, how does Selasi represent the failure of cultural difference in *Ghana Must Go*? Put in details, what does tribalism bring to the different Nigerian communities? In which psychic state are the transnational Nigerians and Ghanaians set by a failed hybridity? Why does the interracial marriage of Olu and Ling set them in grievance? Through these questions, the study argues that in *Ghana Must Go* the characters' failure to assimilate cultural difference sets them in troubles.

To explore the different questions, the study uses Bhabha's theory of culture. Since the differences in cultures stand as cultural borders, Bhabha coins cultural difference to break these frontiers. The postcolonial theorist coins cultural difference as a cultural interaction that "emerges only at the significatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated …. *Such*

an 'assimilation of contraries' creates … cultural changes" (1994: 34, 38). Bhabha coins such a concept to combat cultural fixity established by colonial discourse as it can be found in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*. I have already given an insight into the power of Bhabha's concept of cultural difference in Dangarembga, Adichie and Darko's debut novels elsewhere in the following terms: "the female protagonists fight to assimilate what. Bhabha terms as 'cultural difference.' This concept of Bhabha refers to the colonized subject's knowledge of the colonizer's culture for a post-colonial social cohesion" (Brindou, 2022: 376). Cultural difference being a cultural politics which consists of assimilating cultural contraries, it is thus a powerful tool to the different questions in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*.

The work is structured in four sections. The first section deals with the holocaust of Nigerian tribalism. It highlights the failure of Nigerians to assimilate cultural contraries as the root cause of the Biafran war. The second section is about the melancholia of a failed hybrid family. It shows that the melancholia in the hybrid family of Kweku is occasioned by the family's failure to assimilate cultural contraries. The third section is concerned with the grievance of a lost interracial marriage. This section analyses the Nigerian Ghanaian Olu and the Asian American Ling's interracial marriage as a union in which the failure of cultural differences gives rise to grievance.

1. The Holocaust of Tribalism in Nigeria

In Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, Nigeria is a multiethnic community. There are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa to mention but few. Instead of making use of this plurality of ethnicities to enrich one another, they use it to wage war, thus the use of the term holocaust in the above title to refer to the Nigerian Biafran war portrayed by Selasi. Ricoeur coins holocaust to mean "mass atrocity … crimes of state committed by regimes" (2004: 323). Such mass atrocity and crimes of state reflect the Nigerian war of tribalism known as the Biafran war fictionalized by Selasi. The writer typifies the holocaust of the Biafran war in her novel as follows: "A truckload of soldiers, Hausas, high on cheap heroin and hatred, had killed them, setting fire to the mansion, piling rocks at the exits" (Selasi, 2013: 105). The hatred developed by the Hausa goes against the Igbo people. It

takes root in the different ethnic groups' failure to cohabitate peacefully in cultural pluralism.

The Igbo being mostly Christians living in the Southeastern part of Nigeria and the Hausa being mostly Muslim living in the Northern Nigeria, the different ethnic groups fail to appropriate what they have in differences. Their failure to assimilate cultural contraries gives birth to ethnic hatred that announces "*the beginning of the Nigerian civil war* … where the Hausas were targeting Igbos" (Selasi, 2013: 106). With the help of the Nigerian government, a truckload of Hausa soldiers kills Igbo people and makes many other victims.

In America, Fola is viewed by her classmates and professors as a "native of a generic War-Torn Nation" (Selasi, 2013: 107). Such an identity shows the holocaust dimension of the war and points at the destruction that the different tribes endured from their failure to assimilate cultural contraries. In this vein, Appiah contends that African identities are shaped by "conflict"; and "it is too late for Africans to escape" (1992: 72). Such a conflict is so visible in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. The civil war disrupts Fola's life. It forces her to be a refugee in Ghana as follows: "She'd fled at the start of the war" (Selasi, 2013: 197). The war is fostered by the different ethnic groups' failure to assimilate the differences they have in cultures. Wallinger attributes the Sai family's troubles to African tribes' failure to assimilate cultural contraries. She argues: "The terrible traumas that Fola and Kweku of the first generation and Taiwo and Kehinde of the second generation carry with them originate in Africa" (Wallinger, 2018: 214).

The Nigerian war occasions Fola's father's death in Kaduna and the housegirl's fright. From the onset, the narrator mentions the tragedy that the Nigerian civil war occasioned to Fola, her father and, the housegirl Mariama:

> The housegirl Mariama grabbed her forehead when she saw her. 'A fever, you have a fever, where's your father?' she cried.
>
> Fola shrugged, groggy. 'He went to Kaduna.'
>
> 'No!' cried Mariama, slumping promptly to the floor.

> … After two her father's partner at the law firm, Sena Wosornu, leaned frantically on the doorbell. Fola looked at Mariama. The housegirl was trembling, rocking, clutching her elbows and shaking her head, noiselessly mouthing some prayer (Selasi, 2013: 198–199).

Since the war is occasioned by the different tribes' failure to accept their cultural differences; therefore, it is the tribes' failure to assimilate cultural differences that sets Fola and the housegirl in fright. Traumatic fright, as Caruth contends, "is more than just 'a pathology; or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the history of a wound that cries out…in the attempt to tell…of a reality…that is not otherwise available" (1996: 4). The death of the father that Fola and the housegirl Mariama fear the most happens. Fola's father's death is announced to them by his friend Sena as follows: "'Fola,' he said. 'I have something to tell you.' … 'Your father–' (Selasi, 2013: 199).

Fola's father's death is part of the "slaughtered civilians, starving children" (2013: 201-202) that the Nigerian war has occasioned. They endlessly live this trauma as Caruth contends: "The survival of trauma is not the fortunate passage beyond a violent event … but rather the endless inherent necessity of repletion, which ultimately may lead to destruction" (1996: 62-63).

Like most of the victims made by the war, Fola's father is lost forever. This occasions Fola's flight and refuge in Ghana. Sena, the friend of her father, takes her to his parents in Ghana on the recommendation of her father:

> *If anything ever happens, take the baby to Ghana. Don't leave her in Nigeria*, her father had said. She packed a gold *aso–oke*, a birthday gift, records, his thick kente blanket and bell-bottom jeans. She didn't pack photo or dresses or teddy bears. The details came later. They left before dawn.
> How at this airport, much smaller, as crowded, they landed, mid-summer, July 1966, all the colors so different from Lagos, more yellows, the smell like the smell of a broken clay pot. A man with an Afro gone gray came to greet them, all busy white bear, laughing eyes, wings of wrinkles. 'You

> must be Fola!' He shook her hand. She shook her head. She didn't know who she must be anymore. 'People called me 'Reverend.' Reverend Mawuli Wosornu. Sena's father,' he said, though he looked far too young (Selasi, 2013: 199-200).

As Fola is taken to Ghana by Wosornu, she notices contraries between her Yoruba culture and the cultures in Ghana. She notices differences in colours preference and in hairstyle. This shows that differences exist among cultures. Only, it is when the different communities fail to learn from their differences that they rise into conflicts. A similar critic is levelled by Hanna Wallinger: "Fola is the prototypical exiled and displaced person. She suffers the traumatic murder of her father in the Nigerian war in 1966 and is sent to Accra, Ghana, by her father's partner at the law firm" (2018: 211).

As the father dies from the war in Kaduna, Femi, his mistress, Bimbo's son who is four years Fola's Junior, fails to accept Fola. Though Fola is Femi's "*Aburo*" (Selasi, 2013: 236), he refuses any brotherly collaboration with her. The narrator informs: "Femi alleged that he thought she had died with their father that night in the fire in Kaduna; otherwise, he claimed, he would never have excluded her entirely from their father's inheritance. Alas. Too late now to redistribute the monies" (Selasi, 2013: 236-237). Having the same biological father, Femi is compelled to show brotherly solidarity to Fola, but he fails to do so. He stands on cultural differences to reject Fola. Though Femi and Fola's father is Yoruba, Femi comes from a mother different from Fola. His mother is "Bimbo, a tall, hard, and wiry woman who in another life may well have modelled, not whored" (Selasi, 2013: 236). Fola's mother is "Igbo, … and grandmother Scottish" (Selasi, 2013: 106). In Addition to that, Fola's mother is dead. This distinction between Fola and Femi accounts for Femi's refusal to show familial solidarity to Fola. Instead of holding a humanist universalism, Femi holds tribalistic division. This sets Fola in humiliation in such a way that she "vowed never again to give Femi the pleasure of offering help" (Selasi, 2013: 237).

Fola takes further abuse from Femi. Though she vows never again to give Femi the pleasure of offering help to frustrate her, she breaks this vow for her twins as mentioned:

> This time her brother refused to send cash but proposed a small trade as an alternative solution: If Fola would send her *ibeji* to him, he would pay all their school fees plus college tuition. At some point he'd wed the only daughter of a general turned oil entrepreneur; he was tricked, she was barren. Having *ibeji* in the household might 'cure' this wife Niké, he explained, as *ibeji* were magic. A deal. Fola sent the twins to Nigeria in August and forty weeks later Sena sent them back home.
> From what she can gather, her twisted half-brother had hosted some bacchanal that Sena attended (the details, to do with drugs, prostitutes, orgy (Selasi, 2013: 237).

Femi does not take into account the familial relation in order to bring his solidarity to Fola. He rather exploits her twins in drugs, prostitution and orgy. It is because Femi fails to consider Fola as his sister that he uses her twins in drug, prostitution and orgy.

The Biafran war does not affect only the Nigerians. It also affects the Ghanaians. The Nigerian federal government uses Ghanaian soldiers for the war and deports them in the misery after the war. From the narrative perspective, the reader discovers:

> Sena had his own tragic tale to unburden: of expulsion from Lagos under 'Ghana Must Go,' winter 1983, with the Nigerian government's summarily deporting two million Ghanaians; of return to East Cantonments, impecunious and affronted, to build up a practice from scratch in Accra (Selasi, 2013: 237).

Millions of Ghanaian soldiers are used for the Biafran war then deported to the East Cantonments in Ghana through the expulsion coined as "Ghana Must Go." The presence of Ghana in "Ghana Must Go" shows the clear-net rejection of the soldiers on the basis of their difference in Nation. The rejection of the others on the basis of their differences that sets Nigeria in tribalistic war is what the federal government is still

applying to the Ghanaian soldiers. Though it is in 2013 that Selasi develops the concept, three years later Mbue Imbolo retakes in *Behold the Dreamers* the concept of "Ghana Must Go" (Mbue, 2016: 355) to denounce the crisis that the failure to assimilate cultural contraries occasions.

2. The Melancholia of a Failed Hybrid Family

Doctor, Kahn and Adamec give an insight into melancholia that fits the psychic conflicts of the hybrid characters in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. They defend melancholia as follows:

> Melancholia is a term used throughout history to denote a severe form of depression. The word derives from the Greek prefix melas, meaning black. In a state of melancholia, the individual feels loss of interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities, has low self-esteem, and is preoccupied with self-reproaches and regrets (2008: 340).

Though the Sai family is hybrid, the father Kweku is Ghanaian and the mother Folasadé Somaryina Savage is of mixed race and culture, her mother is "Igbo, and her father is Yoruba and grandmother Scottish" (Selasi, 2013; 106), the members of the family fail to negotiate the different cultures. They rather conflict with the differences that exist in the cultures. As Taiwo announces the death of their father in Ghana to her sister Sadie, the latter feels indifferent. The narrator mentions: "Did she feel it? The loss of her father, the death of a man she had almost not known, who was gone before she was in grade school, a stranger? How could she have? What could she claim to have lost?" (Selasi, 2013: 148) Sadie's feeling of indifference is due to the fact that though being born from a Ga father, she is brought up overseas then left there by her father to return to Ghana when she is still a child. The absence of the father occasions the absence of his Ga culture in Sadie's life. This cultural absence brings her to fail being concerned with her father's funeral. Sadie is, to use Roy Osamu Kamada's terms, in "a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activities" (2010: 140).

Instead of crying for the death of her father, Sadie cries for missing Fola as this passage reveals: "*Now* comes the sadness, an upswell from silence. She opens her eyes and the sorrow pours out, not the one she was bidding at the loss of her father but longing for Fola. She misses her mother" (Selasi, 2013: 153). It is the lack of the father's Ga tradition in the life of Sadie that causes her failure to feel any pain from his death. If only Sadie learnt her father's tradition, she would have felt a pain about his loss instead of longing for her mother. When crying for missing her mother, Sadie expresses her nostalgia. Jonathan Boulter states: "Nostalgia is a mode of being that places the subject in continual relation to the past" (2011: 118). Sadie's nostalgia for her mother reveals her crying for missing Western world. Her mother is a symbol of the Western world since she has been living with her in America.

Sadie's development of nostalgia for her mother who precipitates them in Ghana for the funeral does not mean that she has knowledge in her father's Ga tradition. She rather has knowledge of the Western world that her father also carries. Kweku is a product of Ga tradition. He is also a surgeon. He is thus a product of several cultural worlds. Birgit Neumann and Gabriele Rippl so convincingly demonstrate such a hybridization in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*: "The opening up of transcultural spaces, making the readers see the entanglement of cultures from different parts of the world can be seen in Selasi's decision to give the Sai family a hybrid genealogy, encompassing African as well as European roots" (2017: 172). Though Sadie's father is Ga and Western, she assimilates only Western culture, a hybridization that sets her in an inhibition. Anne Anlin Cheng is rich in giving detail about the power of cultural assimilation: "Assimilation functions as a protection against the trauma of incommensurability by restaging the drama of incommensurability" (2001: 83). Sadie assimilates only Western culture. She has no knowledge in her father's Ga tradition.

In the following passage, Sadie seems to be integrated in her father's Ga tradition. But this is so much superficial. Referring to Sadie, the narrator voices: "She'd wrapped herself up in the kente, delighted, and marched to the kitchen, 'I'm a Yoruba queeeen!'" (Selasi, 2013: 153) Though Sadie wraps herself in the kente of the Ga community, she does not claim the

Ga identity. She rather claims to be a Yoruba queen. Even the Yoruba identity that she claims is too much superficial. Since she was born and grew up in America from her mother who was made refugee in Ghana then flee to America for her studies, Sadie therefore knows few or nothing about the Yoruba culture.

The Sai family so much fails to assimilate cultural contraries that when the mother Fola calls for Christmas gathering, the children fail to comply. The narrative perspective mentions Sadie's alienation: "She spent every other Christmas in St. Bath's with the Negropontes … with the twins never home, Olu always with Ling" (Selasi, 2013: 155). Since Sadie spends her every Christmas not with her mother Fola but with the American Negropontes; "Sadie faltered. *What now?*" (Selasi, 2013: 155) when "now, for whatever reason, her mother was insistent that Sadie be in Boston two years in a row and that *all* of them come, Olu, Taiwo, and Kehinde, at least for the event, Christmas day" (Selasi, 2013: 155). Since Fola was born and grew up in Yoruba culture before refuging in Ghana, she embodies some African traditional values of living in community that she wants to inculcate in her children. But the children's alienation to the American culture brings them to fail to seize this opportunity. Instead of praising her mother effort to unite the family, Sadie rather falters. In this context of trauma, Jonathan Boulter argues: "Trauma is always a material cause, always has a material cause, but the economy of trauma, its work, takes places at the level of the mental" (2011: 62).

Sadie does not consider Fola as a mother. When Fola signs "your mother" at the end of her group e-mail that she sends to her children to gather for Christmas celebration, Sadie refuses to attribute such an identity to Fola. This lies in the following passage: "'My darling, I would like us to be together this Christmas, all of us. Please let me know. Love, your mother'" (Selasi, 2013: 156). For Sadie, Fola does not bear the features that a mother must embody. She has the following perception of a mother that she does not feel that her biological mother embodies:

> Sibby, yes: red-faced and sobbing and seething at the bottom of stairs with the shaking of fists, 'I am you *mo–ther*, young *la–dy*,' each syllable separated, You'll do as I say!' Fola

> doesn't sob or seethe. She never raises her voice at them. Whenever one of them shouts at her she simply tips her head and waits. It's not exactly patience, nor dismissal, something in between, and interest in the shouter's plight, and empathy, with distance (Selasi, 2013: 156).

The authoritative mother that Sadie wants her mother to be is hidden in Fola. Fola cares about her children; that is why she wants to re-approach them to her by inviting them to Christmas celebration. Since Sadie does not spend time with Fola, she does not feel that she bears such a mother-woman trait. This brings Wallinger to assert: "Thematically, the novel presents a portrait of a family devastated by separations and forced to search for their real home" (2018: 210). Sadie shows her mother that they are not a family: "'I want to spend Christmas with a family.' Fola smiled. 'You have a family of your own.' 'We're not a family,' mumbled Sadie" (Selasi, 2013: 156). Sadie points at the failure of the members of Sai family to assimilate cultural differences when she voices to her mother that they are not a family.

While the mother is expecting to celebrate Christmas with the children at home, Sadie is willing to join the Negropontes for Christmas. The differences rather than commonalities that exist among the Sai family bring Sadie to feel being a stranger at home. Selasi typifies:

> How light things became and how lost she's become, how alone they all are, how apart, how diffuse. What she couldn't tell Fola is why she hates Christmas, why she longs to disappear for that week in St. Barth's: so as not to feel the distance, the heartbreaking difference, between what they've become and what a Family should be …. Her greatest fear realized: she doesn't belong. But isn't meant to (2013: 158).

The loneliness and loss express how each member of the family fails to know better the other in order to live as a family. It is difficult in this vein to admit that Selasi's Afropolitan concept brings about the appraisal of cultural hybridity. Neumann and Rippl rightfully invite Taiye Selasi's critics to see the limit of Selasi's concept of Afropolitanism in terms of being an appraisal of cultural hybridity in the following terms:

> While Selasi's debut novel with its many locales depicts specific locations as transcultural, her very positive notion of 'Afropolitanism' as developed in 'Bye-Bye Barbar' seems to have come under scrutiny: though all of the Sai children are young cosmopolitan achievers, they appear to suffer from feelings of displacement and non-belonging. Their diasporic condition prevents them from enjoying middle-class lives, including the financial security and mobility that it allows for (2017: 173).

Olu's appropriation of American culture sets him in cultural melancholia. All the decade spent in America, Olu lives with his wife Ling without being connected neither to his mother's Yoruba community in Nigeria nor to his father's Ga community in Ghana. This brings him to fail to know what a family is when he has to go to Ghana for the burial of his father. Olu voices to Ling, his Asian wife: "'I don't *want* to be a family … I don't believe in family. I didn't want a family. I wanted us to be something better than that'" (Selasi, 2013: 182–183). In this regard, the Afropolitans cannot be said to "live in the metropolitan capitals of the world, 'achieving things 'people' in the grand sense only dreamed of'" (Balakrishnan, 2017: 6). The members of the Sai family fail to integrate their traditions in their cosmopolitan cultures.

Though Balakrishnan concludes that with Afropolitanism, "instead of treating pluralism as a threat to state stability, scholars instead presented Africa's multiracial societies as harbingers of a futuristic post-racial order" (2017: 8), this is not the case with the Sai family. Though Olu belongs to multiple communities, born of Ga father and a Yoruba mother and bred in America, his in-between identity sets him in cultural loss. He is in Ga community during the burial of his father but stands as an American. Olu's identity in this respect reveals that an Afropolitan culture is not totally emancipatory. It is still conflictual like pan-African and Afrocentric cultures. It is, as Sarah Balakrishnan puts it, "a race-based epistemology, which undergirded the concepts of Pan-Africanism, Afrocentrism and négritude" (2017: 8).

As the father dies and Fola and her four children plus Ling arrive in Ghana; Kehinde expresses a cultural loss. As Fola receives them at the

airport to lead them home, she takes Olu, Sadie and Ling in her personal Mercedes and Kehinde and his twin sister Taiwo take cab. In the cab, the following conversation occurs between Kehinde and the driver:

> 'Our father's from here …
> 'Oh yeah? Where in Ghana?' The driver is smirking.
> 'I don't know where,' says Kehinde, now closing his eyes.
> 'You don't know where he's from, your own father,' says the driver.
> He sucks his teeth, glancing at Taiwo, still mute. 'While don't you ask him?'
> As it finally hits him, 'He died,' Kehinde answers (Selasi, 2013: 210).

Since Kehinde is bred in America and then abandoned by his father during fifteen years for Ghana where he dies, he is a stranger to his own community. He does not know from which Ghanaian family his father originates. As the driver informs him that there are several communities in Ghana and wants to know from which community his father comes, Kehinde answers that he does not know.

Though the mother Fola drives her children to their father's house in Ghana from the airport, this paternal house remains unhomely to them. The children express this unhomeliness in the following passage:

> Half of the bodies moving busily, lugging suitcases, half of the bodies looking awkward, out of place, trying to help, to be of use but not to get in the way of the bodies who know where to go, what to do. With the lightly frantic energy of awkward introductions, with no one quite knowing what to say or to whom, smiling at no one, shifting position, making lax observation (Selasi, 2013: 211).

The children are at traumatic loss because of their absence in the Ga culture. They see the Ga community different from the American society to which they get used. None of the members of the family knows the Ga tradition. This cultural loss is the consequence of the difference in culture between their parents' traditions and the Western culture acquired from Western countries. The family fails to learn what is unknown to them from their father's Ga tradition.

During the funeral, as one of the girl dancers makes use of the traditional gesture to invite Sadie, Sadie mistakes this traditional code for begging for money. The narrative perspective mentions:

> Sadie, who is staring, mouth open, breath suspended, doesn't at first process what the gesture implies. The drummers resume drumming, the girl resumes whirling, the crowd resumes clapping, then crack! She stops again. A hand out to Sadie.
> Sadie turns to Fola. 'I-i-is she asking for money?
> 'She is asking you to dance.'
> '*Bra, bra, bra,*' says the girl, palms turned upward. 'Please *sees-tah*, come. Come and dance, please, I beg.' She takes Sadie's hand, takes a little step back, making Sadie lean forward, then rise off the bench. The assembled crowd claps with delight at this process (Selasi, 2013: 268–269).

Sadie's misunderstanding of the gesture of the little girl expresses her failure to appropriate her father's Ga tradition. This attitude of Sadie shows non-acquaintance of the Sai family with Ga tradition in Ghana. Since the cultural code is alien to Sadie, it raises inner conflict in her. The omniscient narrator informs readers:

> Sadie flushes red, shakes her head, 'No, I can't.' She is seconds from weeping; she feels the thing building, the knot in her stomach, the accumulating bile. She takes a step back, but the girl pulls her forward, and she hasn't the heart to use force to break free. Her siblings are watching with what looks like a mixture of worry and encouragement, their eyes and smiles wide, as if watching a baby trying to learn how to walk, ready to spring to their feet when she falls (Selasi, 2013: 269).

The code of the Ga dance used by the little girl is unknown to Sadie that is why she mistakes the invitation for begging for money. Sadie's failure to understand the traditional Ga dance shows her clear-cut alienation from the Ga tradition in their father's traditional village Kokrobité. Sadi's failure to assimilate the cultural contrary sets her in trouble. As the girl holds her hand for dancing, she flushes red and feels knot in her stomach. Her cultural loss even sets all her siblings in panic. All the members of

the family worry and feel getting up to save her from Ga cultural practice. Sadie and her sibling in this cultural loss are in grievance.

The long stay of the family in America which makes them absent from Ghana causes their ignorance of cremating in Ghana. This unfolds in the conversation between Fola and Benson who is the friend of the family: "'Shall we go choose the coffin?' asks Benson. 'Can we cremate? Do they cremate in Ghana?' asks Fola. 'Of course.' Benson looks stunned. 'There's a place near my clinic'" (Selasi, 2013: 300–301). The Yoruba mother that Fola is stays long absent from her husband Kweku's Ga community due to her migration to America. That is why she is ignorant about the fact that people cremate in Ghana. Her ignorance sets Benson in shock. He is stunned by her ignorance about the tradition in her husband's Ga community.

3. Grievance of a Lost Interracial Marriage

Anne Anlin Cheng argues that grievance occurs "from suffering injury to speaking out against that injury" (2001: 3). In *Ghana Must Go*, the Sai family suffers from psychic injury to expressing this mental pain. Olu meets with, in the Asian American Cultural Center Open House at Yale, Ling Wei and marries her. But he finds it difficult to announce the death of his father to Ling:

> *How* is the shame Olu holds in his stomach, bent over, while Ling in her sleep turns away. *How* can he wake her up this woman and tell her the father he's told of died this kind of death? *How*, when he's promised for years fourteen years now, that one day he'll take her to meet him at last and she'll love him, he knows it, a doctor like they are, a mind such as they have, for everything else. Ling, whom he's loved since they touched pouring punch at the Asian American Cultural Center Open House at Yale (Selasi, 2013: 114).

Olu grieves about how to announce the death of his father Kweku to his Asian wife Ling. This grievance is occasioned by Olu's lack of knowledge in his African tradition and in Ling's Asian culture. Olu's African identity is already hybrid. He is born from a Yoruba mother and

Ga father. Mbembe gives credence to the plurality of African cultures. This is revealed by Balakrishnan as follows:

> This use of the term, meaning a pluralism of African cultures in one geographical space, was later expanded by theorist Achille Mbembe in a 2007 essay 'Afropolitanism' wherein he described Afropolitanism as 'the presence of the elsewhere in the here', the 'interweaving of worlds' caused by the movement of Black and non-Black people in, out and throughout Africa (2017: 1-2).

Olu being of a Yoruba mother from Nigeria and Ga father from Ghana, and living in America, can be said to be Afropolitan. But this Afropolitan identity does not help him to be homely in any location. Olu could have different ways to announce the death of his father to Ling if only he learnt the Yoruba and Ga traditions, and the American and Asian cultures.

Since Olu is married to Ling, they become a family. This union is sufficient for Olu to know that he should have been acquainted with Ling's tradition to feel homely with her. But Olu does not do so. He is a stranger to the cultural traditions of his father, mother and wife. Olu's failure to learn about the different cultures sets him in grievance. He grieves about how to proceed to announce his father's death to Ling. Olu in this line of reflection fails his interracial marriage. He fails to integrate himself in the tradition of his wife and to make his wife be integrated in his tradition.

In the interracial marriage of Olu and Ling, there is problem of communication code that brings about grievance. This occurs between Olu and Ling's father Dr. Wei. As Olu uses the metaphor of hand to tell Dr. Wei that he would like to ask Ling for marriage, there has been problem of comprehension: "'For my 'daughter's hand in marriage,' Dr. Wei said bemusedly. 'Which one?' 'Of your daughters?' Olu frowned. 'Of her hands…'" (Selasi, 2013: 117). If only Olu took time to bring Ling to teach him her Asian tradition, he would have known the way to proceed to ask for a woman in marriage. It is because Olu knows nothing about Asian traditional way of asking for marriage and Ling's father also

knows nothing about the method employed by Olu that the message is misunderstood. Dr. Wei takes the literal meaning of Olu's use of the hand. Though Olu uses the hand as a metaphor of asking Ling for marriage, Dr. Wei does not see it in this way.

Olu and Ling's marriage gives rise to another grievance. Verbal conflict occurs between Olu and Dr. Wei on the account of Olu and Ling's marriage. Dr. Wei voices to Olu: "How can you value another man's daughter, or son, when you don't even value your own?" (Selasi, 2013: 120) Here is a problem of culture. For Dr. Wei, Asian people value their family while African people do not value their wives and children, and do not have moral value. For that reason, he does not see why he is going to give his blessing for Kweku's marriage with his daughter. Since Olu is in conflict with his own family, it is this conflictual image that he presents to Ling's parents. Standing on this image, Dr. Wei judges Africans to fail to value their family. Olu does not succeed in valuing his family in order to bring Ling's parents to be willing to let him be integrated to their family and also Ling be integrated in Olu's family.

After fifteen years of living in couple, Ling Wei presents Olu to Taiwo as a husband who does not love her. This reveals in Ghana when Ling goes with Olu and his family at the death of their father Kweku. From the narrative perspective, the reader is informed:

> Ling doesn't notice, her back turned to Taiwo, unfolding small clothes at the foot of the bed. 'I don't think your brother likes me.' She laughs, after a moment.
> 'Olu's just like that,' Taiwo mumbles. But smiles. Does this mean that Olu has abandoned the pretence of being in love with his college best friend? Fair enough, only fools rush, but this is excessive: some fifteen years in and no wedding in sight. Her brother never kisses the woman in public nor touch her unthinkingly when putting on coats, all but left her there standing in the driveway on arrival; displays nothing of the clinging that passion begets (Selasi, 2013: 217).

Cultural conflict occurs between Olu and Ling in the above passage. Olu's attitude reveals African culture. In the tradition of African community, love making is intimate and must be made in private place

such as the marital room. Next to that, Olu's attitude of expending fifteen years without wedding marriage does not mean that he does not love Ling Wei. The narrator well reveals Olu's love for Ling as follows: "He can't bear to lose her" (Selasi, 2013: 305). Only, it is a delay because they get married after fifteen years of living together as the following passage illustrates: "Then they got married on a whim in Las Vegas" (Selasi, 2013: 304). The delay is explained by the fact that ring marriage counts nothing to African tradition.

Parents live most of their marital lives without organizing ring marriage like what is known in Western civilization as civil wedding. Even when some get this civil wedding, it is not this marriage that counts for the traditional community. It is the dowry that is valued by the family members of the two couples. That is why a woman and a man can spend several years living together without civil wedding but the African community considers them as wife and husband. This African tradition that Olu's marital attitude reflects on is in contracts with the European marriage that Ling dreams for. If only Olu and Ling learn to negotiate their different cultures, Ling would have understood that Olu's attitude does not mean a lack of love for her. It is because Ling is used to Western culture in which love between two people is to be marked by civil wedding and by kiss everywhere and anytime. Ling stands on Western context of love to blame Olu to fail loving her. The binary opposition exists between Ling and Olu because both of them fail to learn the contraries that exist in their different cultures.

Conclusion

The exploration of Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* through the lens of postcolonial theory has helped reveal that the Nigerians and Ghanaians' failure to assimilate cultural difference sets them in both physical and psychic troubles. This has been achieved through the holocaust of tribalistic war, the melancholia of a failed hybrid Family, and the grievance of a lost interracial marriage. The mass killing, the refugees and the starvation have been revealed as Selasi's representation of the holocaust of tribalistic war. The portrayal of the Sai family's trouble is the novelist clear-cut representation of melancholia of a failed hybrid

family. As for grievance occasioned by a lost interracial marriage, it is Olu and Ling's marriage that has been analysed.

This research has found that *Ghana Must Go* is the denunciation of the social and psychic troubles occasioned by Afropolitans' failure to assimilate cultural difference. Afropolitan is not a homely identity par excellence as Selasi and her advocate attempt to make believe. Even if the Afropolitan individual can be viewed as the African in the world, this individual still carries Western culture in a dominant position while carrying the different African traditions in the margin, a bias hybridity that sinks him/ her in trauma.

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