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## ***Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation***

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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 exclusivement 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.

### **Références**

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

plus, consultez ces normes sur Internet.

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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.

**Les citations courtes :** les citations d'un (1) à quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme courtes ; elles sont mises entre guillemets et intégrées au texte de l'auteur.

### **Résumé :**

- ✓ Pour Pewissi (2017), le Womanisme transcende 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 numérotter 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 largeur 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.



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## **LITTERATURE**

# **Identity Issue in Postcolonial Context: A Comparative Study of Buchi Emecheta's *The New Tribe* and Marita Golden's *Don't Play in the Sun***

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## **Abstract:**

This study explores the concept of identity against the African, British and the African-American contexts. It also examines the functions identity plays in time and space. The use of Systemic Functional Linguistics helps to show how language affects interpersonal relations and brings social change. The study has found that the constant changes in characters' interpersonal relationships are the result of socio-cultural, political, geographical and ideological dynamics.

**Keywords:** identity, culture, referentiality, race, space, exclusion, postcoloniality.

## **Résumé :**

Cette étude explore le concept d'identité en se basant sur les contextes africain, britannique et afro-américain. Elle vise à déceler les fonctions que joue l'identité dans le temps et dans l'espace. Dans le cadre de cette analyse, nous faisons appel à la théorie systémique fonctionnelle qui permet de voir au-delà des contextes les changements perpétuels. L'étude a trouvé que les changements identitaires procèdent aussi bien de la culture, de la politique que de l'espace géographique et idéologique.

**Mots-clés:** identité, culture, référentialité, race, espace, exclusion, postcolonialité.

## **Introduction**

Identity is one of the most complex and timeless concepts ever discussed in literature. The complex nature of the concept resides in the constant changes in the definition of the identity of a human being making it a fluid reality. From the precolonial times up to this postcolonial era; from

Said (1978), Spivak (1988), Bhabha (1994), Malouf (1998), Muchielli (2007) and many other critics to the present, questions about personal and collective identities, whether addressed using the very concept or not, beguile various individuals and social organizations at large. In this paper, I intend to focus my reflection essentially on *The New Tribe* and *Don't play in the Sun*, two pieces of writings produced respectively by the Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta and the African-American novelist Marita Golden. The two narratives call into question the identity issue in a postcolonial context. In *The New Tribe* (2000), Emecheta gives an account of Chester, the protagonist, psychologically destabilized in St. Simon setting, because he seems to be the only black child living in a white community. The enforced dreams by his adoptive mother, Ginny, and the gossip on his color worsen his race-consciousness, and cause, his departure from the community in search for his kinship. Golden's memoir, *Don't Play in the Sun* (2004), mirrors interracial and interracial color complexes with expressions of dissatisfaction about identity which come into different shapes. Interpersonal relations of the participants and the perception of self and others indicate a yearning for a new identity.

The predicaments about characters' personal and collective identity open doors to question the essence identity, its relevance, and the functions it plays in time and space basing on the fictional spaces of the authors. This study makes use of Systemic Functional Linguistics by emphasizing the mood of the text, modality functions, and the sentiments of characters to point out different ways in which identity instigates social cohesion. The work is organized around socio-historical landmarks of identity and the subaltern mind, relevance of identity in context and the functions that identity plays in the personal collective life experience.

## **1. Socio-Historical Landmarks of Identity in the Narrative Contexts**

It is true Emecheta's *The New Tribe* and Golden's *Don't Play in the Sun* have been respectively published in 2000 and 2004, however, the core values and socio-critical orientations ponder on early and mid-twentieth century identity currents. Interpersonal relations in each corpus text

indicate identity predicaments that sharply contrast from one narrative setting to another. The literary articulations of Emecheta's text seal racial repudiations the novelist faces when she moves to London for her studies. Creative writing which ranges from autobiographies to recreated societies reveals the author's assessment of his/her societies. As such, the author's life experience consciously or unconsciously transpires in his/her writings through the social proceedings and relationship that characterize the society in prospects.

Language is the storehouse of human experience past and present. Language allows humans to relate to their environment and organize it. In that respect, literature does not abstract itself from linguistic analysis of human life experience in time and space as a way to social adaptation to contextual realities. Indeed, the concept of identity is roughly defined as who somebody is or the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others (Deuter et al. eds, 2015: 779). This suggests that the concept is best at work when there is contact with somebody else or other people. Migration and interracial marriages cause changes of family ties and relationships, as illustrated by this passage:

As far as Ginny was concerned, Nigeria was one of those dreadful African countries where soldiers kept overthrowing the democratic government, and chaos, poverty and violence reigned [...]. Slowly and painstakingly, she made Chester a storybook based on African folktale she had read [...]. On the cover, she painted green banana trees, and tall, graceful palms, surrounding a mud-walled compound. Inside the compound she painted her own vision of an African village scene (Emecheta, 2000: 8).

The excerpt indicates that the village is something out of Ginny's imagination. It is this imagination that she thinks matches Chester's identity. In this story, the adoptive mother is the starting point of Chester's social unrest. In Golden's narrative, the unrest of the protagonist begins with the mother as can be seen:

My maternal grandmother, Molly Reid, was a stern, no-nonsense who with her part-time-preacher husband raised my mother and three sons in Greensboro, North Carolina. The colorist attitudes that my mother brought north with her surely were incubated in her childhood home and supported by the tightly knit segregated community in which he was raised (Golden, 2004: 40).

Whether from the first or the second excerpt, the figure “grandmother” is the incubator of values that call for memorable past in a postcolonial context. It spots cues of hybridity devoid of epistemic questions on the outcomes given the new settings that bring new values. In the second excerpt, the attitude of Molly Reid is a cathartic response to the devastating consequences of the southern racist and colorist system. Misplaced optimism and irresponsible ambitions are the very course of the fiasco within the oppressed races. Grandmothers, as can be deduced from the narrative contexts, have failed in contextualizing and matching the needs of the day and time. One can say that Emecheta and Golden invite their readers to consider both time and context of situation before deciding which way to go.

The quest for identity raises questions of forwardness and backwardness. Identity, while under constant changes, appeals to reasoned choices that allow the individual on the journey he/she embarks on. With a critical outlook at the concept, Karim agrees with Verma that the concept of identity connotes “routes” or “roots”; i.e. the choice that is predicated on roots leads to the past whereas routes is perceived as more progressive, leading to connections with others (Karim, 2008: 19). Within the context of migration as they explain, one can give them much credit. The binary opposing sets that explain identity in the double-edged sense apply to the respective corpus texts. Emecheta’s protagonist is trying by all means to trace back to his roots. His attempt nearly yields a fortuitous death did Esther not go to look for him in the land he naively considers his. Chester’s hazardous journey to Africa crowned by his deadly disease can be considered as Emecheta’s disapproval of people trying, by all means, to look for their roots instead of their routes.

Against Golden's narrative context, if routes are still valid, this does not give a hint to the reader to ban his/her roots, given the paradigmatic moves imposed by the geographical setting. As can be deciphered from the text, oppressed characters and more specifically female ones, tend to look for their routes by erasing their roots:

But Whites had created another ongoing, invasive, and seductive and powerful conversation about beauty and color through movies and television and magazines and books and the collective imagination. And the language of that conversation was not only an echo of the self-hating dialogue among Blacks about skin color but also its progenitor (Golden, 2004: 9).

In sentence one from the excerpt, the lexical verb "created" translates the action performed by "Whites," the noun phrase in the sentence. The whole excerpt indicates that the whites have successfully imposed the standards of identity which have efficiently impacted and shaped the identity of non-Whites. Most of these end up running from their roots to their routes; i.e. they try to pervasively erase their African or Asian roots.

Contrary to characters that run for their routes in Golden's text, Chester, in Emecheta's novel, runs for his roots. Chester has been manipulated by the masses to the extent that he decides to go for his roots because of his skin color misfit. Chester's setting does not admit his identity. His skin color is the root. He is haunted by his past. His 'setting' pushes him to go for his root and he unprecedentedly fails in his attempt to trace his roots. He has to find his way in the environment that rejects him thanks to the consistent help from Esther. From a Systemic Functional Linguistic perspective, the discursive practices that reproduce dominance and unequal relations of power the racial order" need to be expelled from human society in this twenty-first century which fosters hybridity and value-oriented choices (Tileaga, 2006: 480).

In the traditional African context, societies define identity through cultural values and emphasis on character building. However, the impacts of time on the space as well as Africa's encounter with other societies generate a turn up in the definition of identity which rather incorporates

material, financial, geographical features. These socio-historical factors discussed by some pioneers and perceived under other angles help better understand the processes that have led to the current state whether the issue is regarded with interpersonal, intracultural lenses, or perceived worldwide. Gikandi (2013/2007: 55), one of the prominent African critics of colonial issues, reasserts that “For almost four centuries Africans had endured traumas induced by the foreign encounter.” This colonial experience has created a psychological landmark of inferiority in the ‘subaltern’; a landmark that is willingly nurtured by the hegemonic discourses of oriental powers and accordingly translated into the habits of the descendants. Basing on his skin color, Chester is referred to as devil. He objects to this: “Mother, I don’t want to be king any longer. The others call me king of the devils,” Emecheta (2000: 22). The novelist reveals that being the only black child in the narrative setting in vogue, Chester harvests color-prejudices. In fact, if his schoolmates call him ‘king of the devils’ this is surely an inheritance from their parents. This form of identity prejudice manifests in the language of the environment. The call of Nubukpo (1995: 65) that human beings should sit and humanize is an invitation that transcends gender, class and racial borders. His call for the dignity of individual human beings in their varieties across barriers seeks a holistic approach to life.

With reference to Said’s 1978 book which demystifies the canonization of hegemonic thinking and acting, it is obvious that these landmarks of color difference and color complexes are made up and can be broken to give race-relations a human face:

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments, it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analyzed. All these attributes of authority apply to Orientalism (Said, 1978: 19-20).



In this stance, Said exhibits the strategies that are used to canonize the authority basing on will. He admits that authority is man-made. This authority is understandable in Emecheta's narrative through the disdain of Chester based on his Color skin and in Golden's memoir's through the racial discrepancies.

## **2. Relevance of Identity in the African and the African American Narrative Contexts**

Halliday (1985/1994) views Systemic Functional Linguistics as a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning. This perception of the metafunction of language suggests that every utterance has a variety of meanings depending on the orientations and choices of the participants. The assessment of Abraham Lincoln's January 1, 1863 emancipation proclamation speech, for instance, unveils not only the theoretical emancipation of the colored, but the vicissitudes of the speech which help to understand the self-disdain of the characters in Golden's text according to the degree of blackness. The ideational metafunction in Golden's text reveals that the social status of characters is measured by their color and it is only this color which determines the identity of the participants in the discourse. Both the separation and inequality ideas that stem from the emancipation proclamation better help understand the quarantine processes engineered to maintain the domination of the white race over others.

There are constant changes and ideological mutations from within each social environment based on how identity can help an individual or a people to meet the requirements of the space and time of the narrative contexts. Emecheta's novel unveils the psychological trauma of the protagonist disillusioned about his identity. Chester grows up in a white setting, and worse, his foster parents are white. Within this context, there is no doubt that Chester will have to struggle to discover the identity and the roots of his biological parents. Contrary to the case presented in Emecheta's text, Systemic Functional Linguistics help to realize that characters in the corpus text of Golden are facing challenges of color complex whose origins are hard to tell. While average writings center on

black-white relationships in the American geographical space, Golden's insists on the internal crises that bring tragedies to all the colored folk.

Whereas in the first kingdom Chester has come face to face with the values that shape most African kingdoms in the past, the second kingdom he comes across is slowly undergoing changes that makes it lose Africa's identity. In the light of Gyekye's writings about African values, the reader discovers that Africa's image is being altered in the second kingdom. In fact, the king, in addition to his corrupt attitude tries to hijack Chester and his driver when he realizes Chester is coming from abroad and that he might be probably carrying bags of money. Of course, it is commonly believed in the fictive setting of Emecheta that most of the people who come from abroad are wealthy, and Chester would not be an exception to the rule.

Even taken separately, the writings of Africans and African Americans about postcolonial issues have many common backgrounds and junctures. Colonization makes postcoloniality more outstanding for discussion from fiction to criticism. From the African background, *The New Tribe* poses a problem of racial identity which takes its roots from the encounter of the black and white races even if Emecheta's narrative does not stress this aspect. In the community Chester is brought up, it appears that identity is not constructed but inherited. In fact despite Chester's struggles, his educational commitment and personal construction, only his skin-color matters for the people he shares the narrative space with.

Against the African-American background, *Don't Play in the Sun*, unmistakably and from the title, raises the problem of identity built against the skin-color because Golden exposes how identity relation brings many colored people to undergo skin changes to respond to the identity imperatives in the new setting they are brought to live. The narrative of Emecheta and Golden prove right the outcry of Diome sustained by Galvagni as follows:

The anguish of her [Diome] narrative reinscribes intransigence to imperial forms of oppression and dehumanization that occur as a result of slavery and colonialism, and that reoccur in the chameleon form as a

result of globalization. In the light of the horror and trauma that these historical events unleash upon the collective memory of African and the African diaspora, one of many consequences is a unique mixture of language and culture that is confronting the shape and consistency of world politics (2010: 104).

The strife of life about one's present conditions awakens the consciousness bringing the latter to move from status one to status two for the purpose of constructive change. Even if change appears to be the only outlet, its worth lies in the added value that is brought by that very change. The call for home is quite strong with Chester in Emecheta's 2000 novel. However, the critic of Emecheta will not admit that Chester is right to abandon his family and friends in the pursuit of a token kingdom. It will appear even too easy for him to go back and snatch such a kingdom he has never seen from people who nurtures it.

Through the narrative style and technique, Emecheta voices the insidious and pernicious attitudes of people to stabilize identity. From the onset of the novel to the last pages, the reader of Emecheta realizes that 'tribe' can be the representations of human beings according to their geographical settings or racial membership. No doubt the Blacks' origins are Africa, and the Whites' Europe; however, the attempts by some characters to stick to this classical conception of identity takes them unaware. 'Tribe' shifts from its old conception to a new frame. Tribe is no more valid taking the race or the setting as standards. This is proven by Chester's failure to locate his roots.

The postcolonial context brings critical thinking about the human existence and relationships. In fact, like modern theories which are marked by rigidity, the modern existing life conditions would like every citizen to be much attached to his/her origins and the prevailing rules. It is this modern thinking which brings Mrs. Arlington to redesign Chester's ancestry so that he may easily trace his backgrounds when he grows. There is no doubt that Ginny's can be associated with nobility about her attempt to coo Chester as can be seen: "When Victoria wrote from Australia, she complained that Ginny had lost sight of everything

except Chester, Julia and Arthur” (Emecheta, 2000: 9). Her strategy is a serious threat to human condition in postcolonial context as her actions bring chaos to Chester who travels to Africa but ends up broken, disillusioned, awestruck and sick. This context creates a setting to investigate functions of identity in context and how relations can be monitored to enhance interpersonal and interracial relations.

### **3. Interpersonal Relations and Functions of Identity in the Postcolonial Context**

Postcoloniality brings a new perception of the concept of identity. It implies a “double consciousness”<sup>1</sup> which usually results from the subject’s perception of his/her identity and another form of identity which is the result of the outsider’s perception of the subject’s identity. The postcolonial perspective seeks a positive constructive hybrid identity. It, therefore, seeks to improve value-systems. The perception of these values determines whether ideals pertaining to postcolonial identity need improvement or not. Emecheta is critical of this through the attitudes of the Oba of Chamala towards Chester and Karimu:

Taking his cue, Karimu unloaded some of the gifts from Chester’s back pack. He brought out three packets of Marlboro and a bottle of gin. The Oba gave no indication of whether or not he was satisfied, so he added a packet of razor blades. When it became clear that Karimu was not going to bring out any more gifts, the Oba flicked his horse tail indolently (Emecheta, 2000: 137-138).

The excerpt is enough indication that some African cultural ideals, like hospitality and honesty, have been upset by the Oba of Kamala and his likes. As can be seen from the lenses of Gyekye (1996), Africa is losing her valuable customs and principles. The depiction of the Oba’s wiles quashes Africa’s dearest values. Even if the Oba does not know Chester, it is not a sound reason for him to rob his hosts given that discourses on

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<sup>1</sup> The expression is borrowed from Du Bois who coins it to describe an individual whose identity is divided into several facets. For further information, please consult: W.E. B. Du Bois (1903). *The Souls of Black Folks*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co.

postcoloniality call individuals to both individual and collective responsibilities.

Taking inspiration from canonical writings on Systemic Functional Linguistics, Montes, Barboza and Olascoaga opine that (2014: 105) “People cannot achieve a communicative purpose if words are not addressing specific cultural or contextual issues.” What can be deduced from this assertion is that communication loses its efficacy if the context is not located. And this is proved right against Golden’s narrative context where the writer deplores the communicative failure in most African-American homes. “Too often even parents who feel worthy, mothers who feel beautiful, fail to raise their children on the kinds of dialogues that will create self-worth” (Golden, 2004: 99). The Kabyè, an ethnic group from the northern part of Togo, would regard this situation with the cliché of the people who have the yam and the cutlass, but still expect somebody else to come and cut the yam for them. The postcolonial context would like these African Americans to have an intra-racial introspection on their impeding internal inadequacies before facing the interracial conflicts and color complexes.

Alaei and Ahangari (2016: 205) state: “The ideational meanings are the meanings about how we represent experience in language.” In the postcolonial perspective, the statement of these two disciples of Halliday is outstanding in the sense that a statement can be fully appreciated when the context of utterance is made known to the listener. As if to call the attention of her readership to this, Golden releases:

Women come to me and want to discuss their desire to have their lips made thinner and their noses made smaller. They are so unsure of themselves. What I try to tell these women is that they will still be the same woman inside after the surgery (Golden, 2004: 119).

Within the postcolonial dimension, the postmodern man acquires a new identity. His choice in the making of his new identity is the sum of his preferences in the choice of what he should and should not be after his choices. And it is for her readership not to fail the choice that Golden

insists on the inwards emotions. The postcolonial identity is not a subject of second or third enslavement to the colored. The choice should be liberation from the shackles and entanglements of racial barriers.

Postcolonial identity, as perceived in Emecheta's and Golden's respective novels, does not serve the same purpose. The fundamental nature of identity that defines interpersonal relations is racial; however, racism evolves in each context basing on cultural paradigms. Whereas Emecheta contends herself in the offshoots of white-black relationship which results in the degeneracy of identity ties in her narrative, Golden goes far to reveal that black-black interpersonal relationships are worse than white-black ones in her set boundaries. The way the outside society perceives Chester is the result of his social unrest: "I just want to know who my parents are,' said Chester. 'At school, they said I can't be your child because I am black.' Julia suddenly covered her ears and burst into tears. Ginny held her murmuring comfortingly, and Chester felt guilty again" (Emecheta, 2000: 13). The protagonist of Golden reveals: "I felt I could handle racism at White school more effectively than colorism at a Black school. Because the color complex is a form of intra-racial genocide, because it positions Blacks versus Blacks" (Golden, 2004: 47). They, therefore, call for individual commitment in this postcolonial era through the philosophical discourses that permeate their narratives.

D'Souza (2004: 175) argues that individual human beings need to know "how to respond to situations regardless of what is done or threatened by others." In this line of thought, Golden and Emecheta orient their readers to discover that racism and colorism ought not to annihilate a human being's productivity if he/she can decipher such identity referents that push individual competence and social values at the peripheries of the alleged mainstream values. The best to challenge the destructive legacy of colorism and racism is hard work. Golden (2004: 59) writes:

*Attitude.* The word reminds me of how as a brown-skinned woman I always, even as a middle-aged mother of an adult son, the author of several novels and works of nonfiction, a university professor, lecturer, and partner/friend/spouse to one of the best men in America, I

*still feel that I have to work harder to be seen, heard, valued, accepted, than if I were lighter-skinned. (My emphasis)*

In this excerpt, the autodiegetic narrator suggests that nature, value, or worth of human beings are the result of how they act and interact towards others in the social environment. The protagonist is aware that light-skinned girls are just “the object of sexual desire” (Golden, 2004: 89) that is to be used temporarily whereas those who are committed to hard work are better equipped to dismantle forms of racial prejudice. Again, it is this commitment that crowns the protagonist of Emecheta (2000), the ability of Chester to shift from one environment to another without necessarily relying on other people as indicated in his relationship with Ugwu and his family, Jimoh’s family, Esther, and even his adoptive parents. His sense of longing for noble motives is part and parcel of the standards that should define identity in the postcolonial context; it ought not to be a mere matter of identity defined by geographical or genealogical belongingness as Carnegie and Associates Inc. (2011: 153) note: “While relational improvement and business productivity are centerpieces of our lives, their importance exists because we long to be people who make a difference.”

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study has been to assess the various functions of identity in a postcolonial context. It is established that the perception of identity in a monolithic way and outside the context in a postcolonial situation drives subjects into delirium. The research has indicated identity cannot be implemented outside the realm of the characters’ environment.

Based on the evidences that alight from the comparative functions of postcolonial identity, this research admits that both the roots and the routes in search of identity are relevant. In this perspective, a return to the roots of individual and societal identity or a search of routes in the process of individual and collective identity is an unending process that

thrives over singularities. Postcolonial identity is, therefore, a quest, a process and a means to bridge the gap between what appears dramatically conflicting: black-white, center-margin, East-West, master-slave, self-other, etc.

This study has suggested that against the American background, African Americans need to recollect their memories of the past and the new standards brought by Western cultures to redefine the African-American identity. Against African setting, this study has found that the encounter with ‘colonial masters’ and the effects of globalization tend to erase African cultural values and that there is a need, as in the African-American context, to redefine identity taking into account both assets of globalization and African cultural values past and present.

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