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LIGNE EDITORIALE DE *PARTICIP'ACTION*

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Résumé en français. Mots-clés, Abstract, Keywords,

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Par exemple : Les articles conformes aux normes de présentation, doivent contenir les rubriques suivantes : introduction, problématique de l'étude, méthodologie adoptée, résultats de la recherche, perspectives pour recherche, conclusions, références bibliographiques.

Tout l'article ne doit dépasser 17 pages,

Police Times new roman, taille 12 et interligne 1,5 (maximum 30 000 mots). La revue *Particip'Action* permet l'usage de notes de bas de page pour ajouter des précisions au texte. Mais afin de ne pas alourdir la lecture et d'aller à l'essentiel, il est recommandé de **faire le moins possible usage des notes (10 notes de bas de page au maximum par article).**

- A l'exception de l'introduction, de la conclusion, de la bibliographie, les articulations d'un article doivent être titrées, et numérotées par des chiffres (**exemples : 1. ; 1.1. ; 1.2 ; 2. ; 2.2. ; 2.2.1 ; 2.2.2. ; 3. ; etc.**).

Les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point. Insérer la pagination et ne pas insérer d'information autre que le numéro de page dans l'en-tête et éviter les pieds de page.

Les figures et les tableaux doivent être intégrés au texte et présentés avec des marges d'au moins six centimètres à droite et à gauche. Les caractères dans ces figures et tableaux doivent aussi être en Times 12. Figures et tableaux doivent avoir chacun(e) un titre.

Les citations dans le corps du texte doivent être indiquées par un retrait avec tabulation 1 cm et le texte mis en taille 11.

Les références de citations sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante :

- (Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ; - Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur (année de publication, pages citées). Exemples :

- En effet, le but poursuivi par **M. Ascher (1998, p. 223)**, est « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), d'accroître le domaine des mathématiques : alors qu'elle s'est pour l'essentiel occupée du groupe professionnel occidental que l'on appelle les mathématiciens (...) ».

- Pour dire plus amplement ce qu'est cette capacité de la société civile, qui dans son déploiement effectif, atteste qu'elle peut porter le développement et l'histoire, S. B. Diagne (1991, p. 2) écrit :

Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : de toute manière, les populations ont toujours su opposer à la philosophie de l'encadrement et à son volontarisme leurs propres stratégies de contournements. Celles-là, par exemple, sont lisibles dans le dynamisme, ou à tout le moins, dans la créativité dont sait preuve ce que l'on désigne sous le nom de secteur informel et à qui il faudra donner l'appellation positive d'économie populaire.

- Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation sociohistorique et une inadéquation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères. (S. Diakité, 1985, p. 105).

Pour les articles de deux ou trois auteurs, noter les initiales des prénoms, les noms et suivis de l'année (J. Batee et D. Maate, 2004 ou K. Moote, A. Pooul et E. Polim, 2000). Pour les articles ou ouvrages collectifs de plus de trois auteurs noter les initiales des prénoms, le nom du premier auteur et la mention "et al" (F. Loom et al, 2003). Lorsque plusieurs références sont utilisées pour la même information, celles-ci doivent être mises en ordre chronologique (R. Gool, 1998 et M. Goti, 2006).

Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.

Références bibliographiques (obligatoire)

Les divers éléments d'une référence bibliographique sont présentés comme suit : NOM et Prénom (s) de l'auteur, Année de publication, Zone titre, Lieu de publication, Zone Editeur, pages (p.) occupées par l'article dans la revue ou l'ouvrage collectif.

Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la Maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le Nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2^{de} éd.).

Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Il convient de prêter une attention particulière à la qualité de l'expression. Le Comité scientifique de la revue se réserve le droit de réviser les textes, de demander des modifications (mineures ou majeures) ou de rejeter l'article de manière définitive ou provisoire (si des corrections majeures doivent préalablement y être apportées). L'auteur est consulté préalablement à la diffusion de son article lorsque le Comité scientifique apporte des modifications. Si les corrections ne sont pas prises en compte par l'auteur, la direction de la revue *Particip'Action* se donne le droit de ne pas publier l'article.

AMIN Samir, 1996, *Les défis de la mondialisation*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

AUDARD Cathérine, 2009, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme ? Ethique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard.

BERGER Gaston, 1967, *L'homme moderne et son éducation*, Paris, PUF.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogène*, 202, p. 145-151.

DIAKITE Sidiki, 1985, *Violence technologique et développement. La question africaine du développement*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

NB1 : Chaque auteur dont l'article est retenu pour publication dans la revue *Particip'Action* participe aux frais d'édition à raison de **55.000** francs CFA (soit **84 euros** ou **110** dollars US) par article et par numéro. Il reçoit, à titre gratuit, un tiré-à-part.

NB2 : La quête philosophique centrale de la revue *Particip'Action* reste : **Fluidité identitaire et construction du changement : approches pluri-et/ou transdisciplinaires.**

Les auteurs qui souhaitent se faire publier dans nos colonnes sont priés d'avoir cette philosophie comme fil directeur de leur réflexion.

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**HOME AND EXILE : EXPLORING CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN TAIYE SELASI'S
*GHANA MUST GO***

Koffi Gérard KOUADIO*

Abstract

In light of the contemporary global interconnectedness, the quest for enhancing one's socioeconomic status has emerged as a focal point for certain African diaspora authors. Among these literary figures, Taiye Selasi delves into the intricacies of migration to Western nations for resettlement in her inaugural novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013). This study delves into the themes of home, exile, and cultural hybridity utilizing a postcolonial framework to illuminate the potential for Africans to define their origins and embrace a novel sense of self.

Keywords : Diaspora, home, exile, cultural hybridity, identity

Résumé

En se concentrant sur la réalité du monde devenu un village planétaire, la quête d'un nouvel environnement propice à l'amélioration des conditions de vie a émergé comme un sujet central pour certains écrivains africains de la diaspora. Parmi ces figures littéraires, Taiye Selasi explore dans son premier roman *Ghana Must Go* (2013) les intrications de la migration vers les nations occidentales en vue de s'y établir. Cette étude examine les thèmes du chez-soi, de l'exil et de l'hybridité culturelle en utilisant un cadre postcolonial pour mettre en lumière le potentiel des Africains à redéfinir leurs origines et à embrasser un nouveau sens de soi.

Mots-clés : Diaspora, chez-soi, exile, hybridité culturelle, identité.

Introduction

Born on 2 November 1979 in London, Taiye Selasi is a distinguished writer, photographer, and filmmaker of both Nigerian and Ghanaian descent. As one of the pioneering African diaspora writers, Selasi has authored several short stories, including *The Sex Lives of African Girls*

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(2011), *Driver* (2013), *Aliens of Extraordinary Ability* (2014), and *Brunhilda in Love* (2016). Her literary works include *Bye-Bye, Babar* (2005) in which she explores the arduous living conditions encountered by individuals of African descent beyond their ancestral territories, as well as their ability to forge a new identity within a multicultural context. Building on the themes explored in her essay, Selasi's debut novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013) narrates the journey of Kweku Sai and his family as they move to the United States of America in pursuit of better career prospects. Apart from seeking professional advancement, Kweku's family endeavors to redefine their sense of self in the diaspora. The novel intricately depicts the Sais' integration into American society as they strive to realize their aspirations.

In light of the above, it is worth mentioning that the harmful drawbacks of colonization prevented many Africans from considering themselves true human beings. Indeed, after the era of independence, numerous African countries continue to grapple with civil wars, poverty, unemployment, and other challenges. Moreover, Africans find themselves in a state of cultural and economic disarray in the context of the lingering superiority complex imposed upon them by former colonizers, which still poses a threat to their social integration. As a result, some of them thought that the only viable option for them to reclaim their dignity was to seek refuge in Western countries to start a new chapter in their lives. They firmly believe that these new environments can offer abundant opportunities for them to re-integrate and succeed, with the ultimate aim of returning to contribute to the development of their home countries. Through *Ghana Must Go*, Taiye Selasi encourages Africans living away from their ancestral lands to embrace being 'Africans of the world' (2005, p.2). In other words, she urges them to resist being labeled black individuals in Western societies. Central to their quest for a new identity is the importance of retaining their roots and embodying the essence of being "people who

belong to no single geography’’ (D. Crawley, 2018, p.128). This assertion resonates with the characters’ own experiences in *Ghana Must Go*, they ultimately find a sense of belonging in American society despite the challenges they are confronted with.

This study focuses on the representation of African diaspora identity reconstruction, particularly in Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go*. The novel delves into the significant theme of being caught between two contrasting cultures, reflecting Selasi’s own experience as an ‘African of the world’ and the Sai family’s relocation to the west. It examines how Selasi portrays the characters’ social integration and living conditions in the diaspora and explores the extent to which *Ghana Must Go* contributes to promoting family reunification through diaspora experiences. To what extent does Taiye Selasi advocate African diaspora identity reconstruction ? Why does Taiye Selasi urge Africans from the diaspora to overcome their inferiority complex to redefine a new identity ? For what interest should Africans of the diaspora reconcile their cultural heritage with that of their host countries abroad ? To answer these questions, this study utilizes postcolonial theory. Initially, it analyzes the concepts of ‘home’ and ‘exile’ to unravel how the characters navigate their multiple belongings and anticipate the challenges they may encounter. Subsequently, it delves into cultural hybridity as a crucial aspect to comprehend the characters’ new identities in the diaspora. Last of all, the study emphasizes the literary techniques employed by Taiye Selasi in exploring the construction of diasporic identity among Black individuals.

1 – Conceptualizing Home and Exile : Definitions and Theoretical Frameworks

To conceptualize ‘‘home’’and ‘‘exile’’, it is imperative to first refer to the context in which the title of the novel *Ghana Must Go* was chosen by its author. The title *Ghana Must Go* is a derogatory term used in English-

speaking countries throughout Africa to refer to the mass expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983. This demeaning term was coined in reference to the plastic bags Ghanaians used to store their belongings as they left Nigeria. In this context, there is no denying the fact that Ghanaians were considered invaders when they decided to go into “exile” in Nigeria to seek their livelihood. Among those deported from Nigeria at the time were a majority of undocumented Ghanaian nationals who had long considered their host country their “home.” Focusing on the example of Ghanaians, it is important to clarify that the title *Ghana Must Go* aims to remind readers that in the context of an ever-changing world, humans are looking for a sense of belonging and above all, a place to call “home.”

According to R. Chadon (1997, p. 337) “home” can be considered “a site of contradictory demands and conditions”. This suggests that “home” is a place of everyday lived experiences. In Homi K. Bhabha’s (1994, p. 19) view, “Home may not be where the heart is, nor even the hearth. [...] Home may be a mode of living made into a metaphor of survival”. These definitions highlight that living at “home” is not an easy task. Selasi portrays this complexity in *Ghana Must Go* by depicting Kweku and Folassadé as migrants who left their countries to be exiled in the United States of America. Regarding “exile”, E. Said (2001, p.173) defines it as follows : “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home : its essential sadness can never be surmounted”. This definition highlights the restrictive and challenging nature of “exile” for individuals. E. Said (2001, p.175) further explains that “Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past [...] Exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people”.

In light of the aforementioned definitions of “home” and “exile,” it is evident that life always presents constraints regardless of where a human being resides. Individuals who migrate or go into “exile” in a foreign country are often compelled to renegotiate a new living environment that can provide them with social comfort and a sense of being at “home.” In Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go*, the main characters are Kweku Sai and his wife Folassadé Savage, also known as Fola. They later have four children, namely Olu, twins Kehinde and Taiwo, and Sadie when they meet in the United States of America. Kweku, of Ghanaian descent, is depicted as “fleeing a peace that could kill” (T. Selasi, 2013, p.91), while Folassadé from Nigeria, is portrayed as “on the run from a war” (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 91). Upon leaving their respective “home” countries, Kweku and Fola aspire to view their host country as a place offering promising career opportunities. Prior to meeting her husband Kweku in the United States of America, Fola’s primary goal is to pursue a law degree and become a lawyer. However, she sacrifices her dream of attending law school to care for their four children. In contrast, Kweku is depicted as a distinguished surgeon in the novel. While Kweku diligently provides for his family, Fola assumes the role of a homemaker, supplementing the family income by selling flowers.

The quest for a new “home” or personal “home” outside their homelands is seen as a dead-end adventure from the outset when Selasi refers to Kweku and his wife Fola as “Orphans, escapees, at large in world history, both hailing from countries last great in the eighteenth century – but prideful (braver, hopeful) and broke – so very desperately seeking home and adventure, finding both” (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 91). Arguably, this quote indicates how Kweku and Fola are perceived as two characters rejected by society because of the sad events experienced in their respective countries. In fact, Kweku Sai was born in a Ghanaian village called Kokrobité where

he grew up in poverty. His childhood was too difficult given the fact that he had no father. He was also very sad when his sister Ekua died of tuberculosis at the age of eleven. As regards his wife Fola, she is a traumatized character in the novel because she lost her father during the Nigerian civil war in 1966. With the help of some of her father's colleagues, she managed to take refuge in Ghana where she continued her studies. In Ghana where she starts afresh a new life, she behaves as an orphan, "she finished high school, seldom speaking, barely eating" (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 201). As an "exile" she considers her own country Nigeria as "not home, not a place she could see, so not real" (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 201). Besides, as an orphan of thirteen years, Fola positions herself to be "a native of War-Torn Nation" (T. Selasi, 2013, p.107). As a result, she is a homeless character whose main objective is to cheer herself up after the trauma experienced during the civil war in her country of origin. While leaving Ghana to the USA for her studies, nothing foreshadows Fola's return to Nigeria, her country of origin. In view of her past which is strewn with pitfalls, it is worth mentioning that "home" "can simultaneously be a place of safety and terror" (B. Avtar, 1996, p. 207).

In addition, Kweku's apprehension of "home" is somewhat different from that of his wife Fola. In *Ghana Must Go*, Selasi points out that Kweku is strongly attached to Accra and his village Kokrobité, which can be considered his first "home". Kweku decides to return to Accra after being unjustly dismissed from his service in the United States of America. He still feels connected to his African roots because he promised to return "home" in order to bring financial well-being to his family. In the same vein, Kokrobité appears at first sight to be a landmark for Kweku, as he promised to be back as an experienced surgeon. Unfortunately, this dream could not be realized because he came back too late. When he came for his

mother's funeral at Kokrobité, he was still nostalgic for his own promises as T. Selasi (2013, p. 52) rightfully specifies:

By returning home triumphant with a degree and a son, laying the American-born baby before the Ghana-bound grandma like a wreath at a shrine, "See, I told you I'd return." And with a boy-child on top of it, a luckier-Moses. A father and a doctor. As promised. A success. He imagined this moment everyday in Pennsylvania, how his cameraman would film it, panning up to her face. Cue strings. Tears in mother's eyes.

This passage clearly illustrates Kweku's aspiration to utilize his time in "exile" to aid his family in escaping extreme poverty. The promise he made to his mother attests to his determination to not become westernized and completely disconnected from his African heritage. The bond between Kweku and his mother holds significant importance, as "exile" is viewed by her as a means to achieve financial stability. Furthermore, Kweku's return home serves as a reminder from Taiye Selasi to Africans in the diaspora that they should strive to maintain connections with their ancestral roots.

Another important aspect on which Taiye Selasi does not fail to insist has to do with the scattering of the Sai family after Kweku's unexpected death. Indeed, when Kweku abandons his wife and children in the United States of America following his dismissal, he comes back to Ghana, his country of origin, and dies of cardiac arrest. This unexpected death creates a scattering within the Sai family. According to B. Ashcroft et al. (1995, p. 425) "scattering leads to a splitting in the sense of home. A fundamental ambivalence is embedded in the term diaspora: a dual ontology in which the diasporic subject is seen to look in two directions". This statement deserves quoting because Kweku's children decide to go into "exile" to be far from their late father's family "home." As the eldest son of the Sai family, Olu decides to live in Boston with his fiancée Ling. In his

new “home,” Olu echoes the various reasons for his profound resentment towards his deceased father. The narrator articulates that

The man came from nothing; he struggled, I *know*. I *want* to be proud of him. Of all he accomplished. I know he accomplished so much. But I can't. I hate him for living in that dirty apartment. I hate him for being that African man. I hate him for hurting my mother, for leaving, for dying, I hate him for dying alone. (T. Selasi, 2013, p.306)

In this passage, Selasi intends to illustrate to the reader that the ongoing search for one's 'home' while residing in the diaspora is a challenging endeavor. The passage highlights Olu's deep admiration for his late father's accomplishments during his time in the diaspora. However, he also recognizes the need to surpass his father's living standards referred to as a 'dirty apartment.' Similarly, Kweku's other children were dispersed to various locations following their father's sudden passing. The narrative explores Taiwo's living situation in New York, her twin brother Kehinde in London, and the youngest Sadie's education at Yale. The absence of a father figure like Kweku has caused Kweku's family to unravel leaving the children without parental guidance. The diverse locations chosen by Kweku's children symbolize new beginnings but also places where they grapple with conflicting senses of 'home.' In this context, 'being-at-home is a matter of how one feels or how one might fail to feel' (S. Ahmed, 2000, p.89).

Through Kweku's sons' motivation to strive for better integration into American society, it is evident that the quest for a place to call 'home' while living in 'exile' hinges on where one feels comfortable. In that sense, it can also be argued that Kweku's sons aim to realize their 'American dream' not only to attain American citizenship but also to establish a new identity distinct from their parents' roots. This new identity is closely intertwined with their cultural hybridity, a fundamental aspect of the Sai family's resettlement in the diaspora.

2- Cultural hybridity in *Ghana Must Go* : Character Analysis

This section explores how characters in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* try to re-negotiate a new identity in close proximity with western culture. Within this context, characters' place of birth and living deserves to be taken into account to better understand their cultural hybridity in the diaspora. According to H. K. Bhabha (1994, p.5), hybridity refers to

Liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.

As indicated in the above definition, the hegemony of western civilization must be surpassed to promote a hybrid space or a "Third Space" as per Homi K. Bhabha's concept, where Black and White can coexist without inferiority and superiority complexes. Referring to J. Clifford's (1992, p. 109) idea that "everyone more or less permanently is in transit", it is undeniable that cultures are continuously interacting to enhance individual' cultural hybridity.

In Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, the concept of "hybridity" serves as a bridge between Black and White in binary oppositions such as civilized and uncivilized. Throughout the novel, Selasi portrays characters embodying hybrid identities striving to achieve their aspirations in American society. An early depiction of cultural hybridity is evident in the narrative when Kweku Sai opts for a breakfast of croissants in his new home

And the life that came with it getting out of bed every morning, coming to sit in his little sunroom with the paper and croissants, sipping fresh expensive coffee served by a butler named Kofi to whom he'd speak in a British accent (somewhat inexplicably), "That

will be all.” All his children sleeping comfortably in the Bedroom Wing. A cook cooking breakfast in the dining Wing. And Fola. By far the best part of the view in her Bic-blue bikini swimming the last of her morning laps, Afro bejeweled with droplets, rising dripping from the water like Aphrodite from waves somewhat improbably; she hated getting her hair wet), and waving. (T. Selasi, 2013, pp. 22-23)

Based on this quotation, there is no gainsaying that Kweku feels at ease with his family in his new home. The breakfast of croissants he eats while reading a newspaper and especially the expensive coffee served by his domestic household attest to the fact that his social situation in the diaspora has significantly improved. In this scene, the reader can also notice that Kweku’s wife Fola is doing her morning pastime in the swimming pool while their children are still comfortably asleep in their “Bedroom Wing.” It is also worth observing that another important aspect of Kweku’s cultural hybridity in the above passage remains his conversation with his Ghanaian butler named Kofi when using a British accent. Instead of using an “African” accent, Kweku decides to use a British accent to get closer to the White formerly considered his master. Through this British accent, Selasi intends to call into question the credibility of colonial discourse. Put differently, she wants the reader to bear in mind that “black men [or brown men and women] want to prove to white men at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal of their intellect” (D. Huddart, 2005, p.2). In the same vein, another aspect of characters’ cultural hybridity appears in chapter thirteen of the novel when Taiye Selasi insists on a conversation that occurred between Kweku and his eldest son Olu :

“Where is your mother?”

“She doesn’t want to see you.”

“I don’t want to either.” Olu looked down, gripped the straps of his bag, kicked the ground, and heard another bell. “I have to go.” He walked away. (T. Selasi, 2013, p.88)

What seems surprising in the above excerpt is the way Olu behaves while answering his father’s question. Despite the fact that he was born and raised

in the diaspora, his father's expectation while asking him this question is to answer taking into account the obedience that children owe their parents in traditional African society. Olu's attitude during the conversation with his father proves that he is raised according to American culture. Kweku himself is aware that his son's attitude is not part and parcel of African cultural norms. Nevertheless, he is forced to accept because despite his African roots he began himself to emulate Western mannerisms by using a British accent as mentioned above.

In addition, Kweku's wife Fola is another typical example of a hybrid character in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. The novel highlights that as a migrant character living in the United States of America, Fola's father is a Yoruba man from Nigeria, and she also has a Scottish grandmother. Those diverse cultural backgrounds set her apart from her husband Kweku. Selasi emphasizes that Fola exhibits two contrasting behaviors. On one hand, she puts her own ambition to further her education on hold in order to prioritize the education of her four children, a common practice among African women. Conversely, Fola embraces specific American practices that diverge from conventional African traditions. In the subsequent excerpt, the narrator puts "That she smokes. That she wears shorts. That she wanders around the garden in these shorts and a sun hat with cigarettes and clippers, snipping that, hauling her catch into the kitchen, where she stands at the counter, not pounding yam, not shelling beans, but arranging *flowers*" (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 101).

The above citation is a clear-cut explanation showing Fola's cultural hybridity in the American society. It is interesting to pinpoint that smoking and wearing shorts are habits that are rarely adopted by women in African society. Instead of pounding yams or shelling beans as indicated above, she decides to cut and arrange flowers. Although reserved for men, generally speaking, this activity is most often restrictive and unprofitable.

What matters here for Fola is to better fit into the new space where she lives and is now considered her second home. In addition, Fola decides to give up wearing African dresses by adopting Western style of clothing : “She wore bel-bottom jeans and a wraparound sweater, both care of the Goodwill, a scarf in her hair” (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 53). Here, Fola is aware that by adopting Western style of clothing, she will always remember her African origins. The scarf in her hair which is a typical style of clothing for African women attests to the fact that she intends to link her original culture and trends with that of the Americans. In this context, it must be asserted that “hybridity thus makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different” (R. Young, 1994, pp. 24-25).

Apart from Kweku and Fola, cultural hybridity also affects Olu, Taiwo, Kehinde and Sadie in Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go*. The novel reveals that these American-born children have multi-cultured appearances. Despite being born to the same parents, the Sai children have different appearances. The eldest son Olu resembles his mother Fola despite his dark skin, while twins Taiwo and Kehinde take after their Scottish grandmother. Sadie, on the other hand, resembles her father Kweku, who is from Ghana. These descriptions highlight the ongoing process of cultural hybridity merging with cultural identity. Cultural hybridity is defined as ‘the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, making it an important notion’ (B. Ashcroft et. al, 2000, p. 109). Alongside the distinct appearances of the Sai children, Selasi portrays another aspect of cultural hybridity in her novel through scenes like when the Sai children enjoyed an African dish prepared by Fola before their return to Ghana for Kweku’s funeral.

“Please. Take it. It’s just some *egusi* and jollof for later.”
“I have a small staff ”

“But your cook is Ashanti. He can’t make *egusi*, at least not like mine.” They are smiling, glancing downward, when Fola, feeling butterflies (lower left, bafflement), squints at the garden (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 243).

What stands out when reading the above passage is the mention of ‘jollof’ and ‘egusi,’ which are west African dishes. Clearly, these African delicacies are highly valued by the Sai children, even though they identify more as American citizens. This indicates that these American-born children are accustomed to enjoying this African cuisine, often prepared by their mother, Fola, at home.

The second scene depicting the cultural hybridity of the Sai children occurs in their father’s village where the villagers invite Sadie to participate in a traditional dance that she experiences for the first time

The drum stops. Sadie halts, sweating and breathless. The small gathered crowd ceases clapping and stares. An instant of silence, then Olu “Go, Sadie!” with all the might of his baritone voice. The children resume clapping and cheering in Ga, the chubby dancer, “My sees-tah!” Pictures are taken with phones. Fola leaps up from the bench to embrace her as if she has just run a footrace and won. “My God,” she is laughing, clutching Sadie by the forehead. (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 270).

The flawless execution of this traditional dance by Sadie in her father’s village attests to the complementarity between Western culture and that of Africa. It is crucial to note that this traditional dance, unfamiliar to Sadie in the United States, where she resides with her family, highlights the cultural richness of her father’s village. The enthusiastic cheers from the villagers during the dance depict her deep connection to her second home. Therefore, it can be argued that “roots and routes merge” (H. Wallinger, 2018, p. 207), as seen in how Kweku, Fola, and their children adapt to different cultures. In light of this, how does Selasi portray her narrative in *Ghana Must Go*?

3. Narrative Techniques and Storytelling

Diverse narrative techniques are frequently used by writers in their literary productions to awake readers' mental consciousness and help them understand the hidden meaning of their storytelling. According to J. Waham et al, (2019, p. 180) "narrative technique is the logical order of events presented to the readers in a way that allows the author to show his ability and talent in conveying the themes expressed within the literary work, be it a novel or short story. From this perspective, the narrative technique must be considered by the reader for a better analysis of a literary work. In *Ghana Must Go*, the author employs various narrative techniques through which the reader grasps the experiences lived by the characters. Taiye Selasi uses the symbol of the bag in the title *Ghana Must Go* to the mass departure of Ghanaians from Nigeria, as was discussed in the earlier sections of this paper. As a symbol of migration, the bag 'Ghana must go' conveys a sense of displacement among Ghanaians compelled to seek a new home elsewhere. In addition to the title of her novel, Selasi also incorporates other symbolic elements that prompt the reader to contemplate the destinies of certain characters such as Kweku and Fola. In this regard, the symbol of the boat is introduced in the conclusion of the initial part of *Ghana Must Go* to signify Kweku and Fola's aspiration to embark on a new life, far from their countries of origin.

Two boats lost at sea, washed ashore in Pennsylvania ("Pencil-wherever") of all places, freezing yet alive in love. Orphans and escapees, wandering in world history, both originating from countries that were once prominent in the eighteenth century – but proud (braver, hopeful), brimming with enthusiasm, and financially struggling – desperately searching for a place to call home and seeking adventure, ultimately discovering both (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 91).

This extract reflects Kweku's and Fola's optimism in their quest to reach the United States of America at all costs. The symbol of the boat also reveals the challenging conditions in which Africans migrate to Western countries in an attempt to start a new life after being disillusioned with the

dire living conditions in their home countries. In other words, “Two boats lost at sea” in the above extract signifies the meaningful risks involved in Africans’ migration to Western nations. For instance, they may tragically lose their lives at sea if some boats capsize. Additionally, Selasi also employs the symbols of a butterfly and a dog on page 92 of *Ghana Must Go* to illustrate the fragility of life.

He lies here facedown with a smile on his face. Now the butterfly alights, finished drinking. A spectacular contrast, the turquoise against pink. But unconcerned with this, with beauty, with contrast, with loss. It flutters around the garden, coming to hover by his foot. Fluttering its wings against his soles as if to soothe them. Open, shut. The dog smells new death and barks, startling the butterfly. It flaps its wings once, flies away. (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 92)

This extract illustrates the presence of ominous signs of death in Africa. The scene unfolds when Kweku’s mother passes away in Kokrobité. Selasi skillfully employs the butterfly and the dog as contrasting symbols to depict two distinct yet interconnected situations. The butterfly potentially signifies Kweku’s reconnection with his ancestral land following his unjust dismissal from his job in the United States of America. Conversely, the dog symbolizes the existence of a second home where Kweku can lead a dignified life, despite his abrupt halt to his Western pursuits. Ultimately, the symbols of the butterfly and the dog underscore Kweku’s deep-rooted connection to his country of origin, underscoring the significance of his acquired knowledge from abroad.

Apart from the use of symbols, Taiye Selasi refers to code mixing as a narrative technique to show to what extent Kweku and Fola refuse to forget their African culture. Indeed, these characters most often express themselves using words and expressions from their African cultural repertoire. As an illustration, Fola refers to a Yoruba expression to indicate that she is a mother of twins after giving birth to Kehinde and Taiwo “She chose the name without him, for “the child who follows twins.” This didn’t

so much surprise him. She'd become kind of precious about her Yoruba heritage after becoming *iya-ibeji*, a mother of twins'' (T. Selasi, 2013, p. 13). This extract attests to the fact that going into exile in Western countries should not be synonymous with a rejection of African culture. Furthermore, Fola alludes to the Yoruba myth of twins which states that twins are half human and half deity as follows

Ibeji (twins) are believed to be two halves of a spirit, a spirit too immense to be contained in one body, and are seen as liminal beings, part deity, deserving of honor and even worship. The second twin, typically portrays as challenging and mischievous shows less interest in worldly matters compared to the first often feeling a strong attachment to the spiritual realms. According to Yoruba mythology, the first twin, Taiyewo (derived from 'to aiye wo, 'meaning' to see and taste the world, shortened to *Taiye* or *Taiwo*), dutifully emerges from the womb on a reconnaissance mission and decides to stay in the world. Kehinde (from 'kehinde de, 'signifying' to arrive next'), upon realizing that his counterpart has not returned, leisurely sets out to reunite with Taiyewo, choosing to take on human form. In Yoruba tradition, Kehinde is considered the elder sibling despite being born second, as he is viewed as the wiser one, hence 'older' (T. Selasi, 2013, pp. 83-84).

The above passage illustrates Fola's continued connection to the cultural values of her Yoruba heritage, despite now residing in the United States of America. She actively seeks to impart specific Yoruba cultural practices to her children from birth, ensuring they maintain their cultural identity as they mature. One might expect her to opt for more conventional American names for her children to distance them from their African heritage. In essence, the utilization of the Yoruba twin myth suggests that individuals of African descent can resist Western cultural norms analogous to how they were compelled to forsake their African names for Western ones during colonialism.

In light of the above, it is important to insist on the structure of *Ghana Must Go* to show how Taiye Selasi chooses her own route in her storytelling. It should be noted that in the narration of the story, Selasi uses

a route that, according to J. Herberstam (2005, p.6), follows “nonnormative logics and organizations of [...] activity in space and time.” Indeed, the novel does not respect any linear and chronological standard with regard to the titles attributed to the different parts using verbs of movement like “Gone”, “Going” and “Go.” In alignment with this reasoning, the narrative commences with the unforeseen demise of Kweku, as illustrated in the subsequent excerpt: “Kweku dies barefoot on a Sunday before sunrise, his slippers by the doorway to the bedroom like dogs” (T. Selasi, 2013, p.3). Kweku’s death happens in the backyard of his house in Ghana. The death referenced at the outset of the novel underscores the necessity of pursuing improved living conditions beyond one’s African roots; however, it simultaneously emphasizes the significance of remembering one’s origins as the foundational home. It would be irrelevant to lose sight on the fact that Kweku managed to realize his dream in the diaspora to be a great surgeon. With Kweku’s social success far from his country of origin, Taiye Selasi challenges certain erroneous ideas of the West which reduce the African as a being devoid of intelligence. This is what C. Achebe (1978, p. 3) meant in “The Role of the Writer in a New Nation” when he claims that “we must begin to correct the prejudices which generations of detractors created about the Negro”. In the second part of the novel entitled “going”, Selasi shows how Kweku’s children managed to find stable jobs which can facilitate their social integration in the diaspora after their father’s return to his native Ghana. Finally, the last part entitled “go” deals with the return of Kweku’s children to their native home Ghana to take part in their father’s funeral. This return to the land of their father’s origins is very significant because it allows the reader to understand that whatever their social rank, it is important to remember their origin in order to become familiar with its values.

Conclusion

Through the study of Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, this paper aimed to explore the concepts of 'home', 'exile', and 'cultural hybridity' in a postcolonial setting. These concepts illustrate that Africans living in the West are actively contributing to the development of cultural connections between their home continent and Western nations. The research has shown that as a diasporic African writer, Taiye Selasi advocates a globalized society where individuals from Africa no longer face insecurities based on skin color but are empowered to showcase their intellect and competencies on a par with individuals of other races. The varied experiences of the characters in Selasi's novel underscore the notion that the world is interconnected, resembling a global village where everyone should feel a sense of belonging regardless of their location.

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