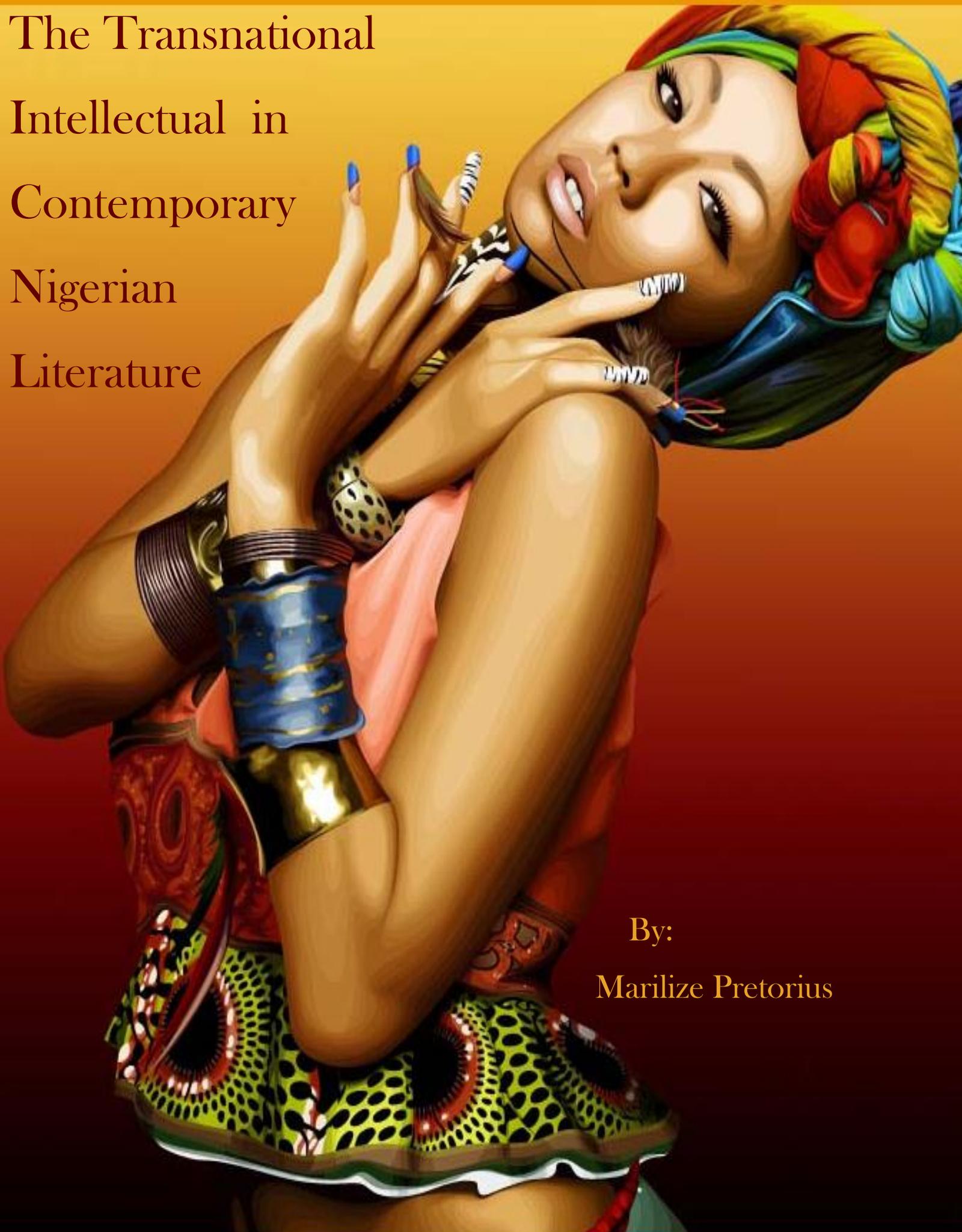


The Transnational
Intellectual in
Contemporary
Nigerian
Literature



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The Transnational Intellectual in Contemporary Nigerian Literature

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This Masterø Thesis has been submitted in accordance with the requirements for the M.A.
Language Studies (English) degree in the faculty of the Humanities, the Department of English
at the University of the Free State.

Date of Submission: 1 February, 2013

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õIf you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to
his head.

If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.ö

- Nelson Mandela

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Professor Helene Strauss, without whom I would not have been able to excel at producing this thesis,
- My family, for their love and patience,
- Danie de Klerk, Marike Potgieter, Thinus Conradie, Leandi Coertze, Bronwyn Kemp and Marnette Brewis for their support and encouragement,
- God, who is the reason for it all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE INFLUENCE OF GLOBALISATION ON INTELLECTUALS IN THIRD GENERATION NIGERIAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Since a call was issued in the 1960s and 1970s for the Africanisation of literary studies in Africa ó with the intention of enriching the intellectual life of Africans (Hossman, 1963: 13) ó the writing and teaching of African literature seem to have declined across the continent (Diala, 2008: 133). This is partly due to political crises that plague numerous African countries and the consequent migration of many of its best scholars and authors mainly to Europe and the United States. Many of the third generation Nigerian authors, as well as African scholars from elsewhere in Africa, currently live outside of Africa either permanently or for extended periods of time, and are often part of western educational institutions (Diala, 2008: 133). Many of these African scholars, authors and intellectuals are still considered authorities on matters pertaining to Africa while the works produced in Africa itself are often overlooked (Gikandi, 2011: 9), but this is not to say that those works produced by writers outside the continent are necessarily vastly different from those produced by authors still living in Africa or that works from the continent should be viewed as either more or less important than those produced outside the continent. In this dissertation I explore the writing of the third generation of Nigerian authors ó some of whom live outside of Africa. Chris Abani and Sefi Atta, for instance, both reside in the U.S., while Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie divides her time between Nigeria and the U.S. Although the authors to be discussed in this dissertation live abroad, and regardless of whether it is due to convenience or exile, they still deliberately engage with Nigerian issues and could thus provide us with potentially unique perspectives on Nigeria. It is specifically the fact that they reside in the U.S. or Europe, yet grew up in Nigeria, that provides us with their distinctive commentary. I will

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consider the various depictions of Nigerian life, which reflect the hybrid identities that Nigerians have adopted due to global influences, migration and extended visits in other countries.

In this dissertation I am concerned with the manner in which globalisation manifests in Africa, specifically in Nigeria, and the impact this has on the development of identity and especially how this relates to the function of intellectuals in Nigeria. Through the process of globalisation, Nigerians have developed what I call Afrotransnational identities. Afrotransnationalism could enable intellectuals to combine relevant theories and ideas that they acquire in the west with the ideas and practices in Africa in affecting positive change in African societies. I posit that the Afrotransnational identity is then central to the way in which Nigerians are able to effectively function as intellectuals in the contemporary Nigerian context. Additionally, the difficulty of women's roles as intellectuals is compounded by a variety of factors, and this has implications not only for women in Nigeria but also the nation at large. If women are to function as intellectuals in Nigeria, they need to address some of the negative effects of a western education, negotiate the changing face of Nigerian culture and traditions, as well as overcome limitations placed on them by patriarchal society. Essentially I am interested in the intersection between globalisation, identity and the ability of the intellectual to function in contemporary Nigeria as presented in three Nigerian novels, namely: *Graceland* (2004) by Chris Abani; *Half of the Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; and *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) by Sefi Atta.

THIRD GENERATION NIGERIAN NOVELISTS

The third generation Nigerian novelists provides us with new perspectives on the postcolonial world and how it fits into the contemporary, globalised world. In their discussion on this third generation, Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton (2005) state that while both the first and second generation African writers were born during colonisation, the 'formative years' of the second generation 'were mostly shaped by independence and its aftermath of disillusionment and stasis' (14). On the other hand, the authors born circa 1960, around the time when most African nations gained independence, are termed the third generation African authors, with Nigeria producing the largest number of these writers and works (Adesanmi and Dunton 2005:

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15). It is from this corpus of third generation Nigerian novelists that I will draw in this dissertation, using specifically Christopher Abani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Sefi Atta.

Much has been written on the differences between specifically the first and third generation of Nigerian authors. One of the most notable differences between the third generation and the two preceding generations is the move away from the focus on deconstructing the "master narrative" of colonialism – which makes up the "traditionalist ur-text" – towards exploring a more urban, transnational existence (Adesanmi and Dunton: 2005: 15, 16; Jones, 2011: 40, 41). So the newer authors write from a rather different perspective even though they often set their novels at roughly the same point in history as the older novels. Adeleke Adeeko (2008: 11) sums up one of the more significant differences as follows:

The new Nigerians appear bent on repudiating the defining markers of the celebrated novels of high postcoloniality. Single-minded, self-assured protagonists fail to become centers of progress in these novels not because nationalists embody some inherent epistemological deficiency; they fail because the Nigerian nation state lacks sturdy democratic guarantees for its citizens.

Although the third generation is also concerned with the problems that the Nigerian nation-state face, the focus is less on lamenting and resisting the effects of the colonial era than on new approaches to surviving in postcolonial Nigeria with a corrupt and often military-powered government. Adeeko (2008: 11) points out that the U.S., more specifically escaping to the U.S., features prominently in these novels as a method of narrative closure, and Adesanmi and Dunton (2008: ix) would indeed agree that migrancy has become a central feature of the new novels. In the older novels, leaving Africa for the U.S. or U.K. was seen as an act of betrayal and that "America spells death of the patriotic spirit necessary for regenerating the African nation space despoiled by colonialism and slavery" (Adeeko, 2008: 15). The newer novels, however, sometimes view this as a "tactical retreat" for those for whom it had become too unbearable or dangerous to remain in Africa (Adeeko, 2008: 15). While the protagonists in older novels could retreat to the traditional village when life in the city become unbearable, in the newer novels this is no longer an option as the powers of the dictator and military rule now extend to these villages as well (Adeeko, 2008: 17). As mentioned above, the third generation is just as concerned with

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nation-building, but the approach has changed somewhat. In earlier novels, the birth of an independent nation-state had been worth dying for, but as the ideal of the flourishing, independent nation-state gave way to corrupt and oppressive leadership, the process of nation-building has become more complicated.

Adeeko (2008: 23, 24) furthermore also discusses the way in which the global and the cosmopolitan feature in the newer novels, stating that although these elements were also present in older novels, "[t]he main mark of difference in the new novels is therefore not some unprecedented globalist insight but the precise turn to America as the preferred cosmopolis, next to Lagos and other Nigerian locations." This turning to America as a means of escape "points to a development of cosmopolitanism in Nigerian intellectual consciousness", but he adds, "we would be mistaken to believe that the willingness to form fruitful relationships with 'strangers' outside of one's homeland is an idea which late 20th century brutal dictatorships imposed on the population" (Adeeko, 2008: 24). Rather, this turn to the U.S. is a "respite" from the harrowing socio-political environment in Nigeria. The engagement with intellectuals from the U.S. does nevertheless potentially provide Nigerians with new ways in which to address the problems back home.

In the older novels, the Nigerian characters voluntarily went abroad to study in order to find a means of fighting colonialism. The same happens in newer novels, except now the characters tend to turn to the U.S., rather than England or France, in order to gain the knowledge and tools to return to fight the neo-colonial forces crippling their nations (Adeeko, 2008: 18). The intellectual's ability to function in the Nigerian public sphere as presented in the novels could be frustrated and complicated, and at the same time it could be enriched. The intellectuals generally still desire a healthy nation-state and desire to engage in a course of action that will manifest this state of affairs, but their ability to do so tends to be compromised. Firstly, the dictator or military rulers in Nigeria resist democracy, often at the cost of human lives, and many intellectuals choose to emigrate to America either as means of escape or respite (Adeeko, 2008: 24, 25). Secondly, in the U.S. as well as other western countries that the characters go to, they encounter and engage with new ideas in western education and culture, ideas that, in turn, can either empower or disempower them in their ability to engage with issues back home. On the one hand, they may have become so entrenched in using western concepts or perspectives to define and explain problems that they fail to realise that these are not always adequate frameworks for

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examining African problems. On the other hand they may be able to selectively use the knowledge they have acquired to provide fresh insight into problems in Nigeria and suggest possible solutions. Regardless of the challenges posed, the fact remains that those who emigrate, more often than not, continue to desire to see their country of origin become a stable nation-state in which its citizens can thrive.

While Amy Novak (2008) and others view the third generation Nigerian novelist as presenting the difficulties the Other experiences in expressing the trauma of the colonial experience, which continues through neo-colonial forces, perpetuating the existence of the colonial 'Manichean Order', Chielozona Eze (2005) and Amanda Aycock (2009a and 2009b) disagree. Although it cannot be denied that neo-colonial forces collude with corrupt Nigerian government officials to exploit the people and natural resources of the country, the new generation does seem to move beyond simply 'write[ing] back' to the Empire in the classic fashion of postcolonial textualities. Rather, they focus on Nigeria as a cultural, transnational and hybridized space with the goal of enhancing human flourishing there (Eze, 2005: 110). This is evident in the novels to be discussed which are all set in the years immediately after independence as opposed to a more contemporary Nigeria. The first and second generation novels are often set in the same time-frame, sometimes written as a prophecy of the future, yet the focus is different. The new novels seem more prone to acknowledge the shared struggles of humans everywhere, the Nigerian setting providing an individual case in point.

Although neo-colonialism may be a reality in Africa, resisting or denouncing this is not the primary focus of my discussion of these novels. Pertinent to the study at hand is Eze's (2005: 107, 108) use of Milan Kundera's (1988: 43) view of the novel as,

a means of examining not reality but existence. Existence for him is 'not what has occurred, existence is the realm of human possibilities, everything that man can become, everything he is capable of' (Kundera 43). ... Thus, his celebrated novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, is not devoted to giving an account of the Prague Uprising, but of how human beings thrived in that given situation, their art of living, loving and dying.

Thus I will examine novels of the third generation as examples of the Nigerian 'art of living, loving and dying' within the set of circumstances they inhabit, because, as Eze (2005: 108) says,

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“[these] submissions are germane to a reading of Nigeria’s third generation fiction”. Chimamanda Adichie for example stated in her talk “The Danger of a Single Story” (2009: n.p.) that every time she returns to Nigeria she is faced with complaints about the failed government and infrastructure and so on, but is also inspired, “by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it”. Therefore, the characters in the novels to be discussed are viewed as actively trying to create a life for themselves and it is often their participation in the course of globalisation that allows them to do so. In the process they put their Nigerian stamp on global ideas and commodities. These characters may be largely powerless to combat or counteract the forces of neo-colonialism, but they seem to be trying to make the best of the situation and thus survive by incorporating the global into the local.

GLOBALISATION AND IDENTITY: TRANSFORMATION AND CIRCULATION IN NIGERIA

For the last decade, scholars have been showing a rising interest in exploring paradigms which go beyond postcolonialism (Young, 2004; Hofmeyr and Gunner, 2005; Yaeger, 2007; Hargreaves and Murphy, 2008; Dawson and Larrivee, 2010; Dawson, 2011). Omaar Hena (2009) discusses postcolonial study’s increasing focus on the impact of globalisation, which can have varying effects on the postcolonial world. It seems that contemporary cultural studies in Africa are moving away from “essentialized notions of difference and builds [sic] on a philosophy of critical cosmopolitanism” (Mbembe and Posel, 2005: 283-284). For example, Emma Dawson and Pierre Larrivee (2010) explicate that the change in attitude towards and use of language by Chinua Achebe of the first generation and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of the third generation are indicative of the way in which Nigeria has moved beyond a “traditional postcolonial identity” towards a more globalised, cosmopolitan one. Indeed Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism could be used to view identity as formed in dialogue with various external influences (Holquist, 1990). As the world becomes increasingly globalised, we encounter more and more influences from foreign places across the globe and have to negotiate these in relation to our own identities. So, as scholars are concerned with how the postcolonial fits into the global, I will consider the

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human, geographic and abstract sites at which the local and global intersect and what these encounters produce, specifically in terms of identity formation.

Anthropologist James Ferguson (2006: 14) states that globalisation through political, economic and cultural forces acts as a network rather than a blanket covering the globe. While some parts of a nation's population have a direct relationship with global forces, others may experience only passing encounters. It seems that the contact the latter has with the global world is often limited to simply being consumers of imported products, such as *Coca-Cola*, *MacDonald's* or *Hollywood* films. Ferguson (2006: 15, 16) explores how Africa often features a sort of 'doubling' of western economic and cultural forms. While African states often have an official economy, army, elections and symbols of western nation-states, they also contain shadow or parallel economies and armies which are often more powerful than the western version they copy (Ferguson, 2006: 16). In this case the official copies tend to be hollow representations of the western forms, while the shadow versions have more substance and are African versions of the western (Ferguson, 2006: 16). Ferguson (2006: 17) further argues then that these shadows 'are' not simply a negative space of absence; it is a likeness, an inseparable other-who-is-also-oneself to whom one is bound. The process of *circulation* and *transformation* (to be discussed below) is useful in describing the flow of globalisation and how this gives rise to Ferguson's shadows as Africans reinvent imported products and ideas in unique and dynamic ways.

One of the most prominent forces of globalisation in Africa is the multinational companies involved in the extraction of natural resources such as oil, thereby connecting local African economies with the global. The majority of citizens of such nations, however, does not benefit from these international relationships. Ogoniland in Nigeria is a prime example of how oil is extracted from the land while the profits go to the Shell Corporation, with Nigerian officials and the military protecting Shell staff from attacks by the Ogoni 'rebels' (Nixon, 1996; Young, 1999). Meanwhile the people residing on the land now live in appalling conditions due to the environmental destruction caused by pollution (Nixon, 1999: 3; Young, 1999: 454-457). Ken Saro-Wiwa wrote about these injustices and was eventually executed by the Nigerian government for speaking out while Shell denied any involvement in this. This subsequently led to international uproar as the spotlight was put on the dealings between the Shell and corrupt government officials at the exclusion of and to the detriment of the local people. Thus, the local

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may be linked to the global and is affected by it, either negatively or positively depending on the circumstances, but very seldom has any access to participate in or influence it meaningfully.

In order to investigate this relationship between the local and global, I will use Bill Ashcroft's (2009: 90) concepts of *transformation* and *circulation*, which describe the flow between the local and global within the networks of globalisation. I am interested in how participation in these processes leads to the development of an array of transnational identities. Firstly though, we need to clarify what this flow between local and global entails. Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (2000: 16) define the flow in the network as,

[t]he movement of physical artifacts, people, symbols, tokens and information across space and time, while networks refer to regularized or patterned interactions between independent agents, nodes of activity, or sites of power.

In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai (1996) proposes five dimensions within which this flow takes place, namely *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *finanscapes* and *ideoscapes*. It is important to note that the different -scapes overlap and are in a constant state of flux, so one cannot really discuss one aspect without necessarily touching on the others. So although I will investigate primarily the ethnoscapes, reference to the other dimensions will be made as these pertain to different forms of transformation and circulation in the novels under discussion here and the resulting transnational identities. Very broadly speaking then the dimensions can be defined as follows: ethnoscapes refer to the people who cross borders and cultures for a variety of reasons; mediascapes are the images and narratives that are produced and disseminated virtually unhindered through the media across the globe; technoscapes are the technological advancements that allow for information to be exchanged globally; finanscapes refer to global financial exchanges; and ideoscapes consist of the ideologies produced by governments and their opposition movements which define the political scenery of a nation (Appadurai, 1996: Chapters 2-4).

Secondly, in defining *circulation* and *transformation* one should consider Ferguson's (2006: 30) reference to the fact that instead of globalisation leading to homogenisation, anthropologists have found that it has resulted in "...a dynamic 'cut-and-mix' world of surprising borrowing, ironic reinventions, and dazzling resignifications". In a later chapter, he (2006: 174)

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further argues that the motivation behind Africans' emulation of western culture, '...is neither a mocking parody nor a pathetic colonized aping, but a haunting claim for equal rights of membership in a spectacularly unequal global society'. I will thus consider circulation as the process whereby ideas, commodities and people 'flow' between the local and the global through, for example, the media, technology, migration or global trade.

Transformation, on the other hand, is the appropriation and reinvention of a global commodity or idea, turning it into a unique, local version. For example, in his discussion on Chris Abani's *Graceland* (2004), Jacob Patterson-Stein (2009) considers how music in the novel takes on a non-national form and does not in fact reinforce the binary opposites of Nigerian and western (specifically from the U.S.) as many critics have argued. Patterson-Stein (2009: 59) quotes firstly James Clifford (1992: 114) as referring to the use of music as the 'localising of global symbols'. He also quotes Jonathan Rutherford (1990: 11) as saying that, '[i]n the commodification of language and culture, objects and images are torn free of their original referents and their meanings become a spectacle open to almost infinite translation'. In this way music is circulated from the U.S. and other parts of the world to Nigeria, but in Nigeria it is 'translated' into and endowed with Nigerian meaning. Similarly, Ashcroft (2009: 90, 91) refers to literary works written in the language of the coloniser as a prime example of this transformation. These texts attempt, among other things, to appropriate and transform the language of the coloniser in order to change the west's perception of the postcolonial subject through circulation of these texts in the west (Gikandi, 2001: 647-652). As mentioned previously, some would argue that this sometimes involves mimicking western culture by appropriating symbols of it, while remaining devoid of the core substance of the culture from which those symbols evolve, and at other times it gives rise to truly African expression. However, I would argue that it is not merely a mimicking of another culture, but rather the appropriation of the symbol, language or music of a different culture and the transformation of it into a local version.

Matthew Omelsky's (2011) discussion on interpellation is useful here in gaining a clearer understanding of the processes of circulation and transformation. Judith Butler (1993, 1997) reworks Althusser's concept of interpellation and 'argues that the notion of interpellation must take into account the way in which the addressee's 'conscience' is conditioned to 'turn around' even before the hail of the law' (In Omelsky, 2011: 88). In this way the subject is not merely

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made a subject of the law, but interpellation presupposes the subject's desire to be obedient to the law (2011: 88). Omelsky's (2011: 88) investigation into the consumption of American culture by young people in Africa frames them as, "by no means passive subjects onto which the interpellation of non-African capital is imposed". Rather, while western consumer capital such as movies and music "interpellate" the youth, of which they then become consumers, they indeed "anticipate the interpellation and reconfigure these cultural items to construct their imaginary sphere" (2011: 88, 89). Following Omelsky, I will view the characters in the novels under discussion as interpellated by global ideas and commodities through the process of circulation of these to the local. The characters, however, in certain ways anticipate this circulation and rather than just inadvertently consuming global capital culture, they do so on their own terms by transforming them into versions that suit their needs and desires.

Having said this, the process of circulation, specifically of novels, is a rather complex and often problematic one. Graham Huggan (2001: 56) argues that the postcolonial writer employs "strategic exoticism" in order to disrupt the reader's perception about the postcolonial world. "Exoticism" is used to market these texts to western readers whose very misperception of the postcolonial world leads them to desire exotic texts (Huggan, 2001: 56). Thus, even though postcolonial writers attempt, through their writing, to deconstruct the reader's misperceptions of the postcolonial, the very process of marketing their writing to an international audience based on its exoticism makes them complicit with the source of these misperceptions, thus ironically undermining their original purpose. Brouillette (2007: 15-26) agrees, claiming that postcolonial literature by nature has a "touristic conscience" which the author and reader try to manage while it is this very process which leads this field of literature to flourish and profit.

This use of "exoticism" is evident, for example, in literature and films on the child soldier which have drawn a lot of attention as these children are represented with the intention to shock people into condemning this practice and demanding change. Even though these types of novels and films are avidly consumed by the west, the question remains as to whether they have the desired effect (Schultheis, 2008). Schultheis (2008: 34-36) discusses, inter alia, the success of the organisation *Invisible Children* in raising awareness about and support for displaced children in Uganda through its feature film, *Invisible Children: Final Cut*. She suggests that their success seems to pivot on how "the film and website ask us quite explicitly to identify with the filmmakers as opposed to the African children, and the resulting activism reifies, rather than

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transforms, the relationship between them (2008: 34-35). So although some youth in the U.S. have become involved in the humanitarian efforts to help the displaced Ugandan children, the success of this project lies in the appeal of becoming a hero through participation rather than any humanitarian inclination. Schultheis (2008) thus points out that despite this project and other films and literature on child soldiering, the western consumer generally tends to misunderstand the underlying global structural inequalities which give rise to political and economic climates that lead to the appropriation of children into armies. These child soldier narratives have in effect become a commodity employing strategic exoticism, albeit with seemingly good intentions, in order to circulate them in the west. The *Invisible Children* filmmakers' use of an edgy, MTV-inspired aesthetic (2008: 34) is also an example of how this narrative has been transformed to suit the culture of the youth in the U.S. So, as narratives of the child-soldier are circulated from the local to the global through technology and the media, they become transformed in the process. Transformation can, in other words, be both subversive and problematic.

Other examples of transformation include India and Nigeria's development of their film industry and its relationship with *Hollywood* products and concepts. The development of both the *Bollywood* and *Nollywood* industries in India and Nigeria respectively indicates that while the U.S. has exported their films to countries around the world, inevitably influencing the cultures which consume these products, the recipient cultures have also sought to modify the film subjects and practices to adhere to cultural needs and interests. Jigna Desai and Rajinder Dudrah (2008) discuss how many have objected to the term *Bollywood*, arguing it implies that the film industry is merely a derivative or copy of *Hollywood* and so prefer to call it *Hindi Cinema*. Desai and Dudrah (2008) explain how the term *Bollywood* only came into popular use long after the Indian film industry had started to develop and that the genres within this industry are uniquely Indian and thus are in no way merely mimicking *Hollywood*.¹

The journals *African Studies* (2005) and *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (2008) have also both published special issues that focus on other forms of transformation, discussing the innovative ways in which many Africans partake in the global flow by transforming local culture through the incorporation of the global into the local. The special edition in *African Studies*

¹ For further discussions on globalisation and both *Nollywood* and *Bollywood*, see respectively Marston et al. *Flattening Ontologies of Globalization: The Nollywood Case* (2007) and Harish Trivedi's chapter *From Bollywood to Hollywood: The Globalization of Hindi Cinema* in Krishnaswamy and Hawley's (Eds) *The Postcolonial and the Global* (2007).

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centres on questions about the relationship between popular culture and the 'African imaginary', but more importantly, 'behind these deliberations, and co-existing with them, were questions relating to the circulation of texts in both a national and a transnational space' (Gunner, 2005: 1). Isabel Hofmeyr's (2005) article in this special issue specifically challenges readers to view African writing, both in literature and the mass media, as engaging with transnational issues rather than just being concerned with the local. Similarly, the special issue of *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, titled 'African City Textualities', is interested in 'document[ing] some of the creativity and vibrancy with which African city dwellers participate in global flows and exchanges – focusing in particular on the flows and exchanges of texts and textual elements' (Primorac, 2008: 1). Both these special issues explore the unique ways in which Africa participates in global flows through the circulation of texts in transnational spaces and the transformation of urban cities into modern, cosmopolitan cities evident in texts.

Wendy Belcher's (2009) *reciprocal enculturation* model, which explicates the agency of the postcolonial other, is also similar to Ashcroft's discussion of the processes of transformation and circulation. Belcher argues that while in the 1980s postcolonial theorists may have come to the conclusion that the postcolonial other had little or no agency, the arguments have come a long way since then (2009: 213). The postcolonial subject indeed did have agency to influence the colonizer and Belcher theorises how this takes place within the field of literary studies (2009: 213). She explains that enculturation has been a reciprocal process between the colonised and coloniser (2009: 221):

We need to view all actors in the colonial encounter as agents, if unequally armed ones. A reciprocal enculturation model posits the existence of mutual cultural exchange between Africans and Europeans that does not elide the agency of the other.

Belcher (2009) discusses a number of studies (Mechal Sobel, 1987; Suzanne Preston Blier, 1993; John Kelly Thornton, 1998; Françoise Lionnet, 1998; Linda Colley, 2000; Keith Cartwright, 2002; Debbie Lee, 2002; Wendy Belcher, 2008) which have used this model to elucidate the extent to which the colonised has impacted upon and influenced the coloniser by acting as a 'consuming subject' as opposed to being a mere 'consumed object'. She thus indicates the promise of new perspectives which the reciprocal enculturation perspective offers in exploring

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how African intellectual and cultural production have been circulated in the western world and incorporated into western ideas and concepts.

In addition, more direct relationships between local and globalising forces often take the form of migration and transnationalism. Migration of the elite or the lucky to the western world has been partly the result of globalisation and political unrest in Africa. Researchers in a variety of fields (Schiller, Basch and Blanck-Szanton, 1992; Crush and McDonald, 2000; Vertovec, 1999, 2001, 2004; Roudometof, 2005) have traced the way migrants have developed transnational, hybrid identities and how this influences the way they relate to and function in both their new country, and in their country of origin. In Nigeria, those privileged enough to have the opportunity to work or study abroad have had complex relationships with both their foreign home and Nigeria. A prime example is provided in Chinua Achebe's novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960), which explores the disillusionment the protagonist experiences upon his return to Nigeria after studying abroad, a theme present in much postcolonial African literature. In this dissertation I will explore the transformation and circulation evident in a number of third generation Nigerian novels, considering specifically the transnational figure involved in both transformation and circulation. People from all sectors of society are participants in these processes, as Aschroft (2009: 93) says:

At any given time the forces acting in globalization may include transnational companies, the state, state-controlled and private media, intellectuals and other cultural elites, and ordinary consumers of all kinds, who demonstrate the culturally productive capacity of consumption.

However, transnationalism does not only extend to migrants or those who study abroad. Chris Abani, for one, stated in an interview with Amy Aycock (2009a: 7) that, '[w]e're all transnational, either in the real sense of having migrated or travelled to different countries, or in the way in which culture is mixed'. Abani continues to state that culture is never static, always in flux, that all culture and identities are therefore 'mongrelized', and thus we are all transnational (Aycock, 2009a: 6, 7).

I will firstly investigate transnational identities that result both from interaction with the global in the local and migration from the local to a variety of geographic sites, both national and

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international. I will examine the local individual who comes into contact with the global in various forms and will consider the results of this intersection, especially focusing on how this process of cultural exchange relates to the developing of hybrid identities. This will include a discussion of the transformation of the global by the local, as well as the circulation of the local within the global as discussed above.

In discussing postcolonialism and globalization, and considering the myriads of people who travel across the globe for business, education, politics and various other reasons, as well as the cultural capital that is circulated between countries and continents, I turn to some of the scholarship on cosmopolitanism. Patrick Hayden (2005: 12) relates how the concept of cosmopolitanism seems to have originated with Diogenes when he stated, "I am a citizen of the world" (Diogenes Laertius, 1925: 65). This was followed by Kant's view on cosmopolitanism and later by the development of cosmopolitan democracy (Hayden, 2005: 11). These discussions have led to a variety of concepts and theories such as "cosmopolitanization" (Beck, 2006), "cosmopolitics" (Cheah, 1998; Archibugi & Koenig-Archibugi, 2003; Stenger, 2010), "abject cosmopolitanism" (Nyers, 2003) and "vernacular cosmopolitanism" (Cheah, 2006; Werbner, 2006). Hayden (2005: 33) defines cosmopolitanism as follows: "Cosmopolitanism means 'world citizenship' and implies membership on the parts of all individuals in a universal community of human beings as moral persons". Martha Nussbaum (1994: 14) also defines cosmopolitanism as the state of being a "citizen of the world" and Ashcroft (2009: 98) similarly refers to it as "a venerable and evocative term meaning 'at home in the world'". Cosmopolitans, as Ulf Hannerz (1995: 102-106) suggests, have mastered the rules and norms of various cultures and are viewed as competent participants in these, yet are not committed to any one culture, but rather to all humankind.

It is, however, important to distinguish between cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. While cosmopolitans willingly and eagerly learn about and immerse themselves in new cultures, transnationals do so only in so far as it enables them to function in their local culture affected by the global or in the culture of the new country they inhabit. For example, Africans who migrate to the U.S.A. more often than not prefer to socialise and intermarry with others from the same cultural group, continuing to do things the traditional way and eating traditional foods (Zachary, 2006: 50). Even if they have lived in the U.S. for many years, they rarely adopt an American identity but continue to view themselves as Nigerian, Cameroonian, Ghanaian or whatever

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nationality they hail from, and continue to maintain a permanent connection with their homeland (Zachary, 2006: 51-53). These immigrants seem to employ the idea of 'home + plus' (Theroux, 1986: 133), the U.S.A., for example, being home plus safety, wealth and convenience.

Afropolitanism then could be said to derive from cosmopolitanism, and can be defined as a way of being an African at home in the world, which is different from being transnational. Initially the term Afropolitan was used by Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu (2005) to describe immigrant Africans who 'live outside of Africa yet remain committed to the cultural politics of their own native/natal nations and the continent at large' (Makokha, 2011: 17). Based on this definition, it seems that Afropolitanism could be a form of transnationalism. The concept of Afropolitanism, however, continued to develop over time and as Gikandi (2011: 11) explains it,

...the term Afropolitan can now be read as the description of a new phenomenology of Africanness – a way of being African in the world. Afropolitanism may sound like an awkward term, but there is no doubting that it has been prompted by the desire to think of African identities as both rooted in specific local geographies but also transcendental of them. To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among others, is an example of an Afropolitan (Makokha, 2011: 16) as she lives outside of Africa yet writes about and 'willingly complicates Africa' (Tuakli-Wosornu, 2005). However, Mbembe goes beyond Tuakli-Wosornu's definition of Afropolitanism in so far as he does not consider it a unique and recent phenomenon, but rather as a phenomenon evident in the pre-colonial world (Makokha, 2011: 18-19). What he calls the 'worlds-in-movement phenomenon' consists of the processes of *dispersal* and *immersion* (Mbembe, 2006:26), which would seem to correlate with Aschroft's *circulation* and *transformation*. Mbembe (2006: 28) rebuts the nativist argument, which he describes as follows:

In its mild form, nativism appears as an ideology glorifying differences and diversity and fighting to safeguard customs and identities perceived as threatened. According to nativistic logic, identities and political struggles are founded on the basis of a distinction between

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–those who are from hereø (autochthonous) and –those who come from outsideø (non-natives). Nativists forget that, in their stereotyped form, the customs and traditions to which they claim to adhere were often invented not by the actual autochthons, but by missionaries and settlers.

Mbembe continues by explaining how the phenomenon of dispersion and immersion in fact predates both slavery and colonialism. He states that Afropolitans such as Adichie would then still be considered African, albeit a different version of African. The texts under discussion in this dissertation are mostly written by Afropolitans and they thus provide us with potentially unique perspectives on what it means to be African or, more specifically, Nigerian. I agree with Mbembeø's anti-nativist point of view as changes in culture and tradition are inevitable, and although changes enforced by colonisation cannot be condoned, the effects of globalisation cannot be avoided either and should, in some cases, be welcomed as these can enrich our lives. As Aycock (2009b: 11, 12) puts it in her discussion on the works of Chris Abani,

[Abani] demonstrates the fraught implications of attempting to achieve/enforce normative identity in the modern, globalised, fragmented ó yet intertwined ó world, while at the same time celebrating the perpetuality of øbecomingø as the meaningful, beautiful (if painful) aspect of life. ... Abani denies the existence of essential identities, questions the use of history as an authoritative source of identity, asserts that identity is performative, and reveals the extent to which we are all inhabitants of a mongrel identity.

I would agree with this view that we are all transnational in one way or another, and yet we still adhere to rules, norms, traditions and rituals specific to our socio-cultural context. Afropolitanism can be viewed as a specific form of African cosmopolitanism. However, while Afropolitans by definition have travelled beyond their borders, specifically to cosmopolitan centres on the continent or abroad, transnationals have not, and therefore I will use the term Afrotransnational to refer to the unique African expression of transnationalism.

In essence, the difference between Afropolitans and Afrotransnationals as I theorise them can be explained in terms of circulation and transformation. Based on Gikandiø's (2011: 11) definition above where he states that Afropolitans live across state lines, I would say that

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Afropolitans form part of a small, relatively privileged group of individuals who have the opportunity to study, travel and even live overseas, usually Europe and the US. These individuals are part of the global flow specifically within Appadurai's (1996) dimension of the ethnoscape. In a manner of speaking they are circulated within a cosmopolitan city, or cities, in a foreign country. Here they are immersed in a new culture with its foreign language, food, people, lifestyle and other facets of culture. Over time they assimilate various aspects of the foreign culture into their own lifestyle and culture, as Elleke Boehmer explains:

In the 1990s the generic postcolonial writer is more likely to be a cultural traveller, or an 'extra territorial' than a national. Ex-colonial by birth, 'third world' in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way, he or she works within the precincts of the Western metropolis while at the same time retaining thematic and/or political connections with a national background. (1995: 233)

They then form a new, cosmopolitan, identity which is a fusion of their original Nigerian identity and the foreign culture(s) they inhabit through the process of transformation. When these Afropolitans return to Nigeria, they are very different to those Nigerians at home because they have mastered aspects of a foreign culture through experiential learning that Nigerians confined to their nation can never achieve.

I define Afrotransnationalism, on the other hand, as an identity generally formed by the local citizens through global 'products' being circulated within local Nigerian contexts and then transformed by the locals, and this ultimately affects their identity. I base my theorisation of Afrotransnationalism on Aihwa Ong's (1999: 4) use of the term transnationality:

Trans denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something. ... I use *transnationalism* to refer to the cultural specificities of global processes, tracing the multiplicity of the uses and conceptions of 'culture'. (Emphasis in original)

I would theorise that Afrotransnationals themselves generally do not cross actual state lines as much as global products are circulated to them from the global. They are only exposed to fragments of any one foreign culture, and often it is out of context. They thus may not come to

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terms with foreign cultures in the same way that Afropolitans do. Nevertheless, they transform the global products in the different -scapes (Appadurai, 1996) and assimilate them into existing Nigerian culture. This circulation and transformation are not limited only to products from outside the continent but include those from other African countries. As these products then flow between one African nation and another, or even between cultures in a nation, they are often transformed and assimilated into the local culture.

I need also add that Afropolitans could possibly develop more Afrotransnational identities. As will be seen in the novels under discussion, many Nigerians return to Africa with Afropolitan identities after studying and living abroad. This is problematic as only a very small percentage of Nigerians, usually the elite of the nation, display Afropolitanism. Some attempt to readjust into the Nigerian or Lagosian way of life outside of the elite lifestyle and begin to discard some aspects of the cosmopolitan culture they adopted. They employ the process of transformation yet again as they assimilate the Afrotransnational culture in Nigeria into their own.

Arguably Afrotransnational identities could perhaps aid in solving, to a limited extent, the problem of defining nationhood in Nigeria and indeed other African countries. Many scholars (Davidson, 1992; Szeman, 2003; Hawley, 2008) have discussed the fraught implications of the colonial powers carving Africa up into countries which divide ethnic groups between nation-states, while combining others, "that have little more in common than proximity" (Hawley, 2008: 16), into a country and then often pitting the ethnic groups against each other as a divide and conquer strategy. In Nigeria such divisions and ethnic differences are one of the factors that led to the Biafran War. However, the Afrotransnational identities of residents of Lagos as represented in the novels of the third generation illustrate the move away from identifying with a person's traditional, ethnic grouping first and foremost: "we notice that the idea of community is no longer restricted to the people from the same ethnic group. Community becomes a group linked by common concern for humanity irrespective of ethnic origin" (Eze, 2005: 104). Dawson and Larrivee (2010) point out the change in attitude towards and use of language in third generation literature compared to that of the first generation "inform on social change" (931). They (2010: 921, 922) indicate the development of a "Nigerian English" which allows for "Nigerian Literature" to arise as opposed to literature identified essentially as Igbo or Yoruba literature, without necessarily denying, destroying or doing damage to those ethnic identities. If

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the literary works of Nigeria can take on a combined 'Nigerian' identity, then perhaps this could indicate the move of the nation at large towards developing some form of a unified identity, or at the very least sharing certain commonalities that cross cultural and ethnic lines within the nation-state. In other words, within Nigeria itself there are numerous cultural and ethnic groups with distinct identities, but Afrotransnationalism could offer some common quality or perspective that crosses these cultural and ethnic boundaries. The Afrotransnational identities assumed by Nigerians in the novels to be analysed may be a move in the direction of cultivating a workable Nigerian identity that could unite the nation in some ways. Afrotransnational identities could thus aid in creating a more inclusive imagined community (Anderson, 1991) that could help Nigerians overcome the problems created by the imposition of a nation-state on the various ethnic groups today known collectively as Nigeria.

I will argue that although early postcolonial literature indeed sought to denounce and subvert the effects of colonialism, the novels by third generation Nigerian authors reflect rather different perspectives. The effects of globalisation evident in their novels in the form of circulation and transformation are not intended to merely decry the lingering effects of colonialism or neo-colonialism where the 'traditional way of living' is defended in light of the destructive effects of globalisation imposed on Africans. Rather, as Ferguson (2006: 20, 21) argues, in the process of globalisation, the idea of western culture is not merely being imprinted on Africans as being superior to African culture and ways of life. Africans are also being made aware of the vast economic inequalities that exist between the western standard of living and the poverty that the vast majority of Africans live in (2006: 21). Thus, I would posit that the consumption and transformation of western commodities and ideas within Africa are motivated largely by a desire to acquire the western standards of living and symbols of affluence they are exposed to in the media rather than being motivated by the perception that western products and ideas are inherently superior to the African. In this way, the products resulting from these processes can firstly be viewed as an expression of the unique African versions of the western goods and concepts Africans encounter in the flow of globalisation. Secondly, the appropriation and transformation of western goods and ideas express their claim to 'a-place-the-world' which refers not only to a geographical location but also a 'rank in a system of social categories' (Ferguson, 2006: 6). So essentially I am interested in exploring the effects of globalisation, specifically in terms of Ashcroft's theorisation of circulation and transformation, as present in

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Appadurai's -scapes, particularly the ethnoscape. My aim is to explore how the manifestation of circulation and transformation gives rise to and impacts on the development of transnational, or Afrotransnational, and Afropolitan identities, and what this means for the future of Nigeria.

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Njubi Nesbitt (2002) describes three categories of African migrant scholars formed as a result of their attempt to come to terms with their "Africanity", which they have to face for the first time due to the fact of being perceived, in other countries, as an African first and foremost, rather than, for instance, an Igbo Nigerian or Gikuyu Kenyan. Chimamanda Adichie for example relates that before she moved to the U.S. she did not consciously identify herself as being African and yet when issues regarding Africa came up she was the one people turned to (Adichie, 2009). Nesbitt (2002) uses Ngugi's "The Allegory of the Cave Dwellers" to explain the complexities of these politics of exile. He (2002: 71-72) posits that firstly, the *comprador intelligentsia* are those, "...serving the neo-colonial system as witting...agents" who promote Eurocentric thinking and neo-colonial interests in Africa, "us[ing] their national origins, color, and education to serve as spokespersons and intellectual henchmen for organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund". The *postcolonial critics*, on the other hand, are the "unwitting agents" who like the comprador intelligentsia "also are conduits of Eurocentric thought for African consumption through the adaptation of the latest trend in European and American perspectives to 'explain' the 'African experience'" (2002: 71-73). Lastly, there are the *progressive exiles* who, "us[e] the knowledge they have gained from their sojourn in the West to liberate their fellows" (2002: 73). These categories shed light on the multiple identities many African migrant scholars struggle with, and as Nesbitt (2002: 74) points out, these categories are not mutually exclusive. It is also doubtful whether these are the only categories. As already discussed, African migrants, not necessarily scholars, often employ the "home + plus" (Theroux, 1986: 133) approach to living in Europe or the U.S. So in an attempt to deal with the double consciousness African migrants develop, Nesbitt (2002) advocates the need to embrace a broader, more Pan-African identity.

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Joining the Pan-African community is useful for scholars in the Diaspora in dealing with double consciousness, but when they return home and engage with issues of their nation as opposed to those of the Diaspora, their approach may need to change. If these scholars return as progressive exiles, it may be beneficial to adopt more Afrotransnational identities if they wish to effectively connect with their fellows whose everyday concerns may be more limited than those of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism as Nesbitt (2002: 73) uses it connects the migrant scholar to others in the Diaspora of African descent in a struggle against racial oppression within the context of living in a western nation where they are perceived as representatives for all of Africa. This may not be completely germane to Nigerians whose struggle differs somewhat and includes grappling with the effects of postcolonialism, neo-colonialism and oppression by their own elite. Afrotransnationalism allows progressive exiles to deal with problems within the specific African context they find themselves in, in part by drawing on useful work by those in the Diaspora. The problem then remains, as Nesbitt (2002: 74) also concedes, that when many of these migrants, even the progressive exiles, return to the continent and succeeds in attaining a position of power to liberate their fellows, they tend to turn into the worst kind of comprador intelligentsia. The third generation Nigerian authors under consideration in this study could be considered progressive exiles and it is hard to imagine that any of them would turn into comprador intelligentsia given the chance, but that is not the question at hand. The question here is that if we define them for the purpose of this study as writer-intellectuals (to be discussed below), how do the forces of globalisation influence their depiction of that globalisation in relation to identity and specifically in terms of the effect this has on intellectuals in their novels?

Within this context of globalisation, transnationalism and Afropolitanism I will then consider the role and function of the intellectual taking into account both the authors and the ethnoscapes represented in their novels. I will firstly explore how the different identities, which form as a result of the flow of globalisation, relate to the intellectual's ability to function in the public sphere. Noam Chomsky (1967: n.p.) describes the purpose of intellectuals by stating that,

[i]ntellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western world, at

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least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression.

The purpose of intellectuals is to "speak the truth and to expose lies" (Chomsky, 1967: n.p.) for the good of society. Edward Said (1994: 102) similarly expresses his view of the intellectual's responsibility to speak the truth to power thus:

Speaking the truth to power is no Panglossian idealism: it is carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change.

The purpose of the intellectual according to Chomsky and Said would then be to speak the truth to power in order to, very broadly speaking, stand up for what is right, by choosing the most accurate "truth" and communicating it in a way most understandable to a wide enough audience so that it will bring about change for the good of society.

In order to clarify how intellectuals could go about doing this, I will use two categories of intellectuals, namely the *traditional* and *organic*, as described in Antonio Gramsci's seminal work (1971), to investigate the role and function of the intellectual in Nigerian society in the novels under discussion. The distinction between the two is based not so much on class or profession but rather on function in society (Gramsci, 1971: 3). The *traditional intellectual* consists of those who are professional intellectuals, such as artists or scientists, but who do not necessarily function to meaningfully influence society outside of their respective field (Gramsci, 1971: 3). Conversely there is the *organic intellectual*, who can arise from any social class and profession, yet functions to influence and direct the thinking and actions of a specific social class of society (Gramsci, 1971: 3).

Gramsci's distinction between the two is taken further by the idea of the *public intellectual*, a term Linda Alcoff (2003: 524) clarifies by calling it the "publicly engaged intellectual". It would seem that more often than not, it is *organic* intellectuals who function as *public* intellectuals, while the *traditional* intellectual's ability to do so is limited by the institutions that employ them. There has been much debate in Britain, France, the U.S., as well as in South Africa, regarding the decline or "death" of the intellectual. It has long been argued that traditional

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intellectuals, in the U.S. specifically, who choose to actively take part in the public sphere often risk sacrificing academic tenure due to the restrictions that may be placed on them by their institution or peers who have specific ideas about the responsibilities and expectations of scholarly academics (Alcoff, 2003: 521). Helen Small (2002: 2), in her introduction to *öThe Public Intellectualö* says that,

[a] much higher proportion of the individuals who attract the label 'intellectuals' now are tenured academics rather than the freelance writers or journalists who were prominent a generation or so back ... many have doubted whether the academic can plausibly be an intellectual, especially when the institution providing him or her with financial support seeks in some measure to define the kinds of work undertaken.

Timothy Brennan (2001: 5) similarly argues that due to the corporate nature that universities and other similar institution have adopted, *öthe university is slowly transformed into an arena where the company pays directly for intellectual services renderedö*. Furthermore, according to Said (1994: 9), one of the fundamental shortcomings of the traditional intellectual who works for a specific institution would be that they often develop a discourse specific to their field and it is generally only other experts in the same field who understand it. Regardless, Said (1994: 63) would contend that an intellectual by definition cannot be afraid of upsetting the status quo in favour of remaining silent in the face of injustices committed against society. The audience they can thus reach and influence unfortunately becomes very limited.

In South Africa the debate regarding the possible decline of the public intellectual has arisen with similar concerns. One response to these concerns within the unique context of South Africa was the formation of the *öThe Constitution of Public Intellectual Life Projectö* at the University of the Witwatersrand. There was also a subsequent conference entitled *öParadoxes of the Postcolonial Sphere: South African Democracy at the Crossroadsö* in 2008, and the special symposia of the journal *Social Dynamics* in 2009 and 2010 where some of the findings of this project were published. In her PhD thesis (2009) and article *öGlobal resonance, local amplification: Antjie Krog on a world stageö* (2010), Anthea Garman, who participated in the above mentioned project, frames Antjie Krog, the well-known writer, journalist and poet, at the

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very least as a public figure who attempts to engage the public in problematic issues in South Africa. Garman (2010: 188) attributes the success of Krog's *Country of My Skull* (1998) to,

a particular confluence of a global issue (dealing with the past via truth commissions), a global publishing context and the work of a global writer with a record of literary work and political action [which] enabled a fit which resulted in Krog coming to prominence on a world stage as a person recognised as having the capacity to speak about the country's transition in all its complexity.

Krog is presented as an organic public intellectual who engages in a "transnational public sphere" (Garman, 2010: 192-193), showing that the claim regarding the death of intellectual seems to be exaggerated.

Similarly, J. M. Coetzee's works, both fictional and non-fictional, have been considered as deeply concerned with the intellectual even as Coetzee's own role as public intellectual in South Africa is discussed. Jane Poyner, editor of *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual* (2006), points at the irony that although Coetzee's novels and essays exhibit a concern with "the ethics of intellectualism and the authority of the writer", he himself decidedly avoids the public eye and prefers not to be seen as a *public* intellectual (Poyner, 2006: 2). In a later chapter of this book, David Attwell (2006: 26) further explains along the same lines that although Coetzee's writing explores aspects of the role of the intellectual in society, he would not define Coetzee as an intellectual according to Edward Said's definition. According to Attwell (2006: 26), Said's 1993 Reith Lectures provide a definition of the intellectual which contains three requirements that Coetzee does not adhere to:

He has not in any consistent or obvious way, "spoken truth to power," nor has he discarded academia to speak as the gifted dilettante, nor has he abandoned what Said would have called his "darker gods" (in Coetzee's case, perhaps, an interest in desire and the unconscious) for a discourse of secular rationality.

Regardless of whether Coetzee himself is an intellectual or not, the contributions from Poyner, Attwell and others on Coetzee and the Public Intellectual, as well as the discussion on Krog

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above, nonetheless indicate that the debate around the public intellectual and authors as public intellectuals in South Africa is thriving.²

However, the tension between (and often the inability to reconcile) the intellectual's desires to both *think* and translate that thought into *action* (Rose, 2002; De Grazia, 2002; Robbins, 2002), remains a problem, not only for Krog and Coetzee, but for intellectuals worldwide. For the traditional intellectual at least, thought seldom leads to action for various reasons, one of which is the constraints imposed by academic institutions that employ intellectuals as outlined above by Alcoff (2003), Small (2002) and Brennan (2001). Nevertheless, organic intellectuals who usually emerge naturally outside the realm of academic institutions often replace the traditional intellectual (in terms of function at least) despite the fact that the initial intention of professionalising the intellectual was to provide intellectuals with a platform to engage with the public sphere. For the purpose of this study, where I consider the intellectual in Nigerian literature, I will use the term *academic* to refer to *traditional intellectuals* who form part of an institution and are often limited by this alliance.

On the other hand, Grant Farred's (2003) discussion of the *vernacular intellectual*, which extends Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual, will be used to explore those figures who effectively "speak the truth to power", as Said (1994) would say, and influence the thinking and action of society, albeit a specific social grouping. The vernacular intellectual can arise either organically or traditionally, but is a public figure who identifies with the masses and uses popular, as opposed to purely academic, means to effectively influence the way society thinks, opposing hegemony, and challenging social injustice (Farred, 2003). Said (1994: 88) argues that intellectuals can only truly fulfil their purpose by being amateurs in the sense that they cannot allow themselves to be bound by their field of specialisation which they present only in a classroom. Rather, professing to be an amateur himself despite his specialisation in modern European and American literature, Said (1994: 88) is "moved by causes and ideas that [he] can actually choose to support because they conform to values and principles that [he] believe[s] in" and thus, "make[s] a conscious effort to acquire a new and wider audience for these views, which

² The intellectual history in South Africa of course dates back to the works of figures such as Sol Plaatje and Pixley ka Isaka Seme, and was later followed by numerous others who wrote in protest against Apartheid. Although after Apartheid ended many questioned what South Africans would now write about, it was clear that there would be no lack of issues to write about (Ndebele, 1994: vii), and the writings of Njabulo Ndebele, Krog and Coetzee similarly indicate that discussion by and about the intellectual in South Africa is still alive and well.

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[he] never present[s] inside a classroomö. The vernacular intellectual can thus arise from the ranks of the specialised professions, but does not limit his or her influence to these but actively engages society at large on matters that interest him/her. The academic and vernacular intellectual are thus similar in that both have the *goal* to affect change in society, but the former is limited in many ways to actually achieve this purpose.

I will use Said's requirements for the public intellectual quoted above to identify the limitations of intellectual activity and categorising intellectuals as either academics or public intellectuals in the Nigerian context. Said (1994: 102) states that the manner in which all intellectuals need to speak truth to power and function as public intellectuals should consist of: 'carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right changeö. The three required components are thus the right *message*, effective *presentation* of the message, and an *audience* that will act on the message. African academics are then intellectuals whose message may be so infused with western ideas and theories as to become irrelevant to the Nigerian context. If academics manage to construct a meaningful and useful message for their Nigerian audience, they will often communicate this message mainly to other academics and the message thus has little effect on society at large. Even if academics have the right message and can engage a wider, non-academic audience, they often use a highly academic discourse which prevents them from effectively communicating with their non-academic audience. On the other hand, the vernacular intellectual is specifically someone who is able to succeed in effectively combining all three these components and thus affect change in society.

Significantly, the mode of address the vernacular intellectual uses is popular, or vernacular, modes of communication. In his reading of *Disgrace* (1999) by J.M. Coetzee, Mark Sanders (2002b) foregrounds the use of Standard English in opposition to vernacular English. Sanders points out how Njabulo Ndebele (1986, 1994) criticises the hegemony of English in South Africa and argues that African literature has to be written in indigenous languages until English can be 'freed sufficiently from its functional use as to enable self-recognition and self-respect on the part of its African speakersö (2002b: 366, 367). Ndebele (1994: 116) then refers to Mthobe Mutloate's (1980) polemic that the conventions of literature need to be violently refashioned in order to allow Africans self-expression (Sanders, 2002b: 367). In this way Ndebele advocates the use of vernacular English(es) as fundamental to producing truly South

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African literature (Sanders, 2002b: 367). Sanders (2002b: 367) points out that both Ndebele and Mutloate's call for the development of vernacular English and a truly South African English are linked to 'self-discovery' and the project of Black Consciousness. The link between language and identity is clear here. Considering this link, even if the intellectual identifies the right audience and formulates the right message, the actual language used can compromise the outcome. If intellectuals do not engage an audience in a discourse they can identify with, the message can go unheeded regardless of how logical or relevant it is.

For example, while Farred uses Muhammad Ali, Bob Marley, C.L.R. James and Stuart Hall as examples of vernacular intellectuals, Christiana Pugliese (1994) applies this term much earlier to the Kenyan author, Gakaarawa Wanjau. Pugliese (1994: 177-180) explains how Gakaara, virtually unknown (or perhaps ignored) in academic literary circles, succeeded in writing and publishing in Gikuyu numerous pamphlets, short stories, readers for primary schools and numerous other writings promoting Gikuyu culture for over fifty years. Gakaara has been received exceptionally well by the general Gikuyu populace, being more widely read in Kenya than even Ngugi wa Thiong'o who also later started writing in his native language to promote the Gikuyu language and culture (Pugliese, 1994: 181). But Gakaara's immense audience and his ability to influence them, particularly in promoting Gikuyu culture, have made him a prime example of a vernacular intellectual even if he is largely unknown in academic circles. The figure of the organic intellectual will then be considered within the framework of Farred's concept and will hereafter be termed the vernacular intellectual.

It would seem that the vernacular intellectual is more likely to translate thought into action, but this is also problematic. Firstly, the line between thought and action can be unclear at times. For instance, Mark Bromell (1995: 102) discusses what he believes a historical moment in the 1990s, when professional scholars in the U.S. were being questioned about the extent to which their knowledge production is related to 'ordinary experience' (1995: 105). Based on the pragmatist work of John Dewey, thought can now be seen 'not as a distinction from but as an extension of experience' (Bromell, 1995: 105). However, this does not negate the fact that thinking cannot only be evaluated based on other thinking but by investigating its impact on the real world (1995: 105). Thus, in institutions of higher education, the problem exists for scholars of how to negotiate the distinction between thought production, on the one hand, and then

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relating those ideas or theories to real world experience within the confines of their institution and profession, on the other, as I also pointed out above.

This relates to Mark Sanders's (2002a) work on the complicity of intellectuals, both its proponents and opposition, in allowing the oppression and injustice of Apartheid. He discusses the responsibility of intellectuals in terms of engaging with issues of complicity as well as the complexity surrounding advocacy. Significantly he explains how intellectuals involved in the Black Consciousness movement were responsible for challenging black South Africans to investigate their own level of complicity in allowing themselves to be abused and treated as second class citizens (2002a: 205). This indicates the relationship between thought and action. Sanders (2002a, 205, 206) compellingly states,

To the extent that it concentrates on the psychic as it plays out in the social inscription of the body, rather than on the merely political, and to the extent that it thereby acknowledges intimacy with the other as inevitable, Black Consciousness, at least in Manganyi's version, has the potential to reverse the psychic affects of apartheid without reproducing its political consequences.

Sanders (2004) later also argues, in response to Farred's (2004) criticism of Sanders's use of the term complicity, that it was only through the intellectual work and thought of Black Consciousness that black South Africans were able to address their internalised oppression and that this consequently incited physical acts of resistance, namely the 1976 student uprising. Coming back to Said's (1994) requirements for the intellectual as needing to present the right message 'where it can do the most good and cause the right change', Black Consciousness would ideally be the right message that needs to be disseminated among a vernacular audience in such a manner that it leads to a change not only in perspective and attitude, but consequently also in action.

The vernacular intellectual, as I theorise it, should by definition be able to influence the manner of thinking or perspectives of a social group in terms of a specific social, political, economic or cultural problem. If the group's thinking, opinion or perspective about a specific matter changes, their behaviour regarding that matter is also likely to change. Thus, the vernacular intellectual will have indirectly affected active change in a specific social group,

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which could in turn affect society at large. On the other hand, there may be cases where thought needs to be immediately translated into action. In *Invisible Chapters* (2002) by Maik Nwosu the character Haile aptly remarks: “[A]fter Cicero had spoken people said ‘How well he spoke’ but after Demosthenes had spoken, they said ‘Let us march’” (92). In the end, the vernacular intellectual needs to be able to influence people by translating thought into action either directly or indirectly. This is at times the shortfall of the academic; they may be able produce groundbreaking theories or perspectives on issues, but these are often only communicated to a very limited group (usually other academics).

In their work on the “Third Cinema” movement, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino (2000), also discuss this tension between the desire to *think* and *act* as intellectual in facilitating a revolution against colonial, neo-colonial or imperialist culture and ideology. They propose that cinema is an ideal tool for creating a subversive, revolutionary culture that will lead to the overthrow of the colonial, neo-colonial or imperialist culture. Yet the cinema industry lies in the hands of the enemy, as it were, who controls the ideology that drives it. If cinema could be used to incite a revolution against those who control it, intellectuals would be left with the following debate: should intellectual work be aimed at fulfilling a political and/or military function, because many intellectuals have a commitment to such action, or should art be created for art’s sake, without any connection to politics or revolution (2000: 268). They (2000: 269) also point out that,

...the revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie, but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense the need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change *through activities on different fronts*.

Thus it is ultimately the intellectual’s responsibility to translate the perceived need for revolution into action by mobilising culture, science, art and cinema to serve specific political aims (2000: 270, 271). Advancements in these fields are usually used for furthering imperialist purposes and intellectuals are often complicit in this (2000: 282), but intellectuals need to revolt against complicity and decide within which of these academic and cultural registers they can most effectively challenge the imperialist and bourgeoisie ideology in order to create a “subversive

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cultureö (2000: 270) out of which revolution will emerge. Solanas and Getino (2000: 272) posit that cinema in the third world is,

the cinema that recognizes in that struggle the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting pointö in a word, the *decolonization of culture*.

Similarly, the intellectuals in the third generation of African writers need to find a means of using their field of expertise to subvert the effect of neo-colonialism and the corruption of their own elite to incite revolution. As Solana and Getino (2000: 285) say, ö[t]he well-known quote from Marx deserves constant repetition: it is not sufficient to interpret the world; it is now a question of transforming itö.

Now, based on the tension between the intellectualö's desire to both *think* and *act*, we need to come back to Nesbittö's (2002) categories of the comprador intelligentsia, postcolonial critic and progressive exile discussed above. Firstly, while Nesbitt uses them to discuss scholars who have emigrated to Europe or the U.S., the scholars in the novels to be analysed all reside in Nigeria. I propose looking at the intellectuals portrayed in these novels as they fall into these categories in so far as they would apply to scholars who have developed Afropolitan identities while studying abroad but have now returned to Nigeria to öliberate their fellowsö (Nesbitt, 2002: 73). I am particularly interested in how the intellectuals in the novels under discussion here vacillate between the latter two of Nesbittö's categories, namely, that of the postcolonial critic and the progressive exile respectively. It seems the problem is that the postcolonial critics remain just that, critics who tend to use predominantly western frameworks to analyse the postcolonial conditions and the academic as defined above would principally fall into the category. The ideal of the progressive exile is that these scholars would return from their æxileø and utilise the knowledge they have acquired in the west to actively change Nigeria for the better and the vernacular intellectual would appear to fit into this category. The progressive exiles to be examined will not be limited to migrant scholars as in Nesbittö's article, but will include vernacular intellectuals who by definition do not have higher education as a prerequisite.

The authors under discussion in this dissertation will also be defined as Edward Saidö's öwriter-intellectualsö (Said, 2002: 24, 25). Although writers are traditionally defined as

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producing aesthetic and creative works of art such as poetry, novels and drama, Said (Said 2002: 25) points out that, "during the last years of the twentieth century the writer has taken on more and more of the intellectual's adversarial attributes in such activities as speaking the truth to power, being a witness to persecution and suffering, supplying a dissenting voice in conflicts with authority". This relates to Chinua Achebe's idea of the African author as teacher (1975), whose purpose is not to simply produce creative or aesthetically pleasing pieces of literature, but to both educate and guide the reader to action. The writer-intellectuals under discussion here use the characters in their novels to voice these opinions and engage the reader with the issues at hand, effectively producing, as Barthes (1973) would have it, "texts of bliss"³

However, viewing these postcolonial authors as writer-intellectuals who are engaging with African issues is problematic in its own way. Firstly, Dickson Ehoyi (1998: 288) explains that

[t]here is a new openness to facing up to the basic dilemma of postcolonial intellectuals, namely, how, given the knowledge and experience that define them, "can intellectuals extend their experiences to those excluded from the powers and privileges ushered in by independence and how can they develop a fundamental knowledge about the conditions of a populace so different from [themselves]?"

Many of these postcolonial writer-intellectuals live outside of Africa and work for academic institutions far removed from the realities of Nigeria, yet they write novels to engage with issues back home. So to what extent can they use their writing to engage with the people they write about when they are so far removed from those people and their lives? Ken Saro-wiwa (Nixon, 1996) and Gakaarawa Wanjau (Pugliese, 1994), for instance, were actively involved with the public they lived among, but Adichie, Atta, Habila and others live in the U.S. or England either permanently or for extended periods of time. They could all be considered Afropolitan and yet they remain committed to writing about their countries of origin and engaging with the issues

³ The text of bliss disrupts the reader's opinions and forces him or her to take on the writerly point of view in order to question the beliefs and opinions that the reader holds. In other words, as Robert Miklitsch (1983:106) explains it, "Pleasure...refers to that language of a text which is conformist, canonical, conventional, whereas 'bliss' refers to its other kind of language, which is subversive, iconoclastic, mercurial." The reader then is forced to take an active role in deciphering and interpreting meaning as it contradicts or challenges his/her existing belief, opinion or perspective.

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and problems Nigeria faces. Yet are their perspectives on issues in Nigeria true to the reality of Nigeria?

Also, if we consider third generation Nigerian authors as writer-intellectuals, are they writing to engage the Nigerian public they write about, or the foreign markets where their writing is most well known? This question brings us back to the argument on the postcolonial exotic, as Ehoji (1998: 284) says, "[b]ecause African intellectuals are, in the first instance, products of advanced levels of Western-style education, their discourses are generally derivations of discourses with international currency. As the authors whose works will be examined in the following chapters all had a western education and reside either permanently or semi-permanently outside of Africa, their works take on a distinctly transnational quality. In her discussion on literary works produced by migrants, Rebecca Walkowitz (2006) argues that a more transnational approach is indeed necessary in studying the works of transnational authors. I will then explore the signs of globalisation, Afrotransnationalism and Afropolitanism as defined above and how these relate to the way in which the different categories of intellectuals develop and are represented in these transnational novels.

The failure of the public sphere in Nigeria, which Kehinde (2010) identifies in novels by Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is also evident in the novels under discussion here. The utopian public sphere as part of a healthy, functioning democracy (Habermas, 1991) has completely degenerated in Nigeria in the three novels examined by Kehinde (2010), with despotic, tyrannical, and often military, leaders suppressing any opposition to the corruption and moral degeneracy of the ruling elite. Ideally the vernacular intellectuals in the novels would have at least a partly utopian public sphere to partake in and thus influence society for the good of all Nigerians. Unfortunately, as a result of the neo-colonial rulers of the day, writers, whether it be novelists, artists, journalists, or any other form of "writer" have no safe public sphere to engage in and with, and they have to find alternative means of "writing" in order to influence Nigerian society.

While discussing the role of the intellectual in Nigeria, I will also explore the role the mass media plays in the public sphere in Nigeria and the extent to which members of the media can function as intellectuals as well as the challenges they are faced with when attempting to do so. Firstly, a pivotal feature of democracy is a free press which holds the ruling authorities accountable. Richard Butsch (2011) outlines the history of the development of the role of the

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mass media as platform for public discussion in the public sphere as a feature of democracy. He (Butsch, 2011: 150) defines a 'public' and explains the role the mass media has come to play in the public as follows:

Put simply, a public is an aggregate of people who engage in public discussion on issues of concern to the state. ... The social institutions that 'house' such discussions constitute the public sphere (Weintraub and Kumar, 1997; Emirbayer and Sheller, 1999). ... The Enlightenment re-established publics as a valued idea and emphasised reason as the necessary mode of deliberation among citizens (Habermas, 1989). But the size of eighteenth-century nation-states made assemblies of even a select class impracticable. Thus, the press became integral to the concept of publics dispersed across a nation. ... But the growth of media raised concerns about its controlling publics rather than being a tool for publics.

He traces the development of the public sphere through European history as modern European nations began to perceive power as belonging to 'the people' rather than to an entity by divine right (2011: 150). Thus, the public participating in the public sphere was necessary for democracy to function and this was facilitated by the mass media, among others (Butsch, 2011: 150). However, this was dependent on the public participating in a rational way rather acting as an irrational crowd as argued by Gabriel Tarde (1969), Robert Park (1972), John Dewey (1927) and Walter Lippman (1920) (Butsch, 2011: 151). Nevertheless, despite concerns that the mass media would manipulate the masses, Tarde, Park and Lippman all agreed that the media should provide the masses with the facts which would lead to informal public discussions about matters pertaining to the state that would ultimately lead to the public exercising their democratic rights to influence government (Butsch, 2011: 152).

Those engaging the public sphere, however, are not only concerned with 'issues of concern to the state'. Gerard Hauser (1998: 86) defines the public sphere as 'a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment'. The public that engages in the public sphere may be concerned with a variety of matters that can range from matters in the private sphere, to problems encountered on a global scale. Ultimately a specific public will address an issue that is of concern to that specific group. Intellectuals need to engage with such publics on issues that

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fall within their field of expertise. In addition, as Craig Calhoun (1992: 2) puts it in his discussion of the public sphere and its place in a democracy, "a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation". This correlates with Said's assertion that the intellectual needs to engage with the right public sphere, allowing for participation from outside scholarly circles, and engaging in discourse that is rational and critical, yet understandable to other participants. I am interested in the specific public sphere that intellectuals engage with. If we consider the public sphere to be the theatre within which public opinion is formed and communicated to the ruling entity in order to direct action, among other things, then intellectuals need to engage in the area of the public sphere that achieves a specific purpose. Just as the bourgeois public sphere has been criticised for its exclusionary practice by Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Geoff Eley and Mary Ryan (Calhoun, 1992: 3), I will investigate the exclusivity of the academic public sphere. I will argue that the academic engages in a public sphere consisting principally of other academics, while the vernacular intellectual engages with a larger public sphere that is more inclusive of members from all strata of society and it is only by this inclusion that intellectuals will function as vernacular intellectuals.

In terms of the role that the media plays in the public sphere, it is important to note that the responsibility of the journalist is to report fairly and accurately in order to inform the public on matters in the public interest so that they can form a public opinion and influence the government for the good of society. Akeem Akinwale (2010: 48) for instance states that "[p]ress organisations are vibrant and restive institutions which provide platforms for power negotiations in the public space". The press then needs to provide the public with information on events and issues in the public interest with the intention of sparking public discussion which should ultimately lead to some form of action to hold the government and ruling institutions accountable for their actions. Unfortunately, if the nation-state is thrown into disarray due to a breakdown in civil order and/or war, as in the case of *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Adichie, the line between propaganda and journalism becomes blurred as the different parties involved struggle for support for their cause. The role of the journalist as an intellectual thus becomes imperative as he/she needs to report to the world the truth about the politics and realities of the war.

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The question then arises that if, as Kehinde (2010) argues, there is no healthy public sphere as Habermas defines it, are vernacular intellectuals completely powerless to influence the public? Moreover, even if the vernacular intellectual is able to influence society and mobilise a specific social group into action, will this action not ultimately fail as a result of a repressive regime? Is there a point to then taking action if the action is doomed to begin with and is destined to end in the deaths or exile of the participants? Furthermore, are all types of intellectuals equally effective in influencing society and what may be the factors that prevent intellectuals from acting like vernacular intellectuals as opposed to mere academics?

The influence of the global on the intellectual will thus be explored and symbols of transformation and circulation will be identified to indicate the changing face of Africa. How this impacts on Nigerian identity is to be explored with specific implications for the identities of intellectuals. Considering the global context discussed above and the failure largely of the public sphere in Nigeria, the question arises as to whether vernacular intellectuals can effectively function in Nigeria.

THE FEMALE INTELLECTUAL

Just as the number of female authors has increased in the third generation of Nigerian writers (Bryce, 2008), the voices of female intellectuals seem to feature prominently in these writings. The novels of both Sefi Atta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, offer a variety of female characters that represent the challenges female intellectuals face in contemporary Nigeria. Zulu Sofola's (1998: 52) concept of *õde-womanization* seems to feature in both their novels and is centred on the idea that western education destroys the ability of African citizens to understand and engage with African issues. Of course this process is more complicated for African women who are often confronted with different forms of western and Arab feminism which fail to explain the experience of African women and even strip them of the ability to engage with woman's issues in Africa (Sofola, 1998 and Aidoo, 1998). Sofola (1998) and others (Flora Nwapa, 1998 and Sabine Jell-Belhasen, 1998) in *Sisterhood, Feminism and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora* argue that many pre-colonial African cultures featured a

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system of dual-sex rule over society, where men and women often took on equal, but different, roles. Sofola (1998: 59) states that as a direct result of European and Arab colonization,

[c]haos set in and women were dislodged and made irrelevant, a fact that is now full-blown in today's European/Arab systems of governance in contemporary Africa where our women have been rendered irrelevant, ineffective and completely *de-womanized*.

Sofola's (1998) claim is that today it is indeed often the illiterate, rural women who are ready for action when challenges arise, while the educated, "civilised" African women are mere shadows or trophies owned by their husbands. She calls for African female academics to take a leaf from the book of the rural, illiterate women and become active agents of change in contemporary African society (Sofola, 1998).

Although these claims can be said to be true to some extent, it does seem to be an over-generalisation. Olabisi Aina (1998: 69-70) for one argues that one cannot romanticise pre-colonial Africa as there are numerous examples of how various pre-colonial African societies were in fact male-dominated and colonialism only legitimated such ideas and practices. Similarly, Ifeyinwa Iweriebor (1998) claims that most modern urban women in Nigeria are not much better off than those living in rural villages and that even the small group of rich elite has to deal with an irregular water and electricity supply. Thus, the divide between the two groups is not nearly as wide as some suppose it to be. She further argues that modern Nigerian women do not deserve all the criticism aimed at them by those propagating the urban/rural dichotomy, but that they are frequently actively involved in the struggle to better the lives of not only women, but also all Nigerians, both urban and rural (Iweriebor, 1998). Iweriebor (1998: 301) "hold[s] the view that the different categories [urban/rural] represent a continuum across time and space and the economy, and that there is a dialectical relationship which can be utilized for the good of all."

The debate regarding the urban/rural dichotomy of African women indicates a need for female intellectuals to arise organically to combine the passion and energy of the rural women with the knowledge and resources of female academics to bring about change in their societies. It is also important to note here that, as Obioma Nnaemeka (1998: 8) points out, African feminism(s) addresses social issues affecting both men and women, as opposed to purely gender related issues, and also calls on men to collaborate with women in finding solutions to African

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problems. Thus, if the rural/urban gap could be bridged, women, together with men, may in fact offer some meaningful solutions to the problems Africa faces.

In this dissertation I will view the female characters in the novels of Adichie and Atta as situated along the continuum proposed by Iweriebor (1998: 301) rather than on either side of the urban/rural dichotomy and in this way compare the ways that the modern, urban Nigerian woman deals with social and personal problems compared to the traditional, rural Nigerian woman. Some urban Nigerian women have indeed become de-womanised as Sofola claims, but this is not always the case, while similarly, the traditional, rural women are not always equipped to understand or address some of problems that globalisation presents them with. So I will investigate how female vernacular intellectuals can arise from along the continuum. Also, considering the discussion on globalisation and the intellectual above, could female intellectuals have something unique to offer in finding solutions to Nigerian problems when compared with their male counterparts? Or are they indeed in danger of being rendered hollow by globalization and western education?

In addition, women in Nigeria who wish to function as intellectuals have to also contend with the limitations placed on them by patriarchal society. Although women across the world experience some form of male oppression, the African, and more specifically the Nigerian, context provides us with a unique and complex system of female oppression. Dewomanised women, as discussed above, largely fail to comprehensively address these situations as they have a limited perspective. In his discussion on complicity during apartheid, Sanders (2002a: 206, 207) points out that women in apartheid not only had to resist political oppression, but also patriarchal oppression. He remarks (2002a: 207),

...we hear not only that women can collaborate mentally and corporeally in their own oppression, and element of consciousness-raising echoing Biko and his contemporaries, but the internal criticism that the anti-apartheid struggle is incomplete when women are still subject to discrimination and violence, and that the sexism and abuse of women in the liberation movements is largely unexamined.

The struggle for political freedom in South Africa may have been won, but the struggle for gender equality still remains. Accordingly, the struggle for liberation against oppression in

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Nigeria by intellectuals, should consist of not only a political struggle, but should implicitly include the struggle for gender equality. Thus, I intend to investigate the different ways in which women are limited by patriarchal society, specifically arguing for the need for collaboration between men and women in fighting for liberation.

CONCLUSION

The following three chapters will examine the effects of globalization on the development of identity and how this pertains to the function of the intellectual in Nigeria. I will explore the effects of globalization on Nigeria and how it affects identity through the processes of circulation and transformation. These processes give rise to what I call the Afrotransnational identity and it is this identity that allows Nigerians to function as intellectuals and affect Nigerian society for the good of all.

Chapter 2 will focus on various examples of circulation and transformation in Nigeria and how this leads to the development of the Afrotransnational identity, especially in terms of the identity of the intellectual, in Chris Abani's *Graceland* (2004). Here I consider intellectuals in Nigeria who are not very highly educated yet arise organically to engage with and mobilise society with varying degrees of success. The intellectual's freedom to engage society is, however, complicated by the state's restrictions on allowing a healthy, functioning public sphere to contribute to democracy in Nigeria. Intellectuals and society at large are left with limited choices in how to affect a positive change in Nigeria.

In Chapter 3 I analyse Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) to demonstrate the differences between the academic and vernacular intellectual in Nigeria and how identity is related to the manner in which intellectuals function as either type. I will examine the Afropolitan and Afrotransnational identities that academics and vernacular intellectuals exhibit respectively. Adichie also presents us with the manner in which academics and vernacular intellectuals engage different audiences with the right message, and doing so in a manner that affects change.

Finally, Chapter 4 is concerned with the complexities that women in Nigeria face in functioning as intellectuals as presented in *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) by Sefi Atta. I will explore how women in Nigeria are challenged with finding a balanced position along the

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urban/rural continuum and thus developing Afrotransnational identities if they are to find a means of bringing their western education to bear on the African context in a meaningful way. Atta also explores a number of limitations that patriarchal society imposes on women. These limitations pose particular problems in the extent to which they can function as vernacular intellectuals in the nation-state.

Abani, Adichie and Atta provide us with examples of the complex situations within which intellectuals have to function in Nigeria. Given the unpredictable and volatile political environment in Nigeria, intellectuals are faced with challenges in directly speaking the truth to power. They can, however, be instrumental in finding less obvious means of subversion.

CHAPTER 2

GLOBALISATION AND THE INTELLECTUAL IN CHRIS ABANI'S *GRACELAND*

INTRODUCTION

Chris Abani's *Graceland* (2004) depicts the urban melee of a rapidly growing Lagos in the 1980s, which illustrates the complex context within which Nigerians struggle to function as intellectuals. I will examine how intellectuals function in this context based on Said's (1994) requirements of having the correct message, communicating it to the right audience and doing so in a manner that the audience will understand and will move them to take some form of action. Only when intellectuals fulfil all three these requirements are they functioning as vernacular intellectuals fully capable of affecting change in society.

Unfortunately, due to the instability of the political, social and economic climate, there is little space for intellectuals or a public sphere to safely engage on issues relevant to Nigerians. Eventually, as depicted in the novel, vernacular intellectuals are forced to make a choice about whether or not it is worth the risk to speak out against injustice in their country. If they choose to speak out, they risk being arrested, tortured or even being executed. On the other hand, if they remain silent, they are allowing injustice to continue and are technically complicit in perpetuating the cycle of injustice and oppression. There is also the third option of leaving the country all together and trying to fight the oppression of military regimes from afar. In *Graceland* though, the two vernacular intellectuals to be discussed are from the lower classes and therefore do not have the means to escape Nigeria. They have to choose between remaining silent and actively fighting, and then have to bear the consequences.

What is particularly interesting about Abani's representation of the intellectual in *Graceland* is the manner in which Afrotransnationalism relates to the intellectual's role. The intellectual has to contend with the effects of globalisation, as global meets local, in 1980s Nigeria, which includes the development of Afrotransnational identities. The Afrotransnational identities are a result of the process of circulation and transformation and could aid the process of

political, economic and social change that all intellectuals strive for. If Nigerians are to break the cycle of oppression, violence and corruption, the nation as a whole needs to take a stand to bring their government to accountability to the people, and developing Afrotransnational identities could aid in uniting their voices in speaking the truth to power about issues that affect all Nigerians.

Also, intellectuals in Lagos are often at the forefront of transformation of global products in the local context, specifically in terms of the arts. This may be viewed as both as a means of escape and subversion of the effects of neo-colonialism. Thus, even when intellectuals are unable to engage the public in affecting wide-scale political change, or if such action fails, they might be able to lead society in surviving and thriving despite the difficult conditions in Lagos.

Abani's *Graceland* is strewn with examples of globalisation intersecting with aspects of Nigerian life. There are numerous examples of how western names, music, cinema, literature, dances and language, among others, are circulated within Nigeria and often transformed into new, Nigerian versions. These ideas and products are often incorporated into existing tradition, both old and new, and so the culture in Lagos takes on a very hybrid nature. This seems to be the hallmark of those who eke out a living in this city; it is the ability to adapt and thus survive. As stated in the previous chapter, this hybrid culture will be viewed not as a dilution of pure Nigerian culture, as this never truly existed in the first place, but rather as an inescapable, and not necessarily negative, effect of globalisation which has been occurring for centuries but has become more pronounced with the advance of technological changes.

Critical works by Adeleke Adeeko (2008), Amy Aycock (2009a and 2009b) and Jacob Patterson-Stein (2009) on Chris Abani's *Graceland* are pertinent to framing my argument regarding the transnational and Afrotransnational identities in this novel. Firstly, Adeeko (2008) casts immigration from Nigeria to the west, specifically the U.S., in a positive light by indicating the change in perspective that immigration is now seen as a viable alternative to dying in the struggle to achieve a healthy nation-state. These immigrants, Adeeko suggests, still tend to remain committed to the building of a stable Nigeria. Secondly, Amy Aycock (2009b), based on her interview with Abani (2009a) and her analyses of *Graceland* and *The Virgin of Flames* (2007), argues that Abani views all identities as 'mongrelised'. Thus, just as the protagonists in his novels are in a perpetual state of 'becoming', so Nigeria, as well as every other nation of the world inevitably influenced by globalisation, is also in a perpetual state of 'becoming' as a

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nation. Lastly, and perhaps most crucial to my argument, is Jacob Patterson-Stein's (2009) work on the 'third space' in *Graceland*. In his review of critical works on *Graceland*, Jacob Patterson-Stein (2009: 51) fittingly argues that critics such as Amy Novak (2008), Madeleine Hron (2008) and John C. Hawley (2008) 'have missed the way in which foreign music in the novel provides identity, creates domestic cultural affiliations, and functions as an anodyne respite from slum life' (2009: 49). He explains that while they 'are certainly not misguided in their analysis of *Graceland*, they are too broad in dismissing the American cultural presence as imperialist' (2009: 51). Rather, he uses Homi Bhabha's ideas of the 'third space' and 'hybridisation' to challenge the concept of essential binaries and point out that the lines between essential binaries (the autochthonous and western) have been blurred. He ultimately argues that music is an example of the transient, hybrid nature of Nigeria within which the protagonist is 'becoming'. Matthew Omelsky (2011) later similarly argues that music, specifically for the youth, is a means of escape from their 'precarious lives', which also links with Adeeko's (2008) position that escape 'both literal and figurative' from the reality of an unstable Nigeria is a reasonable option.

In light of these arguments, examples of globalisation's influence, such as the *molue* bus (Eze, 2005: 108; Dawson 2009: 21) which is a montage of different models of cars made in different countries, will further be viewed as transnational intersections which indicate that certain concerns are universal, despite the specifically Nigerian setting. As Amanda Aycock (2009b) points out,

[Abani] confronts the universal rather than the national, and begins to map out what he believes ought to be the future of literature by Nigerian authors: 'For the longest time, Abani wrote in an article about Nigerian literature,

'Nigerian literature has engaged the West in its many forms (colonialism, neo-colonialism, even apartheid) in attempts to create a literature of protest and opposition, but now, with these spaces losing their urgency, the time has come to begin to imagine and deal with more homegrown (albeit universal) concerns' - gender, sexuality, familial tyranny, history and even hybridism, among others.'

In this way, Abani is dealing with concerns which pertain to the human condition; Nigeria provides the context within which these concerns are explored. The context is one that illustrates the intersection between rural, urban and global (Dannenberg, 2012: 40) which results in a hybridised, cosmopolitan Lagos, where the characters exhibit transnational and Afrotransnational identities which reflect the effects of global circulation and transformation.

THE INTELLECTUAL

The intellectual in Abani's *Graceland* has to face a number of challenges in causing a change in Nigeria for the good of society. Firstly, in order for intellectual activity in Nigeria to have a meaningful impact on the nation-state, the intellectual needs to have the right message, communicate it to the right audience and do so in a manner that the audience will comprehend. I will consider the extent to which the characters Sunday and Caesar fulfil these requirements as vernacular intellectuals. However, even if they do function as vernacular intellectuals, they still have to contend with the dangers inherent in speaking against the government.

Caesar, who is the improbable friend of the protagonist, Elvis is known as 'the King of the Beggars' and yet he functions as a vernacular intellectual in the midst, and probably due to, the volatile Lagos environment. Caesar lost his family during the Igbo pogrom in the north of Nigeria in 1966 and subsequently joined the Biafran army, but after the war he becomes a beggar in Lagos. With nothing left to lose, Caesar often participates in anti-government campaigns which include the performance of plays and reading of poetry and speeches which could be considered intellectual activities. Elvis for instance listens to Caesar's performance of a poem on the 'beauty of the indigenous culture that had been abandoned for Western ways' (2004: 155). The crowd listens intently and even Elvis is 'mesmerised by the richness of the King's voice. It was seductive, eliciting the listener's trust' (2004: 155). So evidently Caesar functions as a vernacular intellectual to the extent that he knows how to effectively communicate with the group of Lagosian 'student, poets, musicians, actors, liberals, lecturers and [...] hippie types' (2004: 154) gathered at Freedom Square. Based on Abani's description of the audience, they seem to consist of Nigerians who can loosely be included in the categories of either academics or vernacular intellectuals as their attendance is motivated by their intention to affect change. The

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audience thus has the potential to speak the truth to power and influence society. Caesar partially fulfils Said's requirements in that he communicates to the right audience and is clearly able to captivate them and effectively get his message across.

Caesar may be unintelligently representing his ideas to an audience consisting of other intellectuals who are willing to participate in activist activities, but the message he chooses is somewhat flawed. Elvis reflects that Caesar's argument was, essentialist, maybe even prejudiced, because the culture he spoke of was that of the Igbo, only one of nearly three hundred indigenous people in this populous country (2004: 155), and the narrator adds, '[a]s naive as Elvis was, he knew there was no way of going back to the good old day, and wondered why the King didn't speak about how to cope with these new and confusing times' (2004: 155). Abani is pointing out here that Caesar and others may be effectively engaging a largely intellectual audience from the different strata in society, but their arguments may not all be useful in causing the right change (Said, 1994:102). Intellectuals need to arise not only to act as postcolonial critics who explain and describe the factors that have led to Nigeria's current problems, but also to offer potential solutions to these problems.

This scene presents us with a further dilemma intellectuals face in terms of the manner in which they address their audience. While Caesar's poem leaves the audience animated, probably because of the nostalgia it invokes, he does not propose an answer for how the reality of Nigeria can be dealt with. He is followed by 'a nervous-looking young man in round glasses' (2004: 155) who argues that the people of Nigeria themselves are responsible for supporting each coup that inevitably changes nothing for them: 'we are both the jailer and the inmates, imprisoning ourselves by allowing this infernal, illegal and monstrous regime of military buffoons to continue' (2004: 156). The crowd is animated after Caesar's moving performance and the reader is only offered fragments of the young man's logically set out argument through the noise of the crowd. What is clear is that he calls for a rebellion, but what kind of rebellion is unclear as the emotionally charged crowd takes it for a call to a violent rebellion, drowning out the rest of his argument. Unfortunately we cannot tell whether the uprising of the crowd reflects a success or failure for the young speaker. Caesar succeeded in evoking an emotional response from the audience and in this state the audience responds emotionally to the more logical argument of the young man. In this case, we cannot tell though whether the intellectual's speech had the desired

outcome and it is debatable whether or not it will "cause the right change" (Said, 1994: 102) as his argument is lost in the din of the mob.

Nevertheless, even if intellectuals can succeed in correctly utilising all three components, they have to do so under the unstable political, economic and social conditions portrayed in *Graceland*. The intellectuals in the novel lack a safe space for a healthy public sphere to function in. Within the dangerous and unpredictable setting of Lagos, Nigerians who wish to function as intellectuals in order to meaningfully influence Nigerian politics and society are faced with the threat of imprisonment, torture and death if they speak against the ruling powers. For instance, the capricious nature of the ruling powers and precariousness of Nigerians' lives as a result, are illustrated when Redemption, Elvis's friend from the Lagos underworld, tries to convince Elvis to join him in his drug-smuggling scheme. Elvis is wary because they could get arrested, but Redemption tells him: "In dis country you can go to prison if some soldier does not like you. At least with dis you can make money" (2004: 108). Evidently, his argument is that if you live with the constant risk of going to prison at the whim of some policeman, then why not take an equal risk by smuggling cocaine but get remunerated for it? Intellectuals in Nigeria who wish to change this state of affairs have to face not only these arbitrary circumstances, but the probability of detention at best and possibly death if they speak the truth to power. Intellectuals thus have to choose between remaining silent, speaking out or leaving the country. When the latter is not an option, especially for the poorer, lower class Nigerians, they are left with the former two options. This makes for a highly complex and dangerous environment for the intellectual.

The intellectual has to weigh the risks of participating in intellectual activity against the government against the consequences of remaining silent. They have to choose between speaking out at the risk of their freedom or even lives and remaining silent for their own safety which will allow the injustice in Nigeria to continue. For instance, in the scene described above, Caesar eventually convinces Elvis to leave the gathering at Freedom Square because he knows that the military will soon arrive to forcefully subdue the restless crowd. Elvis is surprised though that Caesar does not join them as this would appear to be what Caesar wants. Caesar asks Elvis if he has ever been beaten by the police, because he has first-hand experience of their brutality and clearly has no desire to experience it again. Caesar does not deem this specific uprising as being worthy of the consequences. Whether Caesar's actions here are wise or cowardly is highly debateable.

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Later, however, Caesar himself leads an uprising by mobilising people to protest against the government. Caesar manages to organise a march by hundreds of people to the government building in protest of the illegal incarceration and brutal torture of Caesar's known associates, including Elvis. In contrast to the aforementioned scene, here Caesar has reached a point where remaining silent and avoiding confrontation with the military is no longer an option. He rises organically and speaks for the poor and disenfranchised, yet as a result of the unstable political environment, his movement is doomed to fail from the start. So vernacular intellectuals are able to arise organically and elicit a reaction, but they are unfortunately shown to be unable to sustain such movements due to the military government's penchant for suppressing any form of uprising or resistance by brutal force. Even so, Abani seems to suggest that the option of remaining silent or fleeing is no longer worth it.

After Caesar's death, he is deified by the Nigerian people and as Dawson (2009: 30, 31) says,

[t]he transfiguration of the King into a secular saint suggests that it may not be so easy to distinguish popular protest against tyranny and oppressive social conditions from the turn to magical solutions to misery...

This is similar to Osinubi's (2008: 137, 146) observation that Ken Wiwa's father, Ken Saro-Wiwa, was also, in a manner of speaking, deified after his execution and the ensuing political and humanitarian uproar. The deaths of figures such as Caesar and Ken Saro-Wiwa at the hands of the ruling powers in Nigeria that they dared speak truth to seem signify the unavoidable outcome of any similar acts of resistance. This depressing reality could create a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness among Nigerians. In reaction to this, people then deify these figures to subvert the inevitability of this end result and in this way 'turn to magical solutions' in order to create a sense of hope.

On a less public level, Caesar also functions as a vernacular intellectual by giving Elvis an informal education. For instance, Caesar takes Elvis to see the film, *Love Story*, with the intention of teaching him that 'people are important' (2004: 134), which is the message of Caesar's theatre group. In this way he provides Elvis with 'an alternative to Redemption's world' (2004: 134) of criminal activities, such as drug smuggling, as a means of survival. Elvis

is unsure about how the message is meant to provide him with an alternative but Caesar tells him to be patient. Later, Redemption tries to recruit Elvis into the even more dangerous scheme of human and organ trafficking, but Elvis tells him that Caesar has been trying to help him find a different path. Redemption is furious that Elvis would rather listen to a beggar than recognise that Redemption is trying to help him, but Elvis retorts: 'I know you are trying to help me, Redemption. But he is trying to save me' (2004: 139). It seems that Redemption has good intentions in trying to help Elvis survive in Lagos, but unfortunately the plan to do so includes involving him in the dubious dealings of the Lagos underworld. Caesar, on the other hand, is offering Elvis an alternative, because unlike Redemption, Caesar has known a life outside crime and poverty. Due to Caesar's lesson, Elvis understands the fact that 'people matter' and that this fact conflicts with Redemption's disreputable schemes because these schemes will invariably cause harm to others. Surviving and thriving in Lagos are clearly a struggle, but it should not entail schemes such as Redemption's, which could be at the cost of other people's lives. Clearly Elvis needs to find an alternative that enables him to thrive without doing so at the cost of someone else's right to attempt to thrive.

While acting as Elvis's mentor, Caesar tells him a significant story that introduces a metaphor, which runs through the novel, for the three basic roles that people take on in Nigeria. When Elvis is first faced with the ethical dilemma about whether or not to get involved in Redemption's proposal to smuggle cocaine in order to make money, Caesar tells the story of how, when Caesar was a child, his brother once caught a weaver and put it in a cage that he had built. In a moment of impulsive compassion, Caesar released the bird. His brother was naturally furious and slapped him. Caesar tells Elvis to choose, 'whether you are me, the bird or my brother' (2004: 96). In other words, Elvis would have to choose to either be the one to free others from their captivity, to be the bird that flies free if given the chance to escape, or to participate in the cycle of violence by keeping others captive. Caesar implies that Redemption is the one who is trying to put Elvis in a cage of criminal activity while Caesar is trying to free or 'save' Elvis. By the end of the novel though, ironically Caesar is the one responsible, albeit unintentionally, for Elvis's literal incarceration, but Caesar quickly and fervently sets about to set things right and to demand justice. And this time he is not just slapped for his defiance, but killed. Caesar was wrong about Redemption though, because he is in fact the one that saves Elvis as he gives Elvis his visa to the U.S. Elvis on the other hand is unable to free other people, even though he tries on

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occasion, but one hopes that in finding refuge in the U.S. he would perhaps find a way of helping other Nigerians from there. Whether or not he will do so is debatable. As I will discuss below, he clearly cares about people, but his attempts to help them are mostly ineffective. Essentially, Abani's metaphor here reiterates the choices that intellectuals in Nigeria, as well as all people have to make: choose to speak out in order to free others and place your life at risk; remain silent and risk being complicit in keeping others captive in the cycle of corruption, violence and oppression; or actively oppress others for your own gain or flee the country.

Just as the novel provides us with examples of the how Nigerians will actively speak truth to power, there are also instances where individuals partake in oppressing others as well as keeping themselves oppressed. For instance, Sunday, Elvis's father, loses his political campaign because even though he honestly desires to help the people, they are drawn away by his competitor's promises of wealth. This competitor is typical of politicians who come to power by making empty promises and are responsible for keeping their community disempowered. The competitor showers the people with money and gifts, promising them more wealth if they vote for him. Sunday cannot compete and loses the campaign. Sunday could perhaps have constructed his message more carefully to explain that his competitor's promises were not sustainable and how he meant to lead the community to acquire this standard of living over time through their own hard work. Regardless, Sunday cannot be held absolutely responsible for the audience's reaction. People are naturally drawn by the promises of wealth and status that politicians make, often without seriously considering if the politician can or will deliver on such promises. This is how the people unfortunately become "both the jailer and the inmates, imprisoning [them]selves by allowing this infernal, illegal and monstrous regime of military buffoons to continue" (2004: 156) as the nervous young man pointed out at Freedom Square. The people will need to eventually free themselves.

In the Maroko slum, where Elvis and his father live, the inhabitants do attempt to stand together to free themselves. The inhabitants are faced with eviction and the destruction of their homes as part of the government's "Operation Clean the Nation". The inhabitants offer Sunday a chance to do the work he intended to do when he ran in his local elections in Afikpo many years earlier by asking him to lead them in their stand against the government. Although reluctant at first, he eventually accepts the leadership position in the community and mobilises them into setting up barricades, alerting the press to the situation and mobilising the people to protest the

pending destruction of their homes. As Dawson (2009: 28) states, "[t]he resistance campaign that develops against the impending demolition of Maroko belies the widespread belief that slum dwellers are incapable of organizing themselves and asserting their collective agency". This illustrates the efficacy of vernacular intellectuals arising organically and influencing the social group from which they arose. Although they ultimately fail in preventing the demolition of their slum, they had actively resisted the oppression of the military government, and the act of resistance seems to be more important than the success or failure thereof. Sunday has thus arisen as a vernacular intellectual from the slum and succeeds in mobilising a whole community into action, and yet because Nigerians are denied the right to keep the government accountable in Nigeria, such actions are doomed to fail. Nevertheless, when these slum-dwellers are faced with losing their homes and livelihoods, meagre as they are, they are forced to take a stand at the risk of losing their lives rather than attempting the intensely demoralising task of trying to start over elsewhere.

Abani's characterisation of Caesar and Sunday illustrates that vernacular intellectuals can arise organically and organize the people into action even though the outcome is predictable. The fact that on both occasions the resistance was put down by force begs the question whether it was really worth it. Although Adeeko argues that the activist in newer Nigerian literature tends to leave the country and escape to the U.S. rather than just lay down his or her life for the nation, this is not the case for Caesar and Sunday as discussed above. Neither Sunday or Caesar has the option to leave, but it was no longer an option for them to just stay silent either. On the other hand, the novel does end with Elvis about to leave the country for a safer existence in the U.S. and whether or not he will arise as an intellectual is doubtful. For example, he is sickened by the idea of being responsible for the imprisonment of others as was evident when he discovered that Redemption had involved him in human and organ trafficking. He nevertheless has a desire for his nation to become a stable nation state, as he questions the absurdity of the lives of those living in Lagos. For example, as he travels on a bus, he comments to a fellow passenger that the government should remove the dead bodies of pedestrians that litter the highway. He questions the absurdity of pedestrians who risk crossing the highway by dodging on-coming traffic rather than using the overhead bridges built specifically for pedestrians to safely cross the highway. But he never goes further than thinking and talking about it. Also, when the police confiscate the

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second-hand clothes a man is trying to sell to make a living, Elvis tries to comfort the man, yet when the man jumps into the fire himself out of despair, Elvis stands by helplessly.

Similarly, Omelsky (2011) discusses the youths' ambivalent agency to resist in *Graceland*. Omelsky (2011: 91, 92) comments on the manner in which Elvis's childhood friends adopt confrontational names as an act of resistance and in defiance of tradition by noting that a distinction needs to be made "between the *idea* of resistance and the *concrete act* of resistance". These youths struggle with their expression of resistance yet lack the agency to translate this expression into an actual act of defiance. Yet he (Omelsky, 2011: 92) asks,

Can something that we "perceive" or "imagine" be considered a form of resistance, as opposed to an event that produces palpable change? Is it even possible to distinguish between "agency as thought" and "agency as lived experience"?

Elvis and his friends struggle with their desire to change a certain state of affairs and their ability to actively orchestrate such a change. The line between thought and action is very rarely clear-cut though, for action necessarily manifests due to some form of thought process, however momentary. In the example above, the youths' use of subversive naming strategies may be the only means of expressing resistance, but it is still a noteworthy act of resistance because the connotations and identities that are tied to these names could significantly impact their attitudes and outlook on life and thus their lived experience.

There are thus various examples of how individuals want to help their fellow Nigerians, yet are rendered unable to do so either out of fear of the repercussions of getting too involved with other people's lives or sensing that even if they tried to help it would be pointless. The question then is: does one do good and help people only when one knows it will be effective? Or does one help people simply because it is the right thing to do? Is the intention to help people enough? This seems to be the intellectual's ongoing dilemma "when and how does one translate thought into action? And if that action does not yield the desired result, does it mean it was a waste of time and energy? Is immigrating to the U.S. not a better alternative to dying for a cause that is doomed to fail? These are the Nigerian's dilemmas as much as the intellectual's and many of the characters seem to resign themselves to the inevitable fate of a violent death; as a man on the bus says to Elvis, we all have to die one way or another (2004: 57). On the other hand,

Sunday and Caesar decide that rather than merely resigning themselves to their fate, they will die violent deaths, but they will do so on their own terms, going out with a fight and taking down as many of the 'enemy' with them as they can. Regardless of the outcome then, the act of resistance is essential as it points to the every-day person's need and desire for a healthy nation-state where individuals like Elvis can reach self-determination.

CIRCULATION AND TRANSFORMATION GIVE RISE TO AFROTRANSNATIONALISM

Though the conditions described above are hazardous for intellectuals, I would posit that an Afrotransnational identity allows intellectuals and indeed all Nigerians to take back a measure of control over their lives. An Afrotransnational identity develops as Nigerians consume global products and simultaneously transform them into Nigerian versions. They may feel powerless to intervene in the politics of their nation, yet they can control how they consume global products locally, and find a means of escape in the process. There are numerous examples in *Graceland* of how Nigerians deal with globalisation on their own terms and subconsciously perform acts of subversion in a highly unpredictable and oppressive environment.

One of the most obvious examples of transnationalism is the names of the characters in the novel. Firstly, the protagonist is named Elvis after 'The King's' music and dancing which his mother adores. In reference to this, Chielozona Eze (2008: 106) states: '[f]rom the cradle he is taught to cross boundaries and to realize that there are realities beyond those provided by his village and ethnic group'. Later Elvis notes how, 'your name was selected with care by your family and given to you as a talisman' (2004: 147), yet his childhood friends would choose 'confrontational nicknames' (2004: 147) such as 'Confusion' and 'Able-to-do' as an act of rebellion or defiance. The universal act of youthful rebellion has thus found unique expression through the use of western words or concepts for nicknames as opposed to traditional names. Also, when Elvis moves to Lagos, Jagua Rigogo, his neighbour, names his pet python after the magician 'Merlin', ostensibly to enhance his reputation as a man with mystical powers. Similarly, many characters have names with a European ring to them, possible remnants of the colonial era, which include Beatrice, Godfrey and Felicia. Although during colonial times these names may originally have been used in order to show conversion to western culture, they have

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now become part of the hybrid fabric of Lagosian culture. Some names are also taken from famous figures or places from other countries, such as Madam Caro, who is named after the famous Spanish author; Kansas, taken from the U.S. state; and of course the King of the Beggars, Caesar Augustus Anyanwu, who is named after the Roman Emperor.

Furthermore, specific characteristics are also used as names, such as Redemption, Innocent, Blessing and Comfort. The characteristics represented in these names, however, often contradict the very nature of the character it names. For example, Innocent was a child-soldier in the Biafran war and is later paid by his father and uncle to murder his cousin Godfrey in order to avoid having Godfrey bring any more shame to the family name through his thieving and violence. Similarly, Elvis's stepmother, Comfort, is anything but maternal or caring, as she allows her own children to go hungry. On the other hand, Blessing is nicknamed 'Oliver Twist' in reference to her constant sexual 'hunger'. She also turns out to be a 'blessing' to Elvis as she is the one who cares for him while he is ill and helps to convince him to go to the U.S. The most poignant example, however, would be Redemption who lives up to his name by giving Elvis his passport and visa so that he can go to the U.S. The use of these names could show an adoption and suffusion of the global into the local through modern Nigerian naming strategies. Considering Abani's remark about care with which names are chosen, using names such as Elvis or Caesar could indicate that Nigerians are seeking to infuse the attribute and qualities of the rock legend or Roman emperor to the individual. In this way they draw from these figures circulated from the global to the local and include them in their naming strategies. This does not always mean that Nigerians view western names as superior to Igbo or Yoruba names, but rather that using these names and adding them to their culture might enhance a person's standing or reputation in his or her community. Whether the community does in fact view them in a particular way because of their names is debatable, however. It is more likely that it is viewed as just another part of a hybrid life lived in Lagos.

In addition, the wide variety of movies mentioned throughout *Graceland* also indicates the circulation of global cinema within the local. Elvis watches everything from John Wayne action movies and classics such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, to Bollywood productions, revelling in the variety of music and dancing on display. While most people listen to jazz, soul and Highlife, Elvis is fascinated by a variety of music from the 'full orchestral grandstanding of the 1939 Technicolor hit *Gone with the Wind* through to the Bangra pop of Bollywood flicks' (2004: 99).

This exposure serves him well when he writes fake letters from his grandmother's foreign pen-pals in order to cover up his scheme of keeping the postage money of the letters he is supposed to mail for her in order to go to the movies. Ironically he uses *Casablanca*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to fabricate stories from her foreign friends, yet 'somehow he couldn't bring himself to plagiarize an actual book' (2004: 100). Thus, in his own individual way he weaves these western narratives with his own vivid imagination into 'letters' his grandmother enjoys immensely. When he begins to fear she accepted the strange new letters all too easily, he asks her whether she really believes it all, especially some of his more imaginative creations, to which she replies:

Why all the questions, eh? For so long my pen pals held out on the good stories. Instead they wrote boring letters about how well their flowers were blooming and that their local supermarket now had shark and crocodile steaks. What do I care about all that, eh? Stop wasting my time, boy, and read. (2004: 101)

Although we suspect that she knows he is making the stories up, she clearly prefers his wildly concocted stories about 'a Sri Lankan pen pal [who] was abducted by aliens in the middle of some secret ceremony performed by Arthur C. Clarke' (2004: 101) to the dull letters she used to receive. Elvis is inadvertently carrying on a tradition of oral story telling but imbues it with transnational narratives which only add to the enjoyment of the listener who is in fact very traditional.

Dance is another remarkable example of circulation and transformation. In the nightclub, Elvis watches the crowd dance the 'swanti' which seems to have developed from the 'Swanee Shuffle' by Irving Berlin popularised in 1929 when it featured in the first all-black, all-sound musical, *Hallelujah!* (The Internet Movie Database: N.D.). In *Graceland*, the 'swanti' is effortlessly followed by a waltz (2004: 91, 92). The two styles seem to coincide without much hesitation from the dancers. From a young age Elvis's own passion for dance was humoured by his doting grandmother who pays for his dance lessons. The dance instructor, Mr. Aggrey, encourages him to watch dancers such as Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly to help him learn the dance moves, which, 'also sharpens his transcultural appetite' (Eze, 2005: 106). Elvis watches as Mr. Aggrey teaches the adults to waltz gracefully by tying wooden crosses to their backs to

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improve their posture, and as Mr. Aggrey returns to the adults from finishing the children's lesson,

[h]is breath caught in his throat as he realized that it had worked. They were waltzing, and gracefully. Beautiful black dancers, stapled to wooden crosses that pulled them upright and stiff like marionettes; a forest of Pinocchios, waltzing mug trees, marching like Macbeth's mythical forest. (2004: 87)

This poignant description by the narrator, in contrast to the open transformation of the *õswantiõ* mentioned above, shows how no change has been allowed in this form of dance. The dancers are merely *marionettes*, copies of the western dance form, Mr. Aggrey disallowing any expression of their own. So although circulation is widespread, transformation depends on the willingness of the local to break the rules of the global.

Together with the western names, movies and dance, there are also numerous references to both European and American novels, but the role these references play is not, however, to display how western literature floods the Nigerian market. The two novels which feature right in the beginning, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* (1954), are not intended to illustrate Elvis's interest in western novels as opposed to African. Firstly, *Invisible Man* as a racial protest novel can be read as related to the oppression Elvis experiences, though clearly the oppression of the poor by the elite takes precedence over racial oppression in his case. Secondly, Abani's portrayal of Elvis as trying to draw inspiration from Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* is indicative of the parallel struggle Elvis experiences in his desire to have a career in the arts and his need to find a paying job in order to survive. Including *Letters to a Young Poet* in this way alludes to Elvis's struggle between his need for self-actualisation as an artist and his need for survival, a concern not unique to Nigerians. It is noteworthy that the novels Elvis reads are not simply the classics of western literature, but rather novels that contend with issues pertaining to Elvis's interests, questions and struggles as the protagonist of this *Bildungsroman*. Novak (2008: 37) states that, *õ[t]he erasure of traditional culture by colonialism is followed by the inroads of Western culture in post-Independence/neo-colonial Nigeria. Across Nigerian culture, fragments of old ways exist, but they are shorn of their meaningõ. The circulation of these novels in Africa may indicate the õinroads of Western*

culture, but they serve to aid Elvis on his coming of age journey as many of the coming of age rituals in the local have unfortunately become meaningless and perfunctory.

Abani's references to novels are not restricted to western novels, however. For one, Elvis reads the Koran in an attempt to decide for himself whether there are grounds for the battle between Christians and Muslims and treats himself by buying Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Significantly though, he lingers over the novels of Chinua Achebe, Mongo Beti, Elechi Amadi, Camara Laye and other African authors noting, '[he] read them all and ran his fingers along their spines nostalgically' (2004: 111, 112). The numerous references to the different novels seem to be unnecessary at times, but they often show Abani's concern with universal questions of identity formation. However, they do not only indicate a link to universal concerns. Amy Novak (2008:45) interprets the fact that Elvis reads James Baldwin's *Going to Meet the Man* just before he boards the airplane to the US, as follows: 'The book repels the voyeuristic gaze of the Western subject who looks upon black Africa as something primal and violent by reminding him of the violence in his own world and community'. In this way she explains how it links the colonial Nigerian experience to African-American struggles. Moreover, Eze (2005:106) states that these references to the different novels, 'serve[...] the overall narrative purpose of underscoring the multidimensional cultural hybridity of the city of Lagos, thus indicating the effects of globalisation. Through this process of globalisation, Elvis gains access to works by vernacular intellectuals from across the world that influence and aid him on his coming of age journey.

This also becomes apparent when Elvis encounters a bookseller whom he 'mentally christened' Bookseller Tuck because he looks like his mental picture of Friar Tuck from *Robin Hood* (2004: 112). Bookseller Tuck is selling Onitsha Market pamphlets which were,

written between 1910 and 1970, were produced on small presses in the eastern market town of Onitsha, hence their name. They were the Nigerian equivalent of dime drugstore pulp fiction crossed with pulp pop self-help books. They were morality talks with their subject matter and tone translated straight out of the oral culture. ... The covers mirrored American pulp fiction with luscious, full-breasted Sophia Loren look-alike white women. Elvis had read a lot of them, though he wouldn't admit it publicly. These books were considered to be low-class trash, but they sold in the thousands. (2004: 112)

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This is a notable example of transformation as dime drugstore pulp fiction crossed with pulp pop self-help books and combined with the distinct oral culture of Nigeria. In this way the western genre of pulp fiction and pop self-help books is circulated in Nigeria, but in the process of transformation, is infused with a Nigerian quality. This is perhaps not the best example of how a global literary genre enriches the literary tradition of Nigeria, but it is interesting nonetheless that dime drugstore pulp fiction appeals to Nigerians just as it does to the western readership. In the U.S., pulp fiction appealed especially to the lower classes because it was an affordable means of entertainment for them. The lower classes could often not afford the more expensive magazines or novels but were nevertheless looking for entertainment. Pulp fiction provides such cheap entertainment and is circulated to Nigeria where it is transformed for Nigerians.

A variety of language borders is also crossed within the novel. When Elvis first moves to Lagos, the Americanisms he knew were old and out-dated (2004: 8). In other places characters use western sayings in all kinds of strange ways: "Rome wasn't built on all roads" (2004: 134), "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is mad" (2004: 138) and "[w]ell, I hope you are satisfy as you drag up sleeping dogs for me" (2004: 159). These expressions are obviously used incorrectly, and yet in context the meaning is clear. Although the transformation of western language results in the use of expressions that would be considered idiomatically incorrect, it serves the purpose of those living in the context of Lagos. This is an act of subversion where Nigerians do not adhere to the rules of the colonial language and resist the remnants of colonial imposition by instead transforming the language to suit their needs.

One of the more comical yet significant scenes in the novel where language is transformed shows the appeal of specifically American English in the movies that Elvis and his friends attend as children. They adopt Americanisms from these movies that they enjoy so much. The silent movies they watch are projected onto a make-shift screen while the projectionist offers running commentary on scenes on the screen. This commentary includes numerous clichés and inevitably the crowd would join in, theirs being a culture of call and response theatre. Elvis and his friends, "usually sat smoking and trying out conversations from the films" (2004: 150), throwing "Darn these here rustlers" and "If you want to shoot, shoot, don't talk" into the conversation. Matthew Omelsky (2011: 89, 90) points out that the rearticulation of these Americanisms "elevates [these youths] into a euphoric space that centers on the idea of America", thus allowing them to temporarily transcend their precarious lives. Significantly

Elvis also notes that 'American English was exotic and a treat for the tongue, unlike the stricter grammar of England's English, which they learned at school' (2004: 150). The reference to the appeal of the exotic resonates with Huggan's discussion of the postcolonial exotic, except now Americanisms are the exotic being used to 'sell' American movies in Africa. It is as if the postcolonial exotic is functioning in reverse and, '[s]omehow it all made sense to them, like some bizarre pig latin. And there was a power in the words that elevated them, made them part of something bigger' (2004: 150). The appeal of the exotic for them is that it includes them in the global, 'elevating' them above the local which seems mundane from their perspective.

Elvis's grandmother, Oye, is perhaps one of the most prominent examples of this hybrid use of language as well as the intersections between the global and local. As a child Elvis cannot understand his grandmother's Scottish accent which she picked up from the Missionaries she had worked for and learnt English from. Yet, except for her accent, she remains true to the Igbo traditions and the town believes she is a witch with healing powers. She also illustrates intersections between the local and global through her pen pals from Argentina, Germany, Russia and even Sri Lanka. As discussed above, even though these letters are from so many diverse and interesting places, she enjoys Elvis's invented stories much more in the end. Oye's accent and connections across the globe connect her to the global, yet she remains firmly rooted in her local culture, traditions and identity, showing that although the forces of globalisation are pervasive, they are not all-powerful.

The circulation and transformation of western music in Nigeria, which are visible throughout the novel, play the chief role in exhibiting transformation. Jacob Patterson-Stein's (2009) article on music in *Graceland* as non-national is central to my own analysis of transnationalism in this novel. Music from the US, Cuba and Jamaica plays concurrently in the novel with Highlife and other African and Nigerian music. This is not to say that music from elsewhere is preferred to Nigerian music, but rather it shows how this music is circulated locally and consumed together with music produced locally, often influencing the local music through transformation. The Highlife, a style of music originating in Ghana in the 1920s (Collins 1976), is an example of how music styles cross borders on the African continent and are subsequently influenced by the countries and cultures they become popular in (Collins 1989). African music has also been influenced by music from the Diaspora (Collins, 2004; Zeleza, 2010), but Collins (2004) points out that music from the Diaspora naturally originated in Africa itself and later

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found its way back across the Atlantic. Similarly, Stefan Sereda (2008: 35, 36) elucidates how the film *Konbombe: Nigerian Music* credits the African slave trade with bringing African music to the west, from which western popular music later developed. Sereda (2005) argues how music is used in *Graceland* as a weapon to subvert and resist neo-colonial and globalising forces, yet I depart from the point of view that intersections with globalising forces are unavoidable. Thus, transformation of the global by the local in Nigeria is not necessarily always an act of resistance or subversion against globalisation, but sometimes just an enjoyment of foreign cultures. So while all global influences are not necessarily beneficial to the local it intersects with, these encounters do not always result in harmful changes as allowing music to cross national and international borders enriches musical culture. Thus transformation is not only a means of subversion, but also a testament to the ability of humans to adapt to change.

There are a number of examples in *Graceland* of how global and local music intersects and influences each other. For example, when Elvis works at a night club, the Highlife is seamlessly followed by African American Harry Belafonte's "Kingston Town" (2004: 92). Throughout the novel for example, we hear, "a cover of Nigeria's most popular song, "Sweet Mother," by Prince Nico Mbarga" (2004: 117) and Sir Victor Uwaifo's "Joromi" (2004: 137) play alongside Donna Summer's "Spring Affair" (2004: 94) and Jimmy Cliff's, "Many Rivers to Cross" (2004: 118). This makes for an interesting mix comprised of the Highlife by the two aforementioned Nigerian musicians followed by the U.S. Disco Queen, Donna Summer and reggae from the Jamaican, Jimmy Cliff.

The Highlife itself has had many international influences and has subsequently influenced other forms of music. Firstly, famous Nigerian Highlife musician Bobby Benson, who is often mentioned as background music in the novel, introduced a Caribbean flavour to the Highlife (Collins, 2004). Fela Kuti, who developed the music style which he called Afrobeat, in turn, originally wanted to play Highlife music, but while studying in London was strongly influenced by jazz (Olaniyan, 2004: 9). He later developed the style called Afrobeat which Randal Grass (1986: 134,135) explains as, "amalgamated jazz, the funk of U.S. soul singer/bandleader James Brown, highlife, traditional rhythms, and chanted declamatory vocals." Although Fela Kuti was originally inspired by James Brown, when Brown's band toured Nigeria, it was his turn to be inspired, as Peter Culshaw (2004: n.p.) reports,

Tony Allen, Fela's drummer and a key architect of Afrobeat, claims that Brown sent his arranger, David Mathews, to check him out. "He watches the movement of my legs and the movement of my hands, and he starts writing down ... They picked a lot from Fela when they came to Nigeria. It's like both of them sort of influenced each other. Fela got influenced in America, James Brown got the influence in Africa."

The effects of globalisation are far-reaching as African music made its way to the west through the slave trade and colonisation, and later filtered back to the Continent in new forms to again inspire African musicians in turn in the process of circulation allowing music genres to flow from one end of the globe to the other and back again. So while some may argue that this leads to African music becoming hybridised, essentially all music across the world is then hybridised. In *Graceland* they choose to celebrate it.

Significantly, Caesar, King of the Beggars, could be an allusion to Fela and others who used their art as a means of political activism. Elvis explains to his father that Caesar, similarly to Fela, is a poet and a regular speaker at Freedom Square. He is also an actor and uses theatre to fight the government (2004: 205). It is in Freedom Square that Caesar acts as vernacular intellectual just as Fela and other artists did. Also, Caesar helps Elvis escape the wrath of the brutal Colonel by allowing him to join their music, dance and theatre troupe who is leaving Lagos to tour the country. However, upon their return to Lagos a few weeks later when they hold a concert in Freedom Square, there is a military raid on the riotous crowd. Elvis is captured and tortured for information on where the Colonel can find Caesar, but released when he proves unable to do so. This event seems to resonate somewhat with the concert Fela held at Accra, Ghana in 1978 where riots broke out when he sang "Zombie", a song describing the Nigerian army as mindless Zombies. Regardless of whether this is reference to Fela or not, Abani nevertheless shows the universal power of the arts in challenging oppression. Artists such as Fela thus act as vernacular intellectuals as they find an effective means of engaging with their audience through their music and thus have a platform from which to influence them. On a subtle level, their transformation of music encourages and inspires Nigerians and others to find similar means of transforming global influences amidst the unpredictable environment in Nigeria as acts of subversion and escapism.

TRANSNATIONAL AND AFROTRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

An interesting relationship becomes apparent between the circulation and transformation of cultural and other goods in the novel and the formation of transnational and Afrotransnational identities of the characters in cosmopolitan Lagos. As seen above, Oye is influenced by the global in the Scottish accent she learnt from the missionaries, yet rejects their God and holds fast to her Igbo beliefs and customs. Even the lives of her pen pals from across the world are viewed as boring in favour of Elvis's contrived stories, and even though these stories are interspersed with global narratives and concepts, the manner of his story telling harks back to the traditional.

The Indian and Lebanese patrons of the club in Lagos are also representative of the many hybrid identities present in Lagos. Here Elvis is paid to entertain a rich Indian girl, Rohini Tagore, whose father is a rich business man who inherited the business empire of his father, named Unpanishad. Unpanishad had come to Nigeria in 1912 to help build the railways, and stayed on. With an uncanny head for business, Unpanishad had turned those two shops into fifteen huge department stores... (2004: 92). The Tagore family business is involved in the flow of globalisation by importing a variety of products from dry cell batteries, Swiss Army Knives, groceries and toys to cars and tractors (2004: 92). The Tagore family is an interesting example of how hybrid identities change over time as transnational influences change. Although Rohini Tagore had been educated at Oxford, her parents had planned to marry her off to a suitable Indian man as per their custom. While her parents still adhere to the Indian traditions and customs, as part of the next generation of Indians growing up in Lagos and being western educated, [s]he refused, defying [her father] in a gentle but firm assertion of her independence (2004: 93) She then also takes a job teaching comparative philosophy at the University of Ibadan (2004:93). It is clear though that she does not completely break away from her Indian heritage as, [i]n deference to her mother's tearful pleas, she lived at home, even though that meant a two-hour commute each way (2004: 93). She struggles between her desire to please her parents and her desire to break with some of the more limiting aspects of Indian culture. She also makes apparent her family's perception of native Nigerians as [s]he also allowed her father to hire Prakash to protect her from the unbridled and scurrilous advances of the native blacks (2004: 93). She allows her father to hire a bodyguard for her to please him, but is clearly open to the advances of the native blacks. So she does not seem to share her father's rather racist

opinion. Whether she would actually marry outside of her religious, cultural and ethnic custom is an entirely different matter though. Regardless, the Tagore family still view themselves as Indian first and foremost despite their long existence and success in Nigeria.

Partly as a result of her unique situation, Rohini could be seen as the next generation of Indians who takes on a more transnational (or perhaps Indotransnational) identity. She identifies firstly with her Indian heritage as she desires to show deference to her parents, yet she has been influenced by her western education which clearly stimulated in her a need for independence. Her expression of independence is illustrated when she turns down her father's offer to work for him as company financial manager and instead chooses to work at the University. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, she defies the custom of being married off to a man of her father's choosing. Instead she mingles with the native blacks and allows their advances, although doing so under the watchful eye of Prakash. Her western education has thus permeated her cultural beliefs and she now even seeks out the company of native Nigerians. It is doubtful, however, that if she chose to marry that it would be to a native Nigerian. Nevertheless, she is a striking example of the hybrid, transnational identities that exist in Lagos.

Elvis is also obviously an example of changing identities. He is a combination of the old and the new, the local and global. The juxtaposition of his early life in the small, traditional town, Afikpo and his later life in the modern, Nigerian capital, Lagos, in alternating chapters in the novel shows the various influences on his development as a character. Aycock (2009b: 18) comprehensively discusses the gender, cultural and racial aspects of Elvis's identity formation process and states,

In showing that gender and identity are performative in the course of Elvis's 'becoming' Abani does not intend to discard totally cultural, racial and gender identity as constructed and therefore harmful. On the contrary, he celebrates a multiplicity of voices and a variety of experiences. He encourages an understanding that identity and difference are constructed and a recognition that underneath the scaffolding there is some sort of human element we share.

Elvis's process of identity formation then illustrates not only the multiplicity of transcultural and transnational voices which influence his identity, but the multiplicity of voices which influences

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the identity formation of all humankind. Identity by its very definition is hybrid, and this is not necessarily a bad thing.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, Eze (2005: 110) argues that Abani, among other third generation novelists including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Helon Habila, no longer, "write(s) back to the Empire" but is concerned with how citizens of Lagos deal with transnational and global influences in living and attempting to thrive in the rather harsh and unstable conditions. Dance, music, literature and other examples of circulation and transformation discussed above illustrate how Nigerians succeed in doing so. I would also argue that although not all these forms of transformation enhance "Nigerian culture" it is sometimes a matter of survival on the one hand and the desire to flourish under the oppressive conditions on the other. The latter is clear as the incorporation of the global into the local often takes on a celebratory quality as it links local Nigerians, sometimes living in a hazardous violent environment, and allows them to transcend their circumstances, at least for a while. Dawson (2009: 23) points out that Elvis' impersonation of "the King" allows him to imagine a glamorous world away from the life he lives in the slums of Lagos. Similarly, Omelsky (2011: 88) discusses how it is specifically the U.S. that provides the Nigerian youth with cultural capital that allows them to escape their "precarious lives" through their imagination of non-African spaces. It allows them to be part of something they imagine to be bigger and better than their environment. Afropolitanism as defined by Gikandi requires one to have travelled internationally and most of the characters in *Graceland* have, however, never been beyond their own border. Thus I would say that their identities are Afrotransnational rather than Afropolitan. Although they have never travelled outside of Nigeria they nevertheless are no longer just Nigerians, but are linked to the world at large, and are part of the universal struggles and hopes of humankind.

The Afrotransnational identity is essential for intellectuals to function specifically as vernacular intellectuals. As seen in the examples above, Afrotransnationalism allows individuals to traverse the post-colonial, globalised world of Lagos by transforming the global as encountered within the local. The local is then by implication also transformed to suit this changing environment. Vernacular intellectuals would be perfectly suited to guiding members of society through this process. Fela Kuti does this through his amalgamation of both global and local forms of music. His music allows people to temporarily escape real life, or at least makes life bearable.

CONCLUSION

The intellectuals in *Graceland* have to face a very dangerous environment and are forced to make difficult decisions as they attempt to engage with the public and affect change in society. They have the difficult decision of either speaking the truth to power and risking their lives or remaining silent about injustices and thus acting complicit in keeping Nigerians in a state of oppression while protecting their own lives or finding a way to escape to the U.S. or Europe. Although the act of resistance by vernacular intellectuals may come at a price, and may be inevitably doomed as a result of arbitrary violence and injustice, the price of remaining silent becomes too high. However, in engaging with the audience, vernacular intellectuals still have to engage the right audience in a manner that will cause the right kind of change to occur.

This change can only be achieved if the messages are meaningful in helping Nigerians to deal with the reality of their lives. They have to incorporate a relevant message with the correct means of communication to the right audience in order to affect such change. At times this will mean protest is the only recourse left in asserting their right to justice and requiring that the government be accountable. At other times, vernacular intellectuals lead the way in showing Nigerians how they can take control over their lives in small ways by transforming the circulation of global products in the local context. In Nigeria, and specifically in Lagos, the nation-state is unstable and without a space for a healthy public sphere in which to participate and affect positive change. Transformation of the global in local contexts often serves a double purpose as it often offers a means of escape from the harsh realities of Nigerians' lives in Lagos and provides people with opportunities for acts of subversion. Those who cannot literally escape the absurdities of life in Lagos by immigrating to Euro-America, need a different means of escape; music and movies often provide those means. The transformation of the music circulated from the global within the local may thus allow the characters in *Graceland* to transcend their circumstances and connect to the global which is perceived as being free of the absurdities of their everyday life. In this way their connection to the global may represent hope. And yet the act of transforming the global and combining it with the Nigerian illustrates their irrevocable connection and love for their nation, indicating that transformation can be viewed as acts of resistance against the imposition of the global on the local. Just as the youth, who lack agency to express their resistance, find escape in consuming non-African capital culture as

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argued by Omelsky (2011), the intellectuals in *Graceland* have to choose between 'escaping' the absurdities of a violent, incongruous life in Nigeria either literally or through their imagination, and endeavouring to change Nigeria for the better.

This provides a complex and difficult environment for the intellectuals to function in, and yet they are often compelled to act, regardless of the outcome. So at times they choose to act to affect change, either by means of art or by actual physical resistance, while at other times they choose to 'escape' (either temporarily or permanently) in order to maintain their sanity in a crazy world. Thus, the resistance in many third generation Nigerian novels is geared towards the corrupt government rather than other ethnic groups, and when resistance against the government is futile, they subtly resist global culture by transforming it. Essentially, the transnational quality of Lagos and the development of Afrotransnational identities, rather than disempowering Nigerians, offer a ray of hope as the poorest of the poor in Lagos unite in their struggle for survival in resistance to the oppressive military government, even though this movement seems doomed to fail.

CHAPTER 3

THE ACADEMIC VERSUS VERNACULAR INTELLECTUAL IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN*

INTRODUCTION

Half of a Yellow Sun (2006)⁴ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is undoubtedly a novel about the Biafran War, but unlike many other novels on the civil war in Nigeria, it focuses more on the relationships between people surviving this tragedy amidst the atrocities and politics of war than on the war itself (Hawley, 2008:21). It explores the art of living, loving and dying (Eze, 2005:108) in the midst of the political upheaval and massacres leading up to the war and during the war itself. Brenda Cooper (2008:135) similarly states that what Adichie wishes to understand is the thick texture of the everyday that people like her parents experienced at that time. In her author's note, Adichie thanks her parents for teaching her, that what matters most is not what they went through but that they survived (2006: 542). Thus, through this novel Adichie takes ownership of her legacy as a Nigerian and although she did not experience the war first-hand, she sees it almost as her duty to write about the Biafran War and the people who lived it (Hawley, 2008: 21; Adichie, 2006).

Globalisation is not quite as prevalent in *Half* - spanning the period of Nigerian history from shortly after independence (1960) through to the end of the Biafran War (1970) - as it is in *Graceland* (2004), which is set in the 1980s when the effects of globalisation had become more pervasive with the advance of technology. However, both Adichie and Abani are part of a generation that has grown up in a highly globalised, transnational world. Adichie thus writes about the Biafran War and the intellectuals from that period from a different perspective to first and second generation authors.⁵ Abani's *Graceland* is set in the time period following the

⁴ To be referred to as *Half* from here onwards.

⁵ Other novels on the Biafran War include the following: *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972) by Chinua Achebe, *Sunset at Dawn* (1976) by Chukwuemeka, *Never Again* (1975) and *Wives at War and Other Stories* (1980) by Flora Nwapa, *Sunset in Biafra* (1973) by Elechi Amadi, *The Biafran War: Nigeria and the Aftermath* (1990) by Herbert

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Biafran War and the transnational identities it portrays developing in this period of Nigerian history enables Nigerians to survive and thrive in a country fraught with continuing corruption, senseless violence and political instability. Both novels provide us with some examples of the early effects of globalisation on Nigeria and the effect it has on Nigerian identities.

This chapter, however, deals with the relationship between transnational, Afrotransnational and Afropolitan identities, as derived from encounters between the local and global, on the one hand, and the figure of the intellectual based on Said's requirements, on the other. The differences between the academic and vernacular intellectual are particularly interesting in *Half* and these differences shed some light on the way that political and social issues are approached in this period in Nigerian history. The novel is partly set in the early 1960s, right after independence, and the conflict surrounding national and individual identity is palpable. Adichie uses the figure of the Afropolitan academic to illustrate that in spite of their western education, or perhaps because of it, academics are not always equipped to deal with the problems in their own nation. It is more likely that they have to some extent become removed from those without a university education and lack the tools and/or opportunities to engage with them effectively. On the other hand she provides us with a striking example of a vernacular intellectual who arises organically and develops an Afrotransnational identity alongside his role as intellectual. He is able to access knowledge from both the western and traditional world and through his experiences during the Biafran War he is compelled to write a book that could potentially affect a change in society in Nigeria as well as the world. This book deals with the issues of injustice, violence and the complicity of the world outside Nigeria who bear witness to the unfolding violence, whether directly or indirectly, in perpetuating such evils, and the novel thus subtly links the local with the global.

TRANSNATIONAL AND AFROPOLITAN IDENTITIES

Two specific types of transnational identities that Adichie portrays are those of the Nigerian elite and of the British expatriates in Nigeria. Adichie uses specifically the characters

Kainene and Richard to comment on these two groups. To begin with, Richard grows up in England to two absent parents who pass away when he is young and he ends up being raised by a nanny. He grows up an insecure, awkward young man and comes to Nigeria in search of the Igbo-Ukwu art he sees in a magazine, but he seems to be more on a journey to find purpose in life. It is Kainene who, showing her perceptive ability to read people, calls Richard "a loner and a modern-day explorer of the Dark Continent" (2006: 78), and in a sense this is exactly what Richard is. Richard's character is rather analogous of Marlowe from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as he journeys into Nigeria, exploring its culture, politics and people, and demonstrates various aspects of human nature. Similar to Conrad's use of his character Marlowe to comment on colonialism, Richard's observations and experiences in Nigeria provide us with a wide range of commentary on different groups of people involved in the politics of Nigeria. As Amy Novak (2008: 41) points out, "despite his effort to shed his European identity, Richard functions as a marker for how colonial epistemology constructs and shapes Africa as an object for consumption". She (2008: 41, 42) adds that Adichie thus turns from Richard to Ugwu as the voice of "interpretive privilege" in writing about the trauma of the Biafran war. Just like Marlowe struggles to come to terms with his experiences in Africa, Richard is unable to comprehensively interpret and present the Nigerian experience.

Firstly, through his journey into Nigeria, Richard himself develops a very interesting transnational identity. As stated above, he grows up in Britain, never travelling beyond it, which severely limits his ability to function as an intellectual in the Nigerian context (as I will discuss below), but he proceeds to actively acquire a rather transnational, or "quasi Igbo" (Cooper, 2008:146) identity as he immerses himself specifically in Igbo culture. His efforts to learn more about Igbo culture and traditions and his learning to speak the Igbo language are, however, more often than not met with a sort of humorous indulgence by the locals as he stumbles through the pitfalls of learning about a new culture.

This is never more evident than in the case of his relationship with his so-called houseboy, Harrison, who prides himself in being able to cook just about any European dish his British master could desire. Ironically Richard wants nothing more than to sample all things Nigerian and much prefers traditional dishes. Harrison himself has acquired a rather tragically comic transnational identity. With his love for all things British, which he views as implicitly superior to the traditional, he cooks a variety of traditionally European foods which unfortunately

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no one seems to enjoy very much. He lords his knowledge of European culture over other more traditional houseboys without realising how ridiculous this is. His expertise on and near obsession with European food and his belief in the superiority of all aspects of western culture over African is a stark reminder of the damage that colonialism has done to the African psyche, or what Ngugi wa Thiongø (1986) calls the colonisation of the mind.

Harrison's type of transnational identity correlates with the new Nigerian elite's artificial identities, who also exhibit this colonisation of the mind. Although Kainene is part of the elite she is nothing like them and Adichie uses her to show the difference between the various transnational identities that can form in postcolonial Nigeria. Although Kainene, herself an Afropolitan, plays the game of socialising with the elite and landing big contracts for her father's business, by bribes if necessary, she does not seem to be motivated by greed as many others. For example, she shows immense compassion for the refugees during the war, spending her own money and using what influence she has to find food and medical supplies for them while her criticism of the elite is unmistakable. She candidly tells Richard that, "[t]he new Nigerian upper class is a collection of illiterates who read nothing and eat food they dislike at overpriced Lebanese restaurants and have social conversations around one subject: 'How's the new car behaving?'" (2006: 80). Indeed, even her own parents offer the Minister of Finance an affair with their beautiful daughter, Olanna, in exchange for a big contract. The elites have acquired certain aspects of European culture, especially those who have travelled extensively, but their version of transnational identity is mostly an empty mirroring as they do it to attain wealth and status rather than as a natural assimilation into their own culture. She effectively indicates the superficiality of the elite and their near obsession with measuring up to what they deem to be worthy European standards.

Richard and Kainene also provide us with interesting commentary on the expatriates in Nigeria. Right from the start the narrator points out that Richard is not the typical expatriate as he never feels at ease or experiences a sense of belonging in the company of other expatriates. He is interested in exploring the country and learning about the different cultures from the people themselves, while other expatriates are mainly interested in exploiting the country and people in one way or another. It is only through his relationship with Kainene that Richard is able to view more holistically and practically experience the politics of not only the country at large but also the people and their everyday lives. He comes to realise later on in the novel when he sees

expatriate Susan, his ex-lover, at Winston Churchill's memorial service in Lagos that, [he] would never have been happy with her if life would be gossamer, all his days merging into one long sheer sheet of nothingness (2006: 296). His relationship with Kainene is quite the opposite and although not perfect, it has real substance. He views the relationships of the majority of expatriates as having that same gossamer quality as his relationship with Susan did:

[T]his was expatriate life. All they did, as far as he was concerned, was have sex with one another's wives and husbands, illicit couplings that were more a way of passing heat-blanching time in the tropics than they were genuine expressions of passion. (2006: 296)

The expatriates do not value the different Nigerian cultures in any way and view Nigeria simply as a context within which they can have their affairs and attain wealth away from the disapproving eye of their British culture back home. In this sense they employ Theroux's (1986) 'home-plus' theory of Nigeria becomes home plus better weather and freedom from social and cultural rules which prescribes acceptable behaviour. Susan for instance does not view Nigerian women as competition, yet she becomes enraged if Richard dares speak to an expatriate woman for even a moment too long. She accepts that most men will experiment with the local women but assumes that they will all eventually return to marry a white woman. Thus she does not feel too threatened or offended when Richard leaves her for Kainene and mistakenly believes he will eventually come back to her. She is unwilling to accept the locals as her equals and describes Kainene's parents to Richard as follows:

Chief Ozobia owns half of Lagos but there is something terribly *nouveau riche* about him. He doesn't have much of a formal education, you see, and neither has his wife. I suppose that's what makes them so *obvious*. (2006: 74)

Although Susan's observation is not far from the truth, she could clearly benefit from learning about local Nigerian cultures from local Nigerians rather than basing her opinion of Nigerians in general on the Afropolitan elites she encounters and the opinions of other expatriates. For example, she sums up Nigerians for Richard thus:

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—They have a marvellous energy, really, but very little sense of hygiene, I am afraid. She told him the Hausa in the North were a dignified lot, the Igbo were surly and money-loving, and the Yoruba were rather jolly even if they were first-rate lickspittles. (2006: 69)

Susan thus reduces them to nothing more than a few generalised observations that cannot begin to express the complexity of these cultures. The unwillingness on the part of Susan and other expatriates to view Nigerians (including the elite) as their equals or as having anything worth learning about means that they resist any form of transnationalism. Instead they attempt to recreate their British world in Nigeria, politely refusing any real Nigerian influence on their lives. Gaining a more transnational identity would clearly be useful to both the expatriates and elite as evident in the case of Richard and Kainene.

The expatriates and elite in Nigeria more often than not take the role of Nesbitt's (2002:72) comprador intelligentsia. They act as agents for the neo-colonial powers and they use whatever influence they have to amass wealth and power for themselves through their neo-colonial connections. Although Nesbitt applies these categories specifically to scholars who are in exile abroad, the category of the comprador intelligentsia can also be applied to the expatriates and elites despite the fact that they do not form part of the intelligentsia. Many of the expatriates are there ostensibly to help Nigeria with its transition to independence, yet in reality they believe Nigerian independence is bound to fail and ultimately are there to enrich themselves while they can. They could potentially have helped the nation get on its feet, but instead they use what knowledge or access to information they have to further their own interests via the international organisations who in turn also benefit from the relationship.

Adichie here contrasts the superficially transnational identities of the elite and expatriates with the more substantial transnational identities of Kainene and Richard. The novel portrays the circulation of people, such as the expatriates, and symbols of affluence from the west in Nigeria. While the expatriates resist any Nigerian influence they encounter in the Nigeria they inhabit, the Nigerian elites tend to eagerly assimilate any symbol of western affluence into their own lifestyles. As in the case of Kainene's parents, the fact that they are *trying* to appear sophisticated and European unfortunately undermines the end-result. On the other hand, Kainene and Richard develop transnational identities through a much more natural and authentic process.

THE JOURNALIST AS INTELLECTUAL

Richard's character is also used to explore the role, both positive and negative, of writers and journalists as public intellectuals. He is initially very unsure of his abilities as a writer, yet he makes numerous attempts to write a novel ó a great novel that would really mean something and make a difference in the world. In one attempt for instance he writes about the bronze roped pots of the Igbo-Ukwu art in the form of a novel about a British archaeologist who discovers these magnificent pots. This endeavour fails as he attempts to write about it from a primarily western perspective and his repeated failure at writing a novel implies that western theories or methods are ineffective in writing about African art in a manner that does it justice. One cannot write meaningfully about an artefact from a specific culture without at least having a comprehensive understanding of that culture. Though one cannot blame Richard for writing from a western perspective as this is the context he was raised in, it does mean that he employs exoticism (Huggan, 2001) in writing about the Igbo art. In other words, he uses the perceived exotic otherness of the pots and the Igbo culture as cultural capital in writing his novel. However, his involvement with Kainene and the scholars at Nsukka see him learn more about the cultures and socio-political realities of Nigeria, which begins to distance him from the stereotypical perspectives that the western world holds of Africa. His interest in the Igbo-Ukwu art also leads him to learn more about the history and cultures of Nigeria, but even so, òhe wondered what he was doing and, more worrying, what he was going to writeö (2006: 90). Here Richard recognises that he still does not have the ability to write about Africa due to the latent western views that he can never completely eliminate from his thinking. However, as he learns more about Nigerian history and culture and becomes more involved in the lives of Nigerians, his identity becomes a fusion of the remains of his British upbringing and the Igbo culture and language he is so intimately involved with, specifically illustrated by his relationship with Kainene. Kainene's reference to Richard as the modern day explorer of the Dark Continent illustrates Richard's sincere desire to explore and learn about Nigeria as well as the misguided approaches he takes in doing so. He thus eventually abandons the idea of writing a novel about Africa as he recognises he is ill-equipped to do so, and rather writes newspaper articles for the western media that subverts the blatantly biased reports written by western journalists about the Biafran war.

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A turning point for Richard as a writer is when he returns from England after a short visit and gains first-hand experience of the massacres of Igbo in the north of Nigeria. At the airport in Kano on the way back to Lagos he has a pleasant conversation with the customs official in Igbo and in response to the man's surprise at a white man speaking Igbo, Richard even uses a proverb implying that "one's brother could come from a different land" (2006: 191). A mere few moments later armed soldiers rush into the airport and kill all the Igbo people they can find. He stands there helpless to save Nnaemka, the customs official he had just conversed with. He realises that despite his best attempts at immersing himself in the culture and traditions of Nigeria, he would always be viewed as a foreigner by most Nigerians and that it is this very fact which saves his life. This reinforces his need to write something about his experience in Nigeria but at the same time also impresses on him the fact of his inability to do so as an outsider.

As he becomes more involved with Kainene and her family he decides to remain in Nigeria during the war, and while he can never be truly Igbo, he does what he can for their cause. Although he never completes any one of his novels, he starts writing articles in support of the Biafran cause. Following his witnessing of Nnaemka's brutal death at the hands of Hausa soldiers he becomes increasingly exasperated by the fact that there is very little he can do to change anything or even make things better in some small way. Meanwhile, his aunt back in England is constantly sending him newspaper clippings about the trouble in Nigeria as support for her pleas for him to come home. After reading some of these articles Richard instead starts writing responses to newspapers that make ridiculous claims. He fervently explains that the hatred and violence between the northerners and southerners is not so much a result of an age-old feud between different tribes as is popularly upheld in the west. Rather he argues that the conflict

...has been caused, simply by the informal divide-and-rule policies of the British colonial exercise. These policies manipulated the differences between the tribes and ensured that unity would not exist, thereby making the easy governance of such a large country practicable. (2006: 209)

The response from the editor of the magazine naturally infuriates Richard as the argument his article makes seems to have been completely ignored. Instead the editor asks Richard if he could write something on the "human angle" that would consider, for instance, questions such as: "Did

they mutter any tribal incantations while they did the killings, for example? Did they eat body parts like they did in the Congo?ö (2006: 210). The media is thus more interested in racist sensationalism than in the actual facts or the causes of the problems. In this way the media is very good at employing the postcolonial exotic in increasing their readership.

Richard's fear about the fact that despite everything he has witnessed and knows he still sleeps well at night, as if nothing has changed, is in a way representative of the response the world has to events they encounter in the media. However, unlike most westerners he reflects that,

[H]e couldn't let himself be. He didn't believe that life was the same for all the other people who had witnessed massacres. Then he felt more frightened at the thought that perhaps he had been nothing more than a voyeur. He had not feared for his own life, so the massacres became external, outside of him; he had watched them through the detached lens of knowing he was safe. But that couldn't be; Kainene would not have been safe if she had been there. (2006: 210-211)

These fears say more about the response of the rest of the world than it does about Richard himself. As he becomes conscious of his lack of meaningful response to these events he sets about to change it, while the rest of the world watches things unfold with a sort of morbid fascination and little else. He is thus motivated to start writing about what he witnessed at the airport in Kano but quickly recognises that he is ill-equipped to do so: öThey sounded just like the article in the foreign press, as if these killings had not just happened that way. The echo of unreality weighed each word down...ö (2006: 211). He, like the western media, is unable to do justice to that which had happened in Nigeria, despite his good intentions. This is evidence of Adichie's opinion, as she also states in an interview with Anna Maria Tremonti (2007), that western writing about Africa is, öcondescending and [...] formulaic, and it just follows a tradition. And since some of it's well-intentioned, it's doubly depressingö.

Scholars (Ryan, 2001; Herrscher, 2002; Hafez, 2002; Perkins 2002; Christians, Rao, Ward and Wasserman, 2008) generally agree that truth, objectivity, honesty and fairness are the core elements of ethical journalism. For instance, Kai Hafez (2002: 228) compares codes of ethics for journalists in different countries and concludes that, ö[f]actual, correct, and unbiased

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coverage [...] can be considered a consensual value of journalism that in all codes forms the core and essence of the journalistic profession. Similarly, William Cote and Roger Simpson (2000: 4) describe the goals of good journalism, specifically in reporting on trauma, as,

...searching responsibly for the truth, keeping the public interest in mind, caring for the people in the story and others close to them, respecting the voices of the people at the center of an event, knowing that the storytellers also are at risk, and doing no harm.

Although these ideals are to be lauded, in practice the boundaries set by these ideals are often blurred as these concepts are notoriously difficult to consistently define and translate into practice. This is even truer in the case of the foreign media as they have to report the truth fairly and objectively while often having a limited perspective on Africa and its people just as Richard exhibits above. Considering the long history of biased, Eurocentric reporting on Africa by the western media, it seems that reporting fairly, accurately and objectively is difficult at best.

Recognising his own limitations in writing a novel about Africa and the complications for the western media in reporting on Africa, Richard agrees to act as journalist during the Biafran war. When Madu, a major in the army and close friend of Kainene, asks Richard to write articles for the Biafran Propaganda Directorate to be sent to the public relations people overseas, he agrees. Initially he is thrilled at the idea that Kainene thinks of him as an *insider* writing about the realities of the Biafran war, but he also realises that they ask him precisely because he is white and not really an insider. This is exactly what would lend credibility to his articles with a western audience. So while Richard is hesitant at first, Madu's honesty compels him to agree to write for them when he says:

Look, the truth is that this is not your war. This is not your cause. Your government will evacuate you in a minute if you ask them to. So it is not enough to carry limp branches and shout *power, power* to show that you support Biafra. If you really want to contribute, this is the way you can. The world has to know the truth of what is happening, because they simply cannot remain silent while we die. (2006: 383)

It is this last phrase which finally convinces Richard and he zealously takes on his new role as journalist writing the truth about the Biafran cause.

Madu's challenge in the quote above is striking as he points out that merely showing support for the cause is very different to making a meaningful contribution. This is also a challenge to many other parties who would argue that they supported the Biafran cause, such as Kainene and Olanna's parents who offer financial support for the war effort, but escape to England when things become too dangerous. Madu thus implies that showing support through mere protest is not enough; one has to do something more practical.

Ideally intellectuals would lead the way in this regard, and yet the challenges to the journalist as intellectual in initiating such action are widespread. As pointed out above, reporting accurately and objectively is difficult for westerners who hold a Eurocentric worldview, albeit subconsciously, and thus interpret events in Africa accordingly. Nonetheless, Cote and Simpson (2000: 41) explain that journalists have an ethical responsibility to respect victims of traumatic events when reporting on these events:

If journalists treat victims of human cruelty with respect and informed attention, they can ease the effects and channel them into pursuits that are constructive for the victims and everyone the media covers.

Richard's encounter with western journalists (to be discussed below) explicates how western journalists reporting on African events, especially those involving human trauma, largely fail to treat the victims with respect. They fail, to a large extent, to recognise their humanity as they view victims from a biased perspective rather than with 'informed attention'. As Cote and Simpson (2000: 2) point out, many journalists do report on traumatic events with great sensitivity but others do not allow victims to determine how their story is told. In this way, reports on African events often serve to reify western parochialism in their view of Africa rather than challenging these views with the truth.

Richard's experiences as a journalist and encounters with members of the western media are thus used to criticise the western media's failure to report accurately and fairly on the Biafran war. Richard's articles on the Biafran war contrast with those of many other western journalists also writing about the Biafran war at the time. Rather than reporting fairly and impartially as

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journalists are ostensibly supposed to do, the media industry is unfortunately often more concerned with financial viability than publishing quality material, as mentioned in the instance above where the editor asks Richard to write something more exciting or exotic. Mention is also made of a journalist named Colin Williamson who left the BBC because the editors explicitly support Nigeria. Of course news stories are always written from a specific angle, but should still be unbiased, and Williamson clearly believes that the BBC editors follow a biased approach to reporting. This undermines journalists' ability to function as intellectuals as they are perpetuating the lies that are leading to the demise of Biafra. Edward Said (1994) would argue that intellectuals by definition need to criticise and challenge the status quo, not be complicit in it. So western journalists, as portrayed here by Adichie, more often than not fail to function as intellectuals and instead do exactly the opposite.

For example, when Richard takes two American journalists to visit refugee camps, a number of problems emerge with the approaches of western journalists to reporting. Firstly, they appear to have set opinions on matters and interpret every encounter and event as implicit support for these opinions rather than searching for the truth. As pointed out elsewhere in this chapter, many scholars (Ryan, 2001; Herrscher, 2002; Hafez, 2002; Perkins 2002; Christians, Rao, Ward and Wasserman, 2008) argue that ethical journalism as being based on reporting the truth, objectivity and fairness. However, they also concede that it is very difficult to accurately and consistently define these terms and thus in practice, the line between ethical and non-ethical journalism easily becomes blurred. When reporting in a foreign country, treating the people with sensitivity can be difficult when you have subconscious preconceptions about them. For example, the two journalists question Richard about whether the Biafrans are secretly transporting weapons together with the food destined for refugees. Although Richard denies this they clearly do not believe him. Similarly, although thousands of Biafrans have died in the massacres and subsequent war, the American journalists are more interested in the death of one white man in the midst of it all. Richard thinks to himself that he, 'would write about this, the rule of Western journalism: One hundred dead black people equal one dead white person' (2006: 462). This illustrates Judith Butler's (2004) argument that the vulnerability and grievability of the Iraqi, Sudanese and Vietnamese is negated by the U.S. discourse of dehumanisation. Similarly, Harting (2008: 64) argues that in narratives of violence as well as the violence of narratives on the genocide in Rwanda,

Western narratives of African expropriation rely on and produce what might be called *necropoeia*, that is, an infusion of social, political, or physical death to negate rather than construct the African subject.

The use of *necropoeia* in narratives on the Rwandan genocide then functions to exhibit the death of the African body to evoke pity and fear (2008: 66). However, rather than subvert the perceptions of the consumer, the African body then becomes a commodity that helps reproduce Africa as an object of humanitarian aid (2008: 66) and reifies the African as dependent non-subject (2008: 63). Thus the body of the abject African becomes a commodity which perpetuates the view of the African as being less vulnerable and grievable than the consumer of the news media.

Another pre-conceived notion that these Americans hold is that Africans are barbaric and therefore eat whatever they can find. Novak (2008: 39) explains that "[t]he British and American journalists see the events of the Civil War through a set of prejudiced assumptions about the violent and primal nature of Africa. The journalists apparently forget that there is a war going on and most of the Biafran population are teetering on the brink of starvation. Eating rats and locusts is not so much an act of barbarism as it is a means of survival. What is barbaric is that people are reduced to this because of war. The tragedy of this becomes clear when one of the two journalists hypocritically states that he really wishes he could do more for the refugees while eating a bar of chocolate. This is evidence of the extent to which this journalist fails to apply the fundamental ethical principle of respecting and caring for the victims of traumatic events (Cote and Simpson, 2000: 4). Finally, when the journalist then says that he wants to see "the real Biafrans" (2006: 464), Richard is obviously confused as to what he means. The man explains that he does not understand how these starving refugees could still support the Biafran cause. Richard astutely asks him, "[d]o you usually decide what answers you will believe before you do an interview?" (2006: 464). The man does not answer but the point is made.

It further becomes clear that they do in fact have predetermined opinions when the other journalist does an interview with a refugee woman. In answer to his rather ridiculous questions such as whether or not she is hungry she states that obviously they are all suffering from hunger. Secondly, he asks if she understands the cause of the war and she responds that the war started

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because the Hausa wanted to exterminate the Igbo. Lastly, she states her belief that Biafra will win the war and deems it sacrilege to even ask what would happen if Biafra were to fail to do so. The American journalist's response is telling: "unbelievable," the redhead said. "The Biafran propaganda machine is great." (2006: 465). Because of his preconceived ideas he cannot conclude that the woman's response has nothing to do with propaganda but that this woman may very well have lost family in the massacres and therefore believes that the Biafran cause is just. Richard thinks to himself that these two journalists are typical of the perspective the western world has of things in Nigeria, how they "arrived with their firm protein tablets and their firmer conclusions: that Nigeria was not bombing civilians, that the starvation was overflogged, that all was as well as it should be in the war" (2006: 465). Even when Richard says to the journalists, "[t]here isn't a propaganda machine.... The more civilians you bomb, the more resistance you grow" (2006: 465), the journalist claims that this statement itself sounds like a piece of propaganda, regardless of the logic behind it. Thus, despite evidence to the contrary, they refuse to admit the reality of things as it contradicts what they believe must be the truth. These two journalists then fail to adhere to some of the fundamental principles of ethical reporting as laid out by Cote and Simpson (2000; 4) above. Specifically, they do not really search for the truth but rather for support of their own preconceived notions. They also exhibit no real respect for the victims of the war but rather decry their attempts at survival as barbaric.

The universality of human suffering is also a point of contention for these journalists. When Richard lashes out at them saying that the American government knows that people are dying yet they do nothing, one journalist retorts that of course their government is aware of it but that people are dying everywhere, including his brother whose body was just brought back from Vietnam. Although Ward (2005: 5, 12) argues for a more cosmopolitan approach to reporting on world events, specifically in terms of their responsibility to all humanity, not just a group, the deaths of all people are clearly not considered equally important. Judith Butler (2004: 30) similarly argues that, "we might critically evaluate and oppose the conditions under which certain human lives are more vulnerable than others, and thus certain human lives are more grievable than others". She (2004: 34) further argues that in the case of acts of violence committed by the U.S. in war, there is a discourse of dehumanization of their victims and thus,

[t]here are no obituaries for the war casualties that the United States inflicts, and there cannot be. If there were to be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition.

Clearly for this journalist, his brother's death in Vietnam is more grievable than the deaths of thousands of Nigerians he has never known and do not qualify for recognition. This is when the title for a book on the Biafran war as an indictment of the world (2006: 469) comes to Richards, echoing the words of Madu, "The World Was Silent When We Died" (2006: 469). This is significant in light of what Said (1993: 45) says about the role of the intellectual in writing or protesting in a crisis such as war:

It is inadequate only to affirm that a people was dispossessed, oppressed or slaughtered, denied its rights and its political existence, without at the same time doing what Fanon did during the Algerian war, affiliating those horrors with the similar afflictions of other people. This does not at all mean a loss in historical specificity, but rather it guards against the possibility that a lesson learned about oppression in one place will be forgotten or violated in another place or time.

The novel Richard intends to write, as an indictment of the world that was silent as people died, does not only recount events leading up to and during the Biafran War, but also reflects the silence of the world as "[p]eople are dying in Sudan and Palestine and Vietnam" (Adichie, 2006: 469) and other parts of the world. As Butler argues, this silence is often because the lives of Nigerians, Sudanese, Palestinian and Vietnamese victims of war are not deemed as grievable. Journalists as intellectuals reporting on the war thus have the responsibility of relating the injustice committed against a specific group at a specific place in time to that of others in a manner that evokes grievability. Ideally media reports of such violence should elicit some response from the world audience but unfortunately, as discussed above, the world media reported on matters pertaining to the Biafran war from a biased position "that the Biafran War was not all that serious and that one white person's death was equal to the death of a hundred black people. In effect they are complicit in perpetuating the injustice and atrocities being committed.

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The way journalists function as intellectuals is problematic in *Half* as Adichie shows that their role in speaking the truth to power is undermined by a number of factors. Firstly, as seen in the case of Richard, he is unable to write effectively about Nigeria despite his good intentions due to his initially limited perspective on Nigerian history and culture, and the fact that he thus views them as exotic. It is only when he becomes more intimately involved with the people, their language and culture and breaks with the exotic view of Nigerians that he becomes more capable of writing articles that are meaningful. Secondly, his character provides us with significant commentary on the limitations of the western media. The western media is (mis)directed by the prejudiced views they hold of Nigeria and fail to report accurately and fairly. It is partly a result of what Adichie calls 'the single story of Africa' (2009) that the west believes in, which relates to Butler's (2004) argument about the lack of vulnerability and grievability of the African from the western perspective. Sadly, even when these journalists hear alternatives, they seem incapable of believing it and resist the alternatives to their prejudiced views. The biased reporting is also driven by the need of media corporations to retain a large audience as consumers of their products as a means of financial stability. Thus, while journalists are supposed to be the voice to the voiceless, Richard surmises that in fact they are often the opposite. Thus the world indeed largely remains silent while people die and in this way are actually complicit in their deaths.

THE ACADEMIC

Half also provides us with a range of characters who function specifically as academics as defined in Chapter 1. For instance, Odenigbo is a revolutionary academic who was educated in Britain and returns to Nigeria full of idealistic passion to build a strong Nigeria. Christopher Ouma (2011:19) portrays Odenigbo as a vernacular intellectual, explaining his use of the term vernacular intellectual as (2011: 28):

an off-shoot of Fareed Grant's idea (2003) of Black vernacular intellectuals (an extension of Gramsci's arguments) about intellectuals who in their critique of social justice stand both inside and outside of academic and conventional spheres.

Ouma (2011: 19) states that Odenigbo is a vernacular intellectual as he is both a scholar at Nsukka University and a "champion[...] for Igbo nationalism". However, I will argue that while he may intend to be a vernacular intellectual, in practice he remains largely an academic. He is an Afropolitan as his time overseas has endowed him with a posh British accent, a love for playing tennis and numerous other aspects of British culture and mannerisms, including his incessant referral to his houseboy Ugwu as "My good man". He has adopted many features of British culture but still avidly argues his identity lies in being Igbo and he is passionate about building a strong Nigerian nation, but it is clear that Odenigbo has become Afropolitan to the extent that he has lost touch with the realities of Nigeria. The knowledge he has acquired in England and his role as a scholar at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, would presumably ideally situate him to aid in the nation-building process, but it is not quite as simple as that.

As an Afropolitan, Odenigbo oscillates between being a postcolonial critic and progressive exile (Nesbitt, 2002).⁶ He wants to help his fellow Nigerians, as a progressive exile, to be free from the effects of colonialism, but often inadvertently slips into using western academic discourse to "explain" the "African experience" (Nesbitt, 2002: 73) and thus takes on the role of a postcolonial critic. For example, Odenigbo forms a discussion forum in his home for African scholars to engage in debate regarding the problems their country faces and to come up with unique African solutions to these problems. He later includes scholars with other nationalities such as Indian, Caribbean and American, and even though Miss Adebayo teases Odenigbo for being a "tribalist" he comes to appreciate the value of other cultures. These debates in his living room range from the need for "a bigger pan-African response to what is happening in the American South" (2006: 24) to the argument that "pan-Africanism is fundamentally a European notion" (2006: 24). The western discourse used to discuss the dilemmas of postcolonial Africa as well as the Diaspora, although useful in terms of describing the issues at hand, does not lead them too far in finding workable African solutions.

For example, Odenigbo and Professor Ezeka argue about the fact that Nigerians only know themselves to be Nigerians because the British constructed this concept and the question remains as to how Africans should instead (re)construct their identities on their own terms.

⁶ As I pointed out in the introduction, my use of Nesbitt's categories will not be limited to the migrant scholar as he uses them, but will include all categories of intellectual, including those who have not been educated overseas or even left the country.

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Odenigbo states that before the arrival of white people he was always Igbo and they should therefore hold on to their tribal identity, but Professor Ezeka points out that again, he still only knows he is Igbo because of colonialism. The debate surrounding this is lively and passionate, but no real conclusion is drawn and there are no potential answers to the questions they are raising. Although these questions are indeed far too complex to find answers to in one evening, debates and discussions like these are essential in working towards answers, answers these academics cannot agree on.

This clearly foregrounds the debates surrounding identity during this period of Nigerian history. There is much discussion about holding on to an essential African identity, specifically that of one's tribe, versus adopting a Pan-African identity. I would argue, as in the previous chapters, that Afropolitan and Afrotransnational identities seem to have risen organically in the place of Pan-African identities during the 1970s and 1980s as seen in *Graceland*. This is because the scope of concerns in Pan-Africanism, as Nesbitt (2002: 72, 73) for instance uses it, is limited largely to issues of race as it pertains to Africans on the continent as well as in the Diaspora. Thus, it does not necessarily address other issues that Nigerians have to deal with in their specific context. Without going into the politics of this I would nevertheless like to refer back to the Afrotransnational identities in *Graceland* that seem to allow the characters to survive and thrive in a Nigeria that is becoming increasingly globalised. Holding onto an identity defined by your specific ethnic group and viewing it as superior to others can be dangerous. These identities can be used to motivate hatred and violence against other cultural groups. For instance, though there were many other factors involved as well, tribal identities did come into play with the coups, pogrom of the Igbo and civil war in Nigeria. Though much of the traditional way of life has been lost in the advance of globalisation, as seen in *Graceland*, the changes that have been brought to Nigeria are now irreversible and the Afrotransnational identities that have developed through circulation and transformation have allowed Nigerians to not only survive the urban chaos that is Lagos, but to indeed thrive in the midst of it.

Coming back to the academics in *Half*, there are primarily two problems with their debates. Firstly, the discourse and theories they use originate primarily in the west and these are at times ineffective in explaining or coming up with solutions to African problems. Secondly, it seems the discussions are not really aimed at finding solutions so much as they are about arguing for the sake of arguing. For example, in one debate, their discussions on the problems facing

Africa include criticism of the works of Hegel, Hume, Voltaire and Locke. Odenigbo even argues that these perspectives were a catalyst for Hitler's hatred of the Jews and thus the holocaust, therefore if the west had treated Africans better the holocaust would never have happened.⁷ Again, while these discussions by the scholars at Nsukka on such matters are necessary, they nonetheless do not go beyond deciding who is to blame for the deprecating perspectives the western world holds of Africa and Africans. When they cannot agree with each other on this and the arguments become too intense, they resort to humour as a means of defusing the tension. Olanna who is new to these debates and discussions notes: "There was something habitual about it, as if they had had different variations of this conversation so many times that they knew just when to laugh" (2006: 63). So while their discussions range from how "Nkrumah really wanted to lord it over Africa" (2006: 64) and "Sharpeville was only a dramatic example of the hundreds of blacks killed by the South African state every day" (2006: 64) to more international topics such as the Cuban missile crisis, they never seem to work towards what could be workable and practical solution to any of these issues. There is no real move away from merely analysing the cause(s) of these problems towards finding a way forward and beyond these issues. They seem to argue for the sake of arguing.

Odenigbo and his fellow scholars then remain little more than scholars and there are limitations on their ability to function as intellectuals. Kainene for one relates quite accurately to Richard the short-comings of Odenigbo as a scholar. She explains that Odenigbo "imagines himself to be quite the freedom fighter. He's a mathematician but he spends all his time writing newspaper articles about his own brand of mishmash African socialism" (2006: 87). Richard later witnesses this for himself as Odenigbo "wave[s] around a copy of the *Daily Times*, shouting, "It is *now* that we have to begin to decolonize our education! Not tomorrow, now! Teach them our history!" (2006: 94), but he never gets further than ranting about it, except in the case of the education he gives Ugwu, his houseboy. Besides education, he also fervently explains

⁷ Mahmood Mamdani (2002: 2-10) makes a similar argument by tracing the history of genocide committed by European nations on their respective colonies until it eventually came back to Europe where Hitler was, in a manner of speaking, trying to colonise Europe. He (2002: 5) further explains that colonisation and genocide are based on the idea of the differentiation between people as belonging to inferior or superior groups. This is what ultimately led to the genocide in Rwanda, where before colonisation the Hutu and Tutsi identities were subject to change and "[o]nly with Belgian colonialism did Hutu become indigenous and Tutsi alien, the degradation of the Hutu a native degradation and Tutsi privilege an alien privilege" (2002: 11). This distinction became enshrined in the law and these political identities that were later confirmed by nationalism, eventually leading to the civil war and genocide (2002: 12).

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to Ugwu that the government needs to teach the people about irrigation technology in order for Nigeria to overcome this colonial dependence on imports (2006: 112). He does not explain how exactly they should go about doing so. So clearly he is ardent in liberating his fellows (Nesbitt, 2002:73) from political, economic and social restraints lingering from the colonial period, but we sense that there is a lack of practicality in actively fighting these problems.

His passion initially seems impressive and sincere but an incident with Ugwu's sick mother shows a critical shortcoming in Odenigbo's character and subsequently his ability to function as an intellectual. Ugwu practically worships the earth his Master, Odenigbo, walks on because he is such a highly educated man, but in this incident he does realise that his Master is indeed fallible. Ugwu's mother falls seriously ill and Odenigbo drives him to his village to see her and bring her back to Nsukka to see a doctor if necessary. It seems to be an act of compassion on Odenigbo's part but during the drive to the village, his above-mentioned diatribe about liberating the people from the colonial dependence on imports (2006: 112) flows. He then moves on to also explain to Ugwu and his aunt that figures in the latest census were forged and how he had mobilised some of his students to demonstrate in Lagos and passionately proclaims, 'we must speak out' (2006: 112). These are important issues he raises, yet his timing for such an invective may be a bit inappropriate. Furthermore, when they arrive at Ugwu's home, his family are in complete awe of the educated man who Ugwu has brought to help. Instead of being gracious about all the superfluous, almost debasing, gratitude the family displays, Odenigbo is irritated and tells Ugwu to hurry and get his mother's things as he wants to get home to receive some guests he is expecting. When Odenigbo then helps Ugwu's mother into the car Ugwu is on the one hand somewhat ashamed at his mother's apparent poverty and lack of hygiene, but his shame quickly turns into anger instead at Odenigbo. He realises that he believes Odenigbo will judge his family based on appearances without knowing about the poverty and other difficult circumstances they have to live in. While he is usually full of pride in his Master as an educated man and is willing to defend him against others' opinions and criticism, even if only in his mind, he now thinks to himself: 'What did Master know about anything anyway, since all he did was shout with his friends and drink brandy at night?' (2006: 114). He realises that despite Odenigbo's excellent education and zeal for righting the wrongs in Nigeria, he is too absorbed in researching and debating to even ask Ugwu about his family. Ugwu had noticed this from the beginning when he started working for Odenigbo, but now it is not merely a case of an

absent-minded scholar, it has become more personal than that. He may be able to mobilise his students to demonstrate in Lagos against the corruption of government officials, but lacks a human connection with the houseboy and his family. Such a connection to everyday people could enable him to mobilise many more people than just his students.

This is probably more of a flaw in character than the fault of his education though. Odenigbo at times seems unable to accept reality, incessantly optimistic about the future of Biafra, even in the face of impending civil war. We see this same trait in his mother when they are evacuating the town Abba as Nigerian troops are advancing and she refuses to leave her home. She seems unable to accept or believe that her hometown, having never fallen to an enemy before, will now fall to the Nigerians. When Odenigbo later receives the news that his mother had been shot by soldiers he is determined to go to Abba to bury her even though Abba is now in occupied territory. He, ironically like his mother, is unable to see reason and makes a desperate attempt to look for his mother's body. Fortunately he returns safely, but without success.

In many ways Odenigbo is also critically disconnected from the people closest to him. When his mother comes to visit him and Olanna at their home in Nsukka, his mother proceeds to shout at Olanna that she is witch and that she will not allow Olanna to steal her son and will ultimately fight her at all costs in order to retrieve her son from Olanna's evil clutches. In the face of this superstitious onslaught, Olanna moves back to her own apartment. Odenigbo seems unable to understand why Olanna cannot just ignore his mother and is more interested in arguing about the latest political upheaval. In reference to the political issues he states that, "[w]e have to show support. We cannot allow ourselves to become disconnected" (2006: 127). This is ironic in light of how completely disconnected he is from the danger that his mother poses to his relationship with Olanna. He is completely puzzled about why Olanna is so upset by his mother's outburst. He simply reasons it away as an older woman clinging to her traditions and beliefs who should be tolerated even if she is unreasonable. He only realises his error later on when his mother is able to contrive circumstances in such a way that Odenigbo impregnates a village girl in order to win her son back from the "witch" Olanna who she believes is set on depriving her of grandchildren.

The flaw thus seems to lie in his character but is manifested through his near obsession with politics which he expresses through his article writing, arguments with other scholars and litanies to just about anyone who will listen. His most valuable intellectual work takes the form

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of articles he writes for a newspaper, the content of which is naturally disseminated among a wide audience. However, due to his tendency to use academic discourse in addressing others, whether it be academic or non-academic individuals, it is doubtful how many readers actually read and understand these articles. This is not to say that Odenigbo is completely selfish or unable to show compassion. On more than one occasion he helps others by taking food to refugees and helping a wounded woman during an air raid rather than getting himself to safety. Unfortunately, although he is capable of compassion his over-riding focus is engaging people on an intellectual level rather than on a human level and thus he often loses his audience.

These flaws place definite limits on Odenigbo's capacity to act as an intellectual and unfortunately despite his best intentions, he is more of an academic than a vernacular intellectual. In his fight with Olanna mentioned above he does not see the point of even trying to reason with his mother about the situation because she is too stubborn and at that point in time there are more pressing matters in his opinion, such as a labour strike. Olanna rightly thinks to herself, "it was her right to be upset, her right to choose not to brush her humiliation aside in the name of an overexalted intellectualism, and she would claim that right" (2006: 129). Thus it is only when Olanna threatens to leave him for good that he decides to take Olanna's side. He does, however, make a very valid statement in reference to his mother's clutching to superstition:

The real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted in this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to negotiate this new world. (2006: 129)

We sense though that although he fully grasps the need for people to be given "the tools to negotiate this new world", he would be limited in his ability to assist people in gaining such tools because, for one, he sacrifices human connection for such causes.

Odenigbo does know how to speak the truth to power through for example the articles he writes, but his impact on his audience outside of his academic circle is limited. As Edward Said (1993:20) says, "knowing how to use language well and knowing when to intervene in language are two essential features of intellectual action." Odenigbo clearly has no problem knowing how to use language, provided his audience has a reasonably high level of education. His lack of sensitivity in human relationships also means he very often has bad timing in

expressing his opinions as discussed above. We also see that Odenigbo functions like an academic most of the time because his discourse, even though it clearly expresses legitimate and valid arguments, is completely lost on those not immersed in it, like Ugwu. Ugwu is in awe of Odenigbo and even if he does not understand his lectures half the time, he would follow him to the ends of the earth as he crusades for justice for all. This seems to be rather counterintuitive though as one of Odenigbo's main passions is to educate Nigerians and thus empower them to fight corruption and injustice. Unfortunately he seems to be unaware that he fails to educate people beyond the limited group of students at Nsukka and when he does realise this he is unable to understand why. Odenigbo seems to be unaware that although Ugwu is quite bright, he initially has a limited English vocabulary and so while Ugwu marvels at the wonderful terminology Odenigbo uses, the meaning is completely lost on him. Odenigbo thus makes an excellent academic and is able to act as a public intellectual to the extent that he influences a specific group in society, namely other academics and his students. His influence is rather limited on the uneducated though simply due to the language barrier. This is why I include Odenigbo in the category of postcolonial critic, because he gets too caught up in the language and discourse of analysing and defining the problem, as opposed to acting like a progressive exile who communicates these issues and potential answers in an understandable discourse to his fellow Nigerians in order to help liberate them from the bonds of corruption and violence which engulf the nation.

Apart from Odenigbo, the other scholars at Nsukka University in general seem to live somewhat removed from the reality of the world they like to argue about so much. For example, when Olanna takes her pregnant cousin to shop in Lagos there are Yoruba men harassing Igbo people in the market because the first coup is perceived as being an Igbo coup. Luckily Olanna's cousin, Arize, speaks very convincing Yoruba and they escape. When Arize tells her that this type of thing, and worse, has been occurring in other cities Olanna is shocked, '[s]he felt hollow. She did not know that things had come to this; in Nsukka, life was insular and the news was unreal, functioning only as fodder for the evening talk, for Odenigbo's rants and impassioned articles' (2006: 168). In light of the ensuing massacre of thousands of Igbo and the Biafran War, the intellectual debates held at Odenigbo's house in Nsukka in the early parts of the novel are indeed rendered almost frivolous.

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The scholars in Nsukka approach their concerns regarding Nigeria mainly as Nesbitt (2002) postcolonial critics and they fail to realise that they are not in fact functioning as progressive exiles. Adichie points this out in a particularly interesting section. After the second coup and the massacre of thousands of Igbo in northern Nigeria, there is much talk of secession. So while Olanna, who had been in the north during the massacres and had witnessed numerous horrors, is recovering at home in Nsukka, she listens to Odenigbo and his friends having their regular discussions and arguments. Now, however, these debates are in much more earnest and include outrage over the recent massacres that Gowon, the leader in the north, has failed to condemn; the western scholars at other universities who are said to have encouraged the massacres; whether David Hunt from Britain will be able to resolve the problems of unity in Nigeria that the British indirectly caused; and ultimately the politics of secession. Interspersed with snippets of this fervent debate is Olanna's objective recounting of mundane events and facts surrounding her day to day experiences as she recovers from the psychological scars resulting from her experiences escaping the massacres. Her somewhat detached observation of the things going on around her is indicative of either a state of depression or the medication Dr. Patel prescribes for her, or perhaps both. This juxtaposition of the passionate debates with Olanna's passive observations subverts the seriousness of the scholars' arguing and the reader is torn between outrage over the injustice and precariousness of the Nigerian state and the fact that arguing over it seems futile in the face of what Olanna witnessed. At the same time, however, it impresses on the reader the urgent need for these issues to be resolved so that Olanna and the rest of the Igbo people, and Nigeria at large, will be able to recover. Up to this point Olanna has lost the use of her legs, a psychological side-effect of shock, and Adichie cuts short Okeoma's fervent statement about Gowon's outrageous call for a unitary government by showing Olanna simply get up off the bed and walk to the bathroom by herself for the first time since returning from the North. This passage is written dispassionately:

Olanna stood up and placed one leg forward, then the other. She swayed. There was a tight pressure around her ankles. She was walking. The firmness of the floor beneath her feet was stirring and her legs felt as if they had vibrating vessels in them. She walked past Baby's Raggedy Ann lying on the floor, and stopped to look down at the stuffed doll for a while before she went in to the toilet. (2006: 200)

This seems almost metaphorical of the recovery that the Igbo and the whole nation could achieve. The lack of emotion used to describe this recovery is starkly contrasted with the fervent arguments by Odenigbo and his friends in the background. Although such debates are necessary and useful in developing possible solutions to the myriad of interconnected problems the nation faces, the fact remains that at some point the people will by an act of sheer will-power, rather than ardent arguing, have to get up and put one foot in front of the other and walk.

The discussions by the academics on social, cultural, political and economic issues, both local and global, do seem to lack a practical conclusion, but that does not mean that they are futile. Adichie, as a writer-intellectual, uses the discussions to, present...the discourse of evolving postcolonialism (Ouman, 2011:16). The arguments by the academics at Nsukka provide the reader with an overview of the politics of that period on Nigerian history that many people would be unaware of unless they had done research beyond the popular media, and also as Ouma (2011:16) argues, "[t]he idea of an academic sodality at Nsukka is problematized by Adichie, as representative of the consciousness of this burgeoning nation-state." We gain insight into the different sides of the story, with no one argument being elevated over another. This allows the reader to view the problems from different perspectives.

Importantly, the very lack of practicality that the academics portray in their nevertheless enlightening and constructive conversations frustrates the reader and impresses on them the need for the academics to take on the role of public intellectuals. As public intellectuals they would actively engage a public on these matters in order to effect change. For instance, the character Okeoma is based on a character inspired by the life of the prolific poet, Christopher Okigbo, who died fighting in the Biafran War. Okigbo's poetry deals with variety of issues such as nationalism and identity which is echoed in Okeoma's works in the novel and his inclusion in the scholarly debates at Odenigbo's house at Nsukka. Poets and other cultural workers are thus seen to be innately involved in the debates surrounding issues of the nation during that period of Nigerian history as their works also reflect the emotional and cultural climate of the day. These works of art could also influence people's thinking and consequently their actions. Hawley (2008:17, 18) also points out that Nsukka was initially a hub for intellectual and political activism and showed a vibrant energy as scholars engaged with political issues. However, towards the end of the war these scholars' works dealt only with the harsh realities of war (Hawley, 2008:18). During the war they seem to have become rather disillusioned in the face of

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personal loss, being surrounded by so much suffering and that they were relatively powerless to have a meaningful impact on the course of the war.

The question arises whether they would have been able to influence the course of events even if they had engaged with the public outside of the university on such matters more actively. Richard Butschø (2011) discussion on the journalist as intellectual in the first chapter of this dissertation is pertinent here as it argues that for the intellectual to effectively engage a public, that public has to participate rationally and once that public begins to slip into 'mob mentality' it is obviously beyond the intellectual to engage them in a meaningful manner. In *Half* that is exactly what happens. The first military coup takes place because specific cultural groups feel they are being excluded from partaking in the democracy while other groups are solely benefitting from the spoils of independence. This coup is called an 'Igbo coup' by the BBC because most of the deposed government leaders were Northerners. However, Professor Ezeka correctly states that, '[i]t was mostly Northerners who were in government' (2006: 159) and Odenigbo angrily adds, '[t]he BBC should be asking their people who put the Northerners in government to dominate everybody!' (2006: 159). Readers can see that even the academics here are straddling a thin line between rational and emotional reasoning. The north views the coup as a direct challenge to their power over the nation, as well as a threat to their existence as a cultural group, and they retaliate by launching a counter-coup that sparks a pogrom of the Igbo living in the North, including those in the military. At this point then, it is largely beyond the power of any intellectual to engage this public in any meaningful way that could lead to a reversal of the events that have been set into motion.

The academics thus play a very limited role in the actual politics of Nigeria. During the war many of the academics take up positions in institutions such as the Manpower Directorate and Science Group and do their part for the war effort, yet they are never actively involved in the politics or leadership. Similarly, after the war when they return to Nsukka and Nigerian soldiers raid their houses to find evidence that implicated these scholars as accomplices in planning the secession, no such evidence is available and one realises that Adichie never portrays any of them as ever getting seriously involved in the actual politics of secession beyond debating it.

This relates to dire circumstances that the intellectuals in *Graceland* faced and the question about whether it is worth taking on the role of the intellectual if the outcome is inevitable. Is speaking the truth to power enough? If the powers have no reason or obligation to

listen to you then what is the purpose of being an intellectual? If the public is too emotionally involved in matters to be engaged on a rational level, then what is the point? While Butsch (2011: 151) points out that: [b]y the end of the nineteenth century, the new fields of crowd psychology and of sociology had identified publics as a safe social formation that did not threaten social order...ö, this does not necessarily mean that the public would act as a completely rational entity that excluded all forms of emotions from its reasoning and decision making. Indeed Lauren Berlantø (2008: viii) work on intimate publics as having a shared öworldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experienceö, indicates that the shared emotions of a public could be used, or manipulated, by artists, politicians or other intellectuals. As with Abani, even if you can successfully engage a public, using emotional and/or rational means, the government will probably still not be inclined to react according to the wishes of the public. In this case, you learn to survive and thrive in the midst of the circumstances that are beyond your control, and in your own small way you have your own act of resistance.

At any rate, Odenigboø intention to act as vernacular intellectual is hampered by his use of academic discourse that is largely incomprehensible to non-academics, as well as his inability to connect to others on a non-academic level in a meaningful way. He has also lost touch with much of the traditional way of life, scoffing at his motherø superstitions. This is problematic when the vast majority of Nigerians are still steeped in the traditions and myths of their culture despite the effects of colonialism. These factors result in Odenigboø role as intellectual being that of an academic rather than a vernacular intellectual.

THE VERNACULAR INTELLECTUAL

Ugwu, on the other hand, is an excellent example of the development of a vernacular intellectual. He starts off as a houseboy for Odenigbo and Olanna at the age of about thirteen and has a limited formal education. Upon his arrival in Nsukka at Odenigboø home, he encounters modernity on a larger scale than he is used to and is fascinated by the house, its furniture, the foreign appliances, the copious amounts of food by village standards and what he considers to be a waste of space particularly in the garden which contains mainly inedible plants. Odenigbo is

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naturally no real help in aiding him to navigate this strange new world as he is too preoccupied with his own academic world. Nevertheless, it marks the beginning of Ugwu's epistemological revolution: as a servant, then a pupil who becomes a teacher during the war, a child soldier and eventually an authorial voice (Ouma, 2011:16).

Odenigbo may have little concern for Ugwu's encounters with modernity, but if Odenigbo is serious about one thing then it is the importance of education in securing the future of Nigeria. He thus sets Ugwu on a journey towards acquiring such an education. Odenigbo is outraged when he hears that Ugwu stopped going to school after standard two because his parents could no longer afford it. He exclaims, "[e]ducation is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?" (2006: 13). He then promises to enrol Ugwu in the staff school and Ugwu is only too willing to do whatever it takes to please his learned master. Although it is unclear how much Ugwu understands of it, Odenigbo then enthusiastically proceeds to explain to him that, "[t]here are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers" (14). True to his word, Odenigbo constantly talks with Ugwu about a variety of political and social matters and gives him numerous books to read which he believes will provide Ugwu with the "answers" formal schooling does not teach him. He seems a bit oblivious to the fact that more often than not Ugwu is completely lost even as he tries his best: "Ugwu did not understand most of the sentences in the books, but he made a show of reading them. Nor did he entirely understand the conversations of Master and his friends but listened anyway" (2006: 21). He does so because he has a near religious respect for education. Despite his rough start, Ugwu is nevertheless set off on a path towards an education that will lead to his development as a vernacular intellectual.

As he develops through his formal and informal education, Ugwu also begins to exhibit a relational capacity⁸ that is essential to his role as vernacular intellectual. He is still caught up in many of the traditions and superstitions of his culture but unlike Odenigbo, who completely shuns these, he does not underestimate the power they could still potentially hold over Nigerians. He also displays an understanding of human relationships that his academic master lacks. For instance, he nurtures friendships with both Harrison, Richard's houseboy, and Jomo who works

⁸ By relational capacity I mean the extent to which he is able to relate with others in a healthy way and to form rewarding relationships.

in the garden. These two have an on-going feud but Ugwu manages to stay friends with both because,

Ugwu preferred Jomo's solemn ways and false stories, but Harrison, with his insistent bad English, was mysteriously full of knowledge of things that were foreign and different. Ugwu wanted to learn these things, so he nurtured his friendship with both men; he had become their sponge, absorbing much and giving away little. (2006: 118)

This says much about Ugwu's relational capacity as well as his hunger for knowledge, both traditional and foreign. He thus does not exclude the type of knowledge he could gain from Jomo, but can distinguish between the useful traditional information Jomo offers and the purely superstitious. Similarly, Harrison also teaches him much about British culture, particularly food. Ugwu then selectively combines a western education with more traditional knowledge, assuming a type of Afrotransnational identity which allows him in the end to function as a vernacular intellectual.

Also, Ugwu's emotional intelligence is evident as he is the one who recognises the threat that Odenigbo's mother poses to Olanna and Odenigbo's relationship, while Odenigbo remains rather oblivious to it as described earlier in this chapter. This is partly due to his lingering belief in the traditional powers that Odenigbo's mother could employ to drive a wedge between the two lovers. While Odenigbo ignores Ugwu's concerns and his mother's suspicious behaviour, Ugwu watches her every move. While Ugwu unfortunately realises too late what she was planning, at least he is not as oblivious and unaware as Odenigbo. He strikes a balance between his knowledge acquired through his western education and his knowledge of traditional powers and employs these in his understanding of relationships.

Similarly, when Ugwu is conscripted into the Biafran army we see more telling signs of his developing cognitive capacity and how it enables him to develop as a vernacular intellectual. While languishing in the military camp awaiting assignment, Ugwu searches for paper, on which he could write what he did from day to day (2006: 451). However, instead of finding paper, he finds a novel hidden behind the blackboard in the old primary school building they use as a base camp. The book, entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave: Written by Himself*, is a temporary refuge for him from the reality of war. Significantly the

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story of Frederick Douglass is a narrative of a slave born in the early 1900s who despite being owned and rented out to various owners, some more vicious than others, manages to gain an informal education. He eventually manages to escape slavery and become involved in the abolitionist movement. There exists a parallel between Douglass and Ugwu's life which points out Ugwu's own move towards becoming a vernacular intellectual just as Douglass did. This transnational link to similar experiences in the Diaspora has a big impact on Ugwu.

As a soldier, Ugwu unfortunately also perpetrates many acts of war that would appear to be detrimental to the development of a vernacular intellectual, yet one incident proves on the contrary to be pivotal in setting Ugwu on course as a vernacular intellectual. This incident confronts him with a particularly difficult predicament. While at a bar drinking with other soldiers he is frustrated with the person he has become and his role as a soldier, and he reflects: "He was not living life; life was living him" (2006: 457). He is perturbed by his situation but does not have much choice in the matter and even if he could run away, he reflects that a part of him wanted to be there. However, when his fellow soldiers proceed to rape the bargirl, he is caught in a dilemma. When told by the other soldiers it is his turn to rape the girl he initially refuses but when they call him a coward he consents. He is self-loathing even as he commits the act and long afterwards he remains extremely ashamed of what he did. His shame becomes double fold when he learns that his sister, Anulika, had been raped by five men during the war just as he and his fellow soldiers had raped the bar girl. This incident shakes him more than any other act of war he commits and the intense regret he feels eventually sets him on a path to becoming a vernacular intellectual.

The power of literature in dealing with something like war is clear when Ugwu is injured and joins Olanna and Odenigbo again at Kainene's refugee camp to recover. When Richard comes to find Ugwu in the hospital, he tells Richard that although he was afraid during the war, he found the Frederick Douglass book and he explains how he "was so sad and angry for the writer" (2006: 495). He thus forgets his own fear for a while by becoming involved in the difficulties of another. Richard thinks it will be an excellent anecdote for his book and tells Ugwu that he is going to write a book about "[t]he war, and what happened before, and how much should not have happened. It will be called 'The World Was Silent When We Died'" (2006: 496). This is significant for Ugwu as he,

...murmured the title to himself: *The World Was Silent When We Died*. It haunted him, filled him with shame. It made him think about that girl in the bar, her pinched face and the hate in her eyes as she lay on her back on the dirty floor. (2006: 496)

So while recovering, he often dreams of the girl in his feverish state but in his dreams the girl turns into Eberechi, the girl from his village he has been in love with for years. Each time this happens, ð[h]e woke up hating the image and hating himself. He would give himself time to atone for what he had done. Then he would go back and look for Eberechiö (2006: 497).

So, as a part of his atonement, he helps at the refugee camp run by Kainene and Olanna and ðin the evenings he wroteö (2006: 497). Although this can never right the wrongs he committed, it does serve as a means for him to come to terms with his violent and debasing acts. He writes about everything from before the war right through to the misery, as well as humour, in the refugee camp. He feels dissatisfied with much of his writing and he,

...realized that he would never be able to capture that child on paper, never be able to describe well enough the fear that dulled the eyes of mothers in the refugee camp when the bomber planes charged out of the sky. He would never be able to depict the very bleakness of bombing hungry people. But he tried, and the more he wrote the less he dreamed. (2006: 498)

Thus, while his writing cannot fully describe exactly what he experiences or witnesses, it enables him to process his experiences and come to terms with them. It is a process of atonement and healing for him rather than an overt attempt to write something great as Richard does, or to educate people like Odenigbo.

It is only much later that Ugwu decides to combine his writings into a book about the Biafran war. When Richard reads a couple of his pages he encourages Ugwu, telling him it is excellent. He informs Richard of his intention to write the book and call it *Narrative of the Life of a Country* using the Frederick Douglass book as his inspiration. Richard then admits to him that he is no longer writing his own a book because, ð[t]he war isn't my story to tell, reallyö (2006: 530). Thus the eight sections that appear at intervals during the novel in which Adichie summarises the chapters in *The Book: The World Was Silent When We Died* is not written by

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Richard as the reader is led to believe. Adichie seems to purposefully mislead us only to reveal right at the end that it was actually taken from Ugwu's book: "Ugwu writes his dedication last: *For Master, my good man.*" (2006: 541). This ode to his Master, who continually referred to Ugwu as "My good man" in true British form, honours the pivotal role that their relationship played and the exposure it afforded Ugwu in becoming a vernacular intellectual. The title of the book is borrowed from Richard as Brenda Cooper (2008:133) states that Ugwu "[m]ust atone for his crime, which he does by inheriting the white character, Richard's, role as the writer, who documents the realities of the atrocities of the war." The fact that Ugwu inherits the book's title from Richard is symbolic of the combination of his western and traditional education in writing the book.

Ugwu's book, *The World Was Silent When We Died*, could be read as speaking the truth to power in a number of ways. Ugwu had never intended to write a book or article that would mean something in the world, but rather, he rises organically to take on the role of vernacular intellectual through his writing. As Ouma (2011) says, "Ugwu gains the status, within the narrative hierarchy of the novel, of an authorial voice, as a source of traumatic memory and history as well as custodian of the processing of the same history." The book does more than this though as it speaks the truth to power by questioning why the world did nothing, and therefore acting as an accomplice, while thousands of Biafrans died. The world presumably had the power to intervene but chose not to, even when they knew the truth. Instead world powers such as Russia in fact participated in bombing Biafran civilians. In raising such questions, Ugwu is more of a vernacular intellectual than either Odenigbo or Richard.

In the various chapters of Ugwu's book he addresses certain factors leading to and aspects of the Biafran War. In the first chapter, he relates how Olanna sees a woman carrying her child's head in a calabash as she flees the massacres, as if unable to accept reality. Adichie also tells us that Ugwu writes about other women from Germany and Rwanda who had done similar things during the Jewish holocaust and Rwandan genocide respectively. In this way, as in Said's (1993) argument referred to earlier in this chapter, by linking Olanna's experience to other massacres and the problem of universal violence and suffering it decries the fact that humankind does not seem to have learned from its mistakes.

In the second chapter Ugwu outlines the ideologies, beliefs and practices that led to the birth of the nation of Nigeria in 1914. Ultimately the British fought the French for control over

the palm-oil trade route and used certain cultural aspects of the respective Yoruba, Igbo and Fulani people against them to implement an indirect rule policy while filling the British coffers with profits made by exploiting the land and its people. As if Nigeria were a toy, the governor-general allowed his wife to pick the name that would join the north and south into a united nation. By implication, Ugwu also thus challenges the underlying authoritative truth that white people are superior to black and that this justifies all the above acts.

The third chapter further explains that at independence Britain made sure that the north and south remained united, even rigging the elections in favour of the North and giving them power at the exclusion of the South. Their motivation for keeping the North and South united was that Nigeria was their prized creation, their large market, their thorn in France's eye (2006: 195). Again we get the impression that Nigeria is nothing but a tool used to gain a victory over France with no thought as to the implications for the nation under dispute. Thus, the divisions that had been created along ethnic lines by the British to ensure control during colonialism were now exacerbated and, [a]t Independence in 1960, Nigeria was a collection of fragments held in a fragile clasp (2006: 195). Ugwu's recounting of these events implicates the sources of many of the political and social problems that would later lead to a civil war.

In chapter five Ugwu writes about an important aspect of the war: starvation. In this chapter he recounts how, [s]tarvation broke Biafra and brought Biafra fame and made Biafra last as long as it did (2006: 296,297). This is because reports of the starvation of Biafrans led some people to act in so far as they protested; motivated certain African nations to finally recognise Biafra; and ironically made parents all over the world tell their children to eat up (2006: 297). It also led to the aid organisations sneaking food into the country as a food corridor could not be agreed upon and as discussed in the section on the journalist above, starvation aided the careers of photographers (2006: 297). Although there were parties that were moved by the news and pictures of starvation in Biafra, people also used it to their advantage, such as Richard Nixon in his presidential campaign and the media trying to sell more newspapers.

Similarly, in chapter six, Ugwu points out how the world remained silent largely out of a fear of aligning themselves with the wrong entity and thus risking the loss of their particular segment of power on the world stage. Adichie states that the tone of silence was set by Britain, the US and Canada following suit. This pronounced silence allowed the Soviet Union the opportunity to finally interfere in Africa by supporting Nigeria. Perhaps the most pronounced

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example Adichie provides in this section is the African nations that also remained silent for fear that if they supported Biafra, other African countries would experience similar secession and potential conflict. The silence of the world was thus as much about ignorance as it was about self-preservation.

The epilogue in chapter seven is a very moving poem. It is modelled after one of Okeoma's poems (2006: 470), which poignantly asks the reader if they were silent as innocent children suffered the debilitating effects of malnutrition. It questions how people living their comfortable lives in other parts of the world could look at a picture of such children, experience momentary compassion and then just carry on with their lives. It reflects how these children laughed, played and lived as normal a life as possible even with the shadow of death hanging over them, knowing that the journalists came to take photos of them but that nothing would change. The world would just remain silent. This is an example of Mark Sanders' (2002a) use of the term complicity. He explains that Karl Jaspers' concept of "metaphysical guilt" proposes that all human beings are connected to one another and therefore people are responsible for crimes committed against others by virtue of this inherent connection (2002a: 6). Thus, when people across the world are aware of injustices and violence committed against others, whether they are of the same community or one completely removed, they are "co-responsible" for those injustices and violence. So remaining silent about these acts renders them complicit in perpetrating violence and injustice against other members of the human race.

Essentially Ugwu's Afrotransnational identity allowed him to combine his formal and informal education in a manner that leads him to write this book. He was able to combine his formal and informal education in a balanced way. He selects for example the means of expression from his formal education, but draws inspiration from his personal experience and from those around him. He thus begins to come to terms with his personal experiences during the war, and to raise important questions that pertain to the role that the world played, or failed to play, in the suffering of not only Nigerians, but all humankind.

CONCLUSION

Half provides us with many different perspectives on how people from different strata in society develop different types of identities in this complex, postcolonial Nigeria and how this

relates to their ability to function as intellectuals. The elites, expatriates, journalists, scholars and even non-academic people provide readers with an array of transnational, Afropolitan and Afrotransnational identities. While the majority of elites conform to a type of empty Afropolitan identity, the British expatriates resist any transnational influence. The scholars on the other hand also adopt Afropolitan identities as a result of their British education, which removes them from society outside of their academic circles. They are largely unable to connect to the non-academic Nigerian citizenry on a non-academic level. The academics thus have a very limited sphere of influence in Nigerian politics before the war and have little or no influence during the war.

I would argue that after the war it is perhaps vernacular intellectuals like Ugwu, writing novels such as *The World Was Silent When We Died*, who will have the ability to help the country come to terms with what has happened through their writings. The wounds left on Nigeria as a nation by the Biafran War will not be easy to heal, but as John Hawley (2008:16) suggests, "[c]ontemporary fiction, though, suggests that time, and art, may by default have become the only effective means to digest the poison of the past, and to slowly heal from within the damage that has been done." Hawley (2008: 21) furthermore quotes Adichie's statement in her interview with Wali Adebani (2006): "I do wish that literature can be strong enough to help. But help in what way? If literature can affect the way one person thinks, then perhaps it has helped. [. . .] I have." This may indicate why she portrays Ugwu as writing literature about the war. It is art such as Ugwu's which is most likely to touch people and just as the writing process allowed him to deal with their violent past, reading his novel could help other people do the same. He is better equipped to do so than either Odenigbo the Afropolitan or Richard and his brand of transnationalism. It is Ugwu with his unique blend of traditional Igbo culture and formal western education who develops an Afrotransnational identity and who is the most effective vernacular intellectual. As Hawley (2008:21) points out, "Richard, plays a highly symbolic role for Adichie: as white chronicler of the war, he gradually finds himself paralyzed for words; in his place, Ugwu rises up as the historian far more suited to the task." Ugwu is far more able to tell the story of the Biafran War than Richard would ever have been.

The summarised chapters from Ugwu's book all tell a part of the Biafran story, and even if people remained silent during the war, certain questions have to be asked. It may be too late to change what happened in Nigeria, but perhaps Adichie is trying to not only pay homage to her heritage as a Biafran, but also arguing that these things should never happen again, to anyone

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anywhere in the world. Through her character Ugwu, the vernacular intellectual, and the chapters of the book that she sums up rather than quotes as he would have written them himself, Adichie merges her own voice with Ugwu's and thus takes on the role of writer-intellectual. As writer-intellectual, Adichie challenges the reader to investigate their own silence when injustices were committed during the Biafran War and other conflicts around the world.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALLENGES OF THE FEMALE VERNACULAR INTELLECTUAL IN NIGERIA IN SEFI ATTA'S *EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME*

INTRODUCTION

1966 marks the history of African women's writing as the year when Anglophone novels by black African women, namely Grace Ogot's *The Promised Land* and Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, were published for the first time (Stratton, 1994: 58), and has been followed by the works of Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Mariama Bâ and other prolific female authors. More recently Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Sefi Atta have joined the ranks as authors of the third generation of Nigerian writers. This follows a tradition of male African writers who mainly excluded women from their assertion of African identity during the late colonial and early post-colonial period (Stratton, 1994: 1-21). Florence Stratton recounts how *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe has been hailed as possibly the most significant novel in African literature, "provid[ing] a model for succeeding writers to follow" (1994: 22) and yet, it

...was written and published in the years immediately preceding Nigerian independence in 1960, a transitional period when political power was being transferred from the colonial masters to a Nigerian male elite. *Things Fall Apart* legitimizes this process whereby women were excluded from post-colonial politics and public affairs through its representation of pre-colonial Igbo society as governed entirely by men. (1994: 27)

Novels by female African authors serve to assert the woman's identity and role in the African literary tradition as well as in the formation of national communities. The struggle for women to make their voices heard in the home and nation continues well into the third generation of female authors in Nigeria. Just as Adichie's tale of the family and home can be read as an allegory for the nation in *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) (Andrade, 2011), Atta similarly presents the woman's battle

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at home against the men in her family who would rule her in parallel with the battle for the nation's freedom from dictators.

Intellectuals as presented in novels by the third generation of Nigerian writers in general have many difficulties to face in modern Nigeria as my reading of *Graceland* indicates. Also, the different roles intellectuals can play can either limit them or facilitate change in the nation as Adichie argued in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The problems that intellectuals face are, however, compounded even further for women. These difficulties are explored specifically in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006)⁹. *Everything* is a novel about the coming of age journey of Enitan, a middle class Yoruba girl living in Lagos with her family. Jonas Akung (2012) traces the development of Enitan through her growth as a child; her formal and informal education; the process whereby she gains social awareness; her emerging sexuality; as well as her journey towards fighting for her rights and the rights of others. She has no real relationship with her religious mother, and her father is the one who teaches her about feminist liberation. It is her friend Sheri who educates her about her sexuality and through their friendship, together with her experiences at boarding school, she develops social awareness. Attending high school and studying Law in London later provide a further social and political education. When she finally returns to Nigeria she has become an Afropolitan and has to adapt to the Nigerian way of life again amidst the numerous coups and government programs of the 1970s and 1980s, such as Operation Clean the Nation. Throughout her adult life in Lagos she continues to grow into a strong woman who eventually begins to actively fight for the rights of women as well as all Nigerians. By way of her depiction of Enitan's journey, Atta identifies factors that limit women's freedom to function as intellectuals.

Everything is set in urban Lagos but the women in the novel also have to negotiate the urban/rural continuum in so far as it represents the tension between traditional and modernising forces. Also, Atta states in an interview with Walter Collins (2007: 123) that she grew up feeling Nigerian as opposed to identifying with one specific ethnic group in Nigeria. Although there are features of Yoruba culture in *Everything*, she seems to write for all Nigerians rather than only Yorubas. This is similar to Abani's approach in *Graceland* where the inhabitants of Lagos lack

⁹ I will refer to the novel as *Everything* from here onwards.

any strong cultural identifiers but adopt transnational identities to deal with their pluralistic and globalised world.

The female characters in *Everything* may be from various ethnic groups (Atta does not always specify), but they all have to face similar issues as women in a patriarchal society if they are to function as vernacular intellectuals. The argument about women's difficulty in functioning as intellectuals is firstly based on the position they take along the urban/rural continuum. Being polarised at either end of the continuum is highly problematic as women either become dewomanised, function mainly as academics, or, at the rural end, they may become caught up in traditions irrelevant or destructive in a rapidly changing world. Dewomanisation according to Sofola (1998), as I stated in the first chapter, is the concept that western education renders African women unable to effectively engage with African issues. The ideal is for women to take the best from both the traditional and modern worlds by finding a healthy space along the continuum and developing Afrotransnational identities which allow them to function as vernacular intellectuals. For example, Evelyn Tegomoh (2003) recounts her experiences growing up in Cameroon, later studying in the strictly Muslim town of Maiduguri in Nigeria and later furthering her studies in a much more liberal Norway. While later doing field work as an anthropologist in a Muslim town in northern Cameroon, she began to engage the women of the town on issues of gender equality (2003: 127). Based on her experiences, she astutely notes that the approach in fighting for gender equality for African women should implicitly respect the rules and norms of the local culture because she believes there is much of value in traditional practices that should not be discarded (2003: 128). She contends that feminist approaches and practices in Europe differ from those in Africa and if changes are to be made for the good of African women in society, these differences need to be understood and the correct method of engagement needs to be used (2003: 128). Tegomoh exhibits an Afrotransnational identity that has been formed through her experiences living in Cameroon, Nigeria and Norway and she inadvertently functions as a vernacular intellectual who clearly understand the importance of introducing new ideas to Africa in so far as the approach taken respects the local culture and effectively engages women on a grassroots level.

In discussing dewomanisation, it is necessary to draw a parallel here to Mark Sanders's (2002a) book on intellectual complicity in apartheid. He discusses, among other things, how the Black Consciousness movement proposed to challenge black people's psychological complicity

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in allowing their physical oppression (2002a: 205). Along the same lines, he explains how African and African American women objected to the participation of white women and men in their discussions on feminism in Africa at the WAAD Conference in 1992 on the basis that they were tired of the advocacy of white women in representing African women (2002a: 206). The representation of African and African American women by others is problematic; as Sanders (2002a: 207) phrases it, "folded into any act of representation or advocacy is an other-intendedness that makes it possible at once to portray and betray". There are limits to the black-white sisterhood of women and thus, African feminism necessarily develops apart from western feminism to a large extent in order to address issues that were pertinent specifically to the African context (2002a: 207). Building on these insights, I will discuss how Nigerian women in *Everything* who intend to effectively function as intellectuals need to overcome dewomanisation by recognising and understanding the limitations of western feminism and alternatively embracing the wisdom that African traditions and practices can offer in addressing gender equality in Nigeria.

An essential part of successfully finding a healthy space along the urban/rural continuum is learning how to adapt to globalisation through transformation of both the global and local products in all the different -scapes (Appadurai, 1996). Here I am concerned primarily with the ethnoscape which consists of the people who are included in the circulation and transformation processes of globalisation (Appadurai, 1996). Shalini Nadaswaran (2011) for instance explains how transformation takes place specifically in the ethnoscape by examining how female characters in third generation Nigerian fiction are redefining family relationships that are structured according to traditional definitions of women's roles in society, in order for women to achieve self-actualisation, agency and self-determination. In order to achieve this, the female characters find themselves somewhere along the urban/rural continuum as they attempt to negotiate the rapidly changing space they inhabit in Nigeria. As Ogunyemi (1994:26) explains,

[m]en also want women to act like Ani, conserving, reproducing, and sustaining life. Women can achieve these ends not necessarily by blindly following so-called tradition, but by modifying it to cope with the exigencies of modern-day existence.

Finding a healthy space along the continuum by developing an Afrotransnational identity through transformation of the global in the local is essential if women are to function as intellectuals in contemporary Nigeria. Unfortunately, men often expect women, both urban and rural, to exhibit the qualities Ogunyemi highlights above without allowing any room for them to adapt to the changes that modernisation and globalisation bring about. Patriarchal society continues to enforce traditional rules and norms which have at times become obsolete and harmful in contemporary Nigeria. This in fact creates increasing tension in and danger for the existence of healthy families and indirectly the nation as a whole.

In discussing the difficulties women encounter as intellectuals in the Nigerian context, I will not adhere to any single theory of feminism, whether it is western or African, but rather I will draw from aspects that African feminism(s) seem to agree on. Firstly, one of the main differences between western and African feminism(s) that pertains to the development of the female vernacular intellectual is, as Nnaemeka (1998: 5) says, that

the majority of African women are not hung up on articulating their feminism; they just do it. In my view, it is *what* they do and *how* they do it that provide the framework; the framework is not carried to the theater of action as a definitional tool.

In other words, it is suggested here that African women spend less time theorising, debating or discussing how to define or frame African feminism than they do in investigating the actual theater of action where the multiple and varied feminism(s) are organically acted out in different African contexts. Desiree Lewis (2001: 7) similarly points out how [Pumla] Gqola calls for a rejection of the Cartesian dualism embedded in the artificial separation between theory (located in the academe) and praxis (art created outside of universities).

Furthermore, Nnaemeka argues that western and African feminism differs with regards to their priorities (1998: 7). For instance, explaining to a group of rural women the feminist framework of intersection of race, class, etc., is nothing but feminism in futility when their real concerns are the basic amenities of life (1998: 6). She draws from Domitila Barrios de Chungara's (1978) criticism of Western-educated Bolivians who would try to engage grassroots women with a discourse they did not understand. If intellectuals are to affect social change, they need to engage everyday people on their level. Shireen Hassim (2006: 21) has similarly

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discussed the historical roots of women's movements in South Africa, specifically those of the ANC Women's League, and how they actively participated in political action with specific reference to their campaigns during Apartheid. These women's movements were aimed at economic and political liberation even as they also stood against the oppression of the patriarchal system they lived in (Hassim, 2006: 21, 22). These women employed a version of African feminism that was based not simply on abstract theoretical frameworks but on active participation in the political arena of Apartheid in relation to their oppression as women. They acted as vernacular intellectuals who mobilised women in major campaigns against the Apartheid system rather than just focusing on theorising female oppression.

Even if women in Nigeria were able to develop Afrotransnational identities and grasp the importance of functioning as vernacular intellectuals as argued above, they still have to face an array of problems in patriarchal Nigerian society. These problems arise when men do not allow modifications in the roles of women in a changing society but expect strict adherence to tradition. These traditional norms and rules lead to women victimising other women, exacerbates the politics of motherhood and limits women's role to the home, specifically the kitchen. Such traditions are also often entrenched in customary law which functions alongside civil law and gives rise to double standards. The use of customary law and double standards ultimately this leads us to the problem of how women are forced to face battles in both their private and public spheres, contested as these categories are in feminist history. For example, in her article where she analyses the public/private dichotomy as a communicative phenomenon, Susan Gal (2002: 79) summarises how various projects of feminist critique on the public/private dichotomy indicate that,

[f]ar from being incompatible, the principles associated with public and private coexist in complex combinations in the ordinary routines of everyday life. ... [and] feminist research has successfully shown the error of assuming stable boundaries between public and private.

Shireen Hassim (2006: 28) has also discussed how the ANC Women's League in South Africa exhibited the confluence between struggle in the nation and those of women, as well as 'making connections between oppression and exploitation in the public sphere and women's subordinate

status in the private sphere. Significantly, Augustine Asaah (2011: 193) also addresses the public/private dichotomy by examining how

between 1947 and 1974, female African women's writing is marked by the politicization of the domestic. In the second cycle, spanning the period 1975-2000, feminist African creative writing is characterized by the deepening and radicalization of the already politicized private realm.

Ultimately, women need to overcome the obstacles posed within both the public sphere in conjunction with those in the private realm and thus be liberated from the limitations placed on them in order to be able to fully function as vernacular intellectuals.

In discussing the limitations placed on women it is essential to explore the manner in which women are often responsible for continuing and enforcing patriarchal practices. Many of the more traditional women from the older generation in the novel are portrayed as having internalised the norms and traditions that keep women subjugated to men. Unfortunately this means that they themselves implement many discriminatory practices. As mothers, mothers-in-law and grandmothers they ensure that these practices are continued. It is thus essential for female intellectuals to fight the complicity of women in allowing and even enforcing the oppression of women. As in Sanders (2002a: 205) discussion of the manner in which Black Consciousness teaches black people to liberate themselves from psychological oppression in order to effectively fight against physical oppression, female intellectuals need to address internalised oppression if they are to fight the external forces that impose this oppression.

One of the most prominent examples of female subjugation is the expectations and problems surrounding motherhood. Atta shows how society places great emphasis on motherhood, sometimes to the detriment of women, but she does not refute the importance of and positive role motherhood can and does play in women's lives in the novel. This illustrates Nnaemeka's (1998: 6) statement that one of the defining features of African feminism(s) is that it, "neither demotes/abandons motherhood nor dismisses maternal politics as non-feminist or unfeminist politics". Earlier feminists such as Adrienne Rich (1976: 13) argued that in motherhood there are both,

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the *potential relationship* of a woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution*, which aims at ensuring that that potential and all women shall remain under male control. (Emphasis in original)

Thus, Rich (1976: 280) states, to destroy the institution is not to abolish motherhood. Bridget Crawford (2011: 235) also examines how the third wave of feminism seems to have taken the contentious position that women's experience of mothering is inevitable, biologically driven and rooted in femaleness itself. She (2011: 237, 238) then points out that considering this emphasis, mothers need legal protection against the institution that tends to use motherhood as a means to subjugate women as Rich pointed out. Thus, motherhood is viewed as positive and central to some women's lives. Unfortunately though, this becomes problematic when people support the institution which upholds the more traditional focus on women as defined solely by motherhood, as well as valuing male children over female. Unless women are allowed to redefine their roles as women in the home as well as in society at large, it will impact negatively on society in the long run. Fiona Green (2009: 84) for instance builds on Sara Ruddick's (1984) work on feminist consciousness in arguing that mothering is a potential site for resisting patriarchy as well as means of being involved with revolutionary activism. This is the same basis on which women in South Africa were mobilised into political action during Apartheid. Hassim (2006: 28) argues that

Female consciousness impels women to political action and, while emphasising roles they accept as wives and mothers [they] also demand the freedom to act as they think their obligations entail [Kaplan, 1997: 6]. ... Thus female consciousness clearly has the potential for facilitating women's political agency.

Again, if women are to be involved in the fight for political freedom, they need to negotiate the space between the public/private dichotomy and fight for women's equality in both these spheres, specifically addressing limitations surrounding motherhood.

I will then furthermore discuss how Atta presents us with ways in which women can free themselves from some of the limitations placed on women, specifically being defined by motherhood or their role in the home. As stated above, the expectations placed on women by

patriarchal society prove highly problematic for women in general, and for those who wish to be vernacular intellectuals specifically. That is not to say that women need to succumb to the status quo. Atta provides us with examples of how women are finding ways out of the traditional limitations of the home without necessarily completely rejecting the traditional way of life, thus successfully finding a balanced position along the urban/rural continuum. Her characterisation of Sheri and Enitan serves to subvert the use of the kitchen and motherhood as means of keeping women subjected specifically by using motherhood and the space of the kitchen to their own advantage.

This leads us to the final point that even if women are able to redefine the concept of motherhood and the kitchen and use it to their advantage, patriarchy ultimately still denies them collaboration in the home and the nation to a large extent specifically through the law. A variety of seminal works (Steady, 1981; Davies and Graves, 1986; Nnaemeka, 1998; Ogunyemi, 1996) points out that African feminism(s) focus on collaboration, negotiation and compromise is essential to addressing issues that affect not only women, but also men, and that men are implicitly to be included in addressing problems in society. Third wave feminists in the west have also expressed that it is imperative for men to be included in transforming society for the good of all (Chapman and Elwood, 2004: 121-127). African feminists (Reed, 2001; Mekgwe, 2008) have continued to advocate the idea that men are to be perceived as partners in the struggle for gender equality in Africa. Collaboration between women, as well as between men and women, is imperative for the growth and development of a stable Nigeria in which all citizens can thrive. This becomes apparent in *Everything* as Atta suggests that the problems women face in Nigeria cannot be separated from those that all Nigerians face as a nation. This is exactly the point that Sanders (2002a) makes when he articulates

the internal criticism that the anti-apartheid struggle is incomplete when women are still subject to discrimination and violence, and that the sexism and abuse of women in the liberation movements is largely unexamined.

I thus intend to examine how the struggle for political freedom in the Nigerian context is paralleled by the struggle for gender equality. Until women are freed from the constraints of

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patriarchal society, they will never be equal in the nation-state, in effect impeding the growth and development of a stable democracy.

AFROTRANSNATIONALISM AND THE URBAN/RURAL CONTINUUM

In novels by third generation Nigerian authors set in contemporary Nigeria, especially Lagos, the lines between rural and urban women become distorted. *Everything* is set in urban Lagos between the late 1970s through to the 1990s and the divisions between women in this novel are based largely on class and socio-economic status rather than along the lines of the urban/rural dichotomy or continuum (Jones, 2011:43). Rebecca Jones (2011: 43) writes that "many of [Atta's] characters display a Lagosian distance from what they see as a somewhat far-off "traditional" Yoruba or other heritage, or more interest in Lagos and a transnational frame of reference." However, regardless of their wealth, education and careers, women from the upper classes often face the same challenges as women from the lower, poorer classes. As with Olanna and Kainene in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Rohini in *Graceland*, women in *Everything* are still expected to adhere to patriarchal cultural rules and norms regardless of their education or profession. In *Everything* women from the lower classes through to the elite, have to face similar problems at home with the men in their families.

Sheri and Enitan inhabit different spaces along the rural/urban continuum largely due to their different experience in childhood and this impacts on the manner in which they deal with the problems of patriarchal society. Sheri grows up in a more traditional, polygamous family, but hers happens to be a happy, cohesive family. She tells Enitan that she is lucky her step-mothers like each other and that there are no real rivalries in her home as is the trend in polygamous families. She also has the benefit of being raised by her grandmother who is a strong matriarchal figure. In contrast, Enitan lives in a home with highly educated parents who are either fighting with each other or absent. Upon returning from visiting Sheri in her home overflowing with people, noise and food, she notes, "[o]ur living room reminded me of an empty hotel lounge" (2006: 36). Polygamous marriages may have their own problems, but a happy one like the Bakare's is indicative of the protective, nurturing environment that a cohesive family unit should ideally be and is preferable to the crumbling civil marriage of Enitan's parents. It thus comes as

no surprise when Enitan prefers boarding school to living at home. So while Sheri makes a life for herself in Lagos despite the odds, Enitan with all the benefits of having a good education finds coming to terms with life in Lagos much more difficult after her time in England. In the end though, Enitan learns how to negotiate the space between traditional and modern Lagos and trades her Afropolitan identity for an Afrotransnational one.

In essence, Sheri and Enitan form part of a younger generation of women in Nigeria who form transnational identities as they negotiate a workable space along the urban/rural continuum. The move towards more transnational identities is key in enabling women previously dewomanised by their western education to develop into vernacular intellectuals. It is important for women in Nigeria to both draw from the organic energy and wisdom of traditional cultures in Nigeria, and to combine them in useful ways with resources and knowledge that western education and globalisation may offer in overcoming the difficulties both men and women face in Nigeria.

Growing up in England for the best part of her teenage years and then studying in London has to some extent dewomanised Enitan and is indeed one of the factors which impairs her ability to function as vernacular intellectual. Enitan acts more like an academic in her initial fight for women's rights than as a vernacular intellectual as her sphere of influence is limited to her middle-class bourgeois friends. She later takes a more active role as a vernacular intellectual as she realises that she needs to engage a wider audience on matters affecting both male and female Nigerians more directly. Also, she recognises that the cost of the damage being done to her country by the government and Nigerians themselves, who remain silent about it, outweighs the risk of imprisonment or death for standing against it. Thus she eventually takes on an active and practical role as vernacular intellectual.

Enitan's development into an intellectual starts at an early age and continues into adulthood. Her father plays an important role in the initial stages. When she leaves for boarding school he tells her to beat up anyone that tries to bully her and exhorts her to join the debating team rather than the girl scouts who are only being trained to become kitchen martyrs. She has a natural gift for arguing and the experience she gains on the debating team at school serves her well in adulthood. She continues using this talent as an adult as she informally debates the merits of freeing women from domesticity within their circle of her middle-class friends in Lagos.

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Limiting her role as intellectual to discussions on certain aspects of feminism, mainly those espoused by western feminism, and only engaging with a small, privileged group of women indicates the dewomanising effects of a western education. Firstly, as Nnaemeka (1998:6) says,

A major flaw of feminist attempts to tame and name the feminist spirit in Africa is their failure to define African feminism *on its own terms* rather than in the context of Western feminism.

More recently, Mekgwe (2008: 16, 17) has traced the development of different strands of African feminism as departing from western feminism specifically because it lacks relevance in the African context. This is along the same lines of Sandersø (2002a: 206) argument that African women expressed the need to define and address women's issues on their own terms apart from the influence of western feminism, however well-intentioned the latter may be. He thus posits that only when African women free themselves from the psychological constraints of western feminism, along similar lines to what the Black Consciousness movement argued for in terms of all Africans, can they address issues that pertain to the African condition. Unfortunately Enitan's attempt to address women's issues in Nigeria is largely based on her experience and the subsequent perspectives she acquired while in England. The discussions and debates she attempts to elicit among her friends are thus met with polite indifference as the issues she raises may not be all that relevant to women's experience in the Nigerian context. These women may be educated and westernised to a large extent, but they understand that they still live in Nigerian with all its dangers and unpredictability. So disturbing the status quo may not be worth it in light of their precariously balanced lives. Enitan thus has to develop an understanding of how western feminism may not always be relevant to the African context and to develop an alternative framework of feminism that addresses the situation of African women specifically.

Secondly, just as Enitan has difficulty in choosing the right message for African women, her influence in such matters does not stretch much further than her group of elite friends. She may take an interest in women less well-off than herself, like the hawker woman at the gate she greets every day, but when the woman disappears, she imagines this woman has gone on some magical adventure. Thus she does not allow herself to ponder the frightening reality of this

woman's life and what may have become of her. Later, her father thus makes the accurate comment, "I hope you're not using an article in *Weekend People* as a springboard for discussing the plight of women in this country... You shouldn't even be discussing the plight of women at all, since you've done nothing but discuss it. How many women do you know anyway, in your sheltered life?" (2006: 141). She has indeed grown up privileged and sheltered from the harsh realities many women face in the squalor of Lagos.

She realises the truth of this when she ends up in prison with the journalist and activist Grace Ameh and hears the stories of the other women in their prison cell. These women have experienced major difficulties and various tragedies in their lives, have been arrested on the whim of some policeman or for crimes that they are driven to commit out of desperation, and most are awaiting trial indefinitely. The leader among these women challenges Enitan's knowledge about the law and her claims that justice will be done:

Tell me, since you've come in here, smelling so clean and speaking such good English, if I came to your office to see you, would you turn your nose the other way?... Would you drive past on the streets when I was walking and wonder? Had I eaten? Had I rested? Did I have a roof over my head? (2006: 272)

Enitan realises that all her debates and arguments about having men and women share domestic duties in the home were not as urgent as she once believed in the face of these women's experiences and the injustices they have suffered. As someone who is part of the middle and upper classes, Enitan is in a sense privileged that unequal domestic burdens are her main concern in the home while women from lower, more traditional classes have to deal with domestic inequalities that could render them homeless and even lead to imprisonment. Thus Enitan decides: "I would no longer speak for women in my country, because, quite simply, I didn't know them all" (2006: 284). If she is to fight for women's rights in Nigeria, she will have to get more practical about it, learn about the problems that women face other than her own domestic inconveniences. In this sense she is more of an academic than a vernacular intellectual due to her womanisation. She is womanised however not solely because of her education. Her sheltered middle-class upbringing also caused her to be disconnected from the struggles of other Nigerian women. She had the intention to fight for the rights of women, but has done so on a

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superficial level and to a very limited group of women. As Grace says, she has to decide to do more than 'want' to help; she has to find a practical way of helping women with real problems. In terms of Said's (1994:102) requirements for the public intellectual, Enitan needs to be able to communicate the right information to the right group of people and doing so in a manner that the audience can understand.

In her desire to function more like a vernacular intellectual, Enitan also grapples with her fear for her safety and pressure from her family to not get involved with politics. After Enitan's first interview with Grace regarding her father's detainment, Niyi, her husband, objects to further involvement because he fears for her and their baby's life. Although Niyi does not intend to act like a dictator in his own home, out of concern for her safety he does later forbid Enitan from getting involved with a campaign by a group of women to have their family members released from prison. Also, Niyi may be a more liberal husband than most, yet he yields to pressure from his family and society to act like the man in the house, otherwise 'they'll be calling me a woman wrapper' (2006: 185). Thus he will not allow Enitan the freedom to take up her role as intellectual. Enitan does not want to shame him in front of his family and Niyi does not want her to experience their wrath if she were to treat him in a way they deem disrespectful. So they compromise to protect each other. Enitan expresses these concerns to Grace who says,

Yes, yes, but you have a voice, which is what I always tell people. Use your voice to bring about change. Some people in this country, what chance do they have? Born into poverty, hungry from childhood, no formal education. It amazes me that privileged people in Nigeria believe that doing nothing is an option. (2006: 259)

Enitan thus begins to realise that standing up for yourself and the rights of others is sometimes more important than pleasing your family. Initially Enitan is content to have all of her friends safe and wants to have her baby in peace. However, after being arrested and hearing the stories of the other women in prison, Enitan slowly begins to realise that doing nothing about it is no longer an option for her. Enitan thus has to free herself from the restrictions placed on her by the expectations of culture if she wishes to fight for the rights of others in her nation at large.

Enitan develops a rather Afrotransnational identity as opposed to the primarily Afropolitan identity she exhibits after her return from Britain, and this allows her to develop as a

vernacular intellectual. As a result of her Afropolitan identity, her perspective on feminist matters is to a large extent framed by western discourse and theory while also being focused on the needs and problems of the upper classes of society in Nigeria. As she begins to encounter the problems that less privileged Nigerian women face, she realises she needs to change her approach to fighting these problems. In the process she becomes more Afrotransnational as she draws from modern women such as Sheri, who find practical ways of overcoming difficulties women face. Yet Enitan does not completely reject the traditions of her Yoruba culture. Enitan allows Niyi to pay her bride price, for instance, and even goes through with the traditional ceremonies surrounding marriage and child-naming, but she begins to draw the line where her family dictates whether or not she fights injustice in her home and nation.

In contrast, Grace is one of the rare cases in which a woman has a close family that supports her in her work as writer, activist, journalist and intellectual, and she acts as a catalyst in Enitan's development as an intellectual. She is instrumental in challenging Enitan in her reluctance to take part in activism because of her difficulties with her family and her fears about safety. When Enitan asks her why she is willing to risk her life to tell a story, she replies:

Because they detain us and fire bomb our offices? You can't kill a testimony of a country and of a people. That's what we're fighting for, a chance to be heard. And the second thing is, I love my country. (2006: 298)

Grace fights because if she does not speak out, who will? Just as Adichie does by way of Ugwu's text *The World Was Silent When We Died*, Atta is making the point that most people are either too afraid to speak out against injustice, too focused on their own survival, or they simply do not care enough. People remain silent while others suffer because they fear they will suffer the same fate. But Atta points out that there will always be someone willing to push past the fear and risk it all to be heard.

Atta explores what it will take for people to take a stand. Niyi tells Enitan not to ruin what little peace and security they have in their lives by displaying political activism (2006: 238). This leads Enitan to wonder: "People like my father, did they come from a different place? Were they born that way? Ready to fight, tough enough to be imprisoned?" (2006: 238). She begins to

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uncover the answer to these questions when she attends the literature reading by a group of academics, authors and activists:

I was in awe of the people I was listening to, that they wrote without recognition or remuneration, and more so that they denounced injustices as a group, at the expense of their freedom and lives. At the same time, I thought that none of them could be fully conscious of the implications of speaking out. They would have an awareness only... But what made a person cross the frontier of safety? It wasn't consciousness. Anger, I thought. Enough to blind. (2006: 263,264)

As discussed above, after landing in prison herself and hearing the stories of other women, remaining silent and hiding from these horrors behind the walls of her middle-class suburban home was no longer an option for her. She gains an understanding that there exists

...a deeply irresponsible abdication of responsibility towards the public and the political, a wilful, self-interested blindness on the part of elite Nigerians, by creating a dangerous dichotomy between public and private... (Jones, 2011:52).

She is thus compelled to stop hiding behind the safety her upper-class lifestyle provides her and make her voice heard. She may once have avoided participating in activist projects but, *õ[w]ho are we fooling?* The state our country is in affects everyone (2006: 325). She could find plenty of reasons why she should not get involved, to remain silent and blind, protecting her family. But she reaches a point where she cannot do so any longer,

I could not wait. There were babies who stayed in their mother's womb too long. By the time they were born, they were already dead. There were people who learned to talk on their death beds. When they opened their mouths to speak, they drew their last breaths. (2006: 328)

Enitan's journey to becoming an active vernacular intellectual, to the point where she steps over the boundary of safety, is very subtle but the little decisions she makes accumulate until she is completely dedicated to working for the release of detainees. She challenges those who

continue to remain silent by explaining that there was no one major event which was a turning point for her:

I can't think of one moment that made me an advocate for women prisoners in my country. Before this, I had opportunities to take action, only to end up behaving in ways I was accustomed, courting the same old frustrations because I was sure of what I would feel: wronged, helpless, stuck in a day when I was fourteen years old. Here it is: changes came after I made them, each one small. (2006: 332)

Many people remain silent out of fear for what could happen to them and their families, but more so out of fear of failure. They will continue to live in a world that feeds these fears unless they decide to make a change. Enitan made small changes in her own life and when she stood with others, they had the power to affect larger changes. It is a risk that has to be taken if there is ever going to be enough change in Nigeria to dissipate all the powers that force people to live in this fear. Enitan sums this up when she says, 'freedom was never intended to be sweet. It was responsibility from the onset, for a people, a person, to fight for, and hold unto' (2006: 307). Thus all Nigerians need to start taking responsibility in fighting for the freedom of their nation despite the dangers. If no one ever stands up, nothing will ever change.

LIMITATIONS PLACED ON WOMEN

Even if women can develop appropriate transnational identities and overcome the effects of dewomanisation in order to function as vernacular intellectuals as opposed to academics, as well as make the small decisions that eventually lead to big change and take some risks, they still have a number of problems to face in Nigerian society which advocates male hegemony in the public sphere, as well as in the private sphere of the home.

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CYCLE OF FEMALE SUBJUGATION

Atta uses various female characters from different generations to present the traditional roles women take in contemporary Nigerian society and the cycle of female subjugation that women themselves often perpetuate in enforcing these roles. Enitan's mother's generation grew up during late colonialism and early independence and although they are educated and even hold degrees, they often revert to the traditional roles of women in society and the home. In turn, Enitan and the women of her generation grow up in a more modern Lagos than their parents did, and although they may be better equipped to deal with the increasing effects of globalisation, they are still struggling with many aspects of Yoruba and Muslim culture which hamper their freedom as women and as intellectuals.

Women from the older generation, such as Enitan's grandmother and mother-in-law, are complicit in continuing the cycle of subjugation of women in Nigerian society. This cycle, just as in the case of violence, is closely linked to selfhood as explained by Jeniffer Rike (1996). She (1996: 27) posits that when children are deprived of certain necessities during childhood particularly in forming healthy identities, they develop "false selves" to protect their true, vulnerable selves and this allows them to survive the difficulties of disempowerment, whether it is by violence, or by female subjugation as in this case. When they are put under pressure, their anger at those people or entities that disempowered them emerges and, "their split off and repressed rage and hatred for the abusive parents will re-emerge, this time projected onto others whom they scapegoat for their own dis-ease" (1996: 28). This sets into motion the cycle where "the abused become the abusers" (1996: 28), or in this case, the oppressed becomes the oppressor.

Women from the older generation may have been educated, but they still subscribe to the rules that traditional Yoruba culture have for women and enforce these on others. Both Enitan's mother and mother-in-law have degrees and could have a career but when they marry, their role as wife and mother takes precedence over personal ambition. Choosing to take on the role of wife and mother over having a career need not be viewed as negative as a healthy family unit can contribute to raising healthy individuals who can make a contribution in society. In Sheri's case though, the healthy family unit consists of two grandmothers and two stepmothers as opposed to the traditional conception of the family unit. While Sheri's grandmother takes on the role of

mother for Sheri naturally, Toro Franco, Enitan's mother-in-law, takes on the role of wife and mother largely out of a belief that she has no other choice:

She was one of those women who swallowed her voice from the day she married. She was a nurse, and yet her husband and sons, all lawyers, thought she couldn't grasp the rudiments of Offer and Acceptance, so she acted like she didn't... If they mentioned the word hungry, she ran into the kitchen... (2006: 182)

Firstly, she has been effectively silenced by marriage. She accepts that she has no power to voice anything of worth in her family. Secondly, her inherent belief that a woman's place is in the kitchen is clear when Enitan tries to trick her into confessing she wishes she could have made more of life. She asks Toro if she does not feel as if the kitchen was the loneliest room in the house, but Toro's reaction shows how deeply her belief runs: "She looked at me like I'd offer to strip" (2006: 182). Toro believes implicitly that a woman's defining role is in the home.

Unfortunately she ends up raising her sons to be just like her husband and becomes complicit in perpetuating the belief that women should be silent and subjugated to their men. When Enitan teases her brothers-in-law saying they are waiting to marry their mother, she is not far off the truth. Toro Franco's sons want to marry a woman who is just as submissive as their mother. Niyi Franco, Enitan's husband, may be an exception to this to some degree. Enitan remarks: "My father-in-law had tamed his wife, almost as if he'd scooped out her brains and left just enough for her to keep on obeying him. His son acted like I was invisible until he liked what he saw" (2006: 255). Yet, Niyi has no interest in "scooping out" Enitan's brains as he appreciates her intelligence and encourages her to have a career, even saying jokingly he wants to marry her despite the fact that she cannot cook. Unfortunately his mother has spoilt him though and he assumes Enitan will cook and clean up after him just as his mother always did.

Enitan and the women who will eventually marry her brothers-in-law now fall prey to a generation of men whose mothers taught them to expect their wives to be obedient and impassive. The irony of this is apparent when Enitan's boyfriend in England complains that she is impassive in bed: "he complained that I was just like other Nigerian women in bed. 'You just lie there,' he said. 'Like dead women'" (2006: 73). This should really come as no surprise to men as they expect Nigerian women to act like mute shadows in every other aspect of their lives.

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Women are complicit in victimising other women in other ways too as the polygamous marriages that feature prominently illustrate. While many children in such families will defend this family structure, “[t]hey rarely confessed about domestic battles” (2006: 246). Both Enitan’s parents came from polygamous families. Enitan’s paternal grandmother was a junior wife and the rivalry among the wives lead them to treat her and her son, Sunny, badly. Ironically despite her suffering as a junior wife in a polygamous marriage, she does not shrink from subjecting other women to the same experience, enabling the cycle to repeat itself. She is the one who threatens Enitan’s mother with finding Sunny another wife to bear him sons if she will not. Enitan’s mother succumbs to the pressure and has another child, but he dies from sickle cell anaemia and she refuses to bear any more children. Sunny does eventually have a son by another woman in secret, although he never marries her. This seems to be the norm in Lagos. Those men who are not polygamists usually have more than one family, neither of them knowing about the other. Women then betray each other by having children with married men.

The difficulties obstructing collaboration between women from different classes are also evident. In the novel a group of army wives start a program to eradicate infant dehydration in a village. Akung (2012: 119) argues that this shows collaboration between women from different walks of life:

...Atta calls on women to adopt female friendship, bonding or sisterhood as these would be one of the ways they can win the war against inequality, tradition and all other patriarchal dictates. Once this is achieved the advancement of women in the society would be achievable.

But in the same newspaper reporting on the army wives’ project, “an army wife was put on display with a gold choker around her neck” (2006: 214). Their affluence and love of publicity thus calls into question their real motives for starting the program. The army wives should help their fellow women even if their motives are not pure, but maybe they should also fight the corruption and violence their own husbands are committing. Akung (2012: 119) is, however, correct in arguing that women need to stand together, not betray each other, if they are to fulfil a meaningful role in society. Grace Ameh teaches Enitan that they will only have a chance to fight injustice if they stand together: “on your own, you are nothing but another victim” (2006: 259).

Women need to support each other just as men and women need to cooperate if Nigerians are to deal effectively with social problems.

The cycle of oppression of women by women is also allegorical of the cycle of oppression in the nation-state at large. The colonials oppressed Nigerians but eventually handed power over to the African males who in turn oppress others when threatened. The men in society also oppress the women in their homes in order to feel empowered. It is indicative of the split psyche as Rike defines it and indicates the continuing struggle for the 'true self'

The cycle of woman-on-woman oppression needs to end just as the cycle of corrupt leadership needs to end. Ogunyemi (1994: 89) explains that older women have survived the hardships of life as wife and mother and are generally highly esteemed in society. In a sense they are feared because it is believed that they must have some powers which enabled them to survive (Ogunyemi, 1994: 89). Unfortunately, these women often repeat the cycle of violence by enforcing traditions and policing the younger women rather than fighting to liberate them.

To break the cycle, old women must be recruited and re-educated by radical women, to establish a new world order among women. Also, young women must participate in the process to prevent them from later venting their anger on other women. (Ogunyemi 1994:89)

The bottom line is that women's psyches need to be healed and they need to form healthy identities as empowered women who can break the cycle of subjugation in the home as well as in the larger social order. Ideally, female vernacular intellectuals would challenge other women to investigate their internalised oppression and complicity in enforcing patriarchy. As Sanders (2002a: 205-207) argues, just as with the Black Consciousness movement, women need to be challenged to investigate and resist psychological oppression in order for them to resist the literal manifestations of that oppression.

POLITICS OF MOTHERING

Motherhood is seen as central to women's lives in African feminism(s) as I pointed out above, but the expectations placed on women in terms of motherhood are problematic in certain

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respects. Firstly, male children are still valued above female children and women often experience a lot of pressure from their families to have sons. By implication, women who cannot have children are deemed to be cursed. In *Everything*, however, Atta presents us with ways in which both Enitan and Sheri overcome these negative aspects of Nigerian life.

Favouring male children over female children is as evident in *Everything* as it was in *Half of a Yellow Sun* with Odenigbo's mother. For instance, Enitan's Uncle, Fatai, defends Sunny for having a son by another woman. He tells Enitan that Sunny may have his faults but he should be excused for having a son and not telling either Enitan or her mother because, "[a]n African man cannot die without leaving a son" (2006: 294). Men thus justify their feeling of entitlement to have sons, even if it is out of wedlock. Enitan thus begins to discover her own father's duplicity. She is angry at her father's hypocrisy as he lied to her about having a half-brother when he had always punished her for lying. Sheri urges Enitan to reconcile with her father because, "This is Lagos," she said. "You can't behave like this. You won't be the first and you won't be the last. Our fathers, we know what they're like. We just have to accept them as they are" (2006: 172). This is indicative of the mindset of many women who are complicit in allowing men to do as they please regardless of the cost to women. At this point Sheri may appear impassive, allowing men to use and abuse her, but later it becomes clear that this is not necessarily the case. Rather, she has learnt how to pick her battles in order to survive in Lagos.

Sheri's status as a reproductively challenged woman further exhibits the disempowerment of women by the focus of their culture on leaving behind a progeny. She becomes infertile after a botched abortion of a pregnancy resulting from rape. In Yoruba culture, few men would ever marry an infertile woman:

Better to be ugly, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren. We had both been raised to believe that our greatest day would be: the birth of our first child, our wedding and graduation days in that order... Marriage could immediately wipe out a sluttish past, but angel or not, a woman had to have a child. (2006: 102)

Atta laments child-bearing as being the main defining feature of women. When Enitan has miscarriages and then struggles to get pregnant again, both her and Niyi's families put pressure on her over this. She states: "I asked why they harassed women this way. We were greater than

our wombs, greater than the sum of our body parts (2006: 188). Atta does not claim motherhood as unfeminist, but argues here that it should not be deemed the sole measure of a woman's worth in society. Furthermore, Enitan observes that at least Niyi already has a son by his ex-wife and so she is free of the pressure of bearing a son. Having Enitan give birth to a baby girl may be Atta's way of subverting this fixation on male children and protesting against this discrimination.

THE KITCHEN

The choices that Sheri has to make in order to help her family survive after her father's death are symptomatic of the limited options open to women in Lagos. Firstly, she is infertile and so getting married is not really an option for her. Secondly, finding a well-paying job is extremely difficult. So, like many other women, Sheri had, "become part of the sugar-daddy circuit in Lagos" (2006: 76) to help keep her and her family alive. Becoming the mistress of a rich brigadier was certainly not the most desirable option, but it was the only alternative to begging. As she says to Enitan, "wanting is not a luxury she could afford."

Sheri does not allow herself to be merely treated as the rich brigadier's possession, but retains her sense of self-worth as a woman and chooses her battles well. She lives by the advice she gives to Enitan, namely that "it's easier to walk around a rock...than to break it down, and you still get to where you're going" (2006: 251). Thus she is willing to be the brigadier's mistress in return for a furnished apartment and money in order to support her family; she is even willing to wear a head-dress in deference to his strict adherence to the Muslim religion, but she draws the line at physical abuse. She says to Enitan she accepted the fact that inevitably all women end up in the kitchen, but "one...where I differ from most women is, if you lift your hand to beat me, I will kill you" (2006: 104). The brigadier finds out the truth of this when he does eventually try to discipline her physically and she retaliates, beating him up with a cooking pot. He tries to force her into obedience as "kitchen martyr" but symbolically she uses a kitchen tool to defend herself. The kitchen is traditionally a symbol of female subjugation and a defining space for the role of women in the home. However, Sheri subverts this symbolically oppressive

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space by using it to defend and free herself and thus redefining the kitchen as symbol of resistance and liberation. If Sheri is to go into the kitchen it will be because she chooses to, not because a man commands it.

The catering business she starts and later extends to include a family restaurant run by her stepmothers and their children is further proof of how she uses the kitchen to empower herself rather than be enslaved by it. Through this business she gains a measure of financial independence. This makes the brigadier jealous and he consequently tries to force her to give up the business and remain dependent on him. Akung (2012:118) argues that Sheri finally takes a stand against the brigadier because, "Sheri is no longer the naive girl who must wait for big Hassan; she moves out of his life and realizes her worth and individuality." I differ in my reading of the text from Akung here, however. Despite appearing to have willingly become a kitchen martyr, it appears she always viewed their relationship as a transaction where she gives him what he wants in exchange for what she needs. This is evidence that Sheri has not internalised female oppression. Clearly the transaction was no longer profitable for Sheri, but by this point the catering business and the family restaurant were doing well enough to enable Sheri to become financially independent. Instead of allowing men and even other women to force her to become a kitchen martyr, she has used the kitchen to her advantage to gain economic independence. Akung (2012: 119) points out how women are silenced and disempowered by a patriarchal system throughout the novel and defines the kitchen as "a destructive metaphor limiting the woman from actualizing her dreams." But while women like Toro Franco and Enitan's mother passively take on their roles as kitchen martyrs, Sheri subverts this negative metaphor, and the kitchen becomes a symbol of liberation for Sheri.

The kitchen as symbol of liberation is also related to the importance of the marketplace as a space for women to exercise their influence in society. Ogunyemi (1994: 48-52) describes the central role that the marketplace played in traditional society: "the marketplace, traditionally located at the center of town, is not only the heartbeat of woman, but also of the community" (51). The marketplace was traditionally a place where the community's economic needs were met, but was significantly also is the sphere where social, psychological and political stability in the community was monitored and maintained. Just as her grandmother Alhaji did, Sheri reclaims the marketplace as a space for women to rise to economic independence from men by redefining the parameters within which they operate in this space. She redefines her role as an

infertile but independent and powerful woman in society. This suggests that men should similarly break free from the capitalist borders and boundaries that colonialism imposed on Nigeria in order to advance the nation economically and psychologically.¹⁰

Sheri invokes the Mammywata¹¹ trope by presenting the reader with way in which women can subvert and transform patriarchal and economic system. Madhu Krishnan (2012: 2) explains that Mammywata is an ambivalent figure that bestows favours and blessings on those devoted to her while bringing harm and destruction on those who defy her. Sheri displays this ambivalence in her relationship with the Brigadier for instance in that she willingly acts as his mistress, bestowing all her favours on him. When he tries to control her life, however, she retaliates by physically attacking and leaving him. At first glance, it may have appeared that Sheri was serving the Brigadier, but it seems that on the contrary he is the one that is at her mercy. Ogunyemi (1994: 30) adds that the traditional Mammywata figure began to change with the influence of colonialism and eventually came to represent the hybrid nature of Nigerian culture with the biracial child being the most visible example of the liaison between Africa and the west. Ogunyemi (1994: 30) says, "[t]he emerging figure of the Mammywata encapsulated the perception of the biracial figure as the epitome of beauty and the bringer of the good things for life. As a biracial girl child, Sheri would be an invocation of the Mammywata figure which represents beauty, power and good fortune. Sheri indeed is largely responsible for the survival of her family after her father passes away, as well as being instrumental in starting the successful business that her family runs. Sheri then invokes the image of Mammywata which represents the ability of women to not only survive tragedy but to find a way to thrive in spite of it. Ogunyemi (1994:32) explains that in early female African literature,

...appropriating the image Mammywata as a model of the childless mother [is revolutionary]. Beautiful, single, rich, independent, powerful, and childless, she thrives in her domain. ... In the cultural and literary milieus, Mammywata is figured as performing a maternal function in the society at large, though she has no child of her own.

¹⁰ See Durojaiye Oyekanmi's article, "Institutionalization of Gender Inequality in Nigeria: Implications for the Advancement of Women" (2005), in terms of examining the manner in which Nigerian women are disadvantaged economically and how they could be advanced.

¹¹ Spelling differs among scholars.

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Sheri almost seems to be Mammywata incarnate by the end of the novel. She embodies all the qualities of Mammywata as describe by Krishnan and Ogunyemi above. She is economically independent by owning and running a successful business together with her step-mothers, does not feel the need to be tied to a man through marriage and yet loves children, starting a charity for street children.

Sheri becomes a subtle type of vernacular intellectual through the use of the Mammywata trope. She represents the possibilities for women in Nigeria and can be upheld as a role model for young women. She transcends the politics of motherhood in Nigeria in so far as she achieves a measure of success, independence and influence that belies the status that infertile women in Nigerian society usually have. Although infertile, Sheri is nevertheless highly concerned with the next generation and the lack of nurturing and protective environments children have in Nigeria, more specifically in Lagos. She seems to understand that if the next generation of Nigerians are not nurtured and educated, both in terms of formal and informal education, there will be little positive change in Nigerian society in the future. She thus becomes involved in mothering the nation in the manner of Mammywata, who *perform[s] a maternal function in the society at large, though she has no child of her own* (Ogunyemi, 1994: 32) by starting a charity for street children in Lagos. She may not be involved in public campaigns like Grace and Enitan, but in her own right she acts as a vernacular intellectual by influencing the lives of her family and a number of orphans that the community generally shun and ignore. Interestingly, Ogunyemi (1994: 34) states that African women novelists have often attempted to deal with the anxieties of infertile women and offer them an alternative and thus *have used Mammywata as a prototype, which, astonishingly, predates that moment in the feminist evolution when theorists strove to erase the notion of obligatory motherhood*. The trope of Mammywata as it applies to Sheri indicates that female vernacular intellectuals can arise organically and defy the expectations and prescriptive norms of patriarchal society in order to fulfil a maternal function to society at large and thus influence her community and potentially the nation. Sheri also acts as vernacular intellectual challenging society's preconceptions of what a woman's role and limitations in society are and presenting herself as an example of the alternatives available to women if they can free themselves from internalised oppression.

Sheri also acts as vernacular intellectual insofar as she becomes a catalyst in Enitan's development as an independent woman and intellectual. Sheri had the benefit of being raised by

her grandmother who was a strong role-model. The legacy she leaves Sheri, of standing up for herself, is what enables her to survive and thrive. This is in contrast to the poor examples set by Enitan's own grandmothers, mother and mother-in-law. Enitan envies Sheri the freedom she has of having her own money and not caring what other people think of her. Sheri's strength challenges Enitan to take stock of her own life:

Her birth mother and motherhood taken away from her, and she wasn't thinking of tearing her clothes off and walking naked on the streets. She was stronger than any strong person I knew. The word strong usually meant that a person was being short-changed emotionally and physically and had to live with it. I had always been motivated by fear, of lowliness, of pessimism, of failure. I was not strong. (2006: 308)

Yet Enitan does learn to be strong and stand up for herself and others in the same way Sheri does. Enitan's journey to liberation from the kitchen is, however, much more fraught with difficulties.

Nevertheless, just as Sheri beating the brigadier with a pot indicates that women can fight back using the very tools that are meant to bind them, Enitan fulfils society's expectation of having children, but on her own terms. She has a child because she chooses to, not because she has no choice. The fact that she gives birth to a girl and is utterly fulfilled by this also undermines society's focus on male children. At the same time by fulfilling society's expectations of her on her own terms, she states she is different after becoming a mother, that she is now free to do as she pleases. And it is after the birth of her daughter that she resolves to take up a role as a vernacular intellectual, even if it costs her her family. Perhaps herein lies a partial key for women to fight the men in their homes. In certain circumstances it may be useful to fulfil society's expectations by having children or taking one's place in the kitchen, but it remains important to do so on one's own terms and use it to one's own advantage. As Nnaemeka (1998:3) argues, resisting differences may not be as fruitful as 'allowing difference to be and in its being create the power that energizes becoming.'

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THE LAW AND DOUBLE STANDARDS

Although women may find liberation in areas like the kitchen and motherhood, liberation is still highly problematic in other areas. One of the main difficulties of being liberated from the limitations of patriarchal culture is that the disempowerment of women is enshrined in customary law which Nigerian courts still uphold as valid. A number of scholars discuss the challenges that customary law poses to women's equality in Africa, especially in reference to the rights of widows (Okeke, 2000; Ewelukwa, 2002; Sossou, 2002; Hamza, 2003). For example, Uchechukwa Ewelukwa (2002: 425) explains that widows in Nigeria, especially the rural, uneducated women, are generally not allowed to mourn their husbands privately, but are subjected to humiliating mourning rituals and are often disinherited in accordance with customary law. Ewelukwa (2002: 446) further explains how a

[f]undamental contradiction inherent in the Nigerian legal system—the coexistence of modern, statutory laws with traditional customary laws and practices—has created a complex and confusing legal regime under which women generally are denied adequate legal protection.

Unfortunately, few women are willing to challenge the legal structures that allow for these injustices or demand equal rights for women in the law (Ewelukwa, 2002: 458). Older generations of women, especially from rural backgrounds, view themselves as custodians of culture and are often resistant to changes to customary law, even if these structures are discriminatory (Ewelukwa, 2002: 470). On the other hand, younger, educated women from the urban areas often call for changes in these laws and practices in alignment with human and women's rights movements, but unfortunately their approach often alienates the older generations of women (Ewelukwa, 2002: 471). It is essential that the different groups of women presented along the urban/rural dichotomy that Ewelukwa (2002) presents find a way to work together in reaching the common goal of having the law protect women's rights. Essentially, female vernacular intellectuals need to arise in order to effectively and sensitively engage women from both sides of the urban/rural dichotomy in uniting in the battle for legal reform in terms of gender equality in Nigeria.

In *Everything*, the use of both customary and civil law in Nigeria sets a double standard. Civil and customary law both exist in Nigeria and Enitan explains in the novel that a court of law will pass judgment in accordance with the way the people in question live their lives. This severely disempowers women economically because according to customary law in the novel, a woman cannot own any property or assets. For example, Enitan's maternal grandmother had worked hard to save money for their children's education. However, her husband uses this money, not needing her consent and not caring to ask, to pay the dowry for a second wife. Enitan's grandmother dies heart-broken over this, having no legal recourse under customary law, just as many other women have had to suffer similar injustices.

Another aspect of customary law that features in the novel is the plight of widows. When a man dies, his family inherits all his assets and not his widow, unless he leaves a will recognised under civil law. Enitan only really grasps the implications of this when she meets a woman in prison whose in-laws put her out of her home after her husband's death. Although she was the one who provided for her immediate and extended family, while all her husband did was spend her money, all their assets revert to his family. She is left to walk the streets owning nothing more than the clothes on her back and even her two children are taken away to live with her husband's family. When a man on the street tries to assault her, it is small wonder she kills him in self-defence. This lands her in prison where she has been detained for six years awaiting trial. There seems to be no justice for women as long as customary law is followed.

The use of customary law alongside civil law is indicative, to a limited extent, of Ferguson's (2006) global shadows in local postcolonial societies. Although the civil law system is operational in Nigeria in accordance with global standards, the customary law system continues to function at the same time. This is indicative of the difficulties of the negotiation between the traditional and modern in postcolonial Africa. Although the western system of civil law, which has its own failings, has been circulated and legitimised in Nigeria, the system is paralleled by the customary law system which often holds more sway in the lives of Nigerians. While Ferguson's (2006: 16) global shadows consist of official economic and cultural forms shadowed by an unofficial and sometimes illegal form, customary law is enshrined together with civil law in Nigeria. Customary law is thus not strictly speaking an unofficial shadow of civil law because it functions legitimately within Nigeria, but there nevertheless exists a complex relationship between the two. Having two different systems of law which potentially contradict

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one another would create a legal system with numerous loopholes that allows human rights to be undermined.

The double standard set by the law also reflects the double standards that most men have in their treatment of women in the novel. Enitan's father for instance exhibits these double standards when Sheri and her family experience firsthand the negative effects of customary law. When Sheri's father passes away, her uncle seizes all their money and property. Sunny, who is a lawyer, takes their case pro bono when their uncle tries to also take away the profitable business Sheri and her stepmothers build. Fortunately Sunny wins the case so that the house and business is out of their greedy uncle's reach. He fights for Sheri and her two step-mothers to own their own property and business, and yet he refuses to sign his wife's property over to her. Although he had always been the one to claim he was for women's liberation, he prevents her from owning her own property. He thus sets a double standard where he will fight for the rights of many other women, yet disempowers the ones in his own home.

Similarly, he may have encouraged Enitan not to be a kitchen martyr like her mother but to pursue a career, yet he does not really empower her as much as he believes. When Enitan vocalises her dissatisfaction with the use of customary law when civil law is in existence, she tells her father: "It has no moral grounding, no design except to oppress women..." (2006: 139). His reply is to ask her how she was ever oppressed as a woman; he was after all the one to pay for her education and employ her as a lawyer in his firm. She does not deny this but states that regardless she was still part of

[t]his group, treated as chattel... We have women judges, and a woman can't legally post bail. I'm a lawyer. If I were married, I would need my husband's consent to get a new passport. He would be entitled to discipline me with a slap or two, so long as he doesn't cause me grievous bodily harm. (2006: 139)

Sunny takes the position that although he is aware of such problems, he has done everything he can so that she would not have to be a kitchen martyr and should thus be grateful. Enitan retorts that this does not change the culture they live in and the restrictions and expectations placed on her as woman. Indeed, her father may have saved her from the kitchen, only to grant her a token position in his firm. For all his encouragement to Enitan to follow her career goals, he still does

not take her seriously as a professional. Perhaps it is because he subconsciously discriminates against her as a woman, but it is also likely that it because she is his daughter and he will always see her as a child.

Her father also maintains this double standard through his support of the political activist, Peter Mukoro, whom her father represents in the numerous legal cases made against him. Enitan confronts her father with the claim that Peter Mukoro is a hypocrite because for all his protesting for a free and democratic Nigeria where all citizens are granted equal opportunity, he is a bigamist denying such rights to the women in his own home. Sunny argues that it is a private matter and his wife is only looking for sensation by bringing up personal matters in the papers. Enitan contends that when you are a social critic like Mukoro, people have a right to know about such matters as it reflects on your character and credibility. She had often wondered whether he wrote his social criticism pieces because he really believed in the cause or because he enjoyed the publicity. Now that the publicity is negative he is less than pleased of course. This is similar to how the ruling powers in Nigeria, whether they be a corrupt government or military dictatorship, want the power to do as they please without having to answer to anyone. Mukoro seems to be acting no better than the parties he criticises as an intellectual. The intellectual by definition has the responsibility of speaking the truth to power (Said, 1994) and it seems that here the tabloids are speaking the truth about Mukoro who definitely wields power over public opinion. Indeed this could undermine the extent of his influence among Nigerians, especially women. However, the intellectual cannot require those in power to be accountable and adhere to one set of standards, while the intellectual refuses to do the same.

FIGHTING THE DICTATOR IN THE NATION AND HOME

The various limitations placed on women discussed above represents the factors that hinder women's participation in the fight for social justice. It leads us to the critical predicament women face in attempting to act as vernacular intellectuals: fighting the dictator in the nation is problematic when you also have to fight the dictator in the home. This is especially apparent when Enitan's father questions why women are not more involved in the fight for democracy in Nigeria. Enitan tells him it is because they have too many problems of their own to contend with:

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No husband, bad husband, husband's girlfriend, husband's mother. Human rights were never an issue till the rights of men were threatened. There's nothing in our constitution for kindness at home. And even if the army goes, we will still have our men to answer to... Bring on the women when the enemy is the state. Never when the enemy is at home. (2006: 196)

Perhaps if women were respected and empowered by the men in their homes they would be more inclined to fight alongside them for a nation where all Nigerians, male and female, are protected and empowered. Grace, while trying to convince Enitan to lead the campaign for the detainees, aptly states that "men fight for land, and women fight for family" (2006: 295). She points out that as these women fight for their family members to be released, they are indirectly also fighting for social justice in their country as a whole. The fight for equality and freedom in both the public and private spheres should not be separated.

It should, however, be noted that speaking out for the rights of women in the home is different to speaking out against the injustice in the nation-state; "it was one thing to face an African community and tell them how to treat a woman like a person. It was entirely another to face an African dictatorship and tell them how to treat people like citizens" (2006: 283). The latter could get you arrested or even killed; yet remaining silent could mean the unnecessary deaths of many other innocents. Again, similar to the argument Adichie makes in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Atta expresses the ambivalence many Nigerians feel towards their country: "What was this country I loved? The country I would fight for? Should it have borders?" (2006: 299). She recognises that Nigeria has its flaws, but the people are worth fighting for because of their basic worth as human beings. That is why she questions whether the fight for a healthy and safe Nigeria should be limited to a political battle to be fought for only by Nigerians. We are all part of the human race and should fight for one another. Men should fight for their families and respect women. In this way they will empower women to fight together with them for equality.

Many people are too scared to stand up for their rights and the rights of others, but the power of collaboration in standing up for people's rights becomes clear in the end. It is only when the campaign for the release of detainees is reinforced by the voices of other similar campaigns that these campaigns collectively succeed. Ogunyemi (1994:48) for instance explains that in a society that holds motherhood in such high regard, almost in awe, that motherhood,

...for women, becomes so validating that, if a majority of women desired to have power as a collective rather than as individuals, motherhood and its perquisites would be the easiest route to perform a coup de gras on the entire populace.

This is exactly what Enitan and Grace's campaign achieves. The authorities are forced to yield to their prisoners in the face of the demands by their esteemed and respected mothers. If campaigns from a few different groups can lead to the release of detainees, then the liberation of women and subsequent collaboration between men and women could lead to the liberation of the nation.

The dictatorship of men in the home thus becomes an allegory for the dictatorship of a group of elites, predominantly male, in the country as a whole. Enitan's struggle for women's rights in the home is paralleled by her need to fight for the protection of the rights of Nigerians in the nation-state. Atta draws a comparison between home and nation when Enitan is expected to cook for her extended family at her own mother's funeral and again when they gather to discuss what, if anything, is to be done for Sunny who is being detained. She exclaims to Sheri: "How can I decide what to do about my father from a kitchen? Come to think of it, how can I decide anything with a mini Idi Amin sitting right there in my home?" (2006: 250). She makes a similar comment on all the struggles around her she is powerless to do anything about: "Sheri's brigadier, for instance, was one of the military men who deprived me of my right to vote, or one of those house dictators who seriously made me wish I could beat up somebody" (2006: 108). Women are thus faced a double challenge in fighting for equality.

Even if women can be liberated from the constraints of the kitchen and motherhood as discussed above, they are left with another difficult choice if they are to function as vernacular intellectuals. Enitan has to either sacrifice her role as leader of the campaign for detainees and stay with Niyi to keep her family safe, or leave her husband, breaking up her family unit, and gain the freedom to effectively make a difference in Nigeria. This leaves the female intellectual with a dilemma: fighting both the dictator in your own home and the dictator in the larger public sphere at the same time is highly problematic. The need for the woman to be liberated in her home is parallel to the need for national liberation:

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I imagined I marched down stairs to where they sat, banged my fist on the kitchen table and yelled, "Get out of my house!" Filled my lungs so our president could hear it in his presidential palace: "Get out of my country!" (2006: 301)

It seems that it is necessary for Enitan to leave Niyi and the confines of the home in order for her to fully function as vernacular intellectual. This is in contrast to the freedom men usually have in choosing to act as intellectuals as Enitan herself notes. Women are thus often forced to choose between having a family and home and functioning as intellectual.

The cycle of subjugation of all Nigerians needs to be broken if Nigeria is to develop into a healthy, stable state. Ogunyemi (1996:3) suggests that

[r]einstating women in government and harnessing women's potential for the progress of the continent would acknowledge the power of women, the neglect of which partially accounts for Africa's, and so Nigeria's, instability and declining status.

Just as the colonisers ruled Nigerians, a group of Nigerian elite have taken over to rule the nation-state in a manner similar to that of the colonial government. In turn, the disempowered men in Nigeria disempowered their women. Both cycles desperately need to be broken and if women are empowered, they may very well be the key to enabling the nation to break the cycle of disempowerment by the elite.

CONCLUSION

Functioning as intellectual is difficult in a number of ways, particularly for women as presented in *Everything*. Women have to face unique challenges in negotiating the Nigerian context they live in between the modern and traditional influences of a globalised, postcolonial world. In order for women to fully function as vernacular intellectuals, it is not simply a case of finding the right message, communicating it effectively and to the right audience as Said (1994) posits. Firstly, women have to overcome dewomanisation in finding the right message. Only by finding a stable place along the urban/rural continuum and developing a transnational identity which adequately combines the best of both the traditional and modern worlds will women be

able to rise above the effects of dewomanisation. Afrotransnational identities could be instrumental in overcoming such difficulties. Grace, Enitan and Sheri function as vernacular intellectuals and exhibit Afrotransnational identities as they assimilate western education and experience into the traditional. This allows them to acknowledge the value of the family unit, yet does not allow its restrictions to limit the role they play as intellectuals.

Secondly, women are restricted in engaging the correct audience in order to affect change. As intellectuals, women need to come to terms with the dangers of speaking the truth to power in Nigeria as well as the constraints of family life. Both men and women have to accept the potentially life-threatening dangers associated with speaking against the ruling powers in Nigeria. This is evident in *Graceland*, *Half* and *Everything*. Women who are mothers additionally have to deal with these dangers in relation to the effect it has on their children, something male intellectuals who are also parents do not seem to be as concerned with. This is indicative of the added pressures women face. While men frequently are in a position to fear for only themselves, women are forced to also take into account what this means for their families. Also, women experience pressure from their husbands and extended families that deem it inappropriate for women to take on a role as intellectual and placing their family in danger, while men's choice to do so is rarely questioned.

Furthermore, women are constrained by the limitations that society places on them regardless of where they find themselves along the urban/rural continuum. Unfortunately women themselves are complicit in perpetuating the belief that women are defined by their roles as wives and mothers. Women need to deal with their internalised oppression in order to stand together in the fight for freedom from such perspectives and the practices that they are embedded in. Atta thus presents us with examples of resistance against the manner in which society may seek to define women by their roles in the kitchen and as vehicles for continuing male progeny. Sheri and Enitan respectively redefine these roles on their own terms rather than allowing them to restrict them. Other discriminating practices are unfortunately still enforced by the use of customary law in Nigeria. Until these laws can be modified to counteract the disadvantageous position of women in society, it remains an uphill battle for women to achieve economic liberation in Nigeria. Women who wish to function as vernacular intellectuals have to overcome all these limitations if they are to effectively engage Nigerians in the fight for social justice. The

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liberation of women in the home is inexorably linked to the liberation of all Nigerians as a nation.

Women intellectuals are thus left with the dilemma of having to choose between fighting for women's rights in the home or leaving the home completely to fight for all Nigerian's rights in the nation. Enitan is forced to leave her husband, the confines of marriage and family obligations in order to function as vernacular intellectual. This may do damage to the construct of the family unit so treasured in some African cultural contexts. Do you sacrifice one for the other? This illustrates the need for men and women to collaborate in working as intellectuals to better the country. Women cannot fight men in their homes as well as their nation. If men acknowledge that women should have input in building the nation then why do they not acknowledge that they should have input in the home? Perhaps if men and women are able to share benefits and responsibilities in the home more equally, the power relationships in the nation may also become more equal. In a sense women are forced to choose between fighting for the liberation of women in the home at the cost of fighting for the nation, or fighting for the nation at the cost of the having a home and family because this restricts her. This is a tragedy and the liberation of women may well lead to liberation of the nation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

One of the most interesting features of literature by third generation Nigerian authors is its representations of globalisation and transnationalism. Novels such as *Graceland* (2004) by Chris Abani, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) by Sefi Atta thus provide us with potentially unique perspectives on the postcolonial condition in Nigeria specifically. These three novels provide us with examples of how Africans are negotiating the world between the roots of the latent traditional world, the lingering effects of colonisation and their increasing interaction with the global. The focus of my thesis was in part to examine how each generation has to find their own balance between retaining valuable aspects of the traditional way of life and combining them with aspects of global culture as well as living in the volatile Nigerian political climate. In this way Nigerians generally develop identities that are either Afropolitan, if Nigerian individuals circulated globally, or what I call Afrotransnational, if the global is circulated locally. These two categories are by no means mutually exclusive though. For instance, Enitan, the protagonist in *Everything*, most notably discarded her more Afropolitan identity for an Afrotransnational one in order to function more effectively as an intellectual. These identities, Afropolitan and Afrotransnational, seem to have a notable impact on the manner in which Nigerians function as intellectuals, which is central to my thesis.

In these novels, intellectuals all seem to have the same intention to effect change for the good of all members of society, but in order to do so effectively they need to fulfil Said's (1994) three requirements. These consist of firstly having the right message, secondly communicating this effectively, usually vernacularly, and thirdly communicating it to the right audience. I have classified intellectuals in this thesis as either academics or vernacular intellectuals depending on the extent to which the intellectual fails in one or more of these three categories.

One of the main shortcomings of academics that my reading of the novels highlights arises when they act as postcolonial critics who describe and debate African problems on a scholarly level without including everyday people in such debates or finding workable solutions

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to problems. In *Half* specifically, the scholars at Nsukka were mostly consumed with debating what the causes are to the problems in 1960s Nigeria. This is similar to Elvis's observation in *Graceland* that Caesar should not simply lament the seemingly idyllic pre-colonial days but should concern himself instead with how to deal with the reality of modern day Nigeria. Intellectuals need to move beyond just describing social, political, economic and other problems and their causes; instead, they need to use their analytical understanding of these various problems to challenge the status quo.

In all three novels, there are those characters who function mostly as academics as they fail to fulfil one or more of Said's (1994) requirements. Generally, the academics engage only other academics. Their sphere of influence often fails to extend to an audience that can stand together with them in fighting for justice in Nigeria. When they do engage non-academic audiences, they often use an academic discourse that renders their message mostly incomprehensible to their audience. Also, the message they communicate is often a derivative of western theories and perspectives, and thus largely irrelevant to the Nigerian context and impractical in terms of everyday lived experience.

These shortcomings on the part of the academic are connected to their Afropolitan identities and the perspectives that go with these identity. Afropolitans like Odenigbo and Enitan have travelled and lived outside of Nigeria and have thus been influenced by foreign culture to the extent that they often lost touch with the reality of those Nigerians who have not had these experiences. In Odenigbo's case this is exacerbated by his lack of relational capacity. Enitan on the other hand is part of a privileged middle-class in Nigeria whose lives are to some extent sheltered from the harsh realities of life in Lagos.

In contrast, vernacular intellectuals in the novels tend to arise organically and act as progressive exiles (Nesbitt: 2002) who find practicable solutions to the problems all Nigerians face. They generally exhibit an Afrotransnational identity and fulfil all three of Said's (1994) requirements. Their Afrotransnational identities allow them to draw from a variety of knowledge bases, both western and African, and combine these meaningfully in addressing cultural, political and relational issues in the Nigerian context. They are thus able to communicate messages that are relevant to their audience. Vernacular intellectuals also address broader, more non-academic audiences than academics. In addition, their manner of engagement with their audience takes into account the specific concerns, class, education and culture; they also tend to present their

message by popular or vernacular means in order to either influence their audience's thinking or perspective in such a way that this engagement affects the audience's behaviour, or mobilises that audience into immediate action.

A theme that seems to run through all three novels is the failure of the public sphere in Nigeria as the government denies Nigerians the right to participate in determining the governing of their country and how this complicates how intellectuals function in Nigeria. This is evident in the setting of the three novels, which collectively span the period of Nigerian history from shortly after independence, through the Biafran war and into the structural adjustment period of the 1980s and early 1990s. Given this period of Nigerian history, the characters all face a highly dangerous and unpredictable environment, especially in terms of life in Lagos. The despotic rulers largely deny Nigerians access to the benefits of independence from colonialism and even disempower and oppress their own fellow Nigerians. Surviving and thriving in this environment is problematic for the characters, and the Afrotransnational identities that develop are indicative of the compromises Nigerians make in order to make a life for themselves. Surviving and thriving becomes more complicated as the greed, corruption and gratuitous violence in the Nigerian state encroach on the lives of the characters in all the three novels. Acting as an intellectual also becomes a complex process as overt resistance and revolution against the government and its extensions of power are highly dangerous as these are invariably met with violent suppression. This leaves the intellectual with one of three choices: speak out against such injustices and risk being arrested, tortured and even executed; remain silent; or leave the country.

Each of these options clearly has its pitfalls. Often the first option is not available to most Nigerians as the expenses involved in leaving the country and acquiring a visa allow only a small group of people to do so as seen specifically in *Graceland* with Elvis. There are those who find a means of making a life for themselves within the Nigerian context and use the system to their own advantage, using illegal means if necessary as in the case of Redemption in *Graceland*. At times this can include a measure of complicity in the injustices committed against others and thus some of the characters reach a point where they can no longer remain silent. In *Half* for instance the 'world remains silent' while thousands of Nigerians die and Ugwu arises organically as vernacular intellectual in order to give a voice to those unspoken for. In this case, speaking the truth to power may not be enough in a Nigeria where in many ways power seems to have corrupted so absolutely. Active protest invariably leads to beatings and even executions of

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protestors. While in *Graceland* such protest is made in the face of inevitable death, in *Everything*, the power of collaboration between various parties who use a less violent means of protest seems to provide a more favourable outcome.

Interestingly, in all three novels there are characters who act as catalyst for the development of the vernacular intellectual or who feel the need to act as educator or mentor to the next generation of potential intellectuals. In *Graceland* Caesar acts as Elvis's mentor who tries to save him from Redemption's schemes. Ironically it is Redemption who saves Elvis by enabling him to go to the U.S. It is doubtful whether Elvis will take up his role as vernacular intellectual, and although Caesar himself fails to meet all of Said's requirements, his most meaningful intellectual activity involves the education he gives Elvis. Similarly, in *Half*, Odenigbo is instrumental in Ugwu's development as vernacular intellectual. Despite being an academic himself, he acts as vernacular intellectual insofar as he provides Ugwu with the informal and formal education that has a profound impact on his development as intellectual. In *Everything*, Sheri invokes the trope of Mammywata and has a major influence on Enitan's move towards becoming a vernacular intellectual. Although not strictly speaking an intellectual herself, her boldness in making a life for herself in Lagos by defying cultural expectations acts as necessary inspiration and encouragement for Enitan. I would posit that regardless of whether intellectuals are categorised as academics or vernacular intellectuals, they can act as vernacular intellectuals by setting other individuals on a path to becoming vernacular intellectuals. Thus, intellectuals can affect change not only by engaging with a public sphere at large, but by being a catalyst for the development of vernacular intellectuals who in turn may have a widespread affect on society.

Intellectuals can also find other, alternative means of affecting change in society. Intellectuals are often those individuals in society who engage in artistic activities as a means of influencing society. In the novels discussed, especially *Graceland*, there are numerous examples of how the transformation of global products, cultural commodities and ideas takes place in local contexts within the sphere of the arts. These transformations allow both the producers and consumers to escape temporarily from their dreary and arbitrary circumstances. They also provide Nigerians with a means of subversion and resistance against those powers who attempt to control and exploit them. Thus, due to the dangers of intellectual activity in the Nigerian

context, acts of subversion through the arts are often both a means of escape and of resistance against the government.

The difficulties facing intellectuals wishing to make a meaningful contribution to Nigerian society is, however, compounded for women as seen in *Everything*. Firstly, women have their own unique problems in spanning the gap between traditional and modern Nigeria. Nigerian women are faced with traditional rules and norms that patriarchal society enforces. So, if women wish to function as vernacular intellectuals, they need to find a balanced position along the urban/rural continuum in order to develop an Afrotransnational identity that draws from the wisdom of traditional culture as well as useful knowledge from the west.

On the one hand then, the Afropolitan women who want to function as vernacular intellectuals often have to deal with the effects of dewomanisation (Sofola, 1998). Here her western education and experience have caused her to lose touch with the reality of women's lives in Nigeria, especially those who are affected by the unjust uses of customary law. As Sanders (2002a) points out, the Black Consciousness movement challenged black people to consider their own complicity in allowing oppression during apartheid. African feminists similarly began to question why it is that white women, even those who are feminists with ostensibly good intentions, should be telling them what their problems are and how to address them. Although not everything that western feminism offers should be discarded, based on my reading of *Everything*, it is nevertheless important that female intellectuals in Nigeria draw from the knowledge and experience of more traditional women in identifying problems Nigerian women face and finding practical solutions.

On the other hand, women who live according to strictly traditional rules and norms are portrayed as becoming complicit in enforcing the system of patriarchal oppression in many ways, but Enitan and Sheri's characters provide us examples of how women can deal with the internal oppression that leads to such complicity. Women like Enitan's mother-in-law need to be challenged on their unquestioning adherence to the patriarchal system that confines her to silence and to the space in the kitchen. The limitations placed on women symbolised by the kitchen thus need to be first dealt with in the psyche of women before these women can effectively deal with the literal manifestation of that oppression. Only then can women like Sheri resist such limitations and use them to their advantage.

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Female vernacular intellectuals are in this way instrumental in finding alternative means of subverting oppression in Nigeria. Enitan and Sheri transform the symbols of oppression, motherhood and the kitchen, respectively, into symbols of liberation and resistance against patriarchal oppression. They effectively use motherhood and the kitchen to liberate themselves from the expectations of patriarchal society, as well as the debilitating economic system in Sheri's case, and using these limitations to their advantage. Where overt resistance may be too dangerous and unproductive, developing subtle means of subversion may present women with alternatives that allow them to survive and thrive. Based on my reading of *Everything*, such resistance and subversion could lead to the transformation of the patriarchal system they live under, which will also grant them more freedom to engage with oppression in other realms of society.

One of the most important points that my reading of *Everything* points out is that women and men need to collaborate if they are to effectively fight the injustices in their country. The Mammywata trope is indicative of the powerful role that female vernacular intellectuals can play in the liberation of women and subsequently the country at large. Such liberation would allow women to stand alongside men in their fight against corrupt Nigerian leadership on a national level. The use of customary law puts major restrictions on this though. Men need to allow women to be empowered both inside and outside the space of the home if Nigerians are to remove the dictator and his consorts from ruling their nation. Essentially then, the fight for gender inequality needs to be undertaken together with the battle for freedom from oppression in the nation.

My reading of these three novels seems to thus refine the definition of the vernacular intellectual. Firstly, identity, specifically the Afropolitan and Afrotransnational, is central to whether intellectuals function as academics or vernacular intellectuals. In these novels and in the Nigerian context they portray, whether intellectuals are Afropolitan or Afrotransnational seems to largely determine the extent to which they fulfil Said's (1994) requirements. Building on Farred's (2004) definition, I suggest that the vernacular intellectual can arise either organically or from the academe; identifies with a wide, often non-academic audience; and uses popular or vernacular means to engage this audience. I would say that it is imperative to further clarify that the vernacular intellectual also needs to draw from a variety of sources of information, both academic and non-academic, in order to develop the most relevant and meaningful message for

the audience and their particular situation. As seen in these novels, the Afrotransnational identity is crucial in usefully combining knowledge from the traditional and western worlds.

Furthermore, intellectuals also have to navigate the complex and unstable socio-political Nigerian environment in deciding when overt or alternative means of resisting and subverting oppression should be used. Vernacular intellectuals, specifically those involved in the arts, can lead the way in finding such alternative means which often includes transforming global products and ideas circulated in the local context in a manner that enriches Nigerian cultural and social life. The Afrotransnational identities which develop through this process may thus be a potential means of establishing commonalities among Nigerians that enable them to stand together in resisting and subverting oppression in Nigeria.

Finally, in the Nigeria presented in the novels under discussion, where intellectual activity often centres on questions of oppression and suppression by the state, men and women need to collaborate if intellectuals are to affect a change in the nation-state. The female intellectuals in *Everything* provide us with some unique insights into the duality of psychological and literal oppression. Male and female vernacular intellectuals need to not only mobilise an audience into action but they need to challenge the psychological oppression of Nigerians and present society with a means of liberating themselves from these limitations. Vernacular intellectuals then further need to aid in the process of developing ways in which members of society can begin to subvert the various systems of oppressions by using these systems to their advantage and thus eventually finding ways of transforming the system altogether.

My study presents a number of areas that could benefit from further research. Firstly, the Afrotransnational identity can be further complicated in terms of the limitations this type of identity has in binding Nigeria, or any African nation-state, together. There could also potentially be different types of Afrotransnational identities depending on intersections between class, race, ethnicity, education or any number of factors. Also, strategies of subversion and resistance that female vernacular intellectuals develop in engaging with issues in the private and public sphere could be further investigated. Such strategies could offer valuable insight into the unique role that women play as intellectuals, as well as the importance of such strategies in fighting not just gender inequality, but also inequalities in the nation-state.

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Cover image: *London South Bank University: Student Union*. [Online] Available: <http://www.londonsouthbanksu.com/content/759603/> [10 June, 2013]

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the effects of globalisation on identity formation and how this specifically impacts on the ability of the intellectual to function in Nigerian society as presented in three contemporary Nigerian novels. Chris Abani's *Graceland* (2004), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) are examined in terms of the Afropolitan and Afrotransnational identities that Nigerians develop through their encounters with and participation in the globalising processes, namely through circulation and transformation (Ashcroft, 2009). These identities correlate with the extent to which intellectuals are able to address the right audience with a message relevant to their context and concerns and delivering this message effectively so as to affect a positive change in society as required by Said (1994). The degree to which intellectuals fulfil these three requirements determines whether they are labelled academics or vernacular intellectuals. The former consists of those intellectuals who exhibit an Afropolitan identity which often causes them to use predominantly western concepts and perspectives to define and explain African problems. They also seldom go beyond discussing and theorising the causes and effects of problems in Africa. Even when they are able to come up with solutions, they rarely translate this into practical intellectual activity with others. On the other hand, vernacular intellectuals exhibit Afrotransnational identities. Afrotransnational refers to the unique African expression of transnationalism that Africans, and specifically Nigerians in this case, develop as they consume and transform global products and ideas within the local. This enable intellectuals to draw from both western and African knowledge, perspectives and practices and combine them in a manner that allows them to work towards finding solutions for African problems. Vernacular intellectuals are also able to meaningfully engage a wider audience in a manner that mobilises them to take action that subverts and resists oppression. The Nigerian context with its military-powered dictators complicates the function of the intellectual as they disallow active participation by members of society in the public sphere. Intellectuals, and indeed all member of society, are consequently forced to either remain silent in the face of injustice and oppression, making them complicit; taking revolutionary action in speaking the truth to power, which puts their lives at risk; or finding alternative ways of resisting oppression. Functioning as vernacular

intellectuals is further complicated for women in Nigeria. Like their male counterparts, they too have to fulfil all three Said's (1994) requirements and have to overcome the effects of dewomanisation (Sofola, 1998) which renders them unable to effectively engage with women's issues in Nigeria due to their western education. The development of an Afrotransnational identity enables them to combine the knowledge and practices from both sides of the urban and rural divide to address women's issues. Women also have particular challenges in negotiating this divide between the urban, modern and rural, traditional spaces in Nigeria. Patriarchal society still imposes certain limitations on women's role in the home and society which affects the extent to which they are allowed to function as vernacular intellectuals. Women can find ways of liberating themselves from the limitations of motherhood and the kitchen by using these to their own advantage, but the use of customary law alongside civil law still disempowers women to a large extent in Nigeria. It is imperative that men and women collaborate in allowing women the freedom to function as intellectuals in both the public and private spheres.

ABSTRAK

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die invloed van globalisering op die vorming van identiteit en die impak wat dit het op die vermoë van die intellektueel om te funksioneer in die Nigeriese samelewing, soos voorgestel in drie kontemporêre Nigeriese boeke. Chris Abani se *Graceland* (2004), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie se *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) en Sefi Atta se *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) word ondersoek in terme van die Afropolitaaanse en Afro-transnasionalistiese identiteit wat Nigeriërs ontwikkel deur hulle ontmoetings met en deelname in die globaliseringsproses wat deur middel van sirkulasie en transformasie geskied. Albei hierdie identiteite is bepalende faktore om die intellektueel in staat te stel om die mees geskikte gehoor te teiken met 'n relevante boodskap wat 'n positiewe impak op die samelewing het, soos beskryf deur Said (1994). Die graad waartoe die intellektueel aan hierdie vereistes kan voldoen bepaal of hulle dan as 'n akademikus of 'vernacular intellectual' geklassifiseer word. Die eerste kategorie bestaan uit intellektueles met Afropolitaaanse identiteite wat lei tot 'n groter geneigdheid om Westerse konsepte en perspektiewe aan te wend om probleme in Afrika te definieer en te verduidelik. Hierdie individue stagneer dikwels in die proses van bespreking en teoretisering van problematiese kwessies waarmee daar in Afrika geworstel word. Selfs in die gevalle wanneer dit by probleemoplossing kom, omskep hulle dit selde in praktiese intellektuele aktiwiteite. Aan die anderkant openbaar 'vernacular intellectuals' Afro-transnasionalistiese identiteite. Dit verwys na die unieke uiting wat mense in Afrika, spesifiek Nigeriërs in dié geval, gee aan transnasionale wat ontwikkel wanneer hulle globale produkte en idees binne die plaaslike gebruik en transformeer. Afrotransnasionalistiese identiteite stel 'vernacular intellectuals' in staat om te put uit kennis wat afkomstig is uit beide die Westerse wêreld en Afrika, om sodoende oplossings vir die vraagstukke in Afrika te vind. 'Vernacular intellectuals' spreek ook tot 'n groter gehoor op só 'n wyse wat hulle motiveer om oor te gaan tot aksie wat onderdrukking teenstaan. Die Nigeriese konteks met sy militêre diktators kompliseer die funksie van die intellektueel omdat hulle aktiewe deelname van lede van die samelewing in die publieke sfere verbied. Intellektueles (sowel as Jan Alleman) word dus gedwing tot swye te midde van humanitêre vergrype wat hulle ook aandadig maak aan hierdie onderdrukking, of om alternatiewelik rewolusionêre aksie te neem ter wille van die waarheid, wat lewensgevaarlik

mag wees; óf om alternatiewe maniere van teenstand te vind. Om te funksioneer as òvernacular intellectualö in Nigerië word verder gekompliseer vir vroue. Soos mans, moet vroulike intellektueles ook voldoen aan Said (1994) se vereistes en moet die effek van ödewomanisationö (Sofola, 1998), wat tot gevolg het dat hulle nie effektief met vrouens se probleem in Nigerië kan werk nie as gevolg van hulle Westerse opvoeding, teengewerk word. Hulle ontwikkeling van òAfro-transnasionalistieseö identiteit stel hulle in staat om hul praktiese kennis van beide kante van die landelike/stedelike kontinuum te kombineer. Vroulike intellektueles kom ook voor spesifieke uitdagings te staan wanneer die skeiding tussen stedelike moderne en landelike tradisionele lewensruimtes gemedieer moet word. Patriargale invloede bepaal verder die rol van vroue tuis en in die samelewing en gevolglik die vryheid om as òvernacular intellectualsö op te tree. Vrouens kan maniere vind om hulleself te bevry van die limiete wat moederskap en die kombuis op hulle plaas deur dit tot hulle voordeel te gebruik, maar die gebruik van öcustomary lawö saam met die Westerse reg laat vrouens steeds grotendeels magteloos in Nigerië. Dit is van kardinale belang dat mans en vrouens saamwerk om vrouens meer vryheid te gee om as intellektueles te funksioneer in beide publieke en private sfere.

KEY TERMS

globalisation

transnational

Afropolitan

Afrotransnational

intellectual

academic

vernacular intellectual

dewomanisation

urban/rural continuum