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Appendix L2

**(Item No 5 of
Check List) Details of Research
Publications**

S.No	Article	Journal	Other Details Vol/No/Page No/ Year	Published in UGC- CARE / Scopus Indexed/ Web of Science
1	The Dilemma of Identity Crisis of Afropolitan Minds in A Bit of Difference by Sefti AHA	Inclusive	Vol. 11. No. 21 July-August, 2022 ISSN-2278- 9758	UGC - CARE Group I
2	* Venting Out" at the Gender Dynamics than "Swallowing" it in Sefti AHA's Swallow	Studies in Indian Place Names	Vol. 40 : No 43 Feb. 2020 ISSN - 2394 - 3114	UGC - CARE Group I

*Proof of list of Journals from Internet to be attached along with copies of reprints.

Scholar : K. Sangavi

Supervisor : S. Kalamani
30.08.2022

The scholar Miss. K. Sangavi published her article in "Studies in Indian Place Names" in February 2020 issue and "Inclusive" in July-August 2022 issue.

J. J. Billi
30.08.2022

Chitra Sivasubramaniam
30/8/2022

Checked By:

HoD/Dean of Respective School

“VENTING OUT” AT THE GENDER DYNAMICS THAN “SWALLOWING” IT IN SEFI ATTA’S *SWALLOW*

Sangavi. K¹, Dr. S. Kalamani²

¹Ph. D. Scholar, Department of English.

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
Bharathi Park Road, Tatabad, Forest College Campus, Coimbatore – 641043.

sangavi14ene36@gmail.com

²Professor, Department of English

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
Bharathi Park Road, Tatabad, Forest College Campus, Coimbatore – 641043.

kalamani.sargunam@gmail.com Mobile: 9994006313.

ABSTRACT:

In *Swallow*, Atta focuses her concern on the plight of women in a patriarchal society. Typically, Atta’s feminist concerns influence her story and characterisation. Atta outlines the condition of women and how they are trapped professionally, socially and traditionally within the framework of patriarchy and demonstrates the destabilising effect of these on women as they struggle for their survival. The women characters in the novel endure and ‘swallow’ the gender dynamics in the society. But the protagonist of the novel, Tolani, at the end ‘vents out’ at the delineation and oppression that are thrust on her. This paper deals with how the women are suppressed traditionally and professionally and how they come out of the shackles they are locked up with.

Keywords: Swallow, Oppression, Vent out, Gender Dynamics, Disparity and Empowerment.

The lives of the native Africans are constantly reflected in the African Literature. It vividly portrays their oppression due to colonialism and later as a result of independence and the consequent conflicts. Before the European invasion, the African literature, more particularly, the Nigerian literature has existed through myths, folktales, legends, songs and other forms. This period is known as the classical period of Nigerian literature. Nigerian oral literature had its practitioners in the members of a cult who jealously guarded certain knowledge. Gradually, the novels replaced the folktales. They are an imaginative form of narrative literature woven around well-knit characters; sometimes even animals become characters as they relate with the physical or supernatural world. Later, the Africans developed the written form oral literature.

The publishing of *Palm-wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola in 1952 marked the starting point of the written form in Nigerian literature. Even before that, by the 1930s, the Hausas had a writing competition and the winning entries including Shehu Umar by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa were published. The stories were written in a language called Ajami, which is a mixture of Arabic and Hausa.

During the colonial era, introduction of the English language brought a huge difference in African Literature. Especially, literature from indigenous languages gave way to literature in the English language. More authors in Nigeria started writing in English, including Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. Many African writers expressed their political and social concerns through their works. These contemporary writers have taken up the issues related to the Nigerian women also.

Feminism, as an ideology manifests itself in different forms – Eco-feminism, Radical Feminism, Anarchist Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Black Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Separatist and Lesbian, and Post- colonial Feminism. Many feminists have opined that many diversities exist which result in uniform and universal female identities resulting from differences in class, race, nationality and historical events.

Space and time became the biggest hindrances, when women like black female writers attempted to write. They did not own even a room for themselves to recollect their thoughts in solitude; nor did they have free hours to relax or had “me” time. The social set-up was not favourable to these women to showcase their creative skills. However, the 1960s and 1970s marked the emergence of black female writers. Grace Ogot’s *The Promised Land* was the first novel by a black woman to be published. Gradually, black female writers like Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Nwapa, Mariama Bâ, Grace Ogot, Efua Sutherland and Buchi Emecheta initiated the advent of women’s writing. Sefi Atta, coming in these line of writers, is an important writer whose works focus more on women and their problems.

Sefi Atta was born in January 1964 in Lagos in Nigeria. She divides her time between the countries of United States, England and Nigeria. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from Antioch University, Los Angeles. She is qualified as a Chartered Accountant in England and also a Certified Public Accountant in the United States. She is the winner of PEN International's 2004/2005 David TK Wong Prize and has received the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa in 2006 for her debut novel *Everything Good Will Come*, the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa in 2009 for her short story collection, *News from Home* and several other literary awards for her works. She was also a juror for the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 2010. Sefi Atta is also a playwright, with her stage plays performed and published internationally; the BBC has broadcasted her radio plays. *Writing Contemporary Nigeria: How Sefi Atta Illuminates African Culture and Tradition* is a critical study of her novels and short stories which was published in 2015 by the Cambria Press.

Atta’s second novel *Swallow* was published in 2010. It vividly portrays the predicament of modern women in the contemporary society. It also deals with their struggles as they journey in the quest of their identities and the domineering male society which stifles their voices in the modern society. The whole novel revolves around the female characters and their empowerment and the desire for independence, where the female characters stand strong for their survival and for what they stand.

Joy Nwiyi in the article, “Survival and Female (Ad)venturing in Sefi Atta’s *Swallow*” in the International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature, says about the novel, “*Swallow*

tells the story of two friends, Tolani and Rose; working-class ladies from entirely different backgrounds whose struggle not to be crushed by the society in which they find themselves unites them” (2).

Atta’s novel, *Swallow* deals with the lives of two young women Tolani and Rose. Their personal and professional lives are dealt in a very detailed and realistic manner by Atta. The culture of Nigeria permits the women to educate themselves to a certain extent. But still, they concentrate more on their house chores, rather than their academic growth or profession.

The gender dynamics is even prevailed from the ancient days of Africa. The Lagos of the eighties was a hard time to live in. The Royal family had to answer the military government like all the others. No one bothered about them outside their circle. There was a unique practice in the Royal family before the military coups and independence. Any unmarried girl who reaches the palace would be a wife of the Royal Throne and the girl’s family need not worry. “Traditional rulers had not yet been totally undermined by the colonials. All unmarried girls in Makoku Town were warned to watch where they went: the stream to fetch water, the next compound. If they ended up in the Palace, no one would come to look for them” (90). Such was the practice in Nigeria where the girls were just abducted just like that in the name of marriage. The Nigerian culture was primarily concerned with the allotment of gender roles. The presumed roles of the members in the Nigerian society are very clear and male dominant too. In Nigerian society, the men were encouraged to have many wives. It is their traditional norms that if the elder brother dies, the younger brother has to take over the elder brother’s possessions and family too.

Atta, even points out the characters and events from the post-independence era. However, the character Iya Alaro is a woman who is brought from pre-independent Nigeria, as a revolutionary character. Because she was more advanced and progressive in thinking she did not adhere to the traditional role of the women. Hence, she was believed to have mystic and magical powers. The whole clan looked at her as if she was a witch and that her words were harsh and venomous. But, she was very closely related to Tolani’s mother and she was the one who encouraged marriage between Tolani’s mother and her father and spoke against the Royal policy of taking wives into the Palace.

Her mother, Arike talks about the tradition of getting the girls married. Her feelings regarding the marriage are expressed in the following manner:

The worst thing for a woman was to be married. Yes, I knew I would be one day. All girls did. You reached a certain age and you were married off. Your family arranged that. They received your dowry: cloth, yams, palm oil, goats, or whatever your husband’s family could afford, to show his appreciation for your upbringing. It was a token, nothing more. You moved into his home, had children and took care of them. (44-45)

Because she wants to escape from such a kind of societal boundaries, she moves to Lagos to pursue her education.

The rights and freedom of women could never be thought of strangled in such a male dominated society and to keep the women submissive, the society has strict rules. Women earned a little money when they were at home by doing some meagre jobs. The profession the women take up has to be indoors and this is not shown outside. Atta's character in this novel *Swallow* exhibits conviction. Tolani's mother is being criticised severely for riding a bike like a man. She is accused of going out and being empowered in the society. She is expected to be 'swallowed' by the societal norms rather than to become a rebellion.

Rose is a strong and courageous woman and she is seen as a little opposite of Tolani who struggles against the difficult offices she comes across. The docile nature of women in the patriarchal society is brought out very clearly by Rose when she becomes angry with the system:

It's rubbish. How many motherless children do we have around? Yet we continue to see childbirth as the ultimate. You must born pikin, you must born pikin by force. That's what I've always said: we Nigerians, we follow blindly. Meanwhile, the whole system is a mess because not everyone agrees, and when we follow without thinking, we all enter the same black hole. . . .The black hole of the African existence. (204)

Atta attempts to showcase the intensity of gender bias. She critically comments on the gender disparity and equality, which are the results of the consequences of traditional practices. These acts stand as the infringement on the rights of women even as human beings. Also, Sapiro in the work, *Women in American Society: An Introduction to Women's Studies*, states, "the primeval struggle through which men have asserted their dominance over women is more deeply embedded in many cultures" (52). In the novel, Tolani is born and brought up in such a society where a woman is taken for granted. She does not know who her father is. Tolani confesses to Rose about her birth secret, "I think my father's brother is my real father, Brother Tade. You know that if a woman is infertile she can't hide it. If a man is sterile, no one has to know. Understand? The wife finds someone else to father her child, and keeps the whole thing a secret....She never talked about when I was born, only trouble because she had one child. Never from my father" (203). This proves that women are subjected to 'swallow' the secrets of men in order to save the name of the family and their dignity in the society.

Apart from all these shackles maintained in the traditional house, women have to struggle to come out of the glass cage and earn their own livelihood through various means. But the male dominant society traps them again and makes them as puppets to move according to their wish. The society expects them to 'swallow' men's misdeeds. When women 'vent out' and expose them, they will invite more sufferings. In the novel, the Federal Community Bank branch manager, Mr. Salako disrespects women and always treats them as his subordinates. When Rose works as his secretary, he misbehaves with her. This sexual harassment happens for a long time, but during on such assault, Rose could not tolerate him and slaps him in front of the guards and the customers. Rose is dismissed immediately by him due to subordination. Although, the fault is with Mr. Salako, no one in the bank supports Rose. Instead, they blame Rose for her harsh behaviour. Rose vents out as, "No justice. No justice for people like us. You hear? Only for the wicked and the corrupt in this country.

Look at Salako – everything he steals from the bank, taking money from customers, taking bribes” (22).

Mr. Salako again sexually abuses Tolani when she becomes his secretary, replacing Rose. Unlike Rose, Tolani stifles her anger and does not show it off. Tolani is affected psychologically by Mr. Salako’s misbehaviour. Even though she reports it to her senior worker Ignatius, she is threatened by him about the consequences if she gives complaint against him. When she starts to show a little opposition to his misconduct, she is suspended by him.

Taking her mother’s life as her inspiration, and her friend Rose’s life as a lesson, Tolani decides not to ‘swallow’ the oppression anymore. Instead she tries and ‘vents out’ at the male domination and inequality that are imposed on her. She goes back to her mother and tries to live her independent life.

Atta, by portraying her characters, tries to reconstruct the social norms in a patriarchal society. She orients her women to not ‘swallow’ the gender oppression but to ‘vent out’, that is, to voice out against the oppression to break the chains of gender bias. To an extent, this empowerment depends on education and financial freedom.

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Commentary Section

The Dilemma of Identity Crisis of Afropolitan Minds in *A Bit of Difference* by Sefi Atta

Sangavi. K, & S. Kalamani

Abstract

Identity is genuinely a multifaceted concept. The migrants living in foreign countries often face an identity crisis due to religious and cultural differences. The novel, A Bit of Difference, also deals with the identity crisis experienced by the protagonist, Deola Bello, a single woman of 39 years, working for an International Charity, and the secondary character, Bandele Davis, who identifies himself with an ambivalent sexuality stream. These characters are seen with well-adaptive and broad Afropolitan thinking due to their exposure to the Western Land and traditions. But they are not ultimately adaptive when it comes to living under the typical societal norms that are imposed on Nigerian society. Eventually, they face an identity crisis as they are unable to express themselves due to their lifestyle preferences in their native land, Nigeria. The epitome of African Diaspora is very much evident in the characters of Atta, most of whom have acquired their freedom far away from their native soil. Most of the migrants ignore the idea of returning home. This paper focuses on how the characters with Afropolitan thinking are trying to embrace the reality of societal shackles concerning their lifestyle, sexuality, and modern thoughts.

Keywords: Identity Crisis, Afropolitanism, Homosexuality, Diaspora, Patriarchy.

Methodology Adopted

The theory of Afropolitanism is broadly applied in this research paper and the Queer theory is applied with reference to dealing with the secondary character, Bandele Davis. This research paper adopts the formatting techniques and other regulations that comply with the Chicago Style.

Post-colonial countries are influenced by Western culture, language, and education. These countries adore the Westerners and express the impact by adopting their ways of life; this happens especially when the citizens of post-colonial countries travel to Western countries and encounter myriad problems in the assimilation process. One such problem is the identity crisis faced by these people, simultaneously with the cultural conflicts. Identity is a complex idea. Identity can be defined as a distinctive feature of a person or a trait shared by all members of a social group or category in psychology and sociology. It is a person's interpretation and presentation of their uniqueness or social affiliations, such as national and cultural identity.

Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst, used the term "identity crisis" to describe one of the most crucial conflicts people face during their development. According to Erik Erikson, an identity crisis is a period of intense introspection and experimenting with various ways of looking at oneself. Migrants encounter this difficulty when they move to a new nation because of religious and cultural differences (Kabouche 2021).

The migration further leads to the development of critical thinking as they start viewing their homeland from a different perspective. This eventually pushes the migrated people to suffer another trip in the phase of identity crisis when they return to their native land. But this westernised thinking and their constant acquaintances with globalised perspectives make them develop the sense of Afropolitanism later in their life.

Afropolitanism is a concept that indicates an aspect of the African people's identity as well as their philosophical attitude towards the world. It is a conceptual area where African heritage realities are acknowledged and questioned in the context of understanding the complexities of contemporary globalisation. It is broadly conceptualised in a cultural, intellectual, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual space rather than confined to just a geographical one.

Taiye Selasi invented the term "Afropolitanism" in her 2005 article, "Bye Bye Babar." Selasi, the daughter of a Nigerian mother and a Ghanaian father, was born in London in 1979 and studied American Studies at Yale and International Relations at Oxford before settling in Rome. She describes her identity as a

local of Accra, New York, Berlin, and Rome (Selasi, Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local 2014). She describes Afropolitan as follows:

They are Afropolitans – the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you. You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue[s] and speak a few urban vernaculars. There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands and the various institutions that know us for our famed focus. We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world. (Selasi 2005)

Selasi's definition is notable for its emphasis on modernity, sophistication, success, and worldliness as if it were written with the goal of eradicating all negative stereotypes about Africa. Her age, she claims, is the new, promising African generation, born of highly skilled Africans who emigrated to the West in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to Selasi, the present generation of Africans are in the vanguard of attempting to comprehend and complicate Africa. Perhaps the most defining feature of the Afropolitan mindset is the refusal to oversimplify; the desire to comprehend what is wrong with Africa while still honouring what is good and distinctive.

On the other hand, Afropolitanism has been defined by Cameroonian cultural critic Achille Mbembe as an ethical position of being accessible to others through the occupation of multiple cultural spaces. He coined the word after conducting scholarly research on South Africa in transition, focusing on cosmopolitan Johannesburg, where he came from (Pucherova 2018).

Afropolitanism, as Mbembe noted in an interview, refers to a way—or a set of ways—in which Africans, or people of African descent, see themselves as part of the world rather than separate beings from it. Pucherova in this regard quotes Balakrishnan, “historically, Africa has been defined in the Hegelian paradigm as out of history, as not belonging to the world.” Mbembe highlights Afropolitanism as an identity

founded on existence through others or by relation, rather than exclusion or hostility; an identity whose allegiance is to the global human community. According to Mbembe, Afropolitanism is:

the awareness of this imbrication of here and elsewhere, the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa, this relativization of roots and primary belongings and a way of embracing, fully cognizant of origins, the foreign, the strange and the distant, this capacity to recognize oneself in the face of another and to value the traces of the distant within the proximate, to domesticate the unfamiliar, to work with all manner of contradictions—it is this cultural sensibility, historical and aesthetic, that suggests the term Afropolitanism. (Skinner 2017)

The protagonists of Afropolitan stories are youths who are highly professional as a result of Western education or aspirations to obtain Western education, and they continually bounce between Africa and the West, nevertheless fitting into both. Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* (2013), Biyi Bandele's *The Street* (1999), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americannah* (2013), Segun Aflobi's *Goodbye Lucille* (2008), and Zukiswa Wanner's *London – Cape Town – Joburg* (2014) are a few instances of Afropolitan books.

Sefi Atta is one of the rare authors who incorporates an Afropolitan narrative into her work. She was born in the Lagos of Nigerian, in 1964. She travels between England, the United States, and Nigeria. She graduated from Antioch University in Los Angeles with a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. She is a novelist, playwright, and short-story writer. She is also a recipient of various notorious awards like the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa in 2006. *Writing Contemporary Nigeria: How Sefi Atta Illuminates African Culture and Tradition*, released by Cambria Press in 2015, is a critical analysis of her novels and short stories. *A Bit of Difference*, Atta's third novel, was published in 2013. Deola Bello, the protagonist of the novel, is an independent Nigerian lady whose actions go against conventional Nigerian ideals. Deola is

blissfully single at the age of 39. She has become a British citizen who lives and works in London for an International Charity.

Even though she calls Nigeria her home, Deola sees herself as a “Nigerian expatriate in London” (Atta 2015, 11) who enjoys living there. Deola, like Ifemelu of *Americanah*, is the ideal of Afropolitanism: a successful, high-achieving, cosmopolitan African lady who knows the “ways of the world,” having attended a British boarding school and summer camps in Switzerland, and then studying at the London School of Economics. Deola is more tolerant than the usual Nigerians because of her upbringing in multicultural

London and extensive travel. Among her pals are church-going Nigerians, as well as gay Nigerian males and secular white feminists. Nigerian patriarchal and conservative attitudes are the main reasons for her preference to live in London; other reasons being Nigeria's malfunctioning infrastructure and services.

Atta's novel focuses on the functioning of government in the Nigerian society and the reasons for the individuals leaving the country, "How had Nigeria governed itself after independence? Two failed attempts at civilian governments, a four-year civil war and God knows how many military regimes in between. . . . All we have is oil money circulating in our economy. The whole banking sector is running on laundered money. The whole of Nigeria is" (Atta 2015, 55, 73).

According to Deola, charity in Africa is quite challenging since aid is frequently squandered: "I don't see Africans helping each other that much either. . . . That is why charities annoy us so much. We don't care about each other" (129). She is keen to point out that Nigerians have no compassion for other Africans or even fellow Nigerians when there are so many British and Nigerian immigration laws concerned with charity.

Deola's Afropolitanism has become more of her lifestyle choice than an ethical attitude in this sense. Deola chooses to stay in a hotel with an internet connection and uninterrupted electricity rather than at her parents' house on a visit home, which emphasise the fact, how "unhomed" she is. She struggles to completely accept the Nigerian environment for what it has become as a society with rigid societal norms when all she wants is to identify herself as an independent woman of her own choices. Deola's estrangement and uneasiness are recurring themes throughout the story.

The novel, *A Bit of Difference*, is harshly critical of Nigerian corruption at all levels, as well as the overall lack of social awareness and empathy for one's fellow citizens. Nigeria is considered an extremely unequal country, with migration to the West widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

In modern literary criticism, gender has become a contentious issue. Judith Butler, a gender theorist, has explained The Social Construction of Gender Theory as "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." In Simone de Beauvoir's concept, sex is distinguished from gender, and it is argued that gender is a developed characteristic of personality rather than a biological trait (Butler 1990).

Theories of gender, sex, and sexuality as fundamental essences have been used to establish many sexual "types" - heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, and others. Sexuality, sex, and gender are all

intertwined. Typical beliefs on masculinity and femininity are the “appropriate” ways for men and women to act, which have formed societal meanings of sexuality. Natural sexual conduct comprised only heterosexual desires and actions and was regarded as the “normal”; any other sexual category that does not comply with society’s norms is regarded as “abnormal” (Kabouche 2021). Many countries have implemented anti-LGBT legislation. Despite the fact that the regulations are rarely implemented, they have serious repercussions for LGBT people. These individuals are inclined to deal with a range of psychological disorders, ranging from self-hatred to despair to alienation, which is why the majority of LGBT people choose to live in other European nations that accept their sexual orientation.

Sefi Atta has a strong narrative voice and is not hesitant to tackle controversial topics. Atta addresses homosexuality as an issue in her novel, *A Bit of Difference*, challenging the traditional and preconceived conception of African sexuality as a homogeneous body. Homosexuality is seen as a “non-African” impact of the West on Africa. In a review of “Recent Trends,” Marc Eprechet discusses how African authors are increasingly writing about non-traditional sexualities in order to demonstrate that their texts are “not consistently and dogmatically homophobic or heterosexist” (Mtenje 2016). This involves providing homosexuals with the respect that is actively lacking in most African nation-states’ politically homophobic speech, as well as challenging the status quo of homosexuality as un-African.

In the novel, *A Bit of Difference*, Bandele Davis, who identifies himself in the stream of ambivalent sexuality, comes to England to attend a decent college. As soon as Bandele arrives in England, he starts to demolish his native identity to become a British citizen. He absorbs all Western standards of living, acting, and behaving. His quick adaptation is well described by the author as, “He sounded completely English, and all she knew about Nigerians who spoke that way was that they looked down on Nigerians who didn’t” (Atta 2015, 45).

Despite the fact that Bandele has left Nigeria and maintains a distance from the Nigerians in London, he is concerned about what others expect of him and what they would say about his sexual orientation. “Knowing what the natives are like?” (Atta 2015, 222), he acted all masculine and ruthless so that his sexuality wouldn’t be questioned because he was afraid of Nigerian judgmental attitudes towards him. He is a multifaceted, complex character who has numerous conscious motives for acting the way he does.

Bandele left his motherland to distance himself from the mainstream heterosexual culture and society because of his differences. The understanding that he is different is quickly followed by the realisation that

his difference is terrible, embarrassing, and should not be discussed publicly. Because his ambivalent sexuality is considered a sin, crime, and psychiatric condition in his home country Nigeria, he chooses to exile himself from his friends and family. Bandele chooses England as his new home because it offers him a level of freedom and security that he could not find in Nigeria. Bandele's further aversion for his native is shown in the following lines:

'Where is home?' Bandele asks.

'Where else?'

He rubs his chin. 'Nigeria is not my home.'

'It's home for me.'

'Good luck to you. I haven't been back in so long I'd probably catch dengue fever the moment I set foot in that country.' (Atta 2015, 50)

Atta gives a clear picture of colonialism's repercussions on African people, particularly homosexual individuals. Bandele conceals his true sexual identity, leading to the abandonment of his other identity and to the development of sentiments like shame and contempt for his homeland. This aids in the formation of a colonial mindset, which he feels the superior though frowned upon in his native land.

Bandele's perceptions regarding his origin and history have shifted as well. This is revealed in the following conversation between him and Deola:

... writes the same postcolonial crap the rest of them write, and not very well, I might add.'

Deola laughs. 'Isn't our entire existence as Africans postcolonial?'

'They should give it a rest, the whole lot of them. Africa should be called the Sob Continent the way they carry on. It's all gloom and doom from them, and the women are worse, all that false angst.

Honestly, and if I hear another poet in a headwrap bragging about the size of her ample bottom or likening skin to the colour of a nighttime beverage, I don't know what I will do.' (Atta 2015, 47)

When Bandele returns to his native after a while from the foreign exile, Deola's friends refer to him as "the bobo who went mad because he couldn't accept the fact that he was black" (Atta 2015, 54). This kind of mockery aggravates his aversion to such an extent that he completely boycotts his motherland and decides to live in a foreign country, where his identity is accepted as he wishes that to be. Bandele's afropolitan

thinking and his ambivalent sexuality make him stand on his ground to reflect his genuine yet constant hatred towards his native land, Nigeria. On the other hand, Deola, with her western exposure, hesitates to mingle with the native environment initially. But eventually, she understands the reality and patiently learns to relive in her country, dissolving all the differences of opinions.

Deola admitted, “I can’t live up to their expectations. Why should they live up to mine?” (Atta 2015, 224). This shows how she attempts not to fall into the stream of typical African migrants who whine only about the shortcomings of Nigerian society. She rather tries to live in her native despite the Nigerian society being harsh towards progressive thinking being pervaded by patriarchy. She realises how the societal shackles on every individual, try to cease them from being independent, expressing their sexuality and leading their preferred lifestyle. Therefore, she is not just an epitome of Afropolitanism but also a fully developed human being who has embarked on a journey of reassuring herself and exploring her identity as a Nigerian citizen.

Nigeria’s critical social and political concerns were addressed through literature by women writers. Third-generation women’s works, particularly from the Diaspora, show the ungranted identification, and women’s commitment to negotiating postcolonial reality is irresistible. The third generation of Nigerian authors, such as Sefi Atta, introduced new subjects to African literature, including sexual orientation, which was previously considered a taboo and continues to be so in some African countries. Atta’s characters are a representation of the actual world, in which homosexuals face discrimination from anti-LGBT laws, family, and society. Because of the rejection, discrimination, and pressure, these people experience mental trauma as well as a heightened identity crisis. Although they are subjected to these societal norms and their inflictions, Atta’s self-assured characters, like Deola Bello manage to survive the crisis and try to embrace the differences. Atta definitely achieves this task of exquisitely highlighting Afropolitanism and thereby throwing the light on the characters as they establish their own identity overcoming the crisis. Through her captivating narrative, she never fails to make her mission clear and relevant to both Africans and foreign readers.

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Sangavi. K, Research Scholar

Dr. S. Kalamani, Professor of English

Department of English,

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women,

E-mail: sangavi14ene36@gmail.com, kalamani_eng@avinuty.ac.in




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Chapter 1

Introduction

Literature, in its essence, is a reflection of the human experience, blending elements of reality and imagination to explore the intricacies of human nature, culture, language, and emotions. African literature serves as a poignant reflection of the lives of the native Africans, who have faced centuries of oppression and struggle against imperialism and post-independence conflicts. This is especially true of Nigerian literature, which has evolved to embrace a variety of media, including novels, folktales, legends, songs, and other oral forms that permeate the Nigerian sensibility. This period is considered the classic period of Nigerian literature.

During this time, oral literature was practiced by a select group of individuals who guarded certain knowledge with a great jealousy. As Ruth Iltisagan details in her seminal work, "Oral Literature in Africa" (1970), African and Nigerian oral literature were those long before the arrival of the Europeans. These oral traditions served as a source of entertainment, philosophy, and belief, and involved the art of verbal storytelling.

In Nigeria, the literary tradition can be traced back to the rich oral literary tradition of the African people. It is a veritable encyclopedia of contemporary social and political events, conveyed through myths, folk tales, fables, proverbs, legends, dances, and songs. The origin of this literary tradition can be traced back to the ancient practitioners and storytellers who breathed life into the folklore and proverbs that formed the basis of Nigerian oral literature. These stories were passed on from generation to generation, becoming an integral part of the Nigerian cultural heritage. The Yoruba community is particularly renowned for its storytelling tradition, with parents sitting with their

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