

Afropolitan Space Invading between Neoliberalization and Africanization

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1 Introduction: Afropolitan space invading

The Afropolitan turn

It was a couple of years ago that I came across the opening remarks of a *Telegraph* article composed by Gaby Wood about Taiye Selasi's first novel. Although *Ghana Must Go* had not been published yet, its author was already introduced as 'a superstar feted by the likes of Salman Rushdie' (Wood). In disbelief, I stared at the first lines then identifying Selasi as a mobile fashionista with a 'flamboyant personal style match[ing] the literary hype' (Wood) residing in Euro-America's most expensive cities and stressing her privileges produced by neoliberal capitalism while mocking others for their lack of mobilities:

I'm not sure which to tell you about first – the book or the jacket. I don't mean the book's cover, that thing one is never supposed to judge. I mean the jacket the novelist is wearing when I meet her, the story of which takes up the first few minutes of our interview. It goes like this: though Taiye Selasi is intermittently based in New York and Rome, on the day she bought the jacket all of her clothes were in India, and somehow she found herself stuck in Hong Kong with nothing to wear ('I mean, I was practically a refugee!' she tells me) when there in a shop window was this item, designed by Alexander McQueen. She had to have it. Or, as she told the shop assistant, 'Not only is it my size, it's my jacket. Do you see what I'm saying? Like, it's just confusing that it's in the display when it's mine.' She paid a sum she has never spent on clothing before or since – and that includes the leather trousers she is wearing with it, for which she is quick to nod in gratitude to Helmut Lang. The jacket, made the year before McQueen died, is a kind of living museum piece: black, cinched, beautifully stitched, and transformed into something almost prehistoric when the sleeves are lifted. It also seems to say quite a bit about the person inside it: stylised, even understated in certain lights, but also, in its way, extreme. (Wood)

I asked myself whether Wood was eventually writing about the same person, who, in her critically acclaimed (cf. Adejunmobi 52; Ede, "Politics" 88; Wasihun 391; Schmidt 177) essay *Bye-Bye Babar* in 2005, had portrayed herself as being part of the latest generation of African emigrants that were not only known for their 'funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes' ("Bye-Bye"), but who also, dispersed across cities around the globe, had begun to redefine what it means to belong to 'Africans of the world' ("Bye-Bye") through comprehending Africa's 'cultural complexity [and its] intellectual and spiritual legacy' ("Bye-Bye"). Wondering what the comforts of being able to afford Alexander McQueen jackets and Helmut Lang trousers while jet-setting the globe had to do with the self-image of being a world citizen with African entanglements, I continued the article, which then described Selasi and her work as representing something new, producing 'characters who are, to use a phrase that has become common but is, in fact, originally Selasi's own, 'Afropolitan' (Wood). I recalled *Ghana Must Go*: An affluent family with African roots, consisting of successful art stars, Yale graduates, editors, and surgeons scattered predominantly along the US East Coast, flies to Accra to attend the former family patriarch's burial and re-connects on his compound near Kokrobite. Selasi's novel, as much as her personal biography, gave the impression that Afropolitans were simply privileged global

citizens, through fiction, repositioning themselves in a neoliberalized capitalistic infrastructure. Towards the end of the article, however, Wood briefly referred to the Yoruba 'myths imported from Lagos' (Wood), which in *Ghana Must Go* not only help the twins Kehinde and Taiwo keep in contact through extrasensory perception implied by the ere ibeji myth (cf. A. White) but also encourage Sadie to disentangle herself from a competitive environment and accept her body through adapting to the Dipo rite (cf. Boakye). Notions of Africanness, Wood indicated, seemed to contest Selasi's neoliberalized realities and inform the Afropolitan's being in the world just as much.

In the end, the *Telegraph* article put in a nutshell the two directions Afropolitanism has been headed after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication. Especially a growing body of Afropolitan authors such as Teju Cole, Dinaw Mengestu, Chika Unigwe, or Sefi Atta have, through their fictions, revealed how Selasi's conceptual idea is located somewhere within the realms of global capitalism and Africanness, stirring up heated discussions and enhancing the scope of debates following the *cosmopolitan turn* (cf. Beck and Grande; Esperanca; Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 77-97) in the 1990s. Afropolitan fiction, the suggestion is, has picked up bits and pieces of cosmopolitan history but it has also used them to give cosmopolitan discourse a new direction. As a neologism, it combines the two words *Afro* and *polites* and relates to the ancient city-states of the Stoics and Cynics (cf. Josephides 2-3; Brown and Held 4-5) as well as Diogenes's image of the *kosmo polites* (cf. Nussbaum, *Patriotism* 7; Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* xii), describing a privileged citizen who 'on the strength of birth or affinity, can call any place in Africa his or her place, while at the same time being open to the world' (Eze, "We" 114). Literary characters such as Cole's nameless narrator in *Every Day is for the Thief*, Sepha and Ayad in Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, Chisom, Ama, Alek, and Efe in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, or Deola and Bandele in Atta's *A Bit of Difference* thus, like Diogenes, regard it their Afropolitan privilege to move freely through the cosmos and articulate their belonging to many places worldwide – which Selasi boasts: 'This one lives in London but was raised in Toronto and born in Accra; that one works in Lagos but grew up in Houston, Texas Like so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many' ("Bye-Bye"). This image of a class of globetrotters that identify as citizens of the world who willingly traverse geographies correlates significantly with Kant's take on mobilities (*Perpetual Peace* 22) delineating the conditions for world citizenship (cf. Stade 32-33; Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 18, 25-26). When it comes to contemporary cosmopolitan discourse, however, the plethora of standpoints found within cosmopolitan approaches (concise overviews are supplied by Beardsworth; Brown and Held; Delanty; Achcar; Spencer) is merely channeled into activating two strands in cosmopolitan debates and refurbishing them with an Afropolitan agenda. No longer can one speak of an Afropolitan

debate within cosmopolitan discourse. Instead Afropolitan fiction is beginning to produce cosmopolitan discourse through manifesting bi-directional notions of neoliberalization and Africanization, emerging in an *Afropolitan turn* that is beginning to take shape.

On the one hand, Afropolitan fiction seems to contribute to a neoliberalization of cosmopolitanism. Neoliberalism according to Harvey's comprehensive definition has emerged predominantly in the Euro-American post-war era as a theory of 'political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (*History* 2). Its implementation, however, has, first and foremost, been facilitated by evolving into an 'ethic in itself' (*History* 2), which goes beyond the economic and infuses all spheres. Relating to Foucault's 'conduct of conduct' outlined in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Wendy Brown at this point speaks of a 'distinctive mode of reason' (21), which proposes that all human action worldwide ought to be regulated by the domain of the market. Neoliberalism has therefore also spread beyond national borders and become a global project (cf. Peck and Tickell, "Conceptualizing"; Urry, *Offshoring*; Gowan). Especially the arts, chiefly literature, have assisted in its dissemination. Considering Marx and Engels's critique that the bourgeoisie has 'through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country' (476) in 'material, so also in intellectual production' (476), Afropolitan fiction accordingly first arises as 'world literature' (477), which in the form of the novel as an instrument for a profound entrenchment (cf. Eagleton, *Literary Theory*; Lukács, *Historic Novel*) promotes the ideals of a revitalized liberal cosmopolitanism based on global capitalism. The Afropolitan author at this stage resembles Gramsci's 'intellectual' (cf. *Selections*), who in academic research (e.g. Tveit; Dabiri; Bwesigye; Nketiah) is labelled as a dynamic, wealthy, and Westernized jet-setter that eventually fabricates world literature as an effective form of ideological control (cf. Lukács, "Ideology"). At the same time, however, Afropolitan novels have also been accused (e.g. Karl; Ede, "Politics") of diffusing neoliberal ethics when advocating entrepreneurial freedoms in a globalized capitalistic architecture. The novels composed by Cole, Mengestu, Unigwe, and Atta, for instance, popularize and textually formalise neoliberal rationalities when reflecting how Africans of the world successfully enter the global stage of capitalism by transforming into competitive 'Afropreneurs' (Otas 38) that are capable of governing themselves. Cole's nameless narrator welcomes the MUSON Centre in Lagos to create neoliberal imaginaries of an entrepreneurial city, Sepha as a corner-shop entrepreneur turns his workplace into a surrogate home, Chisom adjusts her sensorium to adapt to the legitimizing identity of an entrepreneurial jet-setter, and Bandele, in order to find labor in London, invests in whitening his body. Since neoliberal

capitalism even according to late research (e.g. Castells, *Rise; Power*; Calhoun, “Class Consciousness”) remains in dire need of transnationally operating elites to initially produce cosmopolitan fiction as capitalist ideology, Afropolitan novels apparently legitimize the emergence of newly composed transnational capitalist classes (TCC) (Sklair, *Globalization; The Transnational Capitalist Class*), after the dissolution of the modern nation-state:

[A]s long as there are rich and poor, have and have-nots, theories of class retain their relevance and cogency. New conceptualizations of class in the light of globalization are . . . urgent Class in the sense of haves and have-nots has today a global resonance; it is not simply an opposition between one group (bourgeois) and another group (working class), but one involving far broader distinctions: on one side, the global poor or dispossessed (both Western and non-Western, from capitalist and non-capitalist countries) and on the other side, the global rich (multinational corporations, comprador Third World groups, and so on). (Acheraïou 122-123)

Afropolitan literature seems to erect new borders between cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan classes, reiterating systems of economic, cultural, and political inclusion and exclusion and integrating a few Africans into a global elite of world citizens while shoving the rest towards the masses of the global surplus populations. Cole's nameless narrator, for instance, stresses his access to global cities while disposing Chinedu, a local errand boy, from the narrative. Ayad stays in Judith's fortified house-as-home in a gentrified neighborhood that replaces non-affluent local residents. Chisom abandons her sisters to stroll through Antwerp's wealthy shopping district and display her identity as a globetrotter. Bandele enters the Lagosian expat crowd pretending to no longer recognize Deola or other local Nigerians. Critics (e.g. Ekotto and Harrow) in this context do not get tired of pointing out that the authors mentioned are mostly Ivy League alumni and reside and work primarily in Euro-American metropolises, making the production of Afropolitanism notoriously exclusive in the first place. These elites, it is argued, not only cater to Kant's limited mobilities that create a universalism closely harnessed to Euro-America, which then marginalizes 'the unenlightened, the non-cosmopolitan' (P. Werbner 349). They are also indicted for supposedly promoting the 'cosmopolitanism of capital' (Calhoun, “Class Consciousness” 109) beyond Euro-America's shores, turning their fictions into a 'flashy greasepaint used to hide the persistent repulsiveness of neo-liberal capitalism' (Spencer 23), because they keep Euro-America's (neo)colonial aspirations in Africa (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 146-150; Peet) in disguise. Assuming that Afropolitan novels, like bourgeois literature reconsolidating the shaken order in the 19th century and securing the interests of the bourgeois class (cf. Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 17; Sartre, *Literature* 81, 95), seek to dismiss the turmoil caused by a 'disorganized capitalism' (Lash and Urry, *End*), they in fact might contribute to the spread of a totalizing economic code inside and outside Euro-America. Decades ago Fanon already remarked that in times of liberation the colonialist bourgeoisie 'frantically seeks contact with the colonized “elite”' (*Wretched* 9) and that as

soon as the colonizers realize that it is impossible to maintain their domination, they decide 'to wage a rearguard campaign in the fields of culture [and] values' (9). Considering that the bourgeoisie can no longer exist without 'constantly revolutionising the instruments of power, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society' (Marx and Engels 476), the Afropolitan authors through communicating their experiences in supposedly failed African states in that manner become intellectual agents actively assimilating the African continent into a revolutionized global architecture that sustains Euro-America's (geo)strategic dominance.

On the other hand, however, Afropolitan fiction has also been recognized as Africanizing cosmopolitanism because it relates to Mbembe's Afropolitan mindset and Appiah's depictions of a rooted cosmopolitanism. Mbembe, who has been credited with coining the term just as much as Selasi, regards Afropolitanism not only as a race-transcending way of being African in the world, enriched by an entanglement with multiple elsewhere (cf. "Afropolitanism"; "Postcolonial Thinking"). Arguing that Africa remains as the last territory worldwide that has not yet been completely subjected to the rule of capital ("Internet"), he also sees the continent as a locus of resistance and empowerment capable of contesting the neoliberalization of cosmopolitanism. An Afropolitan framework opening literature up to the trajectories of global networks is in this case informed by African cosmologies and thought systems revolving around flexible transformation, constant innovation, circulatory migration, and continuous mobility (cf. "Internet"), and, just as relevant, by notions of an African philosophy focusing on communalism (cf. Dübgen and Skupien 26-29). Cole's nameless narrator, Sepha, Ama, Alek, and Efe, or Deola consequently manage to resist neoliberal realities by referring to communalistic ideas found, for instance, in Yoruba urbanism, Igbo women's associations, or Borana hospitality. Through being in the world the Afropolitan hence turns Africa into an agent in the making of modernities (cf. Makokha 19). As local affiliations in times of neoliberal atomization cross over national borders, they help Afropolitan denizens contribute to the post-neoliberal formation of Appiah's proposed cosmopolitan global village (*Ethics* 216; *Cosmopolitanism* xiii). Afropolitanism for this reason corresponds with Appiah's position interpreting a rooted being in the world a necessity imposed by the disjunctures of globalisation. Through its multiple entanglements, Afropolitan fiction enables authors to raise a cosmopolitan compassion needed to improve understanding and cooperation among individuals from different cultures and geographies and espouse post-neoliberal standpoints. Referring in detail to Aristotle and Diogenes, Nussbaum, for instance, explains that compassion, an emotion rooted in the local, can through literature be educated 'to extend our strong emotions and our ability to imagine the situation of others to the world of human life as a whole' ("Introduction" xiii). Afropolitan novels, capable of representing differing realities, accordingly 'invite their readers to

put themselves in the place of people of many different kinds and to take on their experiences' (Nussbaum, *Cultivating* 89) as soon as they speak to an implicit reader 'who shares with the characters certain hopes, fears and general human concern, and who is situated elsewhere and needs to be informed about the concrete situation of the characters' (89). Literature, respectively, serves as a point of encounter and exchange, where a shared language is spoken and where the Afropolitan author can function as an educational transmitter partaking in an Afropolitan education for global citizenship (cf. Appiah, "Education"). When Cole's nameless narrator delves into a post-neoliberal imaginary of Lagos, Sepha strolls through translocated spaces of home, Chisom enters her parents' lives through extrasensory perception, or Deola saves her body from the labor market, Afropolitan novels offer the ability to listen closely 'to people whose commitments, beliefs, and projects may seem distant from our own' (Appiah, *Ethics* 246) and, ultimately, become instruments of possible social action (cf. Sartre, *Literature* 15) that indicate modes of post-neoliberal contestation. After all, Cole's scope of a communitarianism-oriented cosmopolitanism and Sepha's store of Africanized cosmopolitan solidarity reveal how neoliberal capitalism can be resisted and contested. Ama and Alek's partaking in global social transformations or Deola's and Subu's resistant bodies reducing the global workforce unmask post-neoliberal essentialities just as much. Literary characters and readers alike are thus invited to share these utopian thoughts, which, in the end, can only be activated by African points of entanglement as an archive of afromodernities (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Theory* 8-9) that eventually inform a more resilient post-neoliberal version of Euro-American cosmopolitanism.

Space invading

Located between the junctures of neoliberalization and Africanization, Afropolitan literature, therefore, creates a 'friction' (Goebel and Schabio 2) between purely economic and more critical versions of cosmopolitanism. Whereas Hassan in his essay declares that 'rethinking Afropolitanism through the prism of cosmopolitanism becomes an urgent task' (23) I suggest that cosmopolitanism must rather be rethought through the prism of Afropolitanism because the *Afropolitan turn* through the frictions generated in literature creates a vantage point of expanding cosmopolitan debates. These frictions, I suppose, can best be approached by situating Afropolitan literature within different analytical schemes all relating to interrelated forms of spatialization. Appadurai, for instance, in his take on global interactions speaks of different scapes fusing scalar dynamics to cope with the 'complexity of the current global economy [that] has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics' ("Disjuncture" 296), which is why one could speak of a highly productive Afropolitan scape. Ashcroft, when discussing Appadurai's disjunctive

order and accentuating its disabling structural hierarchies, on these grounds alludes to the emerging concept of a 'flow between the local and the global' (15), which exists 'within, beyond and between' (22) and draws communities 'into the liberating region of representational undecideability' (22). His text indirectly points towards the formation of Afropolitan flows within Afropolitan scapes. Knudsen and Rahbek, at last, in their elaborations on Afropolitan novels refer to a 'space of inquiry and negotiation into what it means to be African in the world and what 'Africa' means in the world' (210), clearly identifying Afropolitan spaces as having materialized and giving flows within scapes a robust form. I propose that these analytical schemes imply that a generated friction must be approached in spatial dimensions. After all, a spatialization of Afropolitanism is indispensable to investigate further into the dynamics of scaping flows taking place in relational spaces, which disrupt fixed and immovable knowledge and certainties manifested in absolute spaces (cf. Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 134-138). Subsequently, 'space/ing becomes a medium with its own consistency and, above all, its own productive agency' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 17), as explained by Derrida: '[I]t is not only the interval, the space constituted between two things (which is the usual sense of spacing), but also *spacing*, the operation, or in any event, the movement of setting aside' (qtd. in West-Pavlov, *Space* 17). Contextualizing Afropolitan literature within the workings mostly produced and brought forward by the *spatial turn* (cf. Harvey, *Condition*; Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*; Hallet and Neumann; Bachmann-Medick; Westphal) enables authors and readers alike to investigate into the conditions of possibility that generate meaning:

Space as a paradigm of intellectual enquiry is crucial here because to situate a cultural artefact in space is to bring it down to earth to re-orient reflection towards the questions of context Meaning is thus a function of space in which it emerges. Truth and falsehood are replaced by space as the matrix of meaning. (West-Pavlov, *Space* 23)

Situating Selasi's conceptual framework within the 'present age of space' (Foucault, *Aesthetics* 175) and understanding the Afropolitans as agents living in this 'era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered' (*Aesthetics* 175), it is, first and foremost, literature through which one can bring into 'the region of possibility that which is yet to exist' (Ashcroft 26). Whereas scholars may face limits within critical theory, Afropolitan fiction, on the contrary, through its emphasis on imagined cosmopolitan contacts can help to assess a 'broader terrain of "conditions of the possibility" for progressive action' (Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 280). Literature can 'recast discursive space' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 136) and open room for utopian ideas not possible in critical theory (cf. Johansen 7; Eagleton, *Against the Grain* ch. 9). Especially the novel, as a sociable genre taking a long time to read and forcing its readers to hold a considerable amount of thoughts in memory for a significant length of time (cf. Randall 116), can, for instance, unmask the neoliberal ideologies in which it is enmeshed or dwell upon Africanized cosmopolitan

education techniques. Literary Afropolitan spaces in novels therefore, I would like to stress, expand the trajectories of cosmopolitan debates. Narrated by Africans of the world, they can, moreover, make use of the spatial vantage point created by the diasporic experience as a metaperspective, which tends to bring together opposed contexts and enables the agents through a state of interstitiality to displace Euro-American discourse from within and then interrogate its categories (cf. Král 37). Afropolitan characters like Sepha, Ama, and Alek, who find themselves in the epicenters of neoliberal capitalism yet through their African entanglements manage to go beyond them, enable fiction not only to negotiate cosmopolitan prerogatives, but help create arenas of utopian thought, of imaginaries outpacing present realities. Cole's imaginary returning to a post-neoliberal Lagos or Deola's moving within a labor market without laboring just as much aspire to Beck's insistence that 'the space of sociological imagination and research has to be opened up and determined anew, i.e. opened up to the *cosmopolitan constellation*' (Beck, "Risk"), which inspires a discursive self-reflection triggered by space invasions.

The literary characters traversing into these spaces, as I will argue throughout this study, are employed as agents of critical enquiry and can henceforth be called Afropolitan space invaders. Whereas predominantly academic research into Afropolitanism has in the past decade been focusing in detail on the notions of neoliberalization and Africanization, the productive friction generated by space invasions has mostly been neglected. Space invasions are thus central to the thesis. I want to outline how the authors who have composed their novels after the publication of *Bye-Bye Babar* have all made excessive use of space invasions to investigate both into Selasi's Afropolitanism located between neoliberalization and Africanization and into the frictions contributing to the formation of the *Afropolitan turn* within cosmopolitan discourse. It is, at this moment, pivotal to note that a space invader need not necessarily be a go-between agent moving within relational space. When the women in *On Black Sisters' Street* are transfixed by their cabins, Unigwe may refer to Selasi's panoptical position within Afropolitan discourse and conquer an absolute framework to uncover the same neoliberal power mechanism that Atta highlights when situating Bandele within Afropolitan knowledge production. When Deola, on the contrary, realizes that her mother expects her to carry out the child, get married, and move back to Nigeria to re-integrate into the local community, notions of Africanness are identified that remain unchanged by neoliberal capitalism. At the moment that these characters move between spaces, however, they unlock a mobility, and become capable not only of exploring spaces but simultaneously actively negotiating and therefore making useful frictions in different localities. Afropolitan space invasions, as a consequence, are highly beneficial to understandings of spacing as an operating medium of articulation:

Geographical sensibility and spatial thinking have not been taken far enough: We need to understand not

only how knowledge is produced in individual places and how literatures and other forms of cultural representations are grounded in specific locations, but also how transactions occur between these locations. Spatialization in [this] context . . . refers to a particular approach which aims at grasping the translocal process of constructing and deconstructing abstract places of here and there. It seeks to understand the transformation of spatial practices: something that is regulated by and regulates the cultural representations of our and others' 'being in the world' as being in translocation. (Munkelt, Schmitz, Stein, and Stroh lx).

Afropolitan literary spaces then put authors into positions that may disrupt essentialities and enable invaders to scrutinize Selasi's conceptual framework from different perspectives covering questions of class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, or other power relations. Taking into account a larger stock of Afropolitan literature, these invading agents might operate as destitute squatters (Chikwava, *Harare North*), or broke taxi drivers (Ndibe, *Foreign Gods Inc.*), as well as Ivy League PhD students (Huchu, *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*), or average middle-class citizens (Brew-Hammond, *Powder Necklace*). They can be male (Cole, *Open City*) or female (Adichie, *Americanah*), Congolese (Proctor, *Rhumba*), Cameroonian (Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers*), or Somali (Farah, *Crossbones*). They may relate to the ethics of the Shona (Bulawayo, *We Need New Names*), to Ubuntu thought (Donald, *Dalila*), or to the morals of the Ga-Adangbe (Gyasi, *Homegoing*). Donald, a male white Scot who grew up in South Africa, writes from the position of a female black asylum-seeker from Kenya entering the United Kingdom, affirming Mbembe's post-racial approach just as much as Proctor, who as a female white author located in South Africa writes about a young black from the Congo searching for his mother in London. The authors themselves, accordingly, can become space invaders as well. Afropolitan fiction as a 'privileged site of tectonic unrest' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 136), consequently, makes it possible for authors to 'take divergent positions on the possibilities and limitations of a cosmopolitan sensibility' (Johansen 7) when partaking in bi-directional flows:

Currently, in addition to the labor force that travels, often painfully and illegally, between Africa and the West, the elite are shuttling between diverse geographic spaces. They carry with them the language to articulate the narratives of their home countries and cultures in their newly adopted spaces, and, as they transport entire cultures, religions, and epistemologies, they use this knowledge to transform the countries into which they enter. Not only do they move away from Africa, they also return home with values and cultures In other words, these bi-directional flows often include wealthy, highly educated, and creative figures, who then become catalysts for cosmopolitanism and for combatting conventional forms of domination and patterns of difference, both in their adopted and their original homes. (Ekotto and Harrow 8-9)

Ekotto and Harrow's remarks focusing on creative elites, at the same time, raise the question of which novels qualify for Afropolitan space invasions in the first place. I think that setting preconditions is highly ambivalent as they may run the risk of excluding important works of fiction. Since the body of Afropolitan literature has become so expansive, however, four quintessential preconditions will be outlined in the following. These will also hint towards the structure of the literary analysis.

What makes the Afropolitan space invader: Chapter breakdown

First of all, the fictions under consideration focus on literary characters all actively invading different Afropolitan spaces located between neoliberalization and Africanization. The four novels written by Cole, Mengestu, Unigwe, and Atta, I propose, devote most of the effort to invasions and curtail their narratives to different strategic spatialities introduced in Selasi's essay. Cole's *Every Day is for the Thief*, for example, which is clearly inspired by Selasi's predominantly metropolitan concept and her locating the Afropolitan in cities around the globe (cf. "Bye-Bye"), places its nameless narrator into Lagos and New York and perceives the global city as a strategic site. The novel, which will be discussed in chapter 2.1, was eventually first published two years after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication and is among the first literary explorations of Selasi's concept in a thoroughly urban context. In *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, which will be examined in chapter 2.2, Mengestu in the same year focuses on investigating four spaces all tackling Selasi's comment that the idea of home can mean many things for Afropolitans because they do not belong to a single geography, but instead feel at home in many (cf. "Bye-Bye"). Chapter 2.3 then outlines how Unigwe, in *On Black Sisters' Street*, employs the sensorium as the transmitting medium in exploring Afropolitan spaces allowing for negotiations of different collective identities. Since the quest for an Afropolitan identity ranges among the most challenging demands posed by Selasi, Unigwe's novel, published four years after *Bye-Bye Babar*, is one of the first attempts to reflect upon the question whether Afropolitanism can be conceived of as a viable groundwork of collective reference for a generation of '21st century African[s]' ("Bye-Bye"). Atta, in *A Bit of Difference*, at last, places the invader's body on Afropolitan labor markets to negotiate Afropolitan futures for writers through Bandele and Deola. Referring to Selasi's stance that Afropolitans are not shy about expressing their African influences in their work (cf. "Bye-Bye"), the body and the Afropolitan labor market are conceived of as spaces producing each other. Chapter 2.4 therefore considers Atta's 2013 novel as one of the latest fictions that reveals how authors almost a decade after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication can (not) partake in debates that are funneled through the Afropolitan publishing business. Although other writers intervene into similar spaces, it is especially these novels that interact most comprehensively with Selasi's essay and its spatialization of discourse. The analysis is therefore structured chronologically along the dates of publication, while other works contributing to spatialities (Adichie, *Americanah*; Cole, *Open City*; Chikwava; Huchu; Brew-Hammond; Mbue; Donald; Farah; Ndibe; Proctor; Bulawayo; Gyasi; Selasi, *Ghana*) will be commented on as well.

Second, to re-direct cosmopolitan discourse, the novels chosen must not only conceptualize an Afropolitan mode of being in the world negotiated by notions of neoliberalization and

Africanization but they must also be highly productive when doing so. Bearing in mind that neoliberalism is 'not implemented by some deus ex machina' (Peck and Tickell, "Conceptualizing" 30) but instead installed as a continuous socioeconomic project that re-organizes the disorganized conditions for global capital accumulation and re-allocates power to transnationally operating elites, invaders must investigate how the tenets of Marxism and a predominantly Foucauldian reading of neoliberalism complement each other (looked into, first and foremost, in chapters 2.3 and 2.4), how neoliberalism redresses (neo)colonial power mechanisms (inspected, for the most part, in chapter 2.1), and how a newly emerging globalized civil society adjusts power relations such as class, gender, culture, and race to new market demands, continuing lineages of domination (outlined primarily in chapters 2.3 and 2.4). The Afropolitan novels are therefore not understood as shallow literary critiques of capitalism but as productively enhancing critical knowledge to understand to which extent constructed neoliberal realities influence cosmopolitan discourse. A similar precondition applies to multiple affiliations when it comes to notions of Africanness, which remains an eminently complex constituent in Afropolitan spaces. Keeping in mind that, in the end, it is 'impossible to comprehend fully what Africa is' (Njami 13), which is why one needs to 'grope around with more or less shaky definitions and accepted ideas' (13), the question what it means to be an African of the world cannot be negotiated outside the realms of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, class, culture and other dynamics under even closer scrutiny in times of globalisation. Ethnicity, in particular, proves to be a difficult field. Chapters 2.1 and 2.4 indicate that Cole and Atta often relate to similar Yoruba and Nigerian entanglements, one of the reasons being the Yoruba's historical mobilities and Nigeria's large English-speaking population contributing significantly to artistic production both in African and Euro-American spaces. This dominance of Yoruba thought in negotiations of Africanness(es), I think, does not turn out too problematic because Selasi in her essay eventually emphasizes the spiritual depth of the Yoruba (cf. "Bye-Bye"). To create a broader picture, notions of Yoruba morals are nonetheless complemented by Igbo thought scrutinized in Unigwe's text (cf. chapter 2.3), the ethics of Ubuntu and the ethics of the Shona investigated in the works of Donald, Chikwava, Bulawayo, and Huchu (cf. chapters 2.2 and 2.3), the significance of the Borana outlined by Mengestu (cf. chapter 2.2), or the influences of the Ga-Adangbe examined by Selasi and Gyasi (cf. chapters 2.2 and 2.4). Ethnicities, at the same time, do not function as ornaments of an Afropolitan mindset, but must be re-negotiated when it comes to transnational notions of Africanness, as suggested by Gikandi: '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' (9). At this very moment that different nationalities and geographies come into play especially Mengestu and Unigwe pick up Mbembe's argument that Afropolitanism

dissolves national borders within Africa (cf. “Internet”), as explained in chapters 2.2 and 2.3. However, to avoid the dominance of Nigerian and Yoruba affiliations within negotiations of Africanness, authors with other national entanglements, such as Cameroon (Mbue), Ghana (Selasi, *Ghana*; Gyasi), Somalia (Farah), Ethiopia (Mengestu), and Zimbabwe (Chikwava; Bulawayo; Huchu), must throughout the thesis be referred to as well to cover the continent's sub-Saharan geographies. I am, at the same time, well aware that the thesis can not cover any novel from any geography, nor focus on any point of departure or destination, which is why some works, be they Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, Farah's *Links* and *Knots*, Owuor's *Dust*, or Vassanji's *Amriika* are left out.

Third, the novels need to explain how frictions created can help cosmopolitan discourse expand and even change directions. Presuming that Africa becomes an active agent in the making of the world, productivity generated through Afropolitan fiction needs to be directed at shaping cosmopolitan modernities. Papastephanou's pamphlet-like introduction to *Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism* (1-2) best encapsulates the often articulated academic longing for a general reconceptualization of cosmopolitanism. In the past, Beck has therefore even called for a new 'cosmopolitan social science' (“Cosmopolitanization” 11). Thus I want to examine how Cole's stable ambivalences discussed in chapter 2.1 not only help re-conceptualize cosmopolitan cityscapes but reveal that cosmopolitan discourse ought to be headed towards a third space. Mengestu's nomadic search of cosmopolitan homes located between the sedentary and the mobile outlined in chapter 2.2, I argue, redefines notions of home but also implies that cosmopolitanism needs to be mobilized. Unigwe's explorations of project identities addressed in chapter 2.3, I posit, not only illustrate how Africans are located between legitimizing and resistance identities, they also hint towards the power of social transformations within cosmopolitan discourse. The heterotopian spaces circumscribed by Atta and reviewed in chapter 2.4, I suggest, may point towards the futures of labor on cosmopolitan markets, yet they postulate cosmopolitan discourse's radical openness to heterotopias. Understanding cosmopolitanism as a space of transposition, which is 'always in the process of becoming' (McCulloch 4), I want to show how the *Afropolitan turn* only through the novels' productivity and their imagined worlds may manage to transform cosmopolitan discourse. Other literary forms and genres, be they Köpsell's poetry (cf. *Akte* 60-61), Ede's spoken word performances (cf. “Globetrotter”), or Adichie's short stories (cf. *Thing*), are therefore not taken into consideration in this thesis. Although these plural modes of literary communication may much more likely draw upon African modes of orality (cf. Ojaide 100-101; Adejunmobi 56; West-Pavlov, *Eastern* 10-11), they do not provide the textual space offered by novels to utilize frictions (cf. J. Marx 12; Randall 116). Following Johansen, Afropolitan novels, I submit, occupy a central role in

imagining cosmopolitan connections because the cosmopolitanism envisioned 'is depicted as continually unfinished, portrayed as an ongoing project' (4).

Fourth, to re-direct and enhance cosmopolitanism the novelists must meet various criteria, if they want to remain in positions to interact with discourse. It has repeatedly (e.g. Knudsen and Rahbek; Nwaubani, "African Books") been stressed how authors, scholars, and discourse not only stimulate but eventually may produce each other, a proposition discussed in detail in chapter 2.4. Accordingly, only novels published after 2005 will be taken into account, whereas works such as Adebayo's *Some Kind of Black* (1996) or Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* (2000), although partially relating to Afropolitan perspectives, will not be mentioned. Since Afropolitan spaces negotiate Selasi's idea of being in the world, the novels must also include characters traversing nation-state boundaries, such as the borders between the US and Nigeria (chapter 2.1), Ethiopia and the US (chapter 2.2), Belgium, Nigeria, and Sudan (chapter 2.3), or Nigeria and the United Kingdom (chapter 2.4). Barrett's *Blackass*, despite being praised for functioning as a photo-negative of Adichie's *Americanah* and stirring up Afropolitan debates through illustrating the Lagosians' reactions to Furo's having become white (Bady, "Afropolitan Debate"), as well as Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, which turns Kingsley into a 419 scammer placed into the same informal spaces that are discussed by Cole (cf. *Every Day*), are therefore left out. Moreover, only novels written in English will be analyzed, because discourse based on Selasi's conceptualizations appears to mainly focus on Anglophone literature (as explained in chapter 2.4), although I would like to underline that there is also a large stock of Francophone (cf. Orlando; Kabale; Kroll), Spanish (cf. Lewis), or Lusophone (cf. Arenas) literature that would also qualify as Afropolitan fiction – let alone works composed in African languages. Last, access to scholarly debates around Afropolitanism implies a certain degree of mobility and, inevitably, commercial success. Especially this precondition turns out highly questionable as well. It is often proclaimed (e.g. Makokha 17; Wasihun 391; Schmidt 178) that an Afropolitan writer generation has emerged, which is mostly based outside Africa. Afropolitan fiction, by now, seems to have almost become a literary market trend, producing numerous labels such as 'Global Africa' (Irele 11) or 'third generation [writing]' (Eze, "Feminism" 89). At times, the authors belonging to this trend seem fabricated because they usually come with similar biographies and prospects. Careers are often started with a tertiary education mostly gained at Anglo-American elite hubs, as evidenced by Selasi and Adichie having attended Yale, Bulawayo having graduated from Cornell, as well as Cole and Mbue being Columbia alumni and Gyasi belonging to Stanford's graduates. Unigwe and Ndibe have been part of Brown's Literary Arts Program, while Cole has become a writer in residence at Bard. The large share of these writers resides outside the African continent. The works that have been published, meanwhile,

have won a vast amount of prizes. Atta's website alone lists seventeen awards. Some also seem to generate abundant profits. Both Gyasi and Mbue, for instance, sold their debut novels for reported seven figures when still in their twenty-somethings or early thirties (Deahl; Selasi, "A Portrait"). Although I would like to refrain from the idea that an author has to be rich and mobile to be an Afropolitan, it is, in the end, these academic merits and commercial successes that enable most writers to partake in public talks worldwide, sit on university panels, participate in prize committees, and, alas, sell their books. Not only Selasi comes across as a superstar. A quick YouTube search proves that Farah's discussions with Appiah, for instance, have drawn considerable attention (Appiah, "Interview"), while Adichie's remarks on the 'danger of a single story' ("Danger") have been watched by an audience going into the millions. The analysis, I posit, accordingly needs to incorporate these preconditions and, at times, go critically into further detail.

The following chapters follow *Bye-Bye Babar's* date of publication in chronological order and differentiate between the four spatialities proposed above. Each text begins with a short framing, briefly exhibiting the spatial setting the novel is placed into. The chapters then continue with investigating neoliberal thought inherent in Afropolitan space invading first before focusing on Africanizations. Although I am well aware that this reduces the analysis to a somewhat dichotomous textual form, I think that it is easier to comprehend how the authors, in the end, aim at overcoming binaries. At times, the vast theoretical backdrop focusing on numerous spatialities of different sorts may seem (too) expansive. However, I would like to stress that positing that literature and theory interact requires a consideration of multiple academic works, essays, or talks constituting discourse. Concise concluding remarks outlining stable ambivalences, the nomadic search, project identities, and heterotopian spaces then follow each dichotomously arranged chapter to indicate the productivity of frictions generated, which will be further enquired into in the final conclusion (see chapter 3). The end notes will also hint towards Afropolitan futures by completing the thesis with referring to Gyasi's proposition of an Afropolitan Atlantic.

2 Afropolitan space invading between neoliberalization and Africanization

2.1 Re-imagining cityscapes: The Afropolitan city in Teju Cole's *Every Day is for the Thief* (2007)

Towards the end of his travels to Lagos, Cole's nameless narrator in *Every Day is for the Thief* finds himself in a Mr. Bigg's, a franchise restaurant which once 'started off as a place for the rich to take their kids' (147), but whose dishes are 'now priced to cater to the middle class' (147). He appreciates it as a 'triumph of free enterprise, a small example of something that is being done right in the new Nigeria' (148), concluding his spatial imaginaries of 21st century Lagos as a neoliberalized node of global capitalism in a newly arranged geography of global cities (cf. Sassen, *Global City*), which not only includes locations such as New York or London (cf. *Every Day* 144) but also Lagos – a 'normal place, or a place that aspires to normalcy' (144). A couple of days later, however, upon his return to his apartment in New York, he re-imagines the same city as a space infused with notions of Yoruba urbanism organized in communal guilds. An Africanized memory of Lagos returns to him, a moment in his journey that 'stands out of time' (158) and not only contests neoliberalized spatialities but, moreover, depicts a post-neoliberal urban hub that feels 'like a center' (159). This bi-directional flow of both neoliberalized and Africanized cityscapes demonstrates how Cole conceptualizes the Afropolitan city as a space of experimentation, a 'strategic arena' (Holston and Appadurai 188) enabling him to explore the contingencies of Afropolitanism.

With *Every Day is for the Thief*, Cole partakes in one of the most essential debates triggered by *Bye-Bye Babar*. Selasi links the Africans of the world very closely to Euro-American and African capitals and, although a multitude of potential spatial references is laid emphasis on and relating to a single geographical entity is considered anathema, argues that Afropolitans feel most comfortable within the presence of 'the G8 city or two (or three) that [they] know like the backs of [their] hands' ("Bye-Bye"). Afropolitanism having become a predominantly metropolitan concept (cf. Ede, "Politics"; Musila) is, in consequence, evident in most Afropolitan novels, which are mostly set in African spots such as Lagos, Mogadiscio, Accra, and Douala or Euro-America hubs including London, Washington D.C., or New York City. Placing the space invaders into a mainly urban context corresponds with a lately re-awakened scholarly interest in urban spaces and a critical analytical stance towards the modern metropolis. Partially triggered by Lefebvre's discussions of the spatial (dis)enfranchisement of urban inhabitants (*Writings*) in the late 1960s, especially the neoliberalization of the global capitalist system since the 1970s (cf. Brenner and Theodore vi; Prashad, *Neoliberalism* 47) has forged the academic emphasis on global cities conceived of as

nodes of the global economy (cf. Castells, *Rise* 434) and thus central 'points for the coordination of processes of production, innovation, and accumulation on a world scale' (Mbembe and Nuttall, "Introduction" 3). The dominance of the neoliberalized city as a means of exerting global control has also become a subject in the works of urbanists such as Harvey, who in the last three decades have shaped a closer and more critical understanding of urban spaces. Selasi's take, when speaking of a new demographic that is not only dispersed across Brixton or Berlin but may also relate to Durban or Dakar when redefining what it means to be African (cf. "Bye-Bye"), however, simultaneously re-allocates the center of attention to explorations of African cities. Mbembe, Nuttall, and Simone among others have in this regard intensively investigated African urban spaces as sites of creative production whose very own contestations of neoliberalization may inform northern urban studies, facilitating reciprocities and disabling intellectual binaries between the global North and South (cf. Prashad, *Neoliberalism*). Since urbanization is currently reshaping the African landscape in particular, transforming the Gulf of Guinea with Lagos and its estimated 23 million inhabitants, for instance, into a network of 300 hubs which will 'have a population comparable to the U.S. East Coast, with five cities of over one million [and] a total of more than 60 million inhabitants along a strip of land 600 kilometers long, running east to west between Benin City and Accra' (M. Davis 5-6), the urbanization of the Global South may in fact contribute most significantly to late urban sociology. The United Nations estimates that in 2030 around 5 billion people, i.e. 60% of the world population, might be living in urban areas, the population in the regions of the global South rounding up to 4 billion (cf. Giddens and Sutton, *Sociology* 219). Answers to pressing challenges such as (im)mobility, community, ethics, citizenship, and the circulation of labor and capital might thus be found in these urban spatialities located between neoliberalization and Africanization – and best be explored, (con)tested and evaluated in literature on the Afropolitan city.

Cole, when tackling these issues, does not reduce his literary creation to discussions encircling the question of how a city like Lagos runs the risk of being imagined as a 'laborator[y] for a variety of neoliberal policy experiments' (Brenner and Theodore 21). Neither does he see Lagos as 'the epitome of hyper modernity' (West-Pavlov, "Shadows" 5) followed by Euro-America 'catching up with [it]' ("Shadows" 5). He does instead acknowledge that the Nigerian metropolis may find itself at the forefront of neoliberalization while simultaneously being interpreted as a city of potentialities (Simone, "Potentialities") and overlapping realities (Mbembe and Nuttall, "Writing"). Both strands do not only compete with, but also inform each other, providing the space invader with an urban site to engage in discourse. The novel is therefore considered an 'experiment' (Cole qtd. in Bollen), inspecting spaces that can transcend Afropolitan cityscapes and forge solutions to current

challenges: 'What is *Every Day Is for the Thief* about? Essentially about one person moving through a space. That's really what it's about. Observing, trying to find a home for himself inside this complication. . . . It happens to be set in a complicated Lagos. But it's about a little soul trying to find a place to rest' (qtd. in Bollen). Cole enters the debate as an intellectual whose take on urban geographies has more recently been covered excessively by the international media and by international scholars (e.g. Mangold; Stephan; Dotzauer; Ede, "Politics"; Eze, "We"; Krishnan, "Postcoloniality"; Gehrman, "Cosmopolitanism"). Only two years after Selasi wrote her essay on Afropolitanism, *Every Day is for the Thief* was published by Cassava. *Open City's* accolades then reignited a second printing by Faber & Faber in 2014. It consequently marks the beginnings of the literary explorations of Afropolitanism's contingencies and must be recognized as one of the pioneer works within the now extensive body of Afropolitan literature.

The analysis examines the novel in three sections. The first part investigates how urban spatialities become neoliberalized imaginaries, shaped by global capitalism. The second part explores how the narrator divests himself from his neoliberal imaginaries and Africanizes urban spaces through a re-imagination of Lagos. The last part, ultimately, shows how this bi-directional flow of imaginaries creates a productive space of discourse that entangles the space invader in stable ambivalences, providing a space in which the invader can negotiate what it means to be an Afropolitan.

2.1.1 Neoliberal imaginaries

Towards the neoliberal imaginary

From the very beginning Cole approaches the city from a strategic position that enables him to individualize form and content and sculpt neoliberal imaginaries into a textual form through placing the freedom of the individual (cf. Harvey, *History 2*) above the needs of the community. He installs a nameless narrator who works at a hospital in New York City and as a dual citizen is equipped with both a Nigerian and a US-American passport (cf. *Every Day* 3). After fifteen years spent in the US, the narrator returns to Nigeria (cf. 10). Cityscapes are predominantly imagined through an individualized perspective that the literary genres employed also cater to. Fragments of *Every Day is for the Thief* were published as blog entries before publication, to some extent resembling an assemblage of travel diary entries (cf. Bollen). Only later were they readjusted into the narrative form of a novel. It is unclear whether Cole is the person giving an account of his travels to Lagos or whether the narrator is fictitious – as revealed by the inside front cover laying claims that the 'narrator makes the difficult journey back to his family house and its memories' (*Every Day*). In an

interview Cole classified *Every Day is for the Thief* as a non-fiction book (Mangold). A year earlier, however, he argued that he completed a series of blog posts and in the process of writing, the story 'became a little distanced from [his] own narrative' (qtd. in Bollen), which is why the characters were 'clearly fictional' (qtd. in Bollen). This intended blurring puts the author into a position from which he can pass off fiction as supposed truth and monopolize the assumed realities of urban spaces in the form of the novel, which is the shape of literature that reflects an individualist stance most sufficiently (cf. Watt 13; Mancing). The narrator, from the first page on, unfolds the course of the story by himself, wherefore it only owes truth to his individual experience that he regards as unique (cf. Watt 13). This individualized form corresponds with the setting right away because form and content are interrelated (cf. Eagleton, *Marxism* 19-34). Beginning in media res with 'I', the narrator wakes up alone in his apartment in New York City and makes his way towards the Nigerian consulate (*Every Day* 3), where he needs to get his passport issued before flying to Nigeria. Strolling through the metropolis as an isolated individual, he describes New York through his individualized lens by creating environmental images: 'Then I enter the subway and make my way over to Second Avenue and, without much trouble, find the consulate' (3). Lynch notes that denizens construct mental city maps in support of orientation and emotional security and that in this process of way-finding, 'the strategic link is the environmental image, the generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world' (4). These environmental images, to some extent, resemble Lefebvre's 'representations of space' (*Production* 33), which are mental constructions of space that could also be referred to as mental space syntax (cf. Hillier; Purcell 102; Elden 110-111). Since these constructions are the result of a bi-directional process between observer and environment (cf. Lynch 6), the narrator functions as Cole's instrument of investigation while the environment is degraded to a fairly passive object. Although city spaces in form of the environment, Lynch claims, might suggest 'distinctions and relations' (6), the space invader now turns into the observer who 'selects, organizes, and endows with meaning what he sees' (6). As the creation of any environmental image from the beginning is reserved for the narrator, the image 'limits and emphasizes what is seen' (Lynch 6). The invader hence remains the only one able to order space. Stanzel calls this a perspectivist description of space (27-28) because the narrator occupies a specific point in space, and limits what is being described to this particular point of view (cf. Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu 26). *Every Day is for the Thief* thus 'formalises' (Karl 338) the ethics of individual liberty prevalent in neoliberal thought through generating notions of individuality in a textualized form.

In accordance with Pleßke's stance, who investigates models of urban mentalities to be employed for cities worldwide, this perspective then facilitates a process of individualized 'spacing':

'[P]eople spatially arrange aspects for orientation in their habitat according to specific spatial perceptions. *Spacing* . . . describes . . . the relational ordering of things in space, forming specific spatial structures' (63-64). Cole's narrator does not approach urban spatialities from a narratological standpoint enabling him to refer to a variety of perceptions but instead creates a position in space syntax that monopolizes the construction of urban images. *Every Day is for the Thief* does not perceive the city as a *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 77) consisting of community bonds, such as 'traditional close-knit ties, personal and often lifelong relationships between neighbors and friends, and a sense of duty and commitment' (Giddens and Sutton, *Sociology* 206). Cole's spatialities instead, from the very start, enforce the competitiveness between individualistic citizens because they read the city as a *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 77), an aggregate of individuals for whom social bonds, conceived of as 'impersonal, relatively short-lived, transitory and instrumental in character' (Giddens and Sutton, *Sociology* 206), are to be limited to individualistic ambitions. This perspective is not only captured in the narrator's living alone and in his wandering through the city by himself. It is also expressed through Cole's decision as an author to construct environmental images only through one single narrator. Instead of providing, say, a collective with a literary voice when depicting the city, Cole chooses to 'invalidate competing notions of the subject' (N. Armstrong 3) and contributes to the formation of the individual as the only reliable source of urban imaginaries. This materialization of a rational and self-responsible individual has, after all, also been the core of classical liberal thought (cf. Beardsworth 115-117) as well as more recent post-war (neo)liberal schools dominated by economists such as Hayek (cf. Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 6, 86) and Milton Friedman (cf. Peck and Tickell, "Conceptualizing" 28), the Chilean Chicago Boys (cf. Harvey, *History* 8), or the German scientists Röpke, Müller-Armack, and Rüstow (cf. Ptak 20-21). The merely economic mode of reason textualized through the narrator's individualized position is then utilized to engage in what Pleßke names as 'bordering' (63). As soon as the Nigerian consulate is entered the observer begins producing neoliberal imaginaries through integrating supposedly insufficient and corrupt African spaces into his narrative. Resembling the colonial process of structural readjustment, which Said in *Orientalism* describes as a dichotomous 'othering' (54) in spatial terms, he transgresses into 'the land of the barbarians' (*Orientalism* 54) and sketches the consulate as a chaotic and non-functioning space. Each visitor is forced to take a number from a red machine and then in a dingy room packed with people hop around between service windows competing for the employers' scarce time (*Every Day* 3-5). The narrator here is betrayed by a 'brusque young man seated behind the glass' (4) and must compete with a 'stressed-out man in stressed-out clothes' (5), who is afraid of not getting his passport issued in due time and makes a scene when begging audibly with an obnoxious tone for his passport (5). The mass of people that

'rise from their seats and jostle in front of the window, forms in hand' (5) are portrayed as nauseating. The consulate, in a nutshell, is imagined as an environment that represents an insufficient state run by corrupt 'crooks' (6), where the narrator faces a demand for a bribe, which shocks him (7). The image of the colonizing explorer, who discovers and objectifies spaces he encounters (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 29) is transposed to the image of the neoliberalizing agent integrating the insufficient African environment into his neoliberal narrative, which disregards national boundaries and at this very moment becomes cosmopolitan through coercing a transnationally valid economic imperative even spanning African territory (cf. Beardsworth 115). The dichotomous division of urban spatialities into assumedly corrupt/non-corrupt and sufficient/insufficient spaces initiates the process of neoliberal bordering, which erects conceptional boundaries through 'spatial scales (e.g. body, community, city, nation) . . . spatial dichotomies (e.g. city/country, center/periphery, public/private), and . . . spatial metaphors (e.g. of segregation, marginality, distance)' (Pleßke 63-64). Getting his passport issued on Nigerian soil in New York City is thus the overture to the invader's travels into spaces beyond ontological borders that are, supposedly, in need of neoliberalization. It also provides the reader with an idea of the Afropolitan that Cole's novel encircles at this stage. The narrator is not a citizen of the world who sets out for Lagos to investigate the different notions of being in the world proposed by Appiah or Mbembe but a member of the TCC who, 'fully doctored' (Sartre, "Preface" xliii), as such represents a global architecture of neoliberal capitalism and approaches the global city as a neoliberal 'synthesis of city and capital' (Tönnies 228).

(In)formal spaces

The arrival at Lagos Airport as a spatial entry gate (cf. Sheller and Urry 2) thus marks the beginning of the neoliberal voyage into the African megalopolis. The entrance is depicted as a transit into a space of 'inefficiency' (*Every Day* 10) the narrator is ashamed of: 'This is an international airport. Things should be better run. Is this the impression visitors should have of a nation?' (11). When entering the country he is expected to pay bribes (cf. 11). Other Afropolitan novels create similar images. Ike in *Foreign Gods Inc.* (Ndibe 74), Deola in *A Bit of Difference* (Atta 70), and Neni in *Behold the Dreamers* (Mbue 380) are also expected to pay money to settle customs or hand out gifts to officers before arranging their further itineraries in crowded and chaotic arrivals halls. African airports, be they in Lagos or Douala, are thus often imagined as entry gates introducing the invaders to spaces of 'lacks and absences, failings and problems' (Ferguson 2), which ought to be put under control. This is evident as the narrator refuses to pay bribes and therefore considers himself the 'prodigal son' (*Every Day* 11) returning to neglected geographies

that are to be integrated into the global economy. As soon as the narrator leaves the airport, however, he is harassed by policemen stopping commercial vehicles to demand more bribes (15) and engages in discussing the informal economy of Lagos, which, from this moment on, becomes the central target of literary investigation. Numerous city spaces are inspected as frameworks running in parallels to supposedly formal socio-economic circulation, making up an essential alternative to failed institutions that are supposed to organize the formal economy. Olopade stresses that in many sub-Saharan hubs the informal economy, which on average rounds up to more than half of all economic activity, for many citizens is in fact the only mode of circulation accessible for anyone (*Bright Continent* 29). She assumes that in Lagos up to 94 percent of the businesses operate 'outside the law' (29). The payment in bribes must therefore be interpreted both a creation of the dynamics of 'forced neoliberalism' (Ekanade 23-24) in Nigeria and an alternative to institutionalized neoliberal exploitation that came with neoliberal policy implementation in African states (cf. Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 53; Peet). Simone, in particular, has outlined how in many African cities fair amounts of capital are often 'deployed to find alternative ways and circuits' (*For the City* 25) because of economic constraints imposed by neoliberal failures: 'An informal sector is thus partially elaborated because of the excess and inappropriateness of regulations that persist in the absence of systematic and realistic ways of assessing domestic economies' (*For the City* 26). After all, the roll-back/roll-out neoliberalism with its neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance and regulations (Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 384) has especially in Nigeria since the 1980s stimulated unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion (Ekanade 2; Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 8), and generated a 'Darwinian jungle in which everything exists in a perpetual state of competition in pursuit of self-interest' (Murobe 671).

The narrator, however, condemns the informal economy of Lagos upon seeing it in action. An internet cafe, for instance, is categorized as a legally inadmissible space dominated by 419 scammers, who steal from the global North and destroy Nigeria's international reputation: 'Yahoo yahoo are on the front lines of their own shadow war, mangling what little good name their country still has' (*Every Day* 27). This view is also picked up by Deola in *A Bit of Difference*: 'Nigeria, corruption, 4-1-9, Internet crime. It's embarrassing' (Atta 130). 419 scammers, however, could also be perceived as creatives encompassing the lack of income and access to socioeconomic spaces within formal frameworks because the con, which according to Packer originated in Lagos, 'represents the perversion of talent and initiative in a society where normal paths of opportunity are closed to all but the well connected' ("Megacity"). Packer here echoes Simone's standpoint that particularly in spaces of the Global South privileges and class status often dictate access to formal employment (*For the City* 26), which is why the informal sector must act 'as a repository' (26) for

those without opportunity to show their skills. Olopade, consequently, argues that the Yahoo Boys's con derives from a 'sense of empty formal alternatives' (*Bright Continent* 18) and that scamming simply is 'one way of exiting an institutional framework that has failed to provide jobs' (18). She indicates that scammers apply modern strategies of survival and claims that they are 'the smartest kids in the room: the best with English, critical thinking and computers' (19), who 'demonstrate a tenacity that is endemic to successful entrepreneurs' (19). Jordan-Smith even detects a political critique in the scam letters, explaining that after General Ibrahim Babangida introduced corruption as a somewhat formalized and legit way of public governing, the military governments in power in the 1980s and 1990s were 'brazenly corrupt' (617), 'creat[ing] a climate where ordinary citizens believed that they would have to resort to any means available to achieve their own economic aspirations' (617). Scam writing thus turned into a space of informal corruption complementing formal corruption carried out by state actors. While both were in inter-dependent relationship, money circulation was subdivided into formal (supposedly legal) spaces of corruption associated with state actors and informal (supposedly illegal) spaces of corruption associated with non-state actors. The borderline between both spaces of corruption was the law, monopolized by the state. The informal space of scam writing, however, enabled young upcoming individuals to succeed financially:

[T]he oil boom of the 1970s resulted in vastly increased access to education for Nigeria's huge population, meaning that by the 1980s the country had larger numbers of young people with higher expectations for their futures than at any time in the past. By the late 1980s, approximately half of Nigeria's then nearly 100 million people were less than 15 years old. The subsequent economic crash and the return of the military created a situation where this increasingly educated and ambitious young population was frustrated in its attempts to secure gainful employment or other legitimate economic opportunities. (617)

E-mail scamming hence composes an economic space meeting the demands of an influx of young upcoming professionals looking for job opportunities. It contributes to new modes of circulation that are addressed by Mbembe and Nuttall and are categorized as genuinely African since, they stress, 'historically, the continent has been and still is a space of flows, of flux, of translocation, with multiple nexuses of entry and exit points' ("Writing" 351) and thus a locus 'that circulates, that is constantly in motion' (351-352). The narrator, however, categorizes the cafe as a space of 'swindlers' (*Every Day* 27) and then semanticizes it as a spatial metaphor symbolizing the assumed dysfunctionality of Nigeria: 'I realize Lagos is a city of Scheherazades' (27). Instead of using urban spaces such as the cafe to create imaginaries that allow for multiple socio-economic realities, the narrator neoliberalizes the formalized modes through a strict binary between supposedly legitimate formal economies limited to the corporate form and informal swindler economies not limited to the corporate form. Supposedly informal and thus illegitimate localities are to be excluded from

penetrating the global.

Similar devices of applying power through bordering (cf. Pleßke 64) are applied when the narrator denounces a shop that only copies CDs without observing laws of ownership. He categorizes the space within a neoliberal framework reproducing modes of capitalistic exploitation: 'A legitimate business, with a public sign, on one of the busier commercial streets in town, catering to a sophisticated clientele, and all the while living on piracy. Do they have any idea that this is a problem? Or is it enough to settle for sophistication without troubling oneself about the laws that defend creativity?' (*Every Day* 130). The law, from a Marxist point of view understood as a legitimizer of capitalist social relations (cf. Comack 42), and in neoliberal policy frameworks manifested in the TRIPS-related intellectual property establishment protecting the intellectual monopolies of the global North (cf. Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 108), is used to structure urban spatialities: '[T]he law legitimizes the dominance of one class over the other' (Comack 42). The narrator does not investigate the legal frame constituted by the locality he is moving within but refers to universal Euro-American legal perceptions and thus articulates a 'value-laden position that has the effect of legitimating a system of unequal social relations' (Comack 43). The space invader becomes an agent condemning the informal sharing of intellectual property. The CD shop is regarded as illegitimate, representing pirates on the margin stealing intellectual property from the global North.

Piracy

The image of piracy must be further examined, as it questions the international property order developed under neoliberalism (cf. Prashad, *Neoliberalism* 5), and interrogates neoliberal distinctions of legitimate and illegitimate modes of circulation within urban spatialities. Simone perceives piracy as an act of spatial transgression within urban contexts, which has been intensified in globalized cities: 'If piracy is considered the act of taking things out of their normal or legitimate frameworks of circulation and use, then intensifying global urbanization, which has partly fractured previously recognized territorial . . . has deepened . . . the . . . possibilities of piracy' ("Pirate Town" 357). This approach is shared by Schwarz and Eckstein, who investigate cultural production in the Global South and perceive piracy as a means of entering spaces assumedly reserved for the Global North, stressing that pirates are able 'not only to consume, but crucially also to produce, share and reproduce [with]in an infrastructure that is more often than not informal' (2). The pirate accordingly can be seen as a self-empowered transgressor accessing interstitial spaces and blurring neoliberal boundaries, producing African modes of power and autonomy increasingly deriving from a capacity to traverse boundaries, erasing distinctions between 'private and public . . . exclusion and inclusion,

remunerated and compelled labour' (Simone, "Pirate Town" 357). The modern means of piracy are thus given contour in other Afropolitan novels as well. Farah in *Crossbones*, for instance, in full length explains why unemployed fishermen invade neoliberalized Somali waters and try to access foreign vessels stealing Somalia's marine resources, questioning neoliberal property orders supported by the United Nations and the international community (73, 187). Instead of utilizing this supposedly progressive spatial concept, and embracing the CD shop owner as a transgressor, Cole's narrator applies neoliberal modalities and leaves the CD shop living on piracy. He rather visits the *Jazzhole* store in Ikoyi, which, on the contrary, is marked as a space informed by global influences and celebrated as the first cosmopolitan setting he encounters:

The presentation is outstanding, as well done as many a Western bookshop: there is a broad selection of jazz, Pan-African, and other international music near the capacious entrance, and rows and rows of books for the general reader toward the back. The shop has a cool and quiet interior. Here, I think to myself, is finally that moving spot of sun I have sought. I see music by Ali Farka Touré, by Salif Keita. There are books by Philip Roth, Penelope Fitzgerald, and, as I had hoped, Michael Ondaatje And there is really only one word for what I feel about these new contributions to the Lagosian scene: gratitude. They are emerging, these creatives, in spite of everything; and they are essential because they are the signs of hope in a place like that, like all other places on the limited earth, needs hope. (*Every Day* 130-131)

Piracy, it seems, is forbidden in this cosmopolitan setting. Neither are possibilities of transgressive spaces referred to nor is the supposedly illegal CD shop perceived as a creative space of circulation. Instead the narrator at this stage invades spaces only to fully integrate them into a neoliberalized landscape. Familiar modes of exploitation are (re)produced when imagining *Jazzhole* as a space that not only ostensibly formalizes and legalizes creativity but also reaffirms exclusionary boundaries:

The prices are high; not higher than they would be in an American or British shop, but certainly beyond the reach of most Nigerians. And yet, knowing that there is such a place, in the absence of good libraries or other vendors, makes all the difference to those who must have such sustenance. And better at these high prices than not at all. But the illegitimate business model of the other jazz shop is a threat to this essential work. (130-131)

Cosmopolitan influences apparently are reserved for the class of the financially liquid, whereas the majority of Nigerians should not have access to the expensive world music. The privileged narrator understands himself as a global agent who has internalized notions of a (neo)liberal cosmopolitanism and defines the African city by referring to economic constraints. Instead of showing solidarity with Lagosians who do not even have good libraries and therefore depend on piracy as a means of transgressing, he condemns illegitimate circulation as a threat to legitimate and thus essential circulation, and integrates the city into a revolutionized global geography, creating environmental images of elite consumption (cf. Brenner and Theodore 24), which he reads as signals of normalcy and hope (cf. *Every Day* 131, 144).

Progressive African approaches to urban spaces are at this point very strongly delegitimized. Olopade, for instance, devotes a full chapter to what she calls kanju, 'the specific creativity born from African difficulty' (*Bright Continent* 20). She assumes that hardships such as failing

electricity, congested roads, or missing social safety nets can make life difficult, but that they also 'produce an extraordinary capacity for making do' (20). Kanju accordingly leads to African understandings of the economy: '[I]nformal norms distinguish African economies – and are bedrock components of kanju. While industrial history and *modernization* theory tend to glorify organization, institutionalism, taxation, legibility and the rejection of informality, many millions of Africans live every day as a rebuke to this logic' (29). This approach is also present in Mbembe's and Nuttall's remarks on the 'Afropolis', in which they disclose how African city spaces may lay out the pathways into futures in which African cities with their non-Euro-American modes of production and circulation set up solutions to modern problems such as the influx of migrants to be absorbed or the redundant formal sector employees. The Afropolis, they argue, generates 'new institutions and forms of social organization, practices of everyday life that encompass systems of employment, housing and urban transport, income earning opportunities, and meaning making – a creativity of practices' ("Introduction" 6). Ferguson, on these grounds, implies that the Afropolis could be perceived as an urban space forging new solutions to economic challenges: 'African traditions of moral discourse on questions of economic process may thus be understood not as backward relics to be overcome, but as intellectual and political resources for the future' (82). Lagosian spatialities could therefore indeed pinpoint new modalities and strategies addressing issues identified as pressing challenges in Euro-American urban sociology. Cole's narrator, however, blocks these proposed pathways as soon as piracy is condemned as an illegitimate mode of creative circulation. Having internalized neoliberal ethics he acts as a space invader who envisions Lagos as a city that still has to realize its international competitiveness and espouse neoliberalism as a global project brought forward by elites, which not only implements neoliberal imaginaries in cities worldwide but also makes it much more difficult to find space for pursuing alternatives.

Re-territorialization

A socio-spatial imaginary relating to this critique is created when the narrator waits for a shipment of donations from the US for a school. Donations as a form of aid are often seen as a threat to local markets, which contribute to the soft imperialism enforced through non-governmental organizations, and are accused of enforcing poverty (e.g. Moyo; M. Davis 75; Ferguson 38), even in Norberg's famous neoliberal pamphlet (105-106). Since the narrator is afraid that the container might be robbed it is opened and its goods are distributed in smaller units at another schoolyard (cf. *Every Day* 102-103). The yard is imagined as a space of economic safety and affiliations with the Global North, a fenced compound enforcing neoliberal structures (cf. King 324; P. Marcuse 363).

The donations are predetermined for a school that wants to distinguish itself from other public schools and share in the influx of private schools in Africa (cf. Olopade, *Bright Continent* 129-134), re-allocating public resources to the entrepreneurial private sector of education: 'My aunt built a school on the outskirts of Lagos in the late eighties. She spends all her money on keeping it supplied with resources so that it can compete with the many other private primary schools in the city' (*Every Day* 102). As soon as area boys then enter the gated compound and through petty theft try to transgress into privatized spaces, the space invader implies how neoliberalism is not only a hegemonic signifier in theory but also in practice. The binary between public and private property is explicitly reaffirmed both in theoretical imaginaries as well as in actions: 'Area boys. Unemployed youth in Lagos neighborhoods, notorious for exacting fines and seizing goods' (107). Multiple sociospatial imaginaries collide at this point. The space invader tries to normalize the logics of entrepreneurialism through 'equating individual freedom with self-interested choices, making individuals responsible for their own well-being' (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, and Maringanti, "Contesting" 2). The area boys, on the contrary, imagine 'alternative visions of justice' ("Contesting" 11). Their aiming for money could be understood as a tax fee compensating the lack of income through an Africanization of space. Metz, for instance, points towards the different moral theories in wealth distribution between citizens of the Global North and Africans:

The requirements of an individual to help others are typically deemed heavier in African morality than in Western. People in the West tend to think that individual rights should largely determine the resources one may possess, for example, one has a right to keep what one deserves for having been productive Giving to others what they have no right to is not thought of as upholding a duty but as being generous. In contrast, a greater percentage of Africans think that one is morally obligated to help others, roughly to the extent that one can and that others need, with rights not figuring into the analysis of how much one ought to transfer wealth, time or labour. (326)

Within the realms of this moral theory, the area boys are in need of help because they are unemployed. The novel here exposes the reader to African thought, articulating 'contestations of neoliberalism [that] incorporate visions of justice [which] enhance the capacity of all citizens to share' (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, and Maringanti, "Contesting" 12). The statement 'You have become wealthy and we must become wealthy too' (*Every Day* 106) unveils the approach that the area boys do not want to take away the narrator's property but ask him to compensate their limited production possibilities. In *Crossbones*, the pirates interviewed articulate a similar position when explaining that they demanded a fine for illegal and unregulated fishing and then shared the proceeds among the fishing community instead of making 'a huge profit' (Farah 210). Upon settling the hotel bill, Ahl, moreover, realizes that the 'price is par for the course for a diaspora Somali visiting home from the "dollar countries."' (270). Farah appears to reflect Simone's analysis of African thought:

If production possibilities are limited in African cities, then existent materials of all kinds are appropriated – sometimes through theft and looting; sometimes through ‘heretical’ uses made of infrastructures . . . and spaces; sometimes through social practices that ensure that available materials pass through many hands. The key is to multiply the uses that can be made of . . . technologies [and] infrastructure . . . (“Pirate Town” 358)

This perception of shared property is also indicated in *Powder Necklace* when Lila's classmates rummage through her personal belongings looking for pens (Brew-Hammond 49) or when the headmistress sends a letter to the students' parents, 'telling them that if they send water to just their daughters, they should be warned that it will be common property' (183). In *On Black Sisters Street*, a taxi driver asks Chisom to give him money because he thinks that she is a wealthy tourist with access to capital (Unigwe 47). Cole's nameless narrator, Lila, Chisom, or Ahl are thus confronted with disenfranchised citizens proclaiming a right for resources necessary to meet the basic needs in the volatile complexity of emerging global cities. After all, even in the Global North the distribution of wealth has for centuries been subject of thorough discussions triggered especially by the Enlightenment period. Durkheim, for instance, explains in detail that property rights do not apply to an identifiable content in a positivist mode but can only be made valid in absolutist and exclusionary practices (200). These absolutist spatial notions relate to Locke's classic liberal conceptions that property must be appropriated through labor (cf. Widerquist 6). However, according to Widerquist even Locke restricts the person's property in quantity because even an appropriator is not allowed to 'waste his or her property or take more than s/he can use [because] . . . if people waste what they take, there might not be enough to go around' (7-8), a central axiom in liberal thought also shared by sociologists such as Durkheim (cf. *Physik* 190). *Every Day is for the Thief* encircles these debates when confronting the question whether donations from the Global North belong to the area boys just as much as they belong to a school. Animated by African contestations of liberal thought the distinction between private and public property is blurred within the small-scale urban space of the schoolyard.

The narrator, at this stage, has a chance to reach out to African morals, approach the local community, and become immersed in the idea of Euro-America catching up with Lagos, sharing with fellow Africans instead of simply following the neoliberal logics of wealth distribution and Euro-American aid. He is also enabled to link the emergence of area boys to the effect of neoliberal policies in Nigeria. Packer, for instance, explains that the dictatorship of Babangida in the mid-eighties and Nigeria's submitting to austerity measures prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund along with a nation-wide privatization of the essential economic sectors entailed the effect to concentrate large amounts of wealth in the hands of a few while leaving the majority of people become even poorer (cf. “Megacity”). His essay describes an

incident witnessed during one of his recent trips to Lagos in which area boys peacefully deducted taxes from a driver:

The incident happened so fast that afterward Omojoro had to explain to me what had been immediately understood by all the participants. The teenagers were area boys, and, since this block was under their control, the money that the old man owed the driver for his tail-light would, according to the city's peculiar logic, go to them instead. What looks like anarchic activity in Lagos is actually governed by a set of informal but ironclad rules. Although the vast majority of people in the city are small-time entrepreneurs, almost no one works for himself. Everyone occupies a place in an economic hierarchy and owes fealty, as well as cash, to the person above him—known as an *oga*, or master—who, in turn, provides help or protection. Every group of workers—even at the stolen-goods market in the Ijora district—has a union that amounts to an extortion racket. (“Megacity”)

This economic sector lays bare a bi-directional flow of imaginaries and elicits how interstitial spaces could emerge in cities like Lagos. Cole, obviously, responds to Holston's and Appadurai's call for more narratives of urban economies needed to 'better identify the various ways in which such cities spawn class fragments, ethnic enclaves, gang territories, and varied maps of work, crime and kinship' (200). Although the urban poor are excluded from neoliberalized space, allegedly anarchic spaces depend on devices of spatial structuring deduced from the formal sector. The *oga* embodies a monopoly of power collecting taxes, area boys are small-time entrepreneurs organized in unions. Lagos, unlike the G8 cities that Selasi refers to, could therefore be perceived as a prodigal space forging new ways of dealing with marginalized and economically disenfranchised migrants: 'The patronage system helps the mega-city absorb the continual influx of newcomers for whom the formal economy has no use' (Packer).

The narrator, however, is not at all content with interstitial economic spatialities because they pose a threat to his neoliberal imaginary. The blurring of boundaries alarms him that binaries are in ceaseless need of re-definition and that new borders between weakened affiliations of the private/public and the formal/informal must be erected and territories made visible. The schoolyard, in this case, delineates how Afropolitan novels as literary creations can make a socio-spatial neoliberalization of territories legible for the reader. Meier, for example, investigates how different cityscapes always compete and underlines that images of places, cities, and social groups have to be (re)produced constantly in everyday actions (23-40). Images, he concludes, are a dynamic and battled construction, which can best be detected in smaller geographical units (cf. 25-26). The schoolyard consequently constitutes a microcosm that the area boys read as a space of economic enfranchisement: 'We'll rip open these boxes and take our share. We will become rich today' (*Every Day* 108). Jahn at this point differentiates between ambient focalization and strict focalization (“Focalization” 175): Cole has the chance to enfranchise the area boys through an ambient focalization, enabling the readership to understand story events from multiple angles as in communal views and to genuinely experience their economic desperation. As soon as the question

of (dis)enfranchisement comes up and the assumed border between justified and unjustified affiliations is blurred, Cole's narrator follows the opposite direction. Through strict focalization he corrects his mental mapping and constructs the image of a space threatening one's physical existence: 'They are primed to maim or kill as the spirit moves them while, on our side, we have ordinary people who have only the normal instinct for safety' (*Every Day* 108). The imagined insecurity is inscribed upon the body. He is 'unsettled' (109) and feels like 'a tuning fork' (109). Realizing that there 'is nowhere to run to' (109) he 'can no longer bear the violation, the caprice, the air of desperation' (109). The mental imagining of the city space here enables the reader not only to track the narrator's movements through space but also 'to experience and understand [his] focalized narration' (Gavins 300) through the embodiment of uncertainties. The readership is relocated to Cole's fictional point of view and supposed to enter into a 'state of immersion' (Jahn, "Focalization" 175), physically feeling the violation of neoliberalized urban spaces as soon as African moral obligations are added to the narrative. This also shifts the center of attention to notions of violence.

Violence

The representations of area boys expose the reader to different modes of violence applied to affirm (neo)colonial binaries and infuse them into neoliberalized cityscapes. When confronted with the area boys, the narrator describes himself as a peaceful and civilized individual, to whom the thought of physical violence seems 'unfamiliar' (*Every Day* 109). Fantasizing about how to respond to being attacked he feels de-centered: 'If they attack, I say to myself, I will crush their throats. I think of myself as a pacifist, but what I want now is to draw blood, to injure Crazed by the situation and by the need for an end to it, I no longer know myself' (109). Physical violence is hence marked as a space of taboo. The area boys, on the other hand, accept physical violence as an appropriate means of achieving their aims and enter taboo spaces willingly: 'We might even take the car. It's a nice car! Or if we don't take it, we can smash the windscreen' (108). Post-colonial discourse has already identified different forms of violence representing the nexus between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizers used physical and psychic violence when enslaving the colonized, and applied linguistic violence when invoking an ideological violence in the hierarchy amongst binary oppositions (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 5, 19, 176). Common among violent devices was the animalization of Africans to install a fixed binary between the the assumedly uncivilized savage and the assumedly civilized colonizer:

[T]he African was assigned a particularly base position: he marked the point at which humanity gave way to animality. In treating him as the very embodiment of savagery . . . the travel and adventure literature gave ostensibly, precise descriptions of both his bodily form and his "manners and customs." In such popular accounts, in other words, African "nature" was grounded in the colour, shape, and substance of the black physique. (Comaroff and Comaroff, "Africa Observed" 35)

This mode of violence has not only been implanted into current representations of Africa(ns) in neo-colonial discourses within post-colonialism (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 176; Mbembe, *Postcolony* 1-2; Oyelakin 159). It has, above all, been transposed to neoliberal imaginaries in *Every Day is for the Thief*. The unemployed and savage have-nots are treated as animals to be kept at a distance. On the one hand, they resemble a plague of rats: 'The city is full of them, and no laws of the land or of human decency apply to them. It is also well know that, at intervals, the police murder numbers of them and deposit their bodies in the lagoon' (*Every Day* 107). On the other hand, they behave like predators: 'They move closer. Their eyes are blood-shot, their chests stuck out' (108). There is, in other words, a lineage of applied violence brought forward and stabilized by histories of (neo)colonialism and neoliberalism ultimately produced by Afropolitan fiction. Afropolitans hence run the risk of using violence to claim and appropriate city spaces to which they 'declare they belong' (Holston and Appadurai 202), thereby violating spaces 'which others claim' (202), particularly in African cities. Mbembe and Nuttall, for instance, stress how 'the most brutalizing forms' ("Writing" 363) of violence were applied to create a 'cosmopolitan flavour' (363) in South African cities. When continuing this lineage, Cole's narrator also monopolizes modes of violence. Creating the taboo space that he is capable of entering entails the area boys' disenfranchisement to represent themselves in any violent manner. Former (neo)colonial boundaries are (re)imagined in a modern neoliberalized geography of violence when portraying the area boys as animals to inscribe their inferiority on their bodies: 'They simply trace a semicircle around us, the perimeter of which they walk back and fourth. Something in their movement brings to mind hyenas keeping their distance from a carcass' (*Every Day* 109). I assume that this lineage of violence could also relate to the Afropolitan writer's position, who writes about the African city when positioned in Euro-America while marginalizing African voices within discourse.

Similar mechanisms come into play in depictions of a Lagos market. The market is first considered a quintessential space of social interaction, an 'essence of the city' (57) one invades 'to participate in the world' (57). At the same time, it is a space that subjects approach 'not merely to buy or sell, but because it is a duty' (57). Not yet integrated into the logics of global capitalism, the narrator hence cannot read its semiotics. He fails when trying to approach the market workers linguistically. As he speaks Yoruba the man he has been negotiating the price for carved masks with begins to laugh nervously, which irritates him (57-58). Physically the narrator remains an outsider as well, being called 'oyinbo' (58), which can best be understood through Fanon's complaint that '[t]he more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush' (*Black* 2) and '[t]he more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become' (2-3). Cole's narrator reads this exclusion and the market workers'

questioning his African entanglements as a lack of control and thus as a threat to neoliberal hegemony. The market workers are not only depicted as animals waiting for prey but also as lazy employees not yet having been subjected to neoliberal governmentality structuring urban spaces (cf. Keil 387): 'Young men sit in the interiors of the small stalls on raffia mats or on low stools, their limbs unfurled. They are passing time, waiting for the next thing to happen' (*Every Day* 58). According to Simone these periods of waiting could be understood as a spatial metaphor signifying the inability of local residents to know precisely what they are dealing with ("Potentialities" 7) when it comes to the limits of urban experimentation, as in *Every Day for the Thief* they find themselves in a market located in the vortex of neoliberalizing forces and their social contestations. The narrator, in his endeavor to further neoliberalize cityscapes, delegitimizes the market as a social site of potentialities and only depicts 'bodies designed for activity far more vigorous than this' (*Every Day* 58). Not only is the market read as a space of missing entrepreneurialism. It is, furthermore, re-conceptualized as a space of violence always alive with 'danger' (57), resembling Farah's depiction of Mogadiscio's Bakhaaraha market, where 'danger is a neighbor' (*Crossbones* 155). As a market thief is detected, a justice mob organizes, which lynches the young boy (*Every Day* 59-61). This form of vigilantism is decisively condemned. The violence applied by the market workers is described as 'intimate, interspersed with curses' (60), their behavior as inhuman when the 'boy's clothes are torn off' (60) and 'he is knocked down repeatedly' (60). When trying to control this non-neoliberalized space and presenting the market workers as inferior and lazy predators, the narrator distances himself from the market as a space of barbarianism opposed to a civilized city: 'The market has seen everything. It must eat. It does not break its habits' (62). Cole's space invader does, in fact, acknowledge that 'the outdoor market is reclaiming for itself what had been designed to be a mall' (59) and indicates that he has encountered sociospatial imaginaries contesting the serial production of enterprise zones in a globalized neoliberal infrastructure. However, instead of further investigating into the market's potentialities and defining African points of entanglement, which may supplement urban spatialities of the global cities, he disposes of remaining traces of Africanness, trying to prove the inferiority of fellow Africans when it comes to the internalization of neoliberal thought.

The creation of violence, after all, can also be regarded as a product of neoliberal city politics worldwide. In southern countries slums are criminalized and confronted with violence because they might contest urban bourgeoisification and symbolize spaces that are not visible and thus cannot be controlled by the authorities (cf. Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 276; M. Davis 108, 111). In northern cities such as London or Paris violent outbursts, though most likely triggered by socio-economic deprivation (cf. Giddens and Sutton, *Sociology* 22; Saunders 237), are associated with 'nothing but

gangs, hooligans, thieves, brigand – in short, *dangerous classes*' (Badiou 16). In recent decades branded as dirt to be 'kärchered' (Sarkozy qtd. in Pulham) or 'criminality pure and simple [that] has to be . . . defeated' (Cameron qtd. in Badiou 17), the socially deprived are reduced to inhuman detritus to be disposed of violently. Lagos, like London or Paris, is thus spun into a web of global cities producing 'excess' (Badiou 72) people which are to be controlled through different modes of violence. In the 19th century already Marx and Engels explained how the European bourgeoisie created large cities and increased the urban population (cf. 477) in order to enlarge the labor force (cf. Harvey, *Companion* 145, 284). These surplus populations now emerge in neoliberalized megacities such as Lagos or Mogadiscio, as best encapsulated by Alek in *On Black Sisters' Street*, who complains that Lagos 'was the most crowded city on earth' (200), which is so congested 'that it was impossible to breathe' (200) because there were '[t]oo many people' (214) and an 'excess of everything' (214), or by Jeebleh and Malik in *Crossbones*, who in Mogadiscio feel surrounded by a 'boisterous, expectant crowd, taxi drivers waiting for fares, unemployed men offering to carry their shoulder bags, beggars begging' (16). These 'excess' people, Mbembe concludes, are considered redundant:

They are a class of 'superfluous beings' that the state (where it exists), and the market itself, don't know what to do with. They are people who can neither be sold into slavery as in the early days of modern capitalism, nor reduced to forced labour as in the era of colonialism and under apartheid. From the point of view of capitalism, as it functions in these regions of the world, they are completely useless – a mass of human meat delivered up to violence. ("Fifty Years")

When controlling these agglomerated populations neoliberalism and violence are thus entwined (cf. Springer 10; Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 231, 235) in a double strategy, which is detectable in *Every Day is for the Thief* when the narrator further unfolds the story of the boy who had stolen from the market and was lynched. The narrator admits that the boy is young and has been starving his whole life (cf. 60) but applies a violent hierarchy when reducing him to an 'excess' person in a criminalized space: 'And what if he was only eleven? A thief is a thief; his master will find another boy, another one without a name' (61-62). When telling the story of violent outbursts that he eventually never witnessed, he remains cognitively distant: 'I know the rest, even before I'm told: I've seen it before. At least, I've seen it in its constituent parts, if never all at once' (59). When describing in greatest detail and horror, how an old car tire is sourced, flung around the boy, and the thief is finally set on fire (60-61), he is oblivious to the causes of violence considered a legitimate means. Instead he simply enters a danfo and leaves the scene (62).

Cole's novel, at this stage, seems to cater to a readership and even to a scholarly body located in the Global North. This was, for instance, evident as Hartwig, a popular German professor and critic of literature, in a TV show hailed Cole as a gifted art historian describing the city concisely as if he

were completing a painting (cf. "Literaturgespräch"). Her comments emphasize that violent outbursts are taken as a fact of Lagosian everyday realities. In fact, the narrator describes the market workers as using violence deliberately. The boy is 'kicked, beaten with what never looks like less than a personal aggravation by other men whom he has never met' (*Every Day* 60). A 'wiry man steps forward and slaps him hard' (60). The violence is merely interpreted as a seemingly legitimate way of self-administered justice since from 'the distance, two traffic officers' (61) are watching everything, and, the narrator assumes, 'in a few days, it will be as though nothing happened' (61). The depictions of the market thus give evidence that a deeper understanding of Africanness may partially be missing in Afropolitan narratives and that the effects of neoliberalization are kept under disguise. After all, the stimulation of structural violence through neoliberal policies has been addressed by a fair number of scholars. Prashad, for instance, explains how the International Money Fund riots that broke out in different African cities in the 1970s were not only directed at International Monetary Fund-related policies, but also criticized the urban planning policies of the domestic elites (*Poorer Nations* 124-125). Uvin (610-615) and Tadjó (22, 33) note how the sudden outbursts of massive violence in Rwanda were fueled by a combination of neoliberalized development aid policies and structural violence, although the conflict has mistakenly been portrayed as a predominant clash of ethnic groups. Uganda (cf. Golooba-Mutebi), Côte d'Ivoire (cf. Banégas, Toh, and Adingra), or Sudan (cf. Marchal and Ahmed; Gertel, Calkins, and Rottenburg; Schönwälder) are also among the African nations where conflict was partially stirred up by a 'genocidal neoliberalism' (Pramono 120). These examples contribute to a more thorough understanding of the narrator's position. The space invader neoliberalizes city spaces by making violence a fact to be condemned by a Euro-American readership, yet purposefully keeps neoliberalism's share in violent outbursts beyond the visible. His (non-)existent investigations into violence misinform the readers about neoliberal economics creating excess people, social inequalities, and violence. The space invader has at this point also bordered spatialities into what the readership is capable of seeing and what it is not capable of seeing, which will further be enquired into.

(In)visibility

There are only hunches when it comes to Euro-American influences on the violent outbursts in *Every Day is for the Thief*. They are more openly exhibited when the boy is accused of stealing a baby for internet scammers: 'It's not a bag, it turns out; it's a baby he's accused of stealing. Everyone knows that you can use a stolen baby to make money, to literally manufacture cash, in alliance with unseen occult powers' (60). Cole refers to occult powers, whose moral implications can be found in

Ghana and Nigeria, which is evident in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* as well when Mama Eko tells Ama about busloads of little children ferried to Benin City for moneymaking rituals (164). Occult forces according to Meyer 'thrive on the notion of an illicit exchange of human life for money' (188) and problematize the thirst for money. Since Nollywood films have promoted the belief that personal success must be achieved at the well-being of ordinary people (Meyer 202), occults have lately been associated with internet fraudsters, especially with Ghanaian Sakawa adepts, who are often accused of partaking in cannibalism, their victims' spirits then expected to enter their computers where they force victims to release their money (Littlewood and Lynch 5). Occult in forms of Sakawa as a mode of producing wealth at the expense of others thus embodies a connection between internet fraud, social deprivation, and Euro-American modes of competitive capitalism. Alice Armstrong points out that Sakawa not only embodies a means of surviving for young people but also ends in a capitalistic habitus (3). Although in Ghana these illegal occult practices have already had a devastating aftermath for communities, 419 scammers in Nigeria engage in similar practices with identical effects (cf. A. Armstrong). The narrator in *Every Day is for the Thief*, however, does not refer to the socio-economic implications when linking the boy stealing from the market to these unseen occult powers. Cole announces what is at stake but then hesitates to further investigate into the handling of occult activities within the market space, arguing that in 'a few days it will be as though nothing happened' (61): 'A thief is a thief' (61). Instead of revealing how European and African systems of thought merge, African entanglements are being withheld and kept beyond the visible violence.

In particular Simone in this regard has outlined how African cities like Lagos are set between the visible and the invisible. He interprets the invisible as a political force within the community and implies that a murky yet mobile assemblage of interests and activities through the invisible may instantly form into a well-organized and civic association (*For the City* 63). The invisible, hence, appears to qualify as an element of sustenance in a somewhat volatile civil structure. Based on these assumptions, the lynching can be understood as an act of an invisible presence correcting wrongdoings motivated by capitalistic greed within the market space. Farah, in *Crossbones* (245), and Unigwe, in *On Black Sisters' Street* (164), after all, describe similar justice mobs stopping thieves. Before the theft is detected Cole depicts the market as a space where the workers stay put to see what new persons arrive (cf. *For the City* 65). Literature, urgently, enables the reader to go beyond the visible because the space invader is capable of narrating these sequences as moments of visibility. As soon as the thief snatches the bag the furious mob materializes as a 'living thing' (*Every Day* 59). This invisible force expresses resistance (cf. *For the City* 65) and displays alternative modes of sociospatial structures. In 'communities at the margin' ("Potentialities" 20),

Simone notes, violence may therefore function as a significant 'device that is deployed as an obligation to protect family, kin and neighbors' ("Potentialities" 20). These African systems of order, however, are not inspected any further, as the narrator suddenly seems incapable of narrating them. Simone grasps the invisible as a force producing spaces that may espouse Africanized solutions to compensate neoliberal failures, but the narrator presents the market as a space of danger and nips the influence of African entanglements in the bud. Cole through his space invader could have defined what it means to be an African in the 21st century but his representations are once again limited. The narrator is dissociated from notions of Africanness. The Euro-American readership, most likely unable to read the invisible force, is eased off. The space invader's representations of Africa therefore reveal the 'preoccupations and prejudices of those engaged in the act of representing' (Grinker, Lubkeman, and Steiner 10). Inaccurate representations, as a means of exercising power, are also reflected in the narrator's visit to the National Museum.

Cultural memory

In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson argues that the museum, along with the map and the census, must be considered an institution of power through which the colonizers could imagine their dominion and exercise power over their colonies (163-164). The museum, he claims, helped constitute a 'totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments and so forth' (184) and enabled the colonial state to manifest a 'total surveyability' (185) of the territories. Although Anderson even warns that former colonies after becoming independent run the risk of reproducing 'this form of political museumizing' (183), the space invader perceives the National Museum in Onikan as a fixture of African entanglements informing his being in the world:

I have looked forward to this visit for many years because the National Museum has been a memorial touchstone for me. During my years in the United States and in Europe, many of my musings about Nigerian cultural patrimony returned me mentally to Onikan, to the insubstantial recollection I had of a place I had last visited as a young schoolboy. All people who are far from home have something to hold on to. For me, it was the museum and the meaning I had invested in its collection. (*Every Day* 72).

Even notions of home are reflected as the space invader reminisces about cultural items such as 'Ife bronzes, the fine Benin brass plaques and figure, Nok terra-cottas, the roped vessels of Igbo-Ukwu, the art for which Nigeria is justly admired in academies and museums the world over' (73). The narrator also implies that the museum, above all, could function as a space in which presented histories of the Global North and the Global South merge, creating sociospatial metaphors resembling Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (see chapter 3 for greater detail). Relating to the 'Atlantic slave

trade' (*Every Day* 78) he could have approached Mbembe's reading of the global slave trade as one of the impulses of emerging global capitalism (cf. *Kritik* 14). The '*conditio nigra*' (*Kritik* 18) could at this point be transposed to the condition of 'excess people' worldwide, infusing cosmopolitan discourse with thoughts on global social inequalities best informed by African points of entanglement. The museum could, consequently, function as a vantage point helping create a universal grid, a total surveyability of the trajectories of inequalities caused by neoliberal capitalism (cf. *Kritik* 67, 149). Instead the narrator keeps these sociospatial templates in disguise when entering the museum as a privileged cosmopolitan art connoisseur, who repeatedly stresses his 'access to the metropolis' (Fanon, *Black* 7): 'My recent experience of Nigerian art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York was excellent. The same had been true at the British Museum, as well as the Museum für Volkerkunde in Berlin' (*Every Day* 74). The Euro-American museums the narrator depicts are standardized by serial production (cf. Harvey, "Managerialism") and appreciated as spaces structured by entrepreneurial functionalism: 'A clean environment, careful lighting, and, above all, outstanding documentation that set the works in the proper cultural context' (*Every Day* 74). The National Museum, on the contrary, is emphatically contrasted as a dysfunctional public space not meeting these standards: 'There are no brochures available about the collection. There are no books or prints for sale. There is no gift shop' (72). Although the museum does offer a collection of items associated with Nigeria's past, it is represented as a space of economic and cultural demise – without commercial gift shops and an exhibition allegedly neglected by Nigeria's lacking interest in preserving cultural markers, especially in written form.

Rather than seeing the museum as a nodal point in the explorations of the global *conditio nigra* as a constitutive moment of modernity (cf. Mbembe, *Kritik* 37), the narrator incorporates (neo)colonial devices when further depicting the museum as a space in need of neoliberalization. The oral history of Nigeria is marginalized as soon as he begins to complain that 'no one cares about the artefacts' (*Every Day* 74). (Neo)colonial power structures are embedded through pointing out that '[t]hough there are examples of each kind of art, they are few, are rarely of the best quality, and are meagerly documented' (73-74). Africa is conceived of as a space of absence, a 'continent of societies without history' (Ferguson 2-3), because the written statements considered superior in (neo)colonial histories are missing. The space invader becomes the colonizing traveller:

Since the 16th century, the instructions given to travellers, whether they were discoverers [or] conquistadors . . . have been clear: everything must be represented in writing. Colonial [or] commercial . . . organisations were rather imaginative regarding the written word, giving it many roles: technical (the written word as the instrument of navigation); scientific (the written word as the place of discovery and knowledge); legal (the written word as a proof); administrative (the written word as the organ of distant government); political (the written word as the guarantor of overseas possessions). (Delmas xxvi)

Since the written form of memory has in post-colonial studies, often in reference to Lévi-Strauss's

work (cf. *Tristes*), therefore been identified as a power device to manipulate the representation of the other (cf. Said, "Invention"; *Orientalism* 21), *Every Day is for the Thief* itself can be read as a written form of memory of the city to manipulate representations. Whereas eurocentricity in (neo)colonial histories was established by the subordination of oral history, Afropolitanism's universal claims are established by the subordination of African spaces of cultural memories found in urban spaces. In excessive detail, the narrator describes the interior as a space of severe neglect. He complains that mildew 'has eaten into the text and photographs in several places' (*Every Day* 75) and that the cardboard 'is curled up around the edges' (75). He can not escape the feeling of 'looking at a neglected high school project' (75) because there 'are no artifacts, and no documents' (78) and the plaques are 'extremely rudimentary, and they, too, have succumbed to mildew' (78). Cole's narrative thus displays how (neo)colonial histories are reaffirmed in younger neoliberal histories. Walking through the museum he constantly refers to Euro-America's global cities and indicates that the Nigerian cultural space ought to be perceived as a mere 'extension' (Fanon, *Wretched* 15) of the Euro-American global infrastructure, which is why the history he continues 'is therefore not the history of the country he is despoiling, but the history of the nation's looting, raping, and starving to death' (*Wretched* 15). When Cole's narrator complains that accounts of the slave trade are 'missing from Lagos' (*Every Day* 114) and that there 'is no monument to the great wound' (114) he makes the Hegelian assumption that history 'has yet to enter the Nigerian public consciousness, at least judging by institutions like the museum' (79). The *Black Atlantic* can not become a sociospatial metaphor merging histories of the Global North and the Global South because the narrator declares that only a museum meeting the neoliberal standards can become a place on the African continent to which he can tie his sense of self (cf. "Bye-Bye"). Until then Nigeria remains 'a country that has no use of history' (*Every Day* 79). When the narrator then leaves the museum in 'bad spirits' (80), it is underlined that other cultural spaces too are expected to be integrated into a neoliberal infrastructure, which is evident in the depiction of privatized spaces such as the MUSON Centre.

Citadelization in the entrepreneurial city

As the epitome of privatized city spaces in neoliberal cityscapes, the MUSON embodies the shift to entrepreneurialism in urban governance in Lagos (cf. Harvey, *The Ways* 134; "Managerialism"). The cultural center according to Cole's narrator plays a 'leading role in the musical and theatrical life of the country' (*Every Day* 81), but it is also a space sponsored by companies such as Shell and Agip, which are known to exploit the country for its oil resources and to contribute significantly to severe environmental pollution in the Niger Delta (cf. D. Smith; Ferguson 35). Shell, above all, has not only been accused of harming the nature and inhabitants in

the Delta region but also of reinforcing social disparities through an unjust allocation of financial profits made in the exploitation of natural resources (cf. Pfaff; Amnesty International). The companies' presence is, nonetheless, appreciated just as much as the significance of privatized spaces is highlighted:

The best thing about MUSON is that it is well organized. Better organized, in truth, than I've come to expect anything in Nigeria to be. And yet, it is a largely private venture. Perhaps that is the secret. . . . And MUSON knows the value of running a nonprofit organization in partnership with corporations: the Agip Recital Hall is named for an oil company, as is the auditorium, Shell Hall. (*Every Day* 82)

Although the narrator makes the criticism that white music teachers in the MUSON Centre are better paid than local music teachers, he conceives this space of racist exploitation as a 'great leap forward' (86) and a sign of modernity that he can identify with: 'The school, and the bold programming of its concert halls, cheers me greatly. To the extent that places like the National Museum kill my desire to live in the country, institutions like the MUSON Centre revive that will' (86). When identifying with the privatized MUSON he simultaneously distances himself from the public National Museum, facilitating what has often been coined a 'citadelization' of cities (e.g. Arat-Koc, "Rethinking Whiteness 319; Mumford 531; P. Marcuse 364; Holston and Appadurai 191), and reinstalling private/public boundaries through neoliberal zoning policies. He considers himself part of the cosmopolitan classes that have access to the private zone of the MUSON while distancing himself from the marginal non-cosmopolitan classes that can only access public zones such as the museum. *Every Day is for the Thief*, at this very moment, also emphasizes how neoliberal thought is formalized (cf. Karl 335; Nilges) in the form of the Afropolitan novel, which simultaneously 'citadelizes' the narrative through keeping non-neoliberalized spaces beyond the legible.

The appreciation of the MUSON Centre echoes the late emergence of entrepreneurial cities and the serialized (re)production of cultural spectacles and enterprise zones, which fuels interurban competition and integrates Lagos into the network of neoliberalized urban hubs found worldwide (cf. Harvey, "Managerialism"; Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 393). Entrepreneurialization according to Heeg and Rosol comprises the shifts in urban planning from government to governance because it enables the privatization and commodification of city spaces through enfranchising private investors, hails the festivalisation of city politics putting on display that global cities are to compete in large-scale events and projects mobilizing potential investors, and forges territorial control strategies to transform city spaces into an urban service metropolis marginalizing and disenfranchising the poor when it comes to visible control of city spaces (cf. 493-495). The MUSON, thus, is a product of an entrepreneurialized urban landscape. Once founded in the 1980s and now 'play[ing] a leading role in the musical and theatrical life of the country' (*Every Day* 81), it

is a large-scale project which 'wealthy people are interested in' (81), attracting financially liquid investors:

Large posters in front of the auditorium announce recent and upcoming shows: a Christmas gala, a choral performance, a fund-raiser for Nigeria breast cancer charities. There is a flyer for a jazz concert featuring the South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela in an appearance with Lagbaja, the most innovative of the current crop of Nigerian musicians. Most fascinating of all is the announcement of a performance of a Molière play by a professional company visiting from France. (82)

The non-private state has lost control over this city space: 'The Nigerian government, that great bungler, is kept out of it' (83). Cole's narrative here appears to put Milton Friedman's famous statement that governmental power ought to be limited and decentralized because 'the great advances of civilization' (3), such as 'architecture' (3), depend on the a '[p]reservation of freedom' (4), into textual form. The composites of the novel and the city spaces go hand in hand when it is revealed how urban spatialities are annexed by an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie through 'school fees' (*Every Day* 84), making the MUSON a citadel of elite consumption (cf. Brenner and Theodore 24). After all, *Every Day is for the Thief* after its re-publishing by Faber & Faber too runs the risk of being sold only in Euro-American spaces or Nigerian spaces of elite consumption. The narrator, however, appreciates these neoliberalized cityscapes and outlines his hopes that Lagos will one day be completely transformed: 'As I enter the building, it occurs to me that this is an institution that, in terms of setting and infrastructure, could someday rub shoulders with the Juilliard School or the New England Conservatory. I take an irrational pride in the thought' (83). Harvey's concern that entrepreneurialism has opened up urban spaces to a serial reproduction of cultural entertainment centers ("Managerialism" 11) is confirmed. Lagos is integrated into an Afropolitan reality espousing a capitalistic development of the global mega-city in which the state does not have an operative role, a basic tenet of neoliberalism.

The Afropolitan city here becomes a metropolitan space allocated to a globalized African urban bourgeoisie, a TCC that no longer identifies as local citizens but instead attempts to re-position itself in a 'superterrestrial topography of money' (Seabrook 211). Afropolitans through entrepreneurialization thus run the risk of producing globalized spaces of leisure, which 'cluster dominant functions in carefully segregated spaces, with easy access to cosmopolitan complexes of arts, culture, and entertainment' (Castells, *Rise* 446-447). These Afropreneurs simply continue lineages of colonial urban zoning and sustain the creation of secluded enclaves. A side effect of the Afropolitan city being integrated into the neoliberalized infrastructure of world cities therefore is the repeated disenfranchisement of Africans and the citadelization of cosmopolitan spaces, reiterating boundaries of exclusion. The neoliberal Afropolis, when promoting these new boundaries, becomes a simple continuation of colonial divisions (cf. King 333). Most Nigerians

can't participate in the MUSON Centre because they have to own their musical instruments, as explained by the receptionist in a mantra-like repetition of a neoliberal imperative:

But the most important thing, which we emphasize to all incoming students, is that you must own the instrument you wish to learn. We try to be clear about this, but people still act confused. If you want to learn the piano, you must have a piano at home. If you want to learn cello, you must own a cello. Flute, trumpet, whatever your instrument is, you must own it. (*Every Day* 85)

The narrator accepts these neoliberal barriers because he opposes a transgression into private spaces: 'They have set the bar quite high. Owning a piano, even in the West, is no easy thing. In Nigeria, it is prohibitively expensive for all but the most moneyed. Yet, I can see immediately how complicated it would be to have a rental system in Nigeria' (86). Instead of identifying with the financially illiquid, Cole's narrator seems to see neo-liberal capitalism as the only legitimate economic system that can harmonize spaces across a seemingly sufficient market-based infrastructure propagated as the only source of well-being for African societies (Murobe 672). The Afropolitan has become governable (cf. Foucault, *Biopolitics*), and so has the city. Exited by the MUSON, franchise systemizing these neoliberalized city spaces then becomes the ultimate integration into a global economy.

Franchise systemizing Afropolitan city spaces

While the MUSON embodies the epitome of privatized spaces found in the Afropolitan city, the fast-food chains 'operating on the franchise system' (*Every Day* 147) symbolize Lagos's emergence as a self-sufficient global city like New York located in a 'space of flows' (Castells, *Rise*). Global mega-cities in Castells's theory do not only connect services, centers, and markets in a global network, and become command centers coordinating the intertwined activities of company networks (*Rise* 409-411), they must also bring forward exclusive spaces at a much larger and systemized scale. Whereas the CD shops, the schoolyard, the market, the museum, and the MUSON were understood as city spaces where neoliberalism as a hegemonic signifier had to be made visible because they were still contested by the city's possibilities and overlapping realities, franchise systemized spaces signify the city creating neoliberalized spatialities in serial production that transfer the American franchise system successfully into African contexts and make the integration of cities like Lagos into the global networks efficient, calculable, predictable, and controllable (cf. Ritzer 263-264). The space invader portrays Mr. Bigg's, Tantalizers, and Sweet Sensation as African success stories because they mass produce African spaces standardized by global axioms: 'In general, these restaurants are as clean as the average McDonald's; they are air-conditioned and they have functioning toilets' (*Every Day* 147). They are even portrayed as a stronghold of local business, an epitome of a self-sufficient economic framework, setting out the city's capabilities to

neoliberalize itself without external influences, having internalized neoliberal governmentality: 'To date, none of the big American fast-food chains has opened in Lagos. Their absence is not felt' (148). The narrator does not mind that the imbrication of the American franchise system further separates the haves from the have-nots and creates serialized spaces of exclusion when installing these privatized and class-divided hotspots that cater to images of Euro-American cities and marginalize social groups through cosmopolitanized infrastructures (cf. Keil 393; Seabrook 5; Yeoh and Lin 210).

Cole hence accentuates that Afropolitan spaces could in the future be franchise systemized as well. A cosmopolitanism with African entanglements that mistakes social segregation with Africanness participates in forming transnational patterns that disrupt the social cohesion in nation-states and cities, which Castells's line of argumentation denotes. Mega-cities, he notes, 'are connected externally to global networks and to segments of their own countries, while internally disconnecting local populations that are either functionally unnecessary or socially disruptive' (*Rise* 436). Afropolitan spaces, be they Cole's Mr. Bigg's in Lagos or Selasi's Medicine Bar in London (cf. "Bye-Bye"), enable space invaders to partake in a transnational space of flows in cities modeling themselves after Euro-American prototypes, but simultaneously separate the privileged from the unprivileged, further widening the gap between citizens. While Afropolitans, as agents of a 'new managerial-technocratic-political elite' (Castells, *Rise* 432), franchise-systemize and monopolize access to these exclusive spatialities, local denizens are left out and local governments or even the nation-state are made redundant: 'Space plays a fundamental role . . . elites are cosmopolitan, people are local. The space of power and wealth is protected throughout the world, while people's life and experience is rooted in places, in their culture . . . [G]lobal power escapes the sociopolitical control of historically specific local/national societies' (*Rise* 446). Cole's space invader hence depicts how Lagos through franchise-systemizing becomes an Afropolitan city in which the space invader hops between Afropolitan enclaves (cf. Ferguson 47), keeping within a space of flows while making Lagos a city of social (im)mo(b/t)ilities, excluding spaces located between these enclaves.

(Im)mo(b/t)ilities

Lagos, in the end, is transformed into a city of (im)mobilities, in which Selasi's Africans of the world find themselves dissociated from local inhabitants. Especially the small talk between the narrator and Chinedu reveals that Selasi's universal conception presupposes access to different mobilities which in turn manifest spaces of exclusion. Although the messenger explains that he is a law clerk, the narrator condescendingly points out that he has 'the air of a schoolboy' (*Every Day*

150), who is inferior to him and ought to be treated like a child: 'I serve him a can of Pepsi. Only then does it occur to me that because canned soft drinks cost much more than bottled drinks in Nigeria – the opposite of what happens in the United States – the can must seem to him an extravagance' (150). The (neo)colonial adult/child binary (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 183) is employed in neoliberal practices, making Chinedu an agent of the inferior surplus masses, who are not given the opportunity to improve their personal situation because they are lacking social capital to enter Afropolitan spaces: 'He reminds me, painfully, of myself, of times when I was the one in socially asymmetrical situations, in my early years in the United States' (*Every Day* 152). The narrator is aware that he could bridge the 'social gap' (152) but rather reifies exclusionary borders: 'I want to ask him whether he has a wife, children. I wonder what additional burdens are being carried on these frail shoulders. But I decide against asking' (151). Ede identifies the same social position in *Open City* and argues that a privileged social position enables Julius to walk across the boundaries of race and class and seek contact to the marginalized and powerless ("Politics" 95). Both novels composed by Cole, consequently, create space invaders that are able but unwilling to traverse social boundaries. Julius could, Ede continues, 'reach down from his privileged position and extend a hand of solidarity' (95) but eventually refuses to do so. A similar behavior can be detected in *Powder Necklace*. Lila, upon having moved to Ghana, considers herself and her friend Brempomaa, a fellow expat, part of a socially superior class: 'Like the people on the international line at the airport, [Brempomaa] looked better. Like she was used to better, knew better. I smiled at her, let her know with my eyes that I also knew better' (Brew-Hammond 51). Whereas she accepts Brempomaa's introducing her to her new school, another helpful classmate is reduced to a 'broni forsekiner' (50), a person trying to socialize with whites (cf. 59). Space invaders like the narrator, Julius, and Lila therefore enter urban city spaces but simultaneously seal them off.

Every Day is for the Thief in this regard also delineates how the North-South dyad as a geographical category of inequality is replaced by (non)existent access to motility. Motility here is understood as a link between social and spatial mobility that encircles 'the capacity of entities (e.g. goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographic space, or as the way in which entities access and appropriate the capacity for socio-spatial mobility according to their circumstances' (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 750). In cities worldwide, access to sociospatial networks, for instance, has become essential for enfranchisement if the formal sector cannot provide enough jobs (cf. Olopade, *Bright Continent* 69-70; Ferguson 72-73). This is visible in Chinedu's behavior. Despite having attended university (*Every Day* 150), he equates the narrator with entry to sociospatial infrastructures: 'Actually I want to know you. I mean, actually, to have us know each other, you know. Maybe one day, by knowing you, I can have a chance to go to America' (152). He

is, however, portrayed as a useless peasant who has to run errands and is ridiculed because he tries to imitate an American accent (151), being re-allocated to the global class of the disenfranchised. His social immobility also manifests itself in geographical boundaries. He has to take the long journey because the narrator wants to give Mrs. Aboaba, his friend Seyi's mother (149), books to 'deliver to her from her son in New York' (149). Instead of going the distance to meet Mrs. Aboaba, 'a distinguished lawyer at a firm on Victoria Island' (149), in person, the socially inferior messenger is mobilized to materialize the space of flows between narrator, Seyi, and Mrs. Aboaba as well as New York and Lagos, but immobilized when trying to enter them. The global city the Afropolitan prescribes therefore is not only structured by geographical obstacles such as the 'Third Mainland Bridge' (150), which impedes the danger of social contact when cutting off the poor neighborhoods from the rich parts of the city (cf. Sennett, *Conscience* xii). Immotilities, in the end, have become a transnational byproduct of the emerging cosmopolitan space of flows producing the global city. Be it in Paris, where second-generation immigrants see the Eiffel Tower from afar but find themselves in 'geographical nullity' (Saunders 239) in their isolated banlieues. Be it in Dubai, where non-privileged inhabitants feel 'so near but yet so far' (Elsheshtawy 227) when staring at clearly visible skyscrapers that they cannot enter. Be it in assumedly post-colonial Africa where a city like Johannesburg is still partially read as a 'city under siege' (Enwezor) consisting of secluded sociospatial entities, with northern suburbs and gated communities for a white cosmopolitan population in proximity of poor non-cosmopolitan squatters (cf. Kruger 197; Simone, "People" 72). These social (im)motilities are detectable in the other Afropolitan novels as well. Chisom and her husband peek into the Lagos suburb of Ikoyi, hopping on and off danfos to gaze at the apartment complexes, understanding them as spaces of possibility (cf. *On Black* 90). For Chisom, however, it remains a secluded space that emphasizes her own lack of motility. She can't even take a local bus to look at the space she can't enter. Atta depicts the same suburb inhabited by an 'Ikoyi crowd' (*Difference* 151), a TCC well-integrated into global networks. Whereas Deola is driven around between the crowd's residential homes 'hidden behind rusty gates' (97), her chauffeur does not have access to these city spaces himself, which Deola advocates: '[Deola] would never describe the division between the haves and have-nots in Nigeria as false. They are bona fide barriers' (236). These sociospheres (cf. Schroer 209) informed by immotilities are present in cities of the Global North as well. *Behold the Dreamers*, for instance, describes New York as an urban hub formed by 'worlds':

Even in New York City, even in a place of many nations and cultures, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, preferred their kind when it came to those they kept closest. And why shouldn't they? It was far easier to do so than to spend one's limited energy trying to blend into a world one was never meant to be a part of. That was what made New York so wonderful: It had a world for everyone. [Neni] had her world in Harlem and never again would she try to wriggle her way into a world in midtown, not

even for just an hour. (Mbue 95)

The gap between the cosmopolitan and the non-cosmopolitan may thus replace geographical core/periphery or North/South paradigms with social relationships inscribed upon infrastructures (cf. Simone, "People"; Arat-Koc, "Rethinking Whiteness" 327), installing post-North-South-dyad sociospheres beyond citizenry in a new spatial syntax: 'Accordingly, it is not so much a question of a "North-South" divide but rather of those within the network opposing those outside it' (Castells, "Globalisation" 60). Afropolitans, such as the narrator, Mrs. Aboaba, Deola, or the Ikoyi crowd, are immersed in the formation of transnational urban networks (cf. Sassen, "Introducing" 28-29; Hannerz 314; Lash and Urry, *Economies* 24), very much evoking Selasi's image of African young upcoming professionals residing in cities around the globe and feeling most comfortable in metropolitan centers offering outstanding 'opportunities for the personal enhancement, social status, and individual self-gratification of the much needed upper-level professionals' (Castells, *Rise* 416). Opposed to this emerging class of cosmopolitan elites, who have monopolized these exclusive entry points in order to move within a space of flows, all the non-cosmopolitan local actors, be they Mrs. Aboaba's office clerk or Deola's chauffeur, remain immobile and hence excluded. I think that Afropolitan novels here seek to concatenate the new coordinates of a re-organized global capitalism based on re-vised dichotomies, which lay out that the 21st century mobile agent needs a non-mobile local counterpart to eventually come into existence. The 'emphasis on the transnational and hypermobile' ("Introducing" 38), Sassen concludes, has therefore 'contributed to a sense of powerlessness among local actors' (38). Chinedu's lack of motility downgrades him to a powerless local not worthy of being part of the narrative. Although he has not even finished his drink, the narrator takes him to the gate, unlatches it, and shakes his hand, 'knowing full well [he] will never see him again' (*Every Day* 153). The narrator here removes the last African he could have interacted with from Afropolitan spaces, demonstrating the limited contingencies of Afropolitan literature. Chinedu is disposed of and re-allocated to the excess people, the 'great mass of the deserving, those countless other awaiting miracles' (153), who are stuck in non-cosmopolitan city spaces: '[H]is figure gradually becomes insubstantial as the little clouds of dust take over. After a while, there is only the road' (153). This disposal provides important insights into Cole's position(s) within Afropolitan discourse. Considering the city a strategic arena, *Every Day is for the Thief*, at this point, remains a novel in which Africanness is marginalized, just like Afropolitanism runs the risk of remaining an exclusive neoliberalized cosmopolitanism, not giving ear to the narratives of non-privileged Africans (cf. Dabiri; Schmidt 178-179). The narrator thus seals off a new global infrastructure of neoliberal capitalism excluding supposedly non-cosmopolitan Africans:

[T]here is only space for stories about the African of the world, where the world is the West. What about

the Africans who do not see themselves in the image of their positioning in the West? The Africans who are keen on dealing with home issues, those who look to literature to articulate their pain, as a form of catharsis? What about them? Have they lost their Africanness? (Bwesigye)

Non-place as transition

Chinedu's removal, however, has dramatic consequences. The narrator's departure from Lagos marks a significant caesura because he gets malaria after being infused by a parasite metaphorically embodying the Africanness missing so far. The manipulated sense of taste (cf. Reed, Tanaka, and McDaniel 220) forces him into a reassessment of his neoliberalized cityscapes as he flies back to the US. When unwillingly admitting Africanness into his body he realizes that he is confronted with a feeling of homelessness further explored in chapter 2.2. His supposedly cosmopolitan sensitivity to localities does not function anymore – epitomized by his inability to consume the Euro-American food, a cultural marker (cf. Bell and Valentine; Eu. Anderson) being served in the airplane, which becomes the image for the feeling of home the narrator can not generate anymore. The flight from Lagos back to New York marks a transition into a re-imagination of social and geographical spaces and hence African entanglements the Afropolitan narrator is in urgent need of. In order to initiate the process of re-imagining Lagosian spaces, he is first forced into what Augé has coined 'non-places', transit places such as airports and airplanes lacking notions of history and identity (77-78) which expose the travelling invader to a new state of mobility:

[M]ovement adds the particular experience of a form of solitude and, in the literal sense, of 'taking up a position' Thus it is not surprising that it is among solitary 'travellers' . . . that we are most likely to find prophetic evocations of spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future. (86)

The non-place of the airplane enables him to start reflecting upon his depictions of the Afropolitan city. He experiences a sense of solitude that isolates him from the neoliberalized Afropolitan city: 'All around me, the bustle of departure, people with too much carry-on luggage, disputations over seating assignments' (*Every Day* 156). When realizing that 'there is something drawing [him] back to this city, this country' (156-157), he acknowledges that neoliberalized spatialities have to be contested.

2.1.2 Post-neoliberal imaginaries

Post-neoliberalizing memory

Having returned to New York, the narrator then contests spatialities narrated so far by literally transgressing into alternative imaginaries first and foremost explored through an assumedly manipulated recollection of Lagos. In the delirious state of sleep deprivation caused by his jet-lag, a memory of Lagos 'returns' (158) to the narrator, 'a moment in my brief journey that stands out of time' (158): 'I am there again I alone wander with no particular aim It feels like a return, like a center, though it is not a place I have ever been before' (158-159). Since environmental images, when used to interpret information and to guide action, according to Lynch are produced both by immediate sensation and by the memory of past experience (cf. 4), memory is not to be underestimated when it comes to depictions of the Afropolitan city. A deliberately misused and thus alternative memory of past experiences can contest present social and geographic imaginaries because the surface representation of the city merely resembling neoliberal cityscapes is made ephemeral (cf. Gerrig 299) and, instead, a substantial re-ordering of space syntax is made possible. Eze, consequently, explains why memory should never be treated as 'an innocent affair' (*Postcolonial* 9):

[I]magination deals with ideas that are formed on the basis of what is remembered. The act of remembering is in itself not always complete; it is largely selective. Imagination . . . reconstructs what is in some way (selectively) contained in the memory to produce new ideas . . . [I]magination and memory . . . work together. One cannot imagine what might be without taking into account what had been. (10)

Cole from the very beginning indicates that the city can not be re-imagined as an idealized space, say a supposedly pre-colonial place of harmony. That is why neo(colonial) and neoliberal influences such as colonial-style buildings and Mr. Biggs's are still visible (cf. *Every Day* 158). He also admits that non-African influences may still be relevant when speaking of the 'uncanny place, this dockyard of Charon's' (161), thus relating to Greek myths and noting that African spaces have always been polycultural (cf. Mullaney 15; Sourvinou-Inwood; Dotzauer). The manipulated memory nonetheless opens potentialities of decentering the role of neoliberalism, as revealed by Said explaining why memory and its representations touch upon questions of power:

[T]he art of memory for the modern world is both for historians as well as ordinary citizens and institutions very much something to be used, misused, and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain People now look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity . . . , a place in the world, though, as I have indicated, the processes of memory are frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened in for sometimes urgent purposes in the present. ("Invention" 179)

Cole's strategy is, at this instant, also informed by post-colonial strategies such as literary remappings, which enable authors to question (neo)colonial representations of spaces and to engage in constructing imaginative geographies (cf. Neumann 130; Rupp 186), correcting mental maps of

cities that might not match current realities. Misusing and exploiting the memory can thus not only decenter neoliberalism but also create idealistic post-neoliberal cityscapes and a changed space syntax. Since neoliberalism has to be produced, especially in cities of the Global South it can hardly be considered a prerogative of ontological realities. The memory of Lagos creating a non-neoliberal space is therefore not manipulated but rather post-neoliberalized. Cole's devoting his last chapter to the memory of urban landscapes exhibits a central strategy of exploring the contingencies of Afropolitanism, decoding and decentering spatialities.

Within the post-neoliberal memory of Lagos former spatial configurations are inaccurate, illustrated by the narrator finding himself in a labyrinth (cf. *Every Day* 159), which emphasizes his disorientation after dominant spatial orientations have been fragmented (cf. Gehring 320-321). He soon realizes that alternative imaginaries can be found within decentered neoliberal cityscapes through the 'labyrinth's winding paths lead[ing], finally, to the meaningful center' (*Every Day* 159). Instead of hopping between franchise-systemized Afropolitan spaces, the narrator has lost his 'geographical bearings' (159) and is enabled to reconnect to the city 'as pure place' (159), through which he can move 'without prejudging what [he] will see when [he] come[s] around a corner' (159). Neoliberalism itself is now, in turn, contested by alternative post-neoliberal imaginaries transforming Lagos into a space 'for envisioning, and indeed mobilizing towards, alternatives to capitalism' (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 1) from within, as demonstrated by the narrator stressing the intentionality (cf. Gibbs 247) that he senses 'to [his] being there' (*Every Day* 159). It is also at this point that the novel's title can be understood as linguistically capturing Cole's suggestion that the Afropolitan city no longer ought to be approached through neoliberalized imaginaries. The Yoruba proverb 'Every day is for the thief, but one day is for the owner' seems to imply that Cole is about to reclaim the neoliberalized and thus stolen city: 'Most often used to refer to embezzling politicians, it espouses the belief that you can lie, cheat, and steal, but no matter how long you get away with it, you will, someday, be caught. It trusts that justice will prevail' (Tayag).

Dialectical enfranchising

Cole then engages in the explorations of post-neoliberal imaginaries predominantly by enfranchising Lagosians in the narrative. The novel is still dominated by a perspectivist description of space but the narrator's individualized spacing and bordering have been disabled, disrupting the novel's organic unity of form and content (cf. Eagleton, *Marxism*) and instead shifting the emphasis on Lagos's denizens. The invader observes carpenters in Iganmu, who are working 'wood with saws, planes, and other carpentry tools' (*Every Day* 160), their only product being 'coffins, some painted white, some stained to a lustrous finish, many others pale and as yet unstained' (160). Their crafting

is described in great detail: 'A few wide planks rest on the wall across the street. A darkly polished casket lies on a trestle. It is grand, with brass handles . . . half open, revealing a tufted interior encased in plush white satin A tall man . . . rhythmically moves his arms back and forth over a butter-colored plank' (160-161). For the first time in the novel the inhabitants are involved in the production of urban 'representations of space' (Lefebvre, *Production* 33), making possible the collective negotiation of lived social space through textually performed representational spaces (cf. *Production* 33; Purcell 102; Elden 110; Eigler 32). This interruption marks the narrator's emerging solidarity with the local actors and his renunciation of former individualizing representations of space. It allows him to acquire a sense of the local place:

To some extent the history of learning about culture has involved a shifting of perspectives, from the privileged position of the observer looking at (or down at) objects of scientific scrutiny, to the position of participant engaged in a dialogue, who looks with (rather than simply at) the people with whom he or she creates and shares a fieldwork experience. Many African authors, in fact, analyze their own cultures Looking from below implies being sensitive to the power of observation . . . sometimes it also means paying special attention to the beliefs, experiences, and interests of people whose voices may be relatively absent from the . . . record: the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed. (Grinker, Lubkeman, and Steiner 5)

Every Day is for the Thief at this moment depicts pre-capitalist urban spatialities as being produced by communally organized guilds specialized on (handi)crafts (cf. K. Marx, *Capital* 1: 250). One needs to keep in mind that the Yoruba have always been among the most urbanized people on the African continent (cf. Bascom; Blier). In fact, they have lived in highly organized and densely populated urban hubs for centuries, making Yoruba cities socially coherent and pre-capitalistic agglomerates of communalistic production and consumption units (cf. Ajani 67; Agwuele 53). Post-neoliberalized African entanglements are thus integrated into Cole's narrative by depicting environmental images of a partially pre-capitalistic Lagos that have been projected into the future and seem to have withstood the pressures of neoliberal capitalism:

Before colonial rule, cities and towns were actually centers of commerce; market centers served not only people in the immediate vicinity but also those in the surrounding areas and beyond Other contributors to trade were arts and crafts. In some Yoruba urban centers . . . there were professionals totally devoted to the production of arts and crafts. (Ayoola 332)

Allocated to the position of the passively observing apprentice, the narrator is initiated into Yoruba society through becoming an apprentice within the Yoruba society's traditional education system, which operates through learning different crafts (Oladejo 33). Since the Yoruba apprenticeship system according to Oladejo not only trains men and women for future employment contributing to the social body's economic sustenance, but also 'teaches character [because] the apprentice is expected to respect the opinion of others, show respect for elders, and learn to speak with others and to negotiate' (33), spacing and bordering have been re-allocated to the Lagosians (re)producing their own cityscapes. Cole's narrator, the observing apprentice, has, moreover, been prescribed a narratological position resembling a story-teller, who transmits knowledge about (handi)crafting

through an altered narrative form. When describing the carpentry consortium, where Lagosians do their work communally, he conveys pivotal social and moral ideas 'whose purpose is to shed light on folk values' (Wreh-Wilson 63). Especially among the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria, the knowledge of social conventions has been proliferated through various narrative forms, such as praise poems, funeral dirges, or proverbs and certain sub-genres (Garuba 8; see also Akinwumi). Other rituals producing cityscapes, such as naming, healing, fishing, or farming (cf. Wreh-Wilson 62), have also been transmitted through these narrative forms. Although Cole does not transpose the novel to oral storytelling, modes of 'orality (or orature) shap[ing] literary expression' (Mullaney 15) here influence the voice and furnish evidence that Cole slightly changes the mode of narration. Instead of only hinting at the African city's potentialities and overlapping realities and then subordinating them to neoliberalized cityscapes, Cole now enables the narrator to fully exploit them.

A re-imagination of Afropolitan city spaces is thus made possible, in particular in Afropolitan literature exhausting intended changes of narrative forms, as Eagleton explains when pointing out how Marxist literary criticism sees form and content as dialectically related: '[F]orm is the product of content, but reacts back upon it in a double-edged relationship Forms are historically determined by the kind of content they have to embody; they are changed, transformed, broken down and revolutionized as that content itself changes' (*Marxism* 20-21). The narrator's ambient focalization is pushed to a point at which the novel even abstains from the pictures appropriating city spaces that Cole took from an elevated viewpoint (cf. Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu 89; Berger 17-18) to complement his neoliberal imaginaries by digitalizing them through a neoliberal gaze (cf. Urry, *Tourist Gaze* 138; Lin) at cityscapes: 'I want to take the little camera out of my pocket and capture the scene. But I am afraid. Afraid that the carpenters, rapt in their meditative task, will look up at me; afraid that I will bind to film what is intended only for memory, what is meant only for a sidelong glance followed by forgetting' (*Every Day* 160-161). Local actors have been empowered to marginalize the narrator, a significant narratological re-configuration, in accordance with Eagleton's stance resulting 'from significant changes in ideology' (*Marxism* 23). Cole's narrator recognizes that his narrative, in order to approach its very own Africanization, must be 'grounded, literally and metaphorically, in the conventions and idioms created by the people themselves' (Garuba 9). The dialectical enfranchisement of Lagosian denizens then also informs him that post-neoliberal cityscapes have marginalized his space of flows and the franchise-systemized Afropolitan spaces. He can no longer rely on the neoliberalized infrastructure as a sociospatial imaginary providing him with emotional security but is instead entangled in '[l]ittle streets [that] wind in upon each other like a basketful of eels' (*Every Day* 159), realizing that 'no two run parallel' (159). In post-neoliberal

Lagos he has lost access to his mo(b/t)ilities and depends on the denizens equipping him with a post-neoliberal space syntax, which marks his entering the community through African thought.

Entering community through African thought

Entering the community through immersion in African moral theory empowers the narrator to redefine points of African of entanglement necessary for a rooted cosmopolitanism (cf. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism; Ethics*). Further inquiries into the funerals the coffins were produced for serve as a vantage point for exploring notions of a communalism prevalent in African thought that re-define individuals, their community, and their social relations (cf. Dübgen and Skupien 26-29), and, lastly, infuse the narrative with the spiritual depth that the Yoruba, according to Selasi, are heir to (“Bye-Bye”). The last chapter therefore also signifies a re-reading of *Bye-Bye Babar* and a re-consideration of the essay's implications:

There is a dignity about this little street . . . Its inhabitants simply serve life by securing good passage for the dead, their intricate work seen for a moment and then hidden for all time. It is an uncanny place, this dockyard of Charon's, but it also has an enlivening purity . . . A wholeness, rather, a comforting sense that there is an order to things, a solid assurance of deep-structured order . . . This is the street to which the people of old Lagos, right across the social classes, come when someone dies. They come with great fanfare if it is an old person, order the most expensive casket in celebration of life, hire out the football field of a secondary school, throw a large party with canopies and live music and colorful outfits. But if the deceased is a youth, fallen before the full fruition of life, the rites are performed under grief's discreet shadow, a simple box, no frills, a small afternoon burial on a weekday, marked by . . . unshowy tears, and attended by neither the parents nor by the parents' friends, for the old should not see the young buried. The carpenters, I am sure, have borne witness to all this. And there they are . . . women in the back rooms of their humble houses who help prepare the bodies for their last journey, washing down what remains of a father or mother or child, fitting the heavy limbs into new clothes, putting talcum powder on the face, working coconut oil into their hair and scalp. (*Every Day* 161-162)

I would like to stress that communalist approaches spread into the novel at this point have been analyzed by numerous schools of thought coming from different African geographies and relating to various ethnicities found on the continent. In accordance with Mbiti's stance (cf. *Introduction* 2), one should not forget that African patterns of living formed along political and socio-economic lines tend to vary from place to place. The philosophical approaches outlined in the following may stem from Yoruba thought but they also may relate to other African societies and their ethics. African philosophies should, consequently, not be seen as a monolithic field. They nonetheless all agree fundamentally that a human person can only be understood as a constituent of a complex web of relationships and that man can only be defined by reference to the environing community (cf. Wreh-Wilson 106; Ayoade 96; Mandova and Chingombe 102). The analytic units 'Yoruba' and 'African' are, for this reason, used as interchangeable categories and will only be differentiated between if of immediate interest. This transethnic approach, in the end, makes it possible to speak of a genuinely communalistic African philosophy which opposes Euro-American thought.

Especially Menkiti's work has been considered seminal in this respect. He claims that the central distinction between the African view of man and the Euro-American view of man is that 'in the African view it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory' ("Person and Community" 172). Mandova and Chingombe, arguing from a similar standpoint, explain that Euro-American culture creates a 'being who thrives on competition and, therefore, on individual and distinct achievement' (102) whereas in African thought, 'the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories, whatever these may be' (102). Subsequently, the narrator, who was so far individualized, acting as a rational and autonomous agent in his neoliberal imaginaries, must now be re-integrated into his imagined community in order to re-define himself through his environment. Cole approaches this fundamental Africanization through a double-phased process.

First, the narrator acknowledges that in post-neoliberal Lagos a 'primacy of the community over the individual' (cf. Okeja 77) provides the 'order to things' (*Every Day* 161). The primacy mentioned by Okeja explains why funerals in places like Iganmu are visited by people 'right across the social classes' (162). This general African understanding that man is defined by reference to the community is also pivotal in Yoruba philosophy, which according to Gbadegesin places a high premium on the solidarity among community members: 'Every member is expected to consider him/herself as an integral part of the whole and to play an appropriate role towards the good of all . . . point[ing] to the value that traditional Yoruba place on community and communal existence with all its emphasis on fellow-feeling, solidarity and selflessness' (132). Accordingly, the narrator can only be considered a human person if he acknowledges that the 'I' belongs to 'the I-You-correspondence as a stream of lived experience without which it could not be thought and would not exist' (Kuckertz 62). This fundamental depiction of social personhood disables the individualized narrative. After all, the self in African philosophy, Okolo contends, is 'almost totally viewed from the 'outside', in relation to other, and not from the 'inside' in relation to itself' (252). As a self informed by his community, the narrator can no longer distinguish between haves and have-nots any longer and realizes that he has made it into 'the city's normal bustle' (*Every Day* 161) that fills him with an 'enlivening purity' (161) and keeps him from 'want[ing] to move on' (161). The Africanized social self will be examined in closer detail in chapter 2.2. At this stage, it is significant to note that the purity and normalcy of the community depicted by the narrator re-signify space and replace Lagos's normalcy so far associated with free enterprise and self-entrepreneurial individualism (cf. 144).

Secondly, the narrator accepts the 'procedural nature of being' (Okeja 77) in African philosophy and realizes that he has to adapt to African entanglements by contributing to the formation of

communities. When explaining that an old person is buried in the most expensive casket and that the funeral entails excessive fanfare (cf. *Every Day* 162) he reveals that personhood must eventually be earned through a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into the community, Menkiti stresses, individuals are 'considered to be mere danglers to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply' ("Person and Community" 172) because personhood is something 'which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed' (172). The Yoruba depicted in the novel therefore celebrate the deaths of those who lived to old age most extensively (cf. A. Taiwo 53-54) because the deceased have managed their incorporation over time. Personhood, moreover, presupposes an interpersonal initiation process promoting social values, which is why children have to imitate the elders in order to become part of the community (cf. Wreh-Wilson 111; Ikuenobe 73), and, ultimately, to become a person. This procedure explains the simple burial if 'the deceased is a youth' (*Every Day* 162) and also illuminates why Efe in *On Black Sisters' Street* plans a party to honor her grandmother: 'It was not every death that earned a party. But if the deceased was old and beloved, then a party was very much in order' (5). Both novels seem to confirm Menkiti's position:

In the particular context of Africa, anthropologists have long noted the relative absence of ritualized grief when the death of a young child occurs, whereas with the death of an older person, the burial ceremony becomes more elaborate and the grief more ritualized--indicating a significant difference in the conferral of ontological status. ("Person and Community" 174)

The depiction of the funeral, which is the last sequence in the novel, therefore marks a striking Africanization of cityscapes and a much more complex understanding of African entanglements. It outlines that personhood in African societies can be something at which individuals like the nameless narrator could 'fail' (Menkiti, "Person and Community" 173). Cole, in these extracts, appears to give a general problem produced by Selasi's Afropolitanism a textual contour. If the Afropolitan space invader through his neoliberal imaginaries fails at defining the 21st century African as a human being, then Afropolitanism can not imbue the idea of the world citizen with African roots with any meaning. Although Cole, at this very moment, may relate to Yoruba ethics to put into textual form this ontological conundrum, the notion of the failing human with his/her neoliberal worldview is also present in other Afropolitan novels relating to, for instance, Shona ethics. In *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*, the Magistrate, when realizing that in Scotland he is no longer called Babmudiki or VaPfukuto by his environing community, reflects the Shona beliefs, which are very closely related to Ubuntu, that a human being must meet obligations to be regarded a human person (cf. Mandova and Chingombe 100) and has to achieve personhood through being defined by the community: 'The Shona way, the right way, stressed the nature of the relationship. The individual was the product of a community and had to be placed in relation to the

next man. It was the glue that held them together, giving each value' (Huchu 11). Unlike Huchu spelling out the communalistic ethos, Cole's approach is much more subtle. The narrator acknowledges that imagining the Afropolitan city has so far dissociated him from his African entanglements and that he needs to accept a procedural incorporation to achieve Afropolitan personhood. The Africanized imaginary, in which the community is accepted as functioning as a social catalyst, following Mbiti's famous axiom of 'I am because we are, and since we are; therefore I am' (qtd. in Menkiti, "Person and Community" 171), for that reason provides him with a sense of social belonging. He encounters a 'wholeness, rather, a comforting sense that there is an order to things, a solid assurance of deep-structured order' (*Every Day* 161), which he feels 'so strongly' (161) that he does 'not really want to move on' (161). The literary Africanization within alternative urban imaginaries could thus be perceived as a rite of incorporation which transforms the narrator into 'a full person in the eyes of the community' (Menkiti, "Person and Community" 176), granting him access after supporting the community and thus providing him with a sensitivity to African localities. The formerly individualized narrator, who only integrated the environment in his neoliberal tour de force, turns into the social self, as implied by Okolo: 'Consequently 'social' is the main category for understanding self, as indeed for all reality in African philosophy. It is the only authentic mode for the African to answer the all-important question in African philosophy, *What or who is an African?*' (253). *Every Day is for the Thief* therefore also outlines the contingencies of Afropolitanism by bringing to notice how references to the spiritual depth of the Yoruba or, in general, African morals can, in fact, adorn the African citizen of the world with access to localities and Africanness marginalized under neoliberalization and supply images of the 21st century African which are much more accurate than those of the Ikoyi TCC. Cole, at this stage, also seems to relate to his own position in cosmopolitan discourse. As an author, he only remains capable of defining his position in discourse if he traces his African entanglements and seeks to alternate his Euro-American imaginary of the city. Hegemonic discourse, apparently, can only be resisted if relating to Africanness as an enriching source of resistance. This newly emerging Afropolitan subjectivity can then contest discourse from within. Africanness here becomes a source of expanding cosmopolitanism coming to terms with pressing issues. Ferguson, consequently, interprets liberated African localities as progressive:

The local level . . . is no longer understood as necessarily backward, ethnic, or rural. New attention is paid to . . . the local as voluntary associations and "grassroots" organizations through which Africans meet their own needs and may even press their interests against the state. There is, in much of this newer research, an unmistakable tone of approval and even celebration – not of the nation-building state, but of a liberated . . . civil society. Left to its own devices, it seems, society might make political and economic progress. (96)

Instead of 'essentialising the geographical entit[ies]' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") of a North-South-dyad by

replacing them with boundaries of an exclusive cosmopolitanism, the Afropolitan city becomes a site enabling the space invader to approach cultural complexities and honor 'intellectual and spiritual legac[ies]' ("Bye-Bye"). This alteration is crucial because it also relates to Appiah's concept of an education for a global community of cosmopolitan citizens. Both the primacy of the community and the procedural nature found within African thought are reflected in his elaborations on cosmopolitanism. Appiah's standpoint, first of all, is founded on the idea of the community that forms the individual: 'Your community shapes you; you help shape others; you help shape yourself' ("Education" 89). He also, second, claims that cosmopolitan thought must be based on 'local loyalty' (85) and that a 'complex set of beliefs, emotions, and habits or response that are required for social life' (90) has to be transmitted by local roots. The education of the African of the world in this rooted cosmopolitanism is hence eventually realized through an 'intentional transmission of culture from one generation to the next' (89). Cole's literary apprenticeship thus relates to the same axioms cultivating Appiah's philosophy but endows them with a post-neoliberal stance not to be found in Appiah's writings. His literary imaginaries go beyond Appiah's philosophy and make post-neoliberalism a bedrock for further enquiries into Afropolitanism. They also raise the question, whether these newly arranged Afropolitan cityscapes, in the end, embody a significant impetus to debates encircling the notion of a communitarianism-oriented cosmopolitanism.

Transcending Afropolitan cityscapes

Can Afropolitan cityscapes shape cosmopolitanism beyond the city's limits? Confronting this question, I would like to delve deeper into the latest discourse on urban spatialities accompanying the *Right to the City* movement. Especially Harvey has, in this context, stressed that the production of urban space also fuels the discussion of what social life in general should look like. Reaffirming Lefebvre's claim (cf. *Writings* 158) that 'the right to the city is like a cry and a demand' (Harvey, *Rebel Cities* x), he highlights that the question 'of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what . . . style of life we desire' (*Rebel Cities* 4), articulating the moral, economic, and political implications that come with reinventing cityscapes. The transformation into global post-neoliberal landscapes, even beyond the city limits, thus begins with urban reinvention. Investigating conceptions, strategies, and actions, Harvey from the very beginning presupposes that a 'collective rather than an individual right' (*Rebel Cities* 4) must be sought after. The production of urban spaces therefore also becomes a matter of a new philosophical standpoint accentuating the role of the social collective in relation to the individual. When Harvey presupposes that 'citizen and comrade . . . march together in anti-capitalist struggle, albeit often working at different scales' (*Rebel Cities*

153), new emerging communitarian contacts between the social whole and the individual are indirectly proposed. Yet the theoretical body on the reinvented city often does not expand upon these philosophical readjustments because it seems incapable of implanting a communitarian ethic into a cosmopolitan urban setting crossing national boundaries. In his quite elaborate discussions of cosmopolitanism, Harvey admits that he abhors the danger 'that seemingly radical [internationalist political] critiques . . . covertly support further neoliberalization and enhanced class domination' (*Cosmopolitanism* 80-81). In fact, Harvey recognizes that nationalism and cosmopolitanism ought to 'mutually complement and correct each other' (*Cosmopolitanism* 81). He remains critical of a 'communitarian politics of place' (*Cosmopolitanism* 197) because he understands it as a means of reaffirming capitalistic and national boundaries. He concludes that a communitarian outlook 'goes nowhere in relation to hegemonic neoliberal practices, except to challenge ethical individualism through small-scale collective solidarity' (*Cosmopolitanism* 197) that does not have the potential to inform transnational formations.

Although I strongly refrain from questioning Harvey's seminal work, his remarks indicate very well that theory at times must be expanded by literature, as further revealed in Calhoun's proposition that cosmopolitanism 'needs an account of how social solidarity and public discourse might develop enough in these wider networks to become the basis for active citizenship' ("Class Consciousness" 96), yet 'cosmopolitans have treated communitarianism as an enemy, or at least used it as a foil' (97). Afropolitan cityscapes in *Every Day is for the Thief* pick up these implications of the *Right to the City* debate and endow theoretical approaches towards the reinvented city with a non-Euro-American philosophical foundation, installing a flow of alternative imaginaries. The last chapter encapsulates a communitarian philosophy with a cosmopolitan outlook generated by African ethics. Both the space invader and Lagos's citizens become fellow 'urban planners' (Elden 110) that are enabled to conjointly express creative ideas of a reinvented city through a communitarian philosophy inherent in the funeral ceremony, the production of coffins, and the narrator's enfranchisement when entering the community (cf. *Every Day* 160-162). Euro-American communitarian thought can, apparently, be enriched by African ethics of communalism. These ethics can, in the long run, enrich communitarian thought predominantly through literature, as Westphal proposes:

To say that the study of literature and space is interdisciplinary amounts to a truism. Literature is already playing the game: texts have always looked at geography and at ways of representing human spaces. Trying to isolate the literary from other disciplinary points of view would only diminish literature and its role in the world. I cannot emphasize this enough: literature is not a subordinate field, operating in the service of other humanities and social sciences, but literature can certainly help them in their projects. Unsurprisingly, writers are the first to become aware of this. (32)

When illustrating that the funeral's size is determined by the person's merits achieved for the

community instead of his/her monetary wealth, the novel presumes that 'the community values take precedence over individual values and therefore the welfare of the individual must be seen from the standpoint of the welfare of the community' (Fayemi 173). The communal guilds exemplify how the production of wealth can be understood as being inseparable from the production of social relations (Ferguson 72; K. Marx *Capital* 1: 248-250). The collective workforce does not rely on a neoliberalized competitive division of labor but instead produces itself by producing post-neoliberal relations. The narrator gives communitarian thought a robust status when he partakes in the appropriation of local spatialities regardless of his dual national citizenship and his residing in New York. The cosmopolitan implications of a communitarian philosophy at this point show that the Lagosians have already incorporated Purcell's claims and enfranchised denizens regardless of their place of residence or the colors of their passports:

[I]t is those who live in the city – who contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space – who can legitimately claim the right to the city. The right to the city is designed to further the interests of all those who inhabit Under the rights to the city, membership in the community of enfranchised people is not an accident of nationality or ethnicity or birth; rather it is earned by living out the routines of everyday life in the space of the city. (102)

Communitarian thought exceeds urban and, ultimately, national borders and is tremendously relevant both for the African of the world and the re-invention of cities. The Yoruba, for instance, belong to the largest ethnic groups outside Africa (cf. Trager 52-53). The globally informed Africans of the world with Yoruba points of entanglement can hence invade local Afropolitan spaces and produce social space, but they can also transcend these local ideas to other global urban spaces, making them bi-directional space invaders. The Yoruba are, notably, present in the Americas and along with other Nigerians they outnumber other African immigrant groups in the USA, where they contribute 'remarkably and positively to the nation's socio-cultural, intellectual, political and economic life' (Okonkwo 132). Since Nigeria, due to its missing nation-building process (cf. R. Werbner 481; Falola and Genova, introduction and ch. 1; Falola and Heaton) and its patterns of mobility and migration (cf. Trager 60, 65), is often understood as a cosmopolitan nation in the first place, communitarian thought can well transcend into non-African urban spatialities. In the novel's last chapter, the space invader finds himself in his apartment in New York City – one of the epicenters of global capitalism and neoliberal thought. Cole's novel thus might install post-neoliberal thought even within neoliberal imaginaries outside Lagos, 'defin[ing] a broader terrain of "conditions of possibility" for progressive action' (Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 298). Neoliberal thought can therefore be contested with its own weapons. A space of flows connecting the local communitarian order with a global citizenship can replace the space of flows dominated by global capitalism. I think that Cole's position here is of quintessential relevance because it does not act on

the assumption that capitalism has to be toppled through a revolution but presupposes that Euro-American philosophies can be enriched and remodeled through African thought. Cole incorporates an essential Afropolitan momentum, the 'very possibility of understanding African economic and political facts' (Mbembe, *Postcolony* 7), into this fluidity of imaginaries and responds to Mbembe's vision (cf. "Afropolitanism") that African authors can flesh out cosmopolitan connections linking the continent to other places, expanding their ideas about what it means to be an African in the 21st century. Supposing that the UN currently counts about 250 million migrants while 60 million people are still on the move (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), and that Africans still find themselves at the forefront of global diasporas (cf. Arndt), partially dominating 'much of contemporary Western culture' (Martinek 219), the transcendence of Afropolitan cityscapes into cosmopolitan spaces outside of Africa is not unlikely at all. A peek into the Afropolitan city as a node of new frontiers (cf. Sassen, "Strategic Site, New Frontier") could as well be a glimpse into future urban landscapes, including the social relations that come with it. African notions of communitarianism integrated into alternative imaginaries have the potential to compensate not only Euro-America's neoliberal failures but also its philosophical shortcomings, as global implications laid out by Harvey and others might profit significantly from African thought systems:

In Euro-American philosophical traditions communitarianism still lacks a uniform and normative expression which can be said to unite all its exponents in their socio-political or moral theory but it has become a fairly strong and important source of critique of the perceived excesses of the liberal ideology of individualism. It does not articulate a substantive theory of what a communitarian society ought to be, or of which specific aspirations are to be expected of the inhabitants of a communitarian order, but its adherents subscribe to the general view of the political and moral community as having rights which are not only independent of those of the individual but also important enough in some crucial ways to warrant the adjustment of the freedoms of the individual to the conditions of the good of the collective whole. Such a position may be considered to be largely a methodological rather than a substantive theory; its dominant image is that of a critique of liberalism. (Masolo 483)

Cole's Afropolitan novel does articulate the substantive theory that Masolo calls for. Since Harvey argues that anti-capitalist struggle brought forward by cities 'must not only be about organizing and re-organizing within the labor process' (*Rebel Cities* 123) but must also 'be about finding a political and social alternative' (123), the local urban space in Lagos and its social and political organization laying out the substantive theory could be as well transcended to ideas of a global communitarian cosmopolitanism informing the *Right to the City* movement while still referring to African entanglements. These alternative social imaginaries are not necessarily restricted to advocating geographical autonomies any longer but may include alternative global imaginaries as well. When Murobe highlights that the political and economic well-being of Africa has to be 'initiated within Africa itself' (679) but that an African Renaissance 'has to start with the idea that Africa is endowed with a creative potential which can make a difference to its people and the global village at large' (679), he implies that this global village could also include New York City some day. Keeping in

mind that according to Arndt 'literature is also about providing us with narratives about the global relevance of local processes' (58), the Afropolitan authors thus might reiterate imaginative narratives which not only challenge but at some point even subvert and change Euro-America.

2.1.3 Stable ambivalences

Cole's literary transgressions into alternative imaginaries, in the end, imply how Afropolitanism opens a productive discursive space utilizing the friction between neoliberalized and Africanized spatialities and how the city can function as a privileged site enabling the Afropolitan space invader to engage in Afropolitan discourse. Both the imagined and the re-imagined cityscapes contest and infuse with each other and make visible the contingencies of Afropolitanism as a theoretical and practical conceptualization relevant for Africans living in places all over the world coping with pressing challenges such as (im)mobility, citizenship, community, ethics, and the circulation of capital and labor. Cole through exploring the city denotes how standing up against roll-back and roll-out neoliberalism can be achieved and simultaneously points towards the exclusionary limits that Afropolitanism might imply. With *Every Day is for the Thief* he thus becomes a literary 'social enlightener' (Eagleton, *Marxism* 41), transposing a global readership both to the lived spaces of the Lagosians in post-neoliberal Iganmu and to the hardships of Chinedu being erased from Afropolitan spaces, to area boys transgressing boundaries and the Nigerian bourgeoisie sending their children to violin lessons at the MUSON, thus exposing Selasi's essay to wider debates encircling both 'utopian spaces' (Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 247) and 'innovative "what ifs" that postulate new scripts for Africa' (Orlando 2) as well as harsh realities.

When tackling the pivotal question whether the Afropolitan city can enhance or even transform cosmopolitan discourse, Cole's position, however, remains ambivalent and can be located somewhere in the realms of Soja's Thirdspace, Bhabha's in-between space of enunciation, and Simone's conceptual maneuvers of detachment. This positioning must be approached as a literary strategy (cf. Neumann 132; Lossau) empowering Cole to occupy ternary spatialities within discourse that question or even replace dichotomous constellations. The notion of being a cosmopolitan citizen living in New York City who refers to African points of entanglement informed by a Yoruba urbanism signifies a meaningful center for the narrator, yet it does not attribute him with a stable Afropolitan status: 'I do not really want to move on. But I know, at the same time, that it is not possible for me to stay' (*Every Day* 161). The form of cosmopolitanism that the narrator has imagined seems inaccessible and 'out of time' (158) because it is not representable, which is why it remains an unstable moment that relates to Bhabha's proposed spatialities: 'It is this

Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew' (*Location* 55). At the same time the narrator is put into a mobile and decentered position from which he is able to disorder and reconstitute the dominant power relations when enquiring both into the effects of neoliberalization and Africanization. This position is also implied in Soja's postulated radical openness, which suggests 'a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered . . . to be incompatible, uncombinable' (*Thirdspace* 5). Cole's narrator finds himself in the 'real-and-imagined' (*Thirdspace* 12), where issues can be addressed without privileging 'one over the other' (5). This analytical angle has, lately, also been picked up in Simone's proposal of detachment, which he understands as 'grounds for viewing urban spaces in new ways' ("Detachment" 26) as soon as things are kept 'out of analytical connections' (26). Afropolitanism, consequently, gives space invaders the chance to act out of multiple attachments, yet remain detached. This uncertain and unstable position created by permanent de/attachment installs a stable Afropolitan ambivalence within cosmopolitan discourse. Cole's novel hence also contends that cosmopolitan discourse should not be deadlocked in dichotomous debates but needs to remain in an ambivalent disposition. His fiction signifies how ambivalence equips Afropolitan authors to open up the potentials of Selasi's concept and transcend its implications, providing literary imaginaries enriching socio-political discourse. Prashad stresses that this creative activity could, in the end, become a possible breakthrough:

The protests of the new epoch push against neoliberalism, sometimes motivated by a desire to retreat to the past, sometimes by a desire to seek a future social order moored in human history but not imprisoned by it. There is no obvious single pathway. Few have the answers, although many are asking the right questions. We are at a moment of transition, where openness to experiment and a willingness to learn from and to teach each other is paramount. A call for such a conversation is not an endorsement of pluralism. It is, instead, a recognition that none of the established political traditions has a monopoly on the truth. Those who seek the future are few, and weak. In the explosion of creative activity against neoliberalism, there is always the possibility of a breakthrough to something different. (*Poorer Nations* 235)

In a speech given at the 2013 Literaturfestival Berlin, Selasi reflected on *Bye-Bye Babar* and explained that in 2005 she was standing in an anteroom between doors but was 'locked out of all . . . rooms' ("African Literature"), finding herself in a 'liminal space' ("African Literature"). Cole enhanced this notion two years later and expanded the anteroom to the Afropolitan city, a site where the continually unfinished cosmopolitan project is given a more extensive form – and which can then in turn become another spatial vantage point, a strategic arena for other significant touchstones relevant in Afropolitanism, such as the question of home, which will be dealt with in the next chapter encircling Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*.

2.2 The Afropolitan nomad in search of home: Dinaw Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007)

'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' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye"). In some of *Bye-Bye Babar's* most frequently quoted lines, Selasi approaches the notion of home by stressing the relevance of sedentary entanglements inside, as well as outside, Africa which serve as referential points for Afropolitans who work in global cities and do not belong 'to a single geography, but feel at home in many' ("Bye-Bye"): '[W]here their parents are from; where they go for vacation; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year)' ("Bye-Bye"). The physical locations mentioned, which ought to provide the Afropolitan's being in the world with a sense of belonging, however, hardly seem to correspond with Sepha's nomadic search of home in Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, which was published in the same year as *Every Day is for the Thief*. As a lonesome immigrant, who seventeen years ago was displaced by Ethiopia's Red Terror and had to flee to Washington, he desperately tries to adapt to fixed places in D.C.'s neoliberalized urban landscape. He aspires to fit into Judith's house-as-home only to realize that he can not complete a family that has refurbished a four-story mansion near Logan Circle and surrounds itself by expensive furniture and ostentatious Christmas gifts. He begins to read his workplace as a surrogate home only to face eviction as a failing entrepreneur. He strolls through his local neighborhood only to watch how it is gentrified with its long-time residents being kicked out of their homes. He walks through D.C.'s nationalized landscape only to end up in his uncle's apartment complex located on the margins of a socially and racially segmented national capital. The spaces of home that Washington D.C. as a cosmopolitan global city (cf. Gerhard) ought to provide even its Afropolitan residents with, seem to remain inaccessible for Sepha, which is why the novel has partially been described as a narrative of failure and frustration (e.g. Arnett; Vermeulen). As soon as Sepha, however, infuses these neoliberalized spaces of home with Africanized notions of mobilities, he does, after all, develop a sense of home. His apartment with its recycled furniture becomes an East African nomad's dwelling. His store, where he begins to engage in nomadic story telling of world literature, transforms into a place of Afropolitan solidarity where the logics of capitalism are disabled. His neighborhood becomes an East Africanized arrival city and Washington D.C., in the end, turns into translocated Addis Ababa. Sepha, when Africanizing these fixed locations, manipulates D.C.'s landscape thus by using an Afropolitan framework to reiterate an East African 'archive of permanent transformation, mutation, conversion and circulation' (Mbembe, "Internet"; see also Mbembe and Balakrishnan 35). Informed by local entanglements (cf. Appiah,

Cosmopolitanism) predominantly set in East Africa, the Afropolitan space invader thus manages to feel at home in many geographies worldwide (cf. Selasi, "Bye-Bye").

The different concepts of home in Mengestu's novel continuously find themselves between the sedentary and the mobile. On the one hand, they expose the reader to neoliberalized versions of the static home based on such ideals as property, the nuclear family, the nation, or the workplace (cf. Kusenbach and Paulsen 6; McCabe; Duyvendak 2). On the other hand, they focus on Africanized understandings of the mobile home no longer regarded as a form of deviance but instead as revitalizing and formative (cf. Morley 33; Kleist 2; Duyvendak 8, 31). Sepha, like Cole's nameless narrator, is placed into the strategic arena of a global city, yet indicates, first and foremost, how Afropolitanism as a conceptual framework manages to correspond with the latest discourse on home and the sheer magnitude of findings in this field of research (cf. Blunt and Dowling 2). Mengestu through his text reiterates meanings produced by academic research encircling the tension created between 'mobility and stasis, displacement and placement, as well as roots and routes go[ing] into the making of home' (Ralph and Staeheli 519) in most productive ways. His novel bears in mind that the number of African immigrants in the United States has grown 40-fold in the past five decades (Carpio 55), which questions the place-based idea of home and its being fixed to a specific location, thus expanding scholarly research: 'Traditionally, in the social sciences, the idea of home has been fixed to a specific location Migration causes the fixity of home to loosen up and allows the global citizen freedom to possess mobile identities' (Masade 96). *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* reads home as a multi-scalar concept, as proposed by Blunt and Dowling:

Home is much more than a house or the physical structure in which we dwell. Home is both a place or physical location and a set of feelings. . . . [H]ome is a relation between material and imaginative realms and processes, whereby physical location and materiality, feelings and ideas, are bound together and influence each other, rather than separate and distinct. Moreover, home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. Home is lived as well as imagined. What home means and how it is materially manifest are continually created and re-created through everyday home-making practices, which are themselves tied to spatial imaginaries of home. (254)

Afropolitan space invaders seem prone to elaborate on these multi-scalar conceptualizations located between the mobile and the sedentary not just in Mengestu's fiction. The women in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, for instance, seem immovable within the epicenter of neoliberal exploitation but create a 'family home' (273) on Zwarte Zusterstraat when altering their sensorium and connecting to their family members in Nigeria. Cole's nameless narrator returns to his New York apartment but there infuses his neoliberalized urban landscape with a post-neoliberal imaginary of Lagos (cf. *Every Day* 156). Afropolitanism apparently contributes significantly to intensified discussions emerging both in Euro-America and Africa.

In *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, Mengestu, who himself was born in Addis Ababa and emigrated to the US in 1980 as a two-year old (Mengestu 232), employs Selasi's framework to explore four spaces of home located between the neoliberalized sedentary and the Africanized mobile. The analysis begins with the house and the workplace and then traces Sepha's movements through the neighborhood and the nation's capital. In the end this nomadic search reveals how Afropolitanism can endow the 21st century African with a sense of home, after all, and, ultimately, redirect cosmopolitan discourse through mobilities.

2.2.1 House

House-as-home

The house in Euro-American geographies usually being conflated with home (cf. Morley 19), Judith's 'four-story brick mansion' (Mengestu 15) ranges among the most crucial spaces in the narrative because it pinpoints the Afropolitan space invader's exposure to neoliberal capitalism bringing in line Marxist and latest neoliberal readings of the house as an asset. Judith, a political history professor taking a gap year, is a single mom still entangled in an on-off-relationship with the Mauritanian economics professor Ayad, with whom she has an eleven-year old daughter called Naomi. She has just bought and refurbished a house that was abandoned for a decade and occupied by homeless men, crack addicts, and a band of anarchists (15-16). She has installed a bathroom on every floor and a posh library with built-in bookcases and sliding doors occupying an entire floor (17). Instead of the public city bureaucracy being 'assigned to the neighborhood' (17) to 'determine whether [buildings] were in need of repair or demolition' (18), Judith as an investor through privatizing a vacant city space makes her way into D.C., which is depicted as a 'gentrifying city in which Western capitalism is at the forefront' (Olopade, *Go West* 135). The mansion embodies the Euro-American ideal of a house-as-home propagated first and foremost by a neoliberalized political economy of housing (cf. McCabe; Hackworth; Rolnik; Sandhu and Korzeniewski; Forrest and Hirayama) and a bourgeoisie that wants to express its socioeconomic status through homeownership (cf. Kusenbach and Paulsen 5-6; McCabe 4). Mengestu, at this point, relates to the role of the house-as-home forging competitiveness in the ideological reproduction of capitalism, best brought forward by Marx:

A house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirement for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls. (K. Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital")

The novel indicates that privately owned houses range among the most significant economic assets both for investing home-owners as well as the banking sector profiting from mortgage products (cf. McCabe 4, 11-13). The sheer size of Judith's residence bears witness to the latest neoliberal policy prescriptions because it reads like a real estate advertisement: 'The second [floor] had been turned into a bedroom for Naomi, and a massive library and TV room; the first, into the living room and dining room . . . and on every floor there was a bathroom' (Mengestu 57). As the medium size of new houses in the United States has increased by almost 50% in the last decades and the number with three or more bathrooms has tripled in just the last few years (Conley), Judith too develops an economic stake and perceives her home as a commodity that generates wealth (cf. Harrison 78).

The commodity also becomes a container of property. Judith carries a 'fortified idea of home' (Duyvendak 30), publicly displaying the set of keys in her hands as 'irrefutable signs of ownership' (Mengestu 18) and disclosing that the privatized interior completes the asset. Boundaries between the private and the public are blurred and re-erected in a neoliberalized mode. The public, despite being excluded from private property, ought to know about Judith's wealth. Sepha watches the moving vans unload 'two gilded mirrors and an antique desk, along with a pair of sofas with pillows so large and comfortable that [he] imagined [him]self asking if [he] could sit, for just a few minutes' (24). Judith pulls back her curtains to allow outsiders to peek inside, the design within the house 'provid[ing] a key visual source for analysing the home' (Blunt and Dowling 56). Staring inside Judith's house and other refurbished buildings, Sepha realizes how his new rich neighbors advocate capitalism through furniture:

At night, the heavy red curtains that draped over the front windows were pulled back far enough to allow more than a peek into the living room. It was the same thing with all of the other newly refurbished houses in the neighborhood; curtains provocatively peeled back to reveal a warmly lit room with forest green couches, modern silver lamps that craned their necks like swans, and sleek glass coffee tables with fresh flowers bursting on top. There was something about affluence that needed exposure, that resisted closed windows and poor lighting and made a willing spectacle of everything. The houses invited, practically begged and demanded, to be watched. When I took my walks at night, this was what I did. I stared into the living rooms of others . . . Sometimes I thought of what I was doing as window shopping. (Mengestu 52-53)

According to Arendt, under 'modern circumstances' (58) binaries between the private and the public are dissolved (59) and simultaneously marked to re-define suggested differences between 'property and wealth on one side and propertylessness and poverty on the other' (61). Like Cole's nameless narrator creating neoliberalized cityscapes to marginalize the area boys (*Every Day* 106-109), Logan Circle's new residents thus use furniture as modern markers of social stratification illustrating the differences between haves and have-nots in a globalized urban landscape. After all, Bourdieu argues that a social group's 'whole life-style can be read off from the style it adopts in furnishing' (*Distinction* 70) because every interior 'expresses, in its own language, the . . . state of its

occupants' (70), sketching, for instance, 'the elegant self-assurance of inherited wealth, the flashy arrogance of the nouveaux riches, the discreet shabbiness of the poor' (70). The houses containing the couches, lamps, and coffee tables, for that reason, may be visible to the non-affluent public but they remain privatized safe havens at the same time (cf. Morley 24; Blunt and Dowling 116; Lloyd and Vasta 2). Exposing both reader and Sepha to bourgeois understandings of taste, Afropolitan literature communicates the merits of property and purported safety (cf. Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 25) in a city neighborhood otherwise considered dangerous. Judith tells Naomi that 'she could have all the space she wanted' (Mengestu 58) if she in return only promised 'to stop running out of the house' (58) and accepted that she ought to be protected from other residents: 'All the doors are locked, though, including the one leading to the third floor. A mother can never be too careful' (84). Naomi, like Cole's nameless narrator fearing the area boys, has internalized these boundaries: 'Naomi hates having people over in the house' (54).

At the beginning of the narrative, Sepha remains capable of critically reflecting upon the exposure of affluence and highlights that there is 'something monstrous about a house with so many lights, something distinctly unjust' (60). He also recalls conversations with the construction workers complaining that Judith had 'wanted a bathroom on every floor of the house, which made no goddamn sense because why the fuck would she need four bathrooms when only two people would be living there' (17). He can not, however, withstand being lured into notions of property as soon as he is allowed to enter the mansion. Investigating how domestic architecture and design are inscribed with meanings that (re)produce ideas (cf. Blunt and Dowling 56-57), the novel, from this point on, emphasizes how power relations such as class, race, and gender are (re)produced within the contexts of neoliberalized homes. Mengestu changes the spatial frames (cf. Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu 24) and moves the narrative space into Judith's house. Literature, at this point, appears to invite the reader (cf. Lukács, *Historic Novel* 156) into the private residence, which is defined by the property it contains. In the house, the Afropolitan space invader, on first sight, seems impressed by the furniture:

An old record player and radio the size of a desk, made of wood and with a dozen chrome knobs, sat in the hallway. The living room had a heavy black wall-mounted phone from the early twentieth century, and a silver clock The leather couches, chestnut colored and densely packed, were separated by a wooden coffee table that had at least fifty small drawers along its side. It was all so solid, comfortable, and familiar (Mengestu 53)

On closer inspection, however, Sepha feels intimidated. When eating 'dinner off porcelain plates with gold-trimmed edges' (55) in Judith's 'immaculate living room, which was larger and grander than anything [he] had ever sat and eaten in since coming to Logan Circle' (55), Mengestu according to Harrison exposes Sepha's spatial insecurity' (80) through '[d]rawing on the trope of

furniture, so highly prized by the gentrifying classes' (80). Developing an affection for Judith and trying to become part of her home, he is pressured into re-positioning himself in the social space of the house (cf. Bourdieu, *Distinction*). When he recognizes how Judith gives a lecture but is not 'speaking to [him] or Naomi but to the room' (Mengestu 56), however, he understands how both are classes apart. He remains silent, 'trying to find a narrow gap in which [he] could insert a well-timed grunt of agreement' (56), incapable of participating in Judith's conceptualization of bourgeois taste, which also affects notions of gender. When Sepha, at a later point in the narrative, is invited for a cup of tea and discusses Christmas presents, he admits that he likes 'small and cheap' (134) to which Judith responds that it 'looks like [he has] gone and picked the wrong family' (134). Her comment affirms the trope of the man of the house and insinuates that Sepha remains unfit to complete the family because he is not a male breadwinner (cf. Pasura and Christou 5): 'I could see myself trying to measure up at family dinners and cocktail parties, and as a result, always falling short. How many times would I have to stare into a mirror and compare myself to Judith?' (Mengestu 134-135). The handling of Christmas gifts in the mansion also demonstrates the gender relations separating Sepha from Judith. Whereas Judith proudly points out that her former husband, a transnationally operating Mauritanian economics professor, who moves between universities in Greece, Kenya, and the US (135), made ostentatious yet improvidently power-relations producing gifts such as a dollhouse, Sepha enters the neoliberalized Christmas economy merely focused on gifts and puts much thought into presents, purchasing a '1928 edition of Emily Dickinson's collected poems' (158) for Judith and a 'journal and a nice fountain pen to go long with it' (159) for Naomi. He can't, however, even wrap them properly and turns out to be incapable of handling property (cf. 161). The power relations between Judith and Sepha, unmasked at this instant, have also been ascribed as signifying former slave-master relations. In fact, Judith's surname, McMasterson, and the name of one of her books, '*America's Repudiation of the Past*' (157), indicate that Judith's house ought to resemble a plantation house (cf. Ledent). In a neoliberalized Afropolitan framework, the breadwinning and mobile Mauritanian economics professor, like a former house slave part of the black bourgeoisie (cf. Benjamin 1: 152), is accepted within the mansion because of his access to capital and mobilities positioning him. Like Cole's nameless narrator, he moves in a transnational space of flows. The immobile Sepha, like Chinedu in *Every Day is for the Thief* lacking capital, is marginalized:

I cursed myself for my silly expectations. I thought I saw the situation now clearly for what it was – a case of mistaken identity. I had forgotten who I was, with my shabby apartment and run-down store, and like any great fool, I had tried to recast myself into the type of man who dined casually on porcelain plates and chatted easily about Emerson and Tocqueville while sitting on a plush leather couch in a grand house. (Mengestu 80)

Morley, at this stage, speaks about a 'homely racism' (217). Afropolitanism here indeed remains

post-pan-racial, as proposed by Mbembe (e.g. Mbembe and Balakrishnan; “Internet”) and exemplified through the Mauritanian professor, but simultaneously reproduces race, as criticized by Ede (cf. “Politics” 92) or Nketiah (cf. “Mimicking”) and illustrated by Sepha's marginalization. Mengestu through the space of Judith's neoliberalized mansion hence explains how Afropolitanism bears the risk of including bourgeois Africans but, simultaneously, excluding non-bourgeois Africans in terms of class, gender, and race – a thought picked up by Atta and expressed through Bandele's body in greater detail (*Difference*; see chapter 2.4). Unable to complete the family, Sepha's relationship with Judith, Olopade fittingly concludes, is 'bound by laws of accumulation' (*Go West* 145) and the end of their affection remains 'capitalistically reinforced' (145). Judith, consequently, does not accept Sepha as a part of her house-as-home, affirming the troubles the Afropolitan space invader faces when trying to feel at home in neoliberalized geographies: 'Class, 'race', gender and various other power relations remain important forces shaping the experience of home for migrants' (Ralph and Staeheli 520). Sepha's marginalization, however, shifts the focus of attention to his own apartment.

Nomadic dwelling

Blunt and Dowling, when investigating the relationship between housing tenure, social divisions, and identities, stress that owner-occupiers are much more likely to be 'employed, white, middle-class, middle-aged and educated' (90), whereas '[p]rivate renters, especially long-term renters, are more likely to be unemployed, young and in non-family households' (90-91; see also Turner and Luea; McCabe 79). This, on first sight, along with the fact that in most Euro-American societies, the socio-economic and cultural norm of homeownership may lead to a stigmatization of people not owning their house or flat (cf. Kusenbach and Paulsen 6), seems to explain why Sepha, when returning from Judith's house, understands his apartment to be even 'shabbier, smaller, and more desolate than [he] remember[s]' (Mengestu 59-60). As soon as Sepha turns to his own furniture, however, a post-neoliberal sense of home begins to evolve. Unlike Judith's house, this place consists of recycled old furniture:

The only thing that wasn't scavenged from the trash was a solid oak desk The couch was draped with a heavy navy blue fabric I had brought from a garment store to cover up the unknown stains and worn armrests. The coffee table was balanced by a stack of magazines on one side and an old bowl on the other. The rug in the center of the room had been left by the previous tenant, who had most likely inherited it from the tenant before him The television had knob dials and terrible reception, and it sat on an old trunk that looked solid from a distance, but was in fact practically paper thin. (60)

Although Harrison interprets the arrangement of recycled furniture as Sepha's 'struggle to secure a permanent sense of belonging in Washington' (81) and Arnett adds that Sepha 'intentionally creates a home that refuses the particularly, actually familiar for the *crypto*-familiar' (111), the apartment,

most significantly, Africanizes the narrative by infusing East African mobilities into spaces of home and activating nomadic thought systems. Especially Mbembe's presumption that an Afropolitan mindset opens up a cultural archive is relevant at this stage:

And when you study the cultural history of the continent carefully, a number of things come to the fore in terms of how African societies have constituted themselves and how they operated. First, they constituted themselves through circulation and mobility. When you look at African myths of origin, migration occupies a central role in all of them. There is not one single ethnic group in Africa that can seriously claim to have never moved. Their histories are always histories of migration, meaning people going from one place to the other, and in the process amalgamating with many other people. ("Internet")

Africa, after all, must be seen as a space of circular migration where permanent relocations have been common for centuries. Nomadism, in East Africa still prevalent among pastoralist and hunter-gatherer groups (cf. Askew and Odgaard 224), has had its fair share in contributing to the continent's mobilities. Pastoral societies such as the Borana, who move along the borderlands of southern Ethiopia and specialize in survival on marginal lands through living off livestock and pastures (cf. Helland 56, 61; Khazanov 123-126; Salzman 1-3, 9; Stichter 47), have inscribed nomadic dwellings on the continent just as much as hunter-gatherer societies such as the Chabu of southwestern Ethiopia, who subsist through hunting and gathering (cf. Dira and Hewlett 73). Throughout Ethiopia's history, these forms of nomadism have been highly influential and even prevalent among the ruling classes. Eventually, it was not until the reign of Fasildas in the 17th century that the quasi-nomadic lifestyle of Ethiopian emperors finally ended and the royal court set down at the fixed site of Gondar (cf. Adejumobi 24). Up until fascist Italy's intervention in the 1930s, Ethiopia's periphery was not controlled by Addis Ababa, and before Haile Selassie's 1975 land-tenure reform a large share of the country, namely the (semi)arid expanses of the lowland, was predominantly inhabited by nomads (Adejumobi 57, 70; Tiruneh 97). Although the number of nomads among Ethiopians has declined to roughly 6 per cent of the population by now and a fair share of nomads has become (semi)sedentary (cf. Tiruneh 108; Helland 56; Khazanov 295; Salzman 15-16; Dira and Hewlett 73), the influence of nomadic thought systems on African mobilities can not be neglected. Sepha's apartment with its gathered furniture can therefore be read as a nomadic dwelling. Oba and Lusigi here speak of a 'home range' (par. 15), which in fact seems to activate in Sepha a mobile sense of home entangled in East African spaces: 'A man, I told myself, is defined not by his possessions That was a phrase I had stolen from my father' (Mengestu 60). Mengestu at this point in the novel brings to the fore that notions of non-sedentary dwelling discussed in the works of Euro-American thinkers such as Heidegger could be considered essentially African. Heidegger explores how dwelling and building in Euro-American thought are conceptually interrelated because human beings are inclined to believe that they must erect houses or shelters in order to dwell: 'To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to

dwelling' (145). He does, however, question this essentialised relation very firmly:

We attain to dwelling, so it seems, only by means of building. The latter, building, has the former, dwelling, as its goal. Still, not every building is a dwelling . . . do the houses in themselves hold any guarantee that dwelling occurs in them? Yet those buildings that are not dwelling places remain in turn determined by dwelling insofar as they serve man's dwelling. Thus dwelling would in any case be the end that presides over all building. Dwelling and building are related as ends and means. However, as long as this is all we have in mind, we take dwelling and building as two separate activities, an idea that has something correct in it. Yet at the same time by the means-end schema we block our view of the essential relations. (143-144)

Afropolitan trajectories reiterate this critique articulated by infusing Africanized notions of home into an erupted means-end schema. No longer willing to adapt to neoliberal realities, Sepha, through an Afropolitan mindset, ties his sense of home to a 'place on The African Continent' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") which no longer consists of sedentary but mobile entanglements. Like Cole's nameless narrator, he can only become a human through relating to African localities providing him with a sense of dwelling. Within the nomad's dwelling, home is, for this reason, 'not necessarily something left behind on migration or something simply returned to afterwards, but something transportable and always in the process of being formed' (Hatfield 59). Sepha's going beyond the material and into the realms of the imaginative (cf. Blunt and Dowling 23; Duyvendak 30) is, essentially, post-neoliberal and carries forth post-colonial resistance. Resisting the idea of a fixed space, Salzman notes, had in Africa long been stigmatized as anti-colonial since '[c]ommonlands, collectively held, have not been popular in those societies with capitalist learnings' (15) because '[p]roductivity and enterprise are believed to come from private property' (15). Stichter too implies that mobility was limited under colonial rule:

In fact, it was the colonial authorities who by and large attempted to curb these movements, the official view being that Africans ought to have a *permanent* rural home, to which the male could be returned after temporary migration for wage labor, and which could support his family. For this reason forms of migration such as the seasonal movement of pastoralists were discouraged under colonial rule. (2)

Sepha's apartment now becomes a post-neoliberal space because it erupts the home-property-nexus relying on fixed places. Like nomads classified as outlaws remaining beyond the control of state authorities, Sepha keeps beyond the neoliberalized housing market. He constantly recycles and reshapes the furniture and points out that the rug 'left by the previous tenant' (Mengestu 60) has ends 'so frayed that at least twice a month' (60) he needs to 'to trim a piece off to keep from tripping on the loops of extended thread' (60). The Afropolitan here seems to thematize his accumulated portable dwellings turning him into a productive worldly exile, who like Diogenes emphasizes a mobility that equates 'not only free movement and even self-exile but also, and more importantly, symbolic freedom from the stranglehold of home and property' (Papastephanou 101).

Sepha then invites Judith into his nomadic dwelling and tries to detach her from the mansion and its containments, renegotiating power relations. Both toast to furniture and Judith points out

that Sepha has 'a great sense of space' (Mengestu 85), even distancing herself from her own property: 'I never wanted to be one of those people who had walls and walls of stuff they could care less about' (86). Informed by his East African entanglements, he attempts to complete Judith's and Naomi's family. Bearing in mind that all known forms of nomadic families have predominantly nuclear structures (Khazanov 127), Sepha appears to presume that the McMasterson family ought to be re-established as a functioning mobile 'self-sufficient economic unit' (Khazanov 127) after Judith was abandoned by her husband and had to move to a new city: '[N]ow that Judith was sitting here in my living room late on a winter evening, everything seemed entirely possible once again. I could fit into her life after all' (Mengestu 85). Khazanov explains that in East African nomadic societies, upon the family head's death, families either disintegrate or re-constitute their unit through levirate marriage, according to which 'the son, brother or relative of a dead man inherits his wife and the obligation to take care of the children who are under age' (127). Sepha, at this stage, is certain that within his home range he is no longer separated by boundaries such as class, gender, or race and that Judith too can adapt to Africanized notions of home: 'She could have been anybody, I told myself . . . Part fugitive, part adventurer, she was always ready to drop everything and run on a dime' (Mengestu 80-81). The Afropolitan framework thus provides both with a space negotiating post-neoliberal standpoints of home and functions as an adequate framework not only to 'examine migrants' articulations of mobile/grounded homes' (Ralph and Staeheli 520), but also to 'interrogate the ways in which various power geometries influence such complex registers of home' (520). Judith, in the end, does not manage to untie herself from her house. She abandons the nomadic dwelling and sends Sepha back into his state of isolation: 'I should get back home . . . I would hate to imagine what Naomi would do if she woke up and found that I wasn't there. Don't worry about walking me home or anything' (Mengestu 88). Mengestu therefore concedes that Afropolitanism may help spur post-neoliberal resistance, yet indicates that resistant forms of home can not become sedentary but must remain mobile and transitory. Through Sepha's state of isolation the novel at the same time shifts the center of attention to the store.

2.2.2 Workplace

The neoliberalized workplace-as-home

The grocery store that Sepha runs near Logan Circle provides a second vital space enabling the space invader to enquire into notions of home because the Afropolitan here runs the risk of accepting the workplace as a surrogate home. In order to follow his capitalistic ambitions, Sepha is forced to remain behind the counter from six a.m. to ten p.m. on every day of the week (191, 38).

He is kept away from his apartment, where he begins to feel lonely: 'On the days that I couldn't bear the thought of returning to my apartment, I kept the store open until midnight, hoping, however irrationally, for the remaining trace of the late-night crowds that used to keep my store afloat' (191). Especially Hochschild, who in *The Time Bind* points out how the inventive cultural system of capitalism creates a version of work-life balance that keeps the worker efficiently at work (xxiii), illustrates how dichotomies between home and workplace have been redefined in recent decades. She concludes that home in capitalist settings no longer remains a safe space or a 'place to relax' (37) but develops into 'another workplace' (37) whereas the workplace in return transforms into a 'safe haven' (36): '[H]ome ha[s] become work and work ha[s] become home. Somehow the two worlds ha[ve] been reversed' (38). When spending his time behind the counter, Sepha consequently finds himself in a locus blurring distinctions between home and office as well as labor and leisure. The store becomes the place where he reads a book every two days (Mengestu 40), socializes with his neighbor residents, and even has dinner with Judith and Naomi. It turns into a social world of itself Sepha escapes to in order to find a sense of belonging, revealing how capitalism within the workplace 'has rediscovered communal ties and is using them to build its new version of capitalism' (Hochschild 44). Hochschild's workplace-as-home thesis, in this respect, also explains why Sepha's friend Kenneth is willing to leave his empty apartment on Christmas and work instead, taking 'one for the team' (Mengestu 180) but being 'happy about it' (180) nonetheless. Once allocated to this workplace-as-home the Afropolitan then turns into an immigrant corner-shop entrepreneur (cf. Kloosterman, Rusinovic, and Yeboah 913; Kloosterman and Rath 102-103). Sepha not only internalizes the basics of capitalism such as adjusting supply to local demands, working out that his customers 'buy bottled water, toothpaste, cleaning supplies, and, if their kids are old enough, one of the small five-cent pieces of candy I've learned to keep next to the register for just this purpose' (Mengestu 5). He also neoliberalizes the notion of the surrogate home, perceiving the store as a space of self-entrepreneurial ambition, which is why he opens a deli counter as an investment: 'I spent two thousand dollars of borrowed money on it with the idea that perhaps my store could become a deli, and in becoming a deli, a restaurant, and in becoming a restaurant, a place that I could sit back and look proudly upon' (3). When becoming an investor he is supported by two emblematic African friends, Kenneth from Kenya and Joseph from the Congo, who no longer want to resemble those 'young, gifted and broke' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") who in the 1970s and 1980s 'left Africa in pursuit of higher education and happiness abroad' ("Bye-Bye"). They regard the opening of the workplace as a neoliberal epiphany, equipping Sepha with maximum 'labour-market flexibility' (Eagleton-Pierce 79) and freeing him from any remaining notions of former home/workplace dichotomies. In accordance with Karl's thesis, the Afropolitan novel as a genre, at

this instant, formalises neoliberalized economic relations (cf. 338-339). It does, in fact, seem to generate a literary matrix which incorporates a 'suitable framework for the beneficial working of competition' (Hayek 88) because it allocates Sepha's body to the workplace and simultaneously textualizes the process of individuals becoming capable of governing themselves:

"Don't you have work?" I asked [Joseph]. "I took the day off," he said. "I wanted to be here for this." We drank the bottle later that evening once Joseph got off work. "This is the beginning," Joseph said. "Today, right here with Stephano's store. We begin new lives. No more of this bullshit. Right?" We were all guilty of hyperinflated optimism and irrational hope at that point. But how could we not have been? . . . "our store" . . . was supposed to signal a departure from frustrating, underpaying jobs and unrealized ambitions. As that first night in the store wore on, our conversations grew increasingly grand, our ambitions and desires for the world limited only by imagination. (Mengestu 144-145)

Not only Joseph puts the neoliberal credo internalized, which can be best explained through Foucault's concept of governmentality (*Biopolitics*), on display when explaining that Sepha's success as an entrepreneur is 'all about marketing' (Mengestu 144) and that he ought to 'learn to think now like a businessman' (144). Kenneth too neoliberalizes Sepha's capitalistic endeavors, arguing that he should be his 'own boss' (143) because it is 'the only way to get anywhere in this country' (143). Both Kenneth and Joseph want Sepha to act as an Afropreneur and regard the store as 'the first step to an even greater venture' (146), echoing Selasi's stance that the Afropolitan ought to branch into fields like venture capital (cf. "Bye-Bye"). They even encourage his self-responsible risk-taking, an essential constituent of neoliberal governmentality: 'We should begin thinking about expanding. In a year or two, you could have an entire grocery store. Start your own franchise.' Kenneth sketched out some numbers on the back of a notebook [that] were nice to look at' (146).

Foucault's notion of governmentality and the Afropolitan space invader functioning as an Afropreneur on the labour market will, at this point, not be enquired into any further because chapters 2.3 and 2.4 consider this dynamic in full detail. Partially glimpsing into the part of the analysis to follow, it is, nevertheless, interesting to note that Sepha, like Bandele in Atta's *A Bit of Difference* and Chisom in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, fails within the neoliberalized labour market, i.e. the workplace-as-home. Although he has adopted neoliberal ethics and has begun to work even longer hours (191) he generates just enough profits to make ends meet, admitting that '[a]lmost nobody comes into the store anymore' (4) and that '[i]t's been this way for months now, with each month a little worse than the one before' (4). He is forced into targeting infrequent profits: 'On those good days, which come once or twice a week, I make just over four hundred dollars . . . I think to myself, America is beautiful after all. There is more here. Gas is cheap. This is not a bad place. Things could be worse' (5). The Afropolitan, it turns out, remains fixed to a workplace to enable others to leave their houses only temporarily: 'On a good day I have forty or maybe fifty customers. Most of them are stay-at-home moms or dads who've moved into one of the newly

refurbished houses surrounding Logan Circle' (4). The sedentary workplace-as-home therefore helps manifest borders between have and have-nots even within liberated markets accessible for Africans. Entrepreneurial ambitions are, based on these assumptions, fueled by a 'Mobility Paradox' (Kleist 3), balancing both capitalistic inclusion and exclusion (cf. Sklair, "Capitalist Globalization" 31-32) as well as stratified globalization and restrictive mobility regimes (cf. Kleist 3-6). Sepha is allowed to enter the US to be entrepreneurially mobile and afford gas. Yet, he has to work so much without earning enough that he remains immobile, transfixed in his store without even being able to buy a car. Mengestu here reflects how the Afropolitan framework allocating Africans to markets worldwide rehabilitates capitalistic mechanisms in a neoliberalized global architecture. Sepha is filtered into the category of migrants desired to meet labor shortages (cf. Kleist 5), yet allocated to an undesired African American neighborhood that he can not move out of. Olopade, on these grounds, reads his life behind the counter defined by the lack of mobility as a 'spatial complaint' (*Go West* 141). Deregulated trading hours for workplaces such as grocery stores indeed equip Sepha with a mobility without freedom (cf. Vermeulen 86-87). Whereas Judith is enabled to take a gap year from her job and still be mobile, Sepha is lacking that mobility and finds himself excluded from the possibility of moving outside of his corner-shop:

There are those who wake each morning ready to conquer the day, and then there are those of us who wake only because we have to. We live in the shadows of every neighborhood. We own corner stores, live in run-down apartments that get too little light, and walk the same streets day after day. We spend our afternoons gazing lazily out of windows. Somnambulists, all of us. Someone else said it better: we wake to sleep and sleep to wake. (Mengestu 35)

Mengestu reflects upon the general image of less fortunate Afropolitans, because Sepha resembles many other space invaders (im)obilized as well in their workplaces. Farouq in Cole's *Open City* has successfully migrated from Tétouan in Morocco but remains sealed off in a corner-shop selling treats to by-passers instead of becoming a writer (102-104). Jende in Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* aspires to leave his village in Cameroon and succeed as a 'conquero[r] with pockets full of dollars' (19) but is incarcerated in a limo driving around his mobile boss. The women in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* dream of making it as businesswomen in Euro-America but remain immobile in their cabins while being frequented by passing clients (237-238). Bandele in Atta's *A Bit of Difference* no longer leaves his desk in his London apartment when finishing his novel about mobile characters appealing to the reading habits of a mobile white readership (51). Workplaces such as corner-shops, limousines, cabins, or desks thus in Afropolitan literature disable Selasi's notion of the Afropolitan being at home in the world as soon as the home becomes a sedentary trap of immobility and the neoliberal ethos. Sepha therefore contests his neoliberalized workplace-as-home through turning the store into a space of cosmopolitan solidarity, using post-neoliberal tactics.

The store of Africanized cosmopolitan solidarity

Realizing that he is trapped, Sepha tries to resist neoliberal realities by turning the shop into a center of cosmopolitan solidarity that universalizes African ethics and, like Cole's post-neoliberal imaginary of Lagos, promotes an African communalism that occludes the logics of capitalism, best captured when Sepha allows his customers to steal:

In the afternoon a short line of kids on their way home from school jostles to get in One of them, a bald-headed boy with wide, emphatic eyes that remind me of Naomi's when she wants something from me or her mother, picks up a candy bar and slides it into the sleeve of his puffy coat, where it disappears into the warm nook of his bent wrist. He looks up at me for a second to see if I caught him. His eyes say it all. They say, "This is what I want. All you have to do is let me have it." I agree, and with a smile and a simple nod of my head, he walks off. He's happy, and for a few seconds I'm happy for him. (Mengestu 39)

Unlike Cole's African ethics emerging especially from the Yoruba, Sepha is informed by an East African sharing system found, for instance, in southern Ethiopia. In great detail Soga reveals that pastoral societies, such as the Borana and the Gabra, have developed a 'coexistence system' (357, 362-363) when it comes to resources. Sharing is enabled by 'cross-cutting ties, or inter-ethnic clans' (363) based on nomadic mobilities. Sepha's empathy, infused with these axioms of sharing, momentarily paralyzes his entrepreneurial ambitions. It is not only directed at the school kids but also at other poor residents of the African American neighborhood, such as the sex workers who regularly shoplift 'a bag of chips or a can of soda, knowing all along that [Sepha] could see them but didn't care' (Mengestu 38). Instead of interpreting the neoliberalized workplace-as-home as a cash cow, through which he ought to compete over scarce resources with other poor residents, he understands his home as a communalistic space, where resources are mobilized through circulatory sharing and where the individual profits from the collective and vice versa. Whereas Nussbaum refers to a Euro-American cosmopolitanism when mentioning that 'class, rank, status, national origin and location [were] treated by the Cynics as secondary and morally irrelevant attributes' ("Kant" 29), Mengestu seems to proclaim that Africanness can enrich cosmopolitan discourse substantially because power relations have been considered secondary in African spaces even before Greece's ancient cities gained significance. Not only does Sepha hand out goods, he also realizes that Kenneth wants to support him financially: 'I know that if I let him, he would pull from his pocket the missing \$26.16 and slide it into the cash register. Anything to make me feel better' (Mengestu 5). The workplace, consequently, develops into a space of post-neoliberal resistance that is restructured by notions of East African pastoralism. Sepha begins to open and close his shop 'at odd hours' (4) and drives away the last 'few regular customers' (4). He no longer cares about profits: "Do you even care?" I shook my head' (4). When following random tourists and leaving the front door unlocked he 'breaks the destructive rhythm of his shopkeeping' (Vermeulen 87) and eventually

invites local residents to circulate goods. Instead of investing into the shabby interior, he contributes to the store's demise, leaving water stains on the ceiling and ignoring the paint peeling (Mengestu 70). He also deliberately attempts driving away potential customers: 'There are eggs rotting in the back of the refrigerator. Expired packages of bread are crowded together in the second aisle. A thick layer of dust hangs over the paper towels, toilet papers, and diapers' (70-71). Leaving and neglecting the store must therefore be interpreted as a mode of resistance (cf. Olopade, *Go West* 147), which creates a 'mobility *with* freedom' (Vermeulen 88) that opens up potentialities and disrupts the neoliberal narrative. This Africanized form of cosmopolitan solidarity established disables power relations and is open to anyone. The store, for instance, turns into a transnational Afropolitan micro-community (cf. Knudsen and Rahbek 228; Carpio 69) for Joseph and Kenneth, who regularly visit Sepha to stand in front of an old map of Africa and play a memory game which includes 'failed coups, rebellions, minor insurrections, guerrilla leaders, and the acronyms of as many rebel groups as [they] can find' (Mengestu 8), redirecting the Afropolitan space to Africa's archive of constant transformation and uncertainties (cf. Mbembe, "Internet"; Kleist 4). The store through this redirection of transnational mobilities mutates into a surrogate home:

The dynamics between Sepha, Joseph, and Kenneth [are] born out of a strange empty space to some degree. All three characters have lost their homes, are sort of isolated, lonely men, and yet together the three of them manage to again create the sort of surrogate little family around Sepha's store, and it's probably the only community that any of them have. (Mengestu qtd. in Reed)

The workplace, however, also becomes a surrogate home for Naomi and Judith, who enter the store to have dinner (Mengestu 131) and escape their neoliberalized home-as-house. When Sepha 'pull[s] down the metal grate and turn[s] the blinds and shut[s] off the fluorescent lights' (132), he actively reclaims the workplace, which liberates him from the restrictions of global capitalism: 'We used the lamp that I kept behind the counter and lit a row of tea candles The light gave the store a warmth and glow that I had thought of as being reserved exclusively for homes' (132). The store of Afropolitan solidarity, like the communal kitchen and the living room in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* or the braiding salon in Adichie's *Americanah*, becomes a space that Africans of the world enter to connect. It is, however, both post-racial and post-neoliberal because it also invites non-African world citizens, such as Naomi or Judith.

To establish even more pressing forms of resistance, Mengestu then turns the Afropolitan micro-community into a location where post-neoliberal ethics are spread through a cosmopolitan education informed by East African entanglements. Sepha regards the shop as an educational space of transgression (cf. Nussbaum, "Patriotism"; Appiah, "Education"; hooks) that merges East African story telling and world literature in order to further marginalize entrepreneurial ambitions and locate strategic nomadic escape mobilities (cf. Oba and Lusigi) that save him from being stuck

in the neoliberalized workplace-as-home. When Sepha and Naomi create 'an entire universe populated exclusively with animals' (Mengestu 30) through which the 'world [is] made simple' (30), Mengestu introduces the fable, a prominent form of Ethiopian oral literatures (cf. Getahun and Kassu 59-60; Lobban), into the store. According to Molvaer, children of all age in Ethiopia are told folk-tales by their parents before going to bed because of their 'educational value' (72). Since animals in folk-tales mostly have stereotyped characteristics, fables often function as educational tools (cf. 73, 166-169). Nomadic societies like the Afar in particular rely on these 'oral methods of communication and storage of ecological, social, political, and religious information' (Balehegn 457) to sustain mobilities and change locations in some of the most inhospitable and forbidding deserts of the world (cf. Balehegn 457; W. Davis 19). Accordingly, orators are treated with immense authority among the Afar society because nomadic mobilities are sustained through ecological philosophies embedded in and transmitted by storytelling (cf. Balehegn 460; W. Davis 20). When Naomi brings a number of books from the local library to the store and both read 'the history of the laurel tree in Greek mythology, a passage about the mountain lion in North America, and then the last pages of *The Brothers Karamazov*' (Mengestu 89), Sepha thus becomes a storyteller contesting notions of the fixed and sedentary workplace as home and its neoliberal ethos. As both complete Dostoyevsky's novel in the following three days (102-103), Sepha 'begins to come alive' (Mengestu qtd. in Reed) because he knows that he needs to transmit cosmopolitan values through reading sessions in order to survive in an inhospitable neoliberalized environment:

I slipped into the characters as I read, I grumbled and bellowed, slammed my fist onto the counter, and threw my arms wide open. I knew this was exactly what my father would have done had he been the one reading. He would have made the story an event, as grand and real as life. He must have told me hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of stories, not just at night, but throughout the course of any given day, over breakfast, during lunch, in the middle of conversation he might be carrying on with my mother or friends The stories he invented himself he told with particular delight. (Mengestu 104)

Reading extracts from the novel, Sepha, like his father, waves his 'hands wildly in the air' (105), grumbles 'in a deep baritone' (105), and tries 'as hard as [he] could to do [his] father proud' (105). He teaches Naomi emotions, such as compassion and love, which are needed in post-neoliberal settings: 'Naomi found each of the characters as real as anyone she met in the street When it came to Alyosha . . . she was willing to fall completely in love' (105). Mengestu, at this point, denotes how literature encourages readers to create an empathic understanding for people with different backgrounds in order to share their experiences (cf. Nussbaum, *Cultivating* 89). Furthermore, he indicates how an Africanization of literature's transmission can create notions of home based on social affiliations. The novel thus sets out how a rooted cosmopolitanism merely through fiction becomes a post-neoliberal form of resistance, as explained by Johansen in detail:

Central to the territorialized cosmopolitanism . . . is its mutability and resistance to totalizing and

deterministic discourse. Cosmopolitanism is understood here as an interpretative practice, with myriad expressive possibilities The centrality of interpretation to territorialized cosmopolitanism lends itself, then, to the narrative practices elaborated in extended prose narratives I find that the sympathetic identifications engendered by extended prose narratives, the experience of absorption and elaboration, and the resulting interpretative possibilities make these narratives particularly useful for thinking about territorialized cosmopolitanism I argue that these narratives provide models for interpreting global connections with a flexibility often precluded by the conventions of other genres. Moreover, the texts . . . are particularly attentive to reading practices that recognize the many ways that physical place shapes how subjects transform cosmopolitan interpretations into global and local action The forms of sympathy created by the texts . . . emphasize the interconnection between affective response to others and the subsequent expansion of knowledge and affiliation this affect prompts. (25-26)

Accordingly, both Sepha and Naomi, in the end, through their acquired cosmopolitan sympathy transform physical space. Sepha reads out more stories and Naomi lays her head against his arm (Mengestu 105). The friendship established forces Sepha to distance himself from his capitalistic endeavors: 'It was just enough to make me see how one could want so much more out of life' (105). Whereas in the store Naomi becomes 'stubbornly independent' (25) of her mother's notion of the house as home, Sepha frees himself from the last remaining traces of entrepreneurial ambitions. When school is closed during the holidays, he is visited by Naomi every day and even installs a stool behind the counter where his friend can rest without having to ask where to sit (102). The workplace has become a new home where the restrictions of neoliberal capitalism are undermined. Although Sepha has 'more customers than' (106) he treats 'each interruption to our reading as an assault' (106). Naomi, even after the reading sessions, refuses 'to go back home' (106). The dissolving of work-home boundaries, in the end, has a positive effect because Sepha manages to turn his workplace into a shared 'safe, familiar place' (27) where cosmopolitan encounters can take place and where individuals like Naomi, Judith, Joseph and Kenneth, regardless of their race, class, gender, or even age, can flee to in order to create post-neoliberal notions of home:

We read the newspaper together Naomi was eleven years old, and she took pride in being able to shake her head at the world. She was convinced that American foreign policy in the Middle East was a failure, that a two-state solution in Israel was inevitable, and that enough wasn't being done about the global AIDS crisis. She tucked and folded the creases in the *Washington Post* with an agility fitting an old man, and even the way she leaned against the counter, her head resting on her chin as she thumbed her way through the articles, spoke of a wisdom. (29)

This specific form of cosmopolitanism, which bears a certain resemblance to Wessendorf's corner-shop cosmopolitanism as well as Elijah Anderson's cosmopolitan contact zones found in kiosks (cf. *Canopy*; "Corner-shop"), is also mirrored in Cole's *Open City*. Farouq's corner-shop as a cosmopolitan refuge enables Julius to escape the Brussels neighborhood appalled by Belgium's right-wing Vlaams Belang and the established 'classic anti-immigrant view, which s[ees immigrants] as enemies competing for scarce resources' (107). Julius has found a post-neoliberal workplace where he can immediately make friends without any small talk: 'I introduced myself, shaking his hand, and added: How are you doing, my brother?' (101). Through discussing Ben

Jelloun's writing (cf. 102-106) both Farouq and Julius resist the power mechanisms of neoliberalized realities. Their conversation resembles the mode of conduct in Mengestu's micro-community: 'I wished the customers would stop interrupting us I extended my hand and said, I hope we can continue this conversation soon, peace. I hope so too, he said, peace' (105-106). The Afropolitan, both Cole and Mengestu suggest, might therefore be immobilized in fixed workplaces-as-homes, yet through African entanglements manages to transform them into hubs of post-neoliberal resistance. Sepha's store, however, not only disables power relations. In the end, it marks the starting point of Sepha's accessing a more genuine mobility, which is why, when being consulted by two random tourists on a tour through D.C., he leaves the workplace and becomes a nomadic wanderer (cf. Nowicka, *Transnational* 63; Harrison 85; de Certeau) who strolls through Washington, his journey at this point opening up pathways through the city and its history and illuminating an even broader ensemble of possibilities (cf. Vermeulen) in the spatial politics of home.

2.2.3 Neighborhood

The gentrified neighborhood

Following the tourists through his neighborhood, Sepha documents the latest changes brought by gentrification more thoroughly. On P-Street he realizes that a former Chinese takeaway restaurant, which was the first place where he ate at alone in D.C. after arriving in the US, had to make 'way for newer and better things' (Mengestu 75). On 14th street he finds out that a former black-owned bookstore, which sold literature on black empowerment, held open-mike readings, and offered African foods (75-76), has been replaced by 'town homes being built on the left and a two-story organic grocery store being built on the right' (75). *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, in these parts of the narrative, depicts D.C.'s longing to become a global city, which has altered the city's geography significantly and transformed once liminal neighborhoods based on social and ethnic affiliations (cf. Gerhard 111-126; Harrison 78). Considering the neighborhood another central home place (cf. Blunt and Dowling 29; Duyvendak 38-39; Morley 4, 16), Logan Circle for residents like Mrs. Davis serves as a fixed reference enabling predominantly African American and socially challenged residents to relate to a sedentary notion of the local environment, which is best captured in the conversation between Sepha and Mrs. Davis:

"It's a free country, Mrs. Davis. People can live where they like." "What do you know about free countries? You didn't even know what that was till you came here last week, and now you're telling me people can live where they like. This isn't like living in a hut, you know. People around here can't just put their houses on their backs and move on." She tried not to laugh at her own joke, but failed, and her face disappeared once more under a row of shining, perfect white teeth. (Mengestu 23)

For locals, such as Mrs. Davis, the neighborhood obviously signifies a community rooted in static physical space (cf. Duyvendak 28-29, 99; Ralph and Staeheli 520; McCabe 73). Gentrification, however, changes Logan Circle's socioeconomic and ethnic structure and erupts these roots as soon as wealthy whites like Judith arrive: 'Before Judith, these were the only reasons white people had ever come into the neighborhood: to deliver official notices, investigate crimes, and check up on the children of negligent parents' (Mengestu 18). Sepha's observation that the neighborhood is 'changing' (23) furnishes evidence of the gentry, a new petite bourgeoisie consisting of affluent middle-class households (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 5), marginalizing residents, which Gerhard reads as an effect of Washington's aspirations of becoming a global city (133, 171) and Hackworth understands as an outcome of gentrification as a physical expression of neoliberalized cityscapes (99). According to Hackworth, gentrification, especially in the early 1990s, can even be interpreted as becoming part of a 'broader restructuring of space' (120) and must be 'connected to the broader process of neoliberal urbanism' (120). In fact it appears to have turned into a standardized procedure of urban neoliberalization taking place in cities worldwide by now: 'Since recession of the early 1990s, gentrification has expanded in virtually every city in the advanced capitalist world It could be said, in fact, that gentrification is the knife-edge neighborhood-based manifestation of neoliberalism' (149; see also N. Smith, *New Urban Frontier*; "New Globalism"). Keeping in mind that Washington, from the 1990s on, also aimed at partaking in the newly erected global city urbanities, gentrification functioned as the neoliberalizing instrument of a cosmopolitanized capital city. In the 1980s and 1990s the average median income increased from 23,800\$ to 57,200\$ and at the turn of the millennium Washington belonged to the 5% of the United States' most expensive metropolises (Gerhard 132). In Adams Morgan, which borders on Logan Circle and Dupont Circle, houses averaging around 30,000\$ in the 1970s at the date of *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bear's* publication cost more than 700,000\$ and one-room-apartments sold for at least 300,000\$ (cf. Gerhard 173), making Logan Circle one of the neighborhoods most affected by gentrification nationwide. Mrs. Davis's comment that residents 'around here can't just put their houses on their backs and move on' (Mengestu 23) reveals that Logan Circle's residents do not have the financial means needed to relocate and that gentrification incites the re-/displacement of the have-nots by the haves: 'It's not right. These people coming in like that and forcing us out' (189). Many residents are, subsequently, evicted and Sepha too loses his store because his '[b]usiness had steadily slowed down since the neighborhood first began to change' (188). Mengestu hence calls attention to the negative consequences of gentrification through showing that global neoliberalization in more local contexts comes 'at the expense of the needs of home, community, family, and everyday social life' (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 73).

Arnett remarks that Sepha, at this particular moment, is displaced again, this time 'by the neoliberal economic revolution reclaiming urban space from the structurally disenfranchised, at the cost of their further disenfranchisement' (119). Mengestu through Mrs. Davis's comment also briefly relates to discussions encircling the question whether Afropolitanism even constructs new racial binaries between African immigrants and African Americans (e.g. Chude-Sokei; Varvogli; Tveit). Her sarcastic yet xenophobic comment calls attention to the problem that the neoliberal revolution might reduce solidarities within black communities. The depiction of the Logan Circle neighborhood hence must be read as a fierce comment on Selasi's stance that the Afropolitan feels at home in the G8 cities. The Afropolitan space invaders, 'the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you' ("Bye-Bye"), in the end, even exacerbate the process of gentrification. Like the nameless narrator in *Every Day is for the Thief*, predominantly 'globetrotting, mixed-race blacks or migrant and 'newly diasporized' Africans' (Ede, "Politics" 88) like Judith's former husband, the 'celebrated economist' (Mengestu 206) with 'multiple ancestries: part black, part Arab, with perhaps even a touch of the French colonist' (206), are allowed to move within the space of flows installed in global cities. They do, however, simultaneously exclude immobilized residents from their own homes when destroying their neighborhoods and worsening economic inequality and residential segregation, as explained by Mrs. Davis at the congregation held at the Second AME Church:

I can't even begin to count how many old friends I've had to say good-bye to in the past six months. These are people just like you and me. Some of them have been living here their whole lives just to find that one day they can't afford to pay the rent. I don't have to tell you that this isn't right. We all know that. (199)

Ayad espouses a neoliberalized cosmopolitanism that produces antagonisms and mutual exclusiveness. His engagement with the local neighborhood 'does not extend beyond' (Harrison 80) Judith's house-as-home and forges a politics of exclusion (cf. McCabe 100). This absolutist notion of a neoliberalized cosmopolitanism (cf. Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism* 134) can also be detected in *Open City* when Julius points out that the World Trade Center buildings erected on Washington Market replaced the Christian Syrian neighborhood established in the 1800s (59) because transnationally operating professionals needed to expand their cosmopolitan universes (cf. Nowicka, *Transnational*). In Mengestu's novel the local residents, in return, assimilate Afropolitan space invaders like Ayad into a neoliberal TCC, which at the congregation are homogenized: 'What are they doing here anyway. They have their own neighborhoods and now they want ours too. It's bad enough that they have all the jobs and schools' (200). Although Sepha tries to enfranchise all residents and approaches Judith's house even after her car has been broken into, Ayad remains indifferent and stays in the fortified home, leaning against the doorway and watching how Judith mourns her destroyed vehicle (208). Ayad and Judith are given the chance to interact and negotiate

their neighborhood but instead chose to isolate themselves from the local residents. The locals, in return, are given the chance to negotiate with the TCC at the congregation but as soon as Judith explains that she shares the residents' concerns she is yelled down (200). Instead, a petition to the city council is distributed, in which the long-time residents of Logan Circle explain that they 'oppose the further exploitation of [their] community by developers' (201). Absolutist notions of the neighborhood exclude each other and as a result Judith's house is burnt down by a person named Franklin Henry Thomas, who has recently lost his one-bedroom apartment after his lease expired and he was asked by his landlord to then pay nearly a third more than he had paid before (225). Through Sepha's comment that the 'name was so decidedly American, so quintessentially colonial in its rhythm and grandeur' (225), Mengestu signals that the neighborhood as a home place ought to be negotiated beyond absolutist terms.

The neighborhood as Africanized arrival neighborhood

Logan Circle, in the end, does not remain a gentrified neighborhood but is instead transformed into a crucial arrival site for migrants that resembles Saunders' concept of the arrival city, which is not merely a static 'place for living and working, for sleeping and eating and shopping' (10) but, most significantly, 'a place of transition' (10). According to Saunders, an arrival city is inhabited by people in transition, who are eventually longing for sustainable social, economic and political futures in the core city (11). The arrival city is, consequently, itself also 'a place in transition, for its streets, homes and established families will either someday become part of the core city itself or will fail and decay into poverty or be destroyed' (11). Despite the misleading term, Saunders' cosmopolitan concept predominantly relates to neighborhoods because his attempt to unite the immigrant neighborhoods found in global cities and coin a term that replaces conventional names such as 'immigrant gateway' (19) or 'community or primary settlement' (19) can in Mengestu's work be detected on a more local level only affecting the neighborhood as a home place. When arguing that arrival cities should not be regarded as inexpensive fixed dwellings of poor people but instead as dynamic places with a transitory role (*Arrival* 19), African points of entanglements seem to enrich Saunders' conceptualization because the neighborhood is eventually 'uprooted' (Duyvendak 74; Ralph and Staeheli 525) and roots based on physical spaces and sedentary notions of home are replaced by notions of mobility and transformation infused with a rooted cosmopolitanism. These roots are, essentially, African as long as, in Njami's words, Africa is perceived as 'a continent in constant mutation' (15), a 'mountain in the making' (15). Potentialities of the transitory and mobile arrival neighborhood are in this case opened by Afropolitanism because the uprooted neighborhood manages to produce new sites of contestation and encounter, and partake in a geography of

circulation and mobility (Mbembe and Balakrishnan 33-34) only as soon as the nomad's archive of transformation and mutation is added to the narrative by Sepha to overcome dichotomies composed by neoliberalized cosmopolitanism. Mengestu traces the four processes proposed by Saunders in *Arrival City*.

First, the neighborhood helps the Afropolitan space invader create and maintain a network which provides a sense of protection and security (cf. Saunders 20). Sepha, having fled Ethiopia's Red Terror, moves into his uncle's apartment, which is located in a building inhabited exclusively by Ethiopians who have moved there after the revolution (Mengestu 115). In this space, his uncle shares everything and installs a communalistic entry-gate into the capitalistic neighborhood:

When I first came to this apartment, my uncle sat me down on the couch in the living room and proceeded to lecture me about what I could expect to find now that I was in America. "Everything that is in this apartment," he said, "belongs to you as much as it does to me. Outside of this apartment, though, you have nothing. Nothing is yours. Nothing belongs to you. Take nothing for granted. No one here will give you anything for free. There is no such thing as that in America. People will only give you something because they think they will get something in return." (139)

Once protected and secure, Sepha establishes a human network with Kenneth and Joseph, which helps him transit from 'village to arrival city to established city' (Saunders 20). The arrival neighborhood is at this point Africanized as notions of a cosmopolitan hospitality are transported into Sepha's neighborhood through an Afropolitan framework re-directing the forces of globalisation:

[N]eighbourhoods, communities and nations are 'internally globalized' and 'cosmopolitanized' by complex global circulations of commodities and cultures that accompany the flows of tourism and migration For those who travel as well as for those who ostensibly stay home, social life is increasingly comprised of 'strange encounters' These new intersections and proximities bring the provocative dilemma of hospitality – how do we welcome the stranger? – urgently back to centre stage, reframing it against the contemporary concerns of a mobile world. (Germann Molz and Gibson 2)

Mengestu indicates how particularly modes of African hospitality prevalent in East African (semi-)pastoral societies can help reshape these encounters. Gathogo, for instance, outlines that African pre-industrial hospitality 'expresses the African sense of communality' (276) and is deeply anchored in everyday life in East Africa, for instance when it comes to 'communal willingness to assist each other' (279) or being 'generous in providing food and shelter for the needy and services for whoever needs help' (279). Ethiopia, in particular, has been praised (e.g. Getahun 178) as a place where travelers and foreigners throughout history have been welcomed with hospitality, which Molvaer confirms: 'People of different ethnic and religious backgrounds mix fairly freely with each other on the local level of Ethiopian life . . . it is both a custom and a duty to show hospitality to strangers, especially with travellers who have nowhere else to go' (133). These ethics are also stressed by Chikago Oba, who explains how in Borana-land in South Ethiopia different ethnic groups have co-existed through sharing goods and establishing networks (274), which

connect sedentary and mobile lives and are essentially transethnic (280). Especially the urban Borana, who as former pastoral societies have begun to live in sedentary settlements, through modes of hospitality manage to keep afloat notions of mobility in their neighborhoods (cf. C. Oba). Similar modes of hospitality are also present in other Afropolitan novels. When Darling, in *We Need New Names*, gets to stay with her aunt in the US, or when Chikwava's unnamed asylum-seeking narrator, in *Harare North*, lives in a Brixton squat, an African spirit of communality is, for instance, also maintained through Shona ethics (cf. Mandova and Chingombe 103). The arrival neighborhood in Mengestu's D.C., like the home spaces defined by Shona ethics, hence becomes a spatial expression of an Afropolitan framework comprising flows of East African ethics, and functions as a shared and relational community space that takes in people regardless of boundaries. Mengestu seems to have adapted Mbembe's stance that Afropolitanism relates to the embracing of 'strangeness, foreignness and remoteness' ("Afropolitanism" 28) and forges the 'ability to recognise one's face in that of a foreigner and make the most of the traces of remoteness in closeness' (28). Logan Circle enables Sepha to fit into a pre-dominantly poor African American neighborhood. In return he welcomes affluent white newcomers like Judith as well as the gay community on 17th street: 'This . . . is all I want out of life, to sit here on these plastic lawn chairs and watch the parade of skinny and muscular men, old and young, as they flirt' (Mengestu 77). Instead of fighting new residents with bricks and homogenizing them, he wants to integrate arrivals like Judith into local networks and resist absolutist notions of the neighborhood as well as inaccurate accusations: 'I was convinced that if given enough space and time, a conclusion would have been drawn that held "them" responsible not only for the evictions in the neighborhood, but for every slight and injury each person in that room had suffered . . .' (200). Like the Stoic cosmopolitans, who according to Nussbaum were 'aware that politics divides people and that it encourages them to think of other groups as alien and hostile' ("Kant" 32) and therefore insisted 'strongly on a process of empathetic understanding whereby we come to respect the humanity even of our political enemies' (32), Sepha sees the home as a relational field of potentialities and opens the arrival neighborhood to anybody: 'We all essentially wanted the same things, which was to feel that we had a stake in shaping and defining what little part of the world we could claim as our own' (Mengestu 211). Home no longer reproduces dichotomies between haves and have-nots, blacks and whites, or hetero- and homosexuals but instead espouses a cosmopolitan openness essential in times of migration when every third person of the world's population is moving from village to city (cf. Saunders 21). A 'capacity to embrace what is new, what is novel' (Mbembe, "Internet") can thus, in fact, be encouraged by the trajectories of Afropolitanism. African ethics are transported through an Afropolitan 'mind of movement [which] calls for innovations' (Makokha 19) and are planted into an

Africanized arrival neighborhood, which itself becomes transitory and unhinged from fixed spaces.

Second, the neighborhood triggers an entry mechanism by providing cheap housing and assisting in finding entry-level jobs (Saunders 20). Sepha remembers that it was easy to catch sight of an available apartment in Logan Circle because there 'was a "For Rent" sign in just about every building [he] passed' (Mengestu 143). As soon as he is employed by the Capitol Hotel as a valet (1) he relocates into a space which propels arrivals into the core of the city (Saunders 18), where he can identify with his neighbors when it comes to boundaries of class and make himself at home through social networks: 'When I moved into the neighborhood I did so because it was all I could afford, and because secretly I loved the circle for what it had become: proof that wealth and power were not immutable, and America was not always so great after all' (Mengestu 16). Logan Circle allows arriving immigrants like Sepha to 'sn[eak] in' (189) and effortlessly socialize with local residents like Mrs. Davis, who has lived in the neighborhood for twenty-three years (22). In return he accepts other arrivals such as the homeless, drug addicts, or anarchists occupying abandoned houses in his neighborhood just as much as the new petite bourgeoisie (4, 15-16). Sepha's ethos and his claim to embrace any newcomers are informed by the ethics of flexibility and innovation and thus, after all, by his Africanness: '[T]here is no other part of the world where people are forced by bad circumstances to innovate as much as in this continent. It's a constant, permanent innovation. If you do not innovate in ways of thinking, in ways of making things, you won't be able to survive' (Mbembe, "Internet"). Similar claims can be found in other Afropolitan novels often focusing on London as an arrival neighborhood. In *Harare North*, Chikwava's narrator stays in the Brixton squat and in this arrival neighborhood manages to turn his homelessness into dwelling, finding jobs on the black market as an entry mechanism (cf. Stebbing; Perfect). In return he accepts other less fortunate squatters. This view of the home, which Stebbing defines 'a way of being in the world, a network of connections that rests in multiple locations in which individuals can express themselves and have a sense of belonging' (106), according to Perfect enables Chikwava to explore contemporary multicultural London as 'an inclusive, hospitable city that welcomes outsiders' (178). In *Rhumba*, Flambeau is given the chance to dwell in Eleanor's London apartment on a 'rickety sofa' (Proctor 95), waiting for his mother from the Congo. Obinze in *Americanah*, living in the British capital as an illegal resident, is enabled to work under Vincent's NI number (Adichie 310) and get into an arranged marriage that is supposed to work as an entry mechanism both for him and his arranged wife Cleo, who explains that she wants to help out her mom in Angola because '[t]hings are tight at home' (283), denizens in 'the arrival city send[ing] cash provid[ing] basic lines of credit to the village' (Saunders 283). The arrival neighborhood, be it in Washington D.C. or in London, thus espouses an inclusive conceptualization of home which is transitory and keeps afloat a constant

flow of arrivals.

Third, the neighborhood works as an urban establishment platform, which allows migrants like Sepha to open a small business like a grocery store and gain support by social networks providing informal resources (cf. Saunders 20). Kenneth teaches him 'how to keep track of [his] accounts, make lists, order supplies and goods, and balance [his] budget' (Mengestu 143). Joseph comes up with the name and designs 'leaflets to pass around the neighborhood' (143). The shortcomings of formal neoliberalized spaces are compensated for by communalistic approaches, which help establish a platform infused with East African ethics of sharing circulating goods, for instance considered a central 'life strategy' (C. Oba 276) in urban Borana-land, where anyone can be a trader, even those without any capital. A system of petty trading, Chikago Oba notes, makes it simple to start a business on markets even without capital and then become a trader selling a variety of goods (276). According to Sepha these platforms should be open to anyone and aspire to constant flows and transformation. He consequently also accepts the 'two-story organic grocery store' (Mengestu 75) erected in his neighborhood and opens up the Africanized arrival neighborhood to anyone, even 'newer and better things, whatever they may eventually be' (75).

After all, Logan Circle is understood as a space providing a social-mobility path into the core of Washington D.C., which is the fourth process proposed by Saunders. In the arrival neighborhood Sepha has become part of the permanently employed ranks of the upper working class residents and can access the core city through generated financial opportunities (cf. Saunders 20-21). Sepha realizes that the Africanized neighborhood has supported his arrival in D.C., which has become his home: 'So, this is the city that I've made my life and home. It seems important now to think of it in that way. To consider it not in fragments or pieces, but as a unified whole' (Mengestu 173). Logan Circle, however, can only remain a mobile place of transition if notions of mobility are continuously re-infused. Especially Oba and Lusigi stress that nomads need to adapt both to 'resource exploitation mobility' (par. 22-23, 29) as well as 'escape mobility' (par. 22, 29) in order to maximise livestock survival but also escape drought conditions (cf. par. 22). This explains Judith's reaction when finding out that her house is burnt down by protesters: 'When Judith finally arrived to reclaim what was left of her home, there was a simple, almost casual pragmatism that governed her actions. It was as if she had known all along that her time in Logan Circle was only temporary' (Mengestu 223). Sepha too acknowledges that his living in Logan Circle is only temporary. He is displaced by his eviction but he is also displaced by his own arrival neighborhood when being attacked by protesters, who throw a brick at his store (220). Sepha towards the novel's closing thus remains happy to claim the store entirely as his own (228), yet he knows that home can only be produced in transitory spaces and that he needs to begin the search alternative notions of home.

2.2.4 Nation

Ghettoized nation as home

When strolling through D.C., Sepha thereupon also reflects on his uncle's apartment as well as the national monuments lining the streets, investigating how physical space functions as an imagined homeland. The predominantly Euro-American idea that a nation serves as an imagined spatial entity with finite boundaries (cf. B. Anderson 7), reveals to Sepha not only how the idea of a tangible homeland is related to the politics of place and identity. It also discloses how spaces of home can inscribe 'geographies of inclusion and exclusion' (Blunt and Dowling 159), which are based on neoliberal capitalism at the same time spanning transnational global webs integrating laborers with different national backgrounds while erecting new national borders from within (cf. Nevins; Balibar; Nketiah; Hall, "The question"). Like Kenneth and Joseph, Sepha has been given access to the United States to work and spur competition among laborers (cf. Eagleton-Pierce 33), yet he remains a foreign outsider even after having lived in the nation's capital for seventeen years because his Africanness does not conform to ideals of the privileged American nation. The notion of an inclusive yet exclusive imagined home limited to a specific locale conceptualizing land as a palpable resource (cf. Eigler 2; Morley 34; Urry, *Sociology* 137) is in the novel physically manifest in national landmarks. These ought to appeal to the national citizens' mystified collective national narrative (cf. Hall, "The question" 293; Urry, *Sociology* 147). The American tourists, for instance, who, as Sepha imagines, come from 'a split-level ranch in the suburbs of some midsize city: St. Louis, Kansas City, or Tulsa' (Mengestu 78), approach the General Logan monument as the physical icon of a glorified civil war hero and look at it to reaffirm the historical account of their nation's 'foundational myth' (Hall, "The question" 294), a strategy that Urry explains: 'Since the mid-nineteenth century travel to see the key sites, texts, exhibitions, buildings, landscapes and achievements of a society has singularly developed that cultural sense of a national imagined presence' (*Sociology* 149). They then walk to the White House and point out that it is the place 'where our president lives' (Mengestu 77), identifying it as a spatial expression of their homeland's idealized sociopolitical integrity. Home for the privileged consists of the mystified memories and presences of an imagined place that is manifest in a grounded locale and thus functions as a source of national identities. The 'enormous fold-up maps' (71) support them when constructing mental cityscapes 'on the basis of a totalizing classification' (B. Anderson 173). These then re-allocate the exclusive capital city as a spatial focal point of the nation to the privileged Americans. Sepha, Joseph, and Kenneth, as underprivileged non-US-citizens, are, consequently, banned from accessing these national landmarks and thus the nation as home. For Joseph and Kenneth, who once spent 'hours standing in front of Lincoln's massive, imposing figure, seated on his throne with an

indifferent gaze cast toward the city' (Mengestu 47), it has now 'been years since either of them has gone near those buildings' (47). Sepha admits that he wishes that General Logan was 'a hero to us all' (72), including residents not born on US American soil. Jende and Neni, in *Behold the Dreamers*, in a similar fashion sit down beneath the statue of Christopher Columbus (Mbue 95), approaching it as the 'center of America' (96). Mengestu, however, crushes these idealized physical fixtures when pointing out that Afropolitan space invaders remain excluded from the idea that the USA can become their homeland: 'There is no mystery left in any of those buildings for us, and at times I wonder how there ever could have been' (Mengestu 46). Neoliberal competition ensuring 'by definition, winners and losers' (Eagleton-Pierce 37) thus produces an American nation that through the globalized economy of signs (cf. Lash and Urry, *Economies*) is economically inclusive, even beyond its shores: 'After seventeen years here, I am certain of at least one thing: the liberal idea of America is at its best in advertising' (Mengestu 98). It can not, however, become home for Afropolitan space invaders as long as they are not considered national citizens because of their Africanness. This is best captured in spatial domains when Sepha describes a group of older black women who as underprivileged residents, like Chinedu in *Every Day is for the Thief*, are expelled from the city's infrastructure when being thrown off a bus at the wrong junction. These 'losers' have to take the bus back in the opposite direction (cf. 74), because they can not generate a sense of orientation and remain unable to find their way in an illegible (cf. Lynch; Harrison 84-85) capital city reserved for the privileged 'winners': 'They shake their heads, lost. I imagine them doing this all day and night, traveling back and forth to the edge of the known world only to return, in the end, to the broken neighborhood they had just left' (Mengestu 74).

Instead the Afropolitan space invader is allocated to the periphery of the imagined homeland and fixed in ghettoized transnational spaces. Mengestu here sets the novel within the broader context of transnational studies (e.g. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc; Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer; Bauböck and Faist; Hartner and Schneider; Levitt, "Transnational"; Levitt and Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing") and its emphasis on African immigrants (e.g. Johnson Osirim; Adebayo and Adesina). Upon arrival from Ethiopia, Sepha finds himself in his uncle's apartment, where he encounters 'an entire world made up of old lives and relationship transported perfectly intact from Ethiopia' (Mengestu 115-116). Ethiopia, he realizes, has been transposed to the apartment complex. He is joined by fellow national citizens, who, like his uncle, moved there after the 1974 revolution but found out that they eventually 'would never leave' (115) the former homeland. Within his uncle's apartment the Afropolitan is given the chance to imagine the homeland through transnational memories: 'Living here is as close to living back home as one can get' (116). The marginalized Ethiopian enclave, however, is accepted within the homeland's

neoliberalized realities only if it is kept beyond the visible. Although Washington, D.C. ranges among the most significant hubs for the Ethiopian immigrant community in the US (cf. Gerhard 130-131; Getahun 116; Lyons 592), the apartment complex in Silver Spring is located on D.C.'s margins, far away from the core city. As most local residents leave the train upon approaching Silver Spring Station, Sepha witnesses a sense of 'solitude and isolation' (Mengestu 113) and on the walk from the station to the apartment complex he feels 'like a sad, pathetic creature' (114). The geographies of exclusion are at this point inscribed upon his body and manifested through the 'hostile glares of the drivers' (114) passing him in their cars. In the complex Sepha explores transnational Ethiopian spaces, where the older women move from apartment to apartment 'as if they were still walking through the crowded streets of Addis' (116) and where complete floors are organized like 'minor villages with children, grandchildren, parents, and in-laws all living within shouting distance of one another' (116). Yet these spaces do not enable Sepha to conceptualize Ethiopia as his homeland. Outlining that there is a 'terror to those floors' (116), as each apartment door is 'guarded by a young woman who stepped into the doorway and stared at [him] with more apprehension and fear that [he has] ever been greeted with' (116), Mengestu indicates that Ethiopia's violent history is bundled in this sedentary enclave and that Sepha's Africanness is reduced to being associated with a fixed geographical entity he was expelled from after his father's murder. In the apartment he is haunted by memories of the Red Terror that led to his father's death (125-130). He can not, however, leave the enclave because spaces outside the ghettoized transnational enclave are conceived of as taboo:

For the first three weeks I was here in this apartment I didn't speak to a single person besides my uncle, and even then our conversations were brief and strained. I rarely left the apartment, nor did I want to. Any connection, whether it was to a person, building, or time of day, would have been deceitful, and so I avoided making eye contact with people I didn't know, and tried to deny myself even the simplest of pleasures. (140)

Being in the world within neoliberalized realities thus becomes a state of a bi-directional exclusion and the notion of the nation as home, ultimately, ineffective – a problem that Selasi identifies as being 'lost in transnation' ("Bye-Bye"). Especially Beck and Glick Schiller, however, have criticized that within migration studies, conceptual boundaries produced by methodological nationalism are still common. Beck, on the one hand, argues that methodological nationalism is not suitable to meet the challenges of the global age because it 'operates on the either-or-principle, excluding the possibility of both' ("Cosmopolitanism" 164). The opposition between "us" or "them" (164) or "in" or "out" (164), he laments, 'does not capture the reality of blurring boundaries' (164). Glick Schiller, on the other hand, complains that scholars of transnational migration have not managed to 'link their descriptions of migrant local and trans-border connections to analyses of new

flexible modes of capital accumulation and the contemporary neo-liberal restructuring of space' ("Theorising migration" 111). Mengestu thus, through the novel, comments on Selasi's essay as well as migration studies failing to address the migrant's problems when trying to explore localities impeded by fixed national boundaries. Other Afropolitan space invaders too remain incapable of creating a sense of home related to nations. Sepha's uncle, Berhane, for instance, in order to conceptualize his sedentary national entanglements, 'turn[s] himself off every morning the moment he le[aves] his apartment for work [and] d[oes]n't turn himself back on until ten or twelve hours later when he return[s] home' (Mengestu 141-142). These entanglements, however, dissolve, as textualized in the uncle's words to President Carter when pointing out that he is 'one of those people for whom nothing is left of their home country' (123): 'Everything I have has been taken away from me' (123). Mengestu's outcry that the space invader is 'never going to return to Ethiopia again' (175) is also reflected by Cole's nameless narrator, who explains that the word 'home' in his mouth feels 'like foreign food' (*Every Day* 156), or by Bandele, who highlights that 'Nigeria is not [*his*] home' (Atta, *Difference* 50). Sepha, accordingly, must refrain from observing the tourists and instead reflect on the nation as home from a translocated perspective activating African cosmologies, signaling how Afropolitan literature through Africanization can also locate more productive connections between the country of origin and the United States.

Translocating home through East African cosmologies

Returning to Logan Circle towards the end of his wanderings, Sepha realizes that the American national capital resembles Addis Ababa: 'There was a park in Addis that looked just like Logan Circle does from a distance, with a few minor adjustments' (Mengestu 216). He also detects a portrait of Frederick Douglass bearing a resemblance to a picture of the former Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie (176). According to Harrison, Mengestu begins to create a 'mental image of Washington [that] is inherently transnational' (86). Sepha, indeed, resembles the image of a global citizen in possession of transnational identities. Contesting the white and privileged tourists' imaginaries at this point, however, also enables the novel to further delve into debates on multi-scalar translocality (cf. Brickell and Datta 3, 6) emerging within transnational studies. I think that Mengestu here immerses in 'transwriting', a type of writing best explained by Walter:

What I call transwriting is a type of writing that moves through an interstitial space between home and within borders, traverses existing territories composed of multiple contact zones, and strives to go beyond, transforming the ambiguity of cultural in-betweenness into an interior consciousness. Times, spaces, and identities are fluid, complementary, in process. Western borders and cultural patterns (identity/alterity; exterior/interior) open up into transcultural borderlands where Western rationalism and African spirituality meet. We are dealing here with process, passage, traverse, and transition in an interstitial zone of cultural negotiations. (68)

Memories of Addis Ababa and Haile Selassie may help Sepha destabilize the sense of an imagined national homeland and the concept of a national capital as a stable origin because they unsettle their physical fixity. Yet, like the Afropolitan author through his transwriting breaking up conceptual borders still informing cosmopolitan discourse, the local entanglements infusing physical spaces with Africanness in the narrative eventually go far beyond the nation:

For at least the first two years that I was here, I was so busy passing my mother, brother, father, and friends in the aisles of grocery stores, in parks and restaurants, that at times it hardly felt as if I had really left. I searched for familiarity wherever I went. I found it in the buildings and in the layout of the streets. I saw glimpses of home whenever I came across three or four roads that intersected at odd angles, in the squat glass office buildings caught in the sun's glare . . . I used to let my imagination get the best of me. My hallucinations of home became standard. I welcomed them into my day completely. I talked to my mother from across the bus; I walked home with my father across the spare, treeless campus of my northern Virginia community college. We talked for hours. (Mengestu 175-176)

Sepha here articulates a way of being in the world that is activated by East African cosmologies giving him metaphysical access to multiscalar local spatialities. Since Ethiopian philosophy (e.g. Sumner; Presbey 423; Kiros; Girma) understands human personhood in terms of metaphysical interdependency, he locates a way of living with his ancestors that allows an imaginative return (cf. Urry, *Sociology* 155; Hatfield 58) to his homeland. After all, particularly nomadic societies like the Borana cultivate African mobilities in this respect. According to their Waq belief system the Borana, for instance, need to travel to worship sites enabling them to connect to their ancestors (cf. Sobania 36-37). Like a nomad Sepha therefore refrains from conceptual boundaries such as national borders and creates multi-scalar worship sites, finding home in a wide range of connections across different spaces which become meaningful in the immediate texture of one's surroundings (Brickell and Datta 6; Nowicka, "Mobile" 16; Duyvendak 13; Accarigi 193). When connecting to his family through buildings, parks, and other public spaces, Sepha's African points of entanglements are permeated into physically manifest spaces and erupt the neoliberalized realities of the United States as an exclusive fixed geographical entity. Afropolitan translocality turns into a specific 'form of 'grounded transnationalism' – a space where deterritorialized networks of transnational social relations take shape through migrant agencies' (Brickell and Datta 3). The roots in rooted cosmopolitanism become 'portable' (Zachary 27) and Afropolitanism transforms into a post-national framework because it enables space invaders to eradicate national boundaries through transgression: 'What translocality offers that is different, is an emphasis on the local, rather than the national' (Hatfield 58). Afropolitan literature therefore contributes to discourse focussed on translocality emerging as a 'form of local-local relations . . . primarily within the debates on transnationalism' (Brickell and Datta 3) and, ultimately, the production of translocal sites in diaspora hubs like Washington:

Diasporic Ethiopians have simultaneous attachments to multiple localized places such as the cities of

Washington, D.C. and Addis Ababa and to specific neighbourhoods or blocks within these cities Neighbourhoods and localities are sites where immigrant identities are emplaced even in the highly diverse Washington metropolitan area. The Ethiopian immigrants' strategies of organizing and mobilization . . . point to both an attachment to particular cities and places within them, as well as agency on the part of the immigrants in their quest for creating localized ethnic space Immigrants' actions reflect simultaneously the group's attachment to material and symbolic spaces in the cities of Washington, D.C. and Addis Ababa as well as the national and global reach of their translocal connections. (Chacko 164)

Translocal spaces activated by African points of entanglements have lately also been approached by Selasi in her 2014 TED talk, in which she reflects on *Bye-Bye Babar* and stresses the Afropolitan's multilocality. This talk can, eventually, be interpreted as a relevant caesura in Selasi's mode of thinking. Only a year earlier, in her 2013 opening speech at the Berlin Literaturfestival, she mentioned that she had come to feel that she 'was standing in some anteroom between four doors – British, American, Ghanaian, Nigerian – locked out of all rooms' ("African Literature") and that at 'that particular moment, eight years ago, it occurred to [her] that there must be others standing in this liminal space, at this crossroads, with [her that she] called . . . 'Afropolitans' ("African Literature"). A year later, she apparently underlined that transnationalism might not help her confront the adverse conditions set up by nationalized spaces:

Last year, I went on my first book tour. In 13 months, I flew to 14 countries and gave some hundred talks. Every talk in every country began with an introduction, and every introduction began, alas, with a lie: 'Taiye Selasi comes from Ghana and Nigeria,' or 'Taiye Selasi comes from England and the States.' Whenever I heard this opening sentence, no matter the country that concluded it -- England, America, Ghana, Nigeria -- I thought, 'But that's not true.' Yes, I was born in England and grew up in the United States. My mum, born in England, and raised in Nigeria, currently lives in Ghana. My father was born in Gold Coast, a British colony, raised in Ghana, and has lived for over 30 years in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Then, one fine day . . . it hit me I'm not a national at all. How could I come from a nation? How can a human being come from a concept? . . . home for me is not my passport or accent, but these very particular experiences and the places they occur. . . . places that shape my experience. My experience is where I'm from. What if we asked, instead of 'Where are you from?' -- 'Where are you a local?' This would tell us so much more about who and how similar we are. ("Don't ask me")

It seems that Selasi too has, at least, questioned the analytical units present in her essay published ten years prior to the TED talk as well as in the 2013 opening speech, possibly reacting to changes within Afropolitan discourse triggered by literature. After all, translocality is also at the forefront of negotiations of home in other Afropolitan novels. In *Homegoing*, Marcus, who is located in the US, tries to use his 'gift of visions' (Gyasi 290) through his Ga grandmother's Akan cosmology (cf. Wiredu, "On decolonizing" 25-26) to connect with his African 'fuller family' (Gyasi 290) in Euro-American spaces: 'He would see these things while his grandmother prayed and sang, prayed and sang, and he would want so badly for all the people he made up in his head to be there in that room, with him' (290). In *We Need New Names*, Darling explains that traumatized children fleeing from their Zimbabwean homeland must leave behind 'the bones of their ancestor in the earth, leaving everything that makes them who and what they are' (Bulawayo 146) but in the US through Shona cosmology (cf. Chimuka 28-29; Chemhuru 80-81) transpose their ancestors into Euro-American

spaces when eating in fast food restaurants, 'uttering their names between mouthfuls, conjured up their hungry faces and chapped lips – eating for those who could not be with us to eat for themselves' (Bulawayo 239). In *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*, the Magistrate through Shona cosmology transposes his Zimbabwean hometown, Bindura, to the Scottish landscape to escape the realities of Edinburgh: 'Right then the saudade hit him pretty bad and, for a moment, he could see Bindura, the low prospect, the giant mine chimneys in the distance, but the memory was a flicker from an old videotape that had been dubbed over' (Huchu 18). This translocation of spaces through Shona cosmologies is, in the end, also displayed by the title of Chikwava's novel, *Harare North*. It is not unlikely that Selasi and other agents operating in cosmopolitan discourse have been affected by this expanding body of Afropolitan literature.

Mengestu's novel, however, as a work of fiction even more elaborately reveals how Afropolitanism may redirect multilocality into a mode of living. Sepha's literary voyage through D.C. has, on the one hand, opened 'important linkages between the American and its Ethiopian counterpart' (Harrison 86), enabling Mengestu to engage in a duality that gave him the ability to define himself as both completely American and Ethiopian (cf. "Dinaw Mengestu, novelist"), implanting the novel as an experience of the African diaspora into America's realities: 'The characters I'm writing about are Americans, even though they may be immigrants' (Mengestu qtd. in *The Economist*). It has also, on the other hand, suggested how literature participating in discourse on the nation can eventually empower Afropolitan fiction to contribute to negotiating spaces that are inclusive for anyone:

America doesn't have a fixed concept of itself. There is no collective meaning of what it is to be American. Anybody can sort of become American, and that's the joy of the country. If you compare it with, say, the French or the British, there is an identity of history and culture that has been going on for centuries. America doesn't have that; it's much younger and it's constantly shifting and will continue to shift. That's part of its greatness, but it's also part of its great frustration. I think there is an emptiness in that, which writers want to explore. (Mengestu qtd. in "Dinaw Mengestu, novelist")

After all, Afropolitan fiction exploring these supposedly 'empty' spaces could, as demonstrated by *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, help further break down conceptual barriers. Mengestu's literature becomes the postnational and, ultimately, post-neoliberal 'practice of the impure' (Hamid), immersing writer, reader, text, and space in 'commingling' (Hamid). An Africanization of Afropolitan spaces therefore lays bare the potentialities needed to forge resistance to the neoliberalized notion of the fixed homeland.

2.2.5 Afropolitanism as nomadic search

Two years after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication Mengestu has thus illustrated how Afropolitan spaces located between neoliberalization and Africanization can produce new impulses to stimulate cosmopolitan discourse regaining significance especially in an era of migration and displacement in Euro-America and Africa. The friction that *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* generates comes from the space invader's nomadic search that locates the Afropolitan between the sedentary and the mobile, eliciting that Afropolitanism can feed upon the notions of Africanness dispersed in cosmopolitan discourse but at the same time runs the risk of being subjugated to absolutist notions of neoliberalization. Understanding cosmopolitanism as a transpositional space that is continuously 'in the process of becoming in its nomadic thinking but never arriving at a final destination' (McCulloch 4), Mengestu hence highlights that Africanness ought to mobilize cosmopolitan discourse and thereby de-center it from within. The Afropolitan, the novel proposes, ought to change between fixed settlements, yet needs to remain mobile and stay a transitory agent. Whereas Cole locates the invader in a stable ambivalence, Mengestu stresses the mobilities that turn the Afropolitan into an empowered constant wanderer within discourse:

A wanderer who 'constructs the way' between different spatially separated places, through movement back and forth, plays an important role in human spatiality: he connects what was separated, or disconnects what was linked. In this process, [of] bridging, he overcomes spatial separation and gains power over space. Bridging points to how space is socially constructed. (Nowicka, *Transnational* 63)

The nomadic search for home hence becomes the nomadic search for Afropolitanism's definition of the 21st century African. Fictions such as *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* in this respect also help cosmopolitan discourse espouse its nomadic trajectories needed to further enhance critical knowledge (cf. Braidotti , which is best encapsulated in the novel's final words:

We walk away and try not to turn back, or we stand just outside the gates, terrified to find what's waiting for us now that we've returned. In between, we stumble blindly from one place and life to the next. We try to do the best we can. There are moments like this, however, when we are neither coming nor going, and all we have to do is sit and look back on the life we have made. (Mengestu 228)

Spatialities in literature lay out a setting that empowers cosmopolitan discourse to transform itself from within, Mengestu seems to argue. Cole would, most certainly, define the in-between state that Sepha in the concluding remarks shares with the reader as a position of stable ambivalence. Mengestu, however, puts forward the notion that only the wanderer lays bare a position of mobility that equips discourse with a post-sedentary disposition – hence the novel's title. When Mengestu signals that Sepha like Dante through mobility may be led out of supposedly hellish Ethiopia to gaze upon the possibilities of Euro-America, the title might as well reveal that cosmopolitanism through mobility ought to be led out of the hellish center of discourse to look at what is possible. Sepha's cosmopolitan home, after all, very closely resembles Hall's postulation of a mobile

cosmopolitanism in constant transition: 'I think if you understand your history as always a history of movement, migration, conquest, translation . . . you could become a cosmopolitan at home' (qtd. in Werbner 351). Sepha can find home everywhere and nowhere only if he changes between fixed locations. Discourse too, it seems, needs to abandon its essentialized positions that come with realities most often being constructed from Euro-American perspectives. Mbembe's definition best captures that cosmopolitan discourse ought to be mobilized through the *Afropolitan turn*: 'Awareness of the interweaving of the here and there, the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa, the relativisation of primary roots and memberships . . . it is this cultural, historical and aesthetic sensitivity that underlies the term 'Afropolitanism'' ("Afropolitanism" 28). Africanness, and with it the 'paradigm of itinerancy, mobility and displacement' ("Afropolitanism" 27) hence become indispensable both for Sepha and for discourse. According to Hall, who claims to 'believe in locatedness, in position, attachment, but [believes] that these are never singular, never completely determining' (qtd. in Werbner 353), this notion of a decentered cosmopolitan discourse in transition is also relevant when it comes to identity construction (cf. Hall qtd. in Werbner 347). Closely related to the literary search of home is thus the search for an Afropolitan identity, which is tackled by Unigwe and will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.3 Making sense of Afropolitan spaces: Collective identities in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009)

Shortly before being murdered, Chisom in *On Black Sisters' Street* walks Antwerp's shopping streets with 'money in her purse' (282). So far confined to an apartment on Antwerp's Zwartezusterstraat with three other women all tricked into prostitution and paying off their debt to a pimp named Dele, she now fakes the lifestyle of a cosmopolitan jet-setter with African entanglements in Ikeja traveling through Europe's capitals. Dressed up for the role and faking an American accent (255-256), she wants to resemble Selasi's Africans of the world who feel most comfortable in global cities where they can be identified by their 'funny blend of London fashion [and] New York jargon' ("Bye-Bye"). Subsequently, she pretends to be 'the sort of woman who could afford regular holidays abroad, living from hotel to hotel in cities across the globe, Mastercard and Visa Gold at her disposal' (*On Black* 258). In order to transform into 'somebody else, with a different life' (255), she shops for visible objects of material wealth such as diamond rings and yells around in a chip shop (257-259), trying to re-order her sensory organization and make herself visible and audible. Through Afropolitanizing her sensorium she aspires to adapt to a collective identity of a cosmopolitan TCC with African roots. It is, however, not on Antwerp's Keyserlei but in the apartment on Zwartezusterstraat, the epicenter of sexual exploitation, where Efe, Alek, and Ama upon Chisom's death form an Igbo women's association and become symbolic sisters. Through Africanizing their sensorium they eventually do transform into Africans of the world, who collectively 'stand up' ("Bye-Bye") and redefine 'what it means to be African' ("Bye-Bye") while being in the world.

Unigwe's novel at this point places the space invaders between different notions of collective identity formation, situating Afropolitanism both within the realms of legitimizing identities and resistance identities outlined by Castells in his *The Power of Identity*. The narrative, on the one hand, examines how neoliberal markets create a globalized 'civil society' (Castells, *Power* 8) with a set of transnational social actors and institutions that condition, entrepreneurialize/commodify, discipline and Afropolitanize the women, allocating positions through reproducing a collective identity that 'rationalizes the sources of structural domination' (*Power* 8). Afropolitanism in this case remains synonymous with an identity generated by a dominant TCC that integrates Africans into globalized systems of exploitation while marginalizing Africanness – neoliberalizing notions of neo-Marxist approaches articulated by the likes of Althusser and Gramsci. On the other hand, the sex workers form a communal opposition from within the core of global exploitation and develop a collective resistance identity, which they generate as 'actors who are in positions/conditions

devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance' (*Power* 8). An Afropolitan mindset at this stage provides Alek, Efe and Ama with the means of re-building a community and re-connecting to notions of Africanness, collectively re-defining the 21st century African.

When investigating identity formation within Afropolitan spaces, Unigwe brings into focus the sensorium, conceiving it both as a threshold between the self and the generalized other (cf. Mead; Abels 203-21) as well as a liminality between collective actors and their spatial framework (cf. Castells, *Power* 7; Mennell 175-176). The senses are not only the transmitting media through which group members experience and make sense of themselves (cf. Farmer 33). They simultaneously, Castells claims, assist in the process of construction of meaning when 'building materials' (*Power* 7) from 'history, geography, productive and reproductive institutions, collective memory, personal fantasies, and power apparatuses' (7) are arranged by social groups to make sense of the spatial framework they find themselves in. Each sense, Urry confirms, contributes to 'people's orientation in space; to their awareness of spatial relationships' (Urry, *Sociology* 79-80). Considering that findings brought forward by the *sensory turn* (e.g. Synnott; Blackman; Classen, "Introduction"; P. Falk; Eccleston; Howes, *Empire*) affirm that sensoria must be read as mere cultural and social constructions, sensory organization becomes a site of (re)production and contestation in Afropolitan spaces inquiring into notions of culture, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. The sensorium functions as the key to 'being able to imagine what it would be like' (Unigwe, *For Beautiful*) as soon as an Afropolitan space invader can bridge the gap between writer and character as well as between reader and text, enabling readers to sense and empathize (cf. Unigwe, *For Beautiful*) with the space invaders and create emotional responses when relating to their 'hopes, joys, fears, plights' (H. White 136). Thus not only *On Black Sisters' Street* encircles the sensorium and its share in identity construction. Other Afropolitan authors (e.g. Mbue; Farah; Ndibe; Adichie, *Americanah*; Donald) also investigate the dominance of sight when, for instance, stressing how Africans confronted with images of wealth are lured into migration and integrate into globalized civil society, or emphasize, on the contrary, how non-Euro-American senses can help Afropolitans reconnect to their local communities. Nowhere, however, is the role of the sensorium in Afropolitan identity formation more prominent than in *On Black Sisters Street*. Whereas Cole and Mengestu two years after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication pioneered in Afropolitan discourse through placing their invaders into cities and homes as strategic spaces, Unigwe in 2009 reflects upon Selasi's essay with much more elaborate vigor when enquiring into the idea whether Selasi's concept in times of migration and displacement can be used as a viable framework for Africans becoming world citizens. Possibly driven by her biographical background allocating her to places all over Euro-

America (cf. Tunca, Mortimer, and Del Calzo 54; Bekers 64; Unigwe, *For Beautiful*), which generated feelings of isolation and longing for a 'community that [she] could belong to' (Unigwe qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 189), Unigwe has written a novel that can be regarded a central touchstone within Afropolitan discourse when it comes to identity formation.

The analysis adapts the arrangement of the three collective identities in Castells's *The Power of Identity*. The first section investigates how Afropolitanism becomes a legitimizing identity as space invaders through a constant reproduction of the Euro-American sensory hierarchy are conditioned, entrepreneurialized/commodified, disciplined, and then Afropolitanized. This part of the analysis, at times, goes into excessive detail because Unigwe's text is very rich in depictions of contemporary Africa spun into webs of global capitalism, and, I would like to stress, might reveal to the reader most conspicuously the costs the introduction of Euro-American cosmopolitan thought into African spheres might come with. In the second section the formation of resistance identities will be looked into by delineating how the sensorium is reclaimed and Africanized, opening Afropolitan spaces to enquire more thoroughly into questions of class, gender, race, culture, and nationality. The last section discusses to what extent the sensoria do (not) enable the women to forge project identities and explore frictions in Afropolitan spaces as a productive vantage point.

2.3.1 Legitimizing identities

Conditioning

Investigating how dominant actors and institutions ambitious to create a globalized civil society integrate Africans into neoliberal world markets, the novel, first and foremost, queries the motives of anyone wanting to become a citizen of the world in the first place with the danger of being withdrawn from one's local entanglements. After all, the Afropolitans portrayed by Unigwe, who find themselves locked into show rooms in Antwerp, serving 'an average of fifteen men' (*On Black* 260) per day, sending most of their earnings to Dele, unable to even hold phone conversations with their own families in Lagos (260), hardly resemble Selasi's shining portrayals of the latest generation of African emigrants. Disentangled African migrants exiled and isolated in Euro-American cities and subjected to economic exploitation are present in most Afropolitan novels. Sepha (Mengestu), Obinze (Adichie, *Americanah*), Dalila (Donald), Bandele (Atta), or Ike (Ndibe) all at some point realize that they not only 'belong to no geography' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") but that they are also trapped in markets allocating positions that merely serve the interests of transnationally operating elites. Unigwe in this respect notes how neoliberal globalization forges the worldwide spanning of capital and markets and merely tricks Africans into migration, globalizing

the state's civil society. Relating to different theories of domination (e.g. Althusser; Gramsci; H. Marcuse; Sennett, *Corrosion*), Castells in this context transnationalizes Gramsci's concept of the state and civil society (Gramsci 206-275) and Althusser's elaborations on a capitalistic infrastructure and a superstructure consisting of different repressive and ideological apparatuses such as the government, administration, army, churches, families, or schools (Althusser 141-144). He claims that the fading away of the nation-state entails the emergence of a network society with dominant managerial elites (cf. *Rise* 432; *Power* 68-70), which Sklair describes as a TCC operating transnationally in economic, political and cultural-ideological spheres (e.g. "Capitalist Globalization" 31) and solely invested in the workings of post-national capitalism: 'The transnational capitalist class is not identified with any foreign country in particular, or even necessarily with the First World, or the white world, or the Western world. Its members identify with the capitalist globalization and reconceptualize their several local and other interests in terms of the capitalist global system' (*Globalization* 156). Unigwe's African space invaders are thus first conditioned for neoliberal markets by a TCC expanding its global outreach through installing a transnational and structurally 'overdetermined' (Jameson 35-45) capitalistic architecture to extend its domination. Understanding space as 'the matrix in which . . . identities are produced' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 153), the sensorium becomes a means of exerting control and allocating positions. The senses are 'enumerated and ordered' (Howes, "Polysensoriality" 446), i.e. hierarchized by the dominant TCC to appropriate the space invaders into the logics of global capitalism.

Efe, for instance, is conditioned by Titus and Dele, who as supporting members of the TCC (cf. Sklair, *Transnational Capitalist Class* 17) owe their economic positions to neoliberal policies that have been pursued in Nigeria since the 1980s. After all, especially Structural Adjustment Programs integrating the country into a neoliberalized global architecture have led to a significant drop in the standard of living for many Nigerians (cf. Ekanade; Mbembe, *Postcolony* 53-57), leaving more than half of its inhabitants living 'on less than \$1 per day' (Unigwe, *For Beautiful*) and dividing Nigerians into those included and those excluded. Titus, for instance, is the owner of a beauty salon that equips African women with Euro-American looks, importing hair from India (*On Black* 72-73) and filling the position of a globalized venture made possible by neoliberal enterprise connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia. He sends his kids to private schools where school fees are only paid in 'dollars and pound sterling' (69). Efe, on the contrary, grows up in poverty, looking after the house and her three siblings, her father's monthly allowance 'barely enough for food' (58). She nonetheless only longs for material wealth as soon as she is lured into sexual exploitation by Titus, who reorganizes her sensorium. He smuggles 'a crisp hundred-naira note into her shy fist' (50), which makes her 'giddy' (50) and adjusts her gaze for materialistic needs:

Efe shut her eyes and thought of the denim trousers she had seen the week before at the second-hand market: blue jeans with a metallic V emblazoned like something glorious on the left back pocket. The jeans had been way out of reach then and she had consoled herself with just looking. Now it was possible that she could own them. (50)

Efe's catering to capitalistic needs through being enabled to visualize them by Titus evokes the image of escaping the Platonic Cave (cf. Plato 747-752) and emphasizes the creation of world markets disrupting national economies. According to Say, supply at this point creates its own demand (138). Say's Law, however, only becomes effective through developing an 'aura, an air of fantasy, which goes beyond any practical purpose' (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 180). Efe does not actually need the jeans but wants to buy them for the image they visibly project. Enabled to see the metallic V, she submits to the aura surrounding the commodity. Her sensorium is at this stage rearranged by a sensory order prioritizing sight. In Euro-American societies, in which the senses are still predominantly categorized according to Aristotle's model of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, and then divided into proximal and distant senses (cf. Howes, "Polysensoriality" 435; Eccleston 2; Arantes 24), seeing dominates. Since the era of Enlightenment sight has not only been associated with reason and attributed with the capability to abstract and to bridge the distance between the observer and the observed while simultaneously keeping a distance (cf. Arantes 25; P. Falk 11). It has also boosted visualizing capitalist-oriented needs in a global economy of aestheticized signs, which, like money, have become symbols in economic circulation (cf. Lash and Urry, *Economies* 3-4). The manipulation of sight reveals how sensory hierarchies follow the dominant ideology inherent in the TCC's globalized civil society and how identity construction and sensory organization are interrelated:

Capitalist globalization . . . balances economic exclusion with cultural–ideological inclusion. In the economic sphere, the global capitalist system offers a limited place to the wage-earning masses in most countries. Workers . . . have occupational choices that are generally free only within the range offered by the class structures The culture–ideology sphere is, however, entirely different. Here, the aim of global capitalists is total inclusion of all classes. They focus especially on the subordinate classes The cultural–ideological project of global capitalism is to persuade people to consume above their biological needs in order to perpetuate the accumulation of capital for private profit; in other words, to ensure that the global capitalist system endures. The culture–ideology of consumerism proclaims, literally, that the meaning of life is to be found in the things that we possess. To consume, therefore, is to be fully alive, and to remain fully alive we must continuously consume. (Sklair, "Capitalist Globalization" 31-32)

The 'crisp notes that made her nearly delirious with joy' (*On Black* 56) empower Efe to visualize items and operate above her biological needs. After hiding the money, she imagines items she might purchase (56). At this moment, she gives up her ability to control her own destiny and replaces it with superimposed needs, also transmitted through manipulated sonic channels, the second distant sense following vision in the Euro-American sensory hierarchy, which along with seeing constitutes the privileged sensory capabilities: 'She imagined herself strutting down the road, going *koi koi koi*

in her new shoes She saw herself driving the car, *vroom vroom vroom*, one hand on the steering wheel, the other hand on the gear stick' (*On Black* 51). The other Euro-American senses, such as touch, are subordinated. She therefore also submits to feeling severe pain when sleeping with Titus because she was promised new clothes and new shoes (49). Although the pain between her legs burns 'with the sting of an open sore' (52) and, as a quintessential corporeal symbol of disorder (cf. Jackson 372), exposes Efe's body to the defects of neoliberal exploitation, she accepts her initiation into capitalistic markets and allows taste and smell as well to be appropriated in exchange for the money she needs for new clothes. When Titus during intercourse breathes right into her nose, she tries to ignore the staleness of the breath, and when he licks her complete side of the face, she tries not to mind his saliva (*On Black* 52). Sensory hierarchization thus helps the TCC to promote the ideology of consumerism as a proposed path to happiness (cf. Sklair, "Capitalist Globalization" 29) worldwide and re-position Efe. As long as Titus supplies her with goods, the sex with him gets 'easier' (*On Black* 57). She grows 'bolder' (58) with increased compensation and asks 'for bigger things' (58).

Chisom too grows up in a family that suffers from Nigeria's neoliberalized economy. Her father is employed by the Ministry of Works but his salary remains static despite inflation eating up his earnings (cf. 89). Unigwe then illustrates how Nigerians such as Chisom's father face the Obasanjo regime's re-arranging the public sector of the economy and minimizing economic interventions of the government while at the same time awarding custom duty waivers to certain companies (cf. Ekanade 21; Modebe, Okoro, Okoyeuzu, and Uche), granting them competitive advantages:

He could never afford a car. Especially not now that President Obasanjo had put an import embargo on cars older than five years, hot on the heels of his wife banning a certain type of lace she wanted exclusively to herself While people are busy killing each other in senseless riots [President Obasanjo] is busy banning the importation of everything. Toothpaste. Chloroquine. Soaps. Detergents. Envelopes He could never buy a car. He could never buy a decent house. He could never earn enough to fulfil his dreams. (*On Black* 89-90)

Despite experiencing neoliberalism's shortcomings, Chisom's father functions as a nation-state family apparatus (cf. Althusser 143) that equips his whole family with an audiovision-based sense for materialistic needs nonetheless. He takes his wife around Lagos 'to gaze at the high wonders that Lagos had in abundance' (*On Black* 90), sends his daughter to university where she 'envisaged her fours years of studying Finance and Business Administration culminating . . . in a job with a bank, one of those new banks dotting Lagos like a colony of palm trees' (20), and helps his wife and daughter read and hear the signs of capitalism: 'Her mother said, 'I shall sit at the back of your car with you. You in the owner's corner. Me beside you. And your driver shall drive us *fia fia fia* around Lagos.' And all three laughed at the happy image of the car' (20). When not finding a job despite graduating from university, Chisom is dissatisfied because her gaze for capitalistic needs is

disabled. Although her new boyfriend, Peter, too has a university degree she sees her life as a 'cul-de-sac' (27) and visualizes leaving Lagos, her vision supported by other Euro-American senses such as smell: 'She closed her eyes and let the smell of [Peter's] cologne take her away. 'I wish life were like this,' she muttered. 'I wish life smelt this good.' Even as she said it she knew that she could not stand another year in Lagos. Not like this. I must escape' (29-30). The cologne signifies wealth and functions as a commodity produced to penetrate and bind consumers through emotional reactions (cf. Classen, Howes, and Synnott 161, 182). Chisom, after being told by her father that he is likely to be let go from his government job due to cuts in the civil service (cf. *On Black* 33), is then fully conditioned by Dele, a TCC member compensating the fading nation-state. The sight of Dele's business card, which she perceives as 'something beautiful, some silk underwear perhaps' (33), leads her away from home, which is now associated with an economic abyss. She runs out of the house and finds herself 'at an office on Randle Avenue, standing at the address on the gold-edged card, that she had, somehow without meaning to, memorised' (33). Stressing the relevance of sight, Unigwe then also refers to prophetic dreams, which are considered common in Igbo thought (cf. Lewis and Oliver 112), and describes how Chisom in dream sequences begins to spot a car: 'A Lexus lit up in such splendour that she could not look directly at it. But she could see the driver. And it was not her' (*On Black* 201). Chisom here, visualizing the car as a prophecy, resembles Herbert Marcuse's one-dimensional man. Since dream interpretation relies on the symbols in dreams, the visualized Lexus implies the implanting of capitalistic signs into former non-neoliberalized private spaces (cf. H. Marcuse 12). Unigwe, clearly, indicates how spirituality, deemed a defining constituent in Selasi's Afropolitanism (cf. "Bye-Bye"), is infiltrated by capitalistic greed. At this moment that *On Black Sisters' Street* touches upon the question of spirituality, I need to briefly stress that the novel predominantly relates to Igbo thought systems. After all, Unigwe clearly identifies as Igbo (cf. *For Beautiful*; Eze, "Feminism" 90; "Crime and Christianity"), and Chisom, through her name, also reveals that she is of Igbo descent (cf. Achebe, "Chi" 71). Since Chisom and Efe have always lived in Lagos (cf. *On Black* 18, 51), which is located in Yorubaland, it is most likely that their ancestors belong to those who at some point in the past have migrated from Igboland to the urban centers located in Yorubaland (cf. Ohadike xix; Harneit-Sievers 118; Oriji). Chisom's fantasizing about a Lexus, without a doubt, is supposed to evoke images inherent in Thomas Friedman's allegorical depiction of post-Cold War identity formation, in which the individual is attracted by the Lexus supposedly representing modern brands recognized worldwide, and abandons the olive tree signifying ethnic identities: '[H]alf the world seemed to be emerging from the Cold War intent on building a better Lexus, dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization' (31).

Similar images of economic wealth come into play in most Afropolitan novels. A shiny Lexus, for instance, is also envisioned by Jende in *Behold the Dreamers* (Mbue 16). Jende's wife, Neni, on the other hand, is attracted by the images transmitted by *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *The Cosby Show* broadcast on Cameroonian TV that teach 'her that there was a place in the world where blacks had the same chance at prosperity as whites' (312). Ifemelu too remembers 'the pretty street on *The Cosby Show*' (Adichie, *Americanah* 130) broadcast on Nigerian TV, which illustrates that the spanning of neoliberal globalization also comes through other advertised signs in the culture industries (cf. Lash and Urry, *Economies* 138-139). Ike, in *Foreign Gods Inc.*, for instance, realizes that the village boys from Utonki are lured into wanting to drive expensive cars such as Hummers or Bentleys or eat pizza that they have seen in TV commercials (Ndibe 244-245). Farah and Donald depict a similar attraction when explaining how people are absorbed into migration because of the images they have seen on TV (cf. *Crossbones* 258; *Dalila* 77). These examples, epitomized by Chisom's infiltrated prophecy, exhibit how Africans are re-positioned in a globalized civil society disrupting local entanglements. Even Thomas Friedman admits that the Lexus representing prospering global markets poses a threat to local ethnic affiliations, since standardizing and homogenizing global market forces, he implies, break down communities and traditions (33-35).

Especially Ama and Alek realize how this breaking down of local communities can also correlate with notions of violence, expanding upon Cole's imaginary take of Lagos. Ama, who grows up in the Igbo city of Enugu, is conditioned, above all, by her stepfather, Brother Cyril, who as a religious apparatus (cf. Althusser 143) introduces the neoliberal spirit employed in Pentecostalism to his family. At one of the city's megachurches, Cyril promotes Prosperity Gospel, which promotes material benefits as a reward for a Christian lifestyle and teaches that financial blessing must be perceived as the will of God (cf. Umoh 657). Prosperity Gospel has enabled him to prosper because in 'under two years of his joining the church he had risen in rank to Assistant Pastor, only one set of ears away from God' (*On Black* 130). Wearing expensive suits and throwing parties for Ama with clowns and cameramen (131), he resembles those Pentecostal pastors who display their economic status made possible by Nigeria's neoliberal infiltration in the late 1980s. After all, a fair share of scholars (e.g. D. Freeman 10; Umoh 660-662; Comaroff and Comaroff, "Privatizing" 37) have attributed the rise of Pentecostalism in African states to the economic failures in the 1980s and the Structural Adjustment Programs that even worsened conditions. Pentecostal forces have, accordingly, gained significant relevance in Afropolitan literature. This specific type of religious apparatus comes into play in *Foreign Gods Inc.* when the local pastor Uka, who resides in a house visibly exposing black leather couches and an entertainment center with a large plasma TV and a stereo system (Ndibe 155), tries to persuade Ike to donate money: 'God is

asking you to sow fifty thousand dollars to build him a church here. If you obey, you'll become a millionaire' (162). Cole's narrator's depiction of Pastor Olakunle, a 'prosperous man' (*Every Day* 50) owning 'several Mercedes-Benz cars' (51) and wearing shoes 'of fine Italian leather' (50), as well as Flambeau's description of the pastor, who wears 'Versace silk' (Proctor 13) and has 'a gold tooth, which flashe[s]' (13), also seem to affirm Dena Freeman's claim that Pentecostalism appears to play the exact role with regards to neoliberal capitalism in African states (cf. 20) as Protestantism with regards to capitalism (cf. Weber). While capitalism as a new economic system was founded on a shift in values and behaviors through which Protestantism made the new economic system seem moral (cf. D. Freeman 20; Umoh 655-656), Pentecostalism in African countries apparently transforms the classic Protestant Ethic investigated by Weber into a new form in the context of globalized capitalist formations (cf. van Dijk 91), stimulating a behavior that ought to entail economic success. This transformation is best encapsulated by Huchu: 'The TV was on God TV, with an American preacher bellowing away something about how God did not like poverty and how, if Jesus came back today, he would be a rich entrepreneur employing twelve people' (*Maestro* 245). According to Dena Freeman, this dispersion of a neoliberal ethic also proposes a significant restructuring of families because believers, she stresses, 'loosen ties with the extended family and focus on the nuclear family as the central unit of production and consumption' (13). Neoliberalism here suggests the same family structure that Engels identifies when criticizing that the nuclear family has emerged as a cell of capitalistic consumption (cf. *The Origin*, ch. II). Ama, for these reasons, in *On Black Sisters' Street* therefore lives in social isolation imposed on her by her parents. She is part of a nuclear family that is viewed as a generator of wealth, particularly by her mother, who considers the marriage a strategic escape from poverty after conceiving Ama as a child out of wedlock: 'I made a mistake . . . that could have destroyed me completely. Yet Brother Cyril took me in and married me. He saved me' (*On Black* 150). Brother Cyril wants to expose Ama to the wealth generated by Pentecostalism as well and encourages her longing for economic mobility. When Ama succeeds in school and turns out top of the class, Cyril rewards her with a large party and a big cake (123). Sight here is employed to make visible revenues. Cyril expects his stepdaughter to 'follow in her mother's footsteps and become a model wife for a good Christian man some day' (131). Ama, however, rejects Cyril's ambitions and withdraws to her bedroom. This refuge is a private space kept beyond the Euro-American distant senses, where Ama likes 'to run her hands along the walls' (122), 'feeling their silky smoothness, letting her hands glide, a lover's hands, over silky smooth skins' (122). In this safe space, constituted by the walls as her silent 'friends whom she could trust' (122), the Euro-American sensorium does not function. In order to fully condition Ama, Cyril therefore rapes her in the bedroom, making transparent her private space so far shielded from civil

society and violently implanting the totalising codes of neoliberal Pentecostalism (cf. Hasu 72; Comaroff 48-49) through audition: 'Ama . . . would have screamed if he had not pre-empted her by covering her mouth . . . and smothering the scream in her throat 'What's the fifth commandment?' 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' she would reply, her voice muffled' (*On Black* 131-132). Besides being supervised and yelled at with 'carefully enunciated [words], rolled out in clasps of thunder' (145), Ama is also forceably conditioned through touch and taste. She is hit with a cane 'cutting a rawness into her skin that hurt for many days' (129), has to wear straightened hair that feels like 'proper oyibo hair' (126), and, when finally trying to tell her mother about the rapes, tastes 'the fear of the nights he came into her room and yearned to spit it out' (150). As soon as Ama questions her conditioning, she is re-appropriated by her mother, who as a family apparatus places the economic revenues of the profit-orientated nucleus above her daughter's personal state. She tells her daughter to 'shut up' (150) because she is afraid of being kicked out of Cyril's house: 'There was a strange hardness to her voice that silenced Ama' (150). Through a violent sensory hierarchization, Ama is, subsequently, infused with the neoliberal dogma that her position in this new economic order is to either comply or 'suffer the consequences of failure and abject poverty, with no one to blame but [herself]' (Macrine 309).

Similar notions of sexualized violence come into play when Alek is conditioned in Sudan, where her family is forced to leave their land and flee before being killed by soldiers of the Janjaweed, a privatized army apparatus (cf. Althusser 137; Tubiana 236; Schönwälder 329-330). The conflicts portrayed in the narrative are a result of Sudan's violent appropriation into a neoliberalized world market in the last three decades, expedited by the restructuring and privatization of government and para-public sectors re-allocating power to an internationally minded elite coexisting with an often privatized security apparatus (cf. Marchal and Ahmed 174-175, 186-188; Gertel, Calkins, and Rottenburg 2; Mbembe, *Postcolony* 78-79). However, nowhere did the installation of a kleptocratic global civility through the TCC press more imperatively than in the neoliberalized land policy, which dismantled the traditional land ownership system, triggering conflicts dating back to the problems of hybrid ownership systems and changing Sudan's socio-spatial configuration ordinarily based on ethnic groups and social hierarchies (cf. Marchal and Ahmed 191-92; Boddy 124). Gertel, Calkins, and Rottenburg note that, whereas prior to Structural Adjustment Programs land could not be sold and access remained in communal hands, serving 'as a reference for the formation of identity' (1), land under neoliberal rule became 'synonymous with private property, where the owner is identifiable by a formal title, rather than . . . belonging to a community with autochthonous roots to the land' (16). This spatially inscribed neoliberal disruption, they indicate, led to the marginalization of the rural population and outbreaks of violent conflicts in

which government-backed militias violently displaced local populations from their homes to prepare the land for oil exploitation (cf. 12). Since Alek belongs to the Dinka (cf. *On Black* 187), who were accused of taking a leading role in resistance to these policies (cf. Ryle 84), she is part of a group most antagonistic to neoliberal capitalism. The privatized military apparatus therefore destroys Alek's local entanglements to eventually enable the process of conditioning. When killing her family and raping her, they monopolize sight. Whereas Alek peeps into 'Darkness' (*On Black* 188), the soldiers spawn a visual hegemony: 'The soldiers wanted to ransack the room. To check every bit of it. Under the bed! The cupboard! The drawers! Between the books!' (189). The Janjaweed use seeing as a 'civilizing sense' (Arantes 25), making visible the family's home as a space yet to be integrated into civil society. Auditory channels are monopolized as well when Alek is raped, followed by the other Euro-American senses:

Alek tried to scream but could not. Her voice failed her When he thrust his manhood inside her, when he touched her, Alex felt a grief so incomprehensible that she could not articulate beyond chanting One by one the other men came and thrust themselves into her, pulling out to come on her face. Telling her to ingest it; it was protein. Good food. Fit for African slaves. (*On Black* 191)

The image of rape coinciding with the violent re-arrangement of senses could be interpreted as a first indication that Afropolitan identity formation can be conceived of as a violent penetration of the local. The Janjaweed, Eze stresses (cf. "Feminism" 93), do not even see themselves as Africans and therefore call Alek a 'Stupid African slave!' (*On Black* 190). The humiliating act of ejaculating on Alek's face, the hallmark of the body comprising the lion's share of the Euro-American sensorium, and the forced ingestion of ejaculate through the mouth, the organ needed to articulate opposition and resistance, can be understood as a corporeal critique that Afropolitanism runs the risk of becoming a repressive framework. Selasi's stance that being 'African must mean something' ("Bye-Bye"), wherefore the Afropolitan 'must form an identity' ("Bye-Bye") and redefine the 21st century African, can come across as a violent incorporation of all Africans into a universalizing neoliberalized discourse and thus as a form of enslavement that eventually facilitates the conditioning by actors and institutions associated with the TCC. After all, only as soon as the soldiers have pervaded Alek's local entanglements she can be conditioned by Polycarp, a Nigerian soldier working for the United Nations (*On Black* 197), which in accordance with theories of neoliberal institutionalism (e.g. Grieco and Ikenberry 116; Keohane 5-8; Prashad, *Poorer Nations* 6; Richardson) and Castells's take on international institutions (cf. "Globalisation" 60) can be regarded a transnational apparatus enforcing a globalized civil society. As administrative bureaucrat (cf. Sklair, "Architecture" 486), Polycarp, on behalf of the UN, complements the neoliberal policies of the Sudanese nation-state (cf. Stein 208) and makes visible material objects: 'Secretly he bought her presents. A bag. A tin of sardines. A hair comb. A mirror. Some sweets' (*On Black* 198). Alek hides

these gifts in a corner of her tent (198), having been taught that she needs to privatize her 'assets' (Harvey, *History* 65). Polycarp then takes Alek to Lagos and teaches her the basics of capitalism when complaining that she gives money to an invalid, arguing that it is significant that the labor forces are integrated into the capitalist infrastructure: 'In Mali a blind couple are successful musicians. Their music is everywhere. I know a Canadian professor who is blind' (*On Black* 216). Like *Every Day is for the Thief*, the narrative here broaches the issue of excess people in Lagos, who according to Polycarp do not position themselves in the labor forces and are therefore worthless: 'They are an eyesore. The government should get rid of all of them. Arrest them and shoot them' (217). Stigmatizing excess people, he trains Alek's sight and further conditions her by enabling her to visualize a nuclear family, ordering a dining-room table that could seat three (218), making her listen to Rolling Dollar (220), and taking her to Bar Beach where he pays for Sprite (222). As soon as Polycarp's plans, however, collide with his family expecting him to marry a girl of Igbo descent (cf. 225) because as first son he is supposed to keep afloat status and property in the patrilineal extended family (cf. Ekeopara; Onwuzurigbo 432; Egodi 142), Alek too is considered a person to be disposed of. Instead of integrating her into his extended family as a sister or a daughter (cf. *On Black* 218), he distances her from local entanglements, taking away the 'framed photograph of the two of them' (226). This sensual disconnection is captured spatially: 'She took his hand between hers, but he claimed it back almost immediately She rested her head against the dust-smelling wall. It flattened her nose and hurt its bridge' (224). He then takes her to Dele's majestic mansion, where he lures her into migrating through audiovision: 'You want to leave Nigeria? Go abroad? London. America. Londonamerica. Said with ease' (225). Unigwe, at this very moment in the narrative, in great detail reveals that identity formation in Afropolitan discourse can hardly be approached without giving thought to the neoliberal architecture of global capitalism. Whereas Selasi claims that Afropolitans ought to 'seek to comprehend the cultural complexity; to honor the intellectual and spiritual legacy; and to sustain our parents' cultures' ("Bye-Bye"), the women in *On Black Sisters' Street*, once positioned in the globalized civil society, can not adapt to the 'complexity common to most African cultures' ("Bye-Bye") and the 'intrinsically multi-dimensional thinking [without which] we could not make sense of ourselves' ("Bye-Bye") because local entanglements, which according to Appiah (cf. *Ethics* 214; "Education" 88-89; *Cosmopolitanism*) are supposed to eventually help the Afropolitan define identity, are constrained by neoliberalism. The narrative then discloses how Africans, once conditioned by the workings of kleptocratic capitalism, are put at risk of becoming a commodity to meet the demands of Euro-American markets for raw materials and a cheap workforce.

Entrepreneurialization/commoditization

As soon as Alek, Ama, Efe and Chisom have been conditioned, they are offered to go abroad and operate as sex workers. Unigwe illustrates how the women turn into Africans of the world through 'inculcation' (Blackman 25), becoming a competitive homo globalis subjected to constant ranking. Strenger concludes that the spread of global capitalism and the craving for quantification have created a '*global I-Commodity Market*' (20), resulting in the 'I-Commodity' (20) individuals have begun to subject themselves to. The value of the I-commodity, he continues, depends on 'the rise or fall of supply and demand, the marketing success of competitors and so on' (20). Unigwe emphasizes how this ethic of constant ranking can affect whole societies, especially those constituted by many less-fortunate individuals. Attracted by images of working in Europe and adapting to the logics inherent in global ranking systems, the women in her novel turn into self-responsible and self-providing (cf. W. Brown 84; Peters 301) entrepreneurs, ranking their imagined lives abroad higher than their existence in Africa: 'In a country where more than half of the population live in poverty, labour migration is often seen as the only viable way to improve one's life chances' (Unigwe, *For Beautiful*). The global I-Commodity Market, at this stage, revolutionizes the 'instruments of production' (Marx and Engels 476) because the Africans of the world begin to internalize neoliberal governmentality fueled by the Euro-American sensorium, in particular vision and audition. Although Eze, at this point, speaks of 'transatlantic slavery' ("Feminism" 92) that transforms the women into slaves about to attend the 'passage to Europe' (*On Black* 247), the scholarly body on entrepreneurialization (e.g. Foucault, *Biopolitics*; W. Brown; Peters; Hindess) complements the Marxist thesis of commoditization and commodity fetishism (e.g. Marx and Engels; K. Marx, *Capital* 1) inasmuch as it explains how actors within a globalized civil society become self-governable. Foucault's work on self-entrepreneurialization also complements Althusser's take on the interpellation of individuals as subjects (Althusser 175) because individuals no longer need to be enmeshed in ideology to function as subjects within civil society. Bidet, among others, in extensive detail covers the conjunctions of Marxist and Foucauldian approaches. He asserts that, although class logic and the theory of a class society in which a bourgeoisie dominates are mostly evaded by Foucault (cf. 25, 156), the neo-Marxist tableau dispersed by thinkers such as Althusser can be detected in Foucault's work as soon as the social as whole comes to be seen as an apparatus (cf. 151). The discourse on the (dis)junctures of Marx and Foucault is too expansive to be covered more thoroughly (for further details see Bidet and Kouvelakis; Harvey, *Companion*; Nigro; W. Brown 53-59). Noting how Unigwe depicts the women becoming globally operating sex workers, however, Afropolitan literature seems to recast the discourse eminent in contemporary theories on shifting structural domination. Chisom, for instance, even before

becoming Dele's property, decides against living with Peter, although he promises to marry her and provide her with love and a family (cf. *On Black* 46). Her denial of Peter is finalized by internalized images of wealth: 'She would have three housegirls, a gardener, a driver, a cook. Her life would be nothing compared to what it was now' (103). Efe votes against living with her son in Lagos after having adapted to the images of wealth dangling in front of her like 'food in front of a hungry child . . . always out of reach but close enough to be seen' (81). Although she realizes that leaving behind her child is 'the hardest thing she would ever do' (82), she is, nonetheless, willing to become 'Dele and Sons Limited's export' (82). She ignores her dinner and instead accepts that the 'word, 'abroad', brought a smile that stretched her lips from one end to the other and a sweet taste to her tongue' (83). The food, which according to Bell and Valentine in realities determined through webs of consumption becomes a marker of identity (cf. 3), is neglected. Taste is replaced by audiovision. She imagines 'two big doors, one beside the other, with Belgium marked on one and London marked on the other' (*On Black* 83). The sound of these Euro-American spaces 'thrill[s] her' (84): 'Something that tinkled and ushered in dawn, clear as glass' (84). Ama too ranks these images of living abroad higher than living with her aunt Mama Eko, despite feeling home when listening to Mama Eko's Nina Simone records and tasting and smelling her dishes that fill the room (153-158). She is dissatisfied with Lagos's 'insistent monotony' (158) only as soon as she starts ranking options: 'It was a better life than she had in Enugu, she could not contest that, but its predictability, its circular motion . . . nibbled at her soul that still yearned to see the world' (159). Images of wealth transmitted in the canteen by female young upcoming professionals displaying their expensive handbags, groomed nails and hair extensions (cf. 160) bolster up a self-entrepreneurial ambition replacing notions of home as soon as they are internalized. She admits that Mama Eko has become like a real mother to her but still can not give her the kind of life she hopes for (166). The sense of belonging she detects in Mama Eko's house is ousted by a visualized imagined identity as an entrepreneur 'earning her own money so that she could build her business empire' (169), delineating the pressing transformations of the self through internalized entrepreneurialization, which Murobe stresses:

[G]lobalization is not so much an option for African . . . countries as an imperative – they are pulled into global political, economic, and cultural relationships without their consent Rather than fostering a sense of common belonging in the global village, neo-liberal economic practices are bringing us back to the Darwinian jungle in which everything exists in a perpetual state of competition in pursuit of self-interest. (671)

Dele then through 'imposition' (Blackman 25) re-positions the entrepreneurs as marketable commodities, transcending the state and the nation and allocating the workforce to European markets. As a TCC member with global perspectives, he extends the scope of commodification

procedures far beyond the nation (Sklair, “Capitalist Globalization” 29) because the transnational exploitation of women is highly lucrative for him: 'Powerful criminal organizations are estimated to earn \$7 billion (£4.3 billion) a year from economic and sexual slavery' (Mentan 78). Unigwe in 2014 in a talk on Afropolitan literature called attention to the fact that about 10,000 women are trafficked from Nigeria every year as sex workers, European destinations including urban hubs in Belgium, Italy, and Spain (*For Beautiful*). Dele thus profits from globalized markets and disorganized capitalism because the objects he can dole out in the age of time-space-compression (Harvey, *Condition*) circulate along 'routes of greater and greater distance, but also . . . at ever greater velocity' (Lash and Urry, *Economies* 2), making transnational allocations a feasible mode of profit maximization. He ranks the women according to features demanded by European clients in capitals such as Antwerp, Milan, and Madrid (*On Black* 42) and converts them into commodities defined by their market value in response to sight, using 'obvious mercantile language' (Eze, “Feminism” 92): '*Abi*, see your backside, *kai!* Who talk say na dat Jennifer Lopez get the finest yansh! Make dem come here come see your assets! As for those melons wey you carry for chest, *omo*, how you no go fin' work?' He fixed his eyes, moist and greedy, on her breasts' (*On Black* 42-43). In order to cater to a Euro-American sensorium, the women all need to share the same physical features and must be tall and slim while having large breasts and appropriately sized buttocks (237). In some cases Dele whitens their physical appearance: 'Perm am. Put relaxer. Make she look like oyibo woman. I wan' make she look like white woman!' (31). The women are, moreover, commodified through sonic channels. Chisom is named 'Sisi' and Alek becomes 'Joyce': 'The name has to go. Alek. Sound too much like Alex. Man's name. We no wan' men. *Oti oo*. Give am woman name' (230). Alek's new name ought to resonate with her new position as a 'thing that will give joy to men in Europe' (Eze, “Feminism” 94), sound regulating demand and supply: '[E]conomic objects . . . exist in the space between pure desire and immediate enjoyment, with some distance between them and the person who desires them, which is a distance that can be overcome. The distance is overcome in and through economic exchange' (Appadurai, *Future* 9). The other Euro-American senses are applied as well, especially touch: 'He pulled Ama close and she could feel his penis harden through his trousers. 'I shall sample you before you go!'' (*On Black* 168). Once fully adapted to the demands of the Euro-American sensorium, the women have been transformed into laborers that resemble the factory workers depicted by Engels and Marx, who 'must sell themselves piece-meal' (479) and are classified as feasible 'commodit[ies], like every other article of commerce' (479) that can be turned into exports: 'I dey get girls everywhere . . . I fit get you inside Belgium. Antwerp' (*On Black* 34). Upon arrival in Europe, the women's adaption to the Euro-American sensorium is checked by Madam, the 'European representative of Dele's company' (Eze,

“Feminism” 92), before being released onto the market: 'Dele was right about you. Ah, that man knows his stuff. He has the best girls on show, you know?' (*On Black* 118). She further whitens their identities if necessary to make them marketable. Chisom, for instance, is forced into whitening her biography in order to meet European expectations. She has to pretend that she is Mandingo and escaped Liberia without a passport. The immigration ministry, a 'Castle' (182) signifying absolute space granting or denying the women entry to the country, which resembles the Asylum Screening Unit in London with its metal detectors and security guards in armoured vests portrayed in *Dalila* (Donald 45-46), has to be accessed through a manipulated identity:

Tell them there that you are from Liberia Tell them that your father was a local Mandingo chief and soldiers loyal to Charles Taylor came at night to your house and killed your entire family Look sad. Cry. Wail. Tear your hair out. White people enjoy sob stories. They love to hear about us killing each other, about us hacking each other's heads off in senseless ethnic conflicts. The more macabre the story the better. (*On Black* 120-121)

The manipulated biography is needed because the European market does not accept supposedly trivial problems such as poverty as a motive for migration. Political persecution is ranked higher than poverty because it more likely matches Euro-American images of African countries. When sneaking her way into asylum Chisom is supposed to respond to the Euro-American sensorium, making visible and audible her desperation, which turns out a prerogative for many Afropolitan space invaders. Jende too, in order to seek asylum, has to invent a story that he is afraid of returning to Cameroon because his girlfriend's family might kill him (Mbue 24). Asylum-seeking Dalila, before entering the Screening Unit, even tries 'to see her story as a journalist would see it' (Donald 50), with details that she needs to google (148). Biographies are adjusted to the expectations of the immigration ministry. Many Afropolitan authors thus stress how Afropolitan identities run the risk of emerging out of imposed misery, turning Africanness into a commodity within discourse, individuality and complexity in African societies diminished by the impact of the global I-Commodity Market.

Dele and Madam then seal the new positions by individualizing and monetizing risks: 'Na when you get there, begin work, you go begin dey pay. Instalmental payment we dey call am! Mont' by mont' you go dey pay me' (*On Black* 35). Risks are shifted from the capitalists to the commodified individual workers, transfixed by neoliberalized market mechanisms. Debt according to Appadurai in these procedures becomes 'potentially monetizable' (“Thoughts”). Chisom, for instance, accepts sending hundreds of Euros to Dele every month although she does not know how she can earn that much money (cf. *On Black* 42). Despite unpredictable wage outcome and the likelihood of failure (cf. Sennett, *Corrosion* 85, 90) the individual takes this risk, motivated by visualized images of revenues:

Five hundred euros was a lot of money. If she converted that to nairas it amounted to more money than

she had ever dreamed of making . . . It was five times her father's salary. Surely, if she was expected to pay back that much, it meant that she was expected to earn a lot more. How much more? She could not get her head around it. Her dreams were within reach of coming true. The gold jewellery, the house for her parents, the posh car. (*On Black* 184)

Unigwe in her talk comprehensively explains how young Nigerians willing to work as sex workers in Europe have to pay off a debt of tens of thousands of euros, their parents usually promoting their prostitution or sometimes even participating as pimps (*For Beautiful*). Neoliberal governmentality at this instant stipulates the corrosion of character, which Sennett defines as the ethical values that humans place on their relations to others and as the personal traits which they value in themselves and for which we seek to be valued by others (*Corrosion* 10), forming 'loyalty and mutual commitment' (10). The women in the novel turn into risk-taking subjects that work under short-term labor conditions and adopt market logics so much that a corrosion of character is inevitable. Corresponding with Marx's theory of commodity fetishism (cf. *Capital* 1: 17-97), interpersonal relations are merely characterized by alienation and monetization because they are mediated through the commodities being exchanged. Accordingly, this corrosion also interrupts the African ethics of interpersonal interrelatedness (cf. Murobe 672) and corrodes the loyalties and family roots that Appiah identifies in his rooted cosmopolitanism (*Ethics* 214). Unigwe's space invaders hence consider the ethical values placed on their relations to their children or close relatives gathered in African communities such as the Igbo (cf. Odo 11) as inferior to supposedly superior career options outside Africa prioritized through visualized images, subordinating the other senses. The Afropolitan's ethical disposition is reconstituted by a mere economic rationale. Efe, for instance, tries to preserve her son's scent and 'soak[s] in the smell of his skin' (*On Black* 87) only to find out that upon seeing 'the first sights of her new world' (88) she struggles 'to remember the smell' (87). Chisom, still 'dream[ing] of the big house she would build' (260), after having arrived in Antwerp can hardly communicate with her family on the phone, 'sp[eaking] in a monotone' (260). As relationships are only motivated by profits, neoliberalism becomes the unavoidable point of origin for identity formation (cf. Murobe 672), which is why the women upon arrival in Belgium 'are not sure what they are to each other' (*On Black* 26), either, and begin to rank each other as competitive co-workers: 'Thrown together by a conspiracy of fate and a loud man called Dele they are bound in a sort of unobtrusive friendship, comfortable with what little they know of each other, asking no questions unless prompted' (26). Neoliberal flexibility prevails over character and local affiliations, destroys the 'qualities of character which bind human beings to one another and furnishes each with a sense of sustainable self' (Sennett, *Corrosion* 27), and enables the TCC to construct legitimizing identities that reproduce the sources of structural domination in a globalized civil society. Dele, 'the common denominator in their lives' (*On Black* 113), thus 'airbrushe[s]' (44) the last traces of

African entanglements 'out of existence' (44) and places the Afropolitans onto the market, where their positions are secured through (self)disciplining.

(Self)disciplining

Following the allocation to Antwerp's red light district, the women are expected to adhere to market mechanisms without any deferment or disturbance. Murobe, addressing this economic imperative, argues that the market is expected to not be interfered with if neo-liberal methodology is to prevail (676). Especially Madam, who is equipped with a master's degree in Business Administration and speaks English, Dutch, and French (*On Black* 117), plays a vital role in keeping them within neoliberal constraints, transmitting market axioms such as utility maximization: 'We haven't got any time to lose Not nervous, are we? You can't afford to be. Not in our business' (116-119). She controls the workforce through sound creating 'spatial and practical divisions' (Hankins and Stevens 3). When enunciating every sentence 'like an order' (*On Black* 116), she makes 'the ability to impose discipline, the capacity to inspire fear' (Sennett, *Authority* 17-18) audible, acquiring authority through sonic channels. Chisom, when listening, envies her self-confidence and accepts her as a patron: 'Back in Lagos nobody would have dared talk to her in that manner. But this was not Lagos. And she needed this woman's help in this city full of strangers' (*On Black* 120). The TCC explaining free enterprise resembles systems of market exchange announced in the era of industrial growth in Euro-America:

During the course of the 19th Century . . . captains of finance and manufacturers made claims which seemed . . . pernicious. Twelve hours a day of labor for a child in the mines was explained as a benefit to society and ultimately to the child The destruction of the agricultural economy was a similar benefit to society; the dispossessed laborers were now "free" to sell their labor on the open market We could never make sense of the moral force of this new industrial order, or of the way the bonds of authority gradually separated from the sense of legitimate authority, if we think of the market ideology as alone the principle on which the new rulers justified themselves. The market idea, as Adam Smith proudly announced, banishes the authority of persons; it is a systems of exchange which is legitimate only as a system. (Sennett, *Authority* 43)

Unigwe now reveals how neoliberalism continues the histories of capitalism but even fine-tunes economic constraints. Madam first further frees Chisom from local entanglements: 'All you need to know is that you're persona non grata in this country. You do not exist. Not here' (*On Black* 182). She then, as an administrative capitalist boss serving in loco parentis (cf. H. Marcuse 35; Sennett, *Authority* 44), explains the new hierarchies emerging in post-national neoliberalized economies after capitalism's disorganization through auditory channels:

My dear Sisi, it's not your place to ask question here. You just do as you're told and you'll have an easy ride. I talk, you listen. *You understand?* Three days ago I gave Joyce the same instruction. She did not ask me questions. She just listened and did as she was told. I expect the same of you. Silence and total obedience. That's the rule of the house. Be seen, not heard. *Capeesh?* (*On Black* 120)

The novel seems to relate to Herbert Marcuse's position, who in his text about one-dimensional man

speaks of a society of 'total mobilization' (21), which has enforced 'a weakening of the negative position of the working class' (35) because the worker 'no longer appears to be the living contradiction to the established society' (35). It does, however, also indicate how theories of class domination have been calibrated. The bourgeoisie and the working-classes nowadays are automatically positioned as dominating agents and dominated agents through the global spread of neoliberal capitalism. Unigwe explains that class domination brought to the fore by Marcuse works without force but is instead induced through modes of self-disciplining. In this neoliberalized environment management is shifted to the laborer and Chisom is made a self-responsible agent. Self-disciplining makes repression unnecessary because Chisom silences herself: 'Yes. She understood. Voice as still as the night' (*On Black* 120). Her altered conduct (cf. Foucault, *Biopolitics*; Cotoi; Gordon; Hindess), now purely rational, stimulates her capacity to regulate her own behaviour and shows that discipline and domination are hence enforced through a totalizing internalization: 'To be unnoticeable is to survive. To wear one's normality as a mask, to long for the indifference of the authorities: this leads to the practice of a self-discipline' (Sennett, *Authority* 96). Auditory channels enable the TCC to stabilize the circulation of labor on capitalistic markets but make it impossible for Afropolitan space invaders to communicate with each other – which could interfere with economic processes: 'They are mostly silent, a deep quiet entombing them, filling up the room, so that there is hardly space for anything else' (*On Black* 24-25). The silence disables any communicative channels, debilitating resistance. Upon Chisom's death, for instance, Efe, Alek, and Ama linger in the living room, lacking the ability to express discontent with market conditions. Ama tries to fill the room with noise but her 'cough hangs alone and then disappears, sucked into the enormous quietness' (36). This silence indicates that notions of Africanness can not be simply recollected: 'The silence is unnatural. Shrieks and tearing of clothes should accompany such news, Joyce thinks. Noise. Loud yells. Something. Anything but this silence that closes up on you, not even needing to tug at your sleeves to be noticed' (36).

Seeing then systemizes the process of (self)disciplining. Upon arriving at Zwartzusterstraat, the women are confined to an apartment evoking the image of the factories that Marx and Engels describe: 'Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class . . . they are daily and hourly enslaved . . . by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself' (479). Unigwe's Afropolitan fiction reveals how Marxist and Foucauldian understandings of power intersect (cf. Nigro 659). The workers are expected to adjust their bodies to the client's normative gaze. Space and time are structured by daily 'preparing for work, rushing in and out of the bathroom, swelling its walls with their expectations: that tonight they would do well; that the men would come in droves' (*On Black* 3). Like the masses of labourers

depicted in the *Communist Manifesto*, the women are locked in a periodic time-space-slavery and have to acquire a female sexuality relating to the market and the constructed nature of sexualized black womanhood (cf. de Mul and Ernst 294). Especially Penny, when explaining why sexual sell must be regarded as real labour, captures how work has been turned into a conduct of continual self-investment: 'From the working hours devoted to the purchase and strategic application of clothes and hair and beauty products, to the actual labour of dieting and exercise, to the creation and maintenance of sexual persona' (17). When rented out to the cabins in the red light district, the means of domination and discipline are nonetheless allocated to the buyer, who is allowed to see, whereas the seller is not. The client's vision is considered superior as soon as he becomes the surveilling observer. Elaborately, Unigwe describes how the sex workers from 'their glass windows' (*On Black* 178) can only for limited amounts of time look at the men 'walk[ing] with an arrogant swagger and a critical twinkle in their eyes . . . from one window to another and having made up their minds go in to close a sale' (178). The power inherent in domination and discipline, produced by the red light district's spatial structuring, strongly resembles Foucault's take on panopticism and the all-seeing power keeping subjects under permanent surveillance. The division of the work place into show rooms with a 'partition wall separating them' (*On Black* 237) allows a 'strict spatial partitioning' (Foucault, *Discipline* 195), keying a disciplinary apparatus into 'concrete spaces such as architecture' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 155) through which 'inspection functions ceaselessly' (Foucault, *Discipline* 195). Whereas the client's gaze seems alert everywhere (cf. *Discipline* 195), the women never know for certain if they are being looked at although they need be sure that they might always be so (cf. *Discipline* 201). The immobile and segmented space of the cabins thus constitutes a micro-model of the disciplinary mechanism. It also refers to what Karl has coined the zero hour of the neoliberal novel, as it exposes the sex workers' bodies to neoliberal decontainment:

Here I offer the term 'neoliberal decontainment' as a shorthand for the present status of the body under neoliberal labour arrangements, and the temporal and spatial imaginaries that are a function of that regime of corporeality. For as the incorporated body of wage labour gives way to the task-based and atomised labouring and intellectual capacities of the neoliberal labour market, so too is the linear, executable time of wage labour recast in what are usefully described as spatial terms I contend that the novel plays out the very quandaries of de- (and in some cases, re-) containment via temporal and spatial patterns that are symptomatic of more fundamental matters of corporeal cohesion. (339)

Exposed to the gaze and thus to continual visibility, the women immediately and repeatedly subject themselves to the judgment of the clients by adopting their viewpoint (cf. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 152; Haugaard 186). Power is, consequently, produced by the self-disciplining of the women when adjusting to the vision of the European client, whose eyes have become instruments of power. Chisom, for instance, learns to 'stand in her window and pose in heels that made her two inches taller' (*On Black* 237). She attempts 'to smile, to pout, to think of nothing but

the money she would be making' (237). The sensorium applied enables the TCC 'to supervise the conduct of individuals while increasing the profitability and productivity of their activity' (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 67), while the consumption needs of the dominant clients transfix the positions of the entrepreneurial yet unskilled and thus immobile (cf. Holston and Appadurai 198; Lash and Urry, *Economies* 165-170, 173) immigrants: 'She learned to twirl to help them make up their minds, a swirling mass of chocolate flesh, mesmerizing them' (*On Black* 237). Relating to Foucault's claim that the panoptic schema spreads throughout the whole social body and that its vocation becomes a generalized function (*Discipline* 207), one can assume that Unigwe alludes to Selasi's panoptic position in the Afropolitan space of inquiry, outlining her access to images of Africanness that others might not have access to and through literature turning them into objects of Afropolitan knowledge. The women in the novel, on the contrary, are confined to their enclosed show rooms giving them 'cabin fever' (*On Black* 253), spatially imprisoned through vision, denoting how Africans within Afropolitan discourse are linked to images of Africanness created by the TCC surveilling them, incapable of changing them on their own because through power alternative realities can be filtered out and erased. Like Africanness becoming a self-regulating commodity in discourse, the women are individualized and distanced from their localities, yet collectively and efficiently integrated into transnational markets. The social panopticon enables the buyers to apply the distant senses when 'looking for adventure between the thighs of *een afrikaanse*' (178) that they name 'Mama' or 'Nubian Princess' (179), through audiovision reifying the concept of Africa as a homogenous entity and forging a simplification of Africa in absence of any profound knowledge (cf. Schmidt 179).

The other Euro-American senses are related to in order to dive deeper into the Afropolitan discourse on ethnicity, class, and gender, and to investigate ideologies that are conveyed through sensory practices (cf. Howes, *Empire* 4). Chisom, for instance, is molested by a client named Dieter, who does 'not look desirable' (*On Black* 211) at all. In extensive detail Unigwe in these narrative sequences describes how this hideous client reaches 'across the table to touch her face, his left palm clammy on her right cheek' (211), runs 'his fingers down the outside of her neck' (211), and moves 'his hand onto her breasts, cupping each one in turn' (212). He also tastes Chisom, licking her skin and sticking his tongue into her ear (212), leaving a stench in the cabin which 'fill[s] Chisom's] body and turn[s] her stomach' (213). Meanwhile, Chisom's colleague, Alek, is frequented by Etienne, one of her regular customers, who is ridiculed by the women for his sad 'state of his genitals' (179). When ejaculating, Etienne digs 'into her waist with his nails, his breath smelling of garlic' (179). His stain is so severe that Alek always has to wash her pillowcase after he has left (179). In accordance with Nussbaum's line of argumentation one can presume that Unigwe tries to

relate to an implicit reader (cf. *Poetic Justice* 5) who through touch, taste, and smell as sensorial transmitters ought to share with Chisom and Alek a certain sensation of disgust and thus notions of oppression within discourse. At the same time, however, the novel may also hint at the formalized mode of neoliberalism stressed by Karl (338-339) because the implicit reader might as well share with Dieter and Etienne sensations of sexualized economic domination and thus maintain notions of power produced by discourse. Especially olfactory codes at this stage create and inform power relations. Since smelling good or smelling bad are seen as integral elements in the presentation of the self and the construction of the other (Synnott 202), Dieter's 'inaugurating [Chisom] into her new profession' (*On Black* 213) comes with an olfactory hierarchy. In Euro-American contexts, smell has often been reduced to an animal sense, which is ranked as inferior to sight or hearing and understood as the lowest in the hierarchical order of human senses (cf. Synnott 185; Reinartz 5; Beer, "Körpergeruch" 213). Simmel even suggested that Afro-Americans could not be granted access to the northern American bourgeoisie because of their smell (cf. 733), partaking in racist assertions that Africans were unclean and reflecting beliefs that ethnic communities exude foreign and for this reason undesirable odours (cf. Reinartz 106; Classen, Howes, and Synnott 161). Sensory stereotypes have, after all, for centuries been used to characterize social groups, which is why, for instance, the working classes were not only expected to live in smelly accommodations but were also thought to eventually exude nasty odors (cf. Classen, "Introduction" 2). Sensory stereotyping, furthermore, relates to notions of gender because women in the Euro-American hemisphere have always been considered smelly if operating as sex workers (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 162). Penny argues that nowadays sex workers' bodies are still 'hated, feared and punished by society at large as part of a culture that understands female sexual objectification as labour whilst remaining terrified of the notion of women gaining real control over the proceeds of that labour' (20). The stench imposed by Dieter and Etienne should therefore not be associated with uncleanness. It is, much more likely, the product of disciplinary power informing the supposedly cosmopolitan space invaders that they have left their African entanglements to 'perform the low value-added services that the global city's new upper class consumes' (Lash and Urry, *Economies* 30) and that they are to remain an immobile and static workforce. I think that Unigwe might even imply that African writers have been invited to contribute to cosmopolitan literature, yet are expected to remain an immobile and static branch of African writers within a Euro-American-dominated cosmopolitan discourse. This thought is investigated into by Atta and examined in chapter 2.4. Olfactory codes hence not only position the Afropolitan space invader but also signal the incapability of resistance to immobilities within neoliberal barriers. Chisom keeps herself from throwing up when smelling Dieter because the 'customer was king even when he was being obnoxious, Madam had warned

them' (*On Black* 275). Alek's aversion to the smell of garlic cannot be suppressed because she knows that 'her affection is for sale' (179), which is why she smiles whenever she sees Etienne (179). Both Dieter and Etienne partake in producing legitimizing identities, even infusing Chisom's visualized images of wealth with olfactory codes: 'A Lexus sparkled in her head. *Think of the money*. Then a candlewick with a human body. *God help me!*' (212). Chisom at this moment realizes that she does not have any share in the process of identity formation: '*This is not me. I am not here. I am at home, sleeping in my bed. This is not me. This is not me. This is somebody else. Another body. Not mine*' (212). Using italics, Unigwe through the spatial form of the text (cf. Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu 5) gestures towards the differentiation between Chisom's 'I' and 'me' (cf. Mead 173-178). The italicized 'I' is associated with a 'sense of freedom' (Mead 177) and a self that is not commodified and disciplined by 'the organized set of attitudes of others' (Mead 175): '*I can't do this*' (*On Black* 212). The 'me' subsumes her legitimizing identity as a sex worker on the sex market: 'Social control is the expression of the "me" over against the expression of the "I." It sets the limits, it gives the determination that enables the "I," so to speak, to use the "me"' (Mead 210). Arguing that '*This is not me*' (*On Black* 212), Chisom wants to detach herself from the 'me' disciplined by civil society's actors and from the social group of sex workers. When Dieter realizes that olfactory codes might not be sufficient enough, he enforces a controlling touch as a means of establishing and maintaining the former order (cf. Classen, "Contact" 259), and, as soon as he notices Chisom's instinct 'to shake it off' (*On Black* 211), restores the hierarchy through physical violence, raping her:

He held her close. Pushed her against the wall, his hands cupping her buttocks, and buried his head in her breasts. 'Stop,' she shouted again. Eyes open, she saw his face, his mouth open and his jaws distended by an inner hunger. Stop! His moans swallowed her voice. His penis searched for a gap between her legs. Finding warmth, he sighed, spluttered sperm that trickled down her legs with mucus, baptised herself into it with tears, hot and livid, down wherever he touched, like he was searing her with a razor blade that had just come off a fire. (212-213)

Realizing her incapability of defining the 'I', Chisom then can 'no longer bear to look at herself' (248). She still adapts to the client's gaze but 'behind that smile her regret gr[ows] bigger' (248). Understanding that privatized risks have been unloaded solely on the women, she regrets her supposedly rational economic decision and realizes that she has been tricked by Dele's promises of prosperity (cf. 248). Visual images of wealth have not sustained: 'Five hundred and fifty euros a week she paid. She did not see how she could do this job long enough to save anything' (252). Whereas she earlier aspired to work 'for a few years, keep her eyes on the prize, earn enough to pay back what she owed Dele and then open up her own business' (102-103) in order to one day 'resurrect as Chisom' (103), she now senses that she has failed as a self-entrepreneur:

Sisi had been in Antwerp for exactly five and a half months. The revelation derailed her enthusiasm to make money. And in its place came a stoicism she could never have imagined she possessed Sisi saw stretched before her long nights with no customers. Dele's voice pounded in her ears. She stood in

front of the mirror and practised a smile But an unhappiness permeated her skin and wound itself around her neck and forced her head down so that she walked as if something shamed her. While she had never been comfortable in her job there was now a certain aversion added to the discomfort. (247-248)

This feeling is shared by Alek, who fears 'that she has forgotten the person that she used to be and that if left for too long she may never find that person again' (179) when staying until her debt is paid off. Although Chisom and Alek share the same grief, they are unable to forge resistance from their positions in civil society. Instead Chisom flees prostitution after meeting Luc, abandoning Alek and exemplifying individual liberty endorsed by internalized neoliberal morality marginalizing any notions of collectivism in identity formation.

Afropolitanization

Having met Luc, a banker who offers to pay off her debt (cf. 235, 263), Chisom wants to eradicate her legitimizing identity. The liberation from confined spaces, which condenses into the thought that she 'could be anyone from anywhere' (258), is embodied by a reclaimed sensorium: 'She could already feel the taste of freedom rush into her mouth, intoxicating her into a rapid dance that pirouetted her round and round the room' (273). This 'beginning of a new life' (284) enabling Chisom to 'get rid of Sisi, let a fire consume Sisi, char her and scatter her ashes' (276) is, moreover, conceived of as a metamorphosis, often identified as a prominent thought in African cosmologies (e.g. Hallen 300; Menkiti, "Normative Conception" 326; "Person and Community" 172; Nzegwu 568; Obenga 44; P. Coetzee 326). The trope of the metamorphosis has also gained prominence in Afropolitan discourse. Mbembe, for instance, describes transformations as genuinely African. In African cosmologies, he argues, 'a human person could metamorphose into something else' ("Internet"), permanent transformation being 'an essential dimension of what we can call African culture' ("Internet"). Africa in these thoughts is repositioned as a philosophical locus of passage (cf. Gehrman, "Cosmopolitanism" 61), opening Afropolitan spaces to the exiled and isolated Chisom. Instead of recollecting her Africanness to locate ways of being in the world, however, Chisom helps reproduce identities that rationalize domination, outlining the sustenance of hegemony (cf. Gramsci; Hensby and O'Byrne 398) that neoliberalism has unfolded within globalized civil society. Resembling Strenger's homo globalis seeking access to other cultural paradigms determining the self after having found out that the legitimizing identity has not helped her construct her self (cf. Strenger 84-85), she espouses notions of cosmopolitanism as an alternative but unties herself from any remaining Africanness:

Sisi tossed in her bed all night, thinking about her decision It occurred to her that the other women might not like it . . . she had a future after this, but the rest? What did they have? Who did they have? Joyce who had confided in her that she had no family anywhere on the face of the earth. What would happen to her? And Ama? Efe? (*On Black* 273)

Chisom turns her back on Zwartzusterstraat and pursues a cosmopolitan identity still informed by global capitalism and infused with the culture-ideology of consumerism. Abandoning Ama, Alek, and Efe emerges as another economic decision grounded on a neoliberal rationale: 'The more she thought about it the more she realised that there was very little to be afraid of. On the contrary, she stood to gain a lot' (271). When replacing the thought of metamorphosis with the notion of a 'true epiphany' (1), Chisom resembles Sepha in his store becoming a corner-store entrepreneur. Unigwe, at this moment, captures neoliberalism's capability to constantly reproduce itself despite malfunctions and perpetually marginalize alternatives – a prerogative of neoliberal thought discussed in more extensive depth in chapter 2.4. Among Chisom's first actions after losing her source of income is the re-capitalization of her life-style through Luc, who ought to provide her with the necessary mobilities. She only pretends to be in love with him, seeing him as a financial catalyst who 'would look after her' (217) and whom she can marry to become a 'bona fide Belgian' (271). Perceiving love as 'a way of loving one's own destiny in someone else' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 241), marriage is interpreted as a means of entering the TCC and grasping economic enfranchisement, visualized as the targeted transformation: 'Humming under her breath, relishing the thought of new beginnings, she thought of how much her life was changing: Luc. Money. A house. She was already becoming someone else. Metamorphosing' (*On Black* 1). Chisom, evidently, wants to invade what Seabrook has defined as 'a whole class of urban people' (214) in the Global South, who imitate Euro-American lifestyles and 'will do anything to get out' (214). Like these urban people, who attach themselves 'to foreigners, seeking sponsorship, a visa, a job, a way out' (214), she clings to Luc because she wants to profit from the proliferation of identity choices directed through access to capital and, therefore, 'more extensive at the 'centre' of the global system than at its peripheries' (Hall, "The question" 305). The metamorphosis, for these reasons, becomes an economic transformation.

She begins to 'mimic' (Nketiah) the TCC, assisting in excluding any alternatives that could threaten the power of the capitalist class. Although she is given the chance to re-arrange the building materials in the construction of identities, realizing that she could be anybody and thus 'any story she chose' (*On Black* 258), the transformation that ought to 'buy her forgetfulness' (1) becomes a reproduction of identity within the realms of global capitalism: 'Sisi navigated the Keyserlei and imagined everything she could buy with her brand-new wealth' (1). Her metamorphosis is accompanied by a re-hierarchization of the Euro-American sensorium, corresponding significantly with Bourdieu's differentiation between economic, cultural, and social capital ("Forms of Capital"), and his stance on the emergence of a habitus within social space, which is constituted by positions and dispositions (*Distinction*). The senses in this case function as

relevant transmitters in the process of accumulation because they assist in generating a habitus unifying patterns of taste and equipping them with a distinct social logic, contributing to the production of a 'space of life-styles' (*Distinction* 166). As soon as Chisom is equipped with economic capital, she starts faking the lifestyle of a cosmopolitan jet-setter with African entanglements, who is '[d]oing Europe' (*On Black* 256) on the Eurostar train. The literary space invader that Unigwe has created comes into sight as a sheer parody of Selasi's latest emigrant generation. Chisom very much impersonates the image of Afropolitans acting as 'African versions of western trust fund kids' (Eze, "We" 114), who Eze demeaningly calls 'privileged snobs who carry one or more international passports and jet from one global city (in Africa) to another (in the West)' ("We" 114). Strolling Antwerp's shopping streets, she indeed mimics a cash liquid globetrotter, who enters shops to try on gold and diamond rings (cf. 257), and thus make herself visible by displaying access to economic capital. Luc's 'monthly allowance' (271) turns her into a touristic nomad of consumption (cf. Eickelpasch and Rademacher 47; Urry, *Tourist Gaze* 4-5; *Consuming* 132), seeing the city with 'new eyes' (*On Black* 282) and prioritizing visual symbols of capitalism over symbols of a cosmopolitanism such as the 'mixing of skin colours' (254), 'beggars, mainly East European women with young children and colourful sweaters' (255), and 'Jews with their Hasidic discs' (254):

She liked the Keyserlei with its promise of glitter: the Keyserlei Hotel with its gold facade and the lines and lines of shops. Ici Paris. H&M. United Colours of Benetton. Fashion Outlet. So many choices She liked the Pelikanstraat with gold and diamond jewellery calling from their display windows, beckoning to customers The souvenir shop with their laces and fancy chocolates. (254-255)

Like Deola and Dalila walking through cosmopolitan London (cf. Atta 17; Donald 33), the Afropolitan space invader at this stage in *On Black Sisters' Street* is enabled to eventually see cosmopolitan images beyond the aestheticized signs of economy. These images, however, are immediately marginalized by consumerism. Although African points of entanglement are acknowledged, as Chisom at one point admits she is 'visiting from Lagos' (256), they are kept in disguise when Chisom dresses like a tourist from the US and imitates 'some rich woman who could afford to travel the world for leisure, taking in sights and trying the food' (255). Chisom focusses on the TCC's global interests and wants to share its lifestyles and its consumption of luxury goods as defining criteria (cf. Sklair, "Capitalist Globalization" 32). Accordingly, economic capital has to be converted into noticeable cultural and social capital, making visible her new habitus. She buys expensive products, spending tons of cash on extravagant trouser suits and knickers (*On Black* 285) to distance herself from 'the shops she would normally have entered' (284), which are now demonized as 'superstores which looked like massive warehouses with clothes so cheap that with twenty euros she had once bought herself three new outfits' (284). Not only does Chisom exhibit objects of social stratification to appeal to the taste of the TCC. She also tries to re-position herself

within social space through marginalizing the social class she formerly belonged to, indicating how identity formation in civil society is based on contrary positions reproducing sources of domination, which is why the global elite located at the center apparently cannot exert its structural domination without the local margins. Clothing in this regard asserts systems of inclusion and exclusion:

[F]ashion can fulfill the dual function of inclusion and exclusion at exactly the same time: it brings together all those who have adopted the fashion of a particular class or group, and excludes those who have not. Thus fashion produces similarity, union and solidarity within the group and the simultaneous segregation and exclusion of everyone else. (Corrigan 170)

The policing of clothing through dress codes, which is often illustrated by academics (e.g. Calefato; Skeggs; Classen, "Introduction"), is also conducted by Selasi when in *Bye-Bye Babar* arguing that a funny blend of London fashion is a characteristic of the Afropolitan or when being portrayed as a wealthy and mobile fashionista in the *Telegraph* article composed by Wood. This nexus between Afropolitan identity construction, consumerism, and fashion and lifestyle has been emphasized by many critics, such as Dabiri:

[T]he problem with Afropolitanism to me is that the insights on . . . modernity and identity appear to be increasingly sidelined in sacrifice to the consumerism Mbembe also identifies as part of the Afropolitan assemblage. The dominance of fashion and lifestyle in Afropolitanism is worthy of note due to the relationship between these industries, consumption and consumerism. The rapacious consumerism of the African elites claimed to make up the ranks of the Afropolitans is well documented It is largely in the pockets of the mobile Afropolitan class that much of the wealth is held. ("Why I'm not")

Through websites such as www.theafropolitanshop.com or www.afropolitan.co.za, Afropolitans are, in fact, further shaped into a narrow class that partake in in the construction of an 'exclusive, elitist and self-aggrandizing' (Tveit) Afropolitan TCC through fashion. Consequently, Chisom holds the carrier bag of the shop where she has purchased items 'in such a way that its name showed' (*On Black* 285) – according to Sennett a behavior also typical for the era of high capitalism and liberalized markets (*Authority* 90). Dress is understood as a means of expressing identity in other Afropolitan novels as well and becomes a prominent leitmotif. In *Behold the Dreamers*, Jende, as soon as he has earned enough money, goes shopping 'for the perfect briefcase' (Mbue 248) he can take to work. He wants to re-position himself, mimicking whiteness: 'With his own briefcase, he'd become a white-collar professional, too' (248-249). Neni, before returning to Cameroon, goes on an extensive shopping trip, buying 'clothes for as many years into the future as they would need in order to preserve their American aura' (348). Bandele, in *A Bit of Difference*, dresses 'like a penguin' (Atta 45) at a dinner party and walks around 'with a blonde with puffy taffeta sleeves' (45), perceiving himself as a cosmopolitan novelist. Kenneth, in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, wears 'a suit for the occasion' (11) when trying to buy a car as his 'first entry into a long-awaited form of American commerce' (10). Economic and social capital also ought to equip space invaders like Chisom with cultural capital: 'Sometimes she dressed for the

role. A cap, sunglasses, a bumbag hanging from her waist, camera dangling round her neck and a Dutch phrase book in her hand' (*On Black* 255). Pretending to be a tourist accessing cultural capital in the form of pictures (cf. Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital" 47), she stops in front of sights and asks people passing to take photographs of her (*On Black* 256-257). When entering a cathedral she aims her camera at paintings that she considers boring and only pretends to take pictures (258). Especially Eze's declaration that he is an Afropolitan because he is capable of 'occupying several cultural spaces and relations' ("We" 117) implies the significance of Chisom's acting. Through her tourist gaze involving 'the collection of signs' (Urry, *Tourist Gaze* 3) she wants to acquire capital endowing her with supposedly cosmopolitan privileges. In the end, however, she poses for pictures 'she would never develop' (*On Black* 257) and trades 'conspiratorial smiles with tourists' (258) she does not further interact with. Economic capital can evidently not be converted into social or cultural capital.

Chisom also engages in sonic practices to mimic a cosmopolitan lifestyle. In a jewellery store she claims that her 'fiancé has asked [her] to choose an engagement ring [because h]e's too busy to come and get one himself' (257) and tries to reposition herself through making audible her access to economic capital: 'Sometimes I wish he had less money and more time' (257). Keeping her Nigerian variety beyond the audible, she reduplicates an American accent to distance herself from her former roommates, the 'group immediately below' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 244), and acquire cultural capital that everyone can sense: 'How loud had she been? Exclaiming, *I'm dying to eat Belgian fries! Quite famous back home in the US, you know!* Then she had turned around to smile at the customer behind her' (*On Black* 259). Not only does Chisom erase her Africanness. When conversing with locals she even reproduces neoliberal mechanisms present in the North-South dyad:

People would start conversations with her at bus stops . . . Old women would tell of when they lived in the Congo many decades ago, talk fondly of Albertville which had now been renamed something they could never remember, something African. Ask you if you spoke Lingala. What you thought of Kabila. Talk of their niece who could not have a baby and adopted a beautiful little son from Rwanda. Or Burundi. 'Beautiful baby, only problem is his hair. Quite difficult to comb, the krulletjes . . .' (280)

Chisom here tries to master Antwerp's wealthy city quarters, formerly inaccessible because of her race and class affiliations, through acquiring social and cultural capital. The other Euro-American senses are supposed to re-position her as well. When interrupting her shopping tour for a bite, food functions as a marker re-allocating her in social space: 'Her new life . . . nudged her towards the Ekxi, with its prices a notch higher than Pano's. She went in and bought a sandwich with lettuce spilling out of the sides, ruffled and moist' (2). Since tastes in food, Bourdieu argues, depend on the idea a class has of the body and of the assumed effects of food on the body (*Distinction* 187),

Chisom proves her access to the social body of the TCC. Consuming the sandwich at a table outside, she makes sure that everyone can not only see her shopping bags as economic capital but also the sandwich representing a liminal analytical substance (cf. Bell and Valentine 44; Kong and Sinha 2) of cultural and social taste. Not only consumed food, however, remains a means of re-positioning herself in social social. The systematicity in properties which she tries to surround herself with, understanding taste as the physiological and psychological generative formula of life-style (*Distinction* 169, 188), is also tangible in purchased objects relating to touch. The knickers that she buys, for example, must be 'sensible' (*On Black* 285) and in the shops she only 'touch[es] things that t[ake] her fancy' (1).

Although Chisom has been given the chance to flee Zwarte Zusterstraat she does not redefine what it means to be African. Nor does she become part of a cosmopolitan class. Despite her having bought expensive clothes and eaten the purchased groceries, faking an American accent, and engaging in small-talk conversations, others remain indifferent to her. In the end, she finds herself in a 'city of strangers, of anonymity' (281) where people still 'see, but don't see' (Sennett, *Conscience* 128-129). Chisom complains that people in central Antwerp do not care about her and even look past her when they say hello (*On Black* 280). Boundaries of race and class cannot be transgressed, instead Chisom is allocated to a state of complete social and racial isolation:

And at bus stops there was a general suspicion of all things conspicuously foreign and very often she would find old women clutching their bags tighter if she stood close to them, strangling their bags under their armpits. And men quickly patted their trouser back pockets, assuring themselves that their wallets were safe. Even her fellow Africans did not talk to her. (280-281)

Chisom, consequently, does not get to partake in a collective identity of the TCC and is unable to convert economic capital into social and cultural capital. Imitating a cosmopolitan elite has further distanced her from notions of Africanness, a problem that Ede holds Selasi responsible for, criticizing that her conceptualization only exhibits an 'Afropolitan individual self-empowerment' ("Politics" 90). Imitation has made her superficial because she is imprisoned in a shallow life-style reduced predominantly to the visual dominating a Euro-American sensorium: 'She felt beautiful. The world was beautiful The streets she walked smelt beautiful. Felt beautiful. Looked beautiful' (*On Black* 284-285). Considering the eyes the essential symbol of the self (cf. Synnott 222; Wulf 96), Chisom does not even recognize Efe, Ama, and Alek any longer. Upon leaving Zwarte Zusterstraat, she peeps into a supposedly empty living room (*On Black* 276). She cannot define the self in relation to the other women because the emphasis on the visual triggered by the access to economic capital in correspondence with the inconvertibility to cultural and social capital has detached and distanced her from any notions of Africanness, which Ede criticizes: 'Afropolitans are, in the first instance, upwardly mobile youth possessing symbolic capital and an unconscious

desire to establish an ideological, aesthetic and especially ethical generational distance' ("Politics" 91). Afropolitanism thus cannot be read as a feasible collective identity formation framework enabling Africans to conceive of themselves as citizens of the world with African entanglements as long as global capitalism within Afropolitan spaces manages to reproduce a civil society establishing legitimizing identities. The pursuit of flexibility inherent in Selasi's call for identity formation in the end produces new structures of power instead of creating conditions which could set Afropolitans free. Unigwe reveals that Afropolitan fictions might simply contribute to the flexibilization of ideological control (cf. Eagleton, *Literary Theory; Marxism*) dispersed through literature targeting a global audience. Chisom's mimicking of the TCC and her reproduction of the Euro-American sensorium imply that Selasi herself might be a guest within cosmopolitan discourse and might tend to reproduce ingrained power mechanisms. Through access to economic capital she may be enabled to join cosmopolitan discourse but, due to missing cultural and social capital, she can not re-direct neoliberalized cosmopolitanism, as Hall explains:

What I would say is that nowadays [cosmopolitanism] is very closely related to globalisation. We are obliged to talk about the interdependencies across the globe in a planetary way, in which more or less everybody is . . . connected with one another. Of course, connected in deeply unequal ways – globalisation is a contradictory system, the product of what used to be called 'combined and uneven development'. Outside this uneven and unequal framework, cosmopolitanism is a very limited concept. It can only mean the capacity of certain elites to move around within very limited circles. (qtd. in P. Werbner 345)

Unigwe herself defines Afropolitanism an 'elitist term' (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 191) because it produces exclusion and inclusion. This position is reaffirmed by Ede, who argues that it turns out 'difficult to imagine a migrant 60-year-old working-class minority with little cultural capital living in London, Brussels, Frankfurt or New York describing or conceiving of himself or herself as Afropolitan' ("Politics" 91). Musila, in a similar fashion, asks whether 'a Somali shopkeeper in a South African township [is] Afropolitan in the same way as Taiye Selasi' (111). As a legitimizing identity Afropolitanism hence appears to remain deadlocked in the dynamics of neoliberal capitalism. Chisom's death can thus not only be read as Unigwe's putting an end to Selasi's enterprise of jet-setting the world as an Afropolitan superstar. It moreover symbolizes that Africans of the world are marginalized as soon as not complying to fill the positions attributed by civil society. Not without any reason Chisom in the narrative is murdered by Segun, Madam's personal apparatus keeping up the order (cf. Althusser 137; Gramsci 215) because Madam has realized that physical violence must be applied to re-enforce the status hierarchy.

Chisom's death, 'cathartic as well as catalytic' (Eze, "Feminism" 98), marks a fundamental caesura nevertheless. It provides a hint that resistance within the Afropolitan space of inquiry is possible after all. Bearing in mind Strenger's position that worldviews are supposed to provide

human beings with symbolic immortality (12), Alek, Efe, and Ama are faced with their own 'mortality' (*On Black* 39) and their insignificance when it comes to constructing a civil society:

Each worldview states that the group and its mission on earth are there to stay beyond our individual death. By contributing to the larger group, its task on earth and its continuity, we feel that something of us will survive our physical death. It also lowers the looming threat of the feeling of being an insignificant speck in a universe that is indifferent to us. (Strenger 12)

The women not only realize that physical death has removed Chisom's possibilities of constructing meaning which can now be given by other people making of Chisom what they will. Death awareness is, above all, a quintessential intermission interrupting the women's narrative because they understand that upon death they will be forgotten by posterity due to their imposed legitimizing identities in a socially atomized space that disentangled them from their local communities. Therefore they look for strategies in defending themselves against this fear, seeking the connection to families and friends and adhering to cultural worldviews that give their lives a new meaning (cf. Strenger 12). No longer willing to remain isolated and subjected, they gather and express opposition against dominant apparatuses. They claim that they are 'human beings' (*On Black* 289) and should no longer be willing to 'take' (289) the state of exploitation they are in: 'Sisi is dead and all Madam can think of is business Why should she treat us any old how and we just take it like dogs?' (289). Madam begins to lose her position as a boss:

Joyce thinks: When [Madam] told them of the death she did not even have the decency to assume the sad face that the gravity of the news demanded She just told of the discovery of the body. And 'The police might want to talk to you but I shall try and stop it. I don't want anything spoiling business for us.' When she added, 'Another one bites the dust,' – in a voice that she might have used to talk about the death of a dog or a cockroach – Joyce felt the urge to slap her. Or to stuff her mouth. (39)

A dynamic of resistance inaugurates the end of legitimizing identities because the women regard the positions produced by the logic of domination as intolerable and are severely upset that her boss wants to continue the economic conduct. Stimulated by death awareness they begin to build communal trenches of resistance based on non-Euro-American principles that seem opposed to those spread within civil society and start to focus on a sense of communal attachment through initiating a process of social mobilization (cf. Castells *Power* 8, 64). This sea change is suggested by Efe's 'feel[ing] an affinity with these women in a way she has never done before' (*On Black* 40-41). Efe no longer perceives Alek and Ama as competitors but understands herself as a part of a social group: 'Sisi's death has re-enforced what she already knew: that the women are all that she has' (41). As Alek also feels that her relationship with Ama and Efe 'is beginning to change' (288), Unigwe reveals that a construction of resistance identities, in the long run, might be possible.

2.3.2 Resistance identities

Marginalizing sight and forming an Afropolitan community through olfaction and taste

The formation of communities according to Castells may be the most important type of identity-building in society because it organizes forms of collective resistance against 'otherwise unbearable oppression' (*Power* 9). Actors in this process re-arrange the materials that were used to define them and resist being assimilated by the system that wants to subordinate them (cf. "Globalisation" 63). Resisting civil society, consequently, comes with resisting the Euro-American sensory model. Considering the sensorium the medium through which the invaders experience and make sense of the relation between the self and the generalized other, the medium itself becomes 'the message' (Howes, *Empire* 4) and its (de)construction the performative act of resistance. Unigwe at this stage reflects the problematic assumption in Euro-American philosophy that sensation must be treated as precultural and eminently natural, although the number and the meanings of the senses are not biological givens but mere social constructs, which is why the senses are enumerated and ordered differently in different societies (cf. Howes, "Polysensoriality"; Geurts 3; Synnott 155; Westphal 132). Resistance to civil society in *On Black Sisters' Street* therefore begins with the marginalization of sight so far employed as a sense of control. Whereas the house on Zwartezusterstraat has formerly been conceived of as a supervised space of capitalistic exploitation where the women remain isolated in neoliberal atomization and are reduced to profit-oriented interactions, it now becomes a local 'community they share' (*On Black* 39). Zwartezusterstraat transforms into a space where they can interact and socialize as a community organization that is capable of generating 'a feeling of belonging' (Castells, *Power* 64) and, in the end, 'a communal, cultural identity' (*Power* 64). The house is now a family territory where the European clients' gaze is disabled: 'The communal kitchen and the shared living room bound the women. They met there when they yearned for company but could always retire to their rooms for some privacy. It was where they could escape the glare of the Schipperskwartier' (*On Black* 273). Here they feel 'most comfortable' (276) and bring the other senses into focus.

Especially olfaction and taste then replace sight as a distant sense and stimulate the forming of a community. The function of olfaction as a social conjunction is already depicted when Chisom leaves the group to live with Luc: '[Chisom] breathed in the smell of the room: it was the smell of all the women who lived there, mingled with the smell of incense. It was a warm smell, something familiar, comforting. It almost smelt of home' (276). Chisom at this very moment realizes how odor as a social attribute contributes to the construction of the social group she belongs to because it evokes emotional responses relating to certain experiences (cf. Classen, Howes, and Synnott 2) she shares with the women. When peeping into an empty living room (*On Black* 276), she realizes that

sight no longer functions as a distant sense and grasps that it is smell that provides access to spaces where a sense of a belonging in terms of class, ethnicity, or culture (cf. Beer, “Boholano” 163) can be generated and resistance boundaries can be essentialized. Reversing Euro-American sensory organization enabling Chisom to bridge the distance to her roommates is a strategy associated with many communities across Africa (cf. Classen, Howes, and Synnott 104; Reinartz 109). Through the reversed sensorium Unigwe gives notice that identity formation can be manipulated from within the spaces of domination. The communal kitchen and the living room, like Sepha's store of Africanized cosmopolitan solidarity, have become a pivotal Afropolitan space and, although Zwartzusterstraat is located in the epicenter of neoliberal exploitation, a much more sufficient territory for the formation of Afropolitan identities than Chisom's location in the supposedly wealthy districts of Antwerp. The novel, I suppose, here reflects upon Unigwe's position as an author. Although located in the center of neoliberalized Afropolitan discourse and its adjacent publishing industry, which Unigwe herself sees as a 'gateway to publishing' (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 192), a door 'guarded by people who are not very familiar with the characters you are writing about [and who] see things from the different perspective of someone who does not understand your world' (192), she is still able to construct resistance from within, a slant on Afropolitanism that reflects Eze's standpoint that Africans of the world eventually become *kosmo polites* as soon as they are capable of occupying various positions from which they can define themselves (“We” 117). Knudsen and Rahbek seem to confirm this perception when arguing that the black sisters' community functions 'as a corrective to the common approach to Afropolitanism as descriptive only of privileged and heightened individualism' (210). Chisom's leaving Zwartzusterstraat in order to pursue Afropolitanization as an act of mimicking the TCC accentuates that olfaction no longer ranks low in hierarchies installed by dominant ideologies: 'She breathed in, soaking in the smell, exhaled and said a silent goodbye' (*On Black* 276). Accepting the body odor's significant role for collective identities could have saved her from being murdered after all.

Alek, Efe, and Ama, on the contrary, do utilize the sense of smell in order to create the sense of community – mostly when sharing food. Law in her analysis of the functions of home cooking by immigrants argues that spaces become 'active and fluid-filled with signs and meanings' (229) if they connect places, people and relationships through smell. Olfaction, she concludes, can constitute olfactory geographies that evoke 'memories of place' (232) and disrupt the landscapes of global capitalism. Reclaiming smell, for these reasons, becomes an alternative means of spatial orientation, allowing the space invaders to carry on the formation of a post-legitimizing identity. Unlike vision, smell serves as the cue the women make use of to define the relationship to the places where they live because it equips them with the ability to locate African spaces they tie their sense of self to (cf.

Selasi, “Bye-Bye”), even if they remain outside Euro-America. Law at this stage speaks of a 'conscious invention of home' (234) because place is intentionally imagined through food. This is delineated in Efe's thoughts about a party honoring her deceased grandmother. Like the Yoruba denizens in *Every Day is for the Thief*, she espouses the Igbo burial tradition (cf. Nwankwo and Anozie 63-64) that 'if the deceased was old and beloved, then a party was very much in order' (*On Black* 5). Thinking about what to cook re-activates Efe's memories of her former community in Nigeria that tried to re-integrate her father after the death of Efe's mother and helps her re-activate her African ethics: 'Nobody will ever let you mourn alone back home' (97). Sharing the African food that was cooked to honor the deceased relative then signifies a symbolic way of sharing a collective group identity (cf. Belk 151; Appadurai, “Gastro” 494) that goes beyond cultural boundaries and exceeds limits of class relations and nationalities. Food operates as a mode of communicating African thought in the Afropolitan community in Belgium, and bonding through food consumption appears to stimulate and transnationalize communalization, equipping the Afropolitan space invaders with a shared sense of home and re-defined points of entanglements. Through savoring African dishes at this food-centered event, taste also becomes active and is reclaimed:

There would be lots of Ghanaians Nigerians of course. A sprinkling of East-Africans – Kenyans who ate samosas and . . . complained about the pepper in Nigerian food The three Ugandan women from the ‘Black is Beautiful’ store close to the Berchem Station And the only Zimbabwean she knew, from the Schipperskwartier Those guests would spawn other guests, multiplying the guest list to infinity. (*On Black* 9-10)

The Africans eating together, smelling and tasting the prepared food, connect Antwerp to African spaces within an alternative geography, disrupting neoliberal geographies that have attributed them with their legitimizing identities, and shifting the positions allocated by globalized civil society. As Efe prepares jollof rice (cf. 7), a significant nutrient cultivated in particular in West Africa's Rice Coast region (cf. Osseo-Asare 17), she enables the Afropolitan community to identify localities on the African continent to which they can tie sense of self, which is a precondition for a rooted cosmopolitanism (cf. Appiah, *Ethics*). Like Selasi reminiscing about 'auntie's kitchen' (“Bye-Bye”), Efe thinks about the food her grandmother prepared: 'On Sundays, she made me moi-moi. When I was in primary school, if my mother wasn't home, she'd make lunch for my younger ones and me. Ah, the woman dey good to us' (*On Black* 8). This thought of installing alternative geographies through food is also encapsulated in *Rhumba* when Knight and Flambeau consume pondu dishes in London (Proctor 178). Considering, however, that especially the Igbo regard the home town a continuing source of identity throughout a person's life (cf. Harneit-Sievers 2), yet as a highly diasporic community (cf. Ojukwu 87) must acquire a flexible 'capacity for constant innovation'

(Mbembe, “The Internet”) when it comes to ways to connect places outside Africa to African localities, Afropolitanism's being in the world does, in fact, serve as a legitimate conceptual framework informed by universalized Igbo ethics. Installing redirected foodscapes through reclaimed smell and taste hence must be regarded a form of resistance to legitimizing identities and, at the same time, as a catalyst in the formation of transnational and transcultural African communities that build collective identities: 'Ama spied two Ghanaian guests going back for a third helping of rice and smirked to Sisi that surely, surely, Nigerians cooked better, made tastier fried rice than Ghanaians' (*On Black* 10). The Afropolitans in *On Black Sisters' Street* apparently, unlike many immigrants who in the last two centuries have broken off social and cultural ties to their homeland, manage to maintain intimate ties with their country of origin (cf. Hartner and Schneider 416) and install an Afropolitan micro-community transcending both continents and boundaries installed by capitalism's civil society. Reclaiming and re-arranging the sensorium enables them to act like 'a family, trading jokes and having a laugh' (*On Black* 273-274), dissolve internal African borders (cf. Mbembe, “Internet”) once set up by the Scramble for Africa, and, like Sepha in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, eventually translocate African spaces: '[Alek] smells the rice. It is still good. *Is Sisi's body already decaying? How long does it take before a corpse starts to rot? . . . How long did it take for Mother and Father to rot? And my brother, Ater? They must be rotten by now. Three years is a long time for a corpse, isn't it?*' (*On Black* 288). Alek at the moment of translocating Chisom and her family through Igbo-infused foodscapes might also relate to the ethics of the Dinka, who in collective ceremonies take part in symbolic food sacrifices to honor the deceased (cf. Deng 122; Lienhardt 281). Constituting a receptive entanglement with multiple African localities, eating here is not only a 'glue' (Bell and Valentine 15) between Africans, which transforms Zwarte Zusterstraat into a transnational community that uses the reclaimed sensorium as a means of symbolic and collective representation through which social cohesion in communities without established affinities (cf. Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer 15) can be achieved. Above all, it helps the citizen of the world to feel local outside former localities and partake productively in the formation of identities based on translocation within the field of transnationalism. *On Black Sisters' Street* too hints at the potentialities of translocality within transnational studies brought forward by *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, making Afropolitan literature a dynamic site negotiating the means of how to transpose African entanglements to spaces outside the continent. Mengestu's and Unigwe's takes that nationalities may remain intact as analytical units, yet are increasingly blurred, is echoed in other Afropolitan fictions as well. In *Dalila*, Ma'aza and Dalila move within transnational spaces in Glasgow when sharing Kenyan tea as well as 'coffee and popcorn, Ethiopian style' (Donald 191). Daniel, however, also explains Ubuntu's communalistic ethics, essentially at

odds with the Euro-American dogma of competition (cf. Dübgen and Skupien 42-44; Hofmeyr 77; Ramose, "Globalization" 752; "The Ethics"), through sharing a Scottish bacon roll with Dalila: 'Ubuntu says, I can only be okay if you are okay. I am, because of who we all are' (Donald 197). Ma'aza, Dalila, and Daniel thus through food install a post-national translocal community within transnational spaces. In *Powder Necklace*, Lila reconnects her family scattered on three continents through banku and okra soup breakfast as well as sliced plantains and sticky balls (Brew-Hammond 223, 249-250), translocating spaces within transnational space primarily through different African foods that have spread globally. In *Behold the Dreamers*, Jende and Neni position their children growing up in New York in translocated African spaces when preparing gusi, garri, and ewang and sending them to various African restaurants in Harlem (Mbue 127, 161). Unigwe hence picks up Beck and Glick Schiller's critique outlined in chapter 2.2 and employs literature not only as transnational narratology (cf. Hartner and Schneider 411, 425-427) but rather as a site of the translocated spatial imaginary. As local food penetrates the global, the Africanized sensorium going beyond the boundaries of capitalism's civil society contributes significantly to cosmopolitan discourse because it also de-centers the space invader from the boundaries of the nation-state.

Finding women's association through touch and repositioning through hearing

Unlike smell and taste, touch is not only reclaimed but, above all, Africanized. So far monopolized by Dele, Titus, and the women's clients to integrate them into capitalism's civil society, it is now redirected by Alek, Efe, and Ama to express emotions and manifest constructed bonds within *Zwartezusterstraat*: 'Another bout of silence descends upon them, but it is less claustrophobic than before. The air has lightened, as though a huge cloth that has been covering them has been flung away' (*On Black* 241). Touch is no longer accepted as a sense ranking low on the Euro-American sensorium. Instead the characters are empowered to explore a sense of community based on emotions transmitted through tactile (cf. Synnott 156; Tuan 76; Finnegan 19) non-verbal communication: 'Ama sighs and then puts a hand out and touches Joyce on her cheek. It is a warm touch and Alek smiles through Joyce's tears' (*On Black* 239). Reclaiming touch and making it useful for identifying relationships enables the women to perform emotional bonding and through a 'skin-awareness' (Knudsen and Rahbek 209) become black sisters – hence the novel's title – in a white environment:

Ama impatiently lights another cigarette then immediately squashes it into the ashtray. She is crying. 'Come here,' she says to Joyce and Efe. She stands up and spreads her arms. Joyce gets up and is enclosed in Ama's embrace. Efe stands up too and puts one arm around each woman. Their tears mingle and the only sound in the room is that of them weeping. Time stands still and Ama says, 'Now we are sisters.' Years later, Ama will tell them that at that moment she knew that they would be friends for ever. (*On Black* 290)

The black sisters realize that they are no longer constrained by entrepreneurial competition and its neoliberal credo 'I am ranked, therefore I am' (Strenger 22). Instead notions of Igbo communalism (cf. Egwutuorah 408), which are similar to the Yoruba ethics determining Cole's nameless narrator's post-neoliberal imaginaries, or the Borana and the Gabra morals forming Sepha's store of cosmopolitan solidarity, begin to take shape and define personhood, replacing the neoliberal credo with Mbiti's general axiom 'I am because we are, and since we are; therefore I am'.

Within the sisterhood, touch is then used as a nonverbal narration technique. The Igbo apply these narration techniques to communicate ethical aspects of being when, for instance, engaging in haptic communication through body language (cf. Okeke and Obasi 48). The women in the novel, when hugging each other, accordingly open these nonverbal modes of communication to interact through them. Touch, moreover, enables them to become a symbolic family unit and form a social institution that resembles the Igbo conceptualization of a women's association, which as a cross-cutting tie can extend the nuclear family and even different geographies (cf. Ohadike xxiii-xxx; Opone 58). Since Igbo societies are communal (cf. Egwutuorah 403, 408), Ama's declaration, 'Now we are sisters' (*On Black* 290), indicates that the women as sisters through the language of touch eventually develop an African '(s)kinship' (Knudsen and Rahbek 209) and forge the formation of the social self. The capitalistic nature of interpersonal relations is replaced by a symbolic association. The women are not related in a biological sense but instead call into life a symbolic sisterhood, made visible to other sensory channels by Alek hanging up a framed inscription reading 'It is not the blood that binds us in the end' (*On Black* 288). Symbolic family structures according to Ayoh' Omidire are also a specific characteristic of Afro-Latin Americans whose families during slavery were dispersed on the slave plantations to avoid slave revolts (89). Whereas Ayoh' Omidire refers to the Yoruba ebi family concept constituting ties in places like Brazil (89), Unigwe indicates that women's associations may now emerge in other Euro-American spaces through Igbo concepts of communalism. Like the enslaved Africans having had to reconstruct family structures in symbolic ways, the women now realize that touch enables them to constitute a resistant association within white neoliberal Euro-America, as articulated by Efe: 'They are all the family she has in Europe' (*On Black* 41). Resistance identities are thus generated by embracing notions of Igbo communalism. The formation of sisterhood has, for these reasons, often been interpreted as Unigwe's idea of an African feminism, which gives Afropolitan authors the means of renegotiating gender issues, notions of friendship, or emerging forms of solidarity (cf. Eze, "Feminism"; Diala-Ogamba; Knudsen and Rahbek 209-210). I presume that the association, indeed, must, first and foremost, be read as a unit which allows for a construction of an 'identity of retrenchment of the known' (Castells, *Power* 65). It is an organized form of group activity and, relating to Mead's

elaborations on the self, only through the association the individual members of the unit can act socially by taking the attitudes of others toward these activities (cf. Mead 261-262). Similar symbolic institutions are developed in other Afropolitan novels as well. Dalila and Ma'aza grow into a social unit when hugging in the darkness during the Home Office raid (Donald 225), Deola becomes a part of Subu's extended family when being hugged by her mother (Atta 300), and Ifemelu, in *Americanah*, manages to bond with her Nigerian sisters working in the braiding salons as soon as they touch her hair (Adichie 126). Unigwe, however, at the same time brings into play the fragility of the association as an institution of collective identity formation within Afropolitan spaces: 'The territory they are charting is still slippery. They are only just beginning to know each other' (*On Black* 241). This fragility is also implied when hinting at sonic perception, shifting the emphasis on hearing: 'The three women laugh. At the end of it a thoughtful silence swallows them up again' (242). The novel thus hints that the formation of resistant cells calls for a necessary repositioning if collective identities are to be established.

The pivotal role of reclaiming audition is already pointed to upon Chisom's arrival in Belgium and her being repelled by Segun not communicating with her. She eventually wonders whether Segun is Nigerian at all because she considers it out of line to 'just keep quiet like that' (101). Chisom still bears in mind the significance of oral communication in African societies such as the Igbo (cf. Duru 64), and categorizes hearing as being a sense that has great value. On these grounds, she is offended by Segun 'letting the silence between them mount until she wanted to scream at him' (*On Black* 101). She does not understand how his lips can remain sealed and why he does not articulate any word of welcome or ask questions about their home country (101). Segun, on the other hand, as Madam's handyman and repressive apparatus (cf. Althusser 142; Diala-Ogamba 105) focuses on stabilizing the controlling gaze: 'Eyes on the road' (*On Black* 101). In the show rooms the women then notice that developing resistance also begins with reclaiming sonic channels: 'The act of talking meant a lot more than what was talked about. It meant someone still saw you as more than a toy to pass time with' (237). Whereas prior to Chisom's death the women as competitors on the sex market were not only silenced but, furthermore, not willing to actually hear one another, falling 'into the sort of awkward silence that befalls people on first meeting' (105), they now bond through reconstituted aural channels that they Africanize. Especially Udefi's essay, in this respect, makes it easier to understand Unigwe's exploration of resistant identity formation. Igbo epistemology, Udefi explains, proposes a mode of knowledge production that differentiates between *amafime* and *nchekwube*. Putative knowledge, called '*amamife*' (114), is based on common sense perception or observation through which things or events are depicted (cf. 114). Second-hand information, called '*Nchekwube*' (114), on the other hand, can be considered uncertain and

unreliable, unless spread by elders, title holders, or native doctors (cf. 114). Barren reveals that Yoruba epistemology is based on similar conceptions, as it differentiates between *imo* as putative knowledge a person might acquire through the sensorium, and *igbagbo* applying to everything that qualifies as second-hand information (cf. 15-16). He stresses that Yoruba-language culture and the English-language culture, thereupon, must be treated as two separate cognitive systems (cf. 15). Barren may not refer to Igbo thought, yet his standpoint brings to the fore the quintessential assumption that propositional Euro-American knowledge according to African thought systems can be deconstructed by putative knowledge. Africanizing hearing, consequently, becomes a relevant means of questioning legitimizing identities formed by secondhand manner knowledge, which was constructed through a Euro-American sensorium as a transmitter of propositional knowledge. In the apartment on Zwarte Zusterstraat the women use their aural *amamifes* to connect to their community and to deconstruct the *nchekwube*: 'Efe clears her throat. She does not know why she feels the urgency to tell her story, but she feels an affinity with these women in a way she has never done before' (*On Black* 40-41). Listening to Efe, the other women enable her to communicate her putative knowledge and question the second-hand knowledge that reduced her to an object of sexual exploitation. Efe disables her position produced by capitalism's civil society when reading out a poem to Alek and Ama. She stands up and gives a performance but is quickly joined by her sisters, who are clapping (242-243). While Efe here repositions herself as a poet, Alek states that she always wanted to become a doctor (243). Actual forms of resistance begin to take shape. Collective identity formation takes place through sonic channels, Hankins and Stevens emphasize: 'To listen is to seek to understand, but to listen is also to witness, and to accept, question or reject the interlocutor's meaning' (18). Similar to the Anlo-Ewe, whose 'word for "to hear" (*nusese*) is used to denote "sensing" (or "experiencing") generally, as well as "understanding"' (Howes, "Polysensoriality" 443), and similar to the Yoruba, who define the ability to hear as the capacity to learn and to be educated (Drewal, "Ifá" 332), the women Africanize their identity with an aural bias based on Igbo epistemology. Unigwe's approach is also present in two other novels. In *Dalila*, Donald highlights the essence of storytelling in Ubuntu through Daniel explaining why 'Your story is all you have' (244): 'As we live our days, every person must make their own narrative or it is made for you. That is the great struggle. From this struggle all stories are told and by their story each one is known, each one is remembered' (243). *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician* picks up this approach and through the ethics of the Shona shows that human personhood can not be sustained if these stories are lost: 'That's all our lives amount to, nothing but stories that we hope will live on after we are gone. We have hope that our names will be remembered' (Huchu 252). An aural basis with hearing as a foundation of transmitting cultural

knowledge allows all these space invaders to re-position themselves in the past through reciprocal storytelling (cf. Schank 114-145; Jahn, “Cognitive” 71; Haspel 76), marginalizing Eurocentric views deeming oral traditions inferior. In Unigwe's narrative, the invaders through narrating their stories in an oral-literate interface to one another not only change the story about themselves, reclaiming their own historic memory (cf. De Mul and Ernst 295; Castells, *Power* 423). As storytellers and audience they also develop their very own conventions in the performance and reception of their oral narratives (cf. Garuba 8). The association, emerging as a constituent of Igbo socio-political organization, in the end, enables the women to recollect and manipulate past events without written records and allows them to act as a pressure group in political matters when opposing legitimizing identities (cf. Ohadike xxv, xxviii). This depiction of a social unit, which is located right within the epicenter of exploitation, yet empowers the sisters to generate a new agency in the matrix of identity construction, may even relate to Unigwe's understanding of the community of Afropolitan writers located within cosmopolitan discourse. While the forming of an association with its own herstories in the narrative accentuates most aptly how Afropolitanism can bring forward the foundations of resistance identities, the forming of Afropolitan writers associations through the *Afropolitan turn* may facilitate resistance to power structures within cosmopolitan discourse. Through creating their very own literary genre with their own conventions writers may seek out resistant niches that may function as cornerstones of disobedience.

This assumption once more stresses the outstanding relevance of literature – for authors as well as readers. Especially Eze's remarks turn out helpful in this respect. He writes that stories are 'illuminating because we relate to the characters; we identify aspects of us in them' (“Feminism” 97). The reason why people tell each other stories, he continues, is 'to invite people to partake of our lives and for us to partake of theirs' (97). These invitations, he then concludes, 'help us bridge the gap between us and others; they enhance empathy and connections between peoples' (98). Unigwe hence emphasizes that oral storytelling not only helps the women to interact but also integrates the reader into the 'sphere of collective experience' (Ranci re 26) and thus the notion of collective resistance. Like Sepha reading out to Naomi, Unigwe immerses the reader in fiction through raising a cosmopolitan compassion. This immersion according to Johansen can indeed make fiction an essential tool of enhancing cosmopolitan discourse: 'The sympathy that prose narratives generate in readers, therefore, makes their various interpretative models viable to internalize and take up, producing the conditions of possibility for a variety of political interventions' (26). At the moment that the women engage in reciprocal storytelling 'to drive change with the stories [they] choose to tell' (Unigwe, *For Beautiful*), Afropolitan prose is, furthermore, Africanized through elements of oral narratives re-infusing Africanness into discourse. Considering Salami's stance that

Afropolitanism is a 'conceptual space in which African heritage realities are both interrogated and understood with the tools and nuances of modern-day globalisation' ("My view"), the space invaders in their Afropolitan community manage to reposition themselves as active agents in the interplay of history and geography (cf. Castells, *Power 7*; Birk and Neumann 122) within globalized realities. Re-telling their stories they assert that identity is not something that already exists but something that is generated through investing in particular positions. Afropolitanism, in this sense, becomes an aestheticized mode of participation in the construction of identities:

Far from being externally fixed in some essentialised past, [identities] are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall, "Identity and Diaspora" 225)

A temporal re-positioning reconfigures Afropolitan spaces. Alek, for instance, associates the past with integrating her into global capitalism, which she does not want to think about: 'She has discovered that it never leaves us completely, no matter how hard we try. The past is like the juice from a cashew. It sticks. And whatever it stains it stains for good. It is always breathing over our shoulders' (*On Black* 180). Through storytelling, however, she transforms into her prior self:

Joyce finds her mind taking her back to life before she came here . . . 'I was not even named Joyce, you know. It's not my real name . . . and, I am not even Nigerian.' . . . 'I always thought you didn't look very Nigerian,' Ama says finally. Efe laughs and says, 'Today na de day for confessions. What are you, Joyce? Who are you? Where are you from? Really?' . . . 'My real name's Alek.' Alek: it sounds like a homecoming. Like the origin of life. (180)

Finding and saying out her primordial birth name re-connecting her to her grandmother (cf. *On Black* 185) is considered a second birth because the Dinka believe that a person is only considered to be truly perished if he/she is not remembered by naming a descendant after one (cf. Akol 34; Lienhardt 149; Deng 10-13, 38-41). Saying out the birth name erases Alek's imposed identity and makes it possible for the sisters to re-arrange the 'perspectives and historical circumstances' (Ojo 242) of Alek and her family through flows brought about by an Afropolitan framework. A similar re-positioning takes place in *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*, which explores notions of Shona cosmologies and ethics in full length. Farai's friend, Tamuka, has only been able to stay in Europe because he secretly used a dead kid's birth certificate to get his passport and took over his name, Scott (cf. Huchu 235). Positioned by the workings of legitimizing identities, he is, however, no longer capable of entering social relations and left by his girlfriend because he has morphed into a different person that left behind the ghost of Tamuka (236). As a person 'in transition between Tamuka and Scott' (236) he begins to realize that he must resist his position as Scott as soon as he has murdered Mr. Majeika, the domesticated pet functioning as a totem, to be eaten. Confronted by Farai, he acknowledges the Shona worldview that relates to totemism as a

moral conscience of the Shona and forbids humans to eat totems (cf. Chimhanda 317). In panic, Farai and Tamuka bury the remnants of Mr. Majeika and say out the rabbit's name multiple times (cf. Huchu 234-238), attempting to fulfill a correct Shona burial, during which the whole praise name must be recited (cf. Chimhanda 317). The novel, at this very moment, delineates that the Shona ethics of naming, similar to those of the Dinka in *On Black Sisters' Street*, also apply to pets, whose names derive from expressed feelings towards community members (cf. Mukusha and Masaka). But Huchu's work also suggests that Tamuka needs to recapture his old name to be considered a human person. He opens up to Farai, who re-integrates him into the social body through reactivating Tamuka's former position: 'You either need to go back to being Tamuka, or fucking move on totally, erase your past and become Scott Murray for shizzle' (Huchu 237). He gives Tamuka advice why this re-positioning is essential: '[N]ames are important, man. They define who we are, where we come from, where we're going, yo. A person's name is important. You have it from birth. As you form and develop your own personality, that becomes inextricably linked with the name you have' (237). Both Afropolitan novels, for these reasons, call for the Afropolitan community as an instrument of socialization, which through hearing builds trenches of resistance. Whereas Tamuka, after talking to Farai, is desired both by Stacey and Nika (cf. 240), the conversations about the past and the re-arrangement of collective identities have transformed the Afropolitan community in Unigwe's novel into a space from which the women can control not only the present but, ultimately, also their own futures. This alteration is depicted through extra-sensory perception.

Extra-sensory perception

Extra-sensory perception influencing the narrative must be taken into account as Unigwe's most urgent literary insistence on the formation of resistance identities. Chisom, after being murdered, is enabled to engage in the active play of history, culture, and power mentioned by Hall, and invade yet inaccessible spaces of structural domination: 'In the instant between almost dying and stone-cold dead, the instant when the soul is still able to fly, Sisi's escaped her body and flew to Lagos' (*On Black* 293). The novel in these sequences reflects Igbo cosmology and explains that the Igbo see their world as consisting of both physical and spiritual spheres, connected by dual-traffic and interaction between inhabitants of both realms (cf. Nwoye 307). The Igbo universe, which concludes that spiritual beings and forces may interact with humans (Nwoye 307), also proposes that a human being is only 'one half' (Achebe, "Chi" 68) of a person because the person is complemented by a 'spirit being, chi' ("Chi" 68). These Igbo beliefs in duality relate to Mbembe's generalizing remarks on transformations in African thought systems, according to which a human

person is always 'transacting with some other force or some other entity . . . trying to capture some of the power invested in those entities to add them to your own powers' ("Internet"). Chisom, from the very beginning of the narrative, is therefore both material and spiritual being. After her death, however, her soul leaves the body, while the spirit turns into a ghost-like ancestor that can be sensed in the human world. Unigwe here integrates extra-sensory perception into the narrative, through which Chisom imposes her presence on her parents' lives, showing how literature makes possible the interaction of assumedly mortal and immortal beings:

Sisi's [soul] escaped her body and flew to Lagos. First she went to the house in Ogba. When she came, her father was in the sitting room reading the Daily Times, thinking that when next Sisi called he would mention that at his age and with a child abroad he ought to have a car and could she not send him one? Sisi whispered in his ear. He shooed the fly that had perched on his right ear away. She found her mother in the kitchen beside the second-hand fridge they had just bought with the money Sisi sent to them. She was pouring a drink, a glass of water, at the same time complaining of the heat and the power failure. 'A whole week and still no light. How am I supposed to enjoy my fridge, eh?' she muttered . . . She lifted the glass to drink. At the moment Sisi tapped her on the shoulder the glass slipped from her hands, spilling water and breaking into two uneven pieces. Sisi's mother would say later . . . that she felt a chill in the air just before the glass slipped. (*On Black* 293-294)

Chisom evidently expresses resistance to her mother and father having reduced their relationship to their daughter to a mere money relation, a key problem addressed in numerous other novels as well. Sepha's mother and brother in Ethiopia, for instance, expect money every few months (Mengestu 41), Ike's mother complains that she is 'back to eating sand' (Ndibe 129) if she is not supported financially, and Bulawayo even generalizes these demands: 'Our extended families sent requests and we worked, worked like donkeys, worked like slaves, worked like madmen. When we hesitated, they said, You are in America where everybody has money, we see it all on TV, please don't deny us' (245). Chisom's parents, likewise, have become accustomed to a Euro-American sensorium, emblemized by objects of material wealth such as the drinks chilled by the fridge, an epitome of global technological transformations (cf. Bell and Valentine 202; Scheire), and the car, as a 'leading object of modernity' (Lefebvre, *Everyday* 100) by now considered a modern universal accessory (cf. Ross 29). Chisom, however, withstands the family apparatus construing her as a source of economic wealth and articulates her refusal through non-Euro-American senses. The material and the spiritual at this stage merge and African points of entanglements enable Unigwe to iterate resistance through literature, installing an immortal space invader:

Another dichotomy which plays an important part in Western reflection, the distinction between the material and the spiritual, has no place either in African thinking. When it comes to immortality, at no stage does mortal life or immortal survival involve absolute immateriality. The ancestors interact with mortals, and because the world of the ancestors is ontologically both analogous and contiguous to that of the mortals, that is, there is no difference in kind between these worlds (as was pointed out, it is all one and the same world) there is no logical problem with this interaction; category problems do not arise; the actions of the ancestors are believed to be within the regular pattern of events. The immortals merely happen to occupy a higher status in the order of things than mortals. (Teffo and Roux 200)

Spaces in Nigeria, which in the narrative were neoliberalized earlier, are now Africanized by

(re-)integrating an African cosmology into the parents' profit-oriented world, creating a transgressive and bi-directional flow of thought systems. Similar transgressive flows are installed in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* when, as already mentioned in chapter 2.2, Sepha's deceased father activates his mobile sense of home and his ancestors inform his metaphysical access to multiscalar local spatialities, and in *Ghana Must Go* when Kehinde manages to sense his twin sister, Taiwo, despite being torn apart by sexualized violence through their Uncle Femi: 'Though he'll remember hearing rustling sounds and going to investigate, he senses (not hears) that there is someone at the door. In his chest, on the left, a light tugging sensation' (*Ghana* 161). For this reason, it is important to bear in mind that constituents of a transethnic African cosmology can often be identified in Afropolitan literature, as already discussed in chapter 2.1. Whereas Mengestu may refer to East African cosmologies of the Borana, Selasi refers to both the Yoruba *ere ibeji* myth (cf. A. White) and the Akan cosmology of the Ga-Adangbe, who do not distinguish between 'the natural/supernatural' (Wiredu, "On decolonizing" 22) when illustrating how the space invader refrains from neoliberal atomization and re-integrates into the community through non-material thought systems. However, especially the Igbo presence outside, as well as inside, Africa (cf. Ojukwu 87) indicates that Igbo cosmology might range among the most significant philosophical resources when it comes to forming pressing challenges to neoliberalized realities. Reiterating resistance through Igbo thought, Chisom becomes a malevolent spirit tormenting the living because her death as a young enterprising human has upset the earth goddess (cf. Ohadike xxxvii; Ogbujah 417). Subsequently, she enters Dele's house and appropriates his children into her own cosmos, infusing the TCC:

On the beds two little girls lay asleep in pink cotton nightgowns . . . and Sisi almost felt sorry for them. But then she saw the likeness of Dele in them, remembered whose daughters they were and she went to them. First to the girl on the upper bunk, and whispered something in her ear. Then she went to the lower bunk, lifted the hair to get to the ear and whispered the same in her ear. Anyone who knew Sisi well might say that she cursed them. They might say that she told them, 'May your lives be bad. May you never enjoy love. May your father suffer as much as mine will when he hears I am gone. May you ruin him.' For Sisi was not the sort to forgive. Not even in death. (*On Black* 296)

Since Chisom is empowered to Africanize capitalism's civil society, Unigwe seems to imply that the neoliberal mode of reason disseminated worldwide can be disabled by African thought, correcting the wrongdoings of Euro-American rationalism inherent in neoliberalism through African spirituality and a cosmopolitan education (cf. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* 43). Madam disposing her for economic reasons and not giving her a proper burial has turned Chisom into a wandering ghost, who is unable to live properly after her death. She has transformed into a malevolent force that imposes a spiritual connection upon those who wanted to disconnect her from the narrative (cf. Ijatuyi-Morphé 15; Osseo-Asare 38). Madam desperately attempts to not only extinguish visible

remains, binning Chisom's belongings, but also walks around with an incense stick because she believes in its power to keep the spirits away (*On Black* 109). Anticipating Chisom's metaphysical presence she burns it as a protective ritual to achieve human well-being through the destruction of malevolent forces, marginalizing her own position as a dominant TCC and Africanizing Zwartzusterstraat installed as the epicenter of neoliberal exploitation.

Africanized Zwartzusterstraat then enables Ama, Efe and Alek to sense Chisom: 'Sisi is everywhere. She is not here, but they cannot escape her . . .' (25). The sensory channels applied at this very moment are best encapsulated in Drewal's sensiotics. Drewal argues that, in order to fully understand Yoruba artists, one must become a sensorially engaged participant and use all 'senses in order to open the multiple sensory paths to knowledge and understanding' ("Ifá" 326; see also "Creating Mami Wata" and "Material, Sensorial"). Drewal may be concerned with the Yoruba, yet one could also speak of Igbo sensiotics. Achebe, when explaining Igbo cosmology, argues that the practical purpose of art is 'to channel a spiritual force into an aesthetically satisfying physical form that captures the presumed attributes of that force' ("Igbo World" 436). Sensiotics, I subsequently conclude, also becomes a mode of transgression in Igbo art and may link the writer as artist, his/her literary characters, and the readership. Igbo sensiotics here enhance the Euro-American sensorium, call into question the dichotomy of body and mind considered irrelevant by Igbo thinkers (cf. "Igbo World" 435), and put Chisom into a position to actively shape the women's lives. First she forces her sisters to engage in African burial traditions. They decide to organize a small service to send her soul off (*On Black* 112). Then she becomes an integral part of the association. Even years after Chisom's death, Alek returns to Nigeria and sets up 'Sisi's International Primary and Secondary School' (27). Ama, moreover, opens up the boutique that Chisom had planned before migrating to Europe (279). The material is hence still influenced by the spiritual and African thought systems still inform the African's being in the world. The Afropolitan text becomes the space making this possible, even for a non-African readership. Since Selasi states that Afropolitans must honor Africa's spiritual legacy and sustain their parents' cultures (cf. "Bye-Bye"), Unigwe at this stage does conclude the narrative with the Igbo view that 'chi has unprecedented veto powers over a man's destiny' (Achebe, "Chi" 69) but simultaneously states that literature, ultimately, has to partake in the honoring of spiritual legacies. Chisom only through prose has become a living dead continuing interaction with the living. She even exposes the reader to ideas of how to tackle civil society. Writing, accordingly, is capable of 'producing unfamiliar and unstable perspectives [and] spatialities' (Ashcroft 26) when already forming into presence what could eventually exist at some point in the future. Not only resistance is articulated in these sequences. Unigwe also begins to investigate how the space invaders construct a type of identity that redefines their positions and

attempts to transform the general social structure of civil society – called project identity by Castells.

2.3.3 Project identities

Partaking in social transformations

Project identities according to Castells emerge from a development of existing resistance identities, encircling the 'project of a different life, perhaps on the basis of an oppressed identity, but expanding toward the transformation of society as the prolongation of this project of identity' (*Power* 10). Afropolitanism enabling the women to disrupt and re-initiate the process of identity construction not only mulls over Selasi's demand that 'it is high time the African stood up' ("Bye-Bye") but also approaches the question whether Afropolitanism, in the end, becomes a project identity of a generic nature comparable to, say, the emergence of women's movements or environmental movements (cf. Castells, "Globalisation" 63). Ama and Alek do, in fact, regard the association as an institution that enables them to break out of the social structure of the sex market's civil society: 'We're not happy here. None of us is. We work hard to make somebody else rich. Madam treats us like animals We can be free. Madam has no right to our bodies, and neither does Dele' (*On Black* 290). Bearing in mind Ohadike's remarks that in Igboland women through associations were empowered to exercise control over local trade and change its organization if deemed necessary (xxx), the sisterhood empowers them to espouse changes of the market conditions as well. When moving back to Nigeria and sustaining Chisom's presence in the school and the boutique, they still embrace the communal resistance identity forged in the house on Zwartzusterstraat. Especially Alek's opening a school that gives out scholarships to bright pupils and mainly employs young women (cf. 279) re-introduces notions of African communalism to the community in Yaba and enfranchises locals as well as Chisom's spirit as social actors seeking the transformation of social structure. Eze accordingly concludes that Unigwe is, in fact, 'interested in flourishing communities, which are to be understood as diverse rather than homogenous, multicolored rather than monochromatic' ("Feminism" 96). The Afropolitan community developed on Zwartzusterstraat has indeed helped Alek transcend resistance 'in continuity with the values of communal resistance to dominant interests enacted by global flows of capital, power, and information' (Castells, *Power* 422) to Nigeria and save students and co-workers from possible sexual exploitation. Alek makes 'Sisi's International Primary and Secondary School [named] after the friend she would never forget' (*On Black* 279) the strategic center of social transformation in the periphery. Murray and Overton in this context stress that acts of social transformation do not

necessarily presuppose a complete rejection of global capitalism but can start as a mode of critical amendment from within:

Resistance at the periphery has also taken on less overt or political forms. Work by post-development theorists . . . has pointed to the way some communities . . . have built 'diverse economies'. These are local systems that do not entirely reject capitalism but build on a strong foundation of communal self-reliance and reciprocity in ways which help preserve social forms and cultural norms. They are conscious efforts to opt out of some of the perceived more harmful aspects of capitalism. (429)

Triggered by Chisom's extrasensory presence and her association, Alek partakes in alternatives to capitalist globalization, her school excluding the private economic sector and enabling her to get involved in solving community issues. Afropolitanism does incite space invaders to change globalized civil society from within and set up networks that redefine African points of entanglement in a post-capitalist mode and create flows between Africa and Euro-America beyond the mechanisms of global capitalism and the totalizing code of neoliberal ethics. Through Afropolitan literature Unigwe, demonstrates how a cosmopolitan compassion can end up in sustainable social transformations. Alek, having been forced from Sudan to migrate to Europe, ends up in Lagos, where her actions are still informed by Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism and its cosmopolitan obligations to others:

Yes, to be a citizen of the world is to be concerned for your fellow citizens, and . . . the way you live that concern is often just by doing things for people in particular places. A citizen of the world can make the world better by making some local place better, even though that place need not be the place of her literal or original citizenship. (*Ethics* 241)

These social transformations brought forward by Afropolitan fiction also very much relate to Appadurai's cosmopolitanism from below, which 'builds on the practices of the local, the everyday, and the familiar, but is imbued with a politics of hope that requires the stretching of the boundaries of the everyday in a variety of political directions' (*Future* 198). Richard Falk's globalization from below, which conceptualizes 'widely shared world order values [such as] minimizing violence, maximizing economic well-being, realizing social and political justice' (19-20), can be detected just as much. These local values or policies of hope ought to inspire new globally active social movements that resist neo-liberal globalization from above. Social transformations produced by Afropolitanism, thus, may indeed produce new forms of cosmopolitan solidarity (cf. Eze, "Cosmopolitan" 110; Fine 380). However, despite Alek's acting as a capital-resistant world citizen, who attempts to construct identity as 'a project of a different life' (Castells, *Power* 10), civil society does not dissolve and dominant actors still manage to reproduce sources of domination. Unlike Alek, Efe, consequently, reproduces the Euro-American sensorium.

Efe's reproduction of the Euro-American sensorium

After having worked as a sex worker for another nine years and having repaid her debt to Dele,

Efe becomes a madam herself and buys two Nigerians at an auction. When the women have to exhibit their bodies like 'female flesh' (Penny 1), Efe applies the Euro-American sensorium in calculating profits. She re-hierarchizes her Africanized sensory organization and as a capitalistic entrepreneur re-establishes vision and hearing as distant senses used as a means of control while simultaneously employing touch and taste to evaluate the women when determining their market value on a market of global sexual exploitation:

The women would be called into the room one at a time for the buyers to see and admire. They would all have numbers, for names were not important. Their names would be chosen by whoever bought them. Names that would be easy for white clients to pronounce. Easy enough to slide off their tongues. Nothing longer than two syllables and nothing with the odd combinations of consonants that make African names difficult for fragile tongues. 'Number three, ladies and gentlemen. Number three is the type of woman white men like. Thin lips. Pointed nose. Sweet *ikebe*.' He slapped her bare buttocks. Number three smiled. 'Imagine her inside a window. This one is material for catching plenty white men. Look at her colour.' Number three's skin was the colour of honey. 'She is one good investment.' Number three's smile grew wider. (*On Black* 278-279)

Although having indulged in notions of resistance identities and having been exploited by the TCC herself, Efe apparently does not engage in forging the same project identity that her former sisters espouse. She has a different position in mind and buys one of the women 'because she smiled easy' (279) and another one 'because she looked docile and eager to please, the sort of girl who was grateful for little' (279). The capital that Efe has accumulated during the years of sexual exploitation enables her to train as a TCC agent. Forming 'alliances between indigenous and foreign members of the TCC' (Sklair, "Capitalist Globalization" 33) and taking the position of an inspecting madam within the global sex market's panopticon, Efe amplifies the power produced in civil society when she examines the women and evaluates their marketability while giving in to being seen (cf. Foucault, *Discipline* 187, 204) by civil society's dominant actors and institutions. Unigwe thus explains how civil society's production of legitimizing identities sustains through an apparatus 'supervising its own mechanisms' (*Discipline* 204). Not only has Efe at this point destroyed the association. She has also revolutionized, i.e. modernized the instruments of production 'and with them the whole relations of power' (Marx and Engels 476) when as an entrepreneurial TCC agent helping European markets seek commodities on non-Euro-American markets through former local expert actors. Neoliberal capitalism, consequently, sustains through turning 'former victims into victimizers' (Eze, "Feminism" 95). Once repositioned in the TCC, Efe secures her entrepreneurial ambitions through utilizing the same apparatuses that Madam employed, bribing police officers (*On Black* 279). As she buys 'more girls to add to her fleet' (279), the only transformation detectable is that of Efe becoming a neoliberal self-entrepreneur on markets that are now accessible for her as an actor reproducing structural domination herself. Diala-Ogamba, subsequently, concludes that Efe's behavior is 'a negative and unwholesome occupation and will in no way benefit society or anyone

else except to satisfy her greed for wealth' (103). Efe's transformation from an agent of resistance identities to an agent of a revised 'new civil society of sorts' (Castells, *Power* 422), thereupon, relates to notions of Afropolitanism as a project identity fueling the transformation of society for the worst. Unigwe consequently draws the attention to a problem of reproductive exclusion that Castells identifies as a central problem of communalism inherent in resistance identities:

New *project identities* . . . seem to emerge . . . from a development of current *resistance identities* The fact that a commune is built around a resistance identity does not mean that it will likely evolve toward building a project identity. It may well remain as a defensive commune. Or else, it may become an interest group, and join the logic of generalized bargaining, the dominant logic of the network society. (*Power* 422)

Concluding the novel, Unigwe illustrates that the emergence of an Afropolitan identity could be conceived of as the reproduction of an entrepreneurial TCC focusing only on the transnational lives of privileged jet-setters. Whereas Selasi speaks of 'adolescence' ("Bye-Bye") when inciting Africans of the world to redefine Africanness, Efe's actions reveal that Afropolitanism runs the risk of producing an identity of a cosmopolitan African bourgeoisie, which bridges the gap between local communities and the capitalist global system (cf. Sklair, *Transnational Capitalist Class* 158-161) only because African roots provide access to commodities for global markets. Afropolitans like Efe might be commercially successful cosmopolitans branching into fields like 'venture capital' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") but their Afropolitan privileges eliminate their Africanness.

Sensoria

Towards the end of the narrative, the collective Afropolitan identities negotiated by Unigwe only on first sight seem to remain located deadlocked somewhere between neoliberalization and Africanization, exclusion and inclusion, as well as global and local spaces. Efe through her re-acquired Euro-American sensorium may have turned into an entrepreneurial citizen of the world extending the scope of neoliberal capitalism, whereas Alek keeps Chisom's spirit and their association's communal identity alive, having become a globally conscious citizen of the world informed by local entanglements. In the end, however, Unigwe does reveal that Afropolitan literature may change cosmopolitan discourse from within. When espousing project identities of different sorts, her novel demarcates spaces invested in negotiating the power of social transformations that may be initiated within discourse. The investigation of different sensoria becomes Unigwe's means of using literature as a tool to participate in cosmopolitan debates:

Fiction, if it is to be honest, demands respect for one's characters and the democratic willingness to listen to other voices, particularly those of one's characters. And to allow those voices to speak without censoring them. Dictatorship has no place in fiction writing. Out of this awakened sense of duty to my characters and a desire to write fiction which was true, I decided to "feel" for myself what it was like to be a Nigerian woman in the red light district. (Unigwe, *For Beautiful*)

When indicating how the alteration of the sensorium through an Afropolitan framework becomes a means of initiating social transformations, Unigwe posits that cosmopolitan discourse too ought to equip citizens of the world with the means of transforming. Considering that cosmopolitanism, which Cole positions as a state of ambivalence and Mengestu rewrites as a process of a nomadic becoming, in Unigwe's novel becomes a project of social alteration, the novel acknowledges that according to Ingram's radical critique cosmopolitanism can also become 'the articulation of an ideal or aspiration [because i]t projects a better, more just, more inclusive community beyond existing ones, even if this coming community is much less well defined than the reality it is set against' (60-61). Writing through articulating ideals and aspirations stimulates discourse and expands the trajectories of scholarly debates. This quintessential question, whether the Afropolitan authors through their writing can eventually change cosmopolitan discourse from within, is discussed more comprehensively in Atta's *A Bit of Difference*, which was published in 2013 and is the last novel to be analyzed.

2.4 The body on the Afropolitan labor market in Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* (2013)

'You're selling yourself short. You're always selling yourself short. Stop selling yourself short' (Atta 49), Bandele keeps yelling at his friend Deola after having been picked up from his reading at a bookshop near Covent Garden. Still waiting in vain for success as a cosmopolitan novelist on a globalized labor market, he has just been marginalized by a white market and re-allocated to the Afropolitan market, later ending up in a mental hospital. The reader, at this stage, is given a glimpse into the life of a failing Nigerian author, who is equipped with a neoliberal capital investment strategy and conceives of himself as a whitened self-entrepreneur, but even fails to place his investment on the market after giving in to being Afropolitanized. Despite his lack of success he still tries to convince Deola of the 'neoliberal rationality' (W. Brown 32) he has internalized, his individual mouth shaped into a site of judgement that not only articulates 'interest and profit seeking, but now entrepreneurialize[s] itself at every turn' (W. Brown 32) and continues ridiculing her Africanness (cf. Atta 195). Deola, on the contrary, has at this point already made it as a successful accountant residing in her own apartment in Willesden Green while operating in Nigeria for an international charity foundation called LINK. Unlike Bandele, however, she is about to give up her childless life and instead as an expectant mother get married to Wale, retrieving her impregnated body from labor markets and accepting an Africanization of her womb while still being in the world. Although Bandele and Deola, in the end, both resemble Selasi's Afropolitans that are 'matching [their] parents in number of degrees, and/or achieving things [their] 'people' in the grand sense only dreamed of' ("Bye-Bye"), Atta outlines how the trajectories of Afropolitanism can have very different outcomes on the global labor market.

The novel, when investigating the Afropolitan's workings, positions the body between notions of neoliberalization and notions of Africanization through understanding it as a point of intersection according to academics (e.g. Gugutzer, *Soziologie*; DeMello; Turner, "Developments"; Featherstone and Turner; Synnott; Cregan, *Key Concepts*) both producing and being produced by its social surroundings. Imbued by Foucault's compelling oeuvre on the function of bodies (e.g. *Madness; Birth; Discipline; History 1; Power/Knowledge; Aesthetics; Biopolitics*) and the social constructivist approaches emerging within the humanities after the *body turn* (elaborate yet concise overviews are provided by Cregan, *Sociology* and Gugutzer, *Body Turn*), Deola's and Bandele's branching 'into fields like media, politics, music, venture capital, design' (Selasi, "Bye-Bye") becomes a corporeal exploration of the contingencies of Afropolitanism. The novel emphasizes especially the functions of the mouth as an entry and exit point and thus a site of individualized

judgement and taste (cf. P. Falk), as well as the womb as a central organ of reproduction enabling the control of biological processes and thus a site of biopower (cf. Foucault, *Biopolitics; History* 1). Perceiving the body as an unfinished malleable construct that can be 'sculpted, moulded, altered, and transformed' (Blackman 26), the Afropolitan laborer is, on the one hand, disciplined and governed through self-entrepreneurialization, which Bandele embodies through becoming both white and black and Deola through being childless. Similarly, however, the body empowers the Afropolitan to discard neoliberal governmentality, outlined by Deola when through the fertilization of her womb transforming into the Africanized body, pointing towards the potentialities inherent in African points of entanglement. Not only *A Bit of Difference* recognizes the body as a spatial site of exploring the Afropolitan labor market. The women in *On Black Sisters' Street*, for instance, expose their bodies to notions of precarity when privatizing risks but also turn them into corporeal sites of resistance when Africanizing their sensorium. Sadie, in *Ghana Must Go*, becomes bulimic when facing the hardships of competitive university but engages in a corporeal African rite of transition when dancing on her father's compound in Accra. Other Afropolitan authors such as Ndibe or Brew-Hammond too employ the body as a tool within their literary works to stimulate the reader's empathy for people with different backgrounds (cf. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice* 5). Atta's novel, however, is the only work which explores the role of Afropolitan authors and their capabilities to intervene into Afropolitan discourse comprehensively. As an author who still divides her time between Nigeria, the UK, and the US (cf. Knudsen and Rahbek 182), Atta through Selasi's conceptual framework meta-fictionally reflects and comments on carrying the label of the 'Afropolitan generation [which] have won accolades for their sterling works in the past fifteen years' (Makokha 20). Within the expanding Afropolitan canon, her writing must therefore be acknowledged as an outstanding literary testament to the challenges of being a cosmopolitan writer.

A Bit of Difference is, consequently, the last Afropolitan novel to be analyzed in detail because the space invading of Bandele and Deola not only reflects upon the trajectories of Afropolitanism after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication in 2005 but, likewise, articulates the directions future Afropolitan writers and Afropolitan discourse might take. The analysis begins with delineating Bandele's self-entrepreneurialization before depicting Deola's Africanization. It concludes with arguing that Atta through creating a discursive Afropolitan body uses the novel to explore heterotopian spaces, this way stressing that the productivity inherent in Afropolitan discourse and its capabilities to enhance cosmopolitan discourse can only come from cosmopolitanism's radical openness.

2.4.1 The entrepreneurialized body: Bandele

Investing in whiteness

Bandele, who in the novel only shows up in short conversations and in Deola's flashbacks, is part of the Lagos-based TCC, which has access to all the privileges counted for in *Bye-Bye Babar* but, typical of Selasi's generation of emigrants that wants to 'distinguish' ("Bye-Bye") itself from former migrants, wants to accomplish 'things his parents' generation only dreamed of' ("Bye-Bye"). Atta from the very beginning emphasizes very strongly how neoliberal rationalities and theories of class struggle are not necessarily mutually exclusive but rather interrelated. Contrary to his bourgeois father, who went to Cambridge to seek 'safety in traditional professions like . . . banking' ("Bye-Bye") and now expects his son to follow in his footsteps (cf. Atta 54), Bandele branches into writing and wants to enter the global labor market as a cosmopolitan novelist. He perceives himself as an 'entrepreneur of himself' (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 226), who is 'being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer' (226) and regards his writing a novel, first and foremost, a capital investment strategy. Unlike Cole's nameless narrator, Mengestu's Sepha, or Unigwe's women, Bandele is a space invader who from the very start illustrates that he has completely been subjected to neoliberal governmentality. He evokes the image of the neoliberal prototype, who not only is dissatisfied with his 'assigned position in the social world' (N. Armstrong 4) and thus feels 'compelled to find a better one' (4) but who, beyond that, also regards his body as the 'conceptual and material site' (Karl 341) where neoliberal 'economic orthodoxies are manifest' (341). Targeting the Euro-American epicenter of capitalism where he wants to place his investment, Bandele is even willing to invest into becoming white, outlining the symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and whiteness in emerging racializing neoliberal geographies, which has been subject of intensive scholarly debate (e.g. Arat-Koc, "New Whiteness(es); "Rethinking Whiteness"; Nketiah; Balibar; Nevins; Garner, "Moral Economy"; *Racisms*; Da. Roberts). Atta throughout the novel draws attention to Mbembe's differentiation between Pan-Africanism as a racial ideology, and Afropolitanism going beyond race and suggesting that being from Africa does not necessarily imply being black (cf. Mbembe and Balakrishnan 29-30; Mbembe, "Postcolonial Thinking"). Bandele understands the body as an entity that can be formed by his desire to adapt to whiteness, giving in to Foucault's notions of the disciplined and docile body (cf. *Discipline*) through which 'norms and regulatory ideals become incorporated' (Blackman 25). Atta thus enquires into this investment strategy by showing how the workings of neoliberal capitalism are inscribed upon bodies through labor and production, the body understood as an unfinished resource which needs to be invested in with work and meaning (cf. Shilling 90; C. Freeman 355). Especially the individual mouth, often considered a site of judgement and taste (e.g. P. Falk 14-16; Bourdieu, *Distinction* 187-188; Bell

and Valentine 44-45), plays a particular role because it is the most controlled sensory opening that regulates the flows in and out of the body (P. Falk 14, 25-26). Coming from a highly mobile family and belonging to a class of bourgeois Nigerians called 'Aways' (Atta 86), who have 'access to the best Nigeria can offer, the best education and professional training the world over' (86), Bandele seems to fully adapt to investment strategies outlined in Schultz's famous essay, *Investment in Human Capital*. Hence he first invests in acquiring skills and knowledge (cf. Schultz 1) and attends Harrow (Atta 44), where he receives a formally organized education (cf. Schultz 9) in order to access the class of 'Aways'. Seabrook has created a vivid image of these mobile world citizens:

As they grow old they will be sent abroad to study, into the anonymity of North America or Europe. And this is the beginning of a generation whose lives are increasingly articulated . . . more and more to an international circuit of transnational companies and diplomacy, officialdom and politics, media stars and celebrities. They cease to be citizens of their country and become nomads belonging to, and owing allegiance to, a supraterritorial topography of money; they become patriots of wealth, nationalists of an elusive and golden nowhere. (211)

Bandele's Harrow education is supposed to increase the possible income flow from his labour. It enables him to adopt a 'posh' (Atta 232) British accent and use his individual mouth to rise up in ranking (cf. W. Brown 36; Strenger) to outperform fellow local competitors. Deola asserts that Bandele 'sounded completely English and all she knew about Nigerians who spoke that way was that they looked down on Nigerians who didn't' (Atta 43). Focused on his economic advantage and planning to place his investment within a globalized capitalistic architecture that transcends local peripheries (cf. Brennan 101), he applies the accent to distance himself from local Nigerians, his mouth helping him with entrepreneurial individualization. Through his acquired 'diction' (Fanon, *Black* 4-5) he links himself to the Lagosian expat crowd and pretends that he no longer recognizes Deola because she is black, behaving 'the same way some expats couldn't tell one Nigerian from another' (Atta 44): 'I thought you were the housegirl' (44). Similar strategies are employed by other Afropolitan space invaders. In *Powder Necklace*, Lila ridicules her Ghanaian English teacher, Mr. Kiss-Say, for his 'awful attempt at a British accent' (Brew-Hammond 66). Cole's nameless narrator, in *Every Day is for the Thief*, smugly observes how Chinedu tries to imitate American English when 'say[ing] "actually" again' (151). Ifemelu, in *Americanah*, begins to 'practice an American accent' (164) to adapt to being an international student at Princeton. Neni, in *Behold the Dreamers*, imagines that as soon as she 'becomes a pharmacist, she might have to attend lots of parties with white people' (Mbue 91) and therefore too tries 'to speak with an American accent' (91). Farai reads his getting annoyed when communicating 'with people who don't understand English' (Huchu 85) as a sign of his 'anglicization' (85). Like Bandele, these space invaders stress their access to the white epicenters of global capitalism. They distance themselves from black local citizens through embodying what Arat-Koc coins a new form of 'whiteness' beyond color lines:

I want to propose that in the present context of neoliberal globalised capitalism, we may be witnessing a new form of 'whiteness,' one beyond the colour line. This is a form of 'whiteness' that is enacted by non-European and non-white actors. In a unipolar world, post-socialism and post-Third World, this 'whiteness' is associated with a transnational bourgeois identity, with being on the side of winners in globalised capitalism; or at least an aspiration to, and identification with belonging in a new, global capitalist modernity. This conception of whiteness serves as a category of distinction *within* as well as between nations and regions. ("A Transnational Whiteness" 59-60)

The remaining body parts then complement the individual mouth as a site of judgement and too become markers of embodied whiteness. At a dinner party in Pall Mall Bandele wears a tuxedo and moves around with a blonde acquaintance (Atta 45), trying to shape his body into something more valuable. He evokes Fanon's image of the colonized who tries to rank higher than his fellow citizens. 'The wearing of European clothes' (*Black* 9), Fanon respectively contends, contributes 'to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements' (9). Thus, a whitened body and its stylization can be interpreted as a form of corporeal capital because it helps the Afropolitan self-entrepreneur strengthen his 'competitive positioning [and] portfolio value' (W. Brown 33-34). Like the mobile fashionista Selasi portrayed by Wood or the Afropolitanized Chisom in *On Black Sisters' Street*, the laborer Bandele understands the clothed body as a tool of entrepreneurial self-forming that contributes to the mouth's function:

The gentlemen looked like retired generals and diplomats. She spotted Bandele taking his surroundings a little too seriously and looking like a penguin. She asked him, 'Aren't you Bandele Davis?' He said, 'I am, and who might you be?' . . . Deola asked Bandele what he was studying. He said he was not in university; he was writing a novel. 'A real one?' she exclaimed, thinking she didn't know one Nigerian student who was writing books or bypassing university. 'The question is, are novels real?' he asked, lifting his hand. (Atta 45)

Fanon's remarks on diction and clothes, appropriately, provide reasons why Bandele through his ranking not only longs for better access to labor markets but simultaneously seeks 'admittance to [a] white sanctuary' (*Black* 34-35). The dissociation from his African points of entanglement, 'his only way out' (*Black* 33), makes him, ultimately, a white person. His becoming a 'bobo who went mad because he couldn't accept the fact that he was black' (Atta 54) reflects the critical standpoint that Afropolitanism can be considered a means of mimicking whiteness beyond the color line as the African bourgeoisie through dis-embedding from their local communities intentionally alienate themselves from unprivileged immobile citizens (cf. Nketiah). This slant is also mirrored in Mbue's depiction of the 'American Wonders' (*Behold* 355), ex-emigres who upon return to Cameroon use "wannas" and "gonnas" (355) in their sentences and walk through their hometowns 'wearing suits and cowboy boots and baseball caps, claiming to understand very little of Cameroonian culture because they were now too American' (355). Through their investment strategies, these Afropolitans want to transform their bodies into whitened shells, embracing Afropolitan futures beyond race but simultaneously establishing the concept of racialisation because race becomes meaningful again in the particular context of neoliberalized color lines. I presume that Atta, on

these grounds, very strongly relates to the reproduction of color lines through the expansive canon of Afropolitan writers that has lately emerged. Bandele's education to some extent resembles that of many Ivy-League educated university graduates. His flamboyant appearance might pose a literary comment on Adichie's or Selasi's having to adopt Euro-American fashion habits (cf. Adichie, "My fashion"; Wood). Atta seems to suggest that most Afropolitan writers, in order to find access to cosmopolitan discourse, at some point had to adapt to expectations installed by white hegemony.

In the narrative, Bandele even needs to relocate to Pimlico to adjust to emerging job opportunities (cf. Schultz 9) and place his investment within one of the nerve centers of globalized labor markets. In London he uses his mouth to establish the distance from the periphery, stating audibly that his biological body could no longer survive in African spaces because he hasn't been back to Nigeria so long that he'd 'probably catch dengue fever the moment [he] set foot in that country' (Atta 50). He tells Deola that Nigeria is no longer his home and complains that black people scare him (48-50). Bandele resembles Cole's nameless narrator, who is afraid of area boys and does not ever want to return to Lagos (*Every Day* 69). He reproduces a colonial language when referring to his fellow citizens as 'Nigerians, ye savages' (Atta 50) and pretends to not understand Yoruba anymore when being called 'Agbaya' (195), responding with a dismissive 'Pardon?' (195). The Afropolitan writer, it seems, mutates into Fanon's black man who 'answers only in French and often no longer understands Creole' (*Black* 7). This also explains why he audibly 'grunts' (Atta 282) when Deola tells him about her recent trip to Lagos. His individual mouth 'gagged . . . with sounds, pompous awkward words that twis[t his] tongu[e]' (Sartre, "Preface" xliii), he fails when communicating with Deola, who complains that his 'ridicule of Nigerians is hard to take' (Atta 54). This behavior has already been criticized by Sartre in his introductory statement on *The Wretched of the Earth*: 'These walking lies had nothing more to say to their brothers' ("Preface" xliii). Since the mouth also facilitates the positioning on labor markets that no longer espouse the homo oeconomicus as a partner of exchange producing market commodities (cf. Eagleton, *Marxism* 68), but instead encircle the homo oeconomicus as a competitive producer producing his/her own satisfaction (cf. Foucault, *Biopolitics* 226; Becker), Bandele emphasizes that he does not want to be 'associated with African writers' (Atta 41) any longer and unties himself from the label of the African writer, his first novel *Sidestep* hence revolving around 'skinny blondes with AA-cup bras' (48) who 'w[ear] ballet flats and ha[ve] names like Felicity and Camilla' (48). African entanglements are understood as a threat to his investment because they supposedly link the self-entrepreneurial cosmopolitan writer to marginal localities that may dissatisfy his globally informed self and thus global labor markets. Whereas his parents, like other Euro-American-educated African emigres, might have been confronted with the domination of labor by capital when selling their

labor power (cf. Harvey, *The Ways* 59), Atta at this point reveals how the Afropolitans signifying Selasi's imagined 21st century Africans are completely subjected to neoliberal alterations of market conditions. When Bandele writes his supposedly cosmopolitan novel, it ought to liberate his very own entrepreneurial freedoms and enable him to produce something that he conceives of as his own satisfaction (cf. Becker 131-150). Yet it allocates him to a white 'world of conformity and coercion' (Harvey, *The Ways* 60) in which he finds himself in a constant struggle with competitors. Consequently Bandele uses his individual mouth to fake an American accent (Atta 50) and to position himself within the realms of other cosmopolitan authors such as Baldwin. As an individual capitalist acting only in his immediate self-interest, however, he simultaneously tries to distance himself from Baldwin's blackness to enhance competitive position: 'He is also a James Baldwin enthusiast, but he considers Baldwin's experiences American, unlike his, which he might describe as aristocratic English His snobbishness is exasperating' (50). Bandele's second novel is, appropriately, set in London and Paris (193) and links him to Baldwin's biography (cf. Waters 715) but differs fundamentally from Baldwin's cosmopolitan disposition. Contrary to Baldwin, who according to Julien belonged to the African American artist-intellectuals who moved to Paris in the early to mid-twentieth century to escape the spheres of racism and the lack of opportunity in the United States and sought the French capital as a space of transformational possibility (22, 36), London for Bandele merely functions as a global platform of entrepreneurial activity and the entry point into white labor markets. This racialized neoliberal imperative, governing as an internalized common rationale, is, on the one hand, exemplified clearly by his mantra-like advising of Deola to transfer jobs and relocate from London's periphery to its urban center. Bandele partakes in the pedagogical 'teaching' (Macrine 309) of the neoliberal 'idea that the wage is nothing other than the remuneration, the income allocated to a certain capital' (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 226): 'With your qualifications, you ought to be working right here in the city Come on. You're selling yourself short' (Atta 49). On the other hand, Bandele tries to permanently dissociate Deola from her African points of entanglements, hanging up the phone when talking to Wale (288), making the body inaccessible for the influx of Africanness considered marginal. While Selasi portrays the Afropolitans' rejection of their predecessors' labels and the entrepreneurialization of their labor as 'adolescence' ("Bye-Bye"), Atta highlights that the cosmopolitan writers from Africa run the risk of losing their roots. The body is reduced to being a tool for outperforming competitors. The writer is incarcerated in the system of competition and no longer autonomous:

[T]he mobility that is characteristic of neoliberal labour markets undercuts the autonomy of the individual body itself by enforcing a non-reciprocal exchange of labour. Rather than 'freely' selling her capacities at a price determined by the market, the worker is compelled to accept the uneven terrain of the neoliberal labour market because she realises that a worker somewhere else may do her job more cheaply. (Karl 343)

When writing his second novel, Bandele only goes to a local Sainsbury's supermarket to buy frozen meals (cf. Atta 51) that he consumes to suit his work schedule and to spend more time on enhancing his investment (cf. Bell and Valentine 80). Entrepreneurial activity has turned him into a self-regulated consumer of unhealthy nutrients, who tries to gain control over his feeding patterns to achieve a growth in corporeal autonomy (cf. Corrigan 115-116; Eccleston 201-202; Turner, *Body and Society* 152) but who also neglects his body and the social functions of food in West African spaces (cf. Osseo-Asare 38). He instead isolates himself in the secluded space of his flat, where he constantly smokes tobacco (cf. Atta 51) to profit from the assumed beneficial effects of nicotine on concentration (cf. Sofuoglu, Herman, Robinson, and Waters 367) that ought to improve his performance, following the 'self-imposed disciplinary code, calling for no less than monastic restraint [which] neoliberalism represents' (Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 381). Segregating the literary character spatially, Atta apparently notes how the Afropolitan author, in the end, through the internalized work schedule turns into a disciplined body that is merely 'monadic' (Shilling 84).

As soon as *Sidestep* is released, however, Bandele realizes that he has targeted a labor market that does not guarantee any revenues for his investment because it is reserved for Euro-American whites. His novel is a commercial flop and, when trying to advertise it at a reading, his mouth does not work properly: 'He stuttered a lot, which was unusual for him' (Atta 41). Atta implies that northern states through neoliberalism have increased international labor mobility with regard to business migration, yet have remained careful to strictly control immigration from southern states (cf. Murray and Overton 428). Marx's and Engels's claims that the national bourgeoisie is constantly involved in a battle 'with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries' (481) appear to still be somewhat prevalent in post-Marxist neoliberal stances. A racializing neoliberalism creates a TCC still based on former colonial binaries along skin color. Within the labor market he positioned himself on, Bandele only functions as a fixed reference of binary opposition pivotal for the construction of Euro-American whiteness (cf. Miller xi, 3-65; Mbembe, *Postcolony* 2). When writing about non-African issues he disregards the 'dichotomizing system' (Mudimbe 4) central to Euro-American thought constructing realities on the basis of binary oppositions to establish relations of dominance (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 19). To some extent he resembles Fanon, who emerged as a war hero and stayed in France to complete his education only to find out that his service to France made no difference to the white French, who regarded black French subjects like Fanon as inferior (cf. Watts 1: 461; Leitch 1437). Like Fanon, who understood that despite his sophisticated level of education and mastering of the French language he was nonetheless regarded as part of an exotic race (cf. Leitch 1437), Bandele, despite his mimicking whiteness, does not succeed in attempting to

prove through his non-Afropolitan cosmopolitan novel 'at all costs to the Whites the wealth of the black man's intellect and equal intelligence' (Fanon, *Black* xiv). The publishing industry, which categorises works of fiction in order to market them more efficiently (cf. Squires 85), according to Veit-Wild's line of argumentation perceives him as a 'cheeky African' (15), who refuses to be the 'Other' (15) and acts as a 'parody of European culture constituted by the educated African match' (16). The categorization of the cheeky African is best demonstrated by Deola's thoughts: '[Deola] has never worked in the publishing industry, but she imagines the people he encounters there. People who would never tolerate a supercilious upstart African like him. An African who doesn't even have the decency to entertain them with stories about how awful his country is' (Atta 192). Whereas the colonists might have been afraid that the cheeky African, when picking up Euro-American influences, could destabilize structures of domination, the white center of global capitalism, at this point embodied by the publishing industry mentioned by Deola, fears Bandele parodying the trivial nature of cosmopolitan literature when, for instance, providing a 'clichéd description of Paris' (193). The same mechanism of racially biased exclusion might be encountered by Afropolitan writers attempting to enter discourse with their supposedly cosmopolitan novels. In *A Bit of Difference* the publishing industry therefore installs continued lineages of (neo)colonial domination through restricting and controlling labor movements: 'After all, it is the dominant white culture's view that Black people have no role to play in "the world of meaning as meaning-makers."' (Yancy 109). Accordingly, Bandele's agent no longer returns his calls after *Sidestep's* publication (Atta 53). Confronted with restrictions devaluating his investment, he has trouble writing his second novel and must be hospitalized. His body, having captured the ill-effects of neoliberal practices (cf. Sparke 237), is relocated to the 'strictly ordered' (Butchart 24) hospital space, where the self-entrepreneur can be monitored to function on markets and where neoliberal norms and regulations are re-imposed and re-inculcated (cf. West-Pavlov, *Space* 156-157; Blackman 25). Upon his release from hospital, Bandele, as a self-responsible entrepreneur following the neoliberal ethos that the individual has to cope with risks on his own, immediately returns to his second novel. Still exposed to maximized vulnerability (cf. Butler, "Performativity, Precarity" ii), he then suffers from depressions so severe that he often can't 'get out of bed' (Atta 46). He accepts a social worker (48), allowing further external monitoring by medical professionals to prevent the disruption of economic processes, yet his mouth hardly functions anymore: '[Medication] dried up his mouth and another bloated him up. They all made him lethargic' (46). Similar embodied states of precarity are also present in other Afropolitan novels and are often captured through malfunctioning mouths signifying a corporeal leitmotif. In *Powder Necklace*, Lila's mother invests in her daughter's return to London to re-allocate her to the epicenter of global markets, which entails Lila's struggling with

her accent because she does not know whether she can fulfill her mother's expectations: 'Since I'd come back to London, everything felt like an out-of-body experience. I listened to myself speak, and I heard myself forcing my English accent back' (Brew-Hammond 142). Ike, in *Foreign Gods Inc.*, senses that his accent, used 'like a sword' (Ndibe 34) against his body, keeps him from finding a job in New York City. Despite 'graduating from Amherst College, cum laude, in economics' (13) his tongue feels 'coated' (7) when he tries to convince Gruels to buy the deity. Aunt Fostalina, in *We Need New Names*, realizes that she is incapable of ordering underwear on the phone because of her accent (Bulawayo 196-198). Neni, in *Behold the Dreamers*, fearing Jende's deportation and thus the following economic abyss, can no longer 'summon a smile, sing a song' (Mbue 62) and suffers a 'loss of appetite' (63). Chisom, in *On Black Sisters' Street*, trapped in her booth and uncertain whether she can accumulate enough capital to pay back her debt to Dele, has problems keeping her porcelain smile 'from falling and shattering' (252). Sadie, in *Ghana Must Go*, attempts to refrain from the competitive environment at Yale and from her successful siblings by seeking refuge in the bathroom and becoming bulimic, 'knelling at the toilet bowl, fingers down throat' (141). It seems that the mouth for many writers becomes a compelling spatial metaphor expressing contempt for Afropolitan ideas. Unlike the space invaders mentioned above, however, Bandele in the end completely loses control over this corporeal exit point when using it to insult anyone who wants to support him but links him to Nigeria. He has fully retreated to what Goffmann in his examinations of patients in psychiatric institutions calls a 'milieu of personal failure' (67), cutting off the last remaining ties to his family that has come from Lagos to visit him in hospital, calling his father a 'fucking kleptocrat' (Atta 53), his mother a 'mercenary cunt' (53) and his sisters 'ugly whores' (54). Instead of refraining from precarity and quitting his investment strategy Bandele is trapped in the workings of neoliberal governmentality. Having become a self-entrepreneur hinders him from selling his labor to a partner of exchange: 'Bandele has never held a job. He had one after *Sidestep* was published because he wasn't earning much in royalties, but he fell out with his manager within a week. He said he couldn't possibly take orders from a job like her' (53). He must consequently withdraw his investment, admitting that '[t]hey certainly don't want to hear from the likes of me, writing about trivialities like love' (191) and re-allocating it to the Afropolitan market. His exclusion from white spaces furnishes evidence of how a racializing neoliberalism through the global labor market immerses but at the same time marginalizes Africans attempting to enter whiteness:

The attraction of . . . earnings has led people from the periphery to seek access to labour markets in the centre To an extent, we can see these strategies of people on the periphery as demonstrating considerable initiative and skill in identifying and exploiting fissures in the global economy However, these voices from the periphery . . . are not accommodated in a selective neoliberal discourse on globalization. Neoliberalism and the politicians in the West who promote it are happy to talk of free

trade and investment but they simultaneously speak of the illegal movement of immigrants and the threat to local ways of life. From this perspective of the periphery, then, neoliberalism is open and free but rather selective, self-serving and exploitative. (Murray and Overton 428)

Excluded, Bandele is merely forced into espousing African entanglements. Whereas Selasi understands these as handy tools to 'complicate' ("Bye-Bye") Africa because they ought to provide the means 'to engage with, critique, and celebrate the parts of Africa that mean most of them' ("Bye-Bye"), Bandele experiences the imposition of African entanglements as a means of blackening his whitened body.

Becoming black: Afropolitanization

In the end, the Afropolitan market that Bandele finds himself in only re-establishes the co-constitutive symbiosis between racial boundaries and neoliberal rationalities, very much disabling Mbembe's approach that Afropolitanism differs from Pan-Africanism because the latter was rooted in the idea of belonging to a particular racial group (Mbembe and Balakrishnan 30). As a self-responsible laborer forced into promoting his investment, Bandele gets back to work and participates in an African writers prize, filtering out alternative choices: 'I had no choice' (Atta 41). Although he begins to hate writing, the prize competition requires him to take part in 'nerve-racking' (41) readings, keeping up the mode of economic competition: 'I just don't want to feel so worthless any more' (51). At one of the readings taking place at the Calabash restaurant in the Africa Centre in Covent Garden, he then finds himself at one of the 'Black events' (48) that 'degenerate into pity parties' (48). The body here becomes Atta's 'essential sociological tool' (Garner, *Racisms* 21) exploring the racializing neoliberalism inherent in Afropolitanism as soon as the audience situates Bandele's novel within a supposedly Afropolitan context, labeling him and re-positioning him within the constructed genre (cf. Squires 8, 70-72) of African literature: 'I'm sitting there pretending to listen to their inane discussion About being marginalized and pigeonholed. Then some writer, whom I've never heard of before, starts yelling at me Something about Coetzee's *Disgrace*' (Atta 47). The Afropolitan labor market, obviously, maintains the fixed binary between black and white labor. The writer shouting at Bandele, in this sequence, refers to Coetzee's elaborations on whiteness (cf. Beiranvand and Liena; B. Smith; Tait) in post-Apartheid South Africa and reflects Selasi's latest discussions (e.g. "Stop pigeonholing"; "Don't ask me"; "Teju Cole talks to Taiye Selasi"; "African Literature") encircling the question whether Afropolitan writers can be classified as African in the first place. Atta, however, through her text also refers to Lurie's comprehending that he is 'no longer marketable' (J. M. Coetzee 88) after having sexual relations with a student thirty years his junior and thus overstepping constructed boundaries of age. Bandele, a 'Coetzee enthusiast' (Atta 47), is made aware that he has overstepped boundaries as well, both of

economic and racial nature. At Calabash he is, ultimately, made black 'in relation to the white man' (Fanon, *Black* 90). Turned into a 'black man [locked] in his blackness' (*Black* ixv), his skin color makes visible his status within the architecture of free market transnationalism and thus, despite the latest discussions of a post-racial neo-liberalism (e.g. Garner, "Moral Economy"; Roberts and Mahtani), facilitates neoliberal regulation through racial boundaries categorizing individual bodies (cf. Nevins 446). Realizing that his body has been blackened takes Bandele back to his state of precarity rendering his mouth inoperative, which causes a panic attack and makes him leave the event: 'Bandele grips [Deola's] hand until they are outside, where he breathes out' (Atta 47). The effects of blackening correlate with the consequences outlined by Yancy, who explains how his maths teacher ridiculed his plans of becoming a pilot and suggested he become a carpenter instead, thus returning his body as something he could no longer recognize, 'a fixed entity, a "niggerized" Black body' (67-68). Yancy argues that the fabricated black body at the same time adapts to the white offender's perspective as soon as the racializing third-person account seeps into his own consciousness (5). Bandele through his mouth captures this state, which is often referred to as double consciousness (e.g. Du Bois), when exploring the Afropolitan space with a white gaze:

I'm sitting there eating chicken and potatoes in what looks like baby's diarrhoea I have an agent on my other side and I was trying to talk to her. You know, to get her to sign me on, but the rep from the Nigeria High Commission kept interrupting. On the other side of the table is this literary event organizer, who has a vacant stare throughout, as if she has no idea how she got there, surrounded by all these Africans. You should see the look of relief on her face when she meets the Afrikaner writer. Every once in a while a chap gets up and reads excerpts and there is nothing worse, nothing worse I tell you, than an excerpt from your novel being read out when your bowels are churning. Then this woman, who wears a kaftan and what looks like a plant growing on her head, gives a speech, and I can't even understand a bloody word she is saying, her accent is so thick. She announces the winner and of course it wasn't me. Coetzee Critic shuffles up to the podium in his garb, you know, looking like a real native, as naive as you please. He gives his thank-you speech: 'I yam vary grateful, I yam vary humbled.' I could puke at this point. Then the patron of the prize takes a photograph with him. He is smiling away, all teeth. (Atta 191-192)

This long extract meta-fictionally encapsulates how Afropolitan writers might be confronted with the risk of trying to enter whiteness but simultaneously being 'othered' (cf. Mohanram 27) into black writers when working in Euro-America, summarized in Adichie's famous and highly controversial statement that she eventually became 'black' (qtd. in NPR; see also Bady, "Afropolitan Debate") in the US. Still using the individual mouth as a site of judgement, Bandele constructs his competitors' bodies as specifically black to prove his whiteness. He ridicules African women who use their hair to establish group identities (cf. Tate 35; Manning; Sherrow 12-16; Johnson 1-3), especially in Yorubaland (cf. Sherrow 411; Agwuele 53), but also within Afropolitan discourse (cf. Wasihun 398; Adichie, *Americanah*). He expresses contempt for the kaftan although considered a symbol of a West African heritage (cf. MacDonald, Lazorchak, and Currie 256), and he feigns linguistic alienation from the English variety being spoken, imitating the other writer. Through this highly

'critical attitude toward his fellow islanders' (Fanon, *Black* 7), Bandele, in accordance with Fanon's line of argumentation, attempts to install a 'deviation of the black man' (*Black* xviii), pretending that he 'no longer understands his race' (xviii). Articulating this internalized white gaze, however, has dramatic effects on his body because his altered mode of consciousness entails a process of destructive self-interrogation (cf. Yancy 68). In Atta's novel this change is brought forward by the mouth. Bandele is unable to take in the award ceremony, arguing that he 'could puke' (Atta 191). Scared of being associated with the competing writers, his vomition centers appear to respond to the psychological stimuli of fear (cf. Tallis 194). Bandele abhors the imposition of blackness so much that he eschews vomiting to indicate how the integrity of his body is questioned. Becoming an anorexic, at this point, results in self-doubt and feelings of shame (cf. Giddens and Sutton, *Sociology* 439). Bandele, however, realizes that his attempts to distance himself from his blackness are in vain as the white literary event organizer feels uncomfortable when surrounded by black Africans and only relaxes when she sees a white Afrikaner writer. Blackness hence turns into a signifier determining power relations, Yancy explains:

My darkness is a signifier of negative values The meaning of my Blackness is not intrinsic to my natural pigment, but has become a value-laden "given," My Blackness functions as a stipulatory axiom from which conclusions can be drawn: "Blackness is evil, not to be trusted, and guilty as such." . . . Whites "see" the Black body through the medium of historically structured forms of "knowledge" that regard it as an object of suspicion. (3)

Trapped in his black body, Bandele feels a sense of self-alienation and loses control over his mouth, moaning that if he hears another writer 'in a headwrap bragging about the size of her ample bottom or lightening her skin' (Atta 47), he does not know what he 'will do' (47). When an excerpt of his book is read out, his 'bowels are churning' (191). Through Bandele, Atta hence expresses her fears that Afropolitan authors, even within Afropolitan labor markets, might face a painful reduction to their black bodies, while their intellectual abilities and cultural productions are hardly taken seriously by white Euro-American societies (cf. "Bodies in Exile" 298). Like many other contemporary writers from Africa, the Afropolitan author produces an African body in pain (cf. Eze, "Feminism" 97; Norridge 99-100) to mediate these anxieties. Outlining that upon moving to England she 'became aware that a lot of English people thought African culture was inferior' (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 182), Atta, through the literary explorations of racism, illustrates how blackness constructed by white hegemony can also painfully affect the migrants' bodies of Afropolitan writers within Afropolitan spaces.

As soon as the racial boundaries have been re-established, the Afropolitan labor market works as a 'disciplinary apparatus [that] bundles systems of knowledge' (West-Pavlov, *Space* 155) and manifests Euro-Americanized representations of Africanness in Afropolitan novels. The

Afropolitan publishing industry, dominated by non-Africans and located outside Africa with almost oligopolistic control (cf. Squires 22, 31; Adejunmobi 54), uses labor as a 'site of incorporation' (Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 392). It expects writers to engage in the production of Afropolitan 'knowledge' (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 111-112) that helps exploit the periphery (cf. Huggan) and makes Africanness economically exploitable in order to be consumed on global markets. The Afropolitan text according to Eagleton's understanding of Sartre's reception theory outlined in *What is Literature?* ought to be 'built out of a sense of its potential audience' (*Literary Theory* 84). Eagleton contends that any literature composed automatically encodes within itself an 'implied reader' (84), and intimates 'in its every gesture the kind of 'addressee' it anticipates' (84). Based on these assumptions, the exploitation of Africanness may turn out as a precondition in the production of Afropolitan knowledge, which is channelled by the publishing industry and ought to harmonize consumer and producer. Eagleton, on these grounds, even implies that the reader through demand may shape the narrative: "Consumption', in literary as in any other kind of production, is part of the process of production itself' (84). I am well aware that Eagleton's and Sartre's assumptions remain highly speculative. Huchu, for instance, in *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*, when making a cameo appearance as a writer named Tendai and explaining to Stacey and Farai why he does not give in to publishers not approving of his accomplished work, seems to stress that he does not adjust his writing to market demands: 'I ain't gonna sell out to the system and go commercial because that's what they want you to do' (*Maestro* 229). It remains difficult to speculate about a writer's motives and ambitions in the process of composing fiction. It is, nonetheless, not unlikely that the Afropolitan space invader, as suggested, runs the risk of being remodeled as a mere 'content creator' (Squires 25). Africa, Bandede complains, may accordingly be consumed as a mere 'Sob Continent' (Atta 47). He reflects Krishnan's critique that Africa is often exhausted as a rather homogeneous space in crisis that transmits a common Euro-American image of the continent circulated across Euro-American space through popular culture (*Contemporary* 1). The image of the African continent functioning as a content creator of failure and absence is best satirized by Wainaina in *How to write about Africa*:

Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title. Subtitles may include the words 'Zanzibar', 'Masai', 'Zulu', 'Zambezi', 'Congo', 'Nile', 'Big', 'Sky', 'Shadow', 'Drum', 'Sun' or 'Bygone'. Also useful are words such as 'Guerrillas', 'Timeless', 'Primordial' and 'Tribal'. Note that 'People' means Africans who are not black, while 'The People' means black Africans In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals Taboo subjects: ordinary domestic scenes, love between Africans Africa is to be pitied, worshipped or dominated. Whichever angle you take, be sure to leave the strong impression that without your intervention and your important book, Africa is doomed. (92)

Wainaina's exaggerated exhibition of representations alludes to the publishing industry's strategies unmasked by *A Bit of Difference*. In fact, Knudsen and Rahbek, when reflecting on the novel,

confirm that 'African 'voices' are handpicked according to their capacity to meet consumer demands' (101). Deola, when being asked by Bandele to guess the title of the novel that won the prize, intuitively responds 'something with "rock" or "river"?' (Atta 190), reasserting Wainaina's critical remarks that African fiction ought to appeal to Euro-American reading audiences: 'African novels are too exotic for her. Reading them, she often feels they are meant for Western readers, who are more likely to be impressed' (Atta 190). Deola adds that she 'finds African literature preoccupied with politics in a way she never was' (194), affirming that average ordinary issues according to Wainaina do not match the Euro-American understanding of Africanness. Bandele, however, has adjusted to universal norms that he understands as a means of literary success and sets his second novel in Europe's capitals, focusing on two characters 'who are unsuitable for each other' (192). Atta's not supplying any more information about Bandele's work of fiction may point towards its rather trivial nature. Although the investment is supposed to appeal to publishers whose products focus on the Euro-American sphere, it does not produce Afropolitan knowledge because it does not integrate 'exotic' (Huggan 56) notions of Africanness into universal norms, missing 'the connotations of a stimulating or exciting difference, something with which the domestic c[an] be (safely) spiced' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 87). Even the scholarly body on Afropolitanism, Krishnan criticizes, partially seems to imply that there is a 'set of doctrinal demands for the 'third-world' writer, whose features coalesce in what then appears as an appropriate cosmopolitanism' (*Contemporary* 3). Musila, accordingly, sees the problem of Afropolitanism 'embracing just enough of Africa to retain a certain flavour that sets one apart from the norm – presumably Euro-America – but not so much as to be too 'Africa'' (110). Not only Bandele is confronted with certain demands for exotic flavors. In Cole's *Open City*, Farouq too complains to Julius that Euro-American publishers expect Moroccan writers like him to 'satisfy the longing for [oriental] fantasy' (104). If exotic 'insights' mentioned by academics such as Wainaina, or literary characters such as Bandele or Farouq, are only added to spice up cosmopolitan fiction with exploitable Africanness and simultaneously induce a sense of difference through representing the exotic 'at the same time [as] an element of attraction and of repulsion and fear' (Veit-Wild 17), then Afropolitan authors, in fact, become empty signifiers who are isolated from their cultural geographical entanglements and remain what is projected on them by Euro-American discourse. This problem also speaks to Osofisan's experience of the Euro-American publishing industry, which expected notions of exoticism in his work and thus reallocated him to local geographies outside the epicenter of knowledge production:

I began as a member of a small group of aspirant writers who met in Ibadan . . . and decided for a number of reasons to publish and promote our works uniquely in Nigeria The foreign publisher, we reasoned, would be obliged to ask the author to tame his or her work for foreign readers, whose concerns, naturally,

would not be the same as those for our people. Already we felt that this kind of pressure was responsible for the orientation in African books of the time toward exoticism We saw our nation was under the threat of disintegration . . . whereas our authors were writing about ethnographic customs and rituals, and being celebrated for these in the Western presses. Hence, to avoid this danger of . . . exotic (self-)indulgence, we thought it best to shun the foreign publishers. (32-33)

Bande's investment is, for this reason, unacceptable within the realms of Afropolitan knowledge because his writing does not identify as being genuinely African. His refusal to contribute to knowledge production makes him a non-expert who is dominated by the self-appointed experts in discourse that claim to 'possess knowledge and the right to use it' (Corrigan 154). The non-African African transforms into a writer who is subjected to the control of those experts that have 'managed to gain some sort of monopoly of what is considered 'proper' use of power' (Corrigan 154). Bande begins to understand that as a cosmopolitan artist living abroad the African is simply needed as a supplier of raw materials for Euro-American consumption, including literary criticism and theory (cf. Ekotto and Harrow 2; Julien 21; Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 20). After the reading he realizes that he must give in to his blackened body in order to place his investment on the market: 'So suddenly I am an "African" writer. Suddenly it's the only way I can get ahead in this business, and I can just sense there is going to be an interest in African literature because of this prize' (Atta 193). Ndibe, in *Foreign Gods Inc.*, through his space invader, Ike, stresses that this mode of Afropolitan knowledge production can also be found in university settings at the moment that Africanness becomes a raw material supplying Euro-American discourses in sociology or political science: 'We're supposed to be living in this new global setting – a village, many call it. In college, I took classes where the buzzwords were 'synergy,' 'hybridity,' 'affinities,' 'multivalency,' 'borderlessness,' 'transnationality,' whatnot Then academics rush in to theorize me into an exile' (55). One, consequently, cannot avoid the question why these Afropolitans, be they writers or university academics, seem to give in to becoming raw materials. Why do Bande and Ike not abstain from knowledge production and resist participating in (re)producing images of Africanness in accordance with Euro-American expectations? I think that Bande's critique that it 'will all be about trying to fit into the African literature scene and you either exploit what is going on or you don't (193-194) seems to forecast Habila's widely discussed comments on Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, in which he indirectly argues that prizes keep Afropolitans in constraints:

The question to be asked then is whether this new writing is a fair representation of the existential realities of Africa, or if it is just a "Caine-prize aesthetic" that has emerged in a vacuum created by the judges and the publishers and agents over the years, and which has begun to perpetuate itself. Writing is an incestuous business: style feeds on style, especially if that particular style has proven itself capable of winning prizes and book deals and celebrity. ("Bulawayo – review")

Habila's blaming the prize business for sustaining Afropolitan knowledge production at this point shifts the center of attention to the silenced body.

The silenced body

Especially prizes and patronage function as disciplinary tools keeping Afropolitan writers in line with neoliberal markets because they enable the publishing business and its agents located in the center of global capitalism to integrate, manipulate, or even eliminate any non-conformity from a panoptic position without the need to prohibit or actively restrain. Ibrónke in this context explains in detail that agents can function as an apparatus which through governmentality shapes the novelist's investment prior to its placing on markets, transmitting 'cultural attitudes that could be activated or created or that could either propel or turn against a particular publication' (47). Since neoliberalism requires a set of actors who are capable of 'promoting the discourse through embodied practices' (Glass 354) in the first place, prizes and patronage, above all, help agents to attract or distance the bodies of writers, balancing supply and demand and drilling the body: 'Normally writers have to approach agents, and agents have to be convinced that it's worth their while to take on a particular author' (Gibbs and Mapanje 297). This is explained when Bandele during the book prize ceremony aforementioned brown-noses the agent and tries to use his mouth to get her to sign him but is ignored. He willingly advertises his investment because he understands that prizes have lately turned out highly significant in the marketing and dissemination of African literature (cf. Krishnan, *Contemporary* 135). He is nonetheless not listened to. The business of prizes within the Afropolitan labor market is thus highly ambivalent, as reflected by Nwaubani:

In the past decade, all sorts of marvelous things have happened for African literature. African writers have won or been shortlisted for some of the most prestigious literary prizes and accorded prominent display in leading bookshops. Contemporary African voices are finally telling African stories. But we are telling only the stories that foreigners allow us to tell. Publishers in New York and London decide which of us to offer contracts, which of our stories to present to the world. American and British judges decide which of us to award accolades, and subsequent sales and fame. Apart from South Africa, where some of the Big Five publishers have local branches, the few traditional publishers in Africa tend to prefer buying rights to books that have already sold in the West, instead of risking their meager funds by investing in unknown local talents. ("African Books")

Makokha, among other academics, in his introductory remarks nevertheless stresses that 'the very best of the Afropolitan generation have won accolades for their sterling works in the past fifteen years' (20), and, he continues, have 'taken home various internationally competitive awards from the Orange Prize to the Commonwealth Prize, from the Booker to the Giller Prize, from the Prix Goncourt Prize to a gamut of national awards given by literary associations and organisations across Africa' (20). Fittingly, the book cover of *A Bit of Difference* identifies Atta as the winner of the 'Wole Soyinka Prize for Literatures', resembling many Afropolitan novels with similar covers, such as *Americanah*, hailed as 'One of the Ten Best Books of the Year' by the New York Times, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* identifying Mengestu as the 'Los Angeles Times Book Prizes Winner', *Crossbones* praising Farah as a 'Hurston/Wright Legacy Award Finalist', or *We*

Need New Names being shortlisted for the 'Man Booker Prize 2013' and the 'Guardian First Book Award'. At no point, however, is the general critique towards the massive influx of the prizes (e.g. Henighan; Armitstead) referred to, which has also entered Afropolitan discourse (cf. Ede, "Politics" 93). Further left out is the fact that usually only novels written in English can be nominated for the prestigious awards mentioned (cf. Krishnan, *Contemporary* 136; Squires 98), which is why the dominance of Euro-language novels on the Afropolitan book market produces unequal power relations (cf. Julien 678; Gibbs and Mapanje 164-175; Huggan) when marginalizing, for instance, oral traditions or African languages. Junyent therefore criticizes that a mercantilization of the literary domain tends to turn readers into consumers, transforming the literary process into a procedure of optimizing the commodity through language: '[T]he creation has also adapted itself to the consumer's taste, and market laws have required the product to be addressed to the maximum number of potential readers; so authors choose majority languages to obtain readers' (109). The obligation of writing in English to succeed in the prize industry becomes a (neo)colonial means of linguistic policing, extending colonial language policies once criticized by Thiong'o:

The attitude of the English was the exact opposite: any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applause; the ticket to higher realms. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts Literary education was now determined by the dominant language while also reinforcing dominance. Orature (oral literature) in Kenyan languages stopped Thus language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds. (265-266)

All the Afropolitan writers mentioned so far usually publish their novels in English, sometimes with Yoruba-, Igbo-, or Twi-inflected language, ornamenting the language (cf. Julien 681) used in Afropolitan knowledge production, keeping the exploitable input from the peripheries within the linguistically visible. Even Selasi catered to this problem recently when outlining that she predominantly referred to novelists from West-Africa publishing their fiction in English, 'no francophone, lusophone or, say, Central African writer in sight' ("Stop pigeonholing"). It is needless to say that Selasi here only names the colonial tongues, omitting African languages. The Afropolitan's investment therefore depends significantly on the prize business. The publishing industry becomes a gatekeeping broker allocating investments expected to be of value to the market, which Unigwe condemns:

[T]he publishing industry is really influential. New York and London are still publishing centres for African writers who write in English, because you want your books to reach as many people as possible. It is still a fact that if New York and London take notice, then other European countries take notice as well. I certainly do not know of many African agents and so the first professional people who read your work are people who do not live in your world Very often the gateway to publishing is guarded by people who are not very familiar with the characters you are writing about. What eventually gets published is dependent on the agent and the editor and on who buys your work. Any book that is commercially published has gone through a series of small censorship. (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 192)

Only if the investment corresponds with Afropolitan knowledge production, it can be conceived of as profitable and marketable and thus eligible for prizes and patronage: 'Doesn't [Bande] know the more naïve [Africans] pretend to be, the more they can capitalize patronage?' (Atta 192). The Afropolitan novel is thus heavily influenced by market demands channeled by publishers and their representatives, meeting Atta's criticism: 'I do not mind my novel being classified as Afropolitan, but it bothers me when other stories are negated because of a definition' (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 184). Readers with their economic choices possibly channelled by stickers displaying prizes on book covers have their fair share in this balancing of supply and demand as well. This problem is also addressed by Huchu in full detail when reflecting on the Maestro's reading habits (*Maestro* 159-162). Bandele's wooing is, consequently, of no interest to the agent while the Coetzee Critic wins the prize. Bandele is at the mercy of the neoliberal agents and their rationality. Since the Coetzee Critic's investment does meet market demands, Bandele has been 'outplayed' (Atta 192). Bandele can no longer use his individual mouth to convince the experts, the publishing agents, to consider his investment: 'I can't get anyone to take a look at what I've done so far. Just take a look at it. And I've been working hard, harder than I have ever worked before. You understand?' (193). He is then silenced (cf. P. Falk 55) and remains unable to complain audibly: 'And this judge, whom I have no respect for whatsoever – I couldn't get past the first page of her novel – walks up to me and says, "Keep writing." Like that, and I'm thinking, Piss off, you untalented tart' (Atta 192). The remaining body parts experience the investment's failure as 'torture, pure torture' (192), affirming the power nexus between the tortured and powerless writer and the torturer and powerful agent (cf. Bakare-Yusuf 315). This sensation of torture, however, is internalized by Bandele. It automatically shapes Bandele's investment, informing him through preemptive threats to his physical integrity that his body is about to be tormented if he does not give in to his captor. The neoliberal agent, after all, only has to hint at the investment failure because the neoliberalized Afropolitan body at this point completely governs itself. Still 'whin[ing] about unfairly awarded book prizes' (Atta 191), Bandele is consequently disposed of.

The killed body: Re-animation

Unwilling to adjust to the Afropolitan labor market, Bandele's body is extinguished through institutionalized dividing practices. The novel that wins the competition, submitted by the Coetzee Critic, is called 'The Death of the African Writer' (190) and refers to 'some Nigerian writer who gets murdered in exile' (190), evidently expunging Bandele symbolically because he disobeyed the production of Afropolitan knowledge. It seems as though the Afropolitan writers that Selasi has continuously been mentioning in her canonising body of work can only place their investments on

the Afropolitan labor market as long as their novels adopt neoliberal rationalities. If not, their bodies will be replaced or disposed of through a regime of penalties established in Afropolitan discourse, marginalizing any doubt about the writers' capacities to govern themselves (cf. Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 392; J. Marx 13). The Afropolitan laborer hence not only runs the risk of (re)producing neoliberal rationalities but also of transforming Afropolitan literature into neoliberal novels that formalize economic relations through plotting the 'formal coordinates of the neoliberal world system's . . . labour markets' (Karl 339). Bearing in mind Karl's assumption that 'in the neoliberal labour market superfluous or necessary parts and capacities can be substituted or discarded altogether' (343), the 'killing', i.e. elimination of alternatives is embodied through Bandele's literary death, which signifies a violent means of withdrawal (cf. Kellehear 8) from Afropolitan knowledge production. Death, however, does not liberate him from being a self-entrepreneur, pointing towards the ethos of self-actualization inherent in neoliberalism:

Like the globalization rhetorics with which they are elided, discourses of neoliberalism have proved to be so compelling because, in representing the world of market rules as a state of nature, their prescriptions have a self-actualizing quality. Even as they misdescribe the social world, discourses of globalization and neoliberalism seek to remake it in their own image. (Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing" 382)

Accordingly, Bandele's self-entrepreneurialization is re-set and his self-regulation is intensified to enable him to fine-tune his investments that can be placed on other labor markets. Crouch's examinations of neoliberalism after the 2007 subprime crisis and its aftermath, whose telling title *The Strange Non-Death of Neo-Liberalism* seem to hint at Bandele's neoliberal reanimation, best encapsulate how neoliberalism at this instant reproduces itself despite its malfunctions, revealing how the seemingly incontestable dogma of the market as the only legitimate instrument of allocation (cf. Matiaske 83) is hardly weakened but merely strengthened even after the most severe crisis.

Bandele's re-setting begins with the discussions of his homosexuality with Deola. While earlier suppressing his sexual orientation because he considered it incompatible with the general work imperative and thus as possibly harming his investment strategy (cf. Foucault, *History* 1: 6), he now admits his relationship with Charlie and for a moment seems liberated from markets, explaining how he is 'taking a break' (Atta 236) from writing his novel and thus subtracting his body from neoliberalism's inscriptions. At this instant, however, his homosexuality extradites his liberated body to the hospital, where Bandele can no longer keep beyond being visible for the market. He wants to take an HIV test and is driven to the clinic by Deola. There he panics, has a nervous breakdown, and is defined as mentally ill, i.e. mad (cf. 285-287). The hospital becomes an institution where neoliberalism through power 'forms, maintains, sustains, and regulates bodies at once' (Butler, *Bodies* 9) and as a crisis heterotopia (Foucault, *Aesthetics* 180) reanimates the non-

entrepreneurial body in critical condition. It is important to bear in mind that especially in the works of Foucault and the literature relating to his oeuvre, the hospital is predominantly conceived of as a space of power. In *A Bit of Difference*, the hospital, thus, also functions as a space of observation, which allows for monopolizing disease categories (cf. West-Pavlov, *Space* 155; Featherstone and Turner 5). Here, non-laboring subjects can be defined as madmen and mental illnesses can be constructed to transfix individuals into an institutionalized context in case their abstinence from labor is no longer tolerated (cf. Foucault, *Aesthetics* 337, 342; DeMello 24; Giddens and Sutton, *Introductory Readings* 231). Bandele in this institutionalized context too is constructed as a mad person because Deola remarks that he is, evidently, 'not mad' (Atta 290) at all, just 'extremely annoying' (290). His illness, nonetheless, dissociates him from cosmopolitan literature. Deola describes how the assumedly cosmopolitan novelist 'who normally refuses to identify himself as Nigerian, begins to show signs of the most common Nigerian phobia – of situations that remind him of his mortality' (285). Bandele apparently realizes that he is no longer to be the cosmopolitan writer he longs to be, his mouth failing its controlling function and being re-configured: 'Bandele, who once called Nigerians a bunch of backward religious fanatics, lets out a cry, 'Christ!'' (285). Within the clinic Bandele then gives in to playing a 'sick role' (Turner, "Defending" 235-236), which disrupts his writing process and, above all, forces him into acknowledging that he needs professional help that can support him and readjust his self-regulation. He is taught that he is obligated to improve and must find competent health care from a physician. Dr. Srinivasan, the 'gazing doctor' (cf. Butchart 17) in charge, therefore, as a manager of social spaces (cf. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 151), advises Deola to seek medical help or even detain Bandele in a psychiatric hospital: 'He might want to go somewhere else Somewhere he can get the care he needs' (Atta 287). Although Atta towards the end of the narrative does not explain whether Bandele is permanently detained, the sick role, without a doubt, is a means of social control because his body is threatened to be permanently relocated to a heterotopian space of deviation where non-laboring subjects are detained, if their behavior continues to be deviant in relation to the laboring workforce (cf. Goffman 5; Foucault, "Other Spaces" 25; *Madness* 50). After talking to Dr. Srinivasan (Atta 287) Bandele, obviously, understands that not contributing to market demands becomes a menace to neoliberal capitalism and its competitive ethos. He accepts his madness and returns to modifying his investment to indicate that he does not want to be sent off to an asylum that further calibrates his self-regulatory mechanisms, so he might be able to reposition himself in accordance with market demands. Bandele's madness thus not only re-animates but even intensifies a self-regulating neoliberal order, displaying how the 'eminently governable' (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 270) Afropolitan writer becomes 'the correlate of a governmentality which will act on

the environment and systematically modify its variables' (*Biopolitics* 271). He is willing to prove that he can fine-tune his investment and tries to finish his novel. Neoliberalism's worst outcomes are interpreted as beneficial to adjustments of investment strategies: 'It's good that I am mad. It has its advantages' (Atta 290). His body returning to writing gestures towards Atta's literary comment that even the worst outcomes reproduce neoliberalism, his novel regarded 'too big to fail' (Sorkin) and his continuing it as 'system-relevant' (Matiaske 83), reproducing Thatcher's famous self-fulfilling prophecy 'There is no alternative' when released from the narrative by Deola: 'She hopes he will finish his novel' (Atta 290). The depiction of Bandele's body thus enables Atta not only to literally flesh out the constraints that writers of Afropolitan fictions might have had to face after *Bye-Bye, Babar's* publication in 2005 when composing and disseminating their work. The bodily inscribed neoliberal rationalities also hint towards Afropolitan futures. If a neoliberal credo immersed in discourse and proliferated through literature can not be contested from within, then Afropolitan fictions in the near future may only facilitate neoliberal thought 'transmogrif[ying] every human domain and endeavor, along with humans themselves, according to a specific image of the economic' (W. Brown 10). The Afropolitan author in this case only accelerates the emergence of what Karl and Nilges discuss as the formation of the 'neoliberal novel'. If the author can only place fine-tuned neoliberalized investments on the market, the reader becomes governable as well.

2.4.2 The Africanized body: Deola

The Afropolitan body

Like Bandele, Deola on first sight evokes the image of Selasi's Afropolitan vision come true as well. A London School of Economics graduate and trained accountant, she jet-sets around the world as LINK's director of internal audit at the London office and supervises the involvement of non-governmental organizations focussed on the prevention of HIV in Nigeria. She holds both a Nigerian as well as a British passport and resides in Willesden Green, where she bought an apartment, emphasizing that 'her mortgage is almost paid and her flat has more than doubled in value' (Atta 19). Part of a TCC family, her father having been the founder and chairman of a Nigerian bank, she is surrounded by TCC friends such as Ndididi, who works for the United Nations in Rome, and Subu, who is vice president of an investment bank and glides across oceans to places like Silicon Valley and Shanghai (cf. 28, 33). Considering herself a citizen of the world, Deola claims that she does not have any doubts about her identity although she is still figuring out an 'adequate description of her status overseas' (7). This status eventually seems to come as close as it

can get to Selasi's depiction of African yuppies active worldwide, who are known by their 'successes' ("Bye-Bye"). In her NGO work, Deola is involved in the media and in venture capital while not being shy about expressing her African influences (cf. "Bye-Bye") when flying to Nigeria to supervise development projects. Having invested enough capital in on-the-job training, formally organized education, study programs, and migration to adapt to job opportunities (cf. Schultz 9), she has made it to the center of global capitalism, endowed with a habitus resembling Selasi dancing at Medicine Bar (cf. "Bye-Bye") in London:

When she was a student at LSE, she went out every weekend and . . . she and her friends were . . . running up their parents' phone bills and driving cars their parents had bought them. They spent their pocket money on memberships at nightclubs like Stringfellows and L'Equipe Anglaise so they could get past bouncers, and threw raucous parties after midnight until their neighbors called the police. (Atta 37)

The London that Deola positions herself in is a supposedly cosmopolitan space that is inscribed on the residents' bodies, be it through hairstyle or the ingestion of food. Her neighborhood offers her a 'black hair salon and a cosmetics shop that sold products for black hair' (18) as well as 'a few Halal butchers and a West Indian shop where she could buy yams, plantains and cherry peppers' (18). Similar cosmopolitan city spaces are identified by Dalila, who outlines how the multicultural settings of London have been manifested in bodily dispositions: 'She is surrounded by people the colour of eggshell and bread, of yams and potatoes, of cashews and oats. Hair the colour of melon flesh and peeled pears, of aubergines and roasted coffee beans. Most beautiful are the eyes. Sparkling irises of topaz and opal, tiger's eye and lapis lazuli' (Donald 33). Deola, however, does not give in to her body being shaped by these cosmopolitan city spaces. She admits that she is surrounded by Black culture, yet remains dissatisfied (Atta 68). Although she appreciates the 'French, Igbo and Portugese' (17) being spoken and the 'group of rowdy Pakistani teenagers or the Romanian mothers who beg' (17) that she encounters, she merely perceives the city as a hub of the global economy, enabling her to behave like a bourgeois resident and to enjoy the privileges of capitalism, such as owning an apartment and a car or buying expensive groceries. Her description of the space her body resides in reads like another real estate advertisement and to some extent resembles Sepha's explorations of the mansion's interior in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*:

She was besotted with her new property. . . . She loves her bathroom. . . . Her bedroom has a draft; so does her kitchen. She will only walk on the linoleum floor in her fluffy slippers The fanciest feature in the flat is the staircase that descends into the living room Her walls welcome her. . . . Later in the afternoon, she warms up her Peugeot 205 and drives to Somerfield to stock up on food . . . the quality is better at Somerfield, she thinks (Atta 19)

When changing the spatial frame and moving the narrative space into the apartment, Atta like Mengestu invites the reader into a private residence that spatially inscribes the privileges of global capitalism. African entanglements, however, are subordinated to these privileges. Deola, for

instance, keeps a distance from the 'Nigerian crowd in London that [she] is not part of' (32). Unlike Subu, who attends 'their *owambe* functions, where they dress up in *aso ebi*, play juju music, spray money and eat jollof rice and fried goat meat' (32), Deola isolates her body from this 'mini-Lagos' (32), and even complains about their gatherings: 'Deola finds it odd that Nigerians go to funerals as if they are social occasions that anyone can gate-crash – they just show up, look sad and leave' (32). Reducing London to a global city of capitalism offering her access to a transnational labor market has made her economically independent but has also excluded her from her social surroundings: 'She held on to her independence there, even as her independence began to look more like loneliness' (120). When working in Lagos, moreover, her depictions of global cities are exposed through the same neoliberal lens that Cole's nameless narrator has acquired. She excessively complains about delayed luggage at the airport, roads full of potholes, unfinished buildings, oil-stained pavements, and hawkers and beggars (69-74), which is why she resides in a boutique hotel instead of staying with her family. The hotel premises signify a cosmopolitan retreat inhabited by the TCC, giving the space of flows a 'leisure-oriented' (Castells, *Rise* 446) spatial form. In the hotel, she encounters a Belgian couple 'who have adopted a Nigerian girl' (Atta 87) and an 'elderly black American woman who looks like an artist' (87). In this secluded community of affluent jet-setters, she orders steak and drinks Eva water (94), supplying her body with Euro-American nutrients. Deola thus operates on a labor market enabling her to participate in the urban global economy, yet isolating her socially and geographically from any notions of Africanness.

Being entitled to work on the Afropolitan labor market, however, comes with drastic embodied consequences and with inscriptions similar to those of Bandele. In flashbacks, Deola reflects how she has always been forced into exposing her body to white conceptions of blackness in order to enter the global workforce. Her investments in education, for example, included her ending up with 'black roles' (56) in her British school, with racist Americans chanting 'Ooga shaka ooga shaka' (66) at her at a Swiss summer camp, and career advisors 'telling her Africans were not intelligent enough to go to university' (63-64). She consequently needed to whiten her body in order to pursue her investment. When applying for on-the-job training she got her hair 'chemically relaxed for interviews' (63), attempting to make it look 'white (i.e., straighter, silkier in texture, lighter in color)' (Sherrow 185). After being hired by an accountancy firm, she lost her braids because they were considered 'unprofessional' (Atta 63), very much resembling Ifemelu, who is advised to take her braids out and relax her hair (*Americanah* 146) for job interviews because, in the words of her aunt Uju, 'You do what you have to do if you want to succeed' (146). Meeting the expectations of her sexist and racist work environment, where she is called 'two-toned' (Atta 211), Deola, furthermore, strolls around in skirt suits because, as a female employee, she is not allowed to wear

pants (210). At LINK she even fakes an English accent to keep her co-workers from assuming that she 'lacks intelligence' (21). The Afropolitan body that Deola has shaped hence is a body fabricated by the same neoliberal constraints that sculpted Bandele. The emphasis, however, shifts from the individual mouth to the womb – the central locus of reproduction to be controlled through 'bio-power' (Foucault, *History 1*: 140), which is integral to the development of capitalism because it makes possible a sufficient insertion of bodies into the processes of production and the regulation of population in relation to economic progress (cf. Harvey, *Companion* 145; Petersen 8). Despite her successes, Deola, in the end, remains childless because her reproductive life is shaped and controlled by economic realities. Jet-setting the world and working for a transnational foundation have turned her into a responsible self-provider (cf. W. Brown 84), who considers bearing a child a threat to her career investments. Although she is at the crucial age of thirty-nine and feels the 'urge to nest' (13), she has, according to Foucault, adapted the idea of the body as a machine producing an earnings stream, whose optimization comes with an integration into systems of economic efficiencies and controls (*History 1*: 139; *Biopolitics* 224). This corporeal adjustment implies that she has also subjected herself to the 'bio-politics of the population' (*History 1*: 139) and its disciplinary grid intrinsic to neoliberal capitalism (cf. Beardsworth 176-178). Deola is, for example, highly critical of her colleague Pamela, who has just had a child and reduces the economic efficiency of a competitive work environment that does not even hire a temporary substitute for Pamela because they 'had a temp from New Zealand once before [who] took too many cigarette breaks' (Atta 5). Her co-worker, Kate, jokingly advises her that '[t]he last time [Pam] was pregnant, I got pregnant' (20), which is why Deola ought to 'Keep away from Pam, I tell you' (20). The paradigm of corporeal distance established by bio-politics, captured in this conversation, deliberately elaborates on how laborers on the Afropolitan labor market find themselves in dire competition with each other as governmentality is translated into market-logic rationalities of efficiency. It also explains why female workers such as Deola sacrifice motherhood when giving in to neoliberal bio-politics limiting the choice to bear children (cf. Heymann 43). The rights and wrongs of reproduction have been allocated to the job market and the self-entrepreneurial individuals have adjusted their bodies to the market's management of the labor force (cf. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 171) that much that Kate and Deola even discipline each other. Deola repels minimizing the value of her investment and thus on the Afropolitan labor market faces corporeal constraints, access to better jobs competing with motherhood. These remarks reflect not only the class- and gender-based restrictions highlighted in literature on reproduction (e.g. Sen; Hartmann; Do. Roberts), they also emphasize that the Afropolitan market aggravates the decline in fertility, which in response has negative effects on community life (cf. Eggebeen 29-34) and thus on notions

of Africanness. Motherhood is, after all, central to most African cosmologies (cf. Mbiti, *Introduction* 87), and particularly in Yoruba thought appreciated as a source of female empowerment (cf. Makinde 164). Children are seen as an 'axis around which the entire life of the Yoruba relates' (Dauda 61), which is why in Yoruba culture motherhood is endorsed and celebrated. In fact, Makinde highlights that it is a 'tragedy' (167) for Yoruba women not to have children because then they are even seen as a threat to communities. Dauda confirms this view and emphasizes that being childless is interpreted as a curse, which is why in Yoruba culture anything will be done to remove this malign constituent of a community ("Children" 61). The same applies to marriage, which in general African thought (e.g. Wiredu, "On decolonizing" 348; Makinde 168; Ngcobo 533) is linked with child-bearing. Mbiti explains in detail that the decision not to get married is even branded as a destruction of the community of humans:

It is believed in many African societies that from the very beginning of human life, God commanded or taught people to get married and bear children. Therefore marriage is looked upon as a sacred duty which every normal person must perform. Failure to do so means in effect stopping the flow of life through the individual, and hence the diminishing of mankind upon the earth. Anything that deliberately goes towards the destruction or obstruction of human life is regarded as wicked and evil. Therefore anybody who, under normal conditions, refuses to get married, is committing a major offence in the eyes of society and people will be against him. (*Introduction* 104)

Deola is, for these reasons, expected to return to Lagos and re-connect to her community: 'The pressure to marry is relentless. Being single is like trying to convince a heckling audience your act is worth seeing' (Atta 34). The Afropolitan job market, however, forces her to abandon African communal notions of motherhood and marriage and isolate herself from her entanglements, which is why she remains unhappy and lonely as a young urban professional in London. Especially Butchart has explained meticulously how Europeans throughout colonial history have constantly (re)constructed the African body through missionary medicine, the industrial panopticon in mining, or the birth of the Bantu clinic (*Anatomy* chs. 5, 6, and 9), disentangling it from localities through its colonial fabrication. Afropolitanism now seems to do the same for Euro-America through a neoliberalized fabrication. Within the bounds of her isolated Afropolitan body, Deola is faced not only with geographical and social but also with familial disentanglement. Her mother 'tells her to come home for good, to work for the bank, by which she means Deola ought to find a man to settle down with' (Atta 34). When ignoring her mother she senses that she is 'letting her . . . down' (242). The same occurs to Subu, Deola's close friend, who could be 'the chairman of her bank [or] the prime minister of England' (34) while her mother would still complain that 'she could be married with children' (34). Both Subu and Deola, Knudsen and Rahbek acknowledge, seem entrapped in a dilemma because 'social convention expects [them] to disown [their] globally informed sense of self and perform a locally prescribed role' (95). Africanness and Afropolitan job market seem

incompatible. Atta hence, in corporeal dimensions, reveals how an infertile Afropolitan body is produced by the market. The Afropolitan outside of Africa is made non-reproductive as much as Afropolitanism runs the risk of being made a non-sustainable concept by neoliberalism, being forced to give up Africanness as a constituent when partaking in cosmopolitan debates.

The communicating body of uncertainty

Nonetheless, *A Bit of Difference* likewise explores the contingencies of Afropolitanism by installing Deola as a space invader antithetical to Bandele. Whereas Bandele on the job market continuously tries to delete any remains of Africanness, Deola utilizes these to develop a reluctance to market mechanisms. In the end, the (bio)power that fabricates her body also enables her to resist the logic of domination within labor markets that she finds herself in. Whereas Unigwe relates to unbearable conditions brought to the fore by these markets, which, ultimately, trigger the formation of resistance (cf. Castells, *Power* 8-9), Atta seems more interested in the discourse on power. Power, West-Pavlov argues, according to Foucauldian logics must be understood as 'dispersed and ubiquitous, polyfocal, relational (resulting from an interaction between social actors), and productive (enabling, generative, making effects happen) rather than repressive' (*Space* 163-164). Hindess therefore understands Foucault's reading of power as 'remarkably heterogenous' (100), which, he continues, might provoke 'resistance and evasion' (100). Afropolitanism from this point on contributes significantly to debates surrounding Foucault's examinations of (bio)power as well as his famous assertion in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*: 'Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (95). Shilling, however, complains that Foucault's work reveals how the body is affected by discourse, but does not examine how the body could react back and affect discourse (71). He accuses Foucault of not being able to 'say what it is about the body that resists' (71) as soon as references to the body establishing forms of resistance to power and discourses appear in his work. Atta picks up this position and investigates how Deola's body upon return to Lagos undergoes a process of transformation and becomes a communicating body of uncertainty that does pave the way for resistance. Upon flying to Nigeria to supervise LINK's fundings she realizes how HIV as a constructed epidemic (cf. Turner, "Developments" 24) allows Euro-America through non-governmental organizations such as 'Widows in Need' (Atta 123) to intervene bio-politically (cf. Park 208; Beardsworth 178) into the production of the global labor force when regulating recreation in African spaces, setting the conditions of reproduction: 'She reads the literature on [Widows in Need], which is somewhat unfocused and suggests that women of childbearing age have the highest risk of HIV infection' (Atta 26). When meeting Widows in Need representatives

she talks to Elizabeth Okeke, who points out that LINK's fundings only facilitate the diffusion of bio-politics but do not eventually help prevent the spread of HIV. When Deola wants to know how LINK can help, Elizabeth only shakes her head and responds with with a dismissive 'I can't tell you' (125). Elizabeth further discloses that the fundings are 'a waste of money and a letdown for the women' (127) because HIV ought to be associated with Euro-America only:

Deola can't imagine an entire town devastated by AIDS. Clusters, as they are called. In Lagos, there are too many people. Depopulation might go unnoticed. She has heard Nigerians say that the rates of infection are higher wherever Westerners flock to in Africa: the port cities and the countries with cooler climates. Nigerians were furious with the press reports that said the virus originated in Africa, livid when the reports said the virus was traced to monkeys. Who did they think Africans were? Dirty perverts? (127)

Elizabeth's resistance to the illegitimate 'scapegoat[ing of] black Africans as being both the possible cause and carriers of this syndrome' (Shilling 52), which allocates the control of the reproductive womb to Euro-American labor markets, transforms Deola into a communicating body of uncertainty. Especially the positions of Frank and Shilling become interesting in this context. Frank argues that the body becomes conscious of itself when it has to confront resistance because it must ask itself 'how predictable its performance will be, how it must constitute itself on a dimension of desire, how it can make sense of its relation to others, and how it relates to its self (51-52). He concludes that these dimensions of control, desire, other-relatedness as well as self-relatedness (53) then generate a 'communicative body' (79). This conception of the body as a construct '*in process* of creating itself' (79) is similar to Shilling's notions of the uncertain body that realizes how it is producing itself (cf. Shilling 3). The womb from this angle can be read as the central locus of uncertainty and reflexivity that spreads through the body as a whole. Whereas in London Deola accepted her non-reproductive life disentangled from any notions of Africanness, Elizabeth's resistance has called into question the constraints that so far characterized her. Deola's communicative body of uncertainty, from this moment on, continues to be formed among the labor market and its 'institutions and discourses' (Frank 80), but these now turn into the 'media for its expression (80) because they now 'enable more than they constrain' (80). Deola, accordingly, begins to lay bare the power relations in place, using LINK as the media for reflection. Confronted with images of needy Africans by her co-worker Anne, who says that non-governmental organizations only exist to raise money for 'these people, who really don't need to be punished any more than they have been already' (Atta 7), she unmasks LINK as a multinational profit-oriented company that only funds 'programmes in Kenya, South Africa and other African countries that have a record for being what they call 'fiscally reliable'' (8) and merely pursues capitalistic goals: 'It is not relevant that they are in the business of humanitarianism. There are debits and credits, checks and balances. Someone has to make sure they work and identify fraud risks' (12). She stresses that

she is engaged with 'an industry that thrives on an Africa that panders to the West' (108), which is also addressed by Bulawayo when in full length portraying a woman who explains to Darling how she watched 'those poor women and children' (175) on CNN and is glad that her daughter is going to Rwanda with the Peace Corps, 'doing great things for Africa, just great' (176). Deola even mentions that constructed epidemics are hierarchized to draw maximum fundings. She stresses that 'HIV gets more attention' (Atta 101) than other epidemics and that 'Malaria is also communicable' (101). Deola's entanglements have apparently bolstered up the last remaining opposition to a neoliberalization of Afropolitanism, which is also articulated in an embodied skepticism towards whiteness and the reclaiming of her own womb as a space of reproduction. She is 'specific' (61) and emphasizes, for instance, that her partners have to be African when it comes to bodily intimacy: 'Her men must taste and smell as if they were raised on the same diet and make the same tonal sounds. Similarity on all fronts is essential' (61).

Embodied uncertainties towards neoliberal conceptions of Afropolitanism are also evident when Deola discusses notions of the brain drain mentioned by Selasi in *Bye-Bye Babar*, which evokes a Cartesian dualism (cf. Warburton 55; Petersen 17, 105-110) between mind and body that 'prizes the thinking mind above the physical flesh' (Shilling 179) and organizes an embodied hierarchy. The implication that Africa is a passive body left by the Euro-American-oriented Afropolitan mind, a helpless geographical *res extensa* abandoned by its *res cogitans* residing outside of Africa, enables the epicenter of global capitalism to project indigence on the headless African body and control it through neoliberal means and non-governmental organizations as their apparatuses, circumventing local governments:

Since the mid-1990s the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and other aid institutions have increasingly bypassed or short-circuited governments to work directly with regional and neighborhood [NGOs]. Indeed, the NGO revolution – there are now tens of thousands in Third World cities – has reshaped the landscape of urban development aid As the intermediary role of the state has declined, the big international institutions have acquired their own grassroots presence through dependent NGOs in thousands of slums and poor urban communities. Typically, an international lender-donor like the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development, the Ford Foundation or the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation will work through a major NGO. (M. Davis 75)

Deola, as a consequence, remains highly 'suspicious' (Atta 119) of the term because she thinks that there are 'enough brains in Africa, at least in Lagos' (119). The depictions of Lagos for this reason differ fundamentally from neoliberal images so far projected by the narrative and equip the city, at this point conceived of as body politic, with brains. She highlights that Lagosians 'achieve so much for themselves' (119) and that she 'marvels at [old friends'] accomplishments – lawyers who are jewellery designers on the side, doctors who just happen to be manufacturing beauty creams, accountants who produce Nollywood films' (119). Afropreneurs such as these, she stresses, 'make the opportunities overseas look like a joke' (119). These re-imagined cityscapes, moreover,

accentuate how the centers of global capitalism may have shifted to the periphery and that Deola's self-investment has allocated her to a geographical space unfit for her investment strategy. She admits that she could not even afford the rent in the more decent Lagos boroughs because the salaries in the Nigerian megacity have become even higher than hers in England (120). The novel, at this moment, complicates perceptions of Africa. On the one hand, it presents an emblematic 21st century African metropolis, standing as 'the epitome of hyper-modernity, figuring the future in ways that are far in advance of Euro-America' (West-Pavlov, "Shadows" 5). On the other hand, it simultaneously contests neoliberalism through redefining its imaginaries and interchanging center and periphery as well as occluding the North-South-dyad. Atta, subsequently, embraces afromodernities by peeping into possible urban futures. Her literary work offers insights into the modern African city that disable the perceptions of Euro-American eyes (cf. Wasihun 394-396). This is evident, in particular, in the portrayal of the Ikoyi crowd, the local TCC that considers its local entanglements more essential than its global outreach: 'Ikoyi people were not that oyinbo. It was too much work. They did not believe oyinbos were worth emulating anyway; they only put on oyinbo airs to make other Nigerians feel inferior, shifting loyalties to cultures as easily as they shifted clothes' (Atta 151). The Afropolitan body that Selasi locates first and foremost outside Africa is in *A Bit of Difference* entangled inside Africa in spaces such as Ikoyi, which serves as an important spatialized socio-economic fixation point in other Afropolitan novels as well (e.g. *Every Day* 130; *On Black* 90-91; *Americanah* 486). Its TCC exemplifies that cosmopolitanism must no longer be interpreted as an elite privilege opposed to forms of rootedness (cf. Appadurai, *Future* 197). Atta instead diagnoses center-periphery models as antiquated. More likely, different scapes have shifted and formed new disjunctures (cf. Appadurai, "Disjuncture" 296), because structural hierarchies have been replaced by an Afropolitan flow between the local and the global (cf. Ashcroft 15). A similar image is provided when Deola dissociates a Jane Austen novel from the former colonial center and reinstalls it within an assumedly peripheral context, implanting bi-directional flows within these scapes: 'She packs *Pride and Prejudice* in her suitcase. When she first read it, the Bennets were fascinating to her. Now, they could well be a Nigerian family' (Atta 121). Considering that Nancy Armstrong reads the novels of Jane Austen as representing the 'perfect synthesis of desiring individual and self-governing citizen' (6) the centre/periphery-revisions also relate to economic domains. This shift of perspectives exposes Deola's body to notions of economic uncertainty because Selasi's depictions of an Afropolitan TCC must at this stage be considered out of date: 'On her salary, her options were to find a sugar daddy or hustle for a government contract, which would probably not be awarded without a sexual favour' (Atta 120). Allocating her reproductive womb to the goodwill of a wealthy sponsor signifies how the shifting

tectonics of global capitalism are inscribed on the Afropolitan's body. Deola evidently disputes Selasi's proposal that '[m]ost Afropolitans could serve Africa better in Africa than at Medicine Bar on Thursdays' ("Bye-Bye"). While Selasi argues that the headless African body is in need 'of the scattered tribes return[ing]' ("Bye-Bye"), Deola, on the contrary, fears that 'the longer she stayed in England, the more difficult it was to return and compete with them' (Atta 120). In *Powder Necklace*, this notion is shared by Brempomaa, who explains to Lila that her parents, an economist and a doctor, moved back to 'solve Ghana's economic and health problems all by themselves' (53) but could not even afford the tuition for Accra's Ghana International School (54). Finding herself in shifting economic gravitation fields reordering cosmopolitan spaces, the Afropolitan body stays put in a state of uncertainty.

The resistant Africanized body

Deola's uncertainty then turns into embodied resistance when being accidentally impregnated by Wale, the owner of the boutique hotel in Lagos. As soon as the condom rips during intercourse (Atta 135), a significant disruptive caesura in the narrative, the body is no longer only fabricated by its social surroundings but instead put into a position to produce its social surroundings as well. The condom symbolizes a spatial boundary that has so far enabled the Afropolitan space invader to coerce control over the flows in the body and thus over the womb. Birth control has hitherto made it possible for the self-responsible and self-providing Afropolitan to relate to the workforce in demand (cf. DeMello 62, 66) and to keep the body secluded from any non-neoliberal means. The transgression of this dichotomy therefore triggers physical panic as Deola tries to restore bodily boundaries: 'She pushes him away, jumps out of the bed and runs into the bathroom . . . she doesn't know what to do with herself. Wash? Pee? Puke?' (Atta 135). (Bio)power, however, is at this moment allocated to Deola, who through her womb's fertilization is put into a position to change labor markets. Hindess in this case does detect notions of resistance in Foucault's thinking:

To insist, as Foucault does, that the exercise of power requires a degree of freedom on the part of its subjects is to say, first, that the effective exercise of power need not imply the removal of liberty. On the contrary, in Foucault's view, where there is no possibility of resistance there can be no relations to power. It follows that the exercise of power will normally be at risk from the recalcitrance of its subjects, it will always involve costs and its outcome will often be far from certain. Resistance, evasion and the costs of dealing with them may provoke refinement or modification of the techniques of power – and these, in turn, will provide conditions under which new forms of resistance and evasion may be developed. (101)

The condom's non-functioning provoking a modification of the techniques of (bio)power accordingly signifies that Afropolitan spaces must be further re-infused with African points of entanglement to transform embodied uncertainty into embodied resistance. This claim is reasserted by the morning-after pill failing as well (Atta 136).

Deola's impregnation, from that very moment on, forces the body into a phase of transition accompanying the initiation of resistance. Embodied transitions stipulated by Africanness are a regular phenomenon in other Afropolitan novels as well. Sadie, in *Ghana Must Go*, no longer hates her body and reconnects to her mother and siblings as soon as she participates in the traditional Dipo rite (267-269), a significant dance incorporating the body into the social community and signifying the transition to social adulthood (Boakye 30-31). Prevalent among the Ga-Adangbe in Ghana, but also found in Yoruba societies in slightly different form (cf. Fadahunsi 81-82), this dance is a rite of transition (cf. Nave 1: 325), which initiates a form of evasion. On the one hand, the dancer is 'out of control and therefore out of the reach of controlling forces' (Edgar, "Dance" 87). On the other hand, the dance elevates 'the place of women' (Fadahunsi 82). Lila, in *Powder Necklace*, becomes friends with the Ghana-born girls as soon as she drinks local *ferme*, gets drunk, and too starts engaging in local dances (cf. Brew-Hammond 83-84). Deola's transition, however, can be classified as even more significant because it relates to the aforementioned social unity of person and community quintessential in African thought. Veit-Wild in this regard underlines that in African cultures the coherence of the body and the body parts within a harmonious communion of its members are understood as 'the basis of the well-being of the community' (109). Since a vital flow securing the unity of person and community is considered the key concept in African belief systems, the fragmentation of bodies endangers the balance of the whole social order (cf. 109). Procreation is, logically, at the center of this body-society system because it maintains the unity over time and space (cf. 109). This also explains why within the social body a particular emphasis must be placed on the female reproductive organs (cf. 109). Deola's fertilized womb enables her to actively disrupt the social coherence she so far latched onto and thus empowers her body to destabilize its social surroundings. Veit-Wild's line of argumentation here indirectly corresponds with Yancy's hypothesis that black resistance is 'a process of recoding Black embodied existence through processes of opposition and affirmation' (112). Impregnation not only forces Deola into resisting its social surroundings but also instantiates the affirmation of her black body: 'To take this interpretation of resistance even further, I argue that at the moment of resistance there is an instantiation of an axiological moment that grounds the Black body with value' (Yancy 112-113). When Deola needs to reposition herself within Afropolitan labor markets because of her pregnancy grounding her body with value she finds herself in a liminal position, a period of transition in which 'a person is particularly polluting and represents a risk for society' (Veit-Wild 109-110). On these grounds, she also presents a greater risk of polluting the social circle inherent in neoliberal job markets. At the same time, Deola must realign with communal settings hitherto neglected. Childbirth can, after all, be considered a bodily transformation of young girls into the social body

of the adult world (cf. Veit-Wild 109; DeMello 69). It enables her to re-connect to the adult community she had to distance herself from when embodying infertility and isolation living abroad. Deola's pregnancy can therefore be read as an embodied double strategy because the body becomes both an empowered site of resistance and a site of communal reorientation, further opening up contingencies of Afropolitan spaces.

Deola upon return to London, for these reasons, begins to deconstruct her social surroundings. Her body, made vulnerable by the physical symptoms of pregnancy, such as queasiness and fatigue (cf. Atta 203), facilitates resistance and rebellion because it enables her to substantiate opposition to market mechanisms: 'She wasn't vulnerable in the same way she is here, working in London. Here she is anxious about being exposed. Everyone has an office persona. Everyone is subject to work norms and anyone who wishes to get ahead ought to learn how to keep their opinions to themselves. She can't for much longer' (210). The vulnerability mentioned implies the erosion of neoliberal structures producing Deola's body: 'The moment of *resistance*, in other words, is the moment of *becoming*, of being made *anew*' (Yancy 112). According to Turner, human beings are 'ontologically frail and their natural environment uncertain' ("End(s)" 10), which is why '[i]n order to protect themselves from vagaries and afflictions' (10) they have to 'build social institutions . . . that come to constitute what we call "society"' (10). Unlike Bandele, who associates his body's precarity and his entrepreneurial failures with personal management problems, Deola accepts her vulnerability and in response resists the Afropolitan labor market, decentering the role of neoliberalism. According to Sutton's approach she even turns into a political activist who plays on her corporeal fragility to make her tactics more effective and who uses the body to convey certain political ideas, demand changes, or simply exert pressure (cf. 141). As an activist she declares that she 'is in the wrong business' (Atta 219) and makes unsuccessful attempts to 'pollute' (Veit-Wild 110), i.e. reform its aid programmes: 'I am going to . . . talk to them, and if they can't be open to an idea that involves a community of Africans being independent, then maybe I'm working for the wrong organization' (Atta 208). Deola, at this very moment, resembles the enslaved African Americans depicted by Yancy, who broke their tools to exert resistance within the capitalistic system of slavery: 'Breaking tools was one way that enslaved Black people were able to exercise control over their work. To break a tool (or destroy a patch of land) requires the establishment of a different/alternative way of relating to a given object (the tool or the land)' (Yancy 122). She blames LINK for Africa's 'self-sabotage' (Atta 218), and accuses her employer for only cooperating with beneficiaries that have to some extent profited from dictatorships, civil wars, and genocides in countries such as Somalia, Sudan, or the Congo (218). In conversations with friends and work colleagues she debates whether non-governmental organizations can be held responsible for the

lack of progress in Africa because they might make Africans 'dependent on the money' (206). She explains that LINK is not interested in making their beneficiaries appear 'self-sufficient' (201) because the NGO must 'evoke sympathy or raise money' (201). Deola thus represents a perceptible risk for her employer's society. She further dismantles LINK's economic and moral foundation when denouncing celebrities working for the non-governmental organizations as representatives of fake charity work: 'It amuses her whenever she sees a photo op in an African village, where a celebrity meets with people who have obviously been prepped about how to welcome the important visitor from overseas' (215). Contrary to Bandele, her vulnerable body in transition is dissociated from these cosmopolitan spaces assumedly located within the NGO business, which is also palpable in Deola's depiction of Graham's office, which is 'full of souvenirs like clay bowls and carvings' (240). She detests Graham for these Westernized representations of assumedly exotic Africanness as much as she abhors his Euro-American approach towards the African continent and his 'prefer[ring] the most European of African countries, like South Africa and Kenya' (240). Finally quitting her job and removing her body from the Afropolitan labor market then enables her to reclaim bodily functions. As soon as she resigns, the British accent is dropped in order to recapture the mouth: 'What was the point of speaking English? . . . Even to her own ears she sounds fake and she is tired of rounding her vowels' (240-241). Losing the imposed accent also empowers her to replace the individual mouth used on competitive markets with a 'collective mouth' (Blackman 89; P. Falk 29-32) needed to interact with her family and friends in Nigeria. Deola, moreover, retakes control over her mind: 'What was the point of working for an organization that hired Africans like herself, who, in the process of being refined, could no longer think for themselves?' (Atta 240). Since according to Sherrow many African cultures understand the head as a 'center of control, communication, and identity in the body' (12), the space invader here reclaims her full body to prepare for a full re-positioning within different social surroundings.

After leaving LINK, Deola returns to Lagos to reconnect to the community she once left. Her mother at this point re-integrates her, raising a cosmopolitan compassion needed to marginalize neoliberal endeavors. She exposes Deola to local bodily features (cf. Hansen 1-2) when wearing her scarf 'tied high turban-style, like a crown of vindication' (Atta 255) and when cultivating her collective mouth with local food and drinks (cf. 256). She also addresses her in Yoruba with 'an oratorical tremor' (255), readjusting her sensorium. Most significantly, however, she Africanizes Deola's womb. Whereas in London her reproductive organs were subordinated by market demands, the fertilized womb is now celebrated as a means of reconnecting to the local community. According to Nnaemeka, motherhood in African literature, on these grounds, is often conceived of as 'an experience ("mothering") with its pains and rewards' (5) and especially in Yoruba culture

reinforces the social bond of expectant mother and community. Instead of relocating the childbearing community member to a clinic, a heterotopian institution that manifests biopower (cf. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 148), according to George even in places in Nigeria with easily accessible clinics, only 40 percent of women use them for their childbirth needs (60). This number, he notes, proves that in urban as well as in rural settings, even nowadays the majority of female Yoruba have home births and adopt folk knowledge of childbearing when giving birth (60). Questions of birth and of death become, ultimately, social issues and not the problem of heterotopian spaces such as clinics or retirement homes. This has already been indicated earlier in the aforementioned portrayals of Yoruba burials of *Every Day is for the Thief* and *On Black Sisters' Street* but is, once more, emphasized by the Magistrate's first encounter of the retirement home in Huchu's novel: 'It was incomprehensible to him that these people, who, after all, were fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, could be rounded up in this Gulag, waiting to die' (*Maestro* 68). These thoughts reveal that the notions of biopolitics remain a mere phenomenon of Euro-American capitalism and therefore do not apply to African conceptions of birth, either. African communities, such as the Yoruba in *A Bit of Difference*, instead place a strong emphasis on the process of procreation as a mode of social adulthood and membership (cf. George 60-61). Child-bearing is generally considered a social issue because parenting functions are not limited to the biological parents and the baby's removal from the womb marks that it belongs to an entire community instead of the individual mother (cf. Ijatuyi-Morphé 482; Mbiti, *Introduction* 92). Ijatuyi-Morphé consequently stresses that 'the cliché that *it takes a village to raise a child*, is inculcated' (482) in these essential thoughts. Deola's mother therefore re-affirms that Deola, upon returning to Nigeria, will 'be taken care of' (Atta 260) and by becoming a mother will be 'promoted to [an] esteemed position' (Makinde 167) within the collective community: 'Whenever you decide to bring yourself back home, we will be waiting for you' (Atta 260). A similar understanding is also present in Shona societies, where children are a high priority and pregnant women must be treated properly (cf. Chikidi 180-181). The appreciation of the expectant woman functions as an instrument of socialization, which also explains why the Magistrate in Huchu's novel goes out of his way to support his pregnant daughter, Mai Chenai (*Maestro* 271). The baby's birth then becomes a social ritual for the whole community:

Ruvarashe, the flower of God, was the baby's name. Her very being had changed everything; Baba Chenai had been transformed into Sekuru VaRuvarashe, Mai Chenai into Mbuya VaRuvarashe, and Chenai into Mai Ruvarashe. An ancient custom, everyone was bound to kin and children formed the centre of this bond. Their very names changed, for a name had to mean something, and what more fundamental meaning could be bestowed on a person than their relationship to others in the family? (293)

The pregnancy in Atta's novel, accordingly, is a quintessential means of reattachment to African

points of entanglement because it exhibits how local affiliations (cf. Nussbaum, "Patriotism" 9) in times of neoliberal atomization help Afropolitan denizens contribute to the formation of a post-neoliberal global village (cf. Appiah, *Ethics* 216; *Cosmopolitanism* xiii): 'It occurs to Deola that her mother might assume she got pregnant on purpose, which, to her mother, might be the cleverest thing Deola has ever done' (Atta 260). The fertilized womb is no longer interpreted as a threat to capital investment but instead as a means of communal bonding, a functioning site of resistance to the pressures of global capitalism. The body again becomes an essential sociological tool the Afropolitan writer can make use of to articulate modes of resistance through literature: 'Deola is surprised by her own tranquility. It is almost as if her womb has formed a protective shield around her. The chair she is sitting in is comfortable and the air conditioner hums' (256). The womb also operates as a catalyst of empowerment: 'She thinks of her growing child as a friend, a friend she is getting acquainted with. She must have grown up to some extent because she is able to put her fears aside, and what might have been a sense is now a determination to be worthy of being a mother' (292). This image of the healthy expectant mother, furthermore, asserts Eggebeen's suggestion that parenthood leads to increased civic engagement in the community in response to health benefits such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and better physical health (30-32) and explains why Deola upon temporary return to London remembers 'that she was loved . . . by people she knew' (Atta 283), embodying the antithesis to Bandele, whose health is deteriorating.

The pregnant body, moreover, forces Deola to reconsider marriage as she notices her frailty. Vulnerability in this case is not a sign of weakness but is merely understood as a fresh impetus to forming social institutions (Turner, "End(s)" 7) and thus accepting marriage: 'She is not as anxious as she was in her twenties and is less vulnerable to being hurt' (Atta 274). Discussions between Wale and Deola concerning marriage enable Atta to explore Afropolitan contingencies by comparing Euro-American and African conceptions of marital bonding. Wale, for instance, complains that his family tried to get him married only six months after he lost his first wife because his mother wanted him 'to have someone to take care' (275) of his daughter Moyo. Whereas Wale's mother, on the one hand, reflects African points of entanglement, according to which the refusal to get married is understood as 'a crime against traditional beliefs and practices' (Mbiti, *Introduction* 110) and as living 'against the mores of Yoruba' (Fadipe 65), Wale, on the other hand, infuses conservative African thought with neoliberal modernities when portraying himself as a competent self-responsible and self-providing single father, who is 'not merely half-partner in the creation of life but the true parent of the child' (Bordo 89): 'I was the one changing her nappies and feeding her' (Atta 275). The thought of liberating himself from the matrifocality displayed by many African family systems (cf. Ijatuyi-Morphé 278) inculcates a sense of

renegotiated gender roles into African points of entanglement. Deola, likewise, only wants a civil ceremony after attending her sister Jaiye's ceremony, which lasted for more than four hours and was attended by relatives Deola has never seen before, only to end in a loveless marriage and final separation (Atta 281). While marriage in African thought is understood as a significant social ritual (e.g. Mbiti, *Introduction* 104), and according to Sheba the most celebrated event in Yoruba culture because it is considered not just a bond between husband and wife but a relationship between complete families (217), Deola 'is loath to idealize Nigerian culture' (Atta 282) because she does not identify with notions of 'extended families' (296) causing a wedding-ceremony related financial 'acrimony' (280). Wale and Deola also question the relevance of ethnicity and religion in the marriage process when Wale explains that he has attended both the church and the mosque and speaks Yoruba and Hausa (296), negotiating the dynamic boundaries of pan-ethnic identities (cf. C.W. Smith 3-4) deemed necessary by changing migratory patterns outside and inside Africa. The discussions about marriage hence open up Afropolitan spaces for a reorientation concerning gender roles, communal traditions and ethnic affiliations and differences – hence the title of the first chapter (Atta 1) and the novel's name. Within these spaces of discourse Deola's body is still exposed to a state of precarious vulnerability: 'Deola feels more relaxed with him, but later, as he walks her to the car, she gets self-conscious again. She makes a move to hug him and their ears collide' (277). Her body, however, is re-defined in relation to African social institutions replacing the social surroundings of the Afropolitan job market: '[Wale] holds her face as he is tired of talking and she chooses to believe him' (278).

The post-neoliberal body

When towards the ending of the novel Deola flies back to London to possibly organize her relocation to Nigeria, Atta concludes the narrative by outlining how the Afropolitan's body has transformed from a site of resistance to a site of post-neoliberal cosmopolitanism. Dissociated from the labor market Deola is enabled to re-imagine the British capital as a cosmopolitan prototype space. In great length she describes how she passes 'Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Lebanese, Indian and Persian restaurants . . . people smoking hookahs, Russian shops, Thai and Swedish massage parlors, newsagents with Arabic newspapers' (297) on her five-minute walks. These cosmopolitan cityscapes are simultaneously enriched by communal notions of Africanness, which is evident when Deola shares *moin moin* with Subu's family, 'regain[ing] her sense of calm and shoo[ing] her fears away' (300-301), or when Wale visits her and both have sexual intercourse: 'Her skin smells of his sandalwood. There isn't a part of her body his hands and tongue have not touched. She tasted herself on his lips and fell asleep with him inside her' (296). Subu's family dinner and Wale's

presence engulf Deola's body in Africanized ethnoscares (cf. Appadurai, "Disjuncture" 297), re-directing cultural flows between London and Lagos. Both capitals and its inhabitants hence are no longer seen as geographical spaces ensnared in neoliberal center-periphery models, white/black binaries, or North-South-dyads but instead become scapes 'allow[ing] for introspection' (Knudsen and Rahbek 102) and giving in to being produced by the Afropolitan's post-neoliberal body. Atta here through 'axial reorientations' (West-Pavlov, "Toward" 9) reveals how Afropolitanism manages to sculpt post-neoliberal architectures permitting decentered and mobile positions because the geography Deola can now situate her body in goes beyond the phases of Euro-American hegemony, be they colonialism or neoliberalism. The title of the very first chapter, 'Reorientation' (Atta 1), already seems to suggest that the novel proposes an Afropolitan mind of movement (cf. Makokha 19) that may complicate the world. This complication, however, can only be incited if accurate notions of Africanness as an 'archive' (cf. Mbembe, "Internet") of revised modernities are brought into Afropolitanism. That is, if a 'reorientation of ideas about Africa and African culture' (Knudsen and Rahbek 1) not only enriches but also sustains and, ultimately, transforms post-neoliberal realities. Yet, the Afropolitan body can only maintain its post-neoliberal disposition if it is informed by authentic notions of Africanness. Atta, in this respect, appears to share Selasi's assertion that for the latest generation of emigrants being African 'must mean something' ("Bye-Bye") because the 'media's portrayals (war, hunger) won't do' ("Bye-Bye"). The space invader is highly critical of inaccurate entanglements informing Afropolitanism, which is emphasized when Deola watches a Hollywood film about a genocide in an imaginary African country and expresses contempt for the 'usual elements' (Atta 291) such as the '[r]ed-eyed African military men [who] drive around in trucks brandishing machine guns' (291) or the 'children [who] run after the trucks' (291). I think that these extracts, which to some extent resemble Huchu's implicit complaints in *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician* about the stereotypical news about African countries (35-36, 107-108), do, in fact, capture a metafictional comment on Selasi's essay through which Atta's position becomes palpable. Repeatedly, Atta stresses how dissatisfied Deola remains with what she sees on the TV about Africa and how she longs for elements of afromodernities instead: 'What she would give to see a boring old banker going on about capital growth, as they do in Nigeria, just for once. Why not? Don't they exist? Don't they count?' (Atta 291). This very critical version of the Afropolitan space invader is, moreover, poised to contest labor markets, which is indicated by Subu's giving up her flat in Shanghai and her globally informed job when too becoming pregnant (cf. 300-301). Since a neoliberal labor market relies on a surplus number of 'sufficiently competent, qualified, and politically disarmed workers to prevent them exerting pressure' (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 64), the Afropolitans upon the narrative's closure diminish the

surplus workforce deemed necessary to keep up competition (cf. Harvey, *The Ways* 64; *Companion* 145). From a Marxist perspective, Deola and Subu are emerging as a proletarian class opposed to the capitalists, who through their bodies seem to develop a new mode of class consciousness:

Under conditions of unbridled competition, the capitalists are forced willy-nilly into influencing greater and greater violence upon those whom they employ. Individual labourers are powerless to resist because they too are locked in competition with each other. The only solution is for the labourers to constitute themselves as a class and find collective means to resist the depredations of capital. (Harvey, *The Ways* 60)

This formation of class consciousness immediately disrupts the notion of a cosmopolitan class sealing itself off from non-cosmopolitans because Subu and Deola maintain their status of being in the world while relating to African entanglements despite becoming proletarians. From a Foucauldian perspective, however, the liberation from market constraints also signals the emergence of a post-neoliberal body because Subu liberates her womb from the restraints of neoliberal governmentality and brings labor and class back into the game:

The transformation of labor into human capital and of workers into entrepreneurs competing with other entrepreneurs obviously obscures the visibility and iterability of class to an even greater degree than classical liberalism does. It also eliminates the basis for alienation and exploitation as Marx conceived them. And it vanquishes the rationale for unions, consumer groups, or other forms of economic solidarity apart from cartels. (W. Brown 65)

When explaining that 'We're fine We're here' (Atta 301), the plural pronoun not only signals a communal reorientation towards African points of entanglement and a renunciation of working for a transnational investment bank. Although Atta explains that 'We're fine, we're here' is a phrase she has heard in Nigeria, which means that people are in fact not fine and thus 'communicate with each other in ways that are not always honest' (qtd. in Knudsen and Rahbek 180), the saying concluding the narrative could also be interpreted as Subu then facing a reorientation within labor markets because of her now reproductive womb. Referring to her unborn child, the 'we' in this case marks the end of the self-responsible and isolated Afropolitan body. The post-neoliberal body's anti-capitalist class conscience and anti-neoliberal mentality is therefore also informed by African notions of community, transcending notions of cosmopolitanism (cf. Ramose, "Transcending") and calling into question outdated global center-periphery fixtures. Atta's literary strategy here is similar to Cole's infusing pre-colonial spatial imaginaries of Lagos into images of a de-neoliberalized Afropolitan city. A post-neoliberal body disentangled from center-periphery-models then endows the space invader with an interior mobility according to Eze quintessential for Afropolitanism. This is reflected especially by Deola's ambivalence towards returning to Lagos for good. The last pages of *A Bit of Difference* disclose that this interior mobility makes Deola a cosmopolitan, after all, because she is capable of defining who she is from several cultural spaces and relations (cf. "We" 116-117). Equipped with her post-neoliberal body she is enabled to not just

target the center of global capitalism but feel local in any place in the world. Atta at this stage ends the novel with this thought, leaving the Afropolitan fully opened to Afropolitan spaces of discourse.

2.4.3 Discursive Afropolitan bodies: Heterotopias

A Bit of Difference, thus, in literary creation explores how the body is produced on the Afropolitan labor market but synchronously investigates how the Afropolitan labor market can be shaped by the body. Atta not only places the space invader as an agent within the vortex of contemporary scapes present within neoliberalized labor markets in order to (re)negotiate notions of labor and capital as well as race, class, ethnicity, and gender. *A Bit of Difference*, above all, as a piece of literature lays out Foucault's implied claims that labor ought to be brought back into economic analysis. After referring to classic liberal thought articulated by Smith and Ricardo as well as the neoliberal credo brought forward by Schultz and Becker (cf. 219-221), Foucault in *The Birth of Biopolitics* finally concludes with doctrines propagated by Robbins in the 1930s (cf. 222) and presumes that labor in neoliberalized economic analysis 'is in some way inserted only as a cog' (223). Fictions such as *A Bit of Difference*, on that account, enable the reader to investigate how the persons working eventually use the means available to them:

What does bringing labor back into economic analysis mean? It does not mean knowing where labor is situated between, let's say, capital and production. The problem of bringing labor back into the field of economic analysis is not one of asking about the price of labor, or what it produces technically, or what is the value added by labor. The fundamental, essential problem, anyway the first problem which arises when one wants to analyze labor in economic terms, is how the person who works uses the means available to him. That is to say, to bring labor into the field of economic analysis, we must put ourselves in the position of the person who works; we will have to study work as economic conduct practiced, implemented, rationalized, and calculated by the person who works So we adopt the point of view of the worker and, for the first time, ensure that the worker is not present in the economic analysis as an object – the object of supply and demand in the form of labor power – but as an active economic subject. (*Biopolitics* 223)

When Atta's novel exposes the reader to the laborer's positions, her work thus not only speaks to a reader who shares certain hopes and fears with the literary characters (cf. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice* 5). Writing and reading become 'both action and a reflection upon that action' (Eagleton, *Against the Grain* 135) because *A Bit of Difference*, as a piece of literature, also transposes the reader to the position of the critical and self-reflective active economic subject. Once labor is brought back into the conduct of literary analysis, Atta reflects upon the problematic conditions it is enmeshed in. The body here is employed as an active point of reciprocal spatial intersection and turns the invader into a 'discursive' (Butler, *Bodies* 70) Afropolitan. It is both an active site of entrepreneurialization and Africanization, of frailty and empowerment, of regulation and contestation – a malleable phenomenon but also a phenomenon of malleability. Predominantly through literature this

discursive body becomes a powerful instrument that can be situated within the realms of heterotopian spaces. Atta illustrates that Afropolitans, in the end, face the problem of only being able to access Afropolitan spaces through their labor, be it novel writing, architecture, or editing (cf. Selasi, “Bye-Bye”). A neoliberalization of Afropolitanism can in this case not be contested because it is only through the labor market that resistance can be articulated, wherefore resistance is allocated to utopian 'spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal' (Foucault, *Aesthetics* 178). The Afropolitans mentioned by Selasi in 2005, after all, are all subjected to neoliberal rationalities. Adjaye's work as a global architect, for instance, may be constrained by architectural competitions (cf. Andersson, Bloxham Zettersten, and Rönn 15). Magazine publisher Gruzintsky can only succeed as a cultural entrepreneur if he constantly invests in an his image of 'an idealized contemporary, young, mobile, open and tolerant figure as a kind of vanguard of a coming society' (Wright 110). Adichie's recognition by a Euro-American readership, Sackeyfio remarks, is 'clearly shaped by her visibility and marketing opportunities in America' (104). According to Selasi it is 'a willingness to complicate Africa' (“Bye-Bye”) which distinguishes these Afropolitans. But what also distinguishes them is that their complications are expressed through books, speeches, buildings and such, i.e. labor. Space invaders like Deola or Bandele, however, at times operating within the Afropolitan labor market without laboring and thus located within utopian spaces 'having no real place' (Foucault, *Aesthetics* 178), are given the chance to locate their discursive bodies in heterotopian spaces (cf. *Aesthetics* 179; a cogent summary of Foucault's heterotopian spatiality is provided by Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 16-21), from which they can reject the capitalistic mode of the NGO business and dispute LINK's neoliberal disposition or lay bare the knowledge production in the Afropolitan publishing business. Deola's post-neoliberal body removed from the market is still able to express its 'African influences (such as they are) in [its] work' (Selasi, “Bye-Bye”) through Atta's literary creation. Bandele's position, incongruent with neoliberal market mechanisms, still reveals the whitening and blackening of his body through the textual form. It is no longer the Afropolitan superstars mentioned in different introductory remarks of Afropolitanism (e.g. Makokha 16-18; Gikandi 10; Wasihun 395) but the non-laboring laborers that contribute to exploring the trajectories of Afropolitanism. Atta hence understands Afropolitanism as a space enabling her to seek out heterotopian spaces, 'design[ing] into the very institution of society' (Foucault, *Aesthetics* 178) a 'realized [utopia] in which the real emplacements' (178) are 'contested, and reversed' (178). Both neoliberalization *and* Africanization make possible this literary creation, which stresses how literature can transcend discourse and shape it at the same time:

Heterotopias offer an alienating representation of an epoch – one that lays bare what the times cannot think. Heterotopias, situated on the borders of society, in a liminal position, reveal the limits of the Symbolic. They thereby cause fissures to appear in orderly representation, thus stripping bare the systems

of conditions of the possibility of a given order of representation. (West-Pavlov, *Space* 138)

A Bit of Difference reflects upon a mere decade of Afropolitan debates and emphasizes how Afropolitanism still brings forward productive spaces. Moreover, it postulates that cosmopolitan discourse too needs to radically open up to impulses generated outside its own boundaries not yet brought into the realms of debate due to labor restrictions. Cosmopolitanism, in other words, needs to give in to its very own heterotopian spaces. Harvey, in one of his most recently published essays, although eventually discussing the differences between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics, quite plainly criticizes that cosmopolitanism should no longer be regarded as 'some kind of theoretical apparatus' ("What do we do" 55) imbued in a cosmopolitan 'doctrine that can resolve issues' (54). He laments, along with those critics aforementioned (e.g. Castells; Sklair; Arat-Koc), that often a technocratic elite partakes in the making of cosmopolitanism (54-55), implicitly asserting that labor becomes a predominant issue of inclusion and exclusion, and implying that – according to Foucauldian logic – labor is then suppressed as an analytical category at the same time. If cosmopolitan discourse constituted through labor therefore attempts to espouse stable ambivalences, its own mobility, or social transformations, it ought to re-integrate the question(s) of labor through its own heterotopias. Atta ends the novel with this postulation. However, whether and how the Afropolitan's body can produce, say, substantial changes of the working conditions through re-defining labor as a category within cosmopolitanism, is not fully exhausted in the novel. The reader finds out that Deola and Subu at the ending of the narrative will be 'fine' (Atta 301) but is not informed whether Deola could make it in London as a jobless single mother or whether she will, in fact, return to Nigeria to live with Wale. Her concluding remarks nonetheless display that cosmopolitan discourse is only about to be Afropolitanized, which will be explained in the final conclusion.

3 Conclusion: Afropolitanizing cosmopolitan discourse

Literature shaping the *Afropolitan turn*

Afropolitan space invading taking place in fictions composed after *Bye-Bye Babar's* publication in 2005 has determined how productive Selasi's proposed framework has proven to be, particularly in literature. From the very beginning, scholarly debates have charged the idea of the 21st century African with contested meanings and to this day academics in books, journals, workshops, and conferences have embroiled in enduring controversies on how cosmopolitanism can be rethought through the prism of Afropolitanism, focusing especially on the forces of neoliberal capitalism as much as the meanings of Africanness in the vortex of globalization. In the end, however, it is through literature that the *Afropolitan turn* within cosmopolitan discourse is given shape. Above all, the novels composed by Cole, Mengestu, Unigwe, and Atta remain central touchstones within cosmopolitan debates being Afropolitanized. Situating Selasi's framework within a wider spatial context and exploring the global city, home, identity construction, and the body on labor markets as predominant sites allows not only for giving the *Afropolitan turn* a form but, furthermore, enables power relations such as race, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or (im)mobility to be investigated and redirected through Afropolitan fixtures. In detail it has been revealed how Afropolitan literature published in the past decade has made use of Selasi's conceptualization and its associated scholarly horizon, yet has also created a vantage point using the friction generated at the disjunctures of neoliberal capitalism and Africanness, which, after all, expands Afropolitan trajectories.

On the one hand, this study has explained how Afropolitan novels help identify the neoliberal agenda having been turned into a conduct of conduct infusing all spheres, which goes well beyond the realms of the economy. The novels illustrate the emerging symbioses between Marxist and Foucauldian understandings of the current shape of the global realities dispersing a neoliberal mode of reason into every domain. Afropolitan fiction may at this point turn out even more capable of naming and addressing these newly emerging power mechanisms than theory. After all, the narratives by Cole, Mengestu, Unigwe, and Atta inform the reader that literature functions as an effective form of ideological control which simultaneously immerses the reader into the neoliberal rationalities of entrepreneurialism. *Every Day is for the Thief's* focalizing the Afropolitan city, for instance, might force the reader into sharing the nameless narrator's fear of area boys in Lagos and into welcoming the MUSON, indulging in neoliberal cityscapes and perceiving the global city as an entrepreneurial playground. Digesting *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, readers, peeping into Judith's bourgeois mansion and gazing at their expensive furniture, may find themselves recreating a neoliberalized thought of home based on, say, a static financial asset. Tracing Chisom's

footsteps in *On Black Sisters' Street*, readers themselves are lured into visualizing the beautiful objects on display in Antwerp's shopping districts, reproducing legitimizing identities and repositioning themselves on the global I-commodity-market. Envyng Deola's lifestyle as a childless, yet highly trained and successful entrepreneur, one might feel the urge to conquer the world as a laboring global jet-setter too and therefore conceive of oneself as an entrepreneur that ought to invest in one's own human capital. The highly mobile and affluent Afropreneurs present in the fictions that have flooded the book market in the past ten years may casually refer to the last traces of Africanness contributing to their elitist cosmopolitan being in the word, yet at this stage have become mere objects of Euro-American literary consumption. In the long run, Afropolitan space invading in texts therefore not only reflects how the ideological grip of kleptocratic global capitalism is dispersed. It also suggests that the reader runs the risk of being made governable and that the neoliberal ethic is further replicated through the arts, especially the novel as a sociable genre.

On the other hand, however, my analysis has also revealed how Afropolitan literature helps the reader identify different Africanizations of these neoliberalized realities. The investigated narratives exhibit why Africa remains the central and most relevant locus of resistance contesting capitalistic essentialities dispersed through a neoliberal dogma. Understanding Afropolitan novels as works of fiction that espouse a rooted being in the world informing the cosmopolitan predominantly through African thought systems and cosmologies, readers are given the chance to grasp why Africa may, in fact, remain among the last post-neoliberal spaces on earth. Re-imagining Lagos through Yoruba urbanism and enfranchising the reader in Afropolitan cityscapes, *Every Day is for the Thief*, for instance, illustrates that imaginaries can embrace notions of communalism which transform global cities into locations of a post-neoliberal communitarian cosmopolitanism. When Sepha in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* takes the readers into his nomadic hut or reads out stories in the store of Africanized cosmopolitan solidarity, their notions of home might be mobilized. Joining the association in *On Black Sisters' Street* or witnessing Chisom's presence through extra-sensory perception, one might as well resist neoliberalized realities and partake in thoughts as to how social transformations could help humans to break free from lineages of domination and head for a different life. Sharing Deola's becoming an expectant mother present on labor markets without laboring in *A Bit of Difference*, readers are placed into the working-classes that have freed themselves from the constraints of neoliberal governmentality. The Afropolitans accordingly teach readers how to develop empathy and put themselves into the positions of others through utilizing African entanglements. Fictions through Afropolitan space invading indicate how Africanness can help rouse a cosmopolitan compassion needed in times of neoliberalized atomization.

Afropolitanized cosmopolitan discourse

With the friction created between these junctures, Afropolitan authors, all in all, shape cosmopolitan debates through decentering, mobilizing, transforming, and opening them from within. Critical knowledge present in academic debates is not only reflected and reproduced but, in addition, broadened and expanded. At this point I would like to consider both Johansen's and Calhoun's remarks on cosmopolitan discourse. Whereas the former stresses that cosmopolitanism in the near future must become an 'interpretative practice, with myriad expressive possibilities' (Johansen 25), the latter criticizes that cosmopolitanism is a 'discourse centred in a Western view of the world' (Calhoun, "Class Consciousness" 91) because it is set up 'commonly as a 'Third Way' between rampant corporate globalization and reactionary traditionalism' (91). I think that Afropolitan literature here locates the means of evading cosmopolitanism's being trapped (cf. Antor 53) in dichotomous patterns and opens discourse to new possibilities. The stable ambivalences outlined in *Every Day is for the Thief*, Mengestu's nomadic search in *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, the social transformations exhibited in *On Black Sisters's Street*, and the heterotopian spaces explored in *A Bit of Difference* lay bare the conditions of possibilities that generate meaning and identify the architecture cosmopolitan fixtures may need to meld into in order to find answers to pressing questions. The spatialities created in these fictions accentuate how an Afropolitanized cosmopolitan discourse can rehabilitate and remain innovative in order to find adequate answers to current global issues such as migration, nationalism, or unleashed capitalism making realities even more complex and difficult to comprehend. Although I refrain from Calhoun's postulation of a cosmopolitan 'democracy' ("Class Consciousness" 93) I share his related implication that discourse ought to move beyond common denominators such as neoliberalism and critical standpoints opposing it and instead open itself to 'crossings and pluralisms' (93). Fictions forging the *Afropolitan turn* automatically reconstitute this open and diversified disposition of discourse going beyond binary dispositions.

Taking into account the massive influx of Afropolitan novels, the spaces outlined in this thesis could, after all, be complemented by an even larger share of spatialities found in works published after 2005. The Afropolitanized internet (cf. Mbembe, "Internet"; Guarracino; Pahl) in Adichie's *Americanah*, or the Afropolitanized sound bits (cf. Skinner; Mbembe, "Variations") in Huchu's *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician* and in Proctor's *Rhumba* indicate further modes of metamorphosis and modification that bring fore the directions cosmopolitan discourse ought to take. This listing of literary spatial expressions, which could, of course, be extended, delineates how the scapes, flows, and spaces of inquiry enhancing and transforming cosmopolitan discourse in the fashion proposed in this thesis seem to have become distinct prerogatives of Afropolitan literature.

Assuming that cosmopolitan discourse is a continually unfinished and ongoing project, frictions generated and utilized in such spaces of ambivalence, nomadism, transformation, or heterotopia have already unremittingly (re-)instantiated the process of becoming. Africanness in forms of constant metamorphosis is in this respect continuously brought into cosmopolitanism because the debates on being a citizen of the world especially in times of migration and the more recent longing of many Euro-American states for purity (cf. Hamid) can no longer sustain without the Afropolitan instantiations to counteract perennial static and inflexible dispositions. I think that Knudsen and Rahbek in 2016 best encapsulated this thought in their end notes:

In our view, Afropolitanism is . . . an African variant of a cosmopolitan approach to the twenty-first century But unlike the many variants of cosmopolitanism that have been proposed in recent decades, it does not come with a manifesto – yet. Still, however, Afropolitanism keeps reminding us that for an African of the world, even in the twenty-first century, cosmopolitanism cannot make do without the ‘Afro’. (300)

Whereas Knudsen and Rahbek rightfully conclude that cosmopolitanism does no longer function without the ‘Afro’, I no longer share their assertion that Afropolitanism about ten years after *Bye-Bye Babar*’s publication remains without a manifesto. After all, Gyasi’s *Homegoing*, ranging among the latest Afropolitan novels published, when encircling Afropolitan futures may indicate where Afropolitanized cosmopolitanism is headed.

Afropolitan futures: Towards the Afropolitan Atlantic?

What will Afropolitanized cosmopolitan discourse still in the making eventually look like? I suggest that Gyasi’s recent novel *Homegoing* tackles this question in the most exhaustive manner, which is why I would like to conclude my thesis with briefly referring to her standpoint. The narrative, which covers the histories of family members split between Ghana and the US through the realms of global capitalism and Africanness, exhibits that Afropolitanized cosmopolitanism might progress into the Afropolitan Atlantic and therefore transcend Afropolitan scapes, flows, or spaces of inquiry. Quite elaborately, Gilroy, in his 1993 *The Black Atlantic*, illustrated how 'racist, nationalist, or ethnically absolutist discourses' (1) can be contested and decentered by perceiving blacks as 'agents, as people with cognitive capacities and even with an intellectual history' (6), whose history must be recast in the framework of the blackened Atlantic as a spatial metaphor liberating cultural discourse from its own boundaries and manifest power relations: 'I want to develop the suggestion that cultural historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicit transnational and intercultural perspective' (15). Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* does not continue the African American tradition within Euro-America’s national borders but instead encapsulates the travels between the

continents. I presume that Gyasi picks up his concern with the 'Atlantic as a cultural and political system' (Gilroy 15) and installs the Afropolitan Atlantic as a single unit of analysis to further expand and shape into form discussions of a cosmopolitan being in the world. The Afropolitan space invader here functions as a main agent, the central cosmopolitan scientist (cf. Beck, "Cosmopolitanization" 11) who has taken over the cosmopolitan's making of the world. Neoliberalism and Africanness, like the shores of Euro-America and Africa, within the Afropolitan Atlantic no longer remain 'mutually exclusive attributes' (Gilroy 10) within Afropolitan spatialities but instead transcend into Afropolitanized cosmopolitan realities. First, the ship in *Homegoing* becomes the key site for transcending spaces generated by frictions in texts, as stressed by Gilroy:

It should be emphasized that ships were the living means by which the points within that Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected. Accordingly they need to be thought of as cultural and political units They were something more – a means to conduct political dissent and possibly a distinct mode of cultural production. The ship provides a chance to explore the articulations between the discontinuous histories. . . . For all these reasons, the ship is the first of the novel chronotopes presupposed by my attempts to rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the western hemisphere. (16-17)

In fact, Gyasi's novel appears to trace the history of the transatlantic slave trade as the epitome of historic global capitalism and simultaneously immerse Africanness into the history of the US. The narrative, however, more likely becomes a 'vision of a dynamic alliance' (Gilroy 23) between Euro-America and Africa as well as neoliberalism and Africanness going beyond generated frictions. The recurring spatial figure of the traveling ship enables the Afropolitan author as a sailing agent to embark on the voyage on an Afropolitan Atlantic. This notion finds its literary embodiment in Kojo, who lives in Baltimore and makes his living working on boats as a caulker (Gyasi 117). Kojo, in the narrative, is a respected expert among the caulkers because he can 'just put his ear to a ship and it would tell him where it needed work' (117), which is why he prepares the boat that can produce an expanded subjectivity in the first place:

Jo jumped off the boat and looked behind him at the beautiful Chesapeake Bay, at the large, imposing ships that lined the Fell's Point shipyards. He loved the look of those boats, loved that his hands helped build and maintain them, but Ma Aku always said that it was bad juju, him and all the other free Negroes working on ships. She said there was something evil about them building up the things that had brought them to America in the first place, the very things that had tried to drag them under. (111)

Kojo, like the Afropolitan novelist taking over cosmopolitan discourse and refining the work of fiction, takes over the boat and fine-tunes it to make it function on an Afropolitan Atlantic. Yet he no longer operates as a space invader. He does not understand the ship as a spatial metaphor continuing the histories of the slave trade or signifying the immersion of Africanness into Euro-America but regards his work as an instantiation of a new subjectivity. As soon as the ship is then placed on the sea, this Afropolitan subjectivity is transposed to the latest cosmopolitan framework. The Afropolitan space invader with Kojo's help has become an empowered navigator who conquers

the sea. In 1993, Gilroy declared the Black Atlantic a new mode of philosophical subjectivity: 'I am proposing, then, that we reread and rethink this expressive counterculture not simply as a succession of literary tropes and genres but as a philosophical discourse which refuses the modern, occidental separation of ethics and aesthetics, culture and politics' (38-39). However, while Gilroy, in 1993, read the Atlantic as a new subjectivity within discourse, Gyasi, in 2016, reads the Atlantic as a new mode of subjectivity emerging through Afropolitanized cosmopolitanism. Afropolitan authors and their literary characters then no longer remain space invaders but have eventually elevated to space transformers, prompting a transformed agency. Afropolitanism, at this very moment, becomes the cosmopolitan being in the world as a 'glocal, analytical interaction of cross-cultural, philosophical, psycho-social and spiritual textures informed by past, present and future Africa [which] denotes a philosophical space' (Salami). Discourse still remains spatial, yet instead of laying bare the conditions of possibilities that generate meaning the Afropolitan has a share in transforming the conditions of possibilities through Afropolitanized cosmopolitan discourse. In the end, the agent has transformed cosmopolitan social science into the Afropolitan Atlantic. In *Homegoing*, the narrative concludes with finalizing this transformation. Marcus, a PhD sociology student at Stanford, who has been afraid of the ocean his whole life 'because of all that space' (296), travels to Ghana with Marjorie. Whereas in the US he has remained uncertain of how to complete his thesis because he does not know how to trace the histories his family ancestors have been enmeshed in, unable to find the appropriate framework (289), on the shores of Cape Coast, next to the Castle where the slave trade was initiated, he finally realizes that he is capable of immersing himself into the ocean – the Afropolitan Atlantic:

He watched [Marjorie] run, headlong into the crashing waves of the water It was his turn to come to her. He closed his eyes and walked in until the water met his calves, and then he held his breath, started to run. Run underwater. Soon, waves crashed over his head and all around him. Water moved into his nose and stung his eyes. When he finally lifted his head up from the sea to cough, then breathe, he looked out at all the water before him, at the vast expanse of time and space. He could hear Marjorie laughing, and soon, he laughed too. (300)

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