NARRATING THE MULTIFORM IDENTITY: MIGRATION AND COSMOPOLITANISM IN HELON HABILA'S *TRAVELLERS*

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Abstract:

This article explores the growing phenomenon of migration of people from former colonies to European countries. The tremendous economic and technological development, in addition to the projected western humanism and generosity constitute the main drives of this massive influx of migrants into Europe. The study is based on Helon Habila's *Travellers* (2019), which appears as a postcolonial text that fictionalizes the stories of some Black and Arab migrants who succeed to cross the European borders. In this novel of the category of migrant literature, the narrative puts side by side the migrants' sad experiences and the supposed humanism promoted through the European concept of cosmopolitanism. In so doing, the author tackles the questions of identity and aspects of racism in the migration policy and practices of European countries.
Key words: cosmopolitanism, humanism, identity, migration, postcolonial, racism

Résumé:

Dans cet article, nous abordons le phénomène de la migration en Europe de personnes issues des ex-colonies. L'extraordinaire développement économique et technologique associé à l'humanisme et la générosité projetés par l'occident constituent les motivations principales de ces flux massifs de migrants vers l'Europe. La présente étude est basée sur *Travellers* (2019) de Helon Habila qui se présente comme un texte postcolonial. Ce texte représente les histoires des certains migrants Noirs et Arabes qui réussissent à franchir les frontières Européennes. Dans ce roman de la catégorie de la littérature migrante, la narration met en opposition les tristes expériences des migrants et le supposé humanisme prôné à travers le concept européen de cosmopolitisme. Ce faisant, l'auteur aborde les questions d'identité et les aspects de racisme dans la politique et les pratiques européenne en matière de migration.

Mots-clés : cosmopolitisme, humanisme, migration, paradigmes identitaires, racisme

Introduction

The influx of migrants into Europe has been a growing phenomenon through the recent decades. This is particularly due to the long-lasting peace, economic and technological advance

of European countries. To those factors it can be added, the cultural and artistic aspect as well as the cosmopolitan discourse of the former colonial powers. All these drives of migration combine to make Europe the destination or transit places for countless travellers from peaceful countries as well as troubled ones over the world. This phenomenon has also become a major topic in artistic and literary productions -biopics, documentary film, work of fiction- based on the experiences of travellers or emigrants. Particularly in literary productions on the topic, such as Taju Cole's *Open City* (2011), Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013), or Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), the motif revolves around the notion of integration, refugee, border, diaspora, identity etc. Helon Habila's *Travellers* belongs to this category of migrant literature since the author is part of the African writers from the diasporain and the novel depicts the lives of some non-western migrants in Germany.

In this novel, the author displays the sad fate of migrants trying to find refuge or good living conditions in European countries. Along the process of migration, the refugees face various forms of hostility and inhospitality from the borders they cross to the towns where they stay, essentially because of some bias identity paradigms. The migrants are assigned a distorted social identity, which is depicted through the lens of racial and ethnic discrimination. The individuals composing this community with a distorted identity in the eyes of native Europeans are therefore held into a permanent process of (re)adaptation of their self-identity. Accordingly, Habila's novel brings to the fore a process of reconstruction of the self: what is actually the migrant before traveling and who does he becomes in the course of the migration?

Casting the migrants through the lens of some misleading identity paradigms reveals also the paradoxical aspect the ideology of cosmopolitanism or humanism advocated by Europeans. Cosmopolitanism is a concept of postcolonial theory and it can be defined in the words of E. Kant (1795, P. 105) as a "universally philanthropic policy that would ensure peace among nations and grant individuals the right to international hospitality or the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory". Therefore, premised on postcolonial theory, this reflection attempts to explore the possibilities of interpretation of the migrants' experiences through the concepts of identity and cosmopolitanism.

1. Assigning Social Identity to Migrants

In *Travellers* (2019), the narrative intertwines the experiences of several travellers from various continents who meet in Europe, precisely in Berlin. It is very important to note that this

way of producing the text concurs with the ethics of representation sustained by postcolonialism. Instead of recounting the story of refugees from the point of view of a native European or a cosmopolitan, Helon Habila decides to them the floor for their own accounts of their diasporic experiences. This attitude corresponds, according to Claire Gallien, to the expression of a "sustained vigilance regarding the ethics and politics of representation" (Gallien, 2018, P.745). In the novel, the characterization and narration technique that underlies this postcolonial-based ethics of representation indicates that those travellers who have migrated to Europe have different status: on the one hand, there are those who travel to Europe for studies, an international work or just for tourism. This category of migrant lives in good conditions, as illustrated by the condition of the unnamed narrator and his American wife Gina who are in Berlin for some academic and artistic purposes. They live in a decent place and Gina is even granted a Zimmer scholarship for her project of portrait painting. On the other hand, there is the category of migrants with the particular kind of traits that Gina, the American portrait artist wants. On this account, the narrator explains: "she was looking for real migrants to sit for her" (H. Habila, 2019, P.4). The real migrant is described as someone who is prematurely old with lined face, "those lines, each of them an eloquent testimony to what he had left behind, to the borders and revers and deserts he had crossed to get to Berlin" (H. Habila, 2019, P.4). Then, the second category is that of refugees who try to flee from sociopolitical crises and poverty in order to reach the shelter and Eldorado projected by European countries. It should be noted that the migrants are confronted with the European migration policy but this does not stop them migrating: it just makes it harder. Therefore, after risking their lives to get to Europe, which corresponds to the land of dream, the migrants continue to face stigmatizations.

Actually, while going through the story plotted in *Travellers* (2019), the reader notices that the characters from the communities of refugees have a treatment that is based on the way they are perceived by native Europeans. The novel reveals various perceptions of those travellers by people in the European countries that they cross or where they would stay along their quest for shelter. The first elements that they are perceived through are their racial and ethnic identities. By racial identity, I mean the biological features of the migrants; and the ethnic identity refers to the place of origin. For instance, the migrants are distinctly identified by their physical traits comprising hair or skin color, which are different from Europeans'. On this account, the beginning chapter of the novel reveals that the first person narrator is annoyed by the attitude of a child shouting "Shokolade! Schokolade!"(H. Habila, 2019, P.4) whenever he

would pass by the playground of schoolchildren in an area of Berlin. Through this lexis, the reader can realize that the black migrants are still identified through some paradigms that can be traced to the colonial terminology of black inferiority.

As matter of fact, history teaches that the psychological and ideological representations of the black Africans are generally negative: being black is being an inferior or a primitive other, a person bound to be slave or good to be civilized. This is part of the imagery constructed to represent black people in the collective memory, through the literary works by some colonial authors. One of those literary productions is Haggard Rider's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). This novel's characterization represents the British subjects under the traits of civilized, dominant and dynamic people while the Africans are depicted through some flat characters who are uncivilized, sanguinary or servants of white men. Another notorious production is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), in which he pretends to raise the devastating effect of the colonialists. However, the reader can easily observe that he rather depicts the Africans as primitive people who are deprived of consciousness. In short, the non-western people, particularly the Africans, are generally represented in the colonial literature in depreciative terms that echo stereotyping.

This form of suspicious perception is expanded to some *minimal group paradigms[1]* as the novel unveils what the migrants from African undergo. The behaviors of non-Africans toward the African diaspora in Europe is made of disdain and rejection. An illustration is provided through the prejudice-based attitude of a café owner in the capital city of Germany. The narrator recounts that "the Berlin-Turkish café, whose owner had been turning away black people, claiming they were all illegal immigrants and drug dealers" (H. Habila, 2019, P.24). Moreover, those migrants with the status of refugee constitute a source of fear for the local inhabitants of the areas where they are given asylum. That is part of the social implications of migration as raised through the following lines:

> …many natives have to abandon their country in search of a more economically viable space and this indicates the fact that migration has dialectic effect. While it brings relief to the émigrés, it complicates the living condition of the natives. (O. Solomon, 2020, P.76)

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[1] a methodology used in social psychology to investigate the minimal conditions required, for discrimination to occur between groups.

From the quote above, it can be inferred that the migrants can affect the stability of the diasporic settings. The émigrés can constitute an economic threat for the natives. They generally represent a cheap labour force, and they consume and important part of the financial help that natives are normally entitled to.

It should also be noted that the migrants could bring a greater diversity of perspectives that can improve the social fabric of European countries. Nevertheless, reversely, there is the potential for increased tension between native Europeans and non-western migrants. Arguably, it happens that some European folks consider foreign people as a menace to the usual ways in Europe. This phenomenon is observable in Helon Habila's novel. In fact, the populations near the refugees' Heim have a depreciative perception of them. The first person narrator recounts:

> The neighbours, it appeared, had complained to the council, they felt threatened, their daughters and sons were not safe on the streets where refugees sold drugs, and got drunk and fought; the aliens had turned the entire street into a dumpster, trash everywhere. The buses were there to take them to another Heim outside the city. (H. Habila, 2019, Pp. 64-65)

Considering the documented information about European adolescents and the consumption of alcohol and drug, the above accusing becomes paradoxical. The accusations formulated in the quote seems not to be appropriate. The German daughters and sons that are presented as potential victims of refugees are rather some skinheads, some adolescents that are fun of heavy metal music, violence and debauchery. The problem lies elsewhere, the native people probably want those people who are identically different or 'aliens' to be taken away far from them. The council contributes to this disgraceful treatment of the migrants by attempting to take them to another location that is outside the city. It sounds that this institution initiates a process of marginalization of the migrants.

In addition, the migrants with the status of refugee are treated unfriendly in Europe, regardless their origin. For example, in Bulgaria Karim Al-Bashir, a migrant from Somalia realizes the hostility and inhospitality of the border police through the following words: "we don't care who you are […] you have no right here. You enter this country illegal and you are a criminal" (H. Habila, 2019, P.181). This apprehension is a prejudice that is extended to the migrant community from non-western countries such as Morocco, Eritrea, Nigeria, Syria, and so on. This ill-treatment of refugees in the European Union countries is testified by a report of Amnesty International stating:

individual member states themselves are taking drastic measures to stop irregular arrivals. Migrants and refugees are being expelled unlawfully from Bulgaria, Greece and Spain, without access to asylum procedures and often in ways that put them at grave risk. (Amnesty International, 2014, P.5)

Concisely, due to the inferior and humiliating status conferred to them, the travellers from ex-colonies looking for shelter in Europe are rather brutalized and marginalized. It can be admitted that the European migration policy reinforces global inequality. The migrants in the narrative are affected by the despicable conditions that they are subjected to in European countries because of their non-western origins. This inequality and its effects on the individuals will necessarily trigger some mechanism of survival, which in turn may contribute to the moral and psychological transformations of the migrants. In this regard, the migrants, particularly the refugees driven by hard push factors are seen in the narrative to be hiding some aspects of their identities or displaying some false facets. This could be termed as the dynamic diasporic identity or the process of reinventing oneself. Accordingly, their personal identities go through a process of reconstruction.

2. The Migrant Self-identity Shifts

The self-identity shift is to be comprehended as a dynamic process through which the migrants operate a change in their usual behaviours or tendency to meet the challenges in the diasporic countries. To grasp this fact the reader may consider the trajectories of migrants or refugees embodied in *Travellers* by Karim, Mark and Manu among others. Karim Al-Bachir was a modest but happy shop owner in the time of peace in Mogadishu. This honest man is threatened by the huge violence that will seize Somalia, consecutively to the downfall of the regime of Siad Bare. He engages on the routes of exile, like many other Somalians as exemplified in Nuruddin Farah's *Knots* (2007) through the character Zaak trying to flee from the war-torn Somalia. Actually, this novel reveals that many Somalian people, like the family of Cambara, the main character, have left the country because of the tyranny of Siad Bare and the endless civil war. The country has thus become a socio-politically disarticulated and unsafe place for millions of Somalians. The only way out for those people is the exile with their families in neighbouring or western countries to escape the dire state of the Somalian crisis. However, the very drives of Karim and his family's migration is a push factor related to the tribal militiamen's violence and the particular fact that he is denied the Somalian identity by those people. Thus, far from being a form of *hodophilia[1],* the peregrinations of Karim and his

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[1] Great love or passion for travel. Opposite of hodophobia, which means morbid fear of travel

family from Somalia to various countries such as Kenya, Yemen, Libya, Bulgaria, Germany and so on, is linked to the fact that he has been initially persecuted in the homeland on a basis of identity.

Subsequently, along the process of migration, staying for a while or crossing the different borders have intensified Karim's own feeling of being stranger wherever he is. Probably that psychological transformation has helped Karim to reconstruct his ipseity. Karim can then disenfranchise from the social and cultural standards of his motherland and adopt some different norms that will shape his new personal identity. Accordingly, this character confesses that he is no longer the honest man who used to live in Mogadishu. Indeed, he admits that "he did join in [illegal business] for a time, and the money was good" (H. Habila, 2019, P.175). Considering the initial status of Karim, with the image of a respectable member of his society, trafficking corresponds to something abject. That is why his wife does not appreciate this way of making money. On this account, she puts "Now we are in this strange land, you can't break any law" (H. Habila, 2013, P. 175). Certainly basing on the education and the ways they are accustomed to, it is unthinkable that this man could abide by the law.

In the way just indicated, the reaction of Karim's wife reveals that the personal identity of her husband has changed. He is now doing something that he would never do before. Above all, along the migration, this Somali male will work "as a kitchen assistant in a hotel" (H. Habila, 2013, P. 176). It is effectively possible to notice that there is a significant change in the private self of this character. Working as a cook enforces the changes or dynamism that Karim's identity is subjected to. Considering his initial cultural norms, doing a female presented job such as cooking, symbolically denotes that Karim has abandoned his Somalian standpoint of self-identification. We can see that the necessity to survive during migration can help construct another form of ipseity. In the narrative, Karim Al-Bashir is depicted as someone who is able to do anything just to ensure survival. Through this character, the conditions of exile have transformed the personality but some other refugees seize their being in Europe to unleash other facets of their identity. The character named Mark is an example.

Mark, also identified as Mary, is a transgender form Malawi who has a strange trajectory in the novel. As a regular migrant, this Malawian student gets to Germany with a scholarship in order to do further studies in cinematography. The character initially registered in Hamburg University as Mary Chinomba will fall in the category of irregular migrant when she becomes Mark Chinomba after changing her identity. Indeed, Mary has always considered herself as a male, a person "who loved to dress in drag, who loved to perform male roles on stage, who

wasn't interested in the nice boys nudged in her direction by her parents" (H. Habila, 2019, P.67). However, in her motherland, *what* or *who* Mary was could not be revealed without damage for her and disgrace for the family. Therefore, in addition to the pull factor that university facilities in Germany represented for her, there was a necessity to run away from a condition that she could no longer bear in her home country. Getting to Europe is then an opportunity for this character to reveal another version of her private self. To operate this shift of the personal identity, the Malawian student will simulate her own death in a letter addressed to her parent. According to the narrator, "she signed the letter 'Mark.' That was the day Mary died," (H. Habila, 2019, P.67). The gender mutation is completed through a symbolic death simulated by the character. The part of the character that is dead is certainly the one representing the former identity, the one that used to be in Africa. The new-created identity is that of the diasporic one, the identity obtained after a shift completed in Germany, where those practices are not an abomination.

Most African societies do not admit transsexuals or transgenderism, particularly among families in strong relation with traditional and religious values. Through the characterization of this Malawian migrant, with a father being a preacher, we realize that H. Habila (2019, P.83) stresses on the fact that traveling contributes to construct the private self of people anew. Out of the stories collected from some refugees, the narrator concludes that "they are here [in Europe] for a new start, not to re-create or hold on to the past. The water they all crossed to come her [in Europe] has dissolved the past." Having a new start with one's past dissolved could be interpreted as a reinventing process. That is what we also notice from the personal story of Manu, a refugee from Libya.

Manu the Libyan migrant has been through so much hardship in his home country that even the hellish circumstances he and his family undergo in Berlin do not make him think of going back home. Olusayo Solomon testifies this, as he puts that "most of the African emigrants embark on journeys in view of their disillusionment with the state of things in their various countries''(S. Olusayo, 2020, P.72). When he is asked about his home country, he replies: "I have no country" (H. Habila, 2019, P. 87). Then it can be observed that Manu refuses to hold on to his past as a Libyan. He needs a new start because he has undergone violent discrimination in the motherland. This character is victim of racism in Libya because "they thought [he] looked different, foreign" (H. Habila, 2019, P. 84). Having 'no country' bespeaks of his inner intention to definitely disconnect himself from his former identity and opt for a new one.

The transformation of the personal identity of this character is significant. To adapt to survival conditions as a refugee, Manu the former physician in Libya has become another person. In Libya, he used to have a responsible and an honorable status of doctor. Now he is turned into another man doing some vulgar and sometime immoral and petty jobs during his stay in Berlin. Indeed, the narrator reveals that, "he wonders what his wife would think if she saw him, a bouncer at the Sahara" (H. Habila, 2019, P.75). From bouncer to escort boy in a nightclub, Manu does not hesitate doing any job that can earn him a few Euro to take care of his family. Here, one can see that the character's ipseity in the European exile unveils another constructed self-identity. This new self-identity is the result of the deconstruction or dissolution of the initial self-identity. The initial professional identity of the individual is different from the one Manu adopts in Europe, due to the conditions imposed by the new environment. In fact he can adopt a professional identity by doing a job "just for winter, in spring he'll find something somewhere, cleaning, construction, dishwashing", the narrator explains (H. Habila, 2019, P.75). Being in irregular situation, Manu must go through those humiliating jobs for the survival of his family, some activities that he has never done in his home country.

From the experience of Manu and the aforementioned illustrations, the reader can infer that the migrants have adopted a *diasporic identity*, an identity that is likely to be qualified as the legacy of deconstruction of the initial private self of the individual. This transformation is due to the variations of culture, social realities, and lifestyles beyond the boundaries he crosses along the process of migration. Following this argumentation, it can be admitted that that Helon Habila's *Travellers* attempts to deconstruct the pretended European humanism attached to the concept of cosmopolitanism reverberated by the European discourse.

3. **Western Cosmopolitanism Paradox**

Once in Europe, the migrants with their families are made promises such as "you are lucky […] you will get better room and food and everything will be fine" (H. Habila, P. 180). After so many difficulties to get to the border of a European Union country, when you hear such words from the immigration officers, you are necessarily happy. You think that you have made a successful journey to a place where humanism is valued. Unfortunately, while the migrants think that they are at the end of their journey, with the end of their suffering, they realize that it was just the beginning of their bad luck. In a word, the European immigration agents "are not very friendly" as Karim, the Somalian refugee reveals (H. Habila, 2019, P.180).

Here, we can establish a link between the unfriendly European immigration agents and the slave ship workers as well as the colonial agents in African territories. How can we understand that those who pretend to be humanists can be so violent with strangers? What can justify the inhuman attitude of the champions of cosmopolitanism towards those who are just different? Finally, which argument can valuably account for the devaluation of Arabs and Blacks instead of due hospitality when they get to Europe?

The above questions indicate that the cosmopolitanism ideology as expressed by Kant is not applied to all by Europeans. Indeed, from the definition provided by Kant, it can be inferred that cosmopolitanism is embedded in the acceptance of the others. From this assumption, it is supposed to inform the migration policies in western countries where it related philosophy had been developed. That is probably the reason why some European countries opened their borders to the massive influx of non-western people. Particularly, the Federal Republic of Germany under the governance of the Chancellor Angela Merkel[1] will open its frontier for numerous forced-migrants families from Somalia, Syria and Libya and so on. That might have accounted as the pull factor for the characters of *Travellers* such as Karim, and Manu to get to Europe with their family, where they are sure to have better living conditions. They are granted access to the Germany but once inside, they go through various experiences of non-acceptance.

The refugees as well as the voluntary migrants in regular or irregular situation have some living conditions that contradict the cosmopolitanism-based politics reverberated by Western governments. They are assigned a particularly exclusionist or discriminatory social identity along some minimal group paradigms: the migrants from Afro and Arab communities are classified as violent, corrupted and criminal people. The behavior of local populations and the institutions of the country putatively construct this form of social identity. In the narrative of Habila, one can see that the diasporic community made of refugees, exiled and other folks in irregular situation is parked and isolated in some inappropriate areas. In Bulgaria for example, they are given dwelling in a place that is described by Karim the Somalian refugee in these terms:

> This place used to be an actual prison, but now is empty so they use it for
> refugee but it is really prison. Very big stone building with iron bars and many

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[1] For her open door policy in 2015, Angela Merkel the former German Chancellor was awarded the Felix Houphouet-Boigny UNESCO Peace Prize in Yamoussoukro-Ivory Coast, in February 2023.

floors, with women and family on one side and the rest for men, all packed
into small tiny rooms (H. Habila, 2019, P. 181).

The description made by this migrant reveals that refugees in most European countries are almost treated like second-class people. They are accommodated in a real prison where they are physically sequestered and psychologically tortured. We can labor further on the image of prison as a place where one is stripped of his psycho-physical liberty. Being in such condition affects not only the personality, but also the whole identity of the migrants. It is even worse when we consider the accommodations given to the migrants in Germany, the home country of Emanuel Kant, the father of the theory and philosophy of cosmopolitanism. The first person narrator of *Travellers* indicates that:

The Heim was an abandoned school building, most of its windows had no
panes, and its yards was overgrown with grass and trash. […] The smell hits
us even before we entered the building: fetid and moist and revolting. Heim.
Home. This was the most un-homely place I had ever seen. (H. Habila, 2019,
P. 57)

Through the narrative, the reader can notice that the migrants go through the same inhuman treatment after crossing the European borders. Consequently, one can be right to feel like the promise of the European countries to host and assist the influx of refugees is not totally shared by some of their institutions and populations. The immigrants hoping to have a shelter in a cosmopolitan Europe are deceived by the institutionalized humiliation and marginalization. Indeed, as we go through the accounts of the refuges we realize that in their European host countries they are victims of a rude form of apartheid. In Germanic language, this term refers to separation and it is historically linked to black segregation in South Africa. The term has regain full sense in Habila's *Travellers* through the grouping of Arab and Blacks in refugee camps of Bulgaria or in the Heim of Germany. Those places recall the townships created to isolate blacks from whites in South Africa, as well as the camps of slaves that were deported in western territories.

From the above hints, it can be assumed that there is no fundamental difference between the treatment of today's migrants and the ones deported to colonial centers or metropoles. Arguing on this account, Susan Mains et al states: "In the contemporary world, the bodies of these postcolonial migrants continue to provide a daily reminder of the spaces and practices of colonial pasts" (S. Mains et al, 2013, P.2). Here then, we realize that the motif of European domination and superiority over the others such as Blacks, Indians, Arabs is still prevailing long after the end of slavery and colonial periods. This contradict the long literary and public

discourse that non-European people have been exposed to, through Medias and educational institutions. Once in Europe, the migrants who have trusted the dreamful image of a humanist continent with high sense of hospitality as embedded in the cosmopolitanism are rather faced with stratification. This kind of treatment would have certainly not be inflicted to some European migrants, for whom the true hospitality related to the European cosmopolitanism would have been implemented.

The notions of inclusion and hospitality promoted by the concept of cosmopolitanism are annihilated by the concept of *Fortress Europe[1]*. Initially imagined as a rampart to protect European countries against any form of attack, this concept is used today to refer to European defensive immigration policy. On this account, some consequent means are deployed in order to keep non-western migrants away from the European borders. This attitude sharply contrasts to the definition of cosmopolitanism promoted by the Europocentric discourse. Therefore, in *Travellers,* the description of the violent attitude of the border police of Bulgaria and the compelling of migrants to live in the vicinity of German people can be a reference to the hostility of the white people. In this context, it is possible to talk about the manifestation of Europeans xenophobia and racism. Indeed, it is inapprehensible to discover that the migrants with the status of refugee under the protection of United Nations or European Union are treated the same way migrants are dealt with in unstable countries like Libya where many black African migrants are likely to be captured, molested, and sold as slave for domestic or sexual exploitation. Then, it can be deduced that it is a matter of identity, it is the racial and ethnic identity of migrants that determine the way they are treated in Europe. This insight is encapsulated in the comment of the unnamed character of the novel during an exhibition of photographs on the apartheid-era. He ironically puts:

> I look at the unsmiling faces, thinking how ironic history was, that they'd come for succour here, escaping persecution and apartheid, this place that a few decades earlier had been roiling with its own brand of persecution under the Nazis. How did they cope with the food, the new language, with being visibly different, with the bone-chilling winter of exile? (H. Habila, 2019, P.15-16)

There is a paradox between the humanist identity extoled by the Europeans and the vast persecution undergone by people who are visibly different in Europe. This could be inferred as a kind of regression of the Western civilization in a century where the means of communication

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[1] In order to defend its borders, the EU has funded sophisticated surveillance systems, given financial support to member states at its external borders to fortify their borders and created an agency to coordinate a Europe-wide team of border guards to patrol EU frontiers. These policies and practices are referred to as Fortress Europe.

have registered a tremendous advance. The world has almost become a global community wherein the notion of stranger or alterity should be (re)defined. In this way, the notion of difference does not refer to inferiority or superiority but simply an alter ego. The alter ego should not be understood or canonized in the sense of an opposing other but just a different version of oneself.

It has always been difficult for those with different racial and ethnic identity to benefit from the European cosmopolitanism. Within the European borders, the right of individuals to international hospitality, as stipulated by the Kantian idea of cosmopolitanism, is not fully implemented. That is even one of the aspects raised by the dimension of cosmopolitanism in postcolonial theory as developed by the Ghanaian Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2007). This postcolonial critic reveals that supports the idea that the true and ethical version of cosmopolitanism should be based on the acceptance of the other. With regard to Helon Habila's novel, the other is not the only tourist or the offspring of ex-colony elites and rich businesspersons travelling to Europe. The other is also a migrant, a refugee or a person seeking for asylum in Europe because the home country is no longer a safe place. Unfortunately, this category of migrant does not benefit from the cosmopolitanism aspect of hospitality, as evoked through the stories of the characters in *Travellers*. Ulf Hannerz mentions the same preoccupation through the following imagery: "cosmopolitan finally appears as this individual who has a propensity towards difference, and willingness to engage with the other, yet always having an available exit from such an engagement"(U. Hannerz, 1990, P.239). The tragedy of migrants shipwreck in 2013, with more than three hundred death off the coast of Lampedusa because of non-assistance is an illustration of this selective application of the European cosmopolitanism. This proves that the acceptance of the others is not yet a reality within the European Union space.

Conclusion

If the long-lasting peace and tremendous economic, technological and artistic development of European countries have made them the favorite destination of millions of travellers, it should be noted that most of those migrants are disillusioned when they cross borders. After the analysis of some migrants' experiences in Helon Habila's *Travellers* through the lens of identity issues and cosmopolitanism, it appears that even today, long after the end of colonization, the identity of former colonized people is still represented through negative, humiliating and inferior representations. This instantiates the hellish and slavish conditions they

go through in the European continent. From this perspective and as shown in *Travellers*, the consequence is the huge impact on their private self as it used to be in colonial time. Basing on the racial issues faced by migrants, as evoked in Habila's novel, it can be inferred that the acceptance of foreigner promoted by cosmopolitanism is not valid for all. The Europeans pretend to be sharing the ideology of acceptance of other or alterity, yet they develop some an immigration policy that compels migrants from unfavorable conditions to get easily to their territories. With regard to all these, the question of integration underlying the concept of globalization remains: is it possible to pretend to globalization when Europeans are free to go and install everywhere on the planet while they imped others to get access to their territory through some systems such as Fortress Europe?

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