

# Welcome

**Name:** Pernille Nailor

**PhD:** African Studies / English Literature

**Thesis Title:** Narratives of Belonging in the Textual Space of Afropolitanism: Nigeria, Ghana and their UK/US Diasporas (working title)

## Thesis Description:

This thesis explores 'Afropolitanism', an African form of cosmopolitanism which is often seen as a philosophical and political trope hinging on questions of 21st-century African identity and belonging. Frequently dismissed as elitist in academic and public discourses, the concept has caused heated debates on culture, fashion and consumerism over the past decade.

Moving beyond these debates, the intention with the thesis is to study Afropolitanism as it is represented in a diverse textual 'space' of literary and cultural production in selected Anglophone urban centres of Nigeria, Ghana and their US/UK diasporas. Recognising the different textual forms of Afropolitanism as well as its complex and media-driven nature, the research will discuss how ideas of belonging are negotiated within this space.

## Supervisors and Institution(s):

Dr Rebecca Jones (Department of African Studies and Anthropology, University of Birmingham)

Professor Karin Barber (Department of African Studies and Anthropology, University of Birmingham)

Dr Dave Gunning (Department of English Literature, University of Birmingham)

Dr Lucy Evans (Department of English, University of Leicester)

## Scholarly / Public Engagement Activities:

### 2019:

- Research visit to the United States.
- Presenting paper on PhD to graduate students in the Department of English at the University of Ghana, Legon, whilst conducting field research in Accra.
- Leading a workshop on how to begin a research project, aimed at graduate students in the Department of English at the University of Ghana, Legon.

### 2018:

- Presenting paper on PhD to members of staff in the Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, whilst doing field research in Lagos.
- Moderating panel at Aké Art and Book Festival in Lagos, Nigeria.
- Participating in the Biennial ASAUK 2018 at the University of Birmingham:
  - Presenting paper titled 'Online Texts and Autobiographical Moments of Belonging: A Reading of Taiye Selasi's Writing' (Panel: 'History, Power and Staging the Self')
  - Presenting paper titled 'Questions of (Im)morality: A Reading of Women's Gender Roles and Sexualities in Contemporary Nigeria Novels' (Panel: '"Immoral" Women in Popular African Imaginaries 2')
  - Chairing panel: 'Performance and Publics in Contemporary African Popular Culture'
- Filmmaking for Fieldwork (training course at Futureworks School of Media in Manchester, UK)
- Prize awarded for the highest quality thesis in West African Studies for MRes thesis.
- Administrative role for the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom (ASAUK), providing support for the Fage and Oliver Monograph Prize committee.

### 2017:

- Guest lecturer at the University of Birmingham (Department of African Studies and Anthropology, 'Cultures of Contemporary Africa', introductory lecture on African literatures)
- Working as a Research Assistant in the Department of African Studies and Anthropology; organising conferences and workshops, arranging travel and accommodation for



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participants, formatting book manuscript before sending it to publishers.

- Presenting a paper at the Cadbury Conference, 'Marriage in Africa', in Birmingham, UK, as part of the panel 'Playing roles and pushing boundaries: telling tales about conformity and transgression' (June 2017). My paper was titled 'Writing beyond marriage: (il)legitimate sexualities in the contemporary Nigerian novel' and focused on Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* (2015) and Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* (2015)
- Organising an interdisciplinary postcolonial conference aimed at postgraduate students and early career scholars at the University of Birmingham (May 2017)

## **2015**

- Presenting a paper at the AfroEuropean Conference in Munster, Germany, as part of the panel 'Afropolitanism and the Afropolitan' (September 2015). The paper explored ideas of identity and belonging in autobiographical texts written by Caryl Phillips and Taiye Selasi.

## **Other Research Interests:**

- African fiction and writing from the African diaspora in the context of English-language literature, American literature, autobiographical theory and texts, postcolonial studies, gender and sexuality.