

THE AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE ELSEWHERE: AN AFROPOLITAN ANALYSIS OF DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON* AND WALKER'S *POSSESSING THE SECRET OF JOY*

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ABSTRACT: Globalization catalyses the proliferation of transnational literature across disciplines and the contemporary African and African-American novels are no exception. They develop Afropolitan topics in which emerge new kinds of migrating populations composed of people whose patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring several societies into a single social field. The article analyses two transnational novels: *Beyond the Horizon* (1991) written by the Ghanaian novelist Amma Darko, and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (2009) written by the African-American novelist Alice Walker. It argues that the African migrant women in the elsewhere (African and African-American novels) overcome oppressions to become Afropolitans. Comparing the two novels through the lens of Afropolitan theory, the article finds out that from being multiple oppressed subjects, the African migrant women find homeliness in the host countries.

Keywords: Afropolitan, Globalization, Homeliness, Migration, Oppression, Transnational, Woman.

RÉSUMÉ: La mondialisation catalyse la prolifération de la littérature transnationale à travers les disciplines, et les romans africains et afro-américains contemporains ne font pas d'exceptions. Ils développent des thèmes Afropolitains dans lesquels émergent des nouvelles populations migrantes composées de personnes dont les modes de vie englobent à la fois leurs sociétés d'accueils et d'origines. La vie de ces personnes transcende les frontières nationales et réunit plusieurs sociétés dans un même champ social. Cet article analyse deux romans transnationaux: *Beyond the Horizon* (1991) de la romancière ghanéenne Darko, et *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (2009) de la romancière afro-américaine Walker. L'analyse soutient que les migrantes africaines dans l'ailleurs (romans africains et afro-américains) surmontent les oppressions pour devenir des Afropolitaines. En comparant les deux romans à travers le prisme de la théorie afropolitaine, l'étude conclut que de multiple sujets opprimés, les femmes migrantes africaines parviennent à trouver le chez-soi dans leur pays d'accueils.

Mots clefs: Afropolitan, Femme, Le chez-soi, Migration, Mondialisation, Oppression, Transnational.

Introduction

Afropolitanism as the “African mode of being cosmopolitan” (B. Neumann and G. Rippl, 2017, p. 160) that scholars attribute to Selasi and Mbembe is the concept used in this article to reflect on Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon* and Walker’s *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. As S. Balakrishnan (2017, pp. 1–2) contends:

The term Afropolitanism, which now encompasses a large subset of cosmopolitan studies, was effectively invented twice in the mid-2000s. Although scholars have typically attributed the neologism to the Ghanaian novelist Taiye Selasi’s 2005 essay ‘Bye-Bye Babar’, South African circles saw the term circulating earlier. In a conversation between scholar Sarah Nuttall and anthropologist Mark Gevisser in 2004, for example, Gevisser remarked that Johannesburg could be called ‘an Afropolitan city … a place where you can eat fufu or Swahili curry or pap *en vleis*’. This use of the term, meaning a pluralism of African cultures in one geographical space, was later expanded by theorist Achille Mbembe in a 2007 essay ‘Afropolitanism’ wherein he described Afropolitanism as ‘the presence of the elsewhere in the here’, the ‘interweaving of worlds’ caused by the movement of Black and non-Black people in, out and throughout Africa.

The stake in bringing the Afropolitanism of Selasi and Mbembe together is that this neologism develops that the Afropolitan subjects live in the metropolitan capitals of the world achieving things their people dreamed of. D. Pucherova (2018, p. 407) puts it well:

Selasi’s definition is remarkable for its focus on modernity, success, sophistication and worldliness—as if set out to destroy all negative images of Africa On the other hand, Afropolitanism has been theorized by the Cameroonian cultural critic Achille Mbembe as an ethical position of being open to others by the virtue of occupying several cultural spaces.

Afropolitanism as developed by Selasi and Mbembe helps unveil that sufferance is not the only fate of the African migrant women in the West and in Europe. They also come across success and homeliness. Referring to C. Eze (2014, p. 245), “within the Afropolitan context, the colonized *migrant* is no longer at the periphery. Nor is she to be understood exclusively as a victim. She now has a voice and, in her relation, she adopts a moral attitude that grants her and others in her world agency”.

Taking Mbembe’s and Selasi’s insight into Afropolitanism as its theoretical framework, the present article suggests that in Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon* and in Walker’s *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, the female characters who are respectively Ghanaian and equatorial African women go from suffering oppression to being opened to others and achieving things their people back home dream of.

Published in 2009, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is a novel written by the African-American writer A. Walker. It is about the African woman Tashi originated from Olinka, a microcosm of African continent, where women excision is part of the patriarchal womanhood. From this nation of equatorial Africa, Tashi migrates to America where she marries the Black American Adam and overcomes the American racism. As for *Beyond the Horizon*, it is the

Ghanaian A. Darko's debut novel published in 1991. Literary, the story is about the Ghanaian woman Mara who after being governed and exploited by men in Ghana and in Germany, readily negotiates the German identities and struggles to gain back the fulness of her freedom and self-achievement.

Despite Darko's and Walker's differences in countries and continents, their novels bring to the fore African migrant women who bears the following Afropolitan feature: ““The ability to recognize one’s face in that of a foreigner … to domesticate the unfamiliar”” (S. Balakrishnan, 2017, p. 2). Thought their migrant characters in the elsewhere (African and African-American novels) undergo several oppressions, they succeed in working with all manner to overcome oppressions.

Critics fail to set Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* in an Afropolitan context. They rather focus on the women excision practiced by the Olinkans to recognize *Possessing the Secret of Joy* as a narrative in which “gendered practices like female genital mutilation are deeply embedded in gender politics and are used in the making of weak women” (R. H. Dhavalewarapu, 2018, p. 43). As for Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, D. M. Ugwanyi (2017, p. 62) bases on the patriarchal womanhood culture in her writing to argue that her “works portray the injustice against women in a patriarchal society”. Different from these critics' points of view, the present article argues that Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* go beyond traditional womanhood culture to reach an Afropolitan dimension.

How do Darko and Walker represent African migrant women oppressions? How do these women succeed in leaving their status of oppressed migrants to exist as Afropolitans in the host countries? To answer these questions through the lens of Afropolitan theory as announced in the earlier lines of the introduction, the work is organized in three sections. At first, the article argues that the African migrant women in the African novel of Darko are oppressed subjects. Then, the analysis shows that in the African-American novel of Walker, the African migrant women are also oppressed. To end, the article puts forth that though the African migrant women in the African and African-American novels are oppressed, they succeed in overcoming the oppressions to become Afropolitans.

1- The African Migrant Woman in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*: An Oppressed Subject

B. Hooks (2015, p. 28) writes: “Colonial imperialist paradigms of black identity … represents blackness one-dimensionally in ways that reinforce and sustain white supremacy”. In Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, such a supremacy is the root cause of Western racism endured

by the African migrant women. The oppressions of the African migrant women occur through the issue of citizenship. Citizenship is “a membership of a political community that involves a set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity” (G. Delanty, 2000, p. 9). The passport in *Beyond the Horizon* is a citizenship that oppresses the African migrant women. The justification of the agent who is responsible for Mara’s illegal migration is illustrative:

‘Because this woman whose passport you have has a valid staying permit for West Germany for at least five years, thanks to some poor wretched and destroyed German drug addict she married. And using it from here to West Berlin is like you came from West Berlin to look around East Berlin and you are returning back to West Berlin.’ (A. Darko, 1991, p. 59)

While Mara’s aims is to struggle to transcend the poverty and despair that the traditional patriarchy imposes to her, to achieve sense of self and solidarity; she finds that the German migration system does not play in her favour. Her own identity is considered as an identity of the Negro rejected by F. Fanon (1967, p. 143): “A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world”. Like the “Africans driven to the West for socio-economic and political reasons that make it impossible for them to attain happiness at home” (D. Pucherova, 2018, p. 411), Mara migrates to escape poverty at home. But Germany does not welcome her. This shows that “race and race biases are the key issues for non-Whites and must be resolved even before gender issues if there is any hope for human survival” (C. Hudson-Weems, 2006, p. 42).

The false passport brings Mara’s thought to be busy reliving how the official of migration sees her: “In truth his only concern was: ‘Ach du meine Güte!’ Yet another primitive African face come to pollute the oh-so-pure German air and stuff it with probably yet more unwanted brown babies! (A. Darko, 1991, p. 60). The agent of migration sets Mara in a discriminatory world that G. C. Spivak views as *In Other World*. This othering endured by Mara is in perfect line with what K. A. Appiah (1992, p. 13) calls extrinsic discrimination which consists in “making moral distinction between members of different races because of believing that the racial essence entails certain morally relevant qualities”.

The official of migration is endowed with a Negrophobic attitude. Considering that “Negrophobe … is not inborn; it has to be constantly cultivated, to be brought into being, in conflict with more or less recognized guilt complexes” (F. Fanon, 1967, p. 53), it rises that the official of migration cultivates his Negrophobia. His education in white institutions that construct the “native as nothing, as thing, and animal” (A. Mbembe, 2001, p. 188) sets in his mind that the black person is the Negro to be feared of.

Another citizenship found oppressing the African migrant woman is the resident papers. Mara is obliged to be connected to a German guy arranged for marriage in order to get her papers. She voices:

Before five weeks was up I was ready with my cash to pay some German guy to marry me, so that I could get my resident papers ... Only my passport left Germany, with the German guy Kaye had arranged for me to marry The German guy came back with a marriage certificate that said we were man and wife I eventually got the blessed stamp of a five-year resident visa in my passport. (A. Darko, 1991, p. 120)

The tokenistic marriage shows how exclusionary is the German politics of resident papers. German people use it to create an immagined community that excludes African migrants like Mara. The resident papers in this context are “Hegemonic discursive forms of inclusion and exclusion that create an ‘imagined community’ that does not comprise ‘others’: ‘those that are not worthy of becoming Europeans’ and usually represented as ‘strangers’ or even ‘enemies’” (R. Wodak and S. Boukala, 2015, p. 257).

Mara’s story of false passport and the tokenistic marriage do not by definition show that she is an African woman of the world in the same way that Tashi’s story of being overcharged by the razor seller proves that America is not homely to her. The two African migrant women’s stories are similar to the ones pointed by D. Pucherova (2018, p. 409) when she contends that “the stories of modern-day slavery ... do not by definition represent Afropolitanism, since they show how Africa, in many ways, remains ‘out of history, as not belonging to the world’”.

Mara acknowledges the material hardships she suffers along the way. She marries Akobi and gets children in Naka before migrating. This makes her leave children in addition to leaving parents back home. She recounts her feeling of separation:

I had made the long journey from home to here. What for? I hadn’t done anything for the people who helped me to come; my family, my mother. My two sons too were waiting for me. For them, too, I had done nothing. And if I could do nothing for them at all, one thing at least, I should have been left with for myself – my dignity. Now that too had been robbed of me. So was this my fate?” (A. Darko, 1991, p. 115)

Darko’s narrative can be said to give a response to E. Dabiri’s (2016, pp. 105-106) following stance: “The problem is not that Afropolitans are privileged per se—rather it is that at a time when poverty remains endemic for millions, the narratives of a privileged few telling us how great everything is ... may drown out the voices of a majority who remain denied basic life chances”. Darko raises the voices of the majority African migrants like Mara suppressed by the voices of the privileged few like Ifemelu in Adichie’s *Americanah* and Enitan in Atta’s *Everything Good Will Come*.

Contrary to D. Pucherova (2018, p. 410) who writes: “By focusing on the process of integration into Western society, the underlying causes of why Africans leave Africa (related

to state failure) often remain under analysed in the so-called Afropolitan novel”, Darko denounces poverty as one of the causes of Africans leaving their countries. Akobi and Mara leave Naka for Germany because of poverty. In the City of Accra, Akobi rents and lives in “a cluster of shabbily-constructed corrugated-iron sheet shelters that looked like chicken houses (A. Darko, 1991, p. 8). Mara’s family is so poor that her father gives her to marriage to use her dowry to pay his debt:

I don’t know why of all the eligible women in the village his father chose me. I only know that the choice, for my father, could not have come at the better time. A man he owed money to had come and forcefully claimed his debt in the form of eight of father’s eleven goats. So my dowry came in handy. (A. Darko, 1991, p. 6)

The male dominated system leads Mara to marry and get children. She is trapped in the traditional womanhood constructed by men for women that makes things fall apart. As C. Opara (1998, p. 114) puts: “Things fall apart because women have not been recognized as a potential dynamic force”. Mara’s father behaves like the colonial ruler criticized by Mbembe. He gives himself “the right to demand, to force, to ban, to compel, to authorize, to punish, to reward, to be obeyed – in short, to enjoin and to direct” (A. Mbembe, 2001, p. 32). Her life difficulty is also occasioned by the fact that her traditional community is endowed with a “patriarchy that includes the systematic exclusion of women from rights of inheritance, to education” (J. Wolfeys et al., 2006, p. 76).

It is because “the phallus has been the focus of ways of constructing masculinity and power” (A. Mbembe, 2001, p. 13) that Mara’s father sets her in arranged marriage. It is this arranged marriage that occasions her status of mother-woman which makes her yearn for home. Her yearning proves that “if diasporas do not or cannot return ‘home,’ they still articulate a yearning for home and a sense of belonging to a scattered community” (N. Zuberi, 2011, p. 1042). Even if Tashi does not suffer the same material hardships like Mara along the ways, she suffers a feeling of separation. She migrates to America before being married therefore does not leave any child back home. But she leaves her parents back home. She suffers the feeling of leaving behind the parents.

2- The African Migrant Woman in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*: A Discriminated Subject

In *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Walker does not portray Tashi to suffer illegal migration like Mara in Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*. Tashi introduces herself to Mbati as “Nafa’s daughter who went to America with the son of the missionary” (A. Walker, 2009, p. 144). Tough Tashi does not migrate illegally to America like Mara, her social discrimination is mutatis mutandis similar to Mara’s.

There is not a fundamental discrepancy between the discrimination of Tashi and Mara. Despite Tashi's legal migration, the American society rejects her. She voices: "The man who sold me the razors, a squat, rheumy-eyed fellow admits he overcharged me because I was a foreigner" (A. Walker, 2009, p. 9). The razor seller is not to be blamed for his discriminatory attitude. It is the white supremacy which is to be blamed because "racial discrimination is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged centre, an 'Othering' directed by the imperial authority" (B. Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 102).

The razor seller puts Tashi in an othering that the West applies to the Orient criticized by E. Said (1978, p. 237) when he mentions that the West acts against the Orient as "We are this. 'they' are that". This discrimination is a clear-cut presentation of the fact that "what humanity really needs but cannot come by is perfect love and genuine cooperation" (O. Adekoya, 1998 p. 168). It is also a denunciation of the fact that as soon as "people looked different, spoke a different language, follow a different religion, then this was considered as a threat to what Benedict Anderson has characterized as the 'imagined community' of a nation" (R. J. Young, 2003, p. 59).

Tashi is in a kind of identity oppression that the trauma theorist A. A. Cheng (2001, p. 53) describes as "not just how I see myself or how others see me but how I see others seeing me". She adduces: "I could not bear the thought of the quick-stepping American nurses looking at me as if I were some creature from beyond their imaginings" (A. Walker, 2009, 57). The nurses' psyches are filed with a Negrophobic attitude given to them by the distorted representation of blackness made by white hegemony as developed by Said in *Orientalism*. It is this Negrophobia that brings them to perceive Tashi in the context of colonial blackness, a "blackness" which is produced through representation" (N. Zuberi, 2011, p. 1102). Western cultural institutions thus fail "to treat black people according to common standards of morality and decency" (C.K. Awuyah, 1998, p. 203).

The Negrophobia of the American nurses against Tashi is similar to the Germans' Negrophobic attitude against Mara during her migration in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. In this novel of A. Darko (1991, p. 59), the anonymous character tells Mara: "In the German people's eyes we niggers all look the same. Black faces, kinky hair, thick lips". This description is not different from the characteristics of the primitive Africans constructed by colonizers to represent the colonized Africans as phobogenic objects.

The attitudes of the American nurses and the German people against Tashi and Mara are nothing but phobia. Developing phobia, F. Fanon (1967, p. 154) writes: "Phobia is a neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object". That object must arouse both fear and revulsion.

If the American nurses and the German citizens respectively see Tashi and other Africans among whom Mara as phobogenic objects, it is because of the Western cultural hegemony created by colonization. With colonization, as Fanon develops in his book, *The Tarzan stories*, the saga of the twelve years-old explorers, the adventures of Mickey Mouse are found recorded in the White's books in which the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage always symbolize the Negroes. As the American nurses and the German people are educated with the colonial books in which Blacks are represented as phobogenic objects "endowed with evil intentions and with all the attributes of a malefic power" (F. Fanon, 1967, p. 155), they face the danger of being eaten by African migrants. The American nurses and the German people's contacts with the African immigrants alone are thus enough for German people's "elements of the infantile structure" (F. Fanon, 1967, p. 155) to evoke their anxiety. In this perspective, Tashi and Mara are the slaves of the past as constructed by Western cultural hegemony. Face to face with the American nurses and the Germans, respectively, the two migrants have a past to legitimate. They have to recall "the times of cannibalism" (F. Fanon, 1967, p. 225).

If sexism is any form of "domination which leads to discrimination, exploitation, or oppression" (B. Hook, 1984, p. 47) then, Tashi endures sexism from Adam in America. Lisette voices: "When Evelyn learned of my pregnancy with little Pierre, as Adam and I and my parents used to call him, she flew into a rage that subsided into a years-long deterioration and rancorous depression. She tries to kill herself. She spoke of murdering their son" (A. Walker, 2009, p. 119). If, as O. Nnaemeka (1997, p. 185) contends, "polygyny as 'many women' places the Western man with one wife and one or more mistresses in the same category as the African man who legitimizes his relationship with more than one woman", then Adam can be aid to express a polygynous attitude against Tashi that does not differ from the polygamous attitude of Akobi against Mara.

From the moment that Tashi known as Tashi-Evelyn is married to Adam Johnson and becomes Mrs Johnson, that is Adam's legal wife, he has marital obligations toward her in the same way that Akobi has marital obligation toward Mara. Despite Adam's legal marriage with Tashi and Akobi's traditional marriage with Mara, Adam and Akobi respectively have Lisette as mistress and Gitte as legal wife. Adam even has a baby known as little Pierre with Lisette. These sexist discriminations set the two migrant women in oppression. While Tashi tries to commit suicide, Mara feels humiliated as follows:

Your second wife? I asked weakly. 'You have taken on a second wife and you didn't tell my family back home?' Our tradition demanded this. It was a sign of respect to the first

wife and her family. When a man took on a second wife without informing the first wife or her family, it showed an indifference towards his in-laws, which in itself was considered disrespectful and humiliating. (A. Darko, 1991, p. 79)

Tashi and Mara are “disadvantaged in several ways: as blacks they, with their men, are victims of a white patriarchal culture; as women they are victimized by black men; and as black women they are also victimized on racial, sexual, and class ground by white men” (C. O. Ogunyemi, 2006, p. 24). Mara’s and Tashi’s husbands are thus androcratic. In the context of such a sexist victimization of women, C. Hudson-Weems (2006, p. 52) contends: “Women are victimized first and foremost because they are Blacks; they are further victimized because they are women living in male-dominated society”.

Tashi’s victimization does not stop with Adam’s phallic attitude. It goes to the phallocentrism of the Christianity. In the church, only white men’s issues are discussed as subjects of the sermon. This is the case of Jesus’s suffering that white holy scripture discusses as subject of the sermon:

Still, I began to see how the constant focuses on the suffering of Jesus alone excludes the suffering of others from one’s view. And in my sixth year as a member of Adam’s congregation, I knew I wanted my own suffering, the suffering of women and little girls, still cringing before the overpowering might and weapons of the torturers, to be the subject of a sermon. Was woman herself not the tree of life? And was she not crucified? Not in some age no one even remembers, but right now, daily, in many lands on earth? (A. Walker, 2009, p. 259)

Tashi raises the suffering of women in general which is excluded from the sermon, and her suffering in particular excluded from Adam’s church. She takes the case of Jesus to illustrate the exclusion of women from the sermon and takes the ministry of Adam to illustrate her case.

Faced with Adam’s progressive ministry’s refusal to integrate Tashi’s cultural practice as a sermon, Tashi feels frustrated. She complains:

They circumcised women, little girls, in Jesus’s time. Did he know? Did the subject anger or embarrass him? Did the early church erase the record? Jesus himself was circumcised; perhaps he thought only the cutting done to him was done to women, and therefore, since he survived, it was all right. (A. Walker, 2009, pp. 259-260)

Tashi can be said to complain about the fact that “Eurocentricity imposes its consciousness as universal, making a particular historical reality the sum total, in the European’s view, of the human experience” (M. K. Asante, 2007, p. 17).

Though Tashi is determined to discuss her suffering with the fellows of Adam’s ministry during his congregation, he says the church is going to refuse: “One sermon, I begged him. One discussion with your followers about what was done to me. He said the congregation would be embarrassed to discuss something so private and that, in any case, he would be ashamed to do so” (A. Walker, pp. 259–260). Though women’s suffering is generally excluded

from the sermon, the particular case of Tashi's circumcision is rejected by Adam because she is African woman.

If Tashi's religious victimisation begins with her migration in America, this is not the case for Mara. Mara's religious victimization begins in Naka. Immigration brings white people to set missionary institution that discriminates Mara vis-à-vis school education. Mara voices: "Akobi's father educates his son Akobi at the Joseph Father of Jesus Roman Catholic school, making his son the first child of Naka to earn a Form Four General Certificate" (A. Darko, 1991, p. 5). Jesus as the trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is a doctrine of Christianity to set man superior to woman. The church places son just after God to render the superiority of man divine. It is such a sexism which is translated through the fact that the first child to succeed in missionary school in the village of Naka is from a male gender.

Mara's illiteracy is the expression of white missionary failure to promote gender equality when it is set in Naka. The politics of Western people to bring religion to educate the African people is to get translators to play the intermediary role between them and the millions of the African people that they exploit. They need vigorous and strong men not only to threaten the African people who rebel against exploitation but also, they need them for more productivity. It is to achieve this goal of domination and capitalism that the first missionary that settles in Africa invests first in men's education. In this sense, H. K. Bhabha (1994, p. 87) contends that English school "forms a corps of translators and be employed in different departments of labour" and be interpreters between colonizers and the millions of the colonized people governed. The white missionary people's early education of the male gender is thus for the "Imperialism to protect its power from threats of people's power by social oppression, racism, sexism, and even through religious divisions Racism and even gender discrimination like women's oppression is not an accident but a product of imperialism in its home base" (N. w. Ngugi, 1993, pp. 110–111).

3- From Oppressed to Homely Migrant Woman: The Afropolitan Model

D. Pucherova (2018, p. 407) writes: "As Mbembe explained in an interview, 'Afropolitanism refers to a way – the many ways – in which Africans, or people of African origin, understand themselves as being part of the world rather than being apart'". To begin with, both Mara in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Tashi in Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* are not foreign to their African countries. They were born and rooted in African cultures before migrating to respectively Europe and America. Mara narrates:

I remember the day clearly, I returned from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wetness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut and breathlessly told me the ‘good news’.

‘Your father has found a husband for you,’ she gasped, ‘a good man!’ (A. Darko, 1991, p. 3–4)

Naka is the village where Mara was born and grown up. She does the domestic chores. She is arranged into marriage by her father. She even helps her parents in the farm and practices some lucrative activities: “Naturally I had to help on the farm to make up for my upkeep and shelter” (A. Darko, 1991, p. 47). Her rootedness in the tradition makes say that she is not apart of Naka. She is rather part of this village. As for Tashi, not only was she born in the village of Olinka but also, she practices women activities. In the village, she is used to helping her mother for cooking, and for farming. Like Mara, Tashi is not cut off of the reality of Olinka.

The two protagonist migrants do not call themselves intellectuals. Mara is illiterate. Tashi does not reach university when migrating to “America with the son of the missionary” (A. Walker, 2009, p. 144). Though these two African migrants are not privileged people, they achieve their integration. In this context, it is not possible to argue that Afropolitanism “refers only to the educated middle-class Africans, being silent about the masses of poor, illiterate and paperless migrants” (D. Pucherova, 2018, p. 410).

Tashi’s joining of the camp of the Mbeles, the “Africa’s liberators” (A. Walker, 2009, p. 40), for her excision, is the root of her resistance to the American discrimination. When reporting the talk of the Olinkan Banse, Adam reveals the excision that Tashi goes through: “He said there were many Olinkans in the camp. Women as well as men. He said of course Tashi was among them, but he believed her to be indisposed” (A. Walker, 2009, p. 42). The excision is an initiation to Tashi’s entering in the Olinkan womanhood. It puts her in a readiness and gives her a completeness to confront life difficulties.

Once in America, Tashi’s excision gives her a self-assertiveness that bridges her passage from “‘girlish,’ i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious … to womanish,’ i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior” (A. Walker, 1984, p. xi). To the missionary Olivia’s voice: “You’ve paid for not listening to me all your life,” Tashi responds: “And I intend to keep on paying Because when I disobey you, the outsider, even if it is wrong, I am being what is left of myself” (A. Walker, 2009, p. 238).

Likewise, as Adam’s ministry refuses Tashi’s suffering to be subject of a sermon, she simply shifts from religion:

My soul removed itself from Adam’s reach … I’d learned to appreciate the sanctuary of the Waverly by then. A place where there was a bench on the lawn, partly in the shade but mainly in the sun, just for me. I liked my Sunday mornings there. Sedated. Calm. The grass

was so green all around me, the sun so warm. The lake glittered in the distance. Out of a bag of crumbs from the kitchen, I felt the ducks. (A. Walker, 2009, pp. 259–260)

Gitte in Germany and Adam in America do not have this possibility of benefiting from different cultural experiences. The fact of not rejecting their traditional cultures is benefit to Mara and Tashi in the host countries. They keep their cultures as backpacks to which they turn to take what they need. Mara's Ghanaian way of living in solidarity helps her live in solidarity with Kaye and Tashi turns to traditional belief.

Tashi goes further in her resistance to the American racist domination. She voices to Mbati: "Aché Mbele, I say. Aché Mbele? She repeats. Yes, I say. Aché is Yoruba and means the power to make things happen. Energy. Mbele means 'Forward!' in KiSwahili" (A. Walker, 2009, p. 257). She refuses to be a victim of the American racial discrimination and shows that, to use her friend Mbati's terms, "resistance is the secret of joy!" (A. Walker, 2009, p. 264)

As a woman in general and African woman in particular, Mara goes from enduring enough pain to integration. In Naka not only does her father set her in an "arranged marriage" (A. Darko, 1991, p. 120) as an exchange of the debt that he owes to Akobi's father but also, he uses the dowry to remarry. She testifies: "Father had used the goats and cows to remarry, and he definitely was not going to agree to my wish of leaving Akobi" (A. Darko, 1991, p. 28). As if she does not suffer enough, Akobi goes on to "blackmail" (A. Darko, 1991, p. 115) her into prostitution in Germany in order to struggle against the poverty that German racist society inflicts to him.

The fact with Akobi is that facing with white capitalist world, he and other migrant "men not only no longer had complete authority and control over women; they no longer had control over their own lives. They were controlled by the economic needs of capitalism. As workers, most men ... (like working women) are controlled, dominated" (B. Hooks, 1984, p. 121). In this circumstance, racism is to be blame for Akobi's translation of Mara into prostitution in the first position before genderism. C. Hudson-Weems (2006, pp. 52–53) puts it well: "Women are victimized first and foremost because they are Blacks; they are further victimized because they are women living in male-dominated society". It is true, and this is similar to other immigrants to a new country, the early years has been difficult for Mara. But she recuperates her liberty.

If "subjectivity is not just a reactive proposition; it is formed not only in relation to the present circumstances, but also – with reference to systems of signification from the past (K. Ganguly, 2006, p. 37), then Mara gains more subjectivity in Germany than in Ghana. In Ghana, not only is she under patriarchal domination but also, she lives in poverty. Her arranged

marriage is not done with her consent as her mother gasps: ““Your father has found a husband for you”” (A. Darko, 1991, p. 3–4) but also, she is exploited by Akobi as she mentions: “I had to sell palmwine too to make money for Alhaji’s monthly rent back in the city” (A. Darko, 1991, p. 47). Though it is Akobi who rents the house in the town, it is Mara who pays for it.

Mara breaks the structures of domination and subordination that produces Akobi’s patriarchal subjectivity. She voices to Kaye:

‘I don’t want Pee to continue paying my money to my husband,’ I am no longer green and you know it. As for the morals of life my mother brought me up by, I have cemented them with coal tar in my conscience. If the gods of Naka intended me to live by them, they should have made sure I was married to a man who loved me and who appreciated the values I was brought up with. I lived by these values until could no longer do so. The rot has gone too deep for me to return to the old me. And that is why, Kaye, I am going to do the films and the stage shows and all there is to it. But I want every pfennig of what I make to come to me!’ (A. Darko, 1991, p. 131)

If as C. J. Sanders *et al.* (2006, p. 131) put, “sexual freedom is a sign of moral autonomy”; therefore, Mara is morally autonomous. She does not exist to please any gods nor any men. She exists for her own self-realization. Next to that, she hires a private detective to investigate about Akobi’s use of her money to make Comfort migrate to Germany and be “married to a German man, got her residency permit and began work at an Afro-Caribbean restaurant in Hanover, as a waitress” (A. Darko, 1991, p. 136). As K. Ganguly (1992, p. 30) mensions: “The authority of the past depends on people’s present subjectivity and vice versa; the stories people tell about their pasts have more to do with the continuing shoring up of self-understanding than with historical ‘truths’”. The gods and the patriarchal system of Naka have no authority upon Mara’s present life because of her financial power.

Mara shows that “the self is like a technology which, at any given moment, articulates a series of real-ized relationships” (K. Ganguly, 1992, p. 30) by overcoming objectification to gain financial security and be a provider for her community back home:

I have sent my eldest brother who lives in the city a video set and television. And from time to time I record ‘Sesame Street’ and Tom and Jerry’ and send the video tapes to him for my two sons. They stay with him most of the time because they have to go school.

My third brother, too, I sometimes see in my daydreams, driving through the narrow pot-holed roads of the city and excitedly hooting the horn of the Datsun saloon I shipped to him. I am also financing a cement-block house for my mother in the village. They say that it has raised her esteem so much that it has even won her back my father. Trust my father! But I am pleased for her.

I have issued instructions to them to find a small cement house in town which I can buy for my two kids, so that when I sink too deep beyond help they will at least have a decent place to lay their heads. (A. Darko, 1991, p. 140)

Though Akobi is in Germany like Mara, he is completely absent in the raising of their children. On the basis of the African American T.N. Coates’s (2015, p. 66) saying: “Anyone can make a baby, but it takes a man to be a father”, Akobi cannot be said to be a man. Though

he is the biological father of Mara's children, from Germany, it is only Mara who provides for these children. Her financial security in Germany reverses the patriarchal tendency for which men are the only wage earners and decision-makers and that woman are provided for and decided for by men. In this context, "migration to the developed West is a relief from the economic discomfort of Africa" (T. Ojaide, 2012, p. 37).

Mara's metamorphosis from subordinated woman to subjectivity and wealthiness shows that identity does not exist as a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is never a finished product as A. De Fina, D. Schiffrian and M. Bamberg (2006, p. 2) mention: "Identity is a process that is always embedded in social practices".

It is a truism that there are things that money cannot help Mara achieve but at least money allows Mara and her parents and family to live and reduce their suffering. Her achievement shows that "it is only money that changes anything or makes anything happen", as little Pierre mentions (A. Walker, 2009, p. 88). Mathew 6 verse 33 of the Bible admits, as A. Appiah (2020, p. 156) paraphrases, "seek first the kingdom of economy then all shall be given to you"¹. Even Mara admits when she gets her passport in Germany: "I was impressed how quickly and smoothly these arrangements could be made if one has the cash" (A. Darko, 1991, p. 120). Mara's integration shows that:

Being African is not reductive to color, heritage or autochthony; rather, being African is expansive. ... We are not half this and half that; we are this and that. We are Igbo and Yoruba and Efik and Xhosa; we are black and white and brown. We are home in Enugu, Lagos, Johannesburg, Bayreuth, Nairobi or Chicago. We are fitted not just with double consciousness; we possess multiple-consciousness, for we perceive the world from multiple perspectives. (C. Eze, 2015, p. 117)

Mara is no longer greenhorn. As well, she is no longer silenced. She takes decision for her own destiny. She breaks through Akobi's domination and exploitation. Mara in this sense takes ownership of progress from Akobi. Her progress from such a maturity gives more light to Nkruma's stance: "The degree of a country's revolutionary awareness may be measured by the political maturity of its women" (C. Helen, 2006, p. 366).

Mara does not fail achieving her self-fulfillment as T. Houndjo and R. Allamagbo (2019, p. 5672) make believe when writing: "There always is a feeling of incompleteness about Amma Darko's female characters as they often succumb to the too deep wounds inflicted by their male predators". She is rather the embodiment of the African woman as described by Dele Maxwell Ugwanyi (2017, p. 52) when he writes:

The African woman on her road to self-actualization is not interested in battling with men neither is her preoccupations those of unhealthy rivalries and competition with men. The

¹ "Chercher d'abord le royaume économique et tout vous sera donné par la suite" (A. Appiah, 2020, p. 156).

African woman is interested in self enhancement and of the restoration of the denigrated dignity of the African woman through patriarchy. The African woman is ready to be heard, to be seen and fitted in all positions previously occupied by men in order to assume equality in its entirety and not to be denied of anything because of her sex.

Mara gains her place to “the human norm whose characteristics include: intelligence, rationalism, adventure and creativity; and that precisely in accordance with Frantz Fanon’s concept of self-fulfilling prophecy” (D. M. Ugwanyi, 2017, pp. 50–51).

As a woman who moves from the traditional patriarchy and German capitalist system to reach the level of recuperating her liberty, Mara is like Tashi, the epitome of Afropolitanism: a high-achieving, successful, cosmopolitan African woman who knows the ways of the world. Mara’s self-reconstruction is in perfect line with B. Hooks’s (2015, p. 29) stance of postmodern blackness subjectivity: “Part of our struggle for radical black subjectivity is the quest to find ways to construct self and identity that are oppositional and liberatory”.

The integration of Mara and Tashi shows that “identity is no longer shaped exclusively by geography or blood, or culture understood in oppositional terms. On the contrary, identity is now relational” (C. Eze, 2014, p. 235). The two African migrants’ integration in both their traditions and the host countries suggests that the African migrant woman refuses to be seen as peripheral subject. Nor is she accepting to be understood exclusively as a victim. She rather defines herself as a world agency. It is appropriate here to cite C. Eze’s description of Afropolitanism: “Their spatial mobility informs their inner mobility and their readiness to negotiate reality. ... I identify them as Afropolitans because they lay claim to Africa and the world in a flexible gesture of unbounded humanity” (Eze, 2015, p. 115).

Conclusion

The African women in the elsewhere suffer oppressions. At first, the elsewhere takes the form of the African novels. The African woman writer moves the African woman from the society to this fictional world and makes her suffer all kind of plight. In this literary genre, the African woman suffers from the feeling of separation at leaving behind her children. She is also a migrant who suffers racism and sexism in addition to poverty in Germany. The African woman in the African-American novel also suffers plights. Though Walker lessens her poverty and motherhood entrapment, she makes her suffer racism and sexism. In America, the African woman suffers oppression because of her African identity. Though her plight is less due to her African-American identity, she nevertheless endures suffering.

It is Walker’s African-American identity that brings her to lessen the African migrant woman’s burden than Darko who is only Ghanaian. Likewise, the African-American identity of Tashi brings her to endure less discrimination in America than Mara whose identity is only

African. The more the African migrant woman is hybridized, the more the host country becomes homely to her. It is Mara's achievement of her German citizenship that allows her to integrate the German society in the same way that Tashi's African-American identity permits her to be homely in America. Hybridization thus occasions the Afropolitanism of the African migrant woman in the African and African-American novels.

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