

# Constructing Afropolitanism: A Response to Culture Clash in Selected African Drama

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## Abstract

*The clash of indigenous and foreign cultures is one of the prevalent themes present in the works of African playwrights living in the Diaspora as well as on the continent. The post-1960 African drama was not only influenced by the impact of colonialism on the traditional African cultures but also the dramatists' experiences in the Diaspora. After the intrusion of colonial powers into African societies, there was inevitable contact between Traditional and Western cultures. The adoption of foreign cultures by Africans threatened the stability of traditional cultures since those who embraced the foreign ways of life often found themselves in a liminal space where they were neither able to fully embrace the new ways of life nor completely disregard their traditional life. This being in the 'middle passage' often led to psychological and physical implications that dehumanized the individual. Does navigating these cultural liminalities require one to adopt a global hybrid identity? In this paper, I argue that embracing Afropolitanism as a hybrid cultural identity could help mitigate this conundrum of cultural liminality. I will explore this option as one of the alternatives to the African and Western cultural matrix that befalls Africans who embrace foreign cultures through the works of three African playwrights, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* by Ama Ata Aidoo, *Death of the King's Horseman* by Wole Soyinka, and *The Gulf* by Femi Euba. I will use Chielozona Eze's definition of Afropolitanism. According to Eze, an Afropolitan is a human being on the African continent or of African descent who has realized that her identity can no longer be explained in the purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa. Therefore, an Afropolitan cannot claim to be either A or B but rather, he or she is A+B+C. Their identity is already intermixed with the identity of the others, and it is not possible to go back to their native place since they are all culturally and even sometimes biologically jumbled.*

**Keywords:** African Diaspora, Afropolitanism, Foreign cultures, Fetishization of origins, Colonialism

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Ama Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), Wole Soyinka's *Death of the King's Horseman* (1975), Femi Euba's *The Gulf* (1991) are deeply rooted in Fanti and Yoruba cultures and traditions. The dramatists—having lived, studied, and worked in Africa and the African Diaspora—Nigeria, Ghana, U.K, U.S—query the dynamics of navigating multiple cultural spaces in plays that grapple with the concepts of leaving Africa, returning to Africa, and belonging to Africa. But even more specifically, these plays explore the tensions that arise when continental Africans and African Americans return from the Diaspora hoping to connect or reconnect to their roots. Additionally, the plays expose tensions that exist between colonial and African cultures on the African continent. In examining the narratives, I argue that the central characters represent Afropolitans as they theorize their tensions and navigate spaces where they are often seen as the 'other.'

The term 'Afropolitanism' was first coined by Taiye Selasi in 2005 in an article called "Bye-Bye Babar." Taiye Selasi—a British-American writer of Nigerian and Ghanaian origin—describes herself simply as a 'local' of Accra, Berlin, New York, and Rome. In coining this term, Selasi ascertained that foreign influences that originate from the contact between African and foreign cultures in the global space are inevitable. Therefore, her Afropolitan is a citizen 'in and of the world.' He or she is part and parcel of this world and brings to it an Afro-diasporic sensibility. The Afropolitan is adjacent to the post-colonial in that the post-1960 African plays were mainly influenced by the impact of colonialism on the traditional African cultures and the dramatist's experiences with foreign cultures, especially as they lived in the African Diaspora. The intrusion of colonial powers into African territories led to inevitable contact between indigenous cultures and foreign western cultures. Africans were made to adopt foreign ways of life and this adoption disrupted the stability of traditional African cultures. Those who embraced the foreign ways often found themselves in a liminal space where they were neither able to fully embrace the new culture nor completely disregard their traditional cultures. This being in the 'middle passage' or the liminal

space often led to psychological implications.

In *Why Afropolitanism Matters*, Thomas Skinner suggests, that Selasi's definition of Afropolitanism is "a global African culture" that seeks to identify with Africa not only across multiple geographical places but also across multiple cultural spaces (4). This global culture, he further argues, is a process of negotiating multiple modes of identification and a sense of place that makes one an African of the world. Yet, Achille Mbembe defines Afropolitanism as, "[a]n aesthetic of the world that is founded in part, on an awareness of the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa (120)." Five years later, Mbembe argued that Afropolitanism should move beyond the 'fetishization of origins' to relationships between the self and the other or the self and the world (Santana 122). There is no consensus on Afropolitan's limits or reach, nonetheless I ground my argument in Chielozone Eze's definition of an Afropolitan as a human being on the African continent or of African descent who has realized that her identity can no longer be explained in the purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa (240). Navigating this condition requires one to embrace a state of cultural hybridity. Instead of grappling with the back and forth dilemma, the individual should embrace both worlds, to be African and the other at the same time.

With the full awareness of the complexities involved in theorizing the Afropolitan space, I read Afropolitanism as a model that embraces the fluidity and dilemmatic realities of African and African diasporic subjectiveness. While Afropolitanism may not offer a permanent solution to the tensions, it provides an alternative to the discourses that perpetuate irreconcilability. For playwrights like Wole Soyinka, Femi Euba, and Ama Ata Aidoo; their personal experiences in the global space were great influences on their grappling with culture clash in their works. As Yewande Omotoso states in one of his interviews, "...everything informs one's writing (Fasselt 233)." Omotoso asserts that writers often draw from their experiences and from what they see around them. He agrees that one's experiences in various spaces undoubtedly inform their writing. Therefore, African playwrights who found themselves in the West or elsewhere outside their African setups often struggled with the question of their cultural identity. However, because one can never claim to have/ belong to a single culture, Afropolitan offers an identity that potentially alleviates the displacement engendered when African and African diaspora peoples confront the questions of cultural belonging.

## **Afropolitanism: Beyond Postcolonial and Diaspora**

### ***Aidoo's Afropolitan Model***

In *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Ama Ata Aidoo situates the conflict around Ato and Eulalie who are caught up in a liminal space between two cultures. The plotline is centered on two returnees; Ato—a young Ghanaian graduate, who is coming back home from the United States after his studies, and Eulalie—An African-American graduate who is married to Ato. As they chronicle through the memories of their lives in America, they struggle to fit and (re)fit in the Ghanaian culture. They move to the city where Ato works in hope of an easier cultural adjustment, but Eulalie fails to adjust to Ato's culture. Ato also finds it hard to readjust to his native culture after many years away. The alienation affects them socially and psychologically as they blame each other for their cultural struggles. They are stuck within the mix of American and traditional African cultures and their efforts to renounce one of the cultures only lead to more tension and catastrophic results. They are displaced and estranged from their native cultures and communities and the more they try to deny their present identity in search of their old identity, the more they get themselves lost in the mix. They will later realize that no return is ever possible and what they are looking for by turning around often disappears under their longing gazes.

Ata Aidoo employs modernism to tackle the clash of cultures. Modernism conveys nostalgia with all its imperfections as the characters look at the indictments of the present. While still in the United States, Eulalie expresses a longing of going back to Africa to find her roots. In *Cultural Translation in Ama Ata Aidoo's Dilemma of a Ghost*, Migraine George remarks, "Eulalie epitomizes a double consciousness. She recognizes that part of her is linked to Africa geographically and culturally (133)." She romanticizes Africa and comments, "I'm optimistic to belong... To belong somewhere again... Wow! The palm trees, the azure sea, the sun, and the golden beaches.... (Jeyifo 244)". However, when she gets to Africa, she finds the culture different from what she expected. She realizes that she copes with the food and her culture is not easily accommodated by the villagers. The news that she has no tribe, and she is not of the villager's tribe is received with raised eyebrows. When she hears the drums which she had longed to hear while still in America, she tells Ato, "Aren't you afraid?... I didn't guess they would be sort of like this (Jeyifo 255)." She thought they would be sort of 'Spanish mambo'. She equates the drumming to some kind of 'witch-hunting.' Since she is used to refrigerated food and could not use firewood to cook, she forces Ato to buy modern machines.

When Ato's mother brings her local food to cook for her husband, she calls them 'crawling things.' She asks Ato, "Did you see a single snail crawling on the streets of New York while you were in the States? And anyway, seeing snails and eating them are entirely different things (Jeyifo 260)". She refuses to wash her stomach with the herbs that Ato's family brings to help her get pregnant. She laughs at Ato's culture and her negative attitude towards the culture stands in the way of her forming a lasting relationship with Ato's family. Just like she cannot understand their customs and look down at them as backward, they cannot understand her alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking

behavior. While imitating Ato, she says, “Eulalie, my people say it is not good for a woman to take alcohol. Eulalie, my people say that they are not pleased to see you smoke...Eulalie, my people say...My people...My people... (Jeyifo 271). Ironically, as she complains about Ato’s people not understanding her and not appreciating her culture, she too has failed to understand them and appreciate their culture. Is Ato to blame for not explaining to her family why Eulalie behaves as she does and for not explaining to Eulalie why her family behaves as it does?”

Ato slaps Eulalie for calling his people ‘narrow-minded savages’ thus forcing her to leave the family. At this point, Esi Kom, Ato’s mother, realizes that Eulalie has not been able to get pregnant because she was on birth control, a foreign concept of ‘humans deciding when they must have children.’ She scolds Ato for not telling them that his wife was on birth control making them look like ‘bastards’ as they assembled medicine for her. Esi Kom notes, “She laughs at us because we do not understand such things...and we are angry because we think you are both not doing what is good for yourselves (Jeyifo 274).” After realizing what has happened, the family embraces Eulalie and takes her as their own while reprimanding Ato for his failure to uphold his values and translate those values to Eulalie. Esi Kom’s action of leading the confused and sorrowful Eulalie into the family house denotes her acceptance of the foreign culture as part of her traditional culture. Ato’s family accepts to interweave their traditional culture with a foreign culture and agrees to recognize the foreign culture as part of them. They agree to become Afropolitans, citizens of the world who do not give up their culture for the other but a people who can see the foreign cultures as part of their customs.

Critics have argued that Ato’s dilemma emanates from his cultural liminality and his inability to act towards either his African traditions or his western acquired culture. Kelly Secovnie observes, “Ato is struggling with the duality, he is incapable of asserting a position or reinventing himself (135).” Ato’s western-influenced aloofness causes disappointments in the village. This causes his relationship with the urbanized, smoking, drinking, and money-spending Eulalie to become more strained. He is unable to explain to her family that Eulalie drinks, smokes and finds it difficult to eat traditional food because of her foreign culture. At the same time, his failure to fully embrace both cultures make him confused and indecisive. He is unable to explain to Eulalie why his family behaves as it does because traditionally, his family values children. Esi Kom while confronting him as the cause of Eulalie’s predicaments states, “But do you never know anything? I thought those who go to school know everything...So your wife says we have no understanding, and we are uncivilized...we thank her; we thank you too...But it would have been good if you knew why she said this (Jeyifo 273).” His ineptitude to embrace both cultures makes him unsure of how and what his family and village will think of him having married a woman from a different culture. Nevertheless, his confusion is resolved when his family embraces Eulalie’s return. Since the idea of family planning was championed by both Ato and Eulalie, the family’s acceptance means that their global culture has been accepted. The family allows them to embrace their Afropolitanism without fear of the way they will be treated and viewed by the villagers. Ato’s mother embraces both cultures and therefore acts as a cultural bridge for Ato’s wife.

Another aspect of the cultural clash that Aidoo’s play demonstrates is the relationship differences into which history has created a cultural conflict between Africans and African Americans. African American’s return to their roots in Africa is often a concuss process that is caused by the gap that exists between their culture and the African culture. They often find it difficult to adjust to the native cultures when they arrive in Africa.

African American characters feel alienated from their roots such that the desire and longing they had of going back to Africa often vanishes when they arrive in their original ‘home’. They find it difficult to cope with African traditions. Nevertheless, the characters in this play found support systems that enabled them to navigate their alienation. In the play, the characters suggest a possibility of adjusting to their African roots and embracing both African America and the African ways of life, thus becoming Afropolitans. According to Darboe Forday in *Conflicts, Stereotypes, and Grudges among Africans and African Americans*, “These divisions are caused by different patterns of socialization and cultural identity. This cultural gap is a source of tension and a strain causing element in the relationships between African and African Americans (Forday 14-15).” The two parties should, therefore, find a way of listening to and understanding each other to find a way forward and deal with problems that arise from their cultural differences. Africans and African Americans need to be patient with each other and be ready to listen and learn from each other so that they come to a point of appreciating each other’s culture.

In Aidoo’s play, it is evident that Eulalie will not cope with Ato’s traditional African culture if she keeps despising it and deeming it as ‘savage, barbaric and backward.’ At the same time, the villagers including Ato’s family will not be able to cope with Eulalie’s culture unless they are patient with her and be ready to understand and take her as she is with her ‘imperfections’ for them to appreciate each other’s culture. Ato’s mother becomes the bridge that aids Eulalie’s passage through the cultural chasm that exists between her and the traditional African culture. When she accepts to be led into the ways of Ato’s family and Ato’s family accepts to understand why Eulalie behaves as she does, they seem to be on course for a lasting solution that has been the cause of their misunderstandings for so long.

### **Wole Soyinka's Afropolitan Model**

Soyinka's *Death of the King's Horseman* is centered on the performance of the Egungun ritual in the Yoruba traditions. The play is structured along the need—ritual—efficacy plotline. In the Yoruba worldview, when a problem arises in the community, it requires the performance of a ritual to avert the dangers that often accompany the problem. When a King dies, the King's horseman or his eldest son was supposed to die to give him company in the afterlife.

In Soyinka's play, the King dies and his horseman—Elesin—willingly chooses to die with him. However, Elesin is prevented from dying by the presence of a white man (Pilkings) who comes to stop him from what he refers to as 'committing suicide'. Elesin's death ritual is also obstructed by his bodily pleasures. Consequently, Olunde—Elesin's eldest and only son—comes back from his studies in the U.K to cover up his father's failure (or and) shame. Olunde's death threatens the continuity of the ritual in the future since he does not have a son. Meanwhile, Elesin had an affair with a village girl before the ritual commenced and she is expecting a child. The unborn child ignites hope for the continuity of the ritual hence evading the King's wrath to the community.

The success or failure of the ritual threatened the survival of the entire Yoruba community. Through the character of Elesin, the play elaborates on how colonialism denied the conquered people a chance to practice their culture. In *A Poet's Quarrel with His Culture*, Ogundele posits that *Death of the King's Horseman* underscores Soyinka's concern for the need for a new ethical beginning that is more appropriate for the historical and social circumstances that befell the colonized nations (58). The play presents the traumatic experiences that the Yoruba underwent after the encounter with colonialism and foreign Western cultures. With the colonial intrusion on Yoruba traditions and Olunde's Western education, Soyinka speaks to the inevitable collision of two cultures. However, the play never gives the reader a clear remedy to the cultural dilemma that is experienced by the characters. Irrespective of the history that exists between Yoruba and Western culture, moving forward and dealing with this cultural dilemma is unclear.

The success of Elesin's death in the Egungun ritual was to deliver his people from any bad omen that could arise from the King's loneliness in the afterlife. The ritual's success was a matter of life and death for the Yoruba people. Nevertheless, Elesin fails to accomplish his duty of going through the gulf to reach the ancestral land not only due to his body desires but also due to the presence of the District Officer, Pilkings. Elesin laments that the Whiteman contaminated the ritual by enforcing his foreign culture on the locals. Ogundele postulates that "[T]he colonial culture's presence in the vicinity alone is enough to undermine the self-confidence of the native culture and expose the limited power of its symbol (56)." The intervention of Pilkings at the ritual place to stop Elesin from accomplishing his duty can be read as his disregard of Yoruba culture. The King's Horseman had chosen to die willingly and there was no reason for Pilkings to stop the ritual. The success of the ritual carried a cultural significance to the community. In blaming Pilkings for his failed mission, Elesin states:

The night is not at peace ghostly one. The world is not at peace. You have shattered the peace of the world forever. There is no sleep in the world tonight... You did not save my life, District Officer, you destroyed it... And not merely my life but the lives of many. The end of the night's work is over. Neither this year nor next year will see it. If I wish you well, I would pray you do not stay long enough on our land to see the disaster you have brought upon us... No. The regrets of life always come later. (Jeyfo 166-167)

Elesin's failure to go through the Egungun abyss expounds on the drawbacks of colonialism on the native Yoruba culture. The foreign cultures imposed on the natives had taunting effects on the native's cultural identity.

As Elesin explains, the Yoruba world is unable to sleep because the lives of many people are now destroyed by the failed ritual (Jeyfo 166). Pilkings' interference on Elesin from accomplishing the ritual threatens to put an end to the great symbolic action of ritual suicide in Elesin's lineage. With Elesin's failure and Pilkings having taken Olunde to England to study medicine, there seems to be no other male son in the Horseman's lineage to carry on with the ritual. Instead of embracing the traditional culture, Pilkings is fighting to destroy and disregard it. However, the more he tries to destroy it, the more he will realize that it is not easy to do so.

In the empire's dying moment after the ritual obstruction, Olunde rises to save it. Olunde had been given a scholarship by Pilkings to go and study medicine abroad to become a doctor. The foreign education alienated him from his culture and rendered him unable to perform his family duty of going to the afterlife to give the King company. On his return, Pilkings expected to use him to carry on his colonial agendas in the Yoruba community. The colonists expected Western education to brainwash Olunde to the point of him tossing aside his culture and collaborating with them to run colonial affairs in Nigeria. But against Pilkings' expectation, Olunde becomes the ideological spokesperson of his community. In *Cultural Death and the King's Horseman*, Adebayo voices that Olunde consumed by his contempt of the hypocrisy of western colonization in funding his education abroad and bewildered by his father's tragic lack of honor, he chooses suicide to redeem the honor of the society and expiate his father's cowardice and treachery (Jayfo 564). By choosing to die to reclaim the family honor, Olunde becomes a cultural hero. But one wonders, is he the community hero? The Praise Singer considers him not. He comments on

Olunde's action as the way of the foreigner and not the community. Olunde, therefore, fails to embrace an Afropolitan identity. His suicide portrays him as someone who succumbs to the whims of a reaction culture and as we learn in the play, this was not the only available option for the Yoruban revolution in cultural revalidation struggle. With Olunde's death, the ritual bridge seems to have been cut from both ends.

Neither Elesin nor Olunde would save the community from the dead King's wrath in the coming days. The community was unable to embrace both the Yoruba tradition and the foreign ways of life. However, the play suggests that amalgamating the two cultures could help in solving the problem that had befallen the community. The fusion is symbolized by the new life that is taking place in the womb of the girl that disrupted Elesin from accomplishing his duty. The unborn child not only belongs to Elesin but the community. Iyaloja tells the girl, "Now forget the dead, forget even the living. Turn your mind only to the unborn (Jeyifo 177)." The unborn child is a hybrid child that will link the two worlds—the traditional, and the foreign world. The special child is a blend of different worlds. He will know what happens in both worlds and will be able to embrace a hybrid identity that can traverse both the colonial culture and the traditional Yoruba culture. With the hybrid identity, the special child will be able to fit in the global culture and space. As Ede Amatoritsero contends in *The Politics of Afropolitanism*, this child will be able to "feel at home in many places" (127). It will belong to no single geography and will be free from categorizations like African or Western. It will seek freedom to build identities in multiple places, identities that are so strong to connect it to the various worlds and cultures that it encompasses. The child would simply be called an Afropolitan. It will create a space of belonging that allows free movement and open-mindedness to new cultures and develop an identity that productively integrates the multiplicity of its experiences as a native and a returnee unlike his father Elesin and stepbrother Olunde.

### ***Euba's Afropolitan model***

In *The Gulf*, Femi Euba metaphorizes the abyss that exists between the Yoruba traditional culture and Western ways of life. In *African Modernity and the Philosophy of Culture in the Works of Femi Euba*, Iyunolu asserts that the play is an extended metaphor that explores the effects of western mechanization on African traditional culture (32). In the play, the gulf embodies the disconnect that exists between African and Western cultures. Euba who often embraces Esu as a satirical figure centers the play on the tale of Ogun's role in human life and the centrality of Esu in the dealings of Ogun. In the play, the Commissioner for roads and Gold are the epitomes of Western culture while Babalorisa and the Reporter act as bridges that help foreigners to navigate the traditional culture. The Yoruba world has embraced Western modernity as a foreign way of life. However, the community did not embrace modernity fully. The Yoruba embraced modern automotive to ferry people across the gulf, but the new road has no traffic rules. The drivers accelerate without limits and overtake anyhow leading to accidents and numerous deaths. The Yoruba cosmology ascertains that the deaths occur due to Ogun's unhappiness since he is not appeased by the villagers who use the road carelessly. According to the Reporter, the gulf is "...the death trap for careless motorists, the slaves of Ogun," who is, "the guardian of the roads and the patron of the blacksmiths (Euba 12)." Two cultures have intermingled, and fusion caused devastating effects. A solution needs to be found to solve the clash. Could the villagers embrace the new culture and amalgamate it into their ways of life?

Femi Euba engages the Commissioner for roads and Babalorisa in the play to exemplify the theme of culture clash. By the commissioner refusing to let Yangi appease Ogun for the accident, which he sees as murder, he disparages the traditional religious beliefs of the Yoruba. However, it turns out that he cannot overlook the authenticity of traditional beliefs. Therefore, through Babalorisa, the symbol of Esu, the Commissioner must cross the gulf to understand how his culture is the cause of the problems that befell the transport ministry. He realizes his contempt and exonerates Yangi of his crime and promises to build a better bridge and collect dues from the drivers to honor Ogun. He learns not only the effectiveness of modernity as a foreign culture in Yoruba traditional setup but also the need to appreciate the Yoruba beliefs in Ogun. Babalorisa succeeds in making the commissioner adapt to both cultures and make him an Afropolitan who is modern but also traditional. By accommodating modernity and traditions, Baba and the Commissioner mediate the West and Africa. Multiculturalism qualifies them to be Afropolitans. In *Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model*, Chielozana Eze observes that there is no such thing as pristine culture and identity completely unaffected by another in today's world (239). Both Baba and the Commissioner accept the idea of 'contamination' of their cultures to acquire an African modern culture that could end the accidents at the gulf.

The plays at hand also advance the relationship differences into which history has created a cultural conflict between Africans and African Americans. African Americans' return to their roots is often a constrained process. The constraint is caused by the gap that exists between African American culture and African culture. They often find it difficult to adjust to African ways of life when they go back. In *The Gulf*, the history of slavery suffocates Gold's return to her ancestral land. Such characters feel alienated from their roots that the desire and longing they have of going back home to Africa often vanishes when they arrive and find it difficult to cope with the African traditions. Nevertheless, the characters in the plays analyzed in this essay found support systems that enabled them to navigate their alienation. The plays broach a possibility for returnees to adjust to their roots and embrace both their

African American and African lifestyles. When this happens, they become Afropolitan. According to Darboe Forday in *Conflicts, Stereotypes, and Grudges among Africans and African Americans*, “These divisions are caused by different patterns of socialization and cultural identity. The cultural gap is a source of tension and a strain-causing element in the relationships between African and African Americans (Forday 14-15). Continental African and African Americans should find a way of listening and understanding each other to deal with the problems that arise from cultural differences. They need to be patient with each other and be ready to listen and learn from one another to appreciate each other's culture.

Through the Reporter Inside-Out—who is neither in one culture nor out—but inside and outside both cultures, Gold comes to understand and appreciate the culture of her people. The Reporter tells her, “This is your root woman! The essence of your being! The very spirit of liberation! To deny this is to deny the very gods.” He acts as a cultural translator for Gold and they both come to appreciate each other's culture. When the Reporter Inside-Out tells her, “Your people always come here—to the fort,” she asks him, “My people, are you serious? I guess we mean nothing to you at all (Euba 11).” She feels disconnected and wants to be treated not as an outsider but as part of African.

### Conclusion

I have discussed in this essay how the selected African plays trace the theme of culture clash through the main characters. In the African setting, culture clash manifests because of colonialism and the experiences of Africans in the Western world. As Dustin Crowley posits in *How did They Come to this? Afropolitan Migration and Displacement*, “[m]any of them have had the opportunity to experience several worlds and in fact have not stopped coming and going, developing an invaluable wealth of perception and sensibility in the course of their movements (128).” Africans' experience in the global world provides back and forth narratives that dominate their writings. Moreover, the differences in the socialization of Africans and African Americans are influences that led to the historic and present cultural tensions existing between these groups. As examined in this essay, navigating cultural liminality requires one to adopt a global hybrid culture. Chielozone Eze proposes in *Rethinking Afropolitanism: The Afropolitan Model* that “[w]hen people speak of an ideal cultural purity, sustaining the authentic culture and human of the Asante or the American family, I find myself drawn to contamination as the name for a counter ideal (240).” Embracing an Afropolitan identity helps such characters to navigate culture clash and the liminal space that they find themselves in while trying to traverse the two cultures.

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