A COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF AFROFUTURISM, MAGICAL REALISM AND AFRICAN MYTHOLOGY IN NAMWALI SERPELL'S *THE OLD DRIFT* AND MARLON JAMES'S *BLACK LEOPARD RED WOLF*: AN AFROCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH STUDIES

OF

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

MASIYALETI MBEWE

201056925

APRIL 2021

Supervisor: Dr C. Sabao

ABSTRACT

Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are genres in literary fiction that can be used by authors and writers to explore difficult themes, complex characters, speculative settings and experimental plot points. While studies of these genres in literature exist, there has not been sufficient research in these concepts that centre the African perspective or explore the intersections of these genres. The main objective of this study was to investigate how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are applied in the novels *The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by Marlon James, to provide an analysis, explore new methods of theorising African literature and challenge current literary epistemologies. This study used the Afrocentric theoretical framework developed by Asante (1980) to meet said objectives and contextualise the analysis of the two novels. One of the main findings of this research outlined how instrumental Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are as literary genres in African literature as they allow authors to centre African perspectives. These perspectives thereby help cultivate a distinct lens that prioritises the African reader. Furthermore, the genres under investigation proved to be a resourceful way for African narratives immerging from the continent to explore a magnitude of complex themes. Lastly, the study recommends that more research on African literature from an Afrocentric perspective be conducted on other literary work produced in the genres of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology as there are more crucial insights yet to be uncovered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kawela M'ule

Bakang Akoonyatse

Rafeeat Aliyu

Zoe Samudzi

Tikusunge Mbewe

Elago Akwaaeke

Laone Mathware

Lethabo Mailula

Mwaka S. Sinyinda-Mbewe

Lenina Parks

Enid Ellis

Alexander G. Weheliye

Allison Lou

Rutendo Munangati

Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja

Dr. C. Sabao

Dr. N. Mlambo

Justin Ellis

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Black writers that, in the words of Toni Morrison, stand at the border, stand at the edge and claim it as central. Claim it as central, and let the rest of the world move over to where they are.

DECLARATION

I, Masiyaleti Mbewe, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

_____ _____

Masiyaleti Mbewe **Date**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background and introduction of the study

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study; the background of the study, statement of the problem and the research questions are briefly outlined along with the significance, limitations and delimitations of the study. Furthermore, this chapter provides an overview description of the chapters in the study; the background generally defines the main focus and interest of the study while the research questions act as a guideline for the study. The significance of the study details the importance and relevance of this study as it relates to the African literary canon. The study focused on critically analysing the ways Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology were used in Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift* (2019) and Marlon James' *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019). This chapter is therefore compartmentalised in an order that guides the reader through the thesis.

Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology have been explored by several literary scholars. Most of these studies however, focus on examining these concepts as stand-alone genres mainly investigating a number of different approaches that do not necessarily analyse the ways in which Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology intersect. From an African literary viewpoint, the main purpose if this study is to consider these concepts from an African perspective in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of African literature produced in the genres of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology. Mazama (2001) highlights the importance of these African perspectives, outlining that the development of analytical theories from African contexts in the school of contemporary thought critique helps systematically displace Eurocentric ways of thinking. In addition, Mazama (2001) urges that

these Eurocentric ways of thinking be replaced with Afrocentric examinations of African experiences thereby reclaiming and African narratives and identities.

The aim of this study is therefore to comparatively analyse how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism, African Mythology are used in Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift* (2019) and Marlon James' *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) respectively, making use of the Afrocentric framework as a basis for the critical analysis.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most literary analyses of African fictional writings and fictional works about Africa have been done through Eurocentric theoretical lenses. This study seeks to examine how Afrofuturism, African Mythology and Magical Realism in contemporary African literature can be analysed from a predominantly Afrocentric perspective. Works written by African writers in these genres have been dissected principally through a Eurocentric gaze, creating a largely monocultural system of analysis that is centres Eurocentric perspectives (George and Dei, 1998). This proposed study also aims to examine the various ways in which the analysis of African literature by African researchers from primarily African epistemologies and perspectives can be developed and normalised. As it is worth considering that researchers from similar cultural and social backgrounds can best understand African phenomena in research practices.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study answers the following questions:

1.3.1 Comparatively analyse how James (2019) and Serpell (2019) use different elements of Afrofuturism, African Mythology and Magical Realism in their respective texts from an Afrocentric perspective;

1.3.2 Analyse how the use of the aforementioned genres are used to explore and challenge current African literary epistemologies; and lastly

1.3.3 Explore new methods of theorising and analysing contemporary African literary texts.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study seeks to contribute an Afrocentric analysis of two relatively new contemporary literary texts from Africa i.e., *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019). The thesis is also conducted in an effort to aid in the expansion of the current existing body of African epistemology around the genres of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology. The study could also serve as a means for understanding the broader intersections between these three genres in African literature calling for more analyses of literature from Afrocentric perspectives.

1.5 Limitations

The study is limited to the comparative analysis of the novels *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019) and *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019); the findings therefore cannot be generalised to other literary works by either author. Whilst there exists a variety of literary texts written from the Afrofuturist, Magical Realist and African Mythological genres, these two works were considered as all the three concepts under investigation were applied in the novels by the authors. Additional limitations included the use of literary works written in English by authors of African descent i.e., African, African American, Black British, Afro-Caribbean writers and writers in the African diaspora.

1.6 Delimitations

This study is confined to the critical analysis of two novels namely, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019) and *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019). The small sample size allows for a more in-depth study and analysis of all the relevant materials related to the limited scope of the study.

The study examines the use of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in the aforementioned novels and the Afrocentric approach was used as the theoretical framework of the study. The comparative analysis was therefore restricted to the parameters of the Afrocentric paradigm; this framework aligns with the study's main aim to analyse African literature from an African context.

1.7 Outline of the chapters

This study is divided into five separate chapters that are broken down into a varying number of subtitles. Chapter One of this study is the introduction, it gives a brief overview of the study; it establishes the background of the study, the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter Two is the literature review which goes into greater detail about the existing literature around studies about Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology; the chapter also outlines the theoretical framework i.e., Asante's Afrocentric approach as well as some of its criticisms. Chapter Three explains the research methodology of the study while Chapter Four is an in-depth discussion of how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are used in *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019). Finally, Chapter Five concludes the study and highlights the study's findings as well as outlining the study's recommendations.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter gave an overall introduction to the study on Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019) and *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019). The chapter also gave a background of the study, statement of the problem, list of the research questions, the significance of the study, the limitations and delimitations of the study. The following chapter is the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines the various literature available around the topics of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African mythology as they relate to the literary study at hand. The existing literature and research differ in their quantity and accessibility across these three conceptual genres therefore this literature review aims to identify these disparities. Cooper (2010) explains how the literature review helps researchers frame and organize their research project as well as critiquing previous scholarly works and identifying key issues in a particular field of study (as cited in Creswell, 2014, pp. 28-29). Additionally, Ridley (2012) highlights how the literature review contextualises and describes "the bigger picture" and this in turn helps researchers identify spaces and gaps in their research.

The Afrocentric approach of study was deemed more appropriate for this research project as it focuses mostly on the analytical perspective of the researcher as well as the body of work under investigation. The exploration of how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in literary fiction are used from a predominantly African perspective emphasises how crucial it is for work produced by Africans as well as descendants of Africans to be dissected from viewpoints that centre the African experience. Sturken and Cartwright (2009) describe how queer, feminist, postcolonial and decolonial theories have all investigated how *looking* contributes to the construction of power dynamics. Literary works like *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf (*2019) use elements of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in unique ways to communicate different themes that take on diverse meanings depending on the analytical perspective used.

2.2 Defining Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology

Chamberlain et al. (2003) acknowledge how complex it is to define the term *genre* but go on to state that it is an observation of art, its form and purpose in order to categorise it. In the selected texts *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019), the use of genre is an important aspect of how these narratives communicate and establish particular themes, symbols and motifs that are crucial parts of the novels and the overarching meaning the authors wish to communicate to the reader.

Womack (2013) defines Afrofuturism as a reimagination of how technology, the future and liberation intersect. Lafleur as cited in Womack (2013, pp. 22) adds that this reimagination of possible futures is conducted through a culturally Black lens. Dery (1994) the originator of the term "Afrofuturism" described the emerging genre as a speculative fiction that addresses African-American themes and concerns in a 20th century context in an effort to include and appropriate aspects of technology, techno-culture and a prosthetically enhanced future as envisioned by African American artists. Acknowledging Dery's definition, Storied (2020) describes Afrofuturism as a nuanced ideology that is not just the summation of science-fiction and Africa; it is however, a concept largely concerned with the reclamation of how Black people perceive and imagine the future.

Nelson (2002) agrees with Womack's definition of the concept, emphasising the intersections around race and technology that Afrofuturism addresses, adding that themes of alienation, Black cultural resilience, future re-imaginings and the transition of the alienated (former enslaved Black folk) to extra-terrestrials are confronted through the conception of different elements of Afro-American culture. Dotse (2016) recognises the importance of Afrofuturism by highlighting how depictions of the future are usually dominated by the imaginaries of male Western science fiction writers. One of the most important elements of Afrofuturism as a

fictional genre as described by Alexander (2018) is how the concept cannot simply be perceived or understood as yet another way of storytelling; Afrofuturism provokes the reimagining of Black futures by interrogating ways in which Black people's present realities and problems can be solved in an effort to create these utopian Black futures.

Peters (2018) notes how a key aspect of Afrofuturism is its radicalism, claiming that the ability to envision progressive narratives of Black people given their deplorable current day circumstances allows for a space to exist where quite literally, Black Lives Matter. Furthermore, Peters (2018) adds that Afrofuturism allows Black people to connect aspects of their history as their stories have been side-lined for so long. The genre allows for non-linear explorations of time. Therefore, these imagined futures of Black existence can be impactful presently as they unearth buried African histories. Mason (2018) summarises the central significance of Afrofuturism highlighting how the genre and its roots in ancient African traditions create a sharp contrast between the past, the present and the future in ways that could inspire the manifestation of real change.

However, as the genre became more popularised in mainstream media, recent developments suggest that disparities exist amongst African futurists, Black European futurists, African American futurists and futurists in the African diaspora. African authors have problematised the definition of Afrofuturism claiming that the genre "is not for Africans living in Africa" (Mashigo, 2018, p.9). Despite the inclusive definition, English (2017) outlines how Afrofuturism is a contemporary movement that includes Black artists from the USA, Africa and the collective Black diaspora. Through the genre, these artists imagine alternative futures that examine justice and liberated expressions of Black subjectivity. Afrofuturism suggests, according to English (2017), Blackness as normative while upheaving notions of linear time. Through science fiction and speculative fiction, Black experiences and Black identities are

reimagined. Because of these developing differences, Okorafor (2019) coined the term *Africanfuturism* defining it as a sub-category of science-fiction more rooted in African culture, mythology, history and perspectives. *Africanfuturism*'s default, Okorafor, (2019) additionally explains, is non-western as its centre is African. More critique for the term *Afrofuturism* lies in the fact that Dery, the originator of the term is not African American or of African descent. Davis (2020) critiques this stating that Dery's coining of the term was retroactive, mainly because futurist artists like SunRa and Octavia E. Butler's work existed long before Dery put it upon himself to coin the term.

Perhaps even more interesting is the assessment that the coining of the term was done through *the white gaze*, a theory attributed to Toni Morrison and later more specifically defined by Pitchford (2020) as the practice of non-Black or white people viewing Black creations under the scope or perspective of ethnocentrism. hooks (1989) contextualises this by postulating that, "Naming is a serious process. It has been of crucial concern for many individuals within oppressed groups, who struggle for self- recovery, for self-determination" (as cited in Paris, 2019, pp. 166). Despite this concern, some African artists and authors still identify as Afrofuturists. For instance, author of young adult fantasy novel *Children of Blood and Bone*, Tomi Adeyemi. According to Storied (2020) early depictions of Afrofuturism in literature included *The Conjure Women* (1899) by Charles W. Chestnut, *Of One Blood* (1902) by Pauline Hopkins, *The Comet* (1920) by W.E.B du Bois and *Patternmaster (*1976) by Octavia E. Butler with more contemporary depictions of the genre in literature growing to include African authors and Afro-descendant authors i.e., Namwali Serpell and Marlon James.

It has been noted that one of Magical Realism's earliest definitions states that the genre emerged as a new art form that presented accurate depictions of everyday scenes and objects whilst presenting deeper meaning and ideas through the insertion of magical and fantastical

elements. The new artform presented in intuitive ways, fact, interior figure and the exterior world (Roh, 1925, as cited in Zamora & Faris, 1995). Flores' (1955) contextual explanation of the genre and its relation to the Spanish American fiction at the time claims that Magical Realism allowed everyday commonalities to be transformed into the surreal. The non-reality was presented as part of the reality and the reader had to accept this as a *fait accompli*. Leal (1967), a scholar in Spanish American literature theorised how Magical Realism more than anything, was a view-point that made space for traditional forms of popular art culture to be explored in simplified ways that allowed artists to confront reality.

The main way the imaginary fused into reality provided a means for the artist to uncover the mystery between that and his circumstances; Magical Realism retained a sort of illogical positionality that did not need psychological explanation. While Chanady (1995) described the genre as multifaceted while (Simkins, 1988) speculated that work by Latin American writer Gabriel Garcia Marques maintained a realism that was intentional in its static and exclusive perception of reality in literature (as cited in Faris, 2004). Marquez presented a version of reality in which the magical text was paradoxically more realistic than the realist text. More contemporary definitions of the genre attribute the affinities of Magical Realism to "carnivalesque" traditions while characteristics of the genre involved reintroductions to native and folklore magic in ways that questioned the relativised (Faris, 2004). While Sasser (2014) also maps out the history and development of Magical Realism from its supposed roots in philosophy, painting and literature; Magical Realism is explained as being qualitatively fluid and adaptive, having extended across temporal, geographical, linguistic and formal boundaries.

Warnes (2009) problematises the term "Magical Realism", questioning if Magical Realism is simply a mode of narration; an irregularity authors randomly engage. Sasser (2014) queries Magical Realism further, inquiring if the genre can be assessed as a literary movement with

specific goals, clearly outlined geographical and cultural boundaries. and if Magical Realism is indeed a genre that can be comparatively analysed across continents and languages. Zamora et al. (1995) maintain that Magical Realist texts can be established by the observation of five primary characteristics mainly; unexplainable magic, realist descriptions that root normality into the narrative, a distinction between the real and the magical that the reader can make, the intersection of reality and magic and lastly time as a concept is challenged, non-linear, redefined or distorted.

What these definitions all have in common through is that they are not from an African perspective. To offer a different approach to Magical Realism, Quayson (2009) explains how within traditional African oral contexts, common and routine narrative structures and genres that circulate have reflective elements of the magical and supernatural within them. Orality extended naturally in relation to how magical elements were weaved into stories; the term Magical Realism therefore gains a different salience in African writing (as cited in lrele, 2009). Other scholars such as (Omotoso, 1979 as cited in Irele, 2009) however, presents the term "Marvellous Realism" in an attempt at exploring the ways in which African literary narratives navigated the magical and fantastical. The definition of Marvellous Realism is esoteric but it does allude to the critique of society with the immersion of magic and the supernatural as Bowers (2004) notes that the differences between Magical Realism and marvellous Realism are especially difficult to explain. Literary critics are still in debates on whether these terms simply signify cultural concepts rather than modes, genres or forms of writing. According to Bowers (2004), Marvellous Realism's differentiating feature is how fiction written within the mode tended to unite the seemingly opposed perspectives of a pragmatic, practical and tangible approach to reality. Magic and superstitions were therefore accepted into the larger context of a narrative.

Iterations of a particular kind of realism in African literature have been observed, particularly Animalist Realism. Animism as coined by anthropologist Tylor (1871) is defined as the belief that objects, creatures and areas possess a particular spiritual essence. Additionally, Nelson (2015) highlights how animism manifests in African literature claiming that works such as *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe use traditional Nigerian animist ideology. This can be seen in depictions of the evil forests, gods and taboos. However, Tylor (1871) definition is problematic as it goes on to suggest that only man (people) in their lowest state of culture would be invested in spiritualist and animalist beliefs. This is an ethnocentric framework as it insists that Africans animist leanings are inferior; this ethnocentric ideology was often used to legitimise colonial perspectives that uphold ethnocentric virtues that often lead to the killing, plundering and enslaving of people outside these idyllic groups (Aboay-Mensah, 1993). Curtin (1974) recounts how scientific racism (eugenics) had to coexist with the European conquest of Africa; imperialist thought was deeply invested in the idea that Africans were inferior to Europeans.

Furthermore, the unpacking of discourse around the influence of colonialism on the development of African literature unearths another perspective that suggests that the insistence that Magical Realism originated in Latin America could prove ahistorical. Center for Pan African Thought (2016) discusses this, suggesting that because of a large portion of the collective, Black history has been erased from historical commentary. Due to European imperialism, information about the modern world is constructed from a Eurocentric perspective. Innis (2018) mirrors these sentiments and points out the exclusion of Black art(its) from educational institutions. Black art and its progression is not considered important enough to be discussed and presented. This is worth noting when considering how traditional African stories are heavily immersed in magical and supernatural elements. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* is one of the most referenced examples of Magical Realism in African literature. Barya

(2013) explains how the novel is immersive in its ability to invoke reflective responses from readers. Furthermore, the novel's Magical Realism is folk-like and uses poetic form in the narrative innovatively. Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The Wizard of the Crow*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Akwaeke Emezi's *Freshwater* are all classic and contemporary examples of African texts that use Magical Realist elements in their narratives.

Myth, according to Peek and Yankah (2005) is defined as a particular culture's sanctified narratives that comprise of the divine, the supernatural and ancestral figures that shape the culture's understanding of humanity. Plato (1936) claims that myth ultimately leads up to philosophy, claiming it is a cumulative observation of one's surroundings (as cited in Udefi, 2011). Myth conveys fact and a basic truth about the human experience; there exists an underlying morality that is communicated through myth (Idowe, 1976, as cited in Udefi, 2011). Saranya and Mathivannan (2017) speak about particular intersections in mythology that are reminiscent of Magical Realism; mythology is an integral part of most world cultures. Myth serves a universal potential when it is blended with realism. Peek and Yankah (2005) admittedly profess how the definition and understanding of African myth is poor because of colonialism. Early collections of African Mythology were made by missionaries, colonial administrators and converts which were ethnocentric in form.

Giddens and Giddens (2006) also recognise how difficult it is to date African Mythology but claim that ancient African wisdom is said to predate modern civilisations and that said wisdom (myths) were passed on orally. While every culture has its own mythology, Altman (2011) affirms how there is no singular or collective African mythology and also acknowledges that these myths are kept alive through oral traditions. Lynch and Roberts (2010) outline how African Mythology is not monolithic although thematically, links between belief systems and

myths on the continent can be established; song and oral forms of storytelling with audience participation are usually the ways in which these myths are passed on from one generation to another.

African myths exhibit a flexibility which is to say that they can be adjusted, altered or changed over time and can be linked to religious beliefs. African writers in turn can reconcile their lived realities and imaginaries with African Mythology, Shafti (2020) discusses the importance of mythology and ancient wisdom outlining how it is cautionary and influential in the decision making through the application of concepts and mythological narratives. In addition, Griffin (2013) explains that mythology is part of one's heritage, it acts as a foundation on which religions can be established while it juxtaposes good and evil as well as the ancient and modern. Ras (n.d.) illustrates how oral tradition and mythology are a significant part of African literature and states that they act as a form of anti-colonial resistance. Myth and tradition are present in African poetry, classic and modern African novels. African novels that draw their structure and influence from African mythology and oral traditions, parables and proverbs include *The Palm Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola, parts of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Maryse Conde's *Segu*.

2.3 Previous studies on Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology

Although Afrofuturism has only recently entered the mainstream conscious in popular culture, much about the concept has been researched with many scholars focusing on the sonic impact of the genre, the intersection between feminism and futurism as well as the representation of Black queer folk in imaginings of the Afrofuture. David (2007) explores how Afrofuturism as articulated by other scholars, provides a conceptual space in which Western humanism and post-humanism in its relation to Black folks can be reinvented. David (2007) claims that the Afrofuturist thought hypothesises reconciliation between the imaged, disembodied identity-

free futures and the occupied identity specific past and present. This can establish a critical connection through which pop-soul artists can convey radical Black subjectivity.

Most studies that investigate the auditory significance of Afrofuturism have focused on SunRa and Janelle Monae. Rollefson (2008) argues that the concept of "myth-space" is fundamental in understanding SunRa's radical Afrofuturist philosophy with Aceves (2019) adding that SunRa (born Herman Blount) a self-proclaimed alien from the planet Saturn started a futurist musical revolution that inspired a range of Black artists from Herbie Hancock to Beyonce. Soldt (2019) analyses Janelle Monae's 2018 Afrofuturist album *Dirty Computer* and its accompanying emotive short film for its feminist and activist themes - that Soldt (2019) goes on to posit, can illustrate what Crenshaw (1989) coined as intersectionality. In addition to this, Turpin (2015) investigates the connection between Black feminism and Afrofuturism in the late 20th century and early 21st century claiming that establishing a connection between the two points is not the main point of contention but rather understanding the many obscure tensions infiltrating the critical reception of gender and race in Afrofuturist culture. The study went on to discuss the roles of critical debate and critical tensions in Black feminist theory and its role in the development of Afrofuturism as critical theory.

Studies on Afrofuturism, its use and impact in film include a study by Wachira (2020) which analyses the agency of water in Wanuri Kahiu's Afrofuturist/sci-fi film *Pumzi* and how it engages with Afrofuturist imagination. Water is perceived as the framework for the imagination of living conditions in the East African Matu Community. Another study by Nyawalo (2017) examines how the films *Les Saignants* and *Pumzi* deploy Afrofuturist aesthetics as a critique of Afropessimist perspectives and the framing of socio-economic realities on the continent. Several studies investigating the link between Afrofuturism and literature have been carried out. Burgess (2020) discusses how Octavia E. Butler's post-

apocalyptic science fiction narratives *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents* parallel society's current apocalyptic-esque COVID-19 crisis.

Recently, Burgess (2020) argues that literature from the past about the future has tessellated to form a current reality. On the other hand, Maynard (2018) takes on post-apocalyptic Blackness and considers the temporal aspects of *Public Enemy*'s declaration, "Armageddon Been-In-Effect" for the African Diaspora by examining how Afrofuturist methodologies, Canada's Black radical traditions and the disruption of linear progress narratives of modernity and the Black condition can be considered as cyborg due to its othered positionality in society. Blackness can be contextualised as machine, commodity and monster. However, in literary examinations of Afrofuturism, Thomas (2019) acknowledges the cultural significance of speculative storytelling and links the genre to its origin in folktales as well as fairy tales and positions them as central African American children's literature as an integral part of establishing their conception of identity. While establishing that a Black fantastic remains deep, Thomas (2019) suggests the retheorisation of Black speculations and their origins beyond Afrofuturism. Interestingly, a recent study by Walters (2020) analyses *Spider the Artist* and *The Popular Mechanic* by Nnedi Okorafor, focusing on how these narratives directly use the speculative to critically observe global oil predations, disruptions and African feminist agency and futurity by presenting female protagonists that confront violent environments and craft modes of resistance, pleasure and possibility.

As a contribution to literary fiction, Mann (2017) describes a sort of pessimistic futurism that investigates the work of Octavia E. Butler focussing on the novel *Dawn* as a key text. It is suggested that Butler captures a 'pessimistic futurism' in that Black female sexuality, reproduction and survival are uniquely constructed while Afropessimism and Afrofuturism are interwoven to carefully consider how Black female subjectivity and labour construct future

worlds. Additionally, McKinley-Portee (2017) studies a solo art piece which attempts to connect Afrofuturism to performance studies while also inspecting Black, queer identity. Afrofuturism is perceived to provide literature with an avenue to explore Black experience within the literary canon. The concept also provides performance artists with ways to discuss social justice issues. Furthermore, Afrofuturism provides Black artists and activists with the means to introduce diversity in performance in general and platform and centre Black artists. Afrofuturism addresses digital and technological arts practice praxis in Africa. It focuses on decentralising centralised Western perspectives. Afrofuturism acts in speculative methods to address decentralisation mechanisms accounting for cyber feminist to African science fiction notions and apply these theories to contemporary globalisation (Bristow, 2012). Finally, Anderson and James (2015) conclude that Afrofuturism has grown as a movement aimed at examining intersections between race, art, science and design; it is a body of Black speculative thought.

Much of the context with which Magical Realism is discussed in academia focuses on its impact as a genre in contemporary art and literature. Hassan (1996) presents the idea that Magical Realist aesthetic art like *Elsabeth Tariqua Atnafu*'s can be viewed as ritualistic. Hassan (1996) connects Atnafu's Ethiopian background, dreams, memory and various other elements from which the artist pulls from in order to create work that scrutinises the perceived novelty of the past and the present while restructuring the future. Kostadinović (2018) on the other hand examines Magical Realism and its characteristics in paintings from the first half of the 20th century and the literature of the Latin American mid 20th century in an effort to showcase how art movements can be transformed from one art medium to another and how their basic concepts can shift. Jameson (1986) discusses the theoretical and historical concept of Magical Realism highlighting its inherent problems. The conceptual problems of the genre

are especially evident when Magical Realism is contrasted with overlapping terms for instance surrealism.

Additionally, Jameson (1986) goes on to analyse several films, observing their stylistic differences while outlining specific elements of the films their construction and the directional choices and how these aspects lend themselves to Magical Realist constructions. More recently, Storied (2020) analyses the films *Border*, *The Killing of a Sacred Dear* and *Tigers Are Not Afraid* with the main objective to unpack the concept of 'modern fairytales' and outlining the qualitative value of Magical Realist films. The analysis concludes that Magical Realism creates stalk contrasts in film that in turn provokes closer examination of reality. It offers an alternative perspective on societal and philosophical issues therefore revealing hidden truths and deeper understanding of the world. Smith (2005) conducts a thought-provoking analysis of Magical Realism and Theatre of the Oppressed in Taiwan speaking directly to the use of these concepts in Chung Chino's Asegamen Theatre in the production *River in the Heart* to rectify class, gender, ethnic inequalities in contemporary Taiwan.

The bulk of the research about Magical Realism focuses on the genre's impact in literature. Shenbahapriya and Jamuna, (2019) also point out the conceptual problems of Magical Realism attributing these disparities to the conflation of Magical Realist literature. The study therefore aims to outline and untangle these terms so as to clarify their meaning some more. Analytical studies about Magical Realism in literature investigate how complex feelings and concepts are communicated in literary narratives and how temporalities like the past or the future can be reconstructed and secured respectively. Abdullah (2020) uses Joseph Skibell's *A Blessing on the Moon* to evince how the author uses Magical Realism, Jewish tradition, ritual and folk belief to create an alternative history that differs from dominant history, making the inevitability of the Holocaust perceivable. The study focuses on the significance of

remembering and storytelling to confront the trauma of the Holocaust. Abdullah (2020) suggests that the author uses the moon in the novel to symbolise the continued possibility that Jewish history despite the damage of the Holocaust has yet to end.

There exists a pool of studies in Magical Realism that use feminist theory to analyse how the genre is used to tackle gender and sexuality. Volkova (2019) uses feminist literary criticism to investigate how Magical Realist characteristics are utilised in literary texts written by women namely, *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura. Similarly, Selravani and Hussain (2019) also use *The House of Spirits* and *Like Water for Chocolate* to investigate how Magical Realism is used as a tool to explore the complexities and challenges women face globally. Additionally, Hrescak (2014), studies the Magical Realist novel *Nights of the Circus* to explore how the genre ideally suits the author Angela Carter's aim to resist patriarchal paradigms by constructing a text that denounces binary power imbalances through the occupation of real and unreal magical spaces. This suggests a practical use of the subversive and self-reflective core characteristic of Magical Realism. Another study by Sanchez (2000) illustrates the significance of the genre in American women's literature in the 20th century. The study also draws out appropriate comparative analytic use of Magical Realism that illustrate different formats and thematic interactions between separate literary traditions. One study by Quayson (2009) examines the relationship between Magical Realism and the African novel. The study lists Ben Okri, Kojo Laing and Syl Chenry-Coker as notable contributors of literature in the genre and goes on to analyse various African texts that utilise the genre to communicate complex African realities.

Few studies have been conducted about the use of African Mythology in contemporary African literature; the bulk of the studies around African Mythology focus on particular elements of mythology i.e., retelling of African folklore. Dorson (1973) acknowledges the close links

between mythology and folklore in academic discourse further claiming that mythology was considered its own science in the 18th century but has become an additional aspect of anthropology, literature and theology. Belcher (2005) warns of these overlaps between mythology and folklore outlining that most African cultures distinguish tales that are told specifically for entertainment purposes and narratives that hold higher value and meaning. Mashige and Thosago (2005) attempts to outline reasons why studies about folklore (and by extension African Mythology) have failed to develop in South African tertiary institutions as a discipline in the arts and humanities. Mashige and Thosago (2005) attributes this apparent lack of development to the lack of disciplinary illegitimacy, theoretical underdevelopment and crisis in syllabus and curricula. A study by Oyeshile (2007) looks at mythology as an approach to conflict resolution; the study admits that even though myths provide authentic approaches to conflict resolution; the approach is still limited and as such, can only operate on a miniature level as it carries little to no consequences for defaulters in any social system. Another study that analyses African Mythology from a political perspective in literature by Okpewho (1998) acknowledges the growth of African oral literary study attributing interest into this mythology to the increasing awareness of heroic tales about great warriors and African empires. The study however, notes that beyond the walls of academia, one can draw parallels between present African leadership politics and the glorified leaders of past African empires. In the process, therefore, arguing that while academia continues to focus on the rich history of African empires, lessons can be learnt from these tales that can provide solutions to the problems that continue to frustrate Africans. In recent literary studies of mythology, Mohamed and Gamila (2019) use Margaret Artwood's novella *The Penelopiad* and Lord Byron's *Prometheus* to analyse the role of mythology to a set of criteria in order to establish what would classify the literature as world literature. From an African context, Ouma (2014) reads the abiku figures in Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* in a diasporic context that provides a framework in which

these mythological Nigerian figures in the text confront structures of radicalized interpretations. The study invites readers to then take the tensions between narratives of the abiku and Yoruba mythology into account as a subject of psychoanalytic interpretation of Dissociative Identity Disorder. In a study also analysing the abiku, Coker (2015) compares the exploration of the abiku myth in Debo Koton's *Abiku* and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* in an effort to extend the abiku metaphor to the existing disfunction of the novels backdrop. Abraham and Abdulmalik (2015) expand existing studies around myth and its use in Chinua Achebe's work and consider inherent myths in the narrative from an ecocritical perspective in an effort to establish African literary narratives as rich in ecological issues. Utilising the mythology in *Things Fall Apart*, they explain the relationship between humanity and nature. In yet another study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Abbady (2017) explains how Achebe applies folktales and myths into his novels to illustrate the sophistication of the Igbo people and their use of myth and folklore to teach their younger generations about the history and value of their ancestors. Santathanakrishnan and Shanmugam (2018) on the other hand examine Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* and suggest that the author attempts to explore and uncover the root of society and religion. The novel features myths, rituals, tradition and cultural conflict to illustrate how the West indulged in the cultural conflict of Kenyans. Lastly, Matthew (2013) claims that the resettlements to myth in African text seems to be one of the more significant characteristics of post-colonial literature. The positioning of myth in these narratives aims to imbed resistance to the dominant power structures.

2.4 Theoretical framework

This study utilises the Afrocentric Theory developed by Asante (1980) as a framework to contextualise how the two narratives under investigation are analysed. Hamlet (1998) describes this paradigm as the theoretical notion that emphasises the perspectives of Africans not as the passive other but as the centre. The framework prioritises understanding African phenomena

from African viewpoints, furthermore this perspective suggests that Africans can be observed as independent of Eurocentric ideas of Africa. The Afrocentric Theory as developed by Asante (1980) positions itself as a direct challenge to dominant Western epistemology while addressing and centring the lived experience of African Americans, continental Africans, Black British folk and Africans in the diaspora (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2014). According to Mazama (2001) Afrocentricity is an extensively significant framework that has developed into an important part of Pan-Africanism. Afrocentricity suggests that the adoption of Western worldviews and perspectives is a core issue African people have to navigate. The failure to recognise the European cultural ethos as the presiding perspective pushes African ideology to the margins, existing and defined by Eurocentric imaginaries. In addition, Oyebade (1990) outlines how the Afrocentric paradigm centres the analysis of African history and culture from African viewpoints. There exists criticisms of the Afrocentric perspective with scholar Brown (2002) pointing out that how Asante only critiques European culture and accuses Asante of trying to prove Afrocentrism as a superior epistemology. Mgbeadichie (2015) also highlights some of these significant critiques explaining that some aspects of Afrocentricity is considered the intellectual opposite of the hegemonic Eurocentrism. However, George and Dei (1998) argue that Afrocentrism goes beyond simply opposing Eurocentrism or being its antithesis but insist that the concept is complex and viewing this from a binary perspective ignores or rather, fails to engage with the deeper interrogation of the connection between these concepts which would require an understanding of the systemic racism and devaluation of oppositional thought to the West. As Asante (1998) outlines, at its core, Afrocentricity prioritises African agency within the historical and cultural context trans-continentally and trans-generationally. Afrocentric knowledge challenges Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism advocates for the hierarchal ordering of knowledge and Afrocentrism aims to undermine this. According to Barreto (2019) Afrofuturism conceptually introduces “a de-centring” lens that shifts perspectives from the

usual Eurocentric perceptions to a more Afrocentric view point; Afrofuturism therefore critiques the construction of an inherently centralised and hegemonic white view of history by interrogating, re-examining and provoking Afrocentric analyses in this way, Afrofuturism is transformative in its insistence on prioritising Afrocentric, Black centred narratives. Interestingly, the Afrocentricity Magical Realism and African Mythology links back to Afrofuturism suggesting an intersection between the three concepts as outlined in Womack's (2016) definition. The underlying principle of Afrocentricity is how the orientation of the theory centres the interests and needs of African people in the discussion (Harris, 2005, as cited Muzorewa, 2005). Based on these fundamental elements, the study of African Mythology would therefore be inherently Afrocentric while magical Realism in contemporary art (visual, literary, philosophical etc.) attributes their Afrocentricity to its consideration of the artist's identity location. As Kershaw (1992) outlines the use of the Afrocentric framework disrupts the academy's maintenance of the white supremacist status quo. Afrocentricity's most vital purpose is to generate knowledge that humanises people of African descent, engaging with work that centres their lived experiences and therefore regard African people as subjects and not passive objects. Serpell's (2019) novel *The Old Drift* structures its narrative around Afrofuturist ideas, utilises Magical Realist elements and includes Zambian Mythology in its story. In order to analyse how these genres, relate them to African people and contribute to the African literary canon, it is worth utilising a framework that shifts African knowledge from the margins to the centre. James (2019) also utilises Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in *Black Leopard Red Wolf* to explore an array of themes that can be interpreted and understood from an African perspective; the Afrocentric framework therefore allows the uncovering of significant insights about the narrative that are worth exploring from an Afrocentric perspective.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided extensive definitions for the concepts under investigation i.e., Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology. The chapter also looked at how previous studies approached investigating the aforementioned concepts in literary, musical and visual art contexts. The Afrocentric theory, its relevance and relation to the investigation of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in *The Old Drift* and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* was also discussed. The following chapter outlines the research methodology that this study used.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter discusses the methodology of the study and how it functions as a means to address and answer the research questioned outlined in Chapter One. The research approach, research design, population, sample, research instruments, procedure, data analysis as well as the research ethics are also discussed and outlined in this chapter.

3.2 Research design

The qualitative research approach perspective was utilised for this study in conjunction with a desktop comparative research method in order to analyse the novels *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018) qualitative research employs the use of a variety of empirical and observed materials i.e., case studies, lived experience, introspection, cultural texts and productions alongside observational, historical and visual texts that aim to give a description to the routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives. Creswell and Creswell (2018) go on to explain how this particular research approach seeks to explore and understand the meaning people or groups of people assign to a social or human problem. This particular form of inquiry supports a way of approaching research that values an inferential style, individual focused meaning and the significance of investigating the nuance and complexities of a particular situation. This approach does not prioritise the statistical and numerical outlooks of principal concepts but instead aims to uncover the more subtle and refined analysis of subjects under investigation.

The qualitative research approach was considered the most suitable and applicable for this study because understanding the ways in which Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African

Mythology are used in literature cannot be easily deduced to a set of numbers. While quantitative research on these concepts can be carried out and are important contributions to the canon, this study specifically investigated how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) used elements of these genres and concepts to communicate more complex and abstract understandings of interpretations or ideologies about a particular set of societal and existential problems. As this particular study was confined to a desktop design given its qualitative nature, no fieldwork was conducted. Travis (2016) explains that desktop study requires researchers to review previous research and resources in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The direction of this study was established by the investigation of how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) used Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in their novels to provide commentary on particular societal issues and to convey certain themes.

3.3 Population

Population as defined by Rafeedalie (n.d.) can be explained as a particular group of individuals, institutions, objects and various other commodities that have a common characteristic that is of a particular interest to a researcher. Eldredge et al. (2016) go on to emphasise how a clearly defined population becomes the basis for which the research findings are applied, assuring the overall validity of the results. The population of this study comprised of novels written by African, African American, Black British, Afro-Caribbean and African Diasporic writers that utilised Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in their narratives therefore *Black Leopard Red Wolf* and *The Old Drift* were selected because of their significant use of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in their stories. Furthermore, the novels that were selected for analysis were also considered because of the themes that emerged in the narratives in large part because of the use of these genres.

3.4 Sample

A research sample is defined by Dawson (2002) as the process of choosing a more researchable or more specific number of variables to investigate; this assists the researcher in generating the results. Additionally, qualitative researchers seek to explore phenomenon in smaller quantities as they may provide insights into wide research populations. The novels selected for this research were chosen from a collection of other African, African American, Black British, Afro-Caribbean and African Diasporic narratives published in the English language that incorporated the use of characteristics linked to Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in their stories. As the research proposal outlines, the study initially intended to comparatively analyse *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019) and *The Icarus Girl* by Oyeyemi (2005) however, on closer inspection, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) was a better fit for the study as its themes and use of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology aligned best with research objectives therefore, the novels *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by James (2019) and *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019) were used as a sample. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015) there are two types of sampling namely, probability and non-probability sampling; the former allows researchers to generalize results of a study from sample populations while the latter is the best method of choice for qualitative research as it is logical and the data is used to answer qualitative inquiries. Leedy and Ornrod (2010) outline how non-probability sampling includes quota, convenience and purposive sampling etc. For this study, purposive sampling was used as the novels were intentionally selected from a total population of African, African American, Black British, Afro-Caribbean and African Diasporic fiction novels that were written in the genres of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology, these novels also thematically addressed an array of issues using these genres. Taking into consideration that the texts were produced by writers of African descent, the Afrocentric perspective was also

purposely selected as a suitable framework for the analysis of the novels in order to address the research objectives.

3.5 Research procedure

According to (Dawson, 2009), research methods are the tools a researcher utilises to collect data and carry out an investigation. This study is a desktop study and a wide range of data and information was collected through the study and analysis of the selected narratives *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) and *The Old Drift* (2019). Relevant secondary sources comprising of academic journals, research papers, articles, literary reviews, videos as well as extensive materials on the Afrocentric perspective, its significance in literary analysis as well as its shortcomings were consulted for the study. The secondary sources aided in the construction and organisation of the study in order to conduct a thorough and critical analysis of the selected novels. The resulting data was coded and arranged according to the specific ways in which the genres under investigation were used by each author, how different themes in the novels were communicated using these genres. *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) were analysed using the Afrocentric perspective, the framework helped contextualise the study while the literature consulted assisted in the generation of the study's findings as well as the study's conclusions.

3.6 Data analysis

Creswell (2013) acknowledges how challenging and complex data analysis is for qualitative researchers; data analysis involves the organising of, coding and interpretation of data. Additionally, Kawulich (2004) explains the many different techniques that exist for the qualitative analysis of data; Kawulich (2004) claims that choosing a suitable data analysis method relies on a combination of factors including the research questions and theoretical framework. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) describe data analysis as the process of making sense

of the data collected; this involves the interpretation and integration of the data the researcher has collected. These meanings, interpretations and insights ultimately contribute to make up the study's findings. The data from the novels were analysed using the content analysis method; based on the plot, setting, themes and world building the researcher was able to identify and acknowledge the different ways in which Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology were utilised by each author to communicate a specific set of messages. Furthermore, Afrocentrism acted as a framework for which these novels were contextualised, interpreted and analysed to extract meaning. These clarifications and analyses contributed to the findings and conclusion of the study.

3.7 Research ethics

Bell and Bryman (2007) insist that maintaining ethical standards in social science research is one of the most important parts of the research process; research ethics prevent plagiarism, the harm of research participants as well as the misrepresentation of research findings. Research ethics provide a set of guidelines that assist for researchers throughout the process of conducting an investigation. As previously established, this research is a desktop study that did not involve the use of human participants, material from the environment, confidential or private information as well as a range of other criteria, therefore, an application for the full exemption from a full ethics review was submitted to the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Committee and was approved. Furthermore, the information and data collected from the study were used exclusively for academic purposes and not for any personal or monetary benefits.

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed and showcased the research methodology applied for this study. The research design as well as the research approach were discussed at length including how these

methods and frameworks were appropriate for this study. Details about the research population as well as the sample selected from the population were explained. The sampling method and the sample chosen for the study were outlined. Lastly, procedures used to determine what themes from *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) and *The Old Drift* (2019) were analysed in this study were also outlined. The following chapter presents the discussion and analysis of how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology were used in the selected novels.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION ON AFROFUTURISM, MAGICAL REALISM AND AFRICAN MYTHOLOGY IN *THE OLD DRIFT* AND *BLACK LEOPARD RED WOLF*

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to comparatively analyse how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are used in the novels *The Old Drift* by Serpell (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019). The chapter is organised into three sections; the first identifies and analyses how Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are used in *The Old Drift*; the second section examines the use of the aforementioned genres in *Black Leopard Red Wolf*. Finally, the last section is a discussion that compares and contrasts the two narratives.

4.2 Summary of *The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell

The Old Drift (2019) is the multi-generational debut novel by Namwali Serpell that follows the matrilineal connections of three women; one Black, one brown and one white and their descendants. The narrative, set in Zambia, is divided into three sections beginning as a historical fiction narrative that follows *The Grandmothers* i.e., Sibilla, Agnes and Matha; their offspring *The Mothers* i.e., Sylvia, Isabella and Thandiwe and then lastly; *The Children* i.e., Joseph, Jacob and Naila. Each section of the novel fluctuates between genres, shifting through Magical Realism and pulling on elements of Zambian mythology interlacing the main characters over a span of several chapters eventually converging and concluding all the storylines in the year 2023. The novel narrated in part by a swarm of mosquitoes, explores the cause-and-effect theory. According to Salkind (2010), cause and effect refers to the link or relationship between two phenomena where one phenomenon directly influences another. In this way, Serpell (2019) investigates human destiny and how every life is significantly interlinked somehow with the next. In many ways, the author highlights how our actions have

extraordinary effects not only on our lives but the lives of our descendants. The novel is also a source of social commentary that digs into the ways in which history, mythology, sex, sexuality, technology, race, gender, politics and feminism relate to Black people. Zambia's colonial history is dissected and connected to how the (afro)future may possibly unfold. The various nuances of the novel explore the more interpersonal relationships between characters and the complex plot comes full circle using the passage of time as the backdrop and foundation of the story's diverse concepts.

4.3 Afrofuturism in *The Old Drift*

One of Afrofuturism's main objective is to write Black people into the future. Serpell (2019) skilfully builds on the possibilities of a Zambian future, taking history and several technological predictions into account. The narrative also highlights specific elements of Zambian history that could be considered Afrofuturist. Unique storytelling format, consideration of feminist perspectives, consideration of technological and medical advancements in their relation to Blackness as well as climate change are all aspects of the novel that Serpell (2019) uses to apply Afrofuturist elements and themes.

4.3.1 The Mosquitoes

In the novel *The Old Drift* (2019), Namwali Serpell uses Afrofuturism to explore a multitude of complex themes. One of the most important qualities of the novel is its ability to use Afrofuturism as a means of examining how deeply connected human beings are across the temporalities of the past, the present and the eventual future. *The Old Drift* (2019) outlines the tangled links between three separate families and while race is a stalk barrier between the characters and their lived experiences, the narrative navigates the very real cause and effects human beings and their actions can have and how the resulting consequences alter or seal our destinies. The book opens and closes with eerie narration from a swarm of mosquitoes; this

non-human narration introduces an objective animal gaze that innovatively posits the mosquitoes as the time keepers of the story, able to decide, dictate and compartmentalise which sections of the story the reader gets to engage with. The onomatopoeic chorus,

> "*Zt. Zzt. ZZZzzzZZZzzzzZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzzzzzzzZZZzzzzzzZZZzzzzo'ona*." (Serpell, 2019, p. 1)

contextualises what often forms part of a larger critique about African narratives. Awuzie (2018) speaks on how substantial it is to deviate from colonial narratives of this nature, stating that they promoted the myth of African as a primitive and inferior place thereby providing justification for the colonial objectification the continent receives. These opening lines cement the novel as African (Zambian specifically) by beginning the narrative with a Chewa phrase that translates to, "*fact"* or colloquially as *"for real"* therefore introducing the story as something that *could* possibly be a real Zambian story. Additionally, Awuzie (2018) however, notes that there exists first generation African writers that produced narratives that are historical and describe a pre-colonial Africa. The African condition is explored in this era in order to examine what went wrong– a popular technique that comments on the future through the windows of the past (Osuafur, 2003, as cited in Awuzie, 2018). The following sentences further compound the critical lens the novel takes in its ideas around the construction of African history,

> "*And so. A dead white man grows bearded and lost in the blinding heart of Africa. With his rooting and roving, his stops and starts, he becomes our father unwitting, our inadvertent pater muzungu. This is the story of a nation – not a kingdom or a people – so it begins, of course, with a white man*" (Serpell, 2019, p. 1).

Second generation African writers counter ethnocentric Eurocentric narratives that criticized the first generation of African writers for being too concerned with "explaining African to Europeans" (Awuzie, 2018). Serpell (2019) is able to use the mosquitoes to both outline the beginning of the end for pre-colonial Zambia by zooning in on how it places the white man, Dr David Livingstone, at the centre of this colonial transformation,

> "*Oh, father muzungu! The word means white man, but it describes not the skin, but a tendency. A muzungu is one who will zunguluka – wander aimlessly – until they end up in circles. And so, our movious muzungu pitched up here again, dragging his black bearers with him*" (Serpell, 2019, p. 1).

This also establishes the cause-and-effect theme that reoccurs throughout the novel,

> "*You have now heard the note of one Percy M. Clark, a wanderer, a brute, a cad, the forefather who started it all. He called himself an Old Drifter but he didn't learn our lesson – his hand grasped a tad too tight. A slip and a clutch, a cry and a fall, and one child strikes another. That tiny chaos, like one of our wings, sets in motion the unwitting cycle: it will spiral across families for generations to come, spurring Fate's furious cataract…*" Serpell, 2019, p. 19).

In another part of the novel; mankind's technological advancements, their intersection with Black Zambians and their immediate environment are explored through several key incidents in the story. One of the first of these consequential events links one of the main characters, Jacob, with the novel's swarming narrators, the mosquitoes. Jacob is a Black inventor living with his grandmother Matha in Kalingalinga without a formal education,

> "Jacob loved the Auto Department. Ever since he had discovered that half-wreck of an aeroplane at Lusaka City Airport four years ago, he had belonged to the electric world.

> He liked to make things in general, but nothing gave him greater pleasure than to galvanise them. No sound was more beautiful to his ears than the twitch-rattle-hum of an object coming to life in his hands. He could rejig a Discman, reassemble a foreign plug to fit a Zambian outlet, make a mixer spin its blades again by surgically removing a dead cockroach from its innards. But he lacked the bravado of the hawkers who strutted the roads, the 'amplifiers' who shouted the wares and prices of the market women. And what's the use of goods you can't sell?" (Serpell, 2019, p. 443).

After spending close to a year trying to create a drone for The General, a villain-isque side character with a military background, a black-market warehouse full of stolen goods and most importantly, the funding Jacob needs for his inventions. A chance encounter inspires Jacob and his invention takes on quite literally a new life,

> "Jacob had just achieved a restless sleep on the floor when a spasm in his hand woke him up. He switched his Bead to torch mode, cupping his hand to shield its brightness. It took him a while to see it because was it was nearly inside the light coming from his middle finger – a red bump next to his Bead. A mosquito bite. It must have interfered with the circuit. He clicked his Bead on and off, trying to still the zinging feeling, but it lingered, pulsing from the centre of his palm. He lay back down and closed his eyes and there it was. The key." (Serpell, 2019, p. 485)

and later on in the passage,

> "He clicked his Bead on, crooked his left middle finger, and opened the Diagram app. With his right index finger, he drew over his palm, making a sketch on the virtual sheet. When he was finished, its lines were shaking because his hand was. It was the blueprint of a wing. Now he just needed money to make a new prototype" (Serpell, 2019, p. 486).

Instances like these in the novel showcase the symbiotic nature in which Blackness and technology intersect. Serpell (2019) is therefore able to make commentary around how these factors influence and play into the construction of the future. Furthermore, the mosquito narrators in turn foreshadow one of the biggest plot twists in the novel and highlight how human error is a dominant theme in the narrative,

> "*Can mosquitoes and humans live peacefully together, can we forge an uneasy truce? Hover around each other enough and symbiosis sets in. Over moons, you'll grow immune, and our flus will move through you – a mild fever and maybe a snooze. This balance can even come to your rescue, defend you against rank intruders. As Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe once said, the lowliest creature, the tiny udzudzu, is what kept the imperialists at bay!*" (Serpell, 2019, p. 491).

Through the character Jacob, Serpell (2019) is able to explore how technological advancements that alter the course of the future and history could be created by people living in impoverished communities. This not only opens up a dialogue around class disparities and access to technology but also around the concept of digital segregation.

Foster (2019) explains this as how technological advancements are kept away from certain communities i.e., usually Black people. Faun and Landstreicher (2019) claim that new technological demands require specialised knowledge that is not available to most people, Jacob's scavenging of *E-Dumps* for scraps attests to this; it is only through The General's funding that he is able to make progress on his inventions, in addition, if technological advancements are discovered in these communities, the inventors are usually erased and the advancements attributed to Western civilization. On the other hand, the instillation of Digit-All beads in most of the Black population of Zambia is indicative of something more suspicious i.e., how technology can be used to further oppress and track Black people and their

movements. The novel ends on a somewhat sinister note, yet again with a chorus of mosquitoes reciting, in the same onomatopoeic style that opened the novel,

> *"Shhhkkkkkkhkkkkkkhkkkrrrkakingkakinkakingchchchch*ding*ding*ding*shhhtzzzzz*
>
> *zzzzzt. ERROR. HTTP 404 FILE NOT FOUND. WE ARE HAVING TROUBLE RECOVERING THE FNITOR AND TRY AGAIN.*
>
> *Excuse us. We're sorry. Please pardon our dust. It appears that we have a problem. The feed has cut, interrupted abrupt, and the culprit? Nowhere to be found. O Error! It seems, while extolling your virtues, we have made some mistakes of our own. For one, we're not sure that we are who we said. Are we red-blooded beasts or metallic machines? Or are we just a hive mind that runs a program that spews Wikipedian facts?*
>
> *Pondering this query – who are we really? – we discovered another mistake. We searched entomology, the study of insects, but etymology popped up instead. It's all fine and good, we looked into the root, etymology means 'search for the truth', its origin is etumos – oh no! There we go! We're doing it again! Straying, swerving, stealing. (Nostra culpa to the Bard of Nostromo, by the way.) Traduttore, traditore, as the Italians say. Or as the Internet says. In fact, any facts, any stats that we've stated? There's just no vouching for their veracity. We deviate, drift…oh, how we digress. We're semantically movious, too."* (Serpell, 2019, p. 567).

The entire novel is a testament to errors, their cause and effects which have been an integral part of the characters in the story, the decisions they've made and effects of their actions and how they interfere with the future.

4.3.2 The future of Blackness, protest and surveillance

One of the main principles of Afrofuturism is how it speculates Black futures. A portion of *The Old Drift* (2019) outlines the possibility of technological advancements being used to police and survey Black people. The Digit-All beads are introduced in the novel through the characters Joseph and Naila,

> "She pointed across the bar to two guys dancing on either side of a girl with long gold and purple plaits, her hips spinning like a centrifuge. The guys had raised their arms over her with the Digit-All Beads in their fingers switched on to make a spotlight. Everyone was watching them, more for the technological novelty than the dance performance" (Serpell, 2019, p. 408).

Concerns about the Digit-All beads in the novel discuss how historically, Black people have been instrumental in Western technological and medical experimentation primarily because Black people's bodies are seen as disposable and subhuman.

> The character Naila says, "So what are these for anyway?' Naila pointed at the drones over the pool.
>
> 'Security,' he said.
>
> 'Surveillance, you mean?'
>
> Jacob tutted. He fiddled on his Digit-All, then stood and cast a screen onto the rooftop. With his hand splayed in the air, light streaming from it, he was a beautiful bare-chested wizard. Naila dragged her eyes to the video, a moving scan over rocky grasslands. People appeared, some holding signs, others holding guns, all of them shouting.
>
> 'Ya. I know about drone photojournalism. But is that really what these tiny-ass drones are for?' She pulled the microdrone from her shirt pocket and held it out to Jacob on her palm.
>
> 'I made the wings with solar tape.' He smiled admiringly down at his creation.
>
> 'What does that have to do with what you're using them for?'

> ‘Niles!’ Joseph piped up. ‘It’s just technology, it doesn’t have morals built in.” (Serpell, 2019, p. 513).

Crockford (2020) explains that technology can be racially biased, errors in algorithms can have catastrophic effects for Black people. The history of white supremacist, anti-Black surveillance and tracking of Black people’s bodies in the US and globally persists even today and manifests differently. The novel observes the anxiety around technological advancements and Black people’s bodies. Serpell (2019) further speculates how useful Blackness is in the process of advancing global technologies and medicine and thus introduces the concept of melanin dependant technology,

> “They only gave us free Beads because electro-nerve technology uses melanin. Again, they were testing them on us. If the product is free, you’re the product.” (Serpell, 2019, p. 523).

This contextualises how significant Black people are in the construction of the future in a very exploitative and anti-Black ways. In addition, a side effect of these Digit-All beads discussed in the narrative is the darkening of skin, something that Serpell (2019) uses to explore internalised anti-Black ideology, an Asian character, Mai embodies this anti-Blackness. Despite all the varying threats being “turned” Black even as a side effect of a *necessary* technological advancement is the ultimate terror,

> “When they were outside the Reg Office, Mai leaned in close.
>
> ‘I hope you are not lying about those clinics,’ she whispered, wagging her middle finger. ‘If this thing tans me blek? You will be seeing me.’ She turned and duckfooted away.” (Serpell, 2019, p. 527). To further drive the idea of Blackness at the centre of all these developments, the African continent and its resources are usually exploited so

it becomes difficult for social critics to discern what is and what isn't beneficial for Black people,

> "Korea and China and Japan had all caught Afrotech fever, flooding the market with cheap mobiles with built-in Wi-Fi ports. In a leapfrog of technology, the majority of Africans, the poor included, had access to the whole wide world through its web." (Serpell, 2019, p. 461).

The Old Drift (2019) makes reference to the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests,

> "By the time Joseph received his A-level results – top marks but not quite high enough for a merit scholarship – the protests had mutated into 'Fees Must Fall!' Cape Town students built a shanty town on the library steps to protest the lack of adequate housing. They set cars on fire and lobbed a petrol bomb into an office. They cut the nose off Rhodes's memorial and spited his nameplate: CECIL JOHN RHODES became RACIST THIEF MURDERER. To the aspiring applicant, these protests all seemed nonsensical. For a man to fall and fees to fall were not the same thing." (Serpell, 2019, p. 403).

Serpell (2019) is able to present an argument about the future of protest and how technological advancements can amplify or stifle political movements and interrupt Black people's agency. The link between the Moskeetoze drones Jacob designed and how ironically technology can be used against Black folk sets up a futuristic Zambia under technologically aided dictatorship, at a demonstration,

> "Naila realised what this meant: the drones had not come to extract something from their bodies but to deliver something – Joseph's Virus vaccine, she was sure of it, the one he had made with Musadabwe – administered via the tiniest plentiest injections.

> Mission accomplished; the drones skittered up into the cone of light." (Serpell, 2019, p. 548).

In summation, Dotse (2016) explains how crucial it is for Africans to participate in the creation of new technologies and systems however, Africans must also factor in how these innovations can be used to combat the ways in which our realities can be oppressive (as cited in Heidenreich-Seleme and O-Toole, 2016, p. 33).

4.3.3 Edward Nkoloso and the Zambian Space Program

Through the character Edward Nkoloso, Serpell (2019) explores one of the earliest examples of Afrofuturism in praxis in Zambia. Based on the very real founder of the Zambia National Academy of Science, Space Research and Philosophy (ZNASSRP), Serpell (2019) uses Hartman's (2008) Critical Fabulation theory that is a semi-non-fiction style of writing that ventures into bringing the suppressed voices of the past to the forefront by means of intense research and fragmented facts. The concept, originating in the essay (also by Hartman) *Venus in Two Acts* that explored, deconstructed and illuminates "The Venus Trope" of enslaved African women. Hartman (2008) constructed the piece in response to the lack of representation of Black women in historical texts (as cited in Hamer, 2020, para. 2). Serpell (2019) is able to speculate what the 1960s Zambian Space Program and Edward Nkoloso were like, using the information from archives,

> "The headquarters of the Zambia National Academy of Science, Space Research and Philosophy was in Chunga Valley, a forested area west of Lusaka, where the edge of the city bled into the edge of the bush. Minister of Space Research Edward Mukuka Nkoloso walked among his cadets, patting shoulders, adjusting capes, igniting cheer. As usual, he wore an army jacket and had covered his dreadlocks with his combat helmet, both preserved from his service in the Northern Rhodesian Regiment. But today

> he had festooned this sartorial drabbery with colour: green silk trousers and a heliotrope cape. The cameras would be filming in black and white, but it was important to suit oneself to the occasion. The Zambian Space Programme was about to make its television debut." (Serpell, 2019, p. 163).

In a separate essay, Serpell (2017) investigates the comical reception of Edward Mukuka Nkoloso, his Afronauts and how African aspirations are often viewed as spectacles that needn't be taken seriously; Serpell (2017) questions why the Zambian Space Program was imagined as satirical. This aspect of Zambian history inspired several Afrofuturist projects including the 2014 Frances Bodomo film *Afronauts* which speculated and reimagined the Zambian Space Program. Black aspirations of otherworldly or intergalactic experiences are introduced into the narrative and the very idea of their oddity challenged, doesn't the universe also belong to Black people? Why is this aspect of Zambian history erased and presented as a quirky moment that doesn't directly challenge the boundaries of Black aspirations? A significant part of Afrofuturism is its ability to allow authors to write into the absence and erasure of Black innovation.

4.3.4 Afrofuturism as progressive feminist theory

The character Matha Mwamba offers a unique examination of how significant Afrofuturism is to the development of feminist ideals. Similarly to Edward Nkoloso, Matha Mwamba is a real person, the only female member of the Zambian Space Program and is reimagined in the novel *The Old Drift* (2019). It is through Matha and the challenges that she faces solely because she is not male. These challenges alter her perception of her future as she finds inspiration and refuge in education, a resource that only men had access to, and while Matha was academically gifted, she goes through extreme lengths to achieve her goals,

> "One morning, Matha woke to the chill of a blade on the back of her neck. She flinched.

> ‘Stay still,’ her mother whispered.
>
> Matha obeyed. Her brother and sister were still asleep in a heaving tangle beside her. Their father was snoring on a mat by the door. It was dawn. The sunlight coming through the thatched roof was reddish, like when Matha’s fingers covered her eyes to count for hide-and-seek. Wood pigeons coolly greeted each other outside. Lying on her side on the packed mud floor, her mother’s hand pinning her down, Matha listened to the birds and to the scrape of the knife rising up the back of her skull, shaving the hair from her head.
>
> Two hours later, she was sitting in the back of a classroom at Lwena Mission.” (Serpell, 2019, p. 147).

Matha is forced to cut her hair and pretended to be a boy in order to get an education, because of her brilliance (as opposed to her brother), she embodies quite literally a sort of aspiration or projection of the future for her family as well as herself. It is incredibly interesting for this only to be achieved when she is perceived as being male. In an alternate reality, Matha is destined to be a cleaner at the school she attends just like her mother Bernadette. It is Matha’s taking charge of her destiny and her girl/womanhood that is Afrofuturistic, she projects her future on her current reality. Later on, Matha is found out by some of her male classmates and falls into a pattern of shrinking and diminishing herself in order to keep her place at the all-boys school; she intimidates her male classmates and is bullied into labouring for them in order to keep their masculinity intact,

> “She learned to temper herself in class: she never spoke up, never raised her hand to go to the board. She even inserted a few errors into her work, which only proved her cleverness – it’s not so easy to be believably wrong. She sat in the back of the

classroom, absorbing lessons and rumours, a quiet unsmiling repository." (Serpell, 2019, p. 150).

However, things seemingly take a turn for Matha when she is reunited with her childhood tutor Ba Nkoloso. Matha is the centre of the future, the Zambian Space Program is relying on her and her intelligence to accomplish their mission, to be the first in space. During an interview with international news networks, Matha expresses the program's plans for her,

"I hear you have been training to go into orbit. Is that so?'

'Yes, please,' she said politely. 'It is so. I am the one going to Mars.'

'You're way ahead of us!' Hoppe grinned. 'We don't have any girls at NASA.'

'Oh-oh? Is it?' she giggled, covering her mouth with her hand.

'Miss Mwamba,' he leaned in confidentially, 'I hear you have been raising twelve cats as part of your training? What is their function?'

'Yes, please. They are to give me companionship on the journey. But they are also' – she took a deep breath to get the pronunciation right – 'technological accessories.'

'Technological accessories?'

'Yes, please. When I arrive on Mars, I will open the door of the rocket and I will drop the cats on the ground. If they survive, we will know that Mars is fit for human habitation. Hoppe laughed. 'And what will you and your cats do on Mars?'

This answer she had memorised: 'Our telescopes have shown us that planet Mars is populated by primitive natives. A missionary will accompany me on my trip but the missionary must not force Christianity on the Martians if they do not want it" (Serpell, 2019, p. 168).

There is something about the way Serpell (2019) writes Matha into the centre from the margins. The Zambian Space Program highlights feminist sentiments that outline the patriarchal and societal challenges that Zambian girls and women faced in the 1960s, pre-Zambian independence. How women were instrumental in the struggle for Zambian independence is carefully explored in this novel as well as how they are amply erased. Matha is celebrated as a feminist icon in the future, only after undergoing terrible pain at the hands of the patriarchy is she able to rise up into her destiny. It is fair to question why girls and women have to be at the receiving end of patriarchal violence in order to grow and achieve their dreams; the novel is realistic in its examination of the systematic barriers women were confronted with in a colonised African country in the 1960s.

4.3.5 Medicine, the HIV epidemic and the use of Black people's bodies in science

Parallel to the conversation around technology and Blackness that the book introduces, a separate conversation around medicine, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its effects are discussed in *The Old Drift* (2019). This discuss also takes into account the experiences of sex workers in Zambia and how the virus, its relationship with Black people's bodies and how the speculative vaccine could be discovered in Africa, how it could be administered as well as its possible side effects. The character Lionel Banda enters the narrative as the mixed-race son of Agnes and Ronald Banda. Lionel grows up to be a medical doctor that experiments with HIV/AIDS patients to come up with a vaccine,

> "By the year 2000, fifteen per cent of the Zambian population was infected with The Virus – mostly women, mostly adults. And that was six years ago,' Lee said, shaking his head. The NGO workers and social scientists in the audience bowed over their scribbling pens. He could almost hear them thinking: Why won't these bloody *muntus* just stop fucking already?" (Serpell, 2019, p. 365).

This is particularly Afrofuturist because of its speculation; it imagines a future where the HIV/AIDS vaccine is discovered in Africa. Although the vaccine is later stolen and the work of Lee Banda, Dr Musadabwe (his research partner) and his son Joseph is erased. What is interesting is how *The Old Drift* (2019) places Zambian sex workers at the centre of the HIV/AIDS conversation; this highlights their struggles and their vulnerabilities as their profession is criminalised in the country. The exploitation of sex workers and how their bodies can be used for unethical medical experiments forms part of a significant dialogue that calls for a future that decriminalises sex work and affords sex workers protection from exploitation,

> "Things moved faster when Lee discovered Hi-Fly Haircuttery & Designs Ltd by chance a year later. Plying Sylvia with dinners and stories, Lee took samples from her and all of her 'salon girls' and followed their leads to other casual sex workers in the community. He began a side project of his own, an experiment of sorts, based on a hunch. Musadabwe ran some tests and after a year of sorting the data and sending samples to their collaborators in Kenya and South Africa, they confirmed the results." (Serpell, 2019, p. 369).

However, another aspect of the novel speaks to the aforementioned experimental/speculative condition of Black people's bodies and their use to advance medical research only to be discarded or have these developments forced upon them. This directly links to the previously outlined mosquito-drone administered vaccine during a political protest. The character Sylvia, a sex worker, is used by Lee Banda to develop a vaccine but is later cast aside and left to die destitute and poor. Although Lee Banda contracts the virus himself and passes it on to his wife and child, he is a middle-classed Zambian with access to many medical privileges that Sylvia does not have.

In a confrontation between Joseph and Jacob, the true extent of how invasive the HIV/AIDS vaccine trials on Sylvia's body are explored in greater detail,

> "Joseph looked at him. 'I've told you. Musadabwe and I are trying to cure it. We're scientists.'
>
> 'Scientists? Nts.'
>
> Joseph folded his damp arms across his chest. 'What word would you prefer? Doctors?'
>
> 'What do you know about doctors?' Jacob sucked his teeth again.
>
> 'Yes, of course. Africans know nothing about medicine,' Joseph said sardonically.
>
> Jacob pointed his finger in Joseph's face. 'I know your medicine is killing my mother.'
>
> Rage beat across the air between them. Standing across from each other in this dark room had kindled something. "Jacob. The Virus is killing your mother, not the medicine.'
>
> "Your father is the one who brought her to this clinic.'
>
> 'He did not take her away from you.' Joseph released the words one at a time.
>
> 'You people are using her!' Jacob shouted. 'For experiments!" (Serpell, 2019, p. 432-433).

4.3.6 Afrofuturism and global warming

The Old Drift (2019) details the beginning of environmental disruption from the very first pages of the novel. The history of colonialism on Zambian ethnic groups (especially the Tonga tribe) and how they were displaced because of the construction of the Kariba Dam. The book brings into the forefront the resistance to colonialism from the indigenous people of Zambia and the environmental effects of colonialism's insidious nature. Zambians that were converted to Christianity and the indigenous people of what would become Zambia were often facing off,

> "The villagers beat drums and threw rocks. They nailed misspelt manifestos to trees. They marched up and down in bare feet, imitating our police squadron, carrying spears on their shoulders as we carry rifles. Do you know how many spears were thrown? Hundreds! Not one policeman was injured. But eight bullets found their mark in the civilians.' Smith stood, put his hands in his pockets, and strolled over to the window. 'I dare say, Colonel, it was quite like Cain and Abel. Brothers murdering brothers." (Serpell, 2019, p. 76).

Global warming is referred to as "the change" in *The Old Drift* (2019), the character Naila, a descendant of Sibilla, the wife of Federico, a colonel in charge of the construction of the Kariba Dam. Serpell (2019) is able to loop the past with the future by documenting how consequential what happens in the past affects the future. The novel also speculates how these changes will be experienced and what technological inventions may be created to monitor global warming and counter or adjust to its changes, the app Tweather is explained as such,

> "Oh, like Tabitha's job at Tweather. Their tag line is something like "A Hive for The Change"
>
> Yes, a hive mind is the same concept. We used to use satellite imagery and meteorology to do the weather before The Change. But now that global warming has made the weather so erratic, it's more efficient for us to get live updates. So, we might say each person's tweet about the weather wherever they're standing in the world is like one neuron firing. Tweather gathers them together to create a shifting data map.'
>
> 'So Tweather is like the consciousness of The Change?'
>
> 'Yes. And Jacob's Moskeetoze have a kind of consciousness, too, because they communicate." (Serpell, 2019, p. 517-518).

Jacob's character also introduces us to the *E-Dumps*, a microcosmic digital compost heap that directly speaks on Africa and how the innovative minds on the continent are caught in the middle of advancing technology while the continent is being left to deal with the catastrophic effects of these advancements on the environment. *The Old Drift* (2019) also raises questions about what happens to our technology when it is no longer of use to us. What effects do electronic waste products have? The book also addresses concerns about race and class disparities, why is most electronic waste "disposed" of in poorer communities?

> "So-called E-Dumps had started to spring up all over Lusaka. These housed leftover gadgets, not from the rich, the apamwamba, the been-to class of Zambians, but from the places they had been to. America, South Africa, China, all of the countries that had run out of room to discard their obsolete and broken tech. These nations were now paying to ship their 'e-waste' to what they considered the trash heap of the world. Little did they realise they were jump-starting a second-hand tech revolution." (Serpell, 2019, p. 446).

Lastly, the novel ends where it begins, at the Kariba Dam. An amalgamation of all of these collective happenings in the novel, seemingly minute events as having catastrophic environmental and political consequences. The mosquitoes once again are a pivotal part of this exploration of climate change and the intersections between technology and Black people,

> "Those fiery young bolshies tried to blow up the dam and take down the government that way. But their blueprints were old, their calculations too tight, and they'd made no concessions to chance. Indeed, their mistake – their Error of Errors – was simply forgetting the weather. Tabitha had warned them all about The Change, and that season was ultra-disastrous. The rainfall that came was ten times the norm and the damned

wall was already failing. When the drones blocked the flue, the Zambezi pushed through, and Kariba Dam tumbled down after." (Serpell, 2019, p. 568).

4.4 Magical Realism in *The Old Drift*

As discussed, Magical Realism is a literary style and genre that depicts the realities of the modern/contemporary world with elements of magic, the fantastical, otherworldly and surreal. *The Old Drift* (2019) makes use of elements from this literary genre in an effort to tackle and engage with complex themes in ways that significantly contribute to the deeper meaning of the novel. Magical Realism is used to explore colonialism, repression, feminism and animism.

4.4.1 The ghost of colonialism

The Old Drift (2019) explores colonialism as a hauntological presence that insidiously infiltrates everyday life making it impossible to imagine a future without taking the past into account. The novel questions how we perceive our history and how this influences our choices therefore impacting the future. Hauntology, coined by French philosopher Jacques Derrida is a concept that grapples with the real-life effects of how "dead" or "lost futures" can haunt the present. It's a cross between the words haunting and ontology (Ashfor, 2019). A practical example of hauntology in an African context could be the noted failure of the post-apartheid "rainbow nation" fantasy. Mncube (2019) explains that while the post-apartheid democratic system delivered Black South Africans to some sort of political freedom however, the socio-economic disparities (poverty, inequality, unemployment) that still linger as a direct result of the previous racially and economically segregated apartheid regime. The promise of a post-racist South African utopia haunts the present, the undeniable inequalities are still a reminder of what could have been. The novel posits colonialism as this very *present* unseen entity of the past; characters like Agnes, Matha, Joseph and Naila wrestle with the traumatic hoverings of the past.

This adds a Magical Realist element to the narrative, juxtaposing how colonialism can distort reality and while the characters in the novel can exist in a post-colonial setting, the ghost of the past is unsettling and ever-present. Naila sums up how colonialism often adapts itself to the new-world order, often just replicating itself, eventually evolving into xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia and anti-Blackness that reinforces white supremacist rhetoric. For instance, the following conversation between Jacob and *God* although critical of neo-colonialism, mirrors xenophobic language

> "The foreigners are the disease. They are still in power.'
>
> 'That's superstitious nonsense,' Joseph clucked. 'You believe we're still under colonialism?'
>
> 'Me, I don't like the foreigners who come here. They just plunder our resources.'
>
> 'Most of the world doesn't even know who we are,' said Joseph. 'We're still very young, you know. This nation barely has a history or a working economy. We benefit from foreign aid." (Serpell, 2019, p. 427).

This haunting of the past is an otherly presence that exists alongside tangible reality, this is an important feature of Magical Realism, the ability of two contrasting liminal elements existing wholly in a singular realm.

4.4.2 Sibilla

Another way in which Magical Realism is used to investigate the intricacies of alternative realities is through the character of Sibilla. Sibilla is an Italian woman covered from head to toe (save some places) in long straight brownish-black hair. The hair is strange and inexplicable and in many ways is used to explore elements of repression, identity, self-regulation, femininity, resilience and perceptions of beauty,

> "The hair on her arms, legs and torso was longer. Every day, it grew until it matched her height – if you suspended it from her body, it would form a sphere" (Serpell, 2019, p. 25).

Sibilla is hidden away from the world in a secluded cabin throughout her childhood and it is only after a run in with danger when the narrative outlines the strange magic of her hair,

> "Mostro,' one boy said again and the others laughed, their breath feathering the air. Then she realised that she wasn't the only one shaking – they were, too, their laughter was shaking. They are feeling what I am feeling, she thought, and just then her hair began to rise." (Serpell, 2019, p. 35).

After this, Sibilla is moved to her paternal grandmother's home where she is still hidden, only coming out at night to entertain Signora and her friends. Her hair is an oddity, a spectacle and even in moments where Sibilla is exploited, she finds freedom,

> "This became what Sibilla did every night. As soon as she entered the salon, the air took on a quiet frenzy, a withheldness, as everyone waited for her to spin. Was that why she came? Or for a respite from the weight and shade of her hair? Or was it for the brothers Corsale with their steady hands? Every night, Sibilla would spin and stop and faint and wake to them – the Colonel with his moustache, the Sergeant with his codino. Every night, one would cut her from her soft tomb and the other would tend to her wounds. Afterwards, Sibilla would lie in a daze and ponder the difference." (Serpell, 2019, p. 44).

The way Sibilla's hair is shorn each day only to grow back the next, symbolises the regenerative properties of female resilience, a theme that shows up in the novel often. The cyclical nature of this ritual can also be linked back to the book's overarching cause and effect theme as later,

after her move to Zambia, Sibilla donates her hair to Sylivia's salon. Sibilla's excess straight hair is used to construct and manufacture wigs and weaves, something Black women use to assimilate to the white supremacist beauty standards that Sibilla herself cannot adhere to despite her whiteness.

Further complicating this link is her family's involvement in the construction of the Kariba Dam, a foundational colonial structure representing the displacement of many Zambians from their land. Gitter (1984) writes about women's hair in the Victorian imagination and while the context of Sibilla's hair is analysed from an African perspective, contextually, Sibilla is a European character whose move to Zambia sets into motion several key events in the novel. According to (Gitter, 1984), hair holds rich and complex meanings that can be ascribed to symbolic and magical powers. Sibilla's hair is intrinsically odd, its spellbinding effect on those around her can be read as unreal and magical, ultimately otherworldly. A deeper reading of Sibilla's chapters suggest how her hair acted as a disembodiment of her agency; being perceived as inherently undesirable, Sibilla was not able to explore her surroundings or even herself, her hair shielded her from the cruelty of the world but in many ways, her hair trapped her,

> "Being trapped in the cabin made Sibilla's hair restive. It undulated like gracile tentacles, and sometimes pythoned around her when she wasn't paying attention. She knew it wasn't out to destroy her, though. It protected her, kept her from coming undone, formed a roped arena for the spinning she had discovered inside her in the Signora's salon. If that inner whorl was a tornado, her hair was the vault of the sky – it held her to a horizon. But as her days of confinement dragged on, the tension between inner force and outer constraint grew. Waiting made it worse. Anticipation was an

enchantment: every creak was a footstep, every birdcall a greeting." (Serpell, 2019, p. 50).

4.4.3 Matha Mwamba

Serpell (2019) explores grief through the character Matha Mwamba. After her dreams at the Zambian Space Program are side-lined because of her pregnancy and her partner Geofrey's abandonment, the direct patriarchal violence that has plagued her whole life, abandonment leaves Matha in an endless fountain of tears,

> "She faded as her pregnancy swelled, her legs and arms thinning as if her flesh were gravitating towards the hub at her centre. Grace still left plates of food at the foot of her sleeping mat and emptied her bedpan each morning. But Matha's connection to other people diminished as her crying continued unabated, as she wept on for her compounded losses. Even as she slept, tears slid into her ears, seeping into her sinuses. Soon the inner membranes became so cushioned with salt that everything started to sound like pebbles clicking at the bottom of a river. Her lashes grew so tangled that they planted themselves in the pores of the swollen flesh around her eyes until, like Venus flytraps, they looked sewn shut. She could barely make out shadows and light through the mesh. Eventually, the weeping stole her voice too." (Serpell, 2019, p. 199).

Matha's tears act as a direct symbol of the trauma Matha experiences at the hands of the men in her life. Abandoned, her brilliant mind unutilised, Matha cries continually becoming known as "the crying woman of Kalingalinga". What is worth noting however, is how Matha chooses to cry rather than recalibrate her focus on raising her daughter Sylvia. Matha gives into the despair and grief that has entered her life. Because of this, she is able to find community with other women in the township, grief brings them together and in a roundabout way, Matha is still a central piece of something larger than her,

> "Soon everyone in Kalingalinga knew what it meant to see those thin horizontal tattoos gleaming white or pink on a mother's or a sister's outer thigh.
>
> The nine Weepers each had their own reason for crying. A philandering husband. A stillborn baby. An abusive brother. But Mrs Zulu did not care to hear why the women were sad and they did not dare share. As if they were at a never-ending funeral, they just gathered together to sit in the yard outside Matha's home and cry all day long, their sobs beating through the air." (Serpell, 2019, p. 208).

The stereotype of the "strong Black woman" that withstands abuse and adversity is disrupted by the introduction of this community of women (The Weepers) that meet and give into the difficulties in their lives, they are allowed in these moments to fall apart. Cole (2018) discusses how harmful this dominant stereotype is and how it comes at the expense of Black women's mental health, Serpell (2019) is able to highlight this and posits The Weepers as a therapeutic gathering that offers these women somewhat of a safe space.

4.4.4 The Mosquitoes

Animist Realism, a sub-category of Magical Realism is explored through the personification and narration of the mosquitoes, their centrality to Zambian culture and the theories of evolution that they present throughout the course of the novel. Harvey (2006) describes how "New Animism" suggests the participation of humans in a "pan-spiritism" that connects all living and non-living things. Harvey (2006) also introduces the possibility of a meta-communication between the different species. Spirit (anima) is the common denominator of all-natural beings (as cited in Wright, 2010). The mosquitoes therefore remind the reader of another presence and perspective that is a significant part of the narrative and the bigger idea that ultimately everything is connected,

> "Here's one more question: are we really a we? Or just a swarm in the swarm? Worse, is this me?! Was it the dread royal we all along?" (Serpell, 2019, p. 208).

Serpell (2019) uses the mosquitoes' narration to interrupt the flow of the narrative; the mosquitoes' chapters are cryptic puzzles that provide the reader with exposition.

4.5 African Mythology in *The Old Drift*

The Old Drift (2019) references several Zambian myths and folklore that tie into the larger narrative's themes. Mythology adds an additional layer of texture and depth to the novel. The setting, plot, conflicts, characters and themes of the novel revolve around several elements including in large part, mythology. Ancient mythological creatures, rituals and superstitions are discussed in the novel.

4.5.1 Nyami Nyami

The Old Drift (2019) pulls heavily from traditional Zambian folklore and mythology. This incorporation of Zambian mythology in the novel helps contextualise the narrative, establishing the links between the past, present and the future. This inclusion of Zambian mythology and folklore facilitates the advancement of the novel's plot as it is the basis for the realistic placement of Zambia as its focal setting; Zambian beliefs, superstitions, practices, rituals and urban legends are scattered throughout the narrative thus giving the novel an organic quality. The mythological aspect of the novel lends a particular eeriness to the story that helps drive home the underlying "cause and effect" theme that the narrative perpetuates i.e., how the effects of colonialism disrupted indigenous Zambian ethnic groups, their spiritual beliefs as well as their land. It is this link to mythology that suggests that some of the present effects of climate change can be attributed to colonial interference with indigenous land; the first major reference to Zambian mythology is through the mythological river god Nyami Nyami. Nyami Nyami is believed to have visited the Tonga and Lozi people that lived in the Zambezi Valley, the river

god is believed to provide protection, meat and blessings for his people whenever he appeared in the form of a fish faced and snake torso ancestral spirit (Faces of Africa, 2019). Nyami Nyami (sometimes written as Nyaminyami) is introduced into the narrative at the Italian's construction of the Kariba Dam in the 1950s. True to form, Serpell (2019) uses this historical fact to flesh out flesh out and reimagine the lives of the real people that existed during this time period. The displacement of the Tonga people due to the dam's construction and how these actions have catastrophic results that are linked to Zambian beliefs,

> "Sibilla knew, from Federico's scattered remarks that the Tonga did not want to leave their homes. Enela explained that, while most of the villagers had agreed to go after the police had come, the old people still wished to remain. They had the right, they said, to stay with the dead, even if they would all be drowned when the river flooded.
>
> 'The dead?' Sibilla asked.
>
> 'The dead are the spirits,' said Enela. 'But we also have the white God. And other gods – the animals. And Nyami Nyami, that is the god that is swimming in the Zambezi…'
>
> As Enela described this rivergod, with its serpentine body and whirlpool head, Sibilla's hair bristled under her shawls. She knew the African witch doctors sometimes decorated themselves with raffia. Did the Tonga think she was some kind of fetish, some animal spirit to be worshipped? Sibilla's suspicion grew when they reached the village, a cluster of mouldy thatched roofs held up by wooden poles, bundled goods here and there, ready to be transported." (Serpell, 2019, p. 75).

The book makes a stylistic choice to end the story where it begins. Sibilla, Agnes and Matha's descendants all meet at the Kariba Dam in a futuristic Zambia. Joseph, Joshua and Naila plan to blow up the grid that is located at the Kariba Dam and is the power source for the Digit-All beads that all Zambians have implanted in their bodies. History and the future collide at this

point in the novel and the looming threat of global warming hangs in the background as the starting point of all their ancestry confronts the consequences of the past in order to reconcile the future,

> "Instead of causing a simple malfunction, the drones had blocked the sluices completely. The waters had risen and tumbled over the dam. Beneath the boat, Nyami Nyami was tossing his whirlwind hair, arching his spiny necks. The Great Zambezi was flooding. Lake Kariba would soon become a river. The Dam would become a waterfall. And miles away, the Lusaka plateau, the flat top of Manda Hill, would become an island…" (Serpell, 2019, p. 563).

4.5.2 Witchcraft

Witchcraft is one of the dominating narratives amongst the Zambians in the novel. Circumstances and situations (mostly bad) are attributed to the work of witches and witchcraft. Mutuzi (2014) claims that African societies believe innately that misfortunes are fault of fellow human beings; these misfortunes include but are not limited to fertility issues, business failures, inability to progress professionally, sickness and may other issues. The novel highlights how witchcraft is a conscious belief in Zambian culture. Witchdoctors are referenced often and one of the main characters ailments are speculated to be linked to witchcraft, mainly Matha Mwamba. At first, Matha, a scientist, does not believe in witchcraft,

> "They bickered about whether witch doctors were any more rational than priests and whether the European census-takers were really blood-sucking wamunyama and whether a chief had more power than a queen" (Serpell, 2019, p. 148), but later in the story because of her non-stop crying, she is labelled as a witch and her endless tears are perceived as a direct result of witchcraft and the word *mfwiti*, a Chewa word for "witch" enters the narrative,

> "When the baby came, Grace made sure to fetch the midwife. The old woman stayed only long enough to catch and smack it, cut the cord, and rattle a prayer over the two sticky bodies. She knew new mothers sometimes fell into a spell of unbanishable sadness, but this was excessive and premature. This was, in a word, witchcraft. The midwife gathered her toolkit – a razor, scissors, thread, Dettol – and as she left, she cursed in Nyanja. 'Mfwiti!' she spat. The cube was ripe with the human tang of amniotic fluid, urine and blood, cut with the chemical smell of baby oil and Dettol. The sack curtain was raised – they had needed the whole room. Grace was washing the floor, muttering about the fate that had her cleaning not only the messes of bazungu, but those of her useless relatives as well" (Serpell, 2019, p. 199-200).

While the novel acknowledges these traditional beliefs, it juxtaposes them with their effects highlighting how problematic these beliefs can be without necessarily demonising how particular situations *can be* perceived as witchcraft in lieu of other explanations. In addition, this insertion of Zambian perceptions critiques why women are at the centre of these accusations suggesting that witchcraft is gendered and the misbehaviour of men attributed to something outside of them, beyond their control,

> "She (Matha) had never imagined that to be a woman was always, somehow, to be a banishable witch. Now, as her baby wept for hunger and as she herself wept distractedly – weeping was just what she did now, who she was – Matha felt that dawning shock that comes when you look at yourself and see a person you once might have pitied" (Serpell, 2019, p.201).

4.5.3 Zambian rituals

The characters Sylvia and Loveness introduce readers to a Zambian cultural practice known as *ku donsa malepe* or the stretching of the labia. Madlala (2013) explains this as a modification

of women's vaginas that can be juxtaposed to several modernised plastic surgery procedures that function to transform oneself into the "ideal woman". This practice however centres Zambian perceptions of beauty. Perez, Mubanga, Aznar and Bagnel (2015) state that this practice is common amongst East and Southern African women. The elongation of the labia is viewed as a practice that wields minor, short term adverse effects. Overall, social value is placed on the sexual benefits of the practice i.e., the enhanced ideas around Zambian women's femininity and their sexual self-image,

> "What does he mean, I'm still a little girl?' she complained to Loveness that evening.
>
> 'Maybe you haven't pulled enough,' Loveness shrugged.
>
> 'What do you mean, pulled?'
>
> Loveness told her all about it. How you have to pull your malepe until they stretch – as long as your thumb – so that with the right stimulation, they swell with blood and grasp the man's mbolo. 'It's simple,' she said.
>
> Sylvia stared at Loveness. 'Show me?'

And she did. The girls took off their chitenges and panties and sat facing each other, knees bent, thighs spread.

> 'Like this,' said Loveness. Later, she showed Sylvia how to use Vaseline and *umuthi* juice from *impwa* to ease the pulling, and gave her a splitted stem to wedge the labia open. Sylvia was late to this and it burned at first. But it soon became her favourite game: to sit knee-to-knee in the sweet, yeasty funk of the brick hut and pull with Loveness, gazing at her lips, the pink inner flesh bared like a fruit bursting from its peel" (Serpell, 2019, p.237).

Serpell (2019) explores how young Zambian woman relate to their bodies and their sexualities; this is linked to the ways in which Zambian practices and rituals influence the way young

Zambian women view themselves in the bigger scheme of things, the reader discovers this "rite of passage" and alternative way of relating to Black girlhood outside of the confides of the white gaze is explored.

4.5.4 Conclusion of *The Old Drift*

The Old Drift (2019) explores themes of fate, colonialism, climate change, technology, human error, identity, feminism, politics, science and gender through the main nine characters of the novel i.e., Sibilla, Agnes, Matha, Sylvia, Isabella, Thandiwe, Joseph, Jacob, and Naila as their lives and fates collide over the course of about a hundred and forty-five years. Starting off in pre-colonial Zambia, the novel chapters shift through a small village in Italy before finally playing out in post-colonial/futuristic Zambia; Serpell (2019) explores the implications of the past on the future, making critical points about the concept of time. The social commentary is delivered through the use of some Magical Realist elements; Sibilla's hair and Matha's endless tears are embodiments of consequence, the character's physical states take on frightening and odd forms to engage perceptions around repression, shame and misogyny; the politics of womanhood (Black, white and brown) are explored through these characters. *The Old Drift* (2019) maps out the legacy of colonialism through its commentary on the interactions between the settler colonialist descendants and the indigenous Zambian characters; the narrative carefully outlines the evolution of race and racism through the ages, deconstructing how blatant the effects of colonialism still are in a hauntological fashion. From the initial colonial disruptions to the technologically advanced future Zambia grappling with climate change and possible political dictatorship, the novel discusses the insidiousness of racism and how it shapeshifts through time eventually intersecting with technology, medicine and the environment. Serpell (2019) highlights the factual Zambian history (the Zambian Space Program and the forgotten psychedelic Zamrock music scene of the 1970s) making the novel a piece of archival fiction. Zambian folklore and myth intertwine with the historical, Magical

Realist and Afrofuturist aspects of the novel positioning the narrative and its characters at the centre of these complex concepts. Nyami Nyami the rivergod is linked to the Kariba Dam which is linked to colonialism and climate change as well as the technological interruptions that come with the future. Zambian rituals (elongation of the labia) are an entry point into discussions about sex work, HIV/AIDS research and the future of vaccinations through the interlinking of Sylvia, Lee Banda, Joseph and Joshua while witchcraft, mental health, feminism and the dangers of superstitions are unpacked through several of the characters Matha Mwamba. From an Afrocentric perspective, the novel is a critique on the past, a source of social commentary for the present and an informed warning of what is to come. The narrative centres Black characters, relating them to their traumas and oppression without excluding them from the discussions around the construction of the future. Serpell (2019) criticises the individualistic logic by weaving together a tight web of complex and intergenerational connections through the detached, objective and animist gaze of a swarm of mosquitoes.

4.6 Summary of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* by Marlon James

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) is a novel by Marlon James that follows the main queer protagonist known only as Tracker; the story follows Tracker throughout several (often magical) African kingdoms as he works with several other werefolk, witches, giants and possessed spirits to find a missing boy, a divine child destined to alter the course of the thirteen kingdoms forever. The narrative draws heavily from African history, African Mythology, Magical Realism and Afrofuturism to create a unique world that challenges perceptions of an uncolonised African, ancient tradition, politics, power, ambition all wrapped up in fantastical adventure. The novel is divided into six parts, each exploring different African civilisations, characters, beasts, mythical creatures and introduces readers to an array of almost a hundred different complex, powerful and distinct characters that exist in a highly expansive and unique

Africa universe. The book explores African queerness, magic, non-binary perceptions of good and evil, friendship, violence and ancient African folklore that erases colonial boundaries and does not stick to Western story telling expectations whilst redefining the limits if African imagination.

4.6.1 Afrofuturism in *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

A significant characteristic of Afrofuturism is its capacity to allow Black creators to reimagine and speculate different worlds that are not directly linked to colonialism or the Western gaze. One of the most outstanding things about *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is how Marlon James' world building completely sidesteps westernised concepts of Africa and instead recreates, reimagines and positions Africa as a completely uncolonised territory. James (2019) centres what could have been and the challenges the characters face are not a direct response to colonialism. The narrative does not divest from the idea that an uncolonised Africa was unproblematic, rather, it explores and confronts those problems and suggests some solutions.

4.6.2 Time

Temporal exploration of black experiences is a central characteristic of Afrofuturism. Blackness has a unique relationship to time; time frames determine how Black people, Black life, Black experiences are perceived; the question here is by whom? More often than not, the answer is the white gaze. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) conceptualises time from an African perspective. The language used to express the passing of time is African, a deviation from the Gregorian calendar,

> "How old are you in moons?"
>
> "My father never counted moons." (James, 2019, p.19-20).

Furthermore, characters in the novel count using yet another pattern that still uses ten as the base number but differs greatly from how people count today,

> "She went missing with five gold rings, ten and two pairs of earrings, twenty and two bracelets, and ten and nine anklets." (James, 2019, p. 5).

On a more significant level, James (2019) introduces the concept of portals. The ten and nine doors are portals scattered throughout the novel's thirteenteen kingdoms that are magically linked and have the ability to transport all who pass through them across space and time. This introduces the concept of African technologies that operate in conjunction with traditional African magic creating a world where it is possible to metaphysically transport characters from one end of the thirteen kingdoms to another,

> "The wisdom of mathematics and black arts. Nobody travel four moons in one flip of a sandglass, unless they move like the gods, or they using the ten and nine doors."
>
> "And this is them," I said.
>
> "All of them." (James, 2019, p. 390).

Another distortion of time in the novel occurs when Tracker, on a mission to rescue Leopard, Fumeli and Sadogo enters The Darklands. Using one of the ten and nine doors, they are able to escape the Mad Monkey and his poison however, in Kongor, Sogolon alerts Tracker of how much time has passed; what felt like a single night for him in The Darklands was actually a full month outside of the possessed forest,

> "Your mind not here yet. Three times now I say to you that journey around the Darklands take three days, and we take four."
>
> "Only one night passed in the forest."
>
> Sogolon laughed like a wheeze.

"So we come three days late," I said.

"You lost in that forest for twenty and nine days."

"What?"

"A whole moon come and go since you gone into bush."

And perhaps this, like the last two times she said it, was where I threw myself back down on the rugs, stunned. Everything not dead had twenty-nine days—a whole moon—to grow, including truth and lies. People on voyages have long returned. Creatures born got old, others died, and those dead withered to dust in that time. I have heard of great beasts who go to sleep for cold seasons, and men who fall ill and never rise, but this felt like someone stole my days and whoever I should have been in them. My life, my breath, my walk, it came to me why I hate witchcraft and all magic.

"I have been in the Darklands before. Time never stopped then."

"Who was keeping time for you?" (James, 2019, p. 246).

4.6.3 The Centring of African history and African futures

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) as a text deliberately subverts western ideas around African histories and speculations of African futures. James (2019) recalibrates the focus of Eurocentric narratives and ideas of Africa and Africans and instead constructs a world that speaks to the African reader. What is even more interesting is the word "Africa" does not appear in the novel at all. The world James (2019) creates, sidesteps European naming, it directly confronts the anthropological Eurocentric gaze that insists on attributing understanding and meaning of the other through the independent naming of the other and the other's experiences. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) introduces this decolonial aspect of Afrofuturism, the practice of actively undermining ethnocentric narratives about the continent and its history. James (2019) is able to write a complex African narrative based on existing African history, this reimagining African literature exercises one of the key features of Afrofuturism, speculation,

"It stood there looking at us like a child. Cut from the hardest wood and wrapped in bronze cloth, with a cowrie in its third eye, feathers sticking out of its back, and tens of tens of nails hammered into its neck, shoulders, and chest.

"Nkisi?" I asked.

"Who show you one," the Sangoma said, not as a question.

"In the tree of the witchman. He told me what they were."

"This is nkisi nkondi. It hunts down and punishes evil. The forces of the otherworld are drawn to it instead of me; otherwise I would go mad and plot with devils, like a witch. There is medicine in the head and the belly."

"The girl? She just had troubled sleep," I said.

"Yes. And I have a message for the troubler."

She nodded at Giraffe Boy, who pulled out a nail that had been hammered in the ground. He took a mallet and hammered it into the nkiski's chest.

"Mimi nguvu. Mimi nguvu. Mimi nguvu. Mimi nguvu. Kurudi zawadi kumi."

"What did you do?" I asked.

Giraffe Boy covered the nkisi, but we left it outside. I held the girl to put her down and she was solid to the touch. The Sangoma looked at me.

"Do you know why nobody attacks this place? Because nobody can see it. It is like poison vapor. The people who study evil know there is a place for mingi. But they do not know where it is. That does not mean they cannot send magics out on the air."

"What did you do?"

"I returned the gift to the giver. Ten times over." (James, 2019, p. 57).

4.6.4 Afrofuturist Architecture and the construction of the future

The fourth part of the novel places Tracker, Mossi, Sadogo, Sogolon and the Buffalo in the territory of Dolingo, still in search of "The Boy". A significant portion of this chapter in the

novel imagines an incredibly complex tribe of blue skinned Doligons who live in an advanced and high futurist forest of tree houses that use gear and rope mechanisms to keep the city expanding into a terrifying collection of futuristic skyscrapers,

> "Light flickered from some windows and blazed bold from others. The trunk rose dark, and continued even higher, past more clouds, where it split like a fork. On the left, what looked like a massive fort, huge plain walls with high windows and doors, another floor on top, and another floor on top of that, going on and on for six floors, with a deck on the fifth and a platform hanging off, held by four ropes that must have been as thick as a horse's neck. At the very top, a compound with the magnificent towers and roofs of a grand hall. On the right, the branch went unadorned as high as the forts, with a one palace on top, but even that palace had many floors, planks, decks, and roofs of gold. Clouds shifted, the moon shone brighter, and I noticed that the fork had three necks, not two. A third branch, thick as the other two, and dressed with buildings finished and buildings being built. And a deck that stretched longer than all others, so far that I thought it would soon break off. From the deck hung several platforms, pulled up and down by ropes "What number of slaves did it take to pull them? And what kind of now was this, what kind of future, where people built high and not wide? On top of, but not beside each other? Where were the farms and where were the cattle, and without them what did such people eat? Farther out in the great expanse, seven more towering trees stood high, including one with massive shiny planks that looked like wings, and a tower shaped like a dhow sail. The other, the trunk pointed slightly west, but the structures shifted slightly east, as if all the buildings were sliding off the base. From branch to branch, building to building, ropes and pulleys, "platforms, and suspended wagons moving to and from, above and below.
>
> "What is this place?" Mossi said.

"Dolingo." (James, 2019, p. 410).

Ross (2020) confirms how Afrofuturistic architecture can revitalise Afrocentric communities and their perceptions of the future; African readers can therefore reimagine what architectural advancements from African perspectives and designs can look like. However, a disturbing yet critical aspect of how Dolingo is constructed is its use of slaves to keep the city structures operating; in conversation with the Ogo, Tracker and Mossi explain why Dolingo is so efficient,

"All these ropes, coming from nowhere and pulling everything. Foul magic."

"Slaves, Ogo," Mossi said." (James, 2019, p. 438).

The Dolingon Empire can be viewed as a microcosmic examination of past and present capitalist structures that rely on the exploitation of Black labour to advance and benefit the upper-class. The future and its advancement are presented as a thing that cannot exist unless some Black people are physically and economically exploited. This forces the reader to examine if alternative ways of advancing society can exist without slaves. While Blackness literally powers the world, how can a future exist or be assembled without the reliance of Black exploitation?

4.6.5 Magic

The Afrofuturist aesthetic (James, 2019) in the novel *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) helps establish the novel's characters in their fictional world. The characters possess supernatural or magical powers that are juxtaposed with a real-life setting and transport the reader to another reality through the text. This helps contextualise the characters, their choices and the plot thus placing the story in an alternative reality therefore subscribing to Afrofuturistic ideals. Some characters can shapeshift, summon spirits, bring the dead back to life, control minds, etc. It is

not often that we read about African characters outside of the colonial or post-colonial narratives. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) gives the African characters powers that enable them to exist outside of the ideas around the powerless African in constant need of aid. The characters strengths are dominant features of the narratives and their weaknesses are not attributed to their Blackness but rather attributed into character flaws that can be addressed through character development in the story,

> "The Leopard did not sleep on the house floor, not even when he was a man. Each evening he climbed farther up the tree, and fell asleep between two branches. He changed to man mid-sleep—I have seen it—and did not fall out." (James, 2019, p. 52).

4.7 Magical Realism in *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

From the onset, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) establishes itself a novel that uses some of the core characteristics of Magical Realism to not only build but, communicate complex and nuanced themes that assist in the advancement of the general plot of the narrative. One of the first establishing plot points is Tracker's journey to the underworld in search of a queen's philandering king,

> "By sunset men and women and beasts were moving in and out of sight, appearing in the shadows, disappearing in the last sunrays, appearing again. I sat on the steps of the largest castle and watched them as sun fled the dark. Men, walking beside women, and children who looked like men, and women who looked like children. And men who were blue, and women who were green, and children who were yellow, with red eyes and gills in the neck. And creatures with grass hair, and horses with six legs, and packs of abadas with zebra legs, a donkey's back, and a rhinoceros's horn on the forehead running with more children." (James, 2019, p. 11).

The novel without warning, launches the reader into a strange world that still tethers itself to reality. No explanations are provided, this is simply just how the universe Tracker inhabits is. Furthermore, there is a way in which the Magical Realism in the narrative exists outside of the constructs of colonial imagination. It is strange, unnerving and immersive, firmly situating itself in an alternate reality that is still familiar. Much like Amos Tualola's *The Palmwine Drinkard*, James (2019) subverts the way we perceive the reality of the Black people in the narrative. They exist in this world and while there isn't a list of rules that dictate how this reality functions, what the characters experience is believable and familiar.

4.7.1 Ghosts and the Supernatural

Black Leopard Red Wolf has a very thorough and interesting relationship with ghosts and the supernatural. The novel does not build up into a spectre filled narrative. Instead, it establishes from the earliest of chapters how commonplace supernatural occurrences are in Tracker's universe. There is an ongoing conversation with the concept of ghosts in the narrative. They are significant to the characters in the novel and they symbolise direct links between the living and the dead and their ability to communicate with one another. One of the most important ghosts in the novel, is the spirit of Tracker's father who appears to him as a voice in a tree,

> "The spirit in the upper branches of this tree was my father talking to me. Telling me to kill for my own brother. And the village knew. They came to my uncle's house to ask. The old women sent word with the children, When will you avenge your brother? The other boys asked me as they taught me to fish. When will you avenge your brother? Each time someone asked the question, the question had new life. After years of wanting to be nothing like my father, I now wanted to be him. Except he was my grandfather; I wanted to be like my grandfather." (James, 2019, p. 31).

Characters are disturbed and followed by the ghost of their pasts. The Gangatom tribe holds on to death of their tribesmen and revenge is an important aspect of honouring their lives. Asanbosam, a monstrous flesh-eating creature follows Tracker and Leopard in an effort to avenge his dead brother, the blood thirsty Sasabonsam. It can be argued that these aspects of the novel are hauntological in their application because as a consequence of (some character's) past actions, the very act of being pursued disrupts the present. Most of the characters in the novel are haunted. Sadogo is haunted by the ghosts of the many people he executed and is plagued by nightmares. The plot revolves around the murder of the elder Basu Fumanguru, the Kwash Dara is haunted by the ghost of his sins and the ghost of the murdered Sangoma protects Tracker. Furthermore, towards the end of the novel, one of the ghosts that haunts Sogolon possesses the body of a young Venin,

> "That is between we and the gods, not you, body thief," Venin-Jakwu said.
>
> "You was always an ungrateful, stinking piece of dog shit, Jakwu. Killer and raper of women. Why you think I give you that body? One day all of that you do will happen to you."
>
> "The body had an owner," I said. (James, 2019, p. 466)

In an analysis of Toni Morrison's Beloved, Selvakkumar and Seraman (2013) explain how ghosts in Magical Realism texts offer an alternative to an existing reality. Ghosts in literature can be understood as post-colonial, undermining Eurocentric accounts of reality. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is rich with the description and exploration of the supernatural. These elements add a different dimension to the novel, creating a perception of Tracker's world that is in symbiosis with the otherworldly and non-human entities. Part of Africa's relationship with reality is its acknowledgement (through myth and folklore) of the supernatural. Riddle (2020) explains how supernatural elements are a commonality in African culture. They provide pathways in which social and psychological anxieties about the unknown can be explored. The

supernatural entities can therefore represent metaphorical embodiments of larger concepts and themes or they can simply be a natural addition or extension of the narrative. A key presentation of the supernatural in *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is how it incorporates witchcraft and witches into the story not just as an oddity but as an integral part of the novel's universe. Sogolon, the Witchman of the Ku, The Mawana Witches and even the Sangoma who is described as an anti-witch are instrumental characters to the plot of the novel. In addition, the landscape between the thirteen territories of The Northlands that Tracker and his fellow hunters travel possess supernatural qualities. The enchanted woods, the Darklands, the ten and nine doors, the tower in Malakal with no doors, the Mweru, Chipfalambula amongst many others,

> "Mist split the light into blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and a colour I did not know was purple. One hundred or 101 paces down, the trees all bent in one direction, almost braiding together. Trunks growing north and south, east-west, shot up, reached down, twisting into and out of each other, then down on the ground again, like a wild cage to hold something in or keep something out. Kava jumped on one of the trunks, bent so low that it was almost flat with the ground. The branch was as wide as a path, and the dew on the moss made it slippery. We walked all the way on one trunk and jumped down to another bending below it, moving up again, and jumping from trunk to trunk, going up high, then down low, then around so many times that only on the third time did I notice we were upside down but did not fall.
>
> "So these are enchanted woods," I said." (James, 2019, p. 46)

The seamless merging of the worldly and other worldly are a staple in the novel, a lot of the characters have supernatural gifts and powers. Some of these powers are gifts from the dead for example Trackers invulnerability to metal weapons and his wolf eye. Tracker also has a powerful nose that he uses to track down people for bounty. The Leopard in the book is a

shapeshifter that can change form between a man and beast, Fumeli is an expert bowman, The Aesi can travel through dreams and can control the minds of those he visits in dreams, Sadogo has superstrength, the Sangoma can cast protection spells and can communicate with ancestors while Sogolon can summon spirits and winds. (James, 2019).

4.7.2 Horror and Magical Realism

Another element that accompanies the Magical Realism in *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) and in many ways amplifies it is the element of horror. James (2019) describes violent scenes vividly; in conjunction with the supernatural and otherworldly concepts in the book, horror is used to communicate the various high-stake and petrifying realities of the otherworldly. The frightening ethereal aspects of the novel transport the reader to a strange and foreign world that houses menacing creatures and terrifying situations,

> "The boy wouldn't nod, the boy wouldn't talk, only cry and eat and watch the door. Her four sons including Makhang and Saduk say, Who is the strange boy, Mother, and where did you find him? The boy will not play with them so they leave him alone. All he do is cry and eat. Nooya's husband was working the salt pits and would not would not be back till morning. She finally get him to stop crying by promising him millet porridge in the morning with extra honey. That night, Makhang was asleep, Saduk was asleep, the other two boys were asleep, even Nooya was asleep, and she never sleeps until all her boys was under the one roof. Hear this now. One of them was not asleep. One of them get up from the mat, and answer the door though nobody knock. The boy. The boy go to the door that nobody was knocking. The boy open the door and he come in. A handsome man he was, long neck, hair black and white. The night hide his eyes. Thick lips and square jaw and white skin, like kaolin. Too tall for the room. He wrap himself in a white-and-black cloak. The boy point to rooms deep in the house. The handsome man go to room of boys first and kill the first son to the third son and the

> floor was wet from blood. The little boy watch. The handsome man wake the mother by strangling her throat. He lift her up above his head. The boy watch. He throw her to the ground, and she is crippled with pain and she whimpering and screaming and coughing and nobody hear. She watch when he bring out the fourth son, the smallest boy, the little dormouse, holding his sleepy head up. The mother trying to scream no, no, no, no, but the handsome man laugh and cut his throat. She screaming, and screaming and he drop the fourth son and move in for her. The boy watch." (James, 2019, p. 140-141).

In a discussion about African American folklore, Magical Realism and horror in Toni Morrison's novels, Preister (2019) explains how there exists another layer of psychological complexity to Magical Realism. The mystery between the vagueness of some supernatural elements of a narrative and superstition are what make Magical Realism terrifying; it is the uncertainty of the otherworldly, horror and Magical Realism can therefore be considered as different sides of the same coin.

4.7.3 Animism

While investigating how Magical Realism usually manifests in African literature; animism was identified as one of the main ways in which African writers incorporated Magical Realism into their narratives. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is littered with animism and animistic qualities for different purposes. In the following passage, James (2019) introduces shapeshifting hyena sisters who subvert our ideas around gender,

> "I looked into the dark for the male who pissed on me, but no man came. But the two naked women came in the little light, and I saw it on both of them. Long cocks, or what looked like cocks between their legs, thick and swinging quick. "Behold, it looks at us," the middle one said.

> "Look at hyena womankind, longer and harder than you," the young one said." (James, 2019, p. 177).

The hyena sisters in the novel are an embodied confrontation of how we associate genitalia with gender, the oddity of the female phallus has been investigated, (Wilson, 2003, p.75) discusses this link describing how the hyena "as representation is also instructive because of its function as focal point for the negotiation of gender anxiety. While both ancient and modern texts depict the hyena as sexually aberrant in a variety of ways, it comes increasingly in modernity to figure a specifically female deviance from gender norms." The sexual violence that Tracker experiences is therefore presented as more traumatic due to the its very nature, essentially because of the form the hyena sisters take.

There are endless references to animism in the novel, the shapeshifting Leopard, the arrival of the Buffalo character that does not shapeshift but possess a human-like self-awareness, the spiritual symbolism of the animal hallucinations in The Darklands and the wolf eye that the Sangoma ghost gifts Tracker after his run in with the hyena sisters or the character Nyka who at one point sheds his skin like a snake. James (2019) injects animism into the narrative constantly, there seems to be an ongoing reminder of how human life is intrinsically connected with nature.

4.8 African Mythology in *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

A huge portion of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is constructed on a foundation of African Mythology and ancient African history. A barrage of different African cultural myths, beliefs, rituals and creatures are used in conjunction with one another to create a world Tracker and the other characters in the novel have to navigate.

4.8.1 African spirituality, religion, witchcraft and traditional African practices

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) borrows heavily from ancient African spirituality, religion and practice; the narrative discusses witchcraft alongside these concepts to pose philosophical ideas around the meaning of life, identity and belonging. James (2019) speculates about the significance of these concepts and each character faces an existential problem. Tracker deals with reconciling his Ku origins as well as his self-proclaimed disbelief of "the gods" even when surrounded by otherworldly beings that possess supernatural or godly powers,

> "You blaspheming the gods?"
>
> "Blaspheming means you believe."
>
> "You don't believe in gods?"
>
> "I don't believe in belief. No, that is false. I do believe there will be antelope in the woods and fish in the river and men will always want to fuck, which is the only one of their purposes that pleases me." (James, 2019, p. 65-66).

The book also functions as a showcase for ancient African beliefs, religions and practices. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) posits an African society that functions outside of western theological constructs. The tribes and people of The Northlands navigate these ideas and James (2019) is able to speculate how a non-colonial African society would experience or explore spirituality and religion,

> "These elders, they say it and sing with foul mouths that a man is nothing but his blood. Elders are stupid and their beliefs are old. Try a new belief. I try a new one every day." (James, 2019, p. 35).

Furthermore, witchcraft is positioned as 'other' even in an African society that does not use Judeo-Christianity as a framework to regulate what is "good" or "bad". Witchcraft is still somewhat a taboo; however, the concept is not invalidated. There is a recognition of witches and witchcraft and their functionality in The Northlands. What's more interesting is how James

(2019) presents witchcraft as a sort of feminist construct; the character Sogolon is a moon witch and although she exists outside of traditional constructs of African womanhood, Sogolon engages Tracker and all the other male/male adjacent characters in critical discourse around what she is expected to do and not to do by virtue of being perceived as "woman folk". Sogolon has snappy one-liners that contextualise how male characters often speak to women especially considering the setting and plot of the novel,

> "What a day when a man tell me what to do. Will you not speak of the child? […]
>
> "What a day when I care what a man believe." (James, 2019, p. 250).

The narrative also creates substantial links between African ancestral beliefs, ritual and cultural practice. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) creates an expansive world that presents African culture not so much as a monolith but as a concept not tethered to restrictive colonial borders. It is not uncommon for the novel to reference Ghanaian folklore with Southern African spiritual practices. Many rituals from different African territories are referenced in the novel, one of the more significant is the discussion of male circumcision. What is also compelling is how African ritual provides a foundation for the novel chooses to explore gender and sexuality,

> "I did not tell him that I was a man already.
>
> "You have seen them. Boys running around, smaller than the men who came back to the village."
>
> "What boys?"
>
> "Boys with red tips, the female cut off from the male."
>
> I did not know what he was talking about so he took me outside. The sky was gray and fat with waiting rain. Two boys ran past and he called at the taller one, his face red, white, and yellow, the yellow a line in the middle of his head going all the way down. Remember, my uncle is a very important man, with more cows than the chief, and even some gold. The boy came over, shining from sweat.

"I was chasing a fox," he said to my uncle.

My uncle waved him closer. He laughed, saying the boy knows he has the mark of the end of youth, and wants the village to know. The boy flinched when my uncle grabbed his balls and cock as if to weigh them. Look, he said. The paint almost hid that the skin was gone, cut away, leaving the bold blossom tip. In the beginning we are all born "of two, he said. You are man and you are woman, just as girl is woman and she is man. This boy will be a man, now that the fetish priest has cut the woman away, he said.

So stiff was this boy, but he tried to stand proud. My uncle kept talking. "And the girl must have the man deep inside her cut out of her neha for her to be a woman. Just as the first beings was of two." He rubbed the boy's head, sent him away, and went back inside." (James, 2019, p. 25).

Murray and Roscoe (1998) critique traditional ethnocentric anthropological examinations of African sexualities suggesting that western understanding of myth and African sexuality be abandoned as they are constructed through colonial systems that were disruptive. James's (2019) exploration of ancient African sexualities and gender reclaims these beliefs and the narrative outlines how progressive ancient African sexualities and genders were. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) also provides a critical perception of patriarchal African beliefs. Tracker's misogyny is not attributed to his sexuality, instead, he is confronted about his problematic ideas about women are challenged,

"Maybe you bear hatred for women."

"Why would you say that?"

"I've never heard you speak good of a single one. They all seem to be witches in your world."

"You don't know my world."

"I know enough. Perhaps you hate none, not even your mother. But tell me I lie when I say you always expected the worst of Sogolon. And every other woman you have met."

"When have you seen me say any of this? Why do you say this to me now?"

"I don't know. You can't go inside me and not expect me to go inside you. Will you think on it?"

"I have nothing to think—"

"Fuck the gods, Tracker."

"Fine, I shall think on why Mossi thinks I hate women" (James, 2019, p. 479-480).

Another aspect of traditional African beliefs that James (2019) confronts is how harmful some superstitions were. The *Mingi* children in the novel are such a significant part of the narrative as they explore how children born with disabilities, ailments and oddities are cast away and demonised,

"The boy is mingi, also the dead girl. In his mouth, you saw two teeth. But they were on the top, not bottom; that is why he is mingi. A child whose top teeth come before bottom teeth is a curse and must be destroyed. Or else that curse spreads to the mother, the father, the family and brings drought, famine, and plague to the village. Our elders declared it so."

"The other one. Were his teeth also—"

"There are many mingi."

"This is the talk of old women. Not the talk of cities."

"What is a city?"

"What are the other mingi?"

"We walk now. We walk more." (James, 2019, p. 39).

The romatisation of pre-colonial Africa as this utopia negates to examine the problematic and oppressive aspects of some African cultures and beliefs; the subjugation of women, prevalence of gender-based violence and dangerous ritualistic practices is explored in this novel to a significant extent.

4.8.2 Story Telling Traditions and Language

The format of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) pulls from oral story telling traditions that are intrinsically a part of African culture. Tracker narrates the book to a figure referred to as "Inquisitor" and true to oral story telling practices, the stories Tracker tells snake in and out of each other, go off on tangents, implore the use of parables and riddles and eventually circle back to the main point of the "lesson" of the story. Sackey (1991) explains that the significance of African traditional oral poetics plays in the growth and development of African literature; this tradition is flexible and deviates from conventional novel structures thus Africanising the novel form. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) makes mention of the Southern Griots and important plot points are engineered and introduced into the story through griots,

"I it is who is speaking
I am a southern griot
We now few we was once all
Hide in dark I come out of
The wilderness, I come out of
The cave, I come out and see"

I was looking for
A lover
I want get
A lover

I did lose

Another

I want get

Time make every man a widow

And every woman too

Inside him

Black like him

Black that suck through the hole in the world

And the biggest hole in the world

Be the hole of loneliness

The man lose him soul give it 'way

For he was looking for

A lover

He want get

A lover

He did lose

Another

He want get

A man when he eat like glutton

Look like a man when he starve

Tell me can you tell one from two

You glutting by day

Then you starving by night, yeah

Look at you, fooling you

You want find

A lover

You want get

A lover

You did lose

Another

You did lose

A lover

You did lose

A lover

You did lose

Another

You did lose" (James, 2019, p. 398-399).

Panzacchi (1994) outlines the role of griots in Africa; how they were traditional praise-singers, musicians, social go-betweeners, counsellors, dancers and acrobats, they were the keepers of histories and genealogies; an integral part of African history and its preservation, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) highlights this.

4.8.3 Ancient African and mythological creatures

As discussed, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) explores a multitude of different African cultures; beliefs, traditions and practices. The narratives also imploys the use of ancient African

creatures from an array of different African cultures all across the continent. The Sangoma (Southern Africa), The Mingi (Southern Ethiopia), Asanbosam and Sasabonsam (Southern Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire, Togo and Jamaica), Yumboes (Senegal), Zogbanu (West Africa), Chipfalambula (Mozambique), Ghommids (Yoruba folklore), Tokoloshe (Southern Africa), Ibeji (Yoruba folklore), Ipundulu (South Africa) and Eloko (Central Africa). Young (2019) explains how mythological creatures found in folklore and mythology serve different functions in literature. Every culture has its own set of mythological creatures in their folklore. However, James (2019) does not limit the scope of the mythological creatures included in the narrative. What is interesting about the way James (2019) uses these ancient African mythological creatures is how they interact cross culturally. A Sangoma from Southern African crossing paths with the Yumboes of Senegal and the Mingi of Southern Ethiopia adds an extra layer of imagination to the novel. This borderless implementation of African mythology is decolonial in its reluctance to be limited.

4.8.4 Conclusion of Black Leopard Red Wolf

The novel Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) is the first volume in the Dark Star Trilogy by author Marlon James. The novel follows the main character Tracker as he navigates the violent and magical labyrinth of the thirteen kingdoms. The narrative is constructed on ancient African Mythology.Characters rub shoulders with ancient beasts like the Yumboes (bush fairies that are the guardians of Mingi children), Zogbanu trolls that live in blood swamps, the bone white Ipundulu vampire, Sasabonsom, the Adze and the Aesi. The novel uses elements of horror and Magical Realism to tell a disturbing story that explores themes of destiny, ambition, power, greed and violence. Using his super power (heightened sense of smell), Tracker and his companions travel through enchanted forests, haunted Darklands, sand seas and even through time altering portals in search of the kidnapped rightful heir of the thirteen kingdoms. James (2019) constructs a narrative that acts as a source of ancient African documentation that uses

Afrofuturist praxis to undermine the constant use of colonialism to shape African narratives. The novel speculates about an untainted Africa, providing an honest commentary on the problematic aspects of pre-colonial Africa whilst highlighting the rich socio-cultural aspects of the era. African politics and science are also the focus of the novel and advanced African communities like the Doligons are the basis for conversations around power, intra-African slavery and capitalism. Animism is a significant part of the novel; the relationship between human characters and animals is explored with the two sometimes embodying each other through shapeshifting werefolk (Leopard and the Hyena Sisters) and the overly sentient Buffalo. Ghosts, witches and spirits are common encounters in the novel and the otherworldly add these supernatural perceptions in the novel that create mystifying effects on the reader, transporting them through a multitude of realities. Spirituality, religion and belief are discussed in the novel and philosophical arguments are posed through the main character Tracker as he confronts his identity. The novel is narrated through the mimicking of the ancient African oral story telling traditions, using verse, parables, riddles and forgotten languages to recount the adventures of the characters in the story. Cultural practices like circumcision are linked to the spiritual; experience of gender and sexuality; James (2019) explores queer relationships in Ancient Africa and their normality through Tracker, Leopard, Mossi, Fumeli and Kava; this can be considered a critique on the imported homophobic sentiments of post-colonial evangelical Christianity on the continent. Characters like Sogolon, Nsaka Ne Vampi and Lissisolo of Akum challenge the patriarchal structure of the magical and ancient African kingdoms offering varying critiques to perspectives of the realities of womanhood in a society that normalises sexual and physical violence against women and children. The novel is decolonial in its approach, steering clear of African literary tropes, instead, using Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology to create a story that engages with African characters

outside of colonial constructions. James (2019) builds a new African world from the ground up, using all these concepts as the basis for a narrative that considers the African gaze.

4.9 Discussion

The following section is a comparative analysis of how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) use the genres Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in their novels *The Old Drift* and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* respectively. This section aims to address the research objectives established in the first chapter of this study i.e., to analyse how elements of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are used by the aforementioned authors from an Afrocentric perspective; establish how these genres explore and challenge African literary epistemologies when used by African writers; explore how the Afrocentric perspectives promote an alternative understanding of Africa that does not consider harmful Eurocentric ethnocentric perspectives. In order to analyse the two novels, the compare and contrast method was implored to discuss the thematic strategies and genre specific concerns that are explored in *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019). This analytical discussion therefore examines the similarities and differences in the novels with very specific focus on the ways these narratives use the aforementioned genres. The analysis aims to critically uncover the ways in which these genres affect the plot of the novel, introduce themes and provide social and cultural commentary of the past, present and the future. This method of analysis according to Walk (1998) could possibly be considered the critical examination of two similar things with critical differences or two similar things with critical differences that possess surprising commonalities. This study will therefore compare the two novels by outlining these similarities and differences and provide a conclusion.

4.9.1 Discussion on how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) use Afrofuturism in their respective narratives *The Old Drift* and *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

One of the primary focuses of the study was to analyse the ways in which Afrofuturism as a genre is used by Serpell (2019) in the novel *The Old Drift*. A key aspect of the Afrofuturist objective is speculation, Bacon (2020) explains how speculative fiction subverts reader expectations emphasising how writers of colour are able to discuss ideas Black futuristic dystopias, myths and African epics noting however how Black speculative thought and literature is still a developing genre. Bacon (2020) reviews *The Old Drift* (2019) claiming that the novel takes an Afrofuturistic gaze at colonialism while confronting the complexities of converging cultures through Zambia's history and Zambia's possible future. Serpell (2019) weaves together a narrative that follows the lives of nine characters over the space of 145 years while Zambia acts as the dynamic backdrop for which a number of themes are explored in the novel. Serpell's (2019) novel is a commentary on the impacts of racism and colonialism on Zambian people and Zambia's environment. The narrative also uncovers the thin veils between people's actions and the consequences that follow throughout their lineages; time does not create a distance between actions and consequences. *The Old Drift* (2019) reminds readers of how human beings are unendingly linked. Naila, the "politically Black" descendant of Sibilla and Federico does not know the extent of her family's involvement in the very violent history of the Italian capitalism and colonialism as well as the devastating impacts on the environment. A conversation with Joseph's grandmother Agnes reveals this,

> "I mean, Kariba Dam has been failing for years, men. That is politics.'
>
> 'The dam is failing because of gravity and The Change, not capitalism! The plunge wall—'
>
> 'But why hasn't it been fixed? Where did the money for fixing our infrastructure go?'
>
> 'To be sure,' said Agnes. 'Kariba Dam was cursed from the start. Thousands of people were displaced in the building of that dam.' She slowly ran her knife back and forth over a grey lump of beef, making it wriggle obscenely. 'The Italians did that.'

> ‘The Italians?’ Naila frowned.
>
> Agnes paused her sawing and turned her head in increments towards Naila, as if her sharp nose were the hand of a clock. ‘Yes. The Italian company that built the dam. Impresit.
>
> “Right,’ Naila muttered. She knew that her grandfather, who had died before she was born, had worked at Kariba Dam but she had never learned its history.” (Serpell, 2019, p. 523).

This awakens a more radical Naila, committed to deconstructing the cis-heteronormative white supremacist patriarchy. The novel is built on speculations like these, it asks the questions, “what would happen if…” The narrative highlights the role of Black feminists in the construction of a truly post-colonial Zambia i.e., the future. Matha is the only female afronaut and because of the very real effects of patriarchal disruption, she spends a majority of her time in the novel mourning her youth only to remerge a feminist icon, her past as one of Edward Nkoloso’s protégés at the Zambian Space Program is taken into account and celebrated. At the centre of where the soon to be realities of Black technological surveillance and technology, is Matha and her cohort of “The Weepers”,

> “Matha Mwamba’s court case dragged on – no one had been harmed but a vaccine clinic had burned down. Government did not take kindly to acts of terrorism, especially when the accused expressed no remorse. The story stayed in the news like a TV serial: Kalingalinga Bombers. Banakulus of The Revolution. International organisations took an interest and made Matha a human rights martyr. A media outlet called Chronics got an interview with her on the inside – ‘Local Churchwoman Reignites Cha-Cha-Cha’ – and when she mentioned an organisation called the SOTP, the word raced across the country like flame along a gas-soaked string” (Serpell, 2019, p. 535).

In the novel, Serpell (2019) pulls from Afrofuturist elements in the story's constant questioning of the "what ifs". In this way, Serpell (2019) writes into the absence of narratives that examine Black lives and Black livelihood in the future. The non-linear structure of the novel mimics the way human consciousness functions, jumping from one memory to another, constantly unearthing meaning and creating links. What makes the novel unsettling is how it realistically depicts and speculates the future. The novel is critical of technological advancements and questions how these changes relate to the ways in which Black people might have to navigate the future. The narrative brings up valid concerns; it questions the ethics of technological advancement and makes it a point to highlight the socio-economic disparities that influence how the evolving digital and technological landscapes will affect Black people. Serpell (2019) discusses the links between science and politics; pointing out how technology can be used to advance political agendas. There is a catch-22 here, on one hand the importance of technology is denoted while the jarring dangers of said technology and its proximity to Black people is unpacked, Joshua's storyline in the novel discusses the complexities of these realities in depth, juxtaposing his impoverished background with his innovative gifts and the eventual co-opting of his inventions by the Zambian government. The novel deals with the duality of concepts; history and the future, destiny and free will, cause and effect, race and post racialism. Afrofuturism in the narrative becomes a means for which Serpell (2019) constructs the possibilities of the future; taking the past's influence into account.

On the other hand, James's (2019) narrative is Black Afrofuturist imaginary in praxis; the book is the testament to the reclamation and construction of African stories; one can also approach *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) as a decolonial text. It takes some of the fundamental aspects of Afrofuturism and practically applies them to the narrative. Freeman (2018) affirms this notion, stating that Afrofuturist praxis is liberatory in its disregard of the perceived aspirations,

possessions and entitlements that encode the expressions of oppressed people and their identities; Afrofuturists therefore create and self-actualise a future social reality that creates safe spaces for Black people. James (2019) completely prioritises the African narrative; truly assembling a story that does not respond to whiteness but instead crafts a narrative that exists outside of its gaze. Blackness is not discussed in an othered context, it is not defined in the context of whiteness, it is rather, the default. *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is decolonial and futurist in its insistence on centring historical African fiction and alternative narratives that shift the Black imaginary from the margins to the centre; the focus is therefore on constructing a literary work that builds a fantastical African society that exists outside of the Western imaginaries that limit the ways in which Black people create. The narrative itself explores an interesting assembly of otherworldly characters that possess magical powers; this positionality of the super-human African re-writes the stereotypical and often ethnocentric idea of what an African in African literature can look like. Deme (2009) critically analyses how supernatural factors in African epics have not been fully explored or examined; ethnocentricity has historically denied the existence of the African epic because of its incorporation of the supernatural (Bowra, 1964, as cited in Deme, 2009). What makes *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) an epic Afrofuturistic adventure is these characters, their powers and their motivations as the navigate a reimagined complex African kingdom; these characters simply do not exist to just push forward the plot of the novel but are explored as multifaceted characters with complex flaws, motivations and abilities that lead themselves to the construction of a experimental and alternate African narrative that disrupts conventional ideas around what African literature is and can be. Furthermore, *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) also distorts time and distance; the ten and nine doors portal as well as various magical elements in the novel help facilitate the story as a futuristic tale that navigates a complex plot and introduces metaphysical and scientific components that deviate the narrative from normative literary

structures that can be limiting to African writers. The novel also explores the magnificence of African architecture, an aspect of African actualities that is often ignored in favour of the regressive ethnocentric ideas around the inability of Africans to construct advanced architecture,

> "I stepped to the door and it opened without my touch. That made me stop and look around, twice.
>
> The balcony outside was a thin platform, maybe two footsteps wide, and loose, with rope as high as the chest to stop drunk men from falling to their ancestors. Behind this tree, two trees stood, and behind them several more. My head was scrambling for a bigger word than vast, something for a city as large as Juba or Fasisi, but with everything stacked on top and growing into the sky instead of beside each other and spreading wide. Did these trees still grow? Many windows flickered with firelight. Music came from some windows, and loose sounds running on wind: eating, a man and woman in quarrel, fucking, weeping, voices on top of voices creating noise, and nobody sleeping.
>
> Also this, a closed tower with no windows, but where all the ropes carrying caravans came in and out. The Queen was right when she said Dolingo did not run on magic. But it ran on something." (James, 2019, p. 422).

The narrative also has quite a progressive exploration of queerness and sexuality; James (2019) highlights how ancient African societies had complex ideas about gender and sexuality that were disrupted and erased by colonialism, the novel is a peek into what an African future that considers reconciling and rediscovering these ideas about sexuality can look like, non-binary characters with gender neutral pronouns are not considered an oddity in the novel, queerness is contextualised and understood from an African perspective,

> "Watching the new men and women in the bush. Luala Luala, the people above the Gangatom, have man who live with man like a wife, and woman who live with woman like a husband, and man and woman with no man or woman, who live as they choose, and in all these things there is no strangeness," he said." (James, 2019, p. 35).

4.9.2 Discussion on how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) use Magical Realism in their respective narratives *The Old Drift* and *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

The narrative of *The Old Drift* (2019) shifts and folds through various genres throughout the text creating an intricate web of storylines, themes, motifs and symbolic moments that connect the characters in the book with Zambian history and possible Zambian futures. The realistic and fantastical merge in the novel and animism as explained in the literature review is a significant feature in African literature. Serpell (2019) narrates the novel from an animist gaze and the swarm of mosquitoes that eerily recite obscure plot points and inject a foreboding and mysterious atmosphere periodically in the narrative, hinting of a much larger mystery yet to be uncovered by the reader. The mosquito narration opens and closes the novel, creating a complete loop in the story that mirrors the life cycle of all things on earth and on a deeper level speaks to the effects of global warming on the environment inferring on how intricately we are all connected,

> "*We are here, too, in this warm, wet future. What keeps us going? Our arthropod flesh or our solar-strip skin? Perhaps it's the same old difference. The best kind of tale tells you in the end, unveils the unsolvable riddle. Wait! Did you hear that? Don't leave us just yet! They're suddenly all speaking through us – Naila and Jacob and Joseph, their parents, and all of their ancestors, too – with a crackling noise like old radio waves, here is their terminal message:*

Time, that ancient and endless meander, stretches out and into the distance, but along the way, a cumulative stray swerves it into a lazy, loose curve. Imagine the equation, or picture the graph, of the Archimedean spiral. This is the turning that unrolls the day, that turns the turns that the seasons obey, and the cycle of years, and the decades. But outer space too, that celestial gyre, the great Milky Way, turns inward and outward at once. And so we roil in the oldest of drifts – a slow, slant spin at the pit of the void, the darkest heart of them all." (Serpell, 2019, p. 568).

Magical Realism is used as a tool to convey complex symbolism in the novel. The strange and fantastical in the narrative act as a means for which the haunting effects of colonialism and racism are confronted. The past is therefore constantly present, ghostly in its permanence, giving way to a hauntological examination of colonialism, insisting on pointing out the jarring effects of the past and how they cannot be ignored. (Saleh-Hanna, 2015) considers a feminist hauntology, analysing various literary texts starring that the term ghost neither confirms nor denies the metaphysical but instead acts as a framework for which fear, grief, unrest, guilt and injustice can be summoned and confronted in an effort to liberate us from the restlessness of the past. Another aspect of Magical Realism is explored through the character Sibilla; what is interesting about the oddity of this character her strangeness interacts with the world. It represents a form of repression and is a springboard for which conversations around Eurocentric beauty standards and femininity intersect. The cyclical nature of how the past is in constant dialogue with the future is in the symbolism of the way Sibilla eventually rids herself of her hair and how this provides Black women in the novel a way to assimilate into a post-colonial Zambia that requires them to adorn symbols of white femininity (straight hair) in order to assimilate into society,

"Ten years later, and the Africans are still thirsty for hair. And Zambia is a good-good country. The politics do not interfere with business here.' (Serpell, 2019, p. 286).

Sibilla is able to shave off what oppresses her and hand it over to Black women, as an illusion of liberation. This tradition of passing down oppression from one person to another is continued with Sibilla's granddaughters Naila, Gabriella, Lilliana and Contessa,

> "What are you made of?'
>
> Every once in a while, one of the girls tried to give a different answer: water, bone, snow, sugar, animal, vegetable, mineral. But Mother did not want innovation. She simply waited until each girl gave the correct sound-off[...]
>
> 'Hair.'
>
> 'Hair.'
>
> 'Hair.'
>
> 'Hair." (Serpell, 2019, p. 309).

What was once a source of repression and shame for Sibilla is now a source of capital as Isabella takes advantage of the anti-Black demand for European beauty standards in Black women. The novel makes a commentary on identity here, interrogating the two perspectives of the descendants of colonisers and the colonised. The novel asks the reader to investigate the ramifications of colonialism and the blatant lack of accountability of such violence (the warping of one's ideas of beauty) thereafter.

Matha Mwaba's character in the novel is used to explore grief; her endless tears became a glaring reminder of how violent and traumatic the patriarchy is. Matha exists at various intersections; she is a Black woman, a scientist, an activist and therefore experiences misogynoir and racial injustice. Matha is discarded in the novel when she is no longer of use to specific characters and as a result falls into a perpetual grief that cannot be ignored. Because Black women are perceived as being strong enough to withstand abuse and mistreatment, Matha's tears disrupt this narrative and directly confront this myth; how this affects her

daughter and later her grandson link back to the cyclical nature of things– a theme the novel communicates to the reader,

> "For days, Matha cried. She lowed and keened and fell silent and wept. For days on end, she watched, through the warped lens of salt water, the dawning and setting of the curtain over the door, the pattern of thicketed birds dissolving as night fell and emerging line by line when the sun rose. Her eyes and nose grew swollen. Her cheeks were hot and taut, webbed with dry salt. The threads in her throat were an utter tangle. She relinquished herself to gravity, the cradle of its heavy arms." (Serpell, 2019, p. 196).

Matha is the point at which a lot of the main issues the novel converse, (Witte, 2015) Magical Realism is presented as normal to characters in stores; the oddities and magical aspects of a narrative blur around the edges and readers interrogate whether something like that (magical in its suspension of our disbelief) can distort our perception of reality could actually happen? Further, Bundy (2012) explains how Magical Realism self-defines as an indefinite, liminal space that allows us to explore and question the physical properties of the material world.

As discussed by Allman (2018), Magical Realism uses magical elements to make a point about reality; societal, familial, mental and emotional realities are questioned and the prose in the narrative forces the reader to ponder about what is real and by virtue, expands our ideas about what is possible. From the onset of the narrative *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) is built on the fundamentals of Magical Realism; constantly distorting reality, subverting and simultaneously constructing our ideas on the world that Tracker and the other characters in the novel have to navigate. Magical Realism assists with the world building of the novel, complicating the ways in which we understand how the character's interact with their environment; the book guides the reader through the thirteen kingdoms of The Northlands with each territory posing new magical and fantastical threats and thus the world building of the novel imbed Magical Realism into the narrative and the odd and otherworldly elements of the novel become commonplace,

a natural extension of the story. James (2019) pulls on the elements of Magical Realism to create the overall aesthetic and mood of the novel; the book has an intense relationship with magic that is not blatantly explained, characters like The Aesi possess distortive abilities that tap into the psyche of some characters; The Aesi is eerie and while he is the Kwash Dara's chancellor, his non-humanness adds an unsettling magical quality to his existence,

> "The one who visits you in dreams. Skin like tar, hair red, when you see him you hear the flutter of black wings."
>
> "I don't know this man."
>
> "He knows you. They call him the Aesi. He answers to the North King."
>
> "Why would he visit my dreams?"
>
> "They are your dreams, not mine. You have something he wants. He too might know that you have found the child."
>
> "Tell me more of this man."
>
> "Necromancer. Witchman. He is the King's adviser. From an old line of monks who started working secret science and invoking devils and were thrown out of the order. The King consults him on all things, even which direction to spit. Do you know why they call Kwash Dara the Spider King? Because in everything he moves with four arms and four legs, except two of each belong to the Aesi." (James, 2019, p. 312).

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) is filled with characters that tether with the otherworldly; witchmen, bush fairies, shapeshifting mermaids, zombies, heart reading spirits, malformed mind reading twins, indigenous vampires and monsters; these characters shape the reality of the novel thus calling on the reader to interrogate their own realities; how much are the weird and unearthly things are experience shape by our own imaginaries as our reluctance to confront the idea of our proximity to the unknown. This insistence on pathologizing our experiences into contexts that require scientific explanation is critiqued here– sometimes things just are;

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) routinely reminds the reader of this. Animism is a significant part of the story; the relationship between the main characters, spiritual realms and animals is in constant conversation in the narrative; The Buffalo character is an illustration of this conversation,

> "Here is truth: The Buffalo was the greatest of companions. In Kongor even old women slept late, so the only souls on the street were those who never slept. Palm wine drunkards and masuku beer fools, falling down more than they got up. My eye jumped over to their side each time we passed one of them, looking at them looking at a near-naked man walking alongside a buffalo not the way some walked with dogs, but how men walked with men. A man flat on his back in the road turned, saw us, jumped up, and ran right into a wall.
>
> The river had flooded the banks four nights before we came, and Kongor was an island again for four moons. I marked my chest and legs with river clay, and the buffalo, lying in the grass and grazing, nodded up and down. I painted around my left eye, up to my hair and down to the cheekbone.
>
> "Where are you from, good buffalo?"
>
> He turned his head west and pointed with his horns up and down.
>
> "West? By the Buki River?"
>
> He shook his head.
>
> "Beyond? In the savannah? Is there good water to be had there, buffalo?"
>
> He shook his head.
>
> "Is that why you roam? Or is there another reason?"
>
> He nodded yes.
>
> "Were you called upon by that fucking witch?"
>
> He shook his head.

"Were you called upon by Sogolon?"

He nodded yes.

"When we were dead—"

He looked up and snorted.

"By dead I mean not dead, I mean when Sogolon was of a mind we were dead. She must have found others. Are you one of her others?"

He nodded yes.

"And already you have sharp thoughts about how I dress. I must say you are a particular buffalo." (James, 2019, p. 269-270).

Tracker is able to discern that the Buffalo and its essence and its consciousness are important and valuable; the Buffalo is not cast aside as simply another animal but instead respected and acknowledged as an equal colleague in the quest for the missing boy. In addition to this, the leopard, the shapeshifting hyena women, Tracker's wolf eye and Chipfalambula all serve important roles in the novel, they act as vessels for which sexuality, gender and the interconnectivity of human, plant, animal and spiritual life is connected. Places in the narrative also significant; the Mweru, the Darklands and the Hills of Enchantment all possess an ethereal quality that perpetuates the animism in the novel,

"He smiled and said,

"True, you cannot leave the Mweru without either dying or going mad, a goddess with revenge towards me made it so, unless there is one beyond magic to lead you out. But what shall I get for it?" (James, 2019, p.600).

Elements of horror also lend themselves to the Magical Realism of the book' the very idea of confronting the otherworldly and the unknown dangers of said worlds is disturbing. The novel

does not shy away from the frightening encounters the main characters have with these otherworldly beings, an example of this is when Tracker and leopard have an encounter with the vampire Sasabonsam,

> "I likes the flesh
>
> And bone
>
> Sasa like blood
>
> And seed. He send we you.
>
> Ukwau tsu nambu ka takumi ba
>
> I spun. No one. I looked in front, the boy. The boy's eyes open, I did not notice before. Wide open, screaming at nothing, screaming for us being too late. Ukwau tsu nambu ka takumi ba. I knew the tongue. A dead thing does not lack a devourer. The wind shifted behind me. I spun around. He hung upside down. A huge gray hand grabbed my neck and claws dug into the skin. He squeezed the breath out of me and pulled me up into the tree.
>
> I don't know how long my mind was black. A vine snaked itself across my chest and around the trunk, around my legs and around my forehead, leaving my neck clean and belly open. The boy hung right across, looking at me, his eyes wide open, searching. His mouth still open. I thought it was his death pose, the last scream that did not come out, until I saw something in his mouth, black but also green. The gallbladder." (James, 2019, p. 79).

Onoh (2017) explains how African horror can encompass several sub-genres like supernatural horror, demonic or occult horror and sci-fi horror; a thing which some parts of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) utilises periodically in the narrative. Magical Realism is an integral part of the book, it allows for the exploration and direct confrontation of abstract concepts that combine the unnerving peering into the unknown in order to uncover the ways in which Black

people are in constant communication with nature and the vastness of the disembodied and unknown.

4.9.3 Discussion on how Serpell (2019) and James (2019) use African Mythology in their respective narratives *The Old Drift* and *Black Leopard Red Wolf*

African mythology, specifically Zambian mythology plays a significant role in the novel *The Old Drift* (2019). The use of Zambian legends, folklore, superstition and mythology adds an extra component to the novel's focus on Zambia. The folklore around Nyami Nyami, the river god angered by the construction of the Kariba Dam links Zambian history to Zambian mythology, suggesting that the devastating deaths of the local and foreign workers on the Kariba's construction site were a direct consequence of the rivergod's contempt. The mosquito narrators highlight this,

> *"You can't trap a river,' the Tonga replied, 'much less the mighty Zambezi, which is ruled by a god with the head of a fish and the tail of a snake. Nyami Nyami will undo your work.'*
>
> *Omens unheeded, the bazungu proceeded with their foolish and damnable plan. They rescued the animals – 'Operation Noah' – then drove the Tonga off in tightly packed lorries. The people were banished from their homes to a land with no marshes, no river – the soil full of lead, the wood full of smoke, the ground as hard as a rock. Nyami Nyami's curse had barely begun."* (Serpell, 2019, p. 78).

This narrative is reintroduced at the end of the novel, this time suggesting that the spirits and the rivergod of the Kariba Dam return once again to sabotage Naila, Joseph and Joshua's plans,

> "Instead of causing a simple malfunction, the drones had blocked the sluices completely. The waters had risen and tumbled over the dam. Beneath the boat, Nyami Nyami was tossing his whirlwind hair, arching his spiny necks. The Great Zambezi was

> flooding. Lake Kariba would soon become a river. The Dam would become a waterfall. And miles away, the Lusaka plateau, the flat top of Manda Hill, would become an island…" (Serpell, 2019, p. 563).

Global warming is a looming throat on this novel and ancient Zambian beliefs around the destruction of the symbiosis of human life, plant life and nature point to climate change as the planet's revenge on the human lives too concerned with capitalism to preserve and be one with nature. This insertion of Zambian mythology also acts as a stand in for a larger conversation. The disruption of Black lives, Black culture and Black beliefs in place of a foreign belief system; colonialism is critiqued, considered unnatural and inherently as evil that will plague the Zambian people for generations to come. There is a space where climate change and mythology meet; Trapero (2020) discusses the climate change crisis i.e., global warming, pollution of water, air, land and the loss of diversity and compare it to Prometheus, the eternally punished titan from Greek mythology. There is a line of thought here that suggests a forewarning of climate change in African Mythology attributing the disintegration of the planet to angered gods. It is after all not uncommon for rituals to be conducted to appease the gods in order to deal with droughts, locusts and environmental disruptions that affect the livelihood of indigenous people. Christian (2014) speaks on the ecology of African traditional practices to the impacts of climate change stating that nature is indispensable in African religious practices therefore anything that affects nature, affects African religion; rainmaking rituals, farming belief systems, soil fertility, traditional ceremonies and ceremonies, traditional medicine production have all been affected by climate change. The novel's main theme is cause and effect and the juxtaposition of environmental change and its effects on the future are investigated in the narrative. In addition to this, other Zambian rituals (like the elongation of the labia), witchcraft, superstition and their links to sexuality, grief and mental health are also

dissected in the novel. HIV/AIDS and its impact of Zambians and their belief systems is also addressed in the novel,

> "The Virus was still taboo and his wealthy patients sometimes seemed more desperate to keep their status under wraps than to stay alive. They paid him generously not just to administer imported ARVs, but to remain discreet about it too. Even the promise of anonymity hadn't convinced them to try experimental therapy." (Serpell, 2019, p. 368).

Serpell (2019) is able to outline the ways in which belief evolves; tracing the key events of personal and societal change back to their origins, colonialism and the underdevelopment of Africa as a result of this. Mythology acts as another avenue for which Serpell (2019) examines society, endless links are established and characters navigate their realities with decisions informed by these belief systems that later affect other people i.e., cause and effect.

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) is based on ancient African history and a variety of mythologies from across the continent. James (2019) tackles ideas around African spirituality, introducing readers to characters that have very specific ideas around mysticism and religion; the basis for which is African Mythology,

> "Ten and seven years I studied in the ithwasa, the initiation to become Sangoma," she said.
>
> I went to the top hut this and every morning when I felt her calling me. Smoke Girl ran up my legs and chest and sat on my head. Ball Boy bounced around me. Sangoma was feeling the beads of a necklace she had buried three nights before, and whispering a chant. The boy she used to suckle kept running into the wall, walking backward, running into the wall, again and again, and she did not stop him. The day before she told the Leopard to take me out and teach me archery. All I learned was that I should try something else. Now I throw the hatchet. Even two at the same time.

> "Ten and seven years of purity, humbling myself before the ancestors, learning divination and the skill of the master I called Iyanga. I learned to close my eye and find things hidden. Medicine to undo witchcraft. This is a sacred hut. Ancestors live here, ancestors and children, some of them ancestors reborn. Some of them, just children with gifts. Just as you are a child with gifts." (James, 2019, p. 68).

James (2019) explores queer relationships in historical African context, examining the intimacies of male friendships from ancient African beliefs,

> "I will never be a man?"
>
> "You will be a man. But this other is in you and will make you other. Like the men who roam the lands and teach our wives woman secrets. You will know as they know. By the gods, you might lay as they lay." (James, 2019, p. 26).

African mythology is constantly referenced in the narrative and James (2019) is able to construct a fictional world where all these ideas and beliefs are actively explored; African cultural practices became the basis for which the plot advances. Belief informs actions and actions have consequences, the quest for the rightful king of the thirteen kingdoms and the events that lead up to his loss are uncovered by Tracker and form the foundation of the story's plot,

> "Lissisolo don't know it but ten and four day pass her in the dungeon. Her brother come to see her, wearing red robes and a white turban that he place a crown on. No chair in the cell, and the guard hesitate when Kwash Dara point at him to go down be on four, like the donkey, so the King can sit on his back.
>
> "I miss you, sister," he say.
>
> "I miss me too," she say. Always too clever but not clever enough to know when to blow out that wick so she don't shine too bright around a man, even if the man be her brother.

He say to her, "Differences we have and will have, sister. That is just the ways of blood, but when trouble comes, when ill fortune comes, when just bad tidings come, surely I must stand by my blood. Even if she betrayed me, my sorrow is her sorrow."

"You have no proof that I betrayed you."

"All truth rests with the gods, and the King is the godhead." (James, 2019, p. 378-379).

The format of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) uses the African oral storytelling technique where narrated stories are passed down from generation to generation through word of mouth, their meanings evolving through the passage of time. Characters speak in parables, riddles, spells, incantations and ancient tongues; this adds a uniquely African storytelling quality to the narrative as it mirrors the unreliable, sporadic way we communicate with one another, an aspect of oral storytelling that weaves together seemingly unrelated stories that are eventually contextualised, and adding greater meaning to the main plot or narrative. One of the most significant chapters of the story is narrated in verse, a griot sings a cryptic tune that provides the reader with exposition and plot, introducing another perspective of the events in the novel,

"And the day come when he turn to go

And he stagger, and he fall, and he say

Come with me or I will fall in the bush

And Mossi go, and the children go

and even me go for Tracker say, Don't act as if you

don't belong to this house

And in this way

Tracker and his kin set off for his mother

What a sight we must be in Juba!

But that is not the story

For Tracker stagger ten times before we get to the gate.

And Mossi hold him up ten times strong

So they get to the door

and a girl open the door who look like him

that is what me and Mossi think

And she don't say nothing, but she let them in

and jump out of the way when the Ball Boy

roll through, and the Giraffe Boy had to duck

and in a blue room

she sit

looking old and weak but her eyes look young

When did he die? Tracker ask.

When a grandfather was supposed to die, she say.

And he look at her like he have something to say

And his mouth quiver like he have something to say

And Mossi start to move we out of the room

like he have something to say

But Tracker stagger again and this time he fall

And she stoop down and touch his cheek

"One of your eyes didn't come from me, she say

and what come out his mouth was a wail

And he wail for his mother

And he wail for his mother

And night come for day

And day come for night

And still he wail.

Hear me now,

I stay in the monkeybread tree ten and nine moons.

The day I was leaving the children cry,

and Mossi hang his head down low

and even the Wolf Eye said, But why do you leave your home?

But a man like me, we are like the beast,

we must roam,

or we die.

Listen to me now.

The day before I leave,

A black Leopard come to the tree." (James, 2019, p. 531-532).

Black Leopard Red Wolf (2019) uses African Mythology for the foundation from which the novel's plot, characters, symbols and motifs are presented and explored. Creatures from ancient African myths and legends like Yumboes, Zogbanu, Ghommids and Ipundulu, African superstitions about children born with disabilities (the Mingi), ancient science, mathematics and politics are the basis for which the larger story is told. Jaja (2014) states that African myth and philosophy is a continuous reflection attributed to the experiences of ancestors; the intellectual foundation for the particular ways people think, the socio-cultural and economic thoughts of a people. African realities, African experiences and the understanding of these experiences are all aspects of an African philosophy. African myths contextualise African cultures, ideas around death, creation, evolution and man's relationship with the environment.

4.9.4 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed and critically engaged with the two texts after investigation *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019). The study revealed that Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are all considerably effective genres that, when used by African authors, are able to shift perspectives and subvert expectations on what African narratives can be. While both authors used all three genres, it is worth noting how each writer chose to discuss similar themes in different ways. Both of the narratives show how these genres are important for the development of African narratives that aim to construct literary work that centres African experiences that speak to reconciling history, folklore and the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study comparatively analysed the use of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in the novels *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) by Namwali Serpell and Marlon James respectively. The main focus of the study was to produce a critical analysis of how both authors use the aforementioned genres and concepts to explore and challenge stereotypical ideas around African narratives. The study also used an Afrocentric analytic framework in order to contextualise the contents of the novels from a perspective that centred African viewpoints and interpretations. Therefore, this chapter summarises the main concepts, themes and ideas that are addressed through the research's critical analysis of the two novels. The study utilises a comparative qualitative analytical desktop investigation of *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) and *The Old Drift* (2019). This chapter discloses if the main objectives of the study were met and also provides a summary of each chapter whilst detailing the limitations of the study as well as a list of recommendations.

5.2 Conclusion

One of the primary objectives of the study was to critically analyse and engage with the ways in which genres could be utilised particularly by African, African American, Black British, Afro-Caribbean and African diasporic writers to construct alternate narratives that explore specific themes that are intrinsically linked to the lived experiences of Black people. This analysis was conducted through a comparative analysis of the works by Serpell (2019) and James (2019). In order to achieve this objective, an extensive background of the genres Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology was presented. A substantial amount

of literature was consulted in an attempt to contextualise and investigate existing ideas about these concepts.

The main purpose of this study was to analyse how different writers from specific African backgrounds used Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology to explore, communicate and present particular ideas and themes in ways that were similar and dissimilar. These comparative analyses led to a particular set of finding that included and maintain how instrumental Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are as genres in the reclamation of African narratives. These genres are an important tool that African authors can use to centre Black experiences and cultivate a distinct lens that prioritises Black readers. This study also revealed the relevance of Serpell (2019) and James' (2019) novel contributions to the literary canon. Serpell's (2019) novel centres Zambia, an African country that is rarely written about in literary fiction through an Afrofuturistic, Magical Realist and African Mythological lens. Serpell (2019) invests a great portion of the novel to detailing Zambian history. In addition, through rich text, imagery and symbolism, Serpell (2019) writes into existence a novel that single-handedly tackles history, race, technology, climate change and the future using a multitude of genres. James' (2019) novel prioritises ancient African histories, African Mythology, Magical Realism and Afrofuturism to create an expansive world that speculates an uncolonized fantastical African society. The novel creates a web of fantastical and magical characters and civilisations. African oral traditions, myth and legends are evoked in ways that call on the reader to engage and critically interact with the narrative.

The first chapter outlined how many literary analyses on African literature were conducted from a Eurocentric theoretical perspective. Furthermore, most of the African literature analysed from these perspectives fit a very specific mode of African novel (e.g., *Things Fall Apart* by

Chinua Achebe or *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o) that commented on colonialism in Africa and its effects on African people. Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology as genres therefore allow immerging fiction from the continent and the diaspora to explore alternative African narratives that cannot be compartmentalised as yet another African novel that focuses on colonialism. These genres expand literary boundaries about what African literature "should" be. The problem statement also highlights how imperative it is for the analyses of African fiction by African researchers to be prioritised because particular nuances and insights in the novels can only be uncovered by researchers from a similar cultural and social backgrounds. In addition, the research also notes that *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) are relatively new novels that utilise very distinct and specific genres to present a set of ideas therefore making this research necessary in cultivating some of the analytical knowledge about the novels *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019).

The analytical framework for this thesis's examination of the two novels was Asante's Afrocentric perspective that aligned with the study's objective to critically examine African literature from African viewpoints. The Afrocentric approach functions as a critical decolonial tool that challenges narrow Eurocentric views that often others African people (Asante, 1998, as cited in Hamlet, 1998). Afrocentricity is an effort at reclamation, it prioritises centring African culture, art, music, literature and knowledge (Hamlet, 1998). To address the initial question and purpose of the research, this study analysed, examined and evaluated ways in which Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology were used in the novels. The subsequent chapters detailing this analysis showed how crucial these emerging genres were in African literature as the allowed the authors to explore alternative formats for which particular African concerns could be explored in fiction. This research project further indicated how these

genres were suitable for the narratives Serpell (2019) and James (2019) produced. *The Old Drift* (2019) explored several characters across three generations as they navigated race and class dynamics in a colonial and post-colonial Zambia that is shifting through multiple revolutions eventually speculating a future Zambia. This thesis argues that the use of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism in *The Old Drift* (2019) made it possible for several complex commentary about Zambian history, present post-colonial issues and Zambian futures to be explored in fiction. The world Serpell (2019) is able to construct in the novel is based on very real Zambian history and mythology. Serpell (2019) is able to use these fundamentals to expand and piece together a narrative that shifts through multiple genres in order to get themes around destiny, cause and effect, colonialism and identity across to the reader. James (2019) also builds *Black Leopard Red Wolf* around ancient African history and mythology in order to reimagine an ancient African kingdom that does not subscribe to the perceived expectations of what an African novel should be according to the Eurocentric gaze. Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology are access points that James (2019) uses to explore an Africa that has its own established ideas around queerness, identity, tradition, religion and spirituality uninfluenced by Western colonial ideals. When comparatively analysed, these two novels both utilise Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology to create fictional worlds that address a variety of similar and different themes. Both authors showcased how the genres under discussion are effective in pivoting the main focus of African fiction from how it will be perceived by European/Western audiences but rather written for African readers therefore, centring their perspectives. Serpell (2019) and James (2019) explore the use of African languages in their narratives with Serpell (2019) specifically highlighting Bemba, Nyanja and Tonga and their colloquial use (pronunciation and code switching) while James (2019) seemingly invented an entirely new African language for the novel. James (2019) critiques African politics from a speculative perspective that highlights pre-colonial African misogyny

and patriarchal values. Serpell (2019) critiques the more modern post-colonial Zambian political landscape, speculating further on where Zambia's political future may lead. *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) also employ the use of non-linear narrative formats through the use of a complex nexus of fictional characters, their stand-alone plot points that provide commentary on the thematic qualities of the exploration of destiny and fate, cause and effect, identity, lineage and ancestry as well as African history and colonialism through literature. In many ways, the novels differ in some of how these genres signpost their focuses; *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) openly explores African sexualities and gender identities outside of colonial constructs and the narrative discusses race in a way that does not position Blackness as the other. *The Old Drift* (2019) takes discussions about technology more realistically whilst still speculating on alternative possibilities while *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019)'s futuristic elements are part of the mythical and magical. Furthermore, *The Old Drift* (2019) comments on climate change while *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) only warns of an eminent threat "the West" will be for Africa. Another aim of this research was to critically analyse *The Old Drift* (2019) and *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) from an African perspective therefore contributing to the canon of literary criticism.

An Afrocentric approach to the analysis of these novels/narratives for the thesis was applied in order to meet the research objective that aimed to explore non-western framework to theorise and analyse contemporary African literary texts. The themes, motifs and symbolism that come across in the narratives under investigation were analysed through an Afrocentric lens that prioritised the different ways in which African perceptions of African literature led to vastly different conclusions outside of the stereotypical Eurocentric lens. The research shows how imperative the discussed genres are in the reclamation of African narratives, their constructions and their viewpoints. Serpell (2019) and James (2019) exhibit the various ways in which these

genres can be used by African writers in order to counter problematic ideas of what African fiction is and can be. Serpell (2019) examines the legacy of colonialism and its quiet insidiousness in how it manifests across generations, *The Old Drift* boldly critiques society's perspectives on sex work and feminism while problematising the future. Serpell (2019) also presents Zambia in a new light as not a lot of literature set in the country is written from a science fiction perspective. James (2019) emerges the reader in a completely reimagined non-colonial Africa that pulls on existing African history and mythology in order to build a narrative that distances and deviates from the central focus of typical science-fiction and mythological novels in mainstream media. The study highlighted i.e., common themes that arise in the two texts such as class, race, African history, identity, destiny, ancestry, fate, cause and effect, African language, reimagination, feminism, sex and sexuality. The study of African narratives from African perspectives become increasingly important as it prioritises the generation of African knowledge while highlighting the importance of Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology in African literature. These genres redefine the boundaries of African literature and enable African, Black British, African American, Afro-Caribbean and African diasporic writers to reclaim their narratives and write beyond the stereotypical ideas of what African literature is. By examining *Black Leopard Red Wolf* (2019) and *The Old Drift* (2019), the study solidifies how important the genres under investigation were in the cultivation of literature African narratives existing beyond the bounds of Eurocentric expectations of fiction written about the continent; the worlds, characters and themes exposed by the novels were indicative of this crucial finding.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings outlined in Chapter four and from consulting prior research on the subject, the following chapter details several suggestions and recommendations for future researchers to consider. In order to promote the creation of experimental, alternative and

futuristic African narratives that embrace African futures and African mythology, African writers should be encouraged not to limit themselves. Science-fiction, fantasy, epic mythological and historical fiction are not exclusively Western. These genres can be rightfully executed by African writers to communicate an infinite number of ideas.

In view of the findings, the researcher recommends:

- More studies by African (Black) researchers on Afrofuturism, Magical Realism and African Mythology as collective genres and/or independently. The majority of the research written in support of these genres however useful, are conducted from a Eurocentric perspective that borders viewing Afrofuturistic, Magical Realist and African Mythological fiction as a spectacle to be observed and quantified independent of African contributions. The literary canon has to prioritise studies and work around these genres by actual Black people.
- More literary contributions in these genres should be encouraged as they expand the range of the African literary canon. African readers deserve to have a wide range of literature to select from.
- More research about African Mythology should be conducted. A lot of the information about African Mythology available is difficult to access. There is a wide gap in the literature available which can be speculated as a result of colonial erasure.
- A bigger sample size of more literature written in the Afrofuturistic, Magical Realist and African Mythological genres should be conducted by African researchers to expand the research canon.

REFERENCES

Abbady, A. (2017). *Myths and Folktales in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318431561_Myths_and_Folktales_in_Chinua_Achebe's_Things_Fall_Apart

Abdullah, S., & Abu, M. (2020). Heavy silence and horrible grief: Reconstructing the past and securing the future through Magical Realism in Joseph Skibell's A Blessing on the Moon. *Ostrava Journal of English Philology*, *12*(1). Retrieved from doi.org/10.15452/OJoEP.2020.12.0003

Aboay-Mensah, R. K. (1993). Mission and democracy in Africa: The problem with ethnocentrism. *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, 17*(3),* 130. https://doi.org/10.1177/239693939301700305

Abraham, O., & Abdulmalik, A. (2015). Ecocritical Analysis of Myth in Achebe's Things Fall Apart. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science Ver. II*, *20*(6), 46-50. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Ecocritical-Analysis-of-Myth-in-Achebe%E2%80%99s-Things-Journals-Abraham/b41a81282bac5fac5ba99edc0881244825ee48d9?p2df

Aceves, R. (2019, July 8). *We travel the spac eways: Afrofuturism in music*. SF Jazz. https://www.sfjazz.org/onthecorner/we-travel-space-ways-afrofuturism-music

Alexander, S. (2018). *What is Afrofuturism and how can it change the world*. Retrieved from https://www.one.org/us/blog/afrofuturism-change-the-world/

Altman, L. J. (2011). *African Mythology Rocks!*. Berkeley Heights, NY: Enslow Publishing.

Anderson, R., & Jones, C. (2015). Introduction: The rise of astro-blackness. In *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Asante, M. K. (1980). *Afrocentricity: The theory of social change*. Buffalo, NY*:* Amulefi Publishing Company.

Asante, M. K. (2009). *Afrocentricity*. Retrieved from http://www.gesafrica.org/wp content/uploads/2016/02/Afrocentricity.pdf

Ashford, J. (2019, October 31). *What is hauntology?*. The Week. https://www.theweek.co.uk/104076/what-is-hauntology

Awuzie, S. (2018). Narratives and the African experience: The dialectical consideration of the writings of first- and second-generation African writers in Africa. *The Journal of Pan African Studies (Online)*, *11*(5), 124,1. Retrieved from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/56417220/11.5-10.1-Awuzie.pdf

Bacon, E. (2020, May 11). *Becoming visible: The rise of Black speculative fiction*. Vector. Retrieved from https://vector-bsfa.com/2020/05/11/becoming-visible-the-rise-of-black-speculative-fiction/

Barreto, V. H. (2019, June 3). *Afrofuturism: Looking at the world from an Afrocentric point of view*. Medium. Retrieved from https://medium.com/torustimelab/afrofuturism-looking-at-the-world-from-an-afrocentric-point-of-view-1dbb1faacd61

Barya, M. (2013, July 30). *Awakening the Senses: A Review of Ben Okri's The Famished Road*. African Writers Trust. https://africanwriterstrust.org/awakening-the-senses-a-review-of-ben-okris-the-famished-road/

Belcher, S. (2005). *African Myths of Origin. Stories selected and retold by Stephen Belcher*. London, England: Penguin Books.

Bell, E., & Bryman, A. (2007). The ethics of management research: an exploratory content analysis. *British journal of management*, *18*(1), 63-77. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00487.x

Bowers, M. A. (2013). *Magic (al) realism*. New York, USA: Routledge.

Bristow, T. (2012). We want the funk: What is Afrofuturism to the situation of digital arts in Africa?. *Technoetic Arts*, *10*(1), 25-32. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1386/tear.10.1.25_1

Bundy, D. J. (2012). *Magical Realism and the Space Between Spaces* (Master's thesis, Utah State University, Logan, Unisted States of America). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/1309/

Burgess, F. (2020). *Collective imagination in deep time: Conjuring with Octavia E. Butler*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/43408842/COLLECTIVE_IMAGINATION_IN_DEEP_TIME_Conjuring_with_Octavia_E_Butler

Cagnato, S. (2016). *The Ghost of Magical Realism in World Literature* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, Illinois, United States). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/25744752/The_Ghost_of_Magical_Realism_in_World_Literature

Carrington, A. M. (2016). *Speculative blackness: The future of race in science fiction*. Minneapolis, United States of America: University of Minnesota Press.

Center for Pan African Thought. (2016, August 3). *The reason Europeans erased Africans from history* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1VtnOrcC80&t=108s

Chamberlain, M., Thompson, P., & Mesec Thompson, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Narrative and genre* (Vol. 1). London, Great Britain: Psychology Press.

Charlie Rose. (1998, January 19). *Toni Morrison gives insight into her works "Paradise" and "The Bluest Eye," criticizes sloppy criticism, and explains the challenge of writing about race for African-American writers* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://charlierose.com/videos/17664

Christian, N. G. (2014). The impact of climate change on African traditional religious practices. *Journal of Earth Science and Climatic Change*, *5*(7), 1-5. Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.831.9914&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Coker, O. (2015). Mythic Imagination and the Postcolonial Experience in Ben Okri's The Famished Road and Debo Kotun's Abiku. *Okike: an African Journal of New Writing*, (53), 71-87. Retrieved from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/57274414/Cocker-Mythic-Imagination-and-the-Postcolonial-Experience-i1.pdf

Cole, M. (2018). *The strong black woman stereotype is harming our health*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/20/strong-black-woman-stereotype-mental-health-depression-self-harm

Cooper, H. (2010). *Research synthesis and meta-analysis: A step- by-step approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*, 1241. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039?seq=1

Creswell, J. W. (2013*). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=dberspeakers

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crockford, K. (2020, June 16). *How is Face Recognition Surveillance Technology Racist?* American Civil Liberties Union. https://www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/how-is-face-recognition-surveillance-technology-racist/

Curtin, P. D. (1974). The black experience of colonialism and imperialism. *Daedalus*, 103(2), 17-29. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024202

David, M. (2007). Afrofuturism and post-soul possibility in Black popular music. *African American Review*, *41*(4), 695-707. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/25426985?seq=1

Davis, J. (2020, April 24). *How black women are reshaping Afrofuturism*. Yes! Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2020/04/24/how-black-women-are-reshaping-afrofuturism/

Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical research methods: A user friendly guide to mastering research*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Cromwell Press.

Dawson, C. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods 4th Edition: A Practical Guide for*

Anyone Undertaking a Research Project. Oxford, United Kingdom: How To Books. Retrieved from http://www.modares.ac.ir/uploads/Agr.Oth.Lib.21.pdf

Deme, M. K. (2009). Heroism and the Supernatural in the African Epic: Toward a Critical Analysis. *Journal of Black Studies*, *39*(3), 402-419. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021934706297819

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Dery, M. (1994). Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose. *Flame wars: The discourse of cyberculture*, 179-222. Retrieved from https://apps.crossref.org/coaccess/coaccess.html?doi=10.1215%2F9780822396765-010

Dorson, R. M. (1973). Mythology and folklore. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *2*(1), 107-126. Retrieved from https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.an.02.100173.000543?journalCode=anthro

Dotse, J. (2016). We know we will. In L. Heidenreich-Seleme & S. O' Toole (Eds.), *African future: Thinking about the future in word and image* (pp. 29-31). Bielefeld, Germany: Kerver Verlay.

Eldredge, J. D., Weagel, E. F., & Kroth, P. J. (2014). Defining and Identifying Members

of a Research Study Population: CTSA-Affiliated Faculty Members. *Hypothesis: the newsletter of the Research Section of MLA*, *26*(1), 5–11. Retrieved from https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25067900/

English, D.K. (2017). *Afrofuturism: Literary and critical theory*. Retrieved from doi:10.1093/obo/9780190221911-0004

Faces of Africa. (2019). *Nyaminyami: The river god*. https://africa.cgtn.com/2019/02/18/faces-of-africa-nyaminyami-the-river-god-2/

Faris, W. B. (2004). *Ordinary enchantments: Magical realism and the remystification of narrative*. Nashville, TN, Vanderbilt University Press.

Faun, F., & Landstreicher, W. (2019). *Technology and class struggle*. Retrieved from https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wolfi-landstreicher-technology-and-class-struggle

Flores, A. (1955). Magical realism in Spanish American fiction. *Hispania*, *38*(2), 187-192.

Foster, K. (2019, October 23). *Let's discuss emoblackthot and all the fake black women online* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAxRqo5wlqI&t=90s

Freeman, M. I. J. (2018, February 19). *Aesthetic vs praxis in Afrofuturism*. Medium. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@amai.m.i.freeman/aesthetic-vs-praxis-in-afro-futurism-12d966efea44

George, J., & Dei, S. (1998). Why Write Back?: The Role of Afrocentric Discourse in Social Change. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 200-208. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1585981?seq=1

Giddens, S., & Giddens, O. (2006). *African mythology*. New York, NY: The Rosen Publishing Group.

Gitter, E. G. (1984). The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 936-954. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/462145?seq=1

Griffin, B. N. (2013, 2 January). *Why mythology is still important today*. Parma Observer. http://www.parmaobserver.com/read/2013/02/01/why-mythology-is-still-important-today

Hamer, C., College, P. (2020, July 28). *Saidiya Hartman's Critical Fabulation can help inspire today's activists*. Study Breaks. https://studybreaks.com/thoughts/critical-fabulation/

Hamlet, J. D. (Ed.). (1998). *Afrocentric visions: Studies in culture and communication*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Hassan, S. (1996). Magical Realism: Art as ritual in the work of Elsabeth Tariqua Atnafu. *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, *5*(1), 24-27. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/422490

Hrescak, Z. (2014). *Elements of Magical Realism in Nights at the Circus, a novel by Angela Carter*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/44305988/Elements_of_Magical_Realism_in_Nights_at_the_Circus_a_Novel_by_Angela_Carter

Innis, T. (2018, August 16). *Addressing black erasure in the arts: Artists fight back*. Afropunk. https://afropunk.com/2018/08/addressing-black-erasure-in-the-arts-artists-fight-back/

Irele, F. A. (2009). Magical Realism and the African novel. *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel* (Cambridge Companions to Literature, pp. 159-176). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521855600.010

Jaja, J. M. (2014). Myths in African Concept of Reality. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, *6*(2), 9-14. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1075851

James, M. (2019). *Black Leopard, Red Wolf: Dark Star Trilogy Book 1*. United Kingdom: Penguin UK.

Jameson, F. (1986). On magic realism in film. *Critical Inquiry*, *12*(2), 301-325. Retrieved from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/448333?journalCode=ci

Kawulich, B. B. (2004). Data analysis techniques in qualitative research. *Journal of research in education*, *14*(1), 96-113. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Barbara_Kawulich/publication/257944757_Kawulich_B_B_2004_Data_Analysis_Techniques_in_Qualitative_Research_In_Darla_Twale_Ed_Journal_of_Research_in_Education_141_p_96-113/links/551c5b6d0cf2909047bc9149.pdf

Kershaw, T. (1992). Afrocentrism and the Afrocentric method. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, *16*(3), 160. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/openview/f7ac5f4488a33a78cdf548696073a34b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1821483

Kostadinović, D. (2019). "Unexpected alternation of reality: Magical Realism in painting and literature. *Facta Universitatis, Series: Visual Arts and Music*, 35-48. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.22190/FUVAM1802035K

Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. E. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design* (9th ed). New Jersey, NJ: Pearson Education.

Leal, L. (1967). *Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature*. USA: Duke University Press.

Lynch, P. A., & Roberts, J. (2010). *African Mythology, A to Z*. New York, NY: Infobase Publishing.

Madlala, T. (2013, October 31). *Cultural practices: Stretching your labia minora*. News24. https://www.news24.com/w24/SelfCare/Wellness/Mind/Cultural-practices-Stretching-your-labia-minora-20131031

Mann, J. L. (2018). Pessimistic futurism: Survival and reproduction in Octavia Butler's Dawn. *Feminist Theory*, *19*(1), 61-76. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1464700117742874

Martinez Perez, G., Mubanga, M., Tomas Aznar, C., & Bagnol, B. (2015). Zambian women in South Africa: Insights into health experiences of labia elongation. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *52*(8), 857-867. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279807767_Zambian_Women_in_South_Africa_Insights_Into_Health_Experiences_of_Labia_Elongation

Mashige, M., & Thosago, C. (2005). Teaching an Eccentric Subject? Why folklore studies is Almost a non-existent discipline. *Journal of Educational Studies*, *4*, 68-77.

Mashigo, M. (2018). *Intruders: Short Stories*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Picador Africa.

Mason, B. (2018). Afrofuturism: The beginning of the end of stereotypical black people in media. Retrieved from https://www.prindlepost.org/2018/03/afrofuturism-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-stereotypical-black-people-in-media/

Matthew, A. (2013). *Resettlement of myth in the African literature*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/5562270/Resettlement_of_myth_in_the_African_literature

Maynard, R. (2018). Reading black resistance through Afrofuturism: Notes on post-

Apocalyptic blackness and black rebel cyborgs in Canada. *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 39*(4),* 29-47. Retrieved from https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/ref/10.3138/topia.39.04

Mazama, A. (2001). The Afrocentric paradigm: Contours and definitions. *Journal of black studies*, *31*(4), 387-405. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002193470103100401?journalCode=jbsa

McKinley-Portee, C. R. (2017). *Queering the future: Examining queer identity in Afrofuturism*. Retrieved from https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/theses/2176/

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Designing your study and selecting a sample. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*, *67*(1), 73-104.

Mgbeadichie, C. F. (2015). *The critical concept of Afrocentrism in Nigerian Literature*. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10871/21088

Mncube, P. (2019, May 23). *The rainbow nation is dead*. News24. https://www.news24.com/news24/columnists/guestcolumn/the-rainbow-nation-is-dead-20190523

Mohamed, D., & Gamila, D. (2019). *How Mythology shapes modern world Literature: The echoes of Mythology*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333357087_How_Mythology_Shapes_Mod

ern_World_Literature_The_Echoes_of_Mythology https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48/

Monteiro-Ferreira, A. (2014). *The demise of the inhuman: Afrocentricity, modernism, and postmodernism*. Albann, New York: SUNY Press.

Mufuzi, F. (2014). The practice of witchcraft and the changing patterns of its paraphernalia in the light of technologically produced goods as presented by Livingstone Museum, 1930s-1973. *Zambia Social Science Journal*, *5*(1), 5. Retrieved from https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&context=zssj

Murray, S. O., & Roscoe, W. (1998). *Boy-wives and female husbands: Studies of African homosexualities*. Basingstoke, Great Britain: Macmillan.

Muzorewa, G. H. (2005). *Know Thyself: Ideologies of Black Liberation: Ideologies of Black Liberation*. USA: Resource Publications.

Nelson, A. (2002). Introduction: future texts. *Social Text*, *20*(2), 1-15. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/31931

Nelson, M. (2015). *Magical Realism in African Literature* [Prezi slides]. Retrieved from https://prezi.com/tttw77ddodq9/magic-realism-in-african-literature/

Nyawalo, M. (2016). Afro-futurism and the aesthetics of hope in Bekolo's Les Saignantes and Kahiu's Pumzi. *Journal of the African Literature Association*, *10*(2), 209-221. https://doi.org/10.1080/21674736.2016.1257499

Okorafor, N. (2019). Africanfuturism defined. *Nnedi vs Wahala Zone Blog*. Retrieved from http://nnedi.blogspot.com/2019/10/africanfuturism-defined.html

Okpewho, I. (1998). African mythology and Africa's political impasse. *Research in African Literatures*, *29*(1), 1-15. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/3820529

Onoh, N. (2017). *Top 10 Things we never knew about African horror stories*. Retrieved from https://www.lounge-books.com/award-winners-we-lov/horror-lounge-blog-nuzo-onoh

Ouma, C. (2014). Reading the Diasporic Abiku in Helen Oyeyemi's The Icarus Girl. *Research in African Literatures*, *45*(3), 188-205. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafrilite.45.3.188?seq=1

Oyebade, B. (1990). African studies and the Afrocentric paradigm: A critique. *Journal of black studies*, *21*(2), 233-238. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002193479002100208?journalCode=jbsa

Oyeshile, O. A. (2007). *Mythology and conflict resolution in Africa: The political and legal imperatives*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280570035_Mythology_and_Conflict_Resolution_in_Africa_The_Political_and_Legal_Imperatives

Oyeyemi, H. (2007). *The Icarus Girl*. London, Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Panzacchi, C. (1994). The livelihoods of traditional griots in modern Senegal. *Africa*, 190-210. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1160979?seq=1

Paris, D. (2019). Naming beyond the white settler colonial gaze in educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *32*(3), 217-224.

Peek, P. M., & Yankah, K. (Eds.). (2004). *African folklore: An encyclopedia*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Peters, B. A. (2018). *This is Afrofuturism*. Retrieved from https://africanarguments.org/2018/03/06/this-is-afrofuturism/

Pitchford, M. (2020, February 21). *Beware of the white gaze*. Fourteen East Mag.

http://fourteeneastmag.com/index.php/2020/02/21/11505/

Quayson, A. (2009). Magical realism and the African novel. *The Cambridge companion to the African novel*, 159-76. Retrieved from https://books.google.bf/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WUETzF27NNwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA159&dq=quayson+2009+magical+realism&ots=wYJrE_iy40&sig=GKMb7OuaPH22X-0ejBj7hTMBKPk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=quayson%202009%20magical%20realism&f=false

Rafeedali, E. (n.d.). *Research: Population and sample*. Retrieved from https://tophat.com/marketplace/social-science/education/course-notes/oer-research-population-and-sample-dr-rafeedalie/1196/

Ras, M. S. (2015). *The use of African myth, folklore and oral tradition in African Literature*.

Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/12376401/The_Use_of_African_myth_Folklore_and_Oral_tradition_in_African_Literature

Riddle, A. (2020). Nature and the supernatural in African literature. *African Identities*, *18(1-2),* 80-94. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2020.1773238

Ridley, D. (2012). *The literature review: A step-by-step guide for students* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Rollefson, J. (2008). The "Robot Voodoo Power" Thesis: Afrofuturism and Anti-Anti-Essentialism from Sun Ra to Kool Keith. *Black Music Research Journal, 28*(1), 83-109. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25433795

Roos, E. (2020). *Afrofuturist architecture*. Retrieved from https://www.colorado.edu/envd/sites/default/files/attached-files/roos_final_thesis_2020.pdf

Sackey, E. (1991). Oral tradition and the African novel. *Modern Fiction Studies*, *37*(3), 389-407. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26283152?seq=1

Saleh-Hanna, V. (2015). Black Feminist Hauntology. Rememory the Ghosts of Abolition. *Champ pénal/Penal field*, *12*. Retrieved from https://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/9168

Salkind, N. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks,

California: Sage Publications.

Sanchez, M. R. N. (2001). *Magic realism in contemporary American women's fiction* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom). Retrieved from http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3502/

Santhanakrishnan, M., & Shanmugam, D. (2018). *Culture and Myth in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Novel The River Between*. Retrieved from http://www.languageinindia.com/march2018/auseminar2/santhanakrishnantheriverbetween1.pdf

Saranya, G., & Mathiavannan, S. M. (2017). A blend of mythology and realism in James Joyce works. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 5*(3)*, 2321-3108. Retrieved from http://www.rjelal.com/5.3.17b/743-745%20G.SARANYA.pdf

Sasser, K. (2014). *Magical Realism and cosmopolitanism: Strategizing belonging*. Kirby Street, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saulson, S. (2019). *African American folklore, Magical Realism and horror in Toni Morrison novels*. Retrieved from https://mochamemoirspress.com/uncategorized/african-american-folklore-magical-realism-and-horror-in-toni-morrison-novels/

Screened. (2020, Jan 6). *The Magical Realism genre in movies* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od3A6Mc8Lao

Selvakkumar, T. (2013). *A study of the discursive space of feminism and the black female*

predicament in the novels of Toni Morrison. Retrieved from https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/175610

Selvarani, R. R., & Hussain, M. Z. (2019). Magical feminism: The female voices of Magic Realism in Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits and Laura Esquivel's Like Water for Chocolate. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, *4*(5). Retrieved from http://journal-repository.com/index.php/ijels/article/view/84

Serpell, N. (2017). *The Zambian "Afronaut" Who Wanted to Join the Space Race*. The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-zambian-afronaut-who-wanted-to-join-the-space-race

Serpell, N. (2019). *The Old Drift*. London, United Kingdom: Hogarth.

Shafti, P. (2020). *The significance of mythology in today's world*. Retrieved from http://www.prepublica.com/blog/significance-mythology-todays-world/

Shenbahapriya, K., & Jamuna, M. (2019). Magical Realism in Literature. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*. 5(8). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/38054906/Magical_Realism_in_Literature

Simpkins, S. (1988). Magical Strategies: The Supplement of Realism. *Twentieth Century Literature, 34*(2), 140-154. doi:10.2307/441074

Smith, R. (2005). Magical realism and theatre of the oppressed in Taiwan: Rectifying

unbalanced realities with Chung Chiao's assignment theatre. *Asian Theatre Journal*, *22*(1), 107-121. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/178226/

Soldt, E. P. M. (2019). *Black girl magic, y'all can't stand it: On Afrofuturism, intersectionality in Janelle Monae's 'Dirty Computer'* (Master's thesis, Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334604857_Black_Girl_Magic_Y'all_Can't_Stand_It_On_Afrofuturism_and_Intersectionality_in_Janelle_Monae's_'Dirty_Computer'

Storied, (2020, March 18). *Afrofuturism: From books to blockbusters* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI1xmwqGEBw

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2001). *Practices of looking* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, E. E. (2019). Notes toward a Black Fantastic: Black Atlantic Flights beyond Afrofuturism in Young Adult Literature. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *43*(2), 282-301. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/743354

Trapero, F. G. A. (2020, June 22). *How do art and mythology relate to climate change*. *Observatory*. Retrieved from https://observatory.tec.mx/edu-bits-2/art-mythology-and-climate-change

Travis, D. (2016). *Desk research: The what, why and how*. Retrieved from https://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/desk-research-the-what-why-and-how.html

Turpin, C. A. (2014). *Strategic disruptions: Black feminism, intersectionality, and Afrofuturism*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/16199640/Strategic_Disruptions_Black_Feminism_Intersectionality_and_Afrofuturism

Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom* (Vol. 2). Albemarle Street, London: J. Murray.

Udefi, A. (2011). Philosophy, mythology and an African cosmological system. *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research,* 8(2), 235-243. Retrieved from https://www.ajol.info/index.php/lwati/article/view/79667

Volkova, E. (2019) *Female voices of Magical Realism*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/4424017/Female_Voices_of_Magical_Realism

Wachira, J. (2020). Wangari Maathai's environmental Afrofuturist imaginary in Wanuri Kahiu's *Pumzi*. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 36*(2)*. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15295036.2020.1820543

Walk, K. (1998). *How to write a comparative analysis*. The Writing Center at Harvard University. Retrieved from http://www. fas. harvard. edu/~ wricntr/documents/CompAnalysis

Walters, W. W. (2020). *"We are pipeline people': Nnedi Okorafor's ecocritical speculations."* *Oil fictions: Reading our contemporary petrosphere*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/43442462/_We_are_Pipeline_People_Nnedi_Okorafor_s_Ecocritical_Speculations

Warnes, C. (2009). *Magical realism and the postcolonial novel: Between faith and irreverence*. Kirby Street, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wilson, A. (2003). Sexing the hyena: Intraspecies readings of the female phallus. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *28*(3), 755-790. Retrieved from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/345320?journalCode=signs

Witte, M. (2015). *Elements of Magical Realism*. Retrieved from http://michellewittebooks.com/2015/09/elements-of-magical-realism/

Womack, Y. (2013). *Afrofuturism: The world of black sci-fi and fantasy culture*. Chicago, Illinois: Lawrence Hill Books.

Wright, R. M. (2010). *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270415266_Graham_Harvey_Animism_Respecting_the_Living_World_New_York_Columbia_University_Press_2006_xiv_248_pp_2850_pbk_ISBN_0-231-13701-X

Young, S. (2019). *Myths and magic: A brief history of the world's most storied legendary*

creatures. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/mythical-creatures/ng-interactive/2019/aug/26/most-legendary-mythical-creatures-history

Zamora, L. P., & Faris, W. B. (1995). *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*. USA: Duke University Press.