



Research article

Exploring Black Writers' Literary Strategies for Interdependence and Global Solidarity

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the techniques and strategies used by African and Afro-American writers to disseminate a sense of Black interdependence and solidarity on a global level. It will examine how Black authors are unceasingly using a planned strategy in their literary works to encourage Black people to envision a sustainable future for themselves. We contend that Black authors and critics are incessantly using the literary medium to inspire Black audiences to self-heal themselves from the trauma associated with European colonization of Africa in the bygone days and this issue is yet to receive a noteworthy observation in the literary field. Hence, this paper will examine various dimensions associated with the Black literary genre to explore more about the philosophies and strategies imbibed by Black writers to encourage their people to self-heal from their past while comprehending the significance of mutual interconnectedness. The select works this paper seeks to study comparatively are Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (2010), Alice Walker's epistolary novel *The Color Purple* (2014), Rivers Solomon with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson, and Jonathan Snipes's fantasy fiction *The Deep* (2020), and Nnedi Okorafor's science fiction *Lagoon* (2014). The frameworks used for this study are Postcolonialism, Africanfuturism, Afrofuturism, and African feminism which are treated as the vantage ground for this reading.

Keywords: Black solidarity, Gender, Racism, Interdependence, Sustainable future



Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Introduction

As readers, we can notice that Black authorship is thought-provokingly experimental in its form when it comes to their mode of expression while envisioning a better future for Blacks. Moreover, the global Black literary platform has been acting as a medium for Blacks to articulate their experiences in a thought-provoking manner. If the readers notice closely, they can trace a systematic strategy used by the writers of African descent to express the undermined history of their dark past which depicts their struggle to overcome the trauma of colonization and slavery. Therefore, a study of the strategies imbibed by Black authors to

Article History: Received: 11 October 2023. Revised: 24 December 2023. Accepted: 25 December 2023. Published: 27 December 2023

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Citation: Buragohain, A, & Kagyung, L. (2023). Exploring Black Writers' Literary Strategies for Interdependence and Global Solidarity. *Rupkatha Journal* 15:5. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v15n5.10>

ensure a sense of Black consciousness and interdependence amongst their people across the globe will undeniably prove to be an insightful one and this paper seeks to explore the same.

The first part of this study will attempt to examine the literary strategies and narrative techniques used by the African and Afro-American authors to perpetuate a sense of Black solidarity and interdependence amongst Black people across the globe. The second part of this study will examine the process involved with the perpetuation of Black authorship strategies into the literary world of fantasy and science-fiction. It will also explore the reality associated with the introduction of new discourses such as Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism which eventually enabled the Black audiences to reconnect to their roots.

Methodology

The methodology involves a critical analysis of the four texts, namely Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (2010), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (2014), Rivers Solomon with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson and Jonathan Snipes' *The Deep* (2020), and Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon* (2014) by using the discourses of Postcolonialism, Africanfuturism, Afrofuturism, and African feminism as the vantage ground for this study. This analysis will also rely upon the ideas and concepts forwarded by critical thinkers in their prominent texts such as *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2015) by Ania Loomba, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (2005) by Wole Soyinka, *ain't i a woman: black women and feminism* (2015) by bell hooks, *Africanfuturism: An Anthology* (2020) edited by Wole Talabi, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-fi and Fantasy Culture* (2013) by Ytasha L. Womack, *The Souls of Black Folk* (2017) by W.E.B. Du Bois, *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (2007) edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, *Powerarchy: Understanding the Psychology of Oppression for Social Transformation* (2019) by Melanie Joy, and *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Moreover, this study will also engage with the ideas shared by several critics in the text *The Evolution of African Fantasy and Science Fiction* (2018), edited by Francesca T Barbini, to underscore the area of African Science fiction in a better manner.

The selected discourses have directed this study to be more focused towards the topic of this research which seeks to study the strategies used by the Black authors to create a sense of solidarity and interdependence amongst the Black people across the globe. Furthermore, as a researcher, we would like to mention an important issue at the very beginning of this critical reading that the term 'Black' is used in this essay only to refer to a large section of people belonging to Africa and the African diaspora. The use of the term 'Black', the discussion, and even the research findings of this paper do not intend to hurt the sentiments of any section of people.

Literary Techniques and a Sense of Black Interdependence and Solidarity

Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian writer, is widely revered as the central figure of the modern African literary platform. His novel *Things Fall Apart* is the first instalment of his African Trilogy which is a collection of three texts. Achebe's works are an explicit refute to the colonial narratives of the past which unwaveringly promoted certain hegemonic practices, such as discrimination of people based on class, race, and gender, which are still prevalent in the current day and age in societies across the world. The presence of oppressive attributes in Western societal conventions eventually compartmentalized a huge section of people of African descent into

an inferior position in societies across the world. Under such circumstances, the only way to step ahead towards a sustainable future is by reconnecting to the roots and by reclaiming the lost position in society. Diana Akers Rhoads adequately mentions Igbo cultural roots in the essay "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" that representing the roots of Igbo in an esteemed way will provide a sense of self-confidence to them. Rhoads (1993) also highlights the importance of Achebe's role in a new nation when he has been trying to encourage people to see what they have lost during the European colonial era (p. 61). To quote it from Rhoads "Achebe, however, cannot achieve his goals merely by representing difference, rather he must depict an Igbo society which moderns can see as having dignity" (Rhoads, 1993, p. 61). Rhoads' essay also highlights that the Igbo society has managed to achieve a certain standard which most societies might be struggling to create even currently as they succeeded to develop tolerance towards other cultures, capacity to change for better, and have developed a strong zeal towards industriousness. Thus, as readers we need to comprehend the significance of representative technique in the literary field because the Black authors have been imbibing it as a strategy to bolster confidence and interconnectedness among their people.

Moreover, as onlookers, we can notice that African and Afro-American writers are constantly addressing the aspects of African culture, history, and heritage in their texts because they believe that by allowing their future generations to know more about their roots, they are in a way helping them to identify their worth. Thus, the constant use of aspects related to African culture, tradition, and history is also a literary strategy on the part of Black authors to perpetuate a sense of Black consciousness on a global level among the Blacks. Similar ideas are shared by Kwadwo Osei-Nyame (1999) in the paper "Chinua Achebe Writing Culture: Representations of Gender and Tradition in *Things Fall Apart*" where Osei-Nyame provides a new turn to the narrative by using Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and dialogism to explore certain aspects associated with representation of ideology as outlined in the text. Osei-Nyame writes "Writing stories that speak for themselves is central to Achebe's novelistic agenda" (Osei-Nyame, 1999, p. 148). This essay has provided a remarkable interpretation of Achebe's techniques while heralding the African lifestyle to greater detail by examining the ideologies prevalent among the Igbo people and thereby, discussing the interlink among the aspects of power, authority, and masculinity. Thus, existing studies highlight that the aspect of decoding the techniques of African and Afro-American writers to empower their people to articulate their mutual comradeship has always been a matter of serious discussion.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* documents the life of an Igbo warrior, Okonkwo, who is a champion among the clans in his locality. The novel documents the instabilities created in the livelihood of the inhabitants of Umuofia and Mbanta when the impacts of European colonization started to root in their land and culture. It represents African culture, tradition, history, and cultivation practices in its raw form and succeeds in captivating the attention of the readers through its natural representation of the livelihood of the Igbo people. Therefore, it can be contended that Achebe, as a Black writer, deployed a very crucial strategy to document the subjective experiences of his people while overtly encouraging them to prioritize the necessity of respecting oneself and realizing the significance of interdependence among the people of Mother Africa. Dennis Chong and Reuel Rogers (2005) in their paper "Racial Solidarity and Political Participation" mention that although Black consciousness is related to voting or campaign activities, there were certain influences on the side of socioeconomic status and age as well. They seek to posit that there are several dimensions associated with Black consciousness, namely Black solidarity, Black nationalism, Black Identity, and so forth (p. 721).

Most importantly, each of these attributes has a role to play in developing a sense of solidarity and interdependence among the Blacks across the globe. Black interdependence is indeed an important factor in shaping the Black behaviour in the societal platform and hence, recent critics are constantly exploring the aspects interlinked with it.

Things Fall Apart represents the challenges a community must face on account of its members' failure to protect the brotherhood in the face of threats from an outside source. The suicide of Okonkwo, considered an abomination by his people, and the failure on his community's part to safeguard their own culture and tradition delineate the absence of solidarity and interdependence among them. On the other hand, Okonkwo's urge to overcome the oppression and indoctrination perpetuated by the European colonizers explicitly depicts the struggle of the colonized people who strived to emancipate themselves from the cruelties of the colonial masters. Thus, African writers, such as Achebe, deliberately used a strategic plan through the systematic use of rhetoric and narratives which tend to encourage the Blacks to unlearn the doctrines of hegemony imposed on their forefathers during the bygone colonial era. The contemporary narrative techniques of the Black authors have been inspiring a huge section of people belonging to the Black communities to envision a sustainable future which will provide them with social mobility and economic growth in the upcoming years.

Meanwhile, Flora Veit-Wild and Clarissa Vierke's (2017) paper "Introduction: Digging into Language" highlights that "A rather acute blindness toward African languages and the role and importance of language in literary discourse more generally speaking has characterised different strands of research in African literatures" (Veit- Wild and Vierke, 2017, p. x). Veit-Wild and Vierke's essay is noteworthy while exploring the topic of this research because their essay shares a detailed examination of the scenarios associated with the construction or edging of the literary texts in African languages. Their findings became insightful as they examined various philosophies associated with Afrophone and Europhone literature and language. This essay provides a detailed investigation of textual craftsmanship that the writers have brought into literary usage and such an analysis will help the audience to reconsider the narrative techniques and strategies used by writers to highlight a specific issue about the lived experiences of Black people in various societies of the world.

On the other hand, Alice Walker as an Afro-American writer contributed greatly to the genre of African-American literature. Her epistolary novel *The Color Purple* helped her to become the first African-American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in the year 1982. *The Color Purple* documents the life of a young African-American girl Celie who lives in a lowly locality with her family. Walker provides a provocative representation of the lived experiences of a section of African-American people who have been struggling throughout their lives to overcome the prejudices meted on them on account of their race, class, and gender. Here, we can mention Lindsey Tucker's (1988) essay "Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: Emergent Woman, Emergent Text" where Tucker contends that Celie, at the age of fourteen, a victim of sexual abuse, violated, and barely literate only have her letters to God which became a medium for her to give a vent to her pain. Tucker also examined Walker's use of linguistic efficiency in her novel "But the fact she is impelled to articulate her experiences is Walker's way of showing the need for language" (Tucker, 1988, p. 82). In the light of such contentions, it becomes noticeably true that the use of epistolary form indeed influenced the thought process of the readers to detect and question the biases inflicted on Blacks on various grounds. *The Color Purple* is a tale of flesh and blood while Celie and her sister Nettie's longing to overcome the prejudices

of society becomes a source of inspiration for several other African-American girls who want to live an emancipated life nurtured through interdependence.

As readers, we can notice that Celie has confronted the worst kind of destiny someone can ever beget. She was repeatedly raped by the man whom she addresses as her father and eventually endured forced pregnancy twice. Moreover, her babies were snatched away from her after their birth. As the narrative progresses, the readers discover that even her husband Albert abuses her. To self-heal herself from such traumas, she writes letters to God where she addresses the injustices inflicted on her by the racist and sexist ideologies of society. Charles L. Proudfit (1991) aptly points out in the paper "Celie's Search for Identity: A Psychoanalytic Developmental Reading of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*" that through Celie's letters to God, Walker opened a letter to the readers to enter the mind of an emotionally guilt-ridden and traumatized fourteen-year-old girl who was repeatedly impregnated by a man (Alphonso) whom she believes to be her father. It is worth mentioning that Celie's letters become a medium for the readers to mirror the psyche of a young Black girl traumatized by the prejudices meted out to her since childhood.

Our contention here is that Walker, as an Afro-American writer, has strategically deployed certain literary mechanisms to enable the readers to understand the condition of a section of young Black girls who were left with no other option but to internalize fear and guilt at some points in their life. Walker, through the memorable relationships portrayed among the female characters such as Celie, Nettie, and Shug Avery in her text, wants to highlight the importance of Black women's interdependence and sisterhood in the contemporary period. Moreover, as readers, we can also speculate a sense of growth in the characters of Celie, Nettie, and Shug because they eventually start to challenge the prejudices exerted against them by the powerful sections of society. Jacqueline Jones (1988) pertinently remarks in the paper "Fact and Fiction in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*" that Walker explicates the livelihood of Black women by understanding their suffering and courage in contrast to the leaden presence offered by menfolk either individually or collectively (p. 654). Walker's use of epistolary form as a means to narrate Celie's story becomes an active ground for the readers to understand the psyche of several African-American girls who are encountering poverty, racism, and sexism daily. Walker created a stir with her narrative that it is high time for Black women to understand the significance of reclamation of identity at public or even in their private space. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie aptly mentions in her text *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014):

Gender matters everywhere in the world. And I would like to ask that we should begin to dream about and plan for a different world. A fairer world. A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves. And this is how to start: we must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently. (Adichie, 2014, p. 25)

Similar ideas are contended by Davis J. Amanda (2005) in the paper "To Build a Nation: Black Women Writers, Black Nationalism, and the Violent Reduction of Wholeness" where Amanda emphasizes the necessity of understanding the complex interplay among gender, class, and sexual oppression to examine how women bodies are depicted within power structures while their attempts to resist are oppressed through violence (p. 26). Therefore, we can derive that in the contemporary period, there is a growing enthusiasm among readers to decode the literary techniques used by Black authors to create strong Black characters who are self-sufficient and are mutually connected through the thread of sisterhood. Accordingly, it can be deciphered that by creating the characters of Celie, Nettie, and Shug Avery, Walker succeeded

in creating a sense of interdependence amongst the young Black girls who are encountering exploitation on the grounds of class, race, and gender and in a way encouraged them to challenge those prejudices of the societies. Walker in a special section titled "Tsunamis and Hurricanes: Twenty-five Years after Publishing *The Color Purple*" mentions that:

The mask of caste, race, class, sex, mental illness, or disease. Their meaning to us, often, is that they are simply an offering, a challenge provided by 'God' i.e., the All Present and All Magical, that requires us to grow. And though we may be confused, even traumatized, as Celie is, by their historical, social, and psychological configuration, if we persevere we may, like her, eventually settle into amazement: that by some unfathomable kindness we have received just the right keys we need to unlock the deepest, darkest dungeons of our emotional and spiritual bondage, and to experience our much-longed-for liberation and peace. (Walker, 2014, p. xx-xxi)

In the light of such scenarios, it can be contended that Walker has noticed the larger scenario, and hence, she knows every Black person is required to overcome the racial and sexist barriers they have been dealing with and thereby envision a sustainable future just as the characters figured out in the later part of the narrative.

Thus, it can be contended that Walker has used a systematic strategy of representation in *The Color Purple* to encourage a section of Black people, who are still oppressed, to speak up for themselves and understand the significance of solidarity and interdependence in their lives. Here, one can reconsider the philosophies introduced by remarkable critics such as Wole Soyinka and W.E.B. Du Bois who wanted to encourage their people to reconnect to their motherland Africa and understand the necessity of empowering oneself while imagining an infinite future of possibilities for the Black communities across the world. Wole Soyinka in his acclaimed text *Myth, Literature and the African World* (2005) analyses the African world which he believes is an interconnection of myth, ritual, and literature. Soyinka's critical text emphasizes the ways through which the African continent perceives itself as an entity. Its ideas endeavour to comprehend the differences that have existed between the unity of experiences and the literary forms emerging out of the area. On the other hand, W.E.B. Du Bois in his *The Souls of Black Folk* (2017) illustrates that constant encounter with prejudice tends to harbour more self-questioning and looking down upon ideals as this will eventually promote an environment of hatred and contempt and thereby aggravate the situation of adversities (p. 6). It can be deciphered that most people from the Black community are still forced to live a prearranged lifestyle in society by the dominant section and they are deprived of the opportunities that might help them climb the ladder of social mobility. Hence, certain authors and critics who come from the same background are continuously striving to create a platform which can provide oppressed Black people with an agency to speak up for themselves. Critics such as Soyinka and Du Bois tried their best to encourage their people to listen to their inner voice, live with grace, and understand the significance of interdependence as the descendants of Mother Africa.

Thus, as contended by Veit-Wild and Vierke (2017), it becomes a relevant issue for the audience to study how the use of African language by the authors tends to creatively explore the specificities of the language that they write in. Therefore, the readers should pay a substantial amount of attention to the linguistic and rhetoric usage by the Black writers because it becomes a medium for communicating a message to the readers while enabling the authors to introduce a platform for the readers to imagine the possibilities of creating a better place for oneself in the society. Veit-Wild and Vierke even highlight that the imaginative space of a

literary work is born in the language used by a writer with its dimensions of form and semantics (p. x). Thus, some of the literary aspects that the critics should take note of while endeavouring to examine how Black authors are inspiring a sense of Black solidarity and consciousness among their people are the use of linguistic strategies, representational techniques, rhetoric, symbols, narrative methods, and characterization.

Authorship Strategies in the Literary Space of Black Fantasy and Black Science Fictions

Meanwhile, *The Deep* by Rivers Solomon with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson, and Jonathan Snipes is a fantasy fiction that recounts a fascinating underwater tale of a Merfolk community. The central character is Yetu who belongs to a community of water-dwelling creatures referred to as the Wajinru. The Wajinru community has been depicted as the descendants of the pregnant Black slave women who were once thrown overboard from the slave ships after they were abused and assaulted by the cruel slave owners. On the other hand, the role of memory has been depicted as a pertinent one in this narrative because the dark history of the transatlantic slave trade is undeniably a matter of dark past, but its consequences have been impacting the thought process of the people belonging to the African countries even in this day and age. It will be pertinent to quote here a few lines from the text *The Deep* to understand the entire scenario better:

They are suffering and scared. They have been robbed from their homes, stolen from their families. Their lives are no longer their own. They belong to the two-legs on the decks of the ships.

We are descendants of the people not on the top of the ship, but on the bottom, thrown overboard, deemed too much a drain of resources to stay on the journey to their destination. (Solomon et al., 2020, p. 58)

The Wajinru community fears recalling their ancestors' past because it is associated with the lives of those African slave women who were forcefully transported from one place to another and were thrown from slave ships into the ocean after they were physically assaulted by their masters. Since most of the Wajinru members fear remembering or recalling the dark history of their ancestors, their community created the role of the historian who performs an "act of Remembrance" (p. 8) which includes recalling the instances of exploitation of the slave women during the transatlantic slave trade. The practice of remembering such gruesome memories is so disturbing for Yetu, who is the historian for her community, that at times she has to escape to the water's surface to breathe in some fresh air. Finally, during one such attempt, Yetu discovers a world outside their watery abode and realizes that this newly discovered world belongs to the surface dwellers and is the same world which was left behind by her ancestors, the pregnant slave women, during the European colonization of Africa when slave trades were practised.

The Deep overtly addresses the issue of exploitation of Black slave women during the bygone era of European colonization of Africa when slavery was quite prevalent. It recounts the lethal journeys undertaken by the slaves through the slave ships when many were physically assaulted and thrown into the water. The depictive techniques used in *The Deep* tend to trigger the conscious mind of Black audiences to ponder about the trauma their ancestors endured during slavery. Prominent African-American critic bell hooks overtly criticized the dark history of African colonization when slave trade was a prominent practice. hooks' acclaimed text *ain't i a woman: black women and feminism* (2015) explicitly addressed the brutal treatment inflicted upon Black slave women during the bygone era of African colonization. In order to

validate this argument, it will be pertinent to quote here a few lines from hooks' aforementioned text:

Many African women were pregnant prior to their capture or purchase. They were forced to endure pregnancy without any care given to their diet, without any exercise, and without any assistance during the labor. In their own communities African women had been accustomed to much pampering and care during pregnancy, so the barbaric nature of childbearing on the slave ship was both physically harmful and psychologically demoralizing. (hooks, 2015, p. 18)

Hence, it can be contended that such an explicit portrayal of the trauma experienced by Black slave women tends to act as a means to visualize the dark past of African history that should not be forgotten by future generations. Solomon and his co-writers created an imaginary setup with mythical creatures because they wanted to reach the psyche of their readers and direct it towards understanding the significance of solidarity and interdependence among them in a captivating manner. My contention here is that such kinds of portrayal by Black writers might have succeeded in creating a sense of Black interdependence among Black people across the globe because, in a very subtle manner, such narratives represented the significance of respecting the African past when African culture, tradition, and people were explicitly discriminated on racial grounds. Yetu, as depicted in the novel, acts as a historian for her community and performs the duty of remembering the traumatic experiences of her ancestors. She tries to perform her duty wholeheartedly even if it creates a sense of emotional turmoil in her mind. Moreover, as a reservoir of such distressing memories of their ancestors, she almost saves the rest of her folk from visualizing the gruesome treatment their ancestors, the African slave women, underwent during the Atlantic slave trade.

Solomon and the co-authors involved with the creation of this masterpiece enabled the Black people to empathize with the sacrifices of their ancestors who struggled a lot to emancipate themselves from the physical and psychological cage instituted around them by the colonial masters. Such narratives tend to create a sense of interdependence amongst the people belonging to the Black community because they can realize that their past was indisputably gruesome, but they can now play an active role in celebrating their present while envisioning a sustainable future which will be devoid of any form of discriminations against them. The presence of Black interdependency and solidarity in societies across the globe will enable them to reclaim the identity that they lost during the era of European colonization of Africa. Thus, the creative role played by contemporary writers to create a sense of Black solidarity among Black people across the globe by use of encouraging rhetoric, overt illustrations, and linguistic potential is remarkable.

With a similar line of understanding, here, we can mention Tommie Shelby's (2002) essay "Foundations of Black Solidarity: Collective Identity or Common Oppression?" where Shelby contends that Black leaders are continuously working to liberate the Blacks from the burden of racial oppression and urged them to become a unified agent to bring in the required social changes. Shelby urges both Black and non-Black people to understand the significance of solidarity because it is quite instrumental in fully achieving the freedom and social equality that the people of colour ideally deserve. This essay highlights a significant aspect allied with racial equality in a society where no doubt many people from the Black community are trying to create a difference by enduring relevant sacrifices, but a few are still acting complacent and self-centred and such cryptic approaches will undeniably create a drawback to the entire movement which started with an ideal of encouraging Black Solidarity in the societies across

the world. Shelby also points out certain other aspects pertinent to the issue of Black solidarity and individual freedom in society. It seems pertinent to quote here a few lines from Shelby's essay to comprehend his arguments in a better manner:

However, I will argue that we should reject this view of black emancipation, not because black solidarity has no contribution to make to black liberation, but rather because cultivating a collective black identity is unnecessary for forging effective bonds among blacks, would create (or exacerbate an already) undue constraint on individual freedom, and is likely, in any case, to be self-defeating. (Shelby, 2002, p. 235)

Furthermore, Shelby even contended that the reconstructed Black solidarity should manage to sustain without the demand for a collective Black identity because the requirement for a collective Black identity might only impede the collective struggles for this section of people ahead (p. 266). Shelby's thought-provoking remarks will initiate further research and debates on such ideas. On the other hand, William T. Houston in the essay "Black Solidarity and Racial Context: An Exploration of the Role of Black Solidarity in U.S Cities" writes "The diminished effect of Black consciousness prompts our attention to explore the level of consciousness that exists among Blacks" (Houston, 2009, p. 721). Houston highlights on an effective level that Black consciousness is highly effective in developing a sense of confidence in Blacks because ethics will eventually help them to build social, political, and economic institutions which will develop a sense of group solidarity and Houston believes that this should eventually evolve into a cultural norm (p. 720). Therefore, appreciation of the entire concept of Black interdependence is distinctly important if one seeks to decode the factors accountable for encouraging Black fraternity among the people of Africa and the African diaspora.

Now, let us examine some of the newly formed discourses initiated by the African and Afro-American writers as intermediaries to enable the Black audiences to reconnect to their roots. For instance, the cultural lenses of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism enabled the Black authors to draw an interlink among various components of the literary platform such as fantasy, facts, science, technology, African history, and African culture. Afrofuturism seeks to rediscover the world of Black culture and tradition by interlinking African-American themes with science and technoculture. As a discourse, it endeavours to engage with the experiences of people belonging to Africa and the African diaspora as well. The discourse of Afrofuturism was introduced by Mark Dery in 1993 to define the interconnection between African-American themes and technoculture of the contemporary era. The readers can decode Afrofuturistic trends in *The Deep* and in *Lagoon* as well. Here, characters such as Yetu, Adaora, Agu, and Anthony can be seen negotiating with current adversity, but with a determination to safeguard their own homeland, culture, and tradition. On the other hand, one can also consider interpreting similar works of fiction through the cultural lens of Africanfuturism which encourages the Blacks to reconnect to their original roots. The term Africanfuturism was coined by Nnedi Okorafor, a Nigerian American author, in 2019. Since its commencement, the discourse of Africanfuturism has been constantly in use to enable Black writers to imagine a sustainable alternate reality where their people will enjoy equality and equity in every sector. For instance, Wole Talabi in the Introduction to the text *Africanfuturism: An Anthology* (2020) can be seen encouraging Black readers to actively engage with African traditions, history, culture, and science.

Thus, the frameworks of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism are remarkably important to unravel the connection that the Black characters seem to develop with their roots. In *The Deep*, the members of the Wajinru community believe in safeguarding their homeland from the extortion

of resources that the companies are about to begin. Their keenness to safeguard their homeland and their reverence towards the sacrifices of their ancestors symbolize the respect and belongingness the Blacks across the globe should possess towards their original homeland Mother Africa.

Similar kinds of representations are visible in Nnedi Okorafor's sci-fi *Lagoon*. Okorafor's *Lagoon* is a pure work of Africanfuturism which narrativizes the life of people in Lagos, Nigeria when they suddenly come across an unexpected crisis because of an unexpected encounter with the aliens. However, later on, the readers discover that the aliens wanted to contact the people of Lagos to discuss a possibly larger and sustainable plan for their place. Nevertheless, things do not turn up as they were expected and a misunderstanding arises between the inhabitants of the land and the aliens that eventually triggers a sudden chaos in the place. The narrative is divided into three parts, namely 'Welcome', 'Awakening', and 'Symbiosis' and recounts a fantasy sci-fi tale where three people, namely Adaora, Agu, and Anthony try to negotiate with an alien ambassador Ayodele to bring back harmony to their homeland during a sudden alien encounter. The way, the three of them raced against time to safeguard their homeland, Lagos, during the sudden chaos tends to be an inspiring event for the readers and particularly for the Black audience because the attitude displayed by the characters will encourage the people of African descent to understand the necessity of unity, solidarity, and interdependency to overcome sudden adversaries.

On the other hand, the aspect of understanding the figure of the 'other' with humane attributes is a significant issue in *Lagoon* and similar ideas are shared by Melody Jue (2017) in the paper "Intimate Objectivity: On Nnedi Okorafor's Oceanic Afrofuturism". Jue highlights in this essay:

Beginning with Lagoons entanglement of the novum and indigenous cosmologies - the strange and the familiar - what draws my attention is how Adaora studies the aliens. Rather than panicking at the sight of a non-human visitor, Adaora sustains an open curiosity toward Ayodele and her people, who have mainly settled in the ocean. (Jue, 2017, p. 174)

Jue highlights that there is a sense of goodwill in the entire encounter with aliens when Adaora confronts the alien Ayodele with curiosity and not with fear and scepticism (p. 174). Jue exploring the aspect of intimate objectivity in *Lagoon* while engaging with the folkloric and the fantastic gives a noteworthy turn to the entire narrative. Moreover, providing a humane turn to understand the role of the 'other' also speaks a lot about the marginalization of the Blacks as the 'other' of society. Thus, decoding the use of symbols and scenarios is a must for the readers if they want to know more about the methodology used by the Black writers to disseminate a sense of solidarity and interdependence on a global level amongst the Blacks.

Okorafor, a Nigerian American writer, is predominantly engaged with the area of Africanfuturism. She has introduced the discourse of Africanfuturism and believes that this discourse will inspire Black people to reconnect to their roots, but this time through a scientific framework. Her Africanfuturistic works are extremely encouraging and thought-provoking for Black spectators because her works possess the capacity to promote Black solidarity and interdependence among them. The readers can also notice that Okorafor deliberately uses the elements of folklore and fantasy to capture the attention of her readers and direct it towards imagining an esteemed future for themselves. It can be argued that a section of African and Afro-American writers truly understood the significance of strengthening the psyche of their people if ever they had to attain an esteemed and self-healed position in society collectively.

African Science fiction stepped a bit ahead of time and imbibed every possible element that might allow the people from Mother Africa and her diaspora to imagine an emancipated and sustainable future for the Blacks collectively. Thus, the celebration of a ferociously independent lifestyle promoted the necessity of unlearning the prejudiced lessons of the colonial era while seeking to self-heal oneself from the hegemonies of powerarchy. Such narratives play a significant role for the Black onlookers because it will help them question the prejudices upheld against them by society. Dr Nedine Moonsamy in the essay "Fish Out of Water: Black Superheroines in Nnedi Okorafor's Lagoon" writes:

Consequently, the question remains- what *does* it mean for a black artist to engage in contemporary popular culture? For Iton, the solution is to lend visibility to the black experience by engaging the fantastic that sits on the margins of popular culture. Black self-narration must then take on surreal dimensions and embrace the art of making strange. (Moonsamy, 2020, p. 176)

Thus, we can notice that Black artists are gradually engaging with the area of science fiction because they want to provide notable visibility to the experiences of Blacks, but this time through a techno-cultural lens. Moonsamy mentions that Okorafor was aware of the fact that her style of writing is not a new one rather it's an inherited one that is quite organic and is more suitable for the narration of Black and African experiences across the world.

Furthermore, Evelyn M. Simien and Rasalee A. Clawson in their paper "The Intersection of Race and Gender: An Examination of Black Feminist Consciousness, Race Consciousness, and Policy Attitudes" mention that "Blacks who endorse black feminist principles should favour policies advocating women's rights" (Simien and Clawson, 2004, p. 797). Moreover, it is arguably true that there is an interlink between racial aspects and Black feminist consciousness in societies across the globe. Their final research output is also quite thought-provoking which states that "Overall, our research offers tantalizing evidence that black men and women have similar levels of black feminist consciousness and that the political consequences of this consciousness are fairly comparable across gender" (Simien and Clawson, 2004, p. 808). Accordingly, it can be contended that a writer's use of discourse, strategy, and narrative techniques is of utmost importance for a researcher to comprehend more about the techniques used by these authors to inspire their people to envision a sustainable future for themselves in the upcoming days.

Meanwhile, Sandra Lindow (2017) in the essay "Nnedi Okorafor: Exploring the Empire of Girls' Moral Development" explains that Okorafor developed an interesting capability of understanding the world of the 'Other' while swiftly blurring the discriminatory boundaries between human, plant, and animals. Lindow highlights that Okorafor succeeded as a writer by aptly using fragments of her memories to create rich stories about the past, present, and even future Africa. It is a matter of fact that Okorafor's creative capacity is appreciable if one gradually moves towards exploring the figure of the 'other'. Okorafor's approach towards understanding the world and the figure of the other will eventually instruct the readers to recognize the prejudices maintained against the Blacks for ages. Lindow also discusses the constructive techniques used by Okorafor to create her characters who are strong enough to question the cultural values of the society while unlearning the biased attributes attached to it. It will be pertinent to quote here a few lines from Lindow's essay:

Once again, bigotry identifies difference as less than human. As cultural outsiders, Okorafor's protagonists are well positioned to question cultural values, a step that is

essential in moral development, and as her novels progress, the words used in taunting are gradually repositioned as positive attributes. (Lindow, 2017, p. 47)

Similar ideas have been explored by Marinette Grimbeek (2023) in the article "Girls Making Families: Agential Assemblage in Nnedi Okorafor's Speculative Fiction" where Grimbeek remarks on the strategy used by Okorafor in her speculative fiction that acts like a bricoleur seeking alternate Western concepts of being by relating to 'Others' through kinships making. This essay discusses the implications associated with developing a kinship with 'others' through which Okorafor's protagonists redefine themselves as well. Grimbeek traces the presence of narratives on family, reproduction, and kinship in Okorafor's works. The ideas introduced in this essay seek to project the act of kin-making through assemblage as a process of self-actualization (p. 150). It seems interesting to engage with Grimbeek's paper if one seeks to explore the entire concept of kinship-making in society to evolve by developing interdependence, comradeship, and solidarity with people belonging to one's own community or other. Okorafor's *Lagoon* illustrates similar scenarios where the protagonist Adaora can be seen developing a new relationship with the shape-shifting alien Ayodele who wanted to develop a mutual bond with the people of Lagos to help its inhabitants envision an alternate possibility for the place.

Thus, the gradual perpetuation of author's strategies into the literary world of Black fantasy and Black science fiction is a noteworthy issue to ponder over and many scholars are already examining these aspects to know more about the literary techniques and narrative strategies used by the African and Afro-American writers to empower their people on a global level.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that the only possible way to end oppression in the present time is by interrupting the oppressive pattern of thinking among us which has been promoting global suffering on various grounds. Similar strategies have been employed by the African and Afro-American authors to alter the socio-political pattern of thinking that tends to promote the oppression of one section of people by another. A noticeable number of works from the Black literary platform revolve around a specific plot that allows the characters to assert their rights and reclaim their identity sooner or later in the narrative. Black literary fiction such as *Lagoon*, *Things Fall Apart*, *The Deep*, and *The Color Purple* nevertheless depict similar representations from the respective authors.

On the other hand, certain Black female characters such as Adaora in *Lagoon*, Yetu in *The Deep*, and Celie in *The Color Purple* represent the necessity of imbibing persistence, interdependence, and perseverance to overcome the adversities of life. The authors of the aforementioned selected texts are aptly aware of the fact that the technique used in the representation of a particular character impacts the thought process of the readers to a large extent. Hence, it is arguably true that an influential representation of Black characters will sooner or later inspire Blacks to envision a better future for themselves. Similar aspects are also studied in my previously published paper "Remapping Black Narratives of Perseverance and Power: A Reading of Select Texts through the Lenses of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism" where I contended that Black people are continuously striving to create a collective platform which will allow them to confer their subjective experiences to the world because they are quite aware of the fact that prevalent Eurocentric discourses are just an output of hegemonic attributes of the bygone colonial era.

Thus, it is highly necessary for us as readers to comprehend the narrative techniques, innovative discourses, and linguistic strategies used by the authors to communicate or express a particular motif to the audiences. Therefore, I can expect that my findings can shed new light on the narrative techniques and strategies used by Africa and Afro-America writers to encourage Black people across the globe to collectively work for a sustainable future while disseminating a sense of Black solidarity and interdependence on a global level.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding Disclosure

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

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