Africanfuturism—a New Commonsense? Apocalypse as Sense-Making after the Crises of Postcolonial Modernity

Damilare Bello | University of Ibadan
http://ellids.com/archives/2021/09/4.4-Bello.pdf

Abstract | Critical dystopia, apocalypse as myth of endings, and the *longue durée* of human cultural history are all circumscribed by the necessity of the future: they are subtended by the extrapolation/speculation of the present into the future, whether in plausible, possible, or annihilative terms. Concerning African postcolonial politics and its literary imagination however, there is a sense in which the paradigm of apocalypse as a sense-making framework and futurist narratives of critical (not classical) dystopian sensibility preempt, rehash, and connect with Mignolo's ruminations on the rhetoric of modernity, Santos's heterotopia and utopian-thinking, Sarr's Afrotopia, and decoloniality's emphasis on the crises of modernity/modern science. This paper is part of the author's interdisciplinary project of thinking through this relation, the theoretical convergence of Africanfuturism and decoloniality as political projects, and their epistemic implications for postcolonial modernity, African future or utopia (i.e., Afrotopia), and the productions of contemporaneous realities in African literary imagination. In order to ground the perspectives posed here in more pragmatic terms, a close-reading of Chinelo Onwualu's "Read Before Use" has been performed as a converging point for the arguments raised.

Keywords | Africanfuturism, Dystopia, Decoloniality, Crises of Modernity/Modern Science, Apocalypse, Heterotopia, Afrotopia, Utopian-thinking, Chinelo Onwualu

This article explores how the apocalypse imaginary and the dystopian sensibility[1] can interlink to fashion a political strategy in Africanfuturism as a framework that bears out future (re)imaginings as radical tactics of localizing a space of survival for Africans in the postcolonial present. To do this, the article ruminates on connections between Africanfuturism, Matthew Eatough's "utopian now," Felwine Sarr's African utopia (Afrotopia), Boaventura Sousa de Santos's conception of heterotopia, and critical dystopia as a utopia-bound episode. This article affirms the necessity of seeking alternative wisdom in living through the twenty-first century's social crises. In so doing, it attempts to make sense of how creating alternative realities by radically displacing the present in future terms constitutes a political intervention in the crises besetting the modern world and the African whose subjecthood is anchored on technoscience. Also of interest is how Africanfuturism relates to apocalypse as a sense-making framework and the crises of (Western) modernity as crises of African future. In connection with this, the article reflects on how Africanfuturism, as a "political tactic for restructuring experiences of the African present through imagining new African futures" (Sunstrum 199), draws on the sensibilities availed by dystopia as an episode and apocalypse as a myth of endings. To develop such a reading, this article rethinks and theorizes Africanfuturism in the light of a commonsense epistemology. And to substantiate and drive the arguments to a meaningful conclusion, the analysis sets up a close-reading of diasporic Nigerian writer Chinelo Onwualu's born-digital short story "Read Before Use" as a converging point for the ideas presented here.

To start, using Nigeria as a case study, if we were to imagine the year 2020 as an apocalyptic dystopian narrative, and its most severe moments of social chaos, political disenchantment, and cultural anarchism as plot materials—i.e., Covid-19 pandemic, #EndSARS protests, Lekki and Zabarmari Massacres, and Kankara Abduction to list but a few—what lessons about Nigeria's ecosystem as a postcolonial state are magnified by the narrative's plot?[2] More importantly, what hypotheses or conclusions are hazardable

---

[1]The dystopian sensibility here refers to a consciousness of and fixation (i.e., the cultural idioms that represent it) on impending catastrophes. More importantly, this consciousness or fixation, as well as its associated symbols, generate conflicting responses that cannot be easily bifurcated into categories of hopelessness and despair or of hope and redemption, and thus are capable of yielding surprising political implications.

[2]These events happened almost sequentially in 2020, rippling the Nigerian socio-cultural fabric by setting off a chain of political implications that has estranged the polity and the ruling elite and, consequently, portending possible cataclysmic futures for the nation-state. #EndSARS was a series of protests by the Nigerian youths against corrupt political leadership and police brutality; they occurred simultaneously in major metropolitan cities in the nation. Lekki Massacre was the response of the government to the protests; there is still no consensus on the number of protesters killed by the military deployed by the state to clamp down on the protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate, one of the more popular sites of the protest. The Zambari Massacre names the gruesome killings of farmers in Borno state by suspected Boko Haram terrorists, while

as regards the larger universe and, particularly, the postcolonial African subject? While it could be envisaged that responses will vary, imagining such a narrative will not fail to yield a political answer, however correct or corrective it may be in its valuation of the raised questions in particular and the human species in general.

The use of the terms 'correct' and 'corrective' here presages some of the pivotal issues interfacing this article—that of the chronopolitical implication of thinking against dominant imaginaries as they pertain to alarmist or more nuanced views of the fate of the human species, the lifespan/afterlife of the present cultural moment, and the alpha role of technoscience in knowledge- and culture-making. By chronopolitical, the article draws attention to Jane Bryce's postulation on speculative literature and futurist thinking as alternative mechanisms of existing within the social real, especially as against state-sanctioned apparatuses of control preserving the latter as it were (2). To her and Kodwo Eshun, who introduces the phrase as a vital intercession in the production and distribution of Black futures (292), this act is an intervening contravention of any lifeworld produced by the (postcolonial) state, Western modernity, and technoscience as a universalized epistemology. It is a method of correcting the present (its ways of knowing, seeing, living, etc.) by extrapolating as well as speculating[3] social facts or cultural baselines and inscribing these alternate futures as participatory in the longevity of human space-times. Thus, any politically correct or corrective answer that affirms the commitment of year 2020-as-narrative to unveiling new or even oppositional knowledge—against anecdotal or empiricist truth—gestures toward how apocalyptic occurrences and dystopian episodes act as the materiality of chronopolitical strategies targeting specific histories and potential futures. To exposit on this conclusion requires restating that there is a sense in which events of apocalyptic proportions and dystopian rigor can bare (un)known truths about societies and systems, and that there is also a sense in which they impose enduring lessons.

Dystopian narratives are generally regarded as patently divested of sanguinity—even if they aspire toward hope—in working with the apocalypse imaginary that proposes, at the surface, "the destruction of modernity as leading to a state of at least provisional suffering and oppression" (Hicks 7). Heather Hicks asserts this in her book *The Post-Apocalyptic Novel,* where she reads post-apocalyptic novels as invested in the death of modernity, but only as a means of achieving a better world by building from the ruins. In treating post-apocalyptic novels as "narratives of global disaster" troubling the

---

the Kankara abduction refers to the kidnapping of over 300 secondary school pupils from a boy's school in Kankara, Katsina state—an instance out of many similar kidnappings in the country.

[3] I am conscious of the controversy between extrapolation and speculation as modes of speculative/science fiction/futurist imagining. Without engaging with the dynamics of the debate, already sufficiently addressed by Landon Brooks, I subscribe to the technical difference(s) between both, especially as they relate to African literature and spirituality, on the basis of plausibility, even if—as widely accepted—both emphasize going beyond the known as the starting point of imagination and the unknown as its end or the future of the known. Extrapolation here would be paying fidelity to the known and the existing as the baseline scientific or sociological reality, and producing these 'knowns' as they were in constructed presents/futures—thereby emphasizing precision and extension as constituting its rhetoric of plausibility. Speculation could either be the formulation of "new sets of rules […] different by not being extrapolated from known facts" or by being extrapolated from a different but preceding speculation (Brooks 24). In other words, it could be a movement from extrapolation that is not bound by fidelity or precision in extending and reproducing what is known. Or it could be a movement toward speculation by extrapolating from existing speculative foundations or baselines.

"episteme of modernity" (1), she emphasizes the dystopian connection as "the story of the collapse of modernity itself" or of degraded societies hampered by "globalized ruin" (2). Her juxtaposition of dystopia and the post-apocalyptic as synonymous literary traditions is anchored on the premise of both as involving degraded societies and the profound absence of certainty in the pathway toward triumph.

However, unlike Hicks who acknowledges this synonymy, emphasizing a negligible difference[4] only based on the "social narratives" that hold such despoiled civilizations together, and James Baumlin who gives credence to it in his article exploring pandemics as apocalyptic events and their effects on conceptions of humanity within the posthumanist framework, this work does not entirely consider the apocalyptic and the dystopian as necessarily synonymous. At least not on the basis of the duration and extent of anguish that characterizes and survives an apocalypse, as seen in Baumlin's statement, "Apocalypse leads, paradoxically, to happy ending, *however terrifying the path toward that ending*" (29; emphasis added). Neither does it completely agree with Riven Barton's position that apocalyptic literature differs extensively from literary dystopias—given his claim that dystopia postdates apocalyptic events and that the former "regardless of how horrible it may be is not an end, but a struggle for continuation," nor that the distinction between the religious apocalypse tradition and secular post-apocalyptic content comes to be resolved in dystopian episodes (Barton 6). Disagreeing with these positions does not suggest that they are wrong; however, it is fueled by an understanding of appreciable overlaps in what these paradigms gesture at, the artifice of their materiality as interventional tactics, and their politics within a rhetorical knowledge cosmos. That is, they sometimes overlap in terms of what they signify—their implication as occurrences or their constitution as material possibilities, and the lessons they provide—the implication of which is that their ability to serve as knowledge paradigms with politico-cultural resonances is heightened. To cite an example, Onwualu's story involves a post-apocalyptic civilization about to witness another apocalypse, a social condition that marks it also as a dystopian narrative. The opposite can also be the case, and apocalypse can suggest a future redemption, which is also the case with the story's impending apocalypse. Thus, rather than completely subscribe to any of the above positions, this article proceeds from the supposition that one framework can integrate structures contrived by the other as a broader paradigm, a point Hicks admits in relation to the apocalyptic and the post-apocalyptic traditions. This suggests that dystopia can draw on the apocalypse framework as a period of suffering without necessarily being post-apocalyptic in outlook, that is, with an end in sight: for instance, apocalypse in its religious connotations signifies the annihilation of the human world (Baumlin 29), setting itself up as a myth of endings (Rosen xi). However, this end is neither infinite nor ultimate, as the gist is often the reconstitution of said world: a turbulent journey toward a new utopia. Re-echoing Baumlin's succinct avowal, the "[a]pocalypse leads, paradoxically, to a happy ending, however terrifying the path toward that ending" (29).

---

[4]Hicks acknowledges a difference between using dystopia and post-apocalyptic synonymously based on the former "presenting a world in which a single metanarrative" operates rather tyrannically, and the latter "depicting a social landscape punctuated by [...] various micronarratives" (8). Her stance is revealed in her point that in either case there is no surety as to what constitutes progress, given how both manifest the absence of alternatives and uniformity that progress often requires.

To argue from this viewpoint is to recognize the slipperiness in making the following argument that should ordinarily buttress Barton's stance: that secular apocalypse redefined the apocalypse imaginary completely from a religious myth of endings—of complete annihilation—to a secular interpretive paradigm. This cannot be more untrue however. One, the explorative and expository scope of the secular apocalypse mythos is traceable to the latent promise of divine recovery and vengeance inherent to religious apocalyptic narratives. Within Judeo-Christian faith, the traditional or religious apocalyptic imaginary orients toward comforting those menaced by social vices/disruption. To this cohort, "the promise of apocalypse is unequivocal; God has a plan, the disruption is part of it, and in the end all will be made right" (Rosen xii). All of this prefigures a newness after destruction. In her work, Elizabeth Rosen unambiguously highlights the genus of corrective and expository intervention that apocalypse exhibits in its religious morphology: a promise of restoration and ultimate order, an avowal to right wrongs, and a specific pontification of what is wrong that requires restoration, which often can be avoided entirely through repentance (xi). Indeed, as will be shown in the latter parts of this article, there is also an insightful nexus between the kind of (judgmental) intervention implied by the religious sensibility of apocalypse as "a corrective response for a people who have not only failed unpardonably, but have also demonstrated an inability even to right its own wrongs" and the manner of intervention ascribable to present-day/secular apocalyptic imaginaries (Rosen xii).

In its multiple religious uses, this trope of newness—New Jerusalem being the conceptual term—is sacrosanct to the apocalypse mythos. Similarly important, in the religious context, apocalypse's functionality as a myth of endings also invariably signifies the annihilation of social crises and corruption that now obtains as the core of the secular apocalypse imaginary, which is why Lisa Yaszek, revisiting the knowledge value of apocalypse, describes it as "positively and negatively charged" (48). This confutes the widespread position that the religious apocalypse is principally concerned with the end of human history. In addition, in its classical Vedic, Hellenic, and Islamic moorings, the resonance of the apocalypse as a sense-making paradigm regulating social consciousness and baseline realities is not alien.[5] Apocalypse, after all, etymologically derives from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, which means unveiling or uncovering. However, and this informs the stated ambivalence, it is also counter-intuitive to admit that the historical transitioning of the myth of apocalypse into its present-day symbolism is not heavily influenced by specific modern occasions. Events like Enlightenment and its drastic cut down on religious clout in regulating epistemology, Industrial Revolution and the rise of modern science as a militant knowledge system, World Wars and terrorism, late capitalism, the use of advanced weapons of warfare and mass destruction, epidemics and outbreaks, and more recently the Coronavirus pandemic have impacted our understanding of what apocalypse means.

---

[5]The etymology of apocalypse in Greek social and epistemological register frames it as concerned with unveiling profound things otherwise hidden, which suggests its acceptance as associable with knowledge. Teresa Heffernan's "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children'" expounds on the expository and revelatory uses of apocalypse in different religions like Islam, pointing toward its function as a knowledge structure across cultures and religion. See also, Rosen, page 7, for how apocalypse functions similarly in Vedic cultures.

Although, like Rosen argues, while a palpable shift is noticeable in how the *zeitgeist* of Enlightenment/Western modernity dulled the restorative portion of the apocalypse formula, post-Enlightenment occurrences also consolidated apocalypse into an end-time narrative in the consciousness of the modern subject, dialing up the annihilative leanings of traditional religious apocalypse. Writers like Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and H.G. Wells trended apocalypse as doomsday in popular imagination through the science fiction genre (Yaszek 48). The upshot of which is the fastening of that tenuous liminal link between subjectivity formation and *weltschmerz*—i.e., melancholy and world-weariness induced by a consciousness of specters of scary futures—as resonant in the maintenance of modern subjecthood. Retained therefore as a structure of feeling in the secular world is the morbid sensibility of the religious apocalypse. Thus, it can be safely supposed that in the process of wrestling with the growing paranoia caused by advancements in technoscience and the crises it facilitates, apocalypse assumed a more synonymous secular relation with destruction and catastrophe.

This development informs how the apocalypse myth can be said to foreshadow or evoke meaningless worlds: degenerate present with a chaotic past and a future devoid of possibilities. While, to Rosen, the episteme of hope within the apocalyptic framework suffers decreasing attention as a result of a consuming emphasis on its destructive tenor by a generation defined by incessant witnessing and fear of unrepentant crises (xv), its revelatory sensibility still retains a vibrant presence owing to various artistic traditions across continents reworking and refusing what Paik calls "the politics of catastrophe," which, as Yaszek explains, involves writers using the apocalypse imaginary to investigate or address racial and class tensions (49). It is commonly expressed in dystopian imaginations—critical dystopia to be precise, which Graham Murphy explains as an inversion of dystopia that began to appear in literary works of the late nineteenth century (473). Dystopian episodes manifesting this model of apocalypse as a revelatory framework recommend themselves as critical schemes evaluating the *longue durée* of human history, albeit with perceptible morbidity. So, while dystopian narratives intimate a "struggle for continuation," their obligation to the social real as "shadow projections of current society, hyper-ventilating problems and potential fears that already exist" (Barton 6) reveals a heavy reliance on the paradigm of apocalypse as a sense-making framework, especially since dystopia as a post-apocalyptic possibility shows capricious investment in the eruption, absence, or trickle of hope, despite the overwhelming clutter of despair.

It should be clear that the direction of this article's current premises is in emphasizing the dystopian utilization of the apocalypse imaginary as a framework. Also of importance is how this framework bolsters the critical sense of dystopian creations, as it cannot be discounted that the shift from reading apocalypse as a myth of the end of human socio-political history to a sense-making paradigm affords modern subjects the privilege of contriving paradigmatic modes of comprehending materiality and subjectivity (Kermode 28). One way this is oft-done is reworking the intervening poetics of apocalypse into a schema that fuses cultural mythology and secular imaginary in ways remindful of the ending of modern ecosystem and of social crises and political vices. When made manifest in dystopian conceptions, this paradigmatic structure justifies its

weight as a radical mode of evaluating nationhood, subjectivity, and progress.[6] At issue therefore is not dystopianism in its classic form of total annihilation, with no glimpse of redemption or hope, but a dystopian sensibility oriented toward utopianism, that is, a critical dystopia moving en-route social and political responsibility or dystopia that "[is] less driven by extremes of celebration or despair, more open to complexities and ambiguities, and more encouraging of new riffs of personal and political maneuvers" (Moylan 182).

In their description of the Covid-19 pandemic as a "magnifying mirror," Suri and Moquim corroborate this view of dystopian outcomes. Their reflection that the pandemic and its dystopian-scare "provides our world an opportunity to re-cognize itself in its reflection" (v) illuminates the foregoing and also stresses on alternatively reading apocalyptic events as radical ways of unveiling confounding social meanings. The logic being optimized here is the illustrative functionality of potential cataclysmic occurrences. Also optimized are the corrective potentials of such occurrences. To cite a useful instance, despite how damaging Covid-19 has been or how epidemics menace the very institutions that remotely make them possible, they jolt us to truths erstwhile discounted. Thus, the argument, put plainly, is that in leveraging the apocalypse paradigm, dystopian scare or catastrophes, while also imperiling the validity of modern systems, recommend themselves prophetically as remedies. Their apocalyptic nature, when read for their telegraphic potentials, disambiguates their origins, causes, or even catastrophic enactments into signposts of maturing crises, so that we can read them as warning signs or critical revelatory schemes foreshadowing possible practical steps against future mishaps.

The above proposition buttresses the position that there is a sense in which dystopian episodes interfacing the apocalypse myth can be apprehended as a mode of knowledge production. Moylan asserts that dystopian literatures narrativizing apocalypse do so with the goal of "exploring ways to change the present systems so that […] culturally and economically marginalized people not only survive but also try to move toward a social reality that is shaped by an impulse to human self-determination and ecological health" (189). His take affords us to see how this kind of dystopian episode loosely interprets the dystopian spirit of melancholy, which undeniably accounts for the critical shift from classical dystopia's more incorrigible pessimism.[7] The creative forms within which this shift finds resonance are often constituted by what he calls "social

---

[6]Teresa Heffernan's article "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children'" is pertinent here as it reads how the apocalypse paradigm can be designed as a narrative tool to explore nationalism. Her article reads Rushdie's deployment of apocalypse as his questioning and skepticism of the idea of the modern nation, claiming fascinatingly that the revelatory potential of the apocalypse paradigm is animated in how the novel projects the idea of the nation as apocalyptic by rejecting marginalized communities or erasing their existence through homogenizing master-narratives, thereby suggesting the end of (alternative) history and the future they produce. Heffernan's article is rich in its sophisticated propositions of how the mythos of apocalypse, when adopted for its paradigmatic strength as a sense-making mode, can offer practical ways of understanding different aspects of the nation, and perhaps remedying, the failures or, to use the decolonial phrase, crises of modernity.

[7]Examples of texts with such overbearing pessimism are Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Yevgeni Zamyatin's *We* (1920), Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952), and Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo* (1952). Others are Olufemi Terry's "Stickfighting Days" (2010), H. G. Wells' *Time Machine* (1895), Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1907), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932).

nightmares." As they are crises at whose core rests redemptive grace, through them critical dystopia intimates, explores, and renders ways to improve society, ironically lessening the dark overtones of apocalyptic wreck and infinite despondency and encouraging hope that is achievable by taking practical steps or relying on commonsense.[8]

It should be stated that the commonsensicality of the solutions tendered by these 'social nightmares' renders them as spectacles. There are several reasons for this: they are spectacles by being negations of dominant reality. Also, they are often simple, practical, but immeasurably productive steps toward self-preservation, self-affirmation, and the collective good in a world defined by wonders of modern science. Wonders that often fail and whose failures become the crises commonsense ironically applies itself against as solution—take for instance the relation between green gas and cancer, high-tech weapons of warfare and terrorism/inter-national wars, advanced technology and the rise or move of modern societies from welfare to surveillance states as revealed in the example of Edward Snowden, and the unpopularity and thus mythologizing of simple, almost outdated solutions like loving one's neighbor as oneself in the face of capitalism-backed individualistic approach to life. In addition, and this spotlights the irony of their spectacle, the remedial validity of these commonsensical solutions is locked away within the chaos they address as belated or prophylactic remedies. Put differently, these solutions self-reflect their chaotic interiority as harvestable of requisite solutions, hereby projecting their contradictory radicality into the realm of the spectacular where, negating the principle of causation, the cause is the solution. Critical dystopia therefore, in working with the apocalypse paradigm, tropes commonsense as realistic steps adoptable toward achieving restoration.

It would appear cautious to accede to Josef Broeck's conclusion in *The Apocalyptic Imagination in America* that apocalyptic thinking and writing have strayed away from any definite description so that there is simply "no common agreement on the form, content, or function" (94). Even where this is near accurate—for instance, Yaszek's work on African writers' relation to the apocalypse paradigm suggests several literary/imaginative uses—it is never the case that an astute observation cannot bare the presence of a procedural leaning toward a message of hope when it is constitutive in a narrative of apocalypse. It can be teased out because the procedures through which the message of hope is choreographed are the materials of the narration itself. Moylan calls them the social and aesthetic values of dystopian narratives, and this article proposes they are anchored on commonsense. Their manner of constitution as radical value systems points toward a politics of catastrophe that reconsiders the process through which utopia can be attained. We see this in how the procedures-as-materials achieve their radicality,

---

[8]Commonsense is used here in a way that draws on the basic principles of the Commonsense philosophy and the ideals of the Scottish realism of Thomas Reid that privileges experience and natural laws based off of perception of human nature and environment in making value judgments. Commonsense here thus refutes the total reliance on empiricist knowledge or positivist science in making net judgments of social worlds; relies on experience-based perception of the human world and the natural environment as constituting sound knowledge; and, importantly, affirms specific locales as capable of generating their own relevant site-related/situated knowledge. I refer to it as knowledge drawn from and by making sense of human observational experiences of natural and social realities in order to effect and affect people's lived experiences of both realities, thereby having a stake in human's circadian experience.

which, as posited earlier, is how they call forth the New Jerusalem motif from the same crises that produce and threaten it.

This returns the discussion to the thesis that there is a sense in which events of apocalyptic proportions and critical dystopian sensibility can uncover hidden fault lines as well as propose curative lessons. Re-framing this in a way that furthers the conversation, there is a sense in which we can attribute to a narrative of apocalypse the quality of a radical politics of possibilities. Thus, approaching dystopian narratives working with this paradigm as anchored on a "utopian imagination" is not illogical. Utopian-thinking or imagination, to define it in Sousa Santos's terms,[9] emphasizes what does not exist but is integral, and can be manifestly so, by being a possibility to what exists ("Three Metaphors" 572). That utopian-thinking orients toward substituting a dominate reality with an implied (alternative) possibility holds immense implication for Global Southern nation-states like Nigeria, its future, as well as the dystopia-apocalypse relation.

Out of the several theoretical imperatives that facilitate interlinking the apocalypse-dystopia as radical sense-making paradigm with Santos's utopian-thinking, three are germane for the discussion here. The first is that Santos stresses on an alarming paucity in utopian-thinking in our current social climate and posits this as the result of the advancement in modern science with epistemology and rationality as its instrument. It means that "exploring new modes of human possibility and styles of will," which is what utopian-thinking is, has been made impossible or unattractive by modern science, through its pervading and exclusionary dominance as a *rational* mode of seeing, knowing, and knowledge production ("Three Metaphors" 573). This may not sound ludicrous if we consider the implication of the rhetoric of modernity and its anthropocentric promises of conviviality, domination of nature, progress, liberty, salvation, etc., on the nature of global knowledge production.[10] However, the relation becomes clearer when we realize that this rhetoric with which modernity achieved universal dominance and undermined/marginalized other knowledge systems has itself become questionable (Santos, "Oppositional Postmodernism" 122–123).

For instance, since the 1950s, the human planet has lost about one third of its forests, with tropical forests responsible for about 40 percent of biomass and oxygen being affected, particularly in Mexico, where over 600,000 acres of forest have been destroyed ("Oppositional Postmodernism" 123). Multinationals fell forest trees at will and for neo-liberal gains, affecting about 12 million acres of Amazon Forest, bringing an onset of desertification and water scarcity, which already affects many third world countries like South Africa (124). We see the promise of peace and conviviality failing with the history of numerous conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe backed by the currencies of capitalism and the precision of advanced technologies of warfare in large-scale annihilation of humans and societies; this is also revealed by the

---

[9]Santos's interventions in diagnosing the problems of the century and its causes, and how indigenous cultures are wrapped into the colonial schemes of Western modernity make his advocacy for new theoretical paradigms in sustaining the relevance and visibility of non-Western indigenous cultures and epistemologies germane here. This work draws on Santos in particular—and Anibal Quijano, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Enrique Dussel, and Walter Mignolo more generally—for the implication of his theorical suggestions on decolonial discourse, specifically as it pertains to Africa.
[10]See Walter Mignolo's "Cosmopolitanism," page 116 for a comprehensive argument on this.

unmanageable refugee crises spilling out of several communities at intra- and inter-national levels as a result of the inherent bias in labeling others as alien, foreigners, non-human, uncivilized, and intruders, etc. Progress, liberty, and salvation have become mirages: to cite Santos, "[w]hile in the eighteenth century 4.4 million people died in 68 wars, in our century 99 million people died in 237 wars" ("Oppositional Postmodernism" 123). Trade wars, guns trafficking, and violation of human rights have increased on an international scale, while the gap between the Global North and South widens on economic and technological fronts.[11] Dumping of pharmaceutical waste in Third World countries has ceased to be a myth; and in bastions of democracy like the United States and United Kingdom, racial injustice and intolerance, police killings, homophobia, xenophobia, and racial intolerance have reached unprecedented peaks since the Civil Rights era.[12] Ethnic cleansing, ritual killings, violation of women and children rights continue to mark several regions of the world beholden to science as the arbiter of knowledge and planetary wisdom or global harmony.[13]

Because the promises were contracted on the altar of modern science as a universal epistemology, they articulated its infallibility, timelessness, and ability to monopolistically offer solutions to modern problems. The rhetoric of modernity thus symbolizes the promises of modern science of futures that were to be secure, progressive, and, consequently, utopian. However, since this is not the case, not only is the present burdened by chaos, the futures promised by modernity and backed by science have lost their allure, ceased to be, and are plagued with inestimable crises. Thus, avowed is a futureless future. For postcolonial African nation-states and subjects re-made in the image of the colonizer, the situation is direr, since "it is in its name [modernity and its future] that they have lost other futures" ("Three Metaphors" 572). Putting it without equivocation, neither does this future have a place for them, nor can they rely on it. As Santos concisely argues, not only is it that "the future promised by modernity has no future [but the] great majority of people in the periphery of the world system [Africans] no longer believe in it" (572). Perhaps no better example is the Covid-19 pandemic, during which Africa and the Global South wait on America and the Global North for progress on a solution despite being initially spared relative to the death rate in the North, and even as the United States government continues to take alarmingly poor steps, underperforming while being embroiled in theatrical displays of international power

---

[11]See Kacowiz, Arie M. "Globalization, Poverty, and the North-South Divide." *International Studies Review*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2007, pp. 565–580. For data on guns-trafficking, see "Comprehensive Statistics of Illicit Firearms Trafficking Now Publicly Available on UNODC Data Portal." *United Nations*, 2019, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2019/October/comprehensive-statistics-of-illicit-firearms-trafficking-now-publicly-available-on-the-unodc-data-portal.html. See also, Vilmi, Lauri, et al. "The Trade War Has Significantly Weakened the Global Economy." *Bank of Finland Bulletin*, 2019, www.bofbulletin.fi/en/2019/4/the-trade-war-has-significantly-weakened-the-global-economy/.
[12]Akpan, Victor E. "Hazardous Waste Management: An African Overview." *MPDI*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2000, pp. 1–15.
[13]The literature on these subjects is extensive, but a good starting point with excellent take on these issues is Michael Mann's *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing.* Cambridge UP, 2005. Also serving as a good overview on the subject of democracy's failure and ethnic killing is Michael Abramowitz's and Arch Puddington's "As Global Democracy Retreats, Ethnic Cleansing Is on the Rise." *Freedom House,* 2019. www.freedomhouse.org/article/global-democracy-retreats-ethnic-cleansing-rise. See Also, Riley, Dylan. "Democracy's Graveyards." *New Left Review*, 2007, pp. 125–136.

tussles.[14] While the Pandemic has since proven to be unpredictable in its manifestations, humbling decades of scientific reasoning, the arrogance of the West through its media in predicting a future of multiple and endless deaths in African countries,[15] even when less was known of the novel virus, speaks to a Western consciousness of the future that is at best dismissive of Africa and at worse patronizing, but cloaked under superficial multicultural narratives and false global solidarity. Herein lie two significant lessons, already well teased out by the Zimbabwean decolonial theorist Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni in his article, "Geopolitics of Power and Knowledge in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Decolonial Reflection on a Global Crisis." One is that decolonial love is "the soul of the post-Covid 19 world order based on a new ethics for living together, economies of care, a politics of conviviality, and hospitality as opposed to enmity" (1).

To clarify, the reference to decolonial love and its ethics here pinpoints the value in commonsensical behaviors and basic social ethics such as good hygiene, washing of hands, thoughtfulness, empathy in decision-making, and participation in resource consumption on the basis of need, which tends toward equitable and even resource distribution in times of crisis. These are all examples of humanistic consideration, which is generally the basis of ethics.[16] This makes good hygiene and thoughtfulness instances of selflessness: being considerate of people facilitates social equilibrium between an individual and others, and good hygiene is an effort at the personal level with ripple effects that promote human welfare at the collective level. However, this idea of 'selflessness' has been unveiled as profoundly absent in the social fabric of the twenty-first century modern world by the Pandemic: during its early days videos of individuals hoarding groceries down to toilet paper pervaded the internet. The consistent insistence on washing and sanitizing of hands, basically commonsensical, has made it a spectacle, implying a degree of disregard/absence owing to the kind of emphasis on it (global ads, sponsored jingles, funded research campaigns, etc.) and to the collective but false sense of security cultivated by an over-dependence on techno-science, modern drugs, and antibiotics. And while it can be argued that new cultural registers like social distancing signal new modes of relationships, this does not discount that the politics of conviviality, economies of care, or hospitality remain integral to the social fabric, because the very principle on which they stand is taking others (the vulnerable, children, frontline workers, foreigners, and other expressions of difference) into consideration, which is the logic behind the global call for social distancing. 'Flattening the curve' is a transcontinental

---

[14]While things have progressed from this, with new vaccines from the US, as at the time of writing this article, this was exactly the case then.

[15]For a summary of several positions on this issue, see Okereke, Caleb and Kelsey Nielsen. "The Problem with Predicting Coronavirus Apocalypse in Africa." *Aljazeera*, 2020, www.aljazeera.com/amp/opinions/2020/5/7/the-problem-with-predicting-coronavirus-apocalypse-in-africa. See also, Berhan, Yifru. "Will Africa Be Devastated by Covid-19 as Many Predicted? Perspective and Prospective." *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2020, pp. 459–467. Also important is Cara Anna's "Africa Could See 300,000 Coronavirus Deaths This Year." published in *AP News* April 17, 2020, where it is reported that according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa, "under the worst-case scenario with no intervention against the virus, Africa could see 3.3 million deaths and 1.2 billion infections." The report goes as far as to claim that "even with intense social distancing under the best-case scenario the continent could see more than 122 million infections."

[16]For how humanistic consideration generally underpins ethics across many cultures, see the volume by Wiredu, Kwasi, ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy.* Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. For additional reading, see also Williams, Bernard. *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics.* Cambridge UP, 1972.

welfare proposition requiring individual and collective participation on a planetary scale, synonymous to keeping everybody safe and the human species alive in its diversity as much as possible, regardless of how this is done. It is interesting to note that this sense of conviviality, where cross-cultural interactivity with non-hegemonic humanistic consideration is primary, is a key tenet of decoloniality as a political project with planetary implications. Thus, this corrective lesson dovetails with the enunciation of this article that crises of dystopian character do in fact offer practical and commonsensical lessons, particularly when we consider that these traditional ethics and commonsensical routines have proven to be effective ways of survival, even as they have been sacrificed on the altar of modern scientific progress.

The second important lesson is that the asymmetrical and pyramidal power relations that set modern science militantly against other forms of knowledge are in fact insidious to the future and continuity of the species. It is Ndlovu-Gatsheni's view that the poverty of "normal-times thinking,"[17] in combating the virus is consequent to the failures of modern science in learning from alternative epistemic systems that it discredited and impoverished on the global scale through colonial modernity and neo-liberal capitalism (4–5). That African states have experienced several epidemics makes it commonsensical to collaborate and learn from African history of epidemics in the war against the virus.[18] But the rhetoric of Western modernity, neocolonialism's hierarchical world-ordering, and the supposed perfection of modern science prevent this. However, to quote Santos's, since "[m]odern science was developed against other forms of knowledge and, most militantly, against common-sense knowledge," its persistent failures pose grave implications for modernity, that is, the world order it sustains ("Room for Manoeuver" 151). These failures strip away the immortality of modern science as flawless and a dependable epistemology. The crises of modernity therefore imply the crises of the social real it activates (e.g., Western modernity, African post-colonial present, etc.). This ripple effect is readable in the life of the modern African, whose subjecthood is an example of what Enwezor, in his article on postcolonial inflections of Euro-modernity, calls a "mimic modernity [achieved] through various European references" in present-day African socio-cultural reality, since it owes its constitution to European colonization and Euro-American imperial imposition of its culture and knowledge through Western modernity (2). Proceeding from Ndlovu-Gatsheni's and Santos's propositions, this article

---

[17]Normal-times thinking are common mental frames and thought systems that have become routine to the modern human social functioning. They are often racialized, gendered, religious, politicized, nationalist, ethno-culturalist, and dwarfed by the various cleavages around which humans mobilize as social agents. Hence, they are too provincial or insular, territorial or excessively nationalist, and fundamentalist or inflexible, which make them inadequate as patterns of thought and, thus, insufficient in generating necessary solutions. More so, they are sometimes causes of modern crisis; and in the sense of Santos's argument that solutions to the crisis of modern science cannot come from modern science, normal-times thinking cannot provide solutions.

[18]To avoid rehashing an argument already made in abundance, three sources are provided below that adequately address what lessons African states and their experience of epidemics have to offer in this period of Coronavirus pandemic. Bernault, Glorence. "Some Lessons from the History of Epidemics in Africa." *African Arguments*, 5 June, 2020, www.africanarguments.org/2020/06/some-lessons-from-the-history-of-epidemics-in-africa/. See also, Pilling, David. "How Africa Fought the Pandemic—and What Coronavirus has Taught the World." *Financial Times*, 23 Oct. 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/c0badd91-a395-4644-a734-316e71d60bf7; Dennis, Angie and Katherina Thomas. "Leaning about Epidemic Response from Sub-Saharan African Countries." *STAT*, 9 April 2020, https://www.statnews.com/2020/04/09/learning-about-epidemic-response-from-african-countries/.

relates to the latter's call to utopian-thinking—that "we [modern African subjects] must reinvent the future by opening up a new horizon of possibilities [future] mapped out by new radical alternatives [paradigms]" ("Three Metaphors" 572)—as a response to two unwritten imperatives: to avoid the dubious and obvious deficiency of normal-times thinking for utopian-thinking; and to conceive of a (new) future for Africa. Like Ndlovu-Gatsheni after him, Santos warns that we must define the alternative paradigms, since "merely criticizing the dominant paradigm, though crucial, is not enough" ("Three Metaphors" 572). This injunction is invaluable as it reaffirms the necessity of defining chosen radical alternatives and, more importantly, earmarks utopian-thinking as an efficient conduit. We come to an understanding of Santos's theoretical injunction first in his conception of utopia as "using the imagination to explore new modes of human possibilities and to oppose the necessity of what exists on behalf of something radically better that is worth fighting for," and then in his conception of utopian-thinking as "call[ing] attention to what does not exist as being the integral, if silenced, (counter)part of what does exists" ("Three Metaphors" 573). This ascription of instrumental utility to utopia as a radical alternative via 'utopian-thinking' by Santos invokes an oft-muted definition or conception of utopia that strengthens this article's dystopian connection.

Rather than seeing Santos's utilitarian and paradigmatic conception of utopia-thinking as the end result, it should be taken as accentuating a twofold imaginative process involved in achieving utopia as an invented, ideal, but previously non-existing society both in terms of positive and negative utopia (Murphy 473). This Manichean connotation of utopia as negative and positive is not a net value but an indicator of the genus of thinking involved, which makes sense given how our understanding of critical dystopia orients analogously to that of negative utopia. Murphy also makes a convincing case for this by claiming that dystopia as a negative utopia is not the "evacuation of eutopian hope" nor does it fall into the class of anti-utopia by divesting utopia of its defining attributes (473). It only extends beyond the hopes essentialized by utopia by emphasizing the terrors of human history, drawing, as argued by Moylan, through inversion "on the more detailed systemic accounts of utopian narratives" in order "not to undermine Utopia but rather to make room for its reconsideration and re-functioning in even the worst of times" (111, 133). Clarifying how dystopia could be a negative utopia, Sargent in his paper, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," argues that it is in its critical sense that it allows for imagining "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived" (9). Hence, dystopia's attribution as negative utopia stems from the distinct critical functionality of this *worseness*, and in whose core rests the corrective capacity and expository/exploratory value that identify dystopia as a move toward utopia and, thus, a mode of utopian-thinking.

If we agree on the above—since the future conceived by the exclusionary and monopolistic nature of Western tradition has no place for Africa—it cannot be rebutted that Africa needs to conceive of its own future and re-imagine a different kind of utopia. Felwine Sarr, the Senegalese philosopher, has sought a way out of this conundrum in his work on re-calibrating African systems of knowledge and patterns of thought for future

invention[19] by proposing an Afrotopia, which not only "allows Africa to chart its own cause [and course]" but allows for Africans to invest organically in an "as-yet-inhabited site of Africa to come," a future that can be engineered through will, thought, and imagination (92, 100). In his words, this Afrotopia is an active utopia in thought, "a space of the possible that has not yet been realized, but where nothing insurmountable will prevent it from coming into existence" (102). Its difference from Western conceptions of utopia lies in its neat blending of the social real and the possible as it is conceived and shaped by Africans, outside of Western-derived epistemic paradigms, and thus suited to Africa's historical and socio-cultural needs.

In such a case, while the procedure is to engage in utopian-thinking, the utopian future as its product is not of the kind proposed by the one-size-fits-all model of Western knowledge, but a different type produced by indigenous and internal mechanisms of African thought and on Africa's terms. However, because achieving this specific sort of utopia (Afrotopia) involves what Santos calls heterotopia, the essential radical solution is not particularly in "the invention of a place elsewhere or nowhere," but "a radical displacement within the same place: our own place—from orthotopia to heterotopias."[20] This displacement allows for redistributing power by shifting it from the center, occupied by hegemonic forces, to existing or emerging zones of marginality. Sarr's position that the future must be thought and engaged with in the present, which involves utopian-thinking and which can be done by "identifying [and capitalizing on] the sites where new practices and discourses [of the future] have already begun to express themselves," cements the relationship between heterotopia and this African utopia (xiv). In other words, the radical strategy is not to locate this Afrotopia in a distant temporality, but to disrupt the Western-controlled postcolonial present through alternative thinking in order to create and actualize its space: this is to be done by locally producing and emphasizing an irruptive *zeitgeist* as Western modernity's contemporaneous substitute. That is, Africans must construct a heterotopia through utopian-thinking as the postcolonial space of onto-epistemological affirmation in order to secure a new African future: a space of interference, contestation, and negation of forced hierarchies, induced anxieties, and repressions by social power and hegemonic cultural paradigms.[21] To architecture such a disruptive space-within-a-space demands mentally giving life via utopian-thinking to what has been made marginal or absent by Western modernity and its science. For Africa, these marginalized materials are African indigenous knowledge and sensibilities, and the future possibilities they give life. Nevertheless, achieving this heterotopian reconfiguration of the postcolonial space for the re-integration of the repressed quotidian

---

[19]To have a better understanding of the limitless potential of this idea of Afrotopia, Felwine Sarr's book, *Afrotopia*, deals brilliantly with how Africa can invent and achieve new futures for itself across multiple facets of modern civilization.

[20]Orthotopia, as used by Santos, recognizes the displacement of autochthonous knowledge forms from their natural place of integrity by Western science, and the need to initiate a restoration, or a return, but a disruptive kind of restoration, that is "from the center to the margin" ("Three Metaphors" 573).

[21]For works that accentuate the disruptive value of heterotopia, see, Lvakhiv, Adam. "Cinema of the Not-Yet: The Utopian Promise of Film as Heterotopia." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* vol. 5, no. 2, 2011, pp. 186–209; Johnson, Peter. "The Geographies of Heterotopia." *Geography Compass*, vol 7, no 1, 2013, pp 790–803; Knight, Kelvin. "Placeless Places: Resolving the Paradox of Foucault's Heterotopia." *Textual Practice*, DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2016.1156151; and Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things.* Tavistock, 1966.

or, as Sunstrum puts it, "occupation and taking-ownership-of the Not-Yet" is not only possible but a tactic of chronopolitical proportions through Africanfuturism (115).

Africanfuturism's chronopolitics is defined not only by its intervention in correcting the dominance of the West in its determination, design, and narration of Africa, but also by allowing a full participation of the latter in its multiple existences. To cite Sunstrum, Africanfuturism in its venture ahead of the past and the present to preside over the future allows Africans to "not only conjure worlds, inventions, alternatives, and possibilities, but also assert [themselves] as the proprietors of those conjuring[s]" (119). This means revoking the future industry's (often Western) monopoly on *future capital* that enables spawning tomorrows, while maintaining overlapping linkages between the past, present, and future as space-times. A type of non-monolith, non-anachronistic, and non-chronological timeline has already been identified in African literary imagination[22] that defines reality, and this utopian-thinking, like Sarr has proposed, capitalizes on this re-configuration of reality (Sarr 100). In place therefore is a sense of overlapping, interconnected, and asynchronously related space-times or historical moments, where the past is the future of an elapsed moment in history; the present, the past's future; and the future, the past or present of a yet-to-be defined moment in time (Adesanmi 229). That Africanfuturism inventively legitimates and utilizes these space-times for future-imagination sets it up as chronopolitical.

Africanfuturism is taken to be a literary political maneuver aimed at initiating a radical restructuring of African present through thinking new futures. Nnedi Okorafor, coining the phrase 'Africanfuturism'—to exhibit the neologism's nominal integrity as opposed to Sunstrum's adjectivized African Futurism or the other iteration AfricanFuturism[23]—defines it as a subgenre of literary imagination "specifically and more directly rooted in African culture, history, mythology and point-of-view as it then branches into the Black Diaspora [and which] does not privilege or center the West [but is] concerned with visions of the future […] it is rooted first and foremost in Africa" (np). Its preoccupation with African agency links it to postcolonial politics and transnational/cultural and global issues (Bryce 5; Sunstrum 114). Also reinforcing its postcolonial concerns is its realization of Eatough's "utopian now" which, as used by him in appreciating the developmental prospects of African future-oriented literature, is that component of utopian-thinking that allows the imagined future, as Santos's "new radical alternative," to co-exist with—by fragmenting the structures of—the postcolonial social present as co-spaces (Eatough 252). To paraphrase Eatough, this "utopian now" is the bringing into material existence alternative possibilities or heterotopias through the act of reading and imagining, which allows readers a glimpse of the utopian possibility lying beyond their social real (253). This kind of *spatial possibility* is boundary-fluid,

---

[22]See Adesanmi, Pius. "Of Postcolonial Entanglement and Durée: Reflections on the Francophone African Novel." *Comparative Literature*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2004, pp. 227–242.

[23]Despite these nomenclatural distinctions and their areas of divergence, at stake for each version is the full agency of Africa. So, while Africanfuturism (as one word) is the version coined by Nnedi, I believe its ideological possibilities find resonance with Sunstrum's African Futurism in outlook, implication, and philosophy better. However, I have opted for Nnedi's nomenclatural version because I also believe the neologism is best articulated as a single nominal entity rather than adjectivized to fully manifest as an epistemic descriptor of a particular aesthetic and cultural philosophy.

shifting, and also liminal for being in-between, present, and at the same time exteriorized. It, however, owes its constructedness to Africanfuturism.

In other words, the "utopian now" completes Santos's heterotopia as enabling a new African future by signposting the interaction of imagined futures—through the materiality of the text as social object—with the social real as that of contemporaneous presents. Since Africanfuturism essentially allows Africans "to imagine the future in present tense [so as to] conjure possibilities for re-seeing the everyday present" (Sunstrum 121), it fits perfectly with Eatough's affirmation of future-oriented African literature as a postcolonial developmental strategy—a politically utopia-bound one, to add (Eatough 237). In heterotopian terms then, Africanfuturism initiates a radical displacement within the postcolonial present by making a proposition toward validating and affirming as integral that which is marginalized as exterior by Euro- and Western modernities.[24] To summarize the point here, Africanfuturism's proleptic and analeptic evaluation of African postcolonial realities provides modern African subjects with lessons in facing modernity's crises. By being a space of disruption and contestation, it not only refuses the kind of future projected for Africa by Western knowledge systems— for instance the media projection of African deaths during the Pandemic, the continued statistical pronouncements on Africa's technological dwarfism, and its prophesied self-destruction from the times of Kant and Hegel down to present-day prediction science.[25] It also allows for new and organic imaginations outside of patterns of thought imposed since colonialism by the West, which cannot be overemphasized enough since cultural/generational innovation starts from imagination and is the basis of the survival of any civilization. So, even though these imaginations can be dystopian or not, the value is in what they instruct; this is important because these lessons will emanate from Africa and its imagination, and also will be specific to it, as borders of the West and its universalized modernity.

This character of Africanfuturism not only reveals its revelatory/expository framework, but informs that as a mode of thinking in utopian register it dialogues with the decolonial idea that the solutions to modern problems exists outside modernity (Santos, "Three Metaphors" 570). In the same vein that the remedies proposed by utopian-thinking are alternatives to experiential facts, an Africanfuturist narrative points at what exists outside Western-controlled postcolonial reality as the alternative solution. This means as a mode of sense-making, Africanfuturism's harnessing of the paradigm of apocalypse and dystopian sensibility gears toward exploring and emphasizing reconsiderations of what exists by mainstreaming the indigenous knowledge that has been exteriorized outside factual reality as fantastical or illogical by modern science. The ways this is done varies: it can "journey into the distant past or alternate and parallel presents," or it can project an expected or new future (Sunstrum 117). This future,

---

[24]This article differentiates Africanfuturism from any other kind of futurism based on Bryce's essay that reads existing African-authored texts "not thought of as speculative" to establish myth, orality, and indigenous cosmogonic philosophies in the production of social reality and rewriting of history as invested in the strain of futurism (1).

[25]See Hegel, Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History.* Translated by J H Clarke. Dover, 1956. See also Immanuel Kant's 1775 work, "Of the Different Races of Human Beings," and his 1764 essay, "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime," collected in *Anthropology, History, and Education,* edited by Zoller Gunther and Robert Louden and published by Cambridge UP in 2007.'

however, is mostly always invented, even if its materials are familiar, depending on the extent of speculation and extrapolation. For it is in the process of invention that Africanfuturist imagination unveils itself as exteriority of a given reality, a condition through which it intersperses decoloniality's border epistemology/thinking, which articulates how and in what manner non-Western indigenous knowledge systems are positioned as exterior to Western modernity and how they can use this positionality to recover lost legacies by avoiding imposed patterns of thinking in deciding what is useful for development and knowledge production.[26]

Santos's crucial declaration that the solutions to modern (African) problems lie outside of (Western) modernity suggests within the exteriority of modernity and its epistemic structures—i.e., within the heterotopias Africanfuturism fashions. Walter Mignolo and Enrique Dussel, decolonial theorist and philosopher respectively, have expanded on the relevance of border thinking and border epistemology that connects directly to this theorizing of Africanfuturism. For instance, African states and their knowledge systems as part of the philosophies of the Global South are all bounded outside the borders of Western knowledge matrix by an oppressive economic order continually revitalized by structures of neo-liberal capitalism like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and ironically (American brand of) cosmopolitan globality and free market democracy. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Dussel, and Mignolo advocate for seeing and producing knowledge outside the imperial epistemic systems as the only way out of the grip of modern science and Western modernity. Particularly, Dussel enjoins creative and critical thinkers to reach inward into indigenous cultures and create new modes of knowledge that would maintain such cultures' distinctiveness against the unifying imperializing spirit of Western modernity (3). Mignolo theorizes this as epistemic disobedience and delinking, a vital locale-specific decolonial approach to intervening in the survival of non-Western cultures and their futures ("Coloniality" 40). The move toward rethinking Africanfuturism in this work from a product of literary imagination, or a sub-form of literature, to a driver of a new one, specifically as an epistemic framework oriented in the manner of utopian-thinking, is guided by these perspectives, and theorizing it as a radical and alternative epistemology derives from here.

This emphasis on epistemic value returns us to the second theoretical possibility that facilitates interlinking the apocalypse as radical sense-making paradigm with Santos's utopian-thinking in Africanfuturism, which, crucially, is also the first condition of arriving at an African utopia, i.e., Afrotopia, or enabling heterotopia: a new epistemology. To Santos, the new epistemology must not only refuse "the closure of the horizons [but also] offer alternatives" ("Three Metaphors" 573). The alternative Africanfuturism offers as a new epistemology is a mode of knowing that takes Africa primarily as its locus of enunciation in figurative, ideological, and literal proportions, manifesting a grounded futurity[27] in its creation of heterotopian alternatives, for the very

---

[26]For more on this, see Dussel's "Agenda of a South-South Philosophical Dialogue" and Mignolo, Walter. "Prophets Facing Sideways: The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference." *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* vol. 19, no.1, 2006, pp. 111–127.
[27]This phrase specifically draws attention to one of Africanfuturism's cultural aesthetics as an African epistemic mode of knowledge-making, which is that it is primarily deeply rooted in African cosmic and

fact that it leans into and exists in the future while simultaneously being firmly rooted in an African onto-epistemological space and present. That is, it is not an inflected, domesticated, or localized variant of a thing alien, but organic to an African space-time, even as it resonates and branches elsewhere. This is explicitly evident in the creative practices it finds resonance: creative art forms working with primordial African legacies, evoking the animist re-enchantment of postcolonial modernity, and producing/occupying what Sunstrum calls "mythologies of the future" (116). This kind of autochthonous futurity works by reacting (re)imaginatively to the essence of modernity as it has operated in African spaces in its imperial versions: European/colonial modernity, Western modernity, and coloniality that entails the residual structural asymmetries retaining the influence of Euro-American imperial powers in ex-colonial sites (Mignolo, "Coloniality" 38).[28] As an epistemology, therefore, it not only labors to repair Western modernity's destruction and appropriation of indigenous knowledge systems, but also to offer and institute alternative ways of viewing the world and maintaining future continuity through literary and cultural production.

Approaching Africanfuturism from this perspective sets it against simple discipline- and genre-specific definitions worked for it by one of its earliest proponents, Nnedi Okorafor, who defines it as a sub-category of science fiction that "does not include fantasy unless that fantasy is set in the future or involves technology or space travel, etc." or as "often depict[ing] aliens, and sometimes witches, and […] mostly set in a recognizable future Africa, with African lineages—which are not cultural hybrids but rooted in history and traditions of the continent with no element or traits drawn from Western culture (or even pop culture)" (Praxis Editorial). Admittedly, Okorafor and this article share a fundamental view of Africanfuturism as, to put it in Hope Wabuke words, "ridding itself of the othering of the white gaze and the de facto Western colonial mindset" particularly by doing away with any primary American reference (Afrofuturism). However, this article takes a departure from these positions by way of anchoring Africanfuturism in the context of a frame of knowing that articulates African lifeworlds in their entirety (that is, harmonizing both postcolonial and indigenous dimensions of Africa,[29] and facilitating various artistic practices beyond science fiction or literature, inclusive of fantasy).

---

techno-scientific worldviews and space-times, and from there ventures into the past and future, while also resonating in other cultures—all these without shearing off or detaching from its roots.

[28]For more on coloniality as it relates to Africa, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. *Epistemic Freedom: Deprovincialization and Decolonization.* Routledge, 2018.

[29]While this debate has been largely avoided, Harry Garuba's article "Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society" addresses the way modern African reality and its literature does away with such imperial dichotomies of fantasy/spirituality/magical realism and science fiction that keep dividing directions in African literary imagination, and foreclosing important perspectives. Also very important is Sunstrum's work, which helpfully articulates how African mythic modes and oral narrative codes work with/in science fiction and vice versa. Her perspectives refuse the erroneous and totalizing tenor in existing submissions that claim or work from the supposition that Sci-fi is "the only genre that enables African writers to envision from our African perspective" (Yaszek 51). Another equally germane article is Harry Garuba's "On Animism, Modernity/Colonialism, and the African Order of Knowledge: Provisional Reflections." It squarely addresses the need for and dynamics of alternative epistemologies that can conceive new futures for Africa. These three articles provide a rich foundational argument on Africanfuturism.

In being such an epistemological proposition, Africanfuturism takes as its provenance what Harry Garuba has trenchantly described as "re-enchantment of Africa," but also at the same time its disenchantment ("Explorations in Animist Materialism" 266). This means it goes beyond Garuba's accurate emphasis on "the different and alternative rationalizations that are increasingly coming to the fore in the histories of so-called Third World societies as they evolve or construct their own modernities […] where the rational and scientific are appropriated and transformed into the mystical and magical," to also reveal Africa's continued technologization, where lifestyle patterns are increasingly digitally networked, including the scaffolds of these alternative rationalizations (266). Thus, as a frame of knowing that fits Molefe Kete Asante's imperative call for an ethnocentrically-based epistemology from which Africa can be narrated and thought through in a world crafted to deny its visibility, Africanfuturism discharges a sensibility defined by its synchronous harmonization of the processes of technologization and re-traditionalization ongoing in Africa (Garuba, "On Animism" 50).

Thinking of Africanfuturism in this way re-conducts it from a literary form into a new commonsense of conviviality and decolonial love—where conviviality and love signify tolerance (openness) and thoughtfulness (relationality)—articulating African mode of knowledge-making in a knowledge economy dominated by the West. Put differently, as a commonsense epistemology, in all its mix of spirituality, technoculture, science, mythology, ritual, religio-mystical codes, folk praxes and lore, and indigenous/pre- and postcolonial orientations, Africanfuturism projects a transversal African experience of seeing, knowing, living, rationalizing, and knowledge production fully aware of its own elasticity, the mutability in the formation of collective subjectivity, and its non-doctrinaire modes of moving between everyday materiality and radical futurity.[30] This endeavor at fashioning a more encompassing epistemic code for the concept is an attempt to rescue it from the rapidly growing taxonomic straitjacket into which it has been cast. Also, it responds to Santos's criterion for a new epistemology, since as practical knowledge, it floods open congested horizons by extrapolating and speculating from African past to redefine the African present and that which is imaginable as African future. In any case, knowledge in its ideation and conceptual stages is almost always initially extrapolative and speculative, at least until its substantiation. So, while the creative forms usable in performing this knowledge and the institutional/disciplinary praxes that legitimate it will be analogously unique in their speculations, especially as regards their materiality, the agenda will always remain sustaining the validity of African states as viable ecosystems with defined historical trajectory and lasting knowledge centers.

---

[30]Africanfuturism has been emphasized as non-doctrinaire for it is underpinned by imaginative inventiveness and creative flexibility in how it is employed as a mode of utopian-thinking by those participating in the labors of decoloniality. Many African cultures are identified as open to innovations and, thus, immanently flexible without detaching from their African roots. A good example is the Yoruba culture—for a better understanding of this idea of flexibility, see Adeeko, Adeleke. *Art of Being Yoruba.* Indiana UP, 2017. Thus, in the spirit of being paradoxical—i.e., of being defined by its ability to continually transform while still persisting with historical antecedents—Africanfuturism is open to being re-calibrated at personal and collective levels.

This creed signifies Africanfuturism's fixation with repairing the fissures between the past and present enabled by the European destruction and invalidation of African plastic expressions and philosophies through enslavement and colonialism. It also reveals its preoccupation with inscribing this repaired relation as the denominator of any logical assumption of possible African futures. Doing so allows it to override future visions of doom in Africa projected by the West and its Futures Industry. No longer then is the question if Black cultures like Africa can imagine new futures as a result of a history of (neo)colonial grieving of the continent, or what kind of futures are imaginable, but *how* and *in what ways* are those imaginable futures relevant to the now. Because this philosophical inquiry operates at the heart of Africanfuturism, by diagnostically redirecting the present through prophetic imaginings that appear as specters or as spectacles, it reveals itself also as occupied with providing alternative solutions that could rescue Africa from crises engendered by the failures of Euro-American modernity. Accordingly then, either as specters or spectacles, Africanfuturist apocalyptic dystopia would no less than inform on or pre-empt commonsensical and practical corrective measures that could unveil the mortality of modern science. One outcome is that we can postulate the idea of an Africanfuturist subjectivity, whose performance as a negation of Western-charged reality is invested in enabling the mortality of Western science by refuting the dominance of Western knowledge systems in a way that forces the world to witness a spectacular unveiling of the limitations inhered to modern science but veiled by a history of grandstanding and showboating.

This subjectivity is a form of a specific psychology, which is the second requirement/condition proposed by Santos in achieving heterotopia, in this case, toward arriving at a new African utopia ("Three Metaphors" 573). This leads us to the third theoretical possibility undergirding this article's premise: the need for a new psychology. For both heterotopia and utopia to be achieved, the colonial subjectivity of conformity with the dominant paradigm (Western modernity and uncritical totalizing faith in modern technoscience) must be excised and replaced with a will that strives toward alternatives. This excision is vital for postcolonial Africa and its modern subjects who are fated to the success and failures of the West by/through colonial psychology. And initiating the required de-attachment is centered at the heart of Africanfuturism that propels the cultivation of the postcolonial subjectivity of deviance in modern African subjecthood. The act of imagining against Western-cultivated images of Africa is the vital oppositional act of decolonial delinking. However, also important is inventing new tomorrows that centralize African heritage and its mythic modes. These acts unveil the psychology as a defiant state of being. To characterize it succinctly, it is an Africanfuturist psychology forged from a complex of *zeitgeist* and *weltschmerz,* where the latter signifies a sobering awareness of the gulf between the ideal and the real worlds, and the former, structures of feeling ensuring subjecthood and, therefore, imaginative will. Hence, it is the chronopolitical grit of Africanfuturist decoloniality. Calibrated in epistemic disobedience, the Africanfuturist psychology feeds the logic that the functions of artistic practice, as made normative by Western discourse, can/should be sabotaged and re-engineered by fibrillating the power dynamics defining it, that it reproduces, or aspires to. With this re-configurative disposition, African literature can therefore, like painting, installation, performance, music, and other cultural arts, habituate the Africanfuturist subjectivity as its performative vessel and site of ratification.

To articulate how all these arguments and concepts fit together toward achieving a new utopia for African subjects and how they have practical lessons to draw from in dealing with postcolonial crises, below is an attempt that shows how an Africanfuturist narrative can be read as exhibiting a balanced pairing of *zeitgeist* and *weltschmerz* (i.e., the epistemology plus psychology of the decolonial subjectivity) required in (re)thinking new futures. This pairing resounds in Chinelo Onwualu's "Read Before Use" (RBU), a digital futurist short story whose invented world is circumscribed by anxieties and estimated perils, usually precipitated by the arrogance of Western knowledge modes and their pernicious appropriation of all possible and legitimate high-stakes solutions to social crises. Since the specter in RBU is an impending apocalypse, and this is tied to the failure of scientific technology, implied by the story is the necessity of a model world where technoscience is emptied of its epistemic arrogance. Prominent in the narrative then is the brand of futurity where an imagined society has survived an apocalypse, referred to in passing as the Catastrophe, to live in dread of another, which foregrounds its reliance on and repurposing of the apocalypse and the dystopian paradigm, respectively. As if taking its cue from Yaszek's position that the politics of catastrophe can function as a postcolonial critique of the haves and have-nots (53), RBU speculatively reworks this theme to extend its focus beyond the Global South and North tensions onto the dire consequences of hegemonic knowledge paradigms. By conceiving of these as the social baseline of RBU's post-apocalyptic universe, Onwualu can narrativize the postcolonial avowal that "the application of Western economic and technoscientific solutions to African problems result in the creation of seemingly new worlds […] that are, in fact, profoundly dystopian for their indigenous inhabitants" (Yaszek 53).

Satellite City, the near-Elysian dwelling of the Scions—the city's affluent who are defined by the Houses they belong to, coupled with their Cold-War-type politics and neo-liberal micro-aggressions—is in jeopardy. The mechanized dome protecting the city from the vast swathes of dystopian wasteland beyond its gates is dying. However, afar from these badlands roamed by rapacious beasts and faithless rogues are indigenous tribes classed by the Scions as bucolic and regressive. The crisis threatening to end the City is hence manifold: foremost is the failure of "the vast generators" powering and safeguarding the city from the *horrors* beyond its gates. Secondary but no less significant is the exclusionary role of the dome in relation to the indigenous tribes, a material reflection of the city's bigotry. While the technological workings of the failing generators are largely sidestepped, the import of this deterioration is clear as Onwualu pans in on the story's politics. Thus, we know there are some high-tech "weather machines" keeping the dome habitable and the circadian banalities within it on course, but which consistently loses power as a result of technological failure. This failure of technology and its science in safeguarding Satellite City speaks directly to the failure of modern science as an epistemology in fulfilling its promises and, thus, the crises of Western knowledge.

Also made obvious is that the solution to the impending doom lies far from Satellite City figuratively and literally, requiring a human with mystical abilities to retrieve it. This signals the story's autochthonous futurity, as it unveils itself as concurrently primordial and futurist, a characteristic Sunstrum explains as corollary of reworking African mythologies into science fiction tropes and vice versa (117). In ratifying the Africanfuturist philosophy, the story refuses the dominance of Western technoscience in the narrative of the salvation of the Black race, for not only are some of

its characters imbued with magical powers evocative of African ontological mythic codes like having superhuman night vision or controlling elemental forces like combusting fire, the space-time's futurity is also clearly fermented on an even mix of technoscience and spiritual mystique, or what Garuba calls animist materialism that induces the persistent re-enchantment of the world and spiritualizes/holds magical consciousness as constitutive of the materiality of a technoscientific humanity ("Explorations in Animist Materialism" 247). This retrieval of African spirituality to couple with technoscience signifies RBU's Africanfuturist cultural aesthetics, its troping of dystopian imaginary, and its style of gesturing toward utopia. This facilitates the story's engagement with postcolonial thematics like racism/ethnicity, multiculturalism, class hierarchies, capitalist opportunism, sexism, and neo-colonial politics, which are inventively rehashed through animist significations in shaping its chronopolitics.

In RBU, the protagonist, Alia, brown-skinned and of impressive intelligence, hails from the far-flung Zahabad tribe. The tribe is made foil to the Scion class, as well as their geographic externality to the dome and the bourgeoisie values it suggests. They are also discriminated against based on skin color. According to the narrator, Scions, represented by Shiloh Krestel, "a pure-blood Scion" and leader of the Krestel House, have "pale, colourless skin" (RBU). This gives them a false demeanor of being phenomenal and fuels the myth of their being more-than-human. This could be read as a metaphor of whiteness, which is not off-mark when placed in context of the narrative's asymmetrical power-plays. Shiloh is Alia's patron, like his mother Ramal Krestel who had recruited Alia to Satellite City and its prestigious City University from Zahabad where Alia "had been the Ivory Tower's [the University in her hometown] leading scholar in pre-Catastrophe texts" (RBU). Shiloh would finance her search for the city's next source of power, even though he has little faith in her theories.

Like the global power inequalities determining the frontiers of knowledge, knowledge production, and who gets to participate, the politics backdropping the city is essentially exclusionary. For instance, while Scions find Alia's presence in the city contemptible, Scribes—Alia's eventual colleagues at the University—disregarded her intelligence, subjecting her to intelligence evaluation, "which only non-Scions were required to take." To quote the narrator, "[d]espite her credentials and consistently stellar performance on those texts, many of her colleagues and the Council of Scribes were still unconvinced that a woman born outside the dome could be worthy enough for their ranks" (RBU). Other signifiers of the classist and racial nature of this space-time is the unspoken but social outlawing of public fraternity between the University's academics and those branded as rogue scholars for their non-conformity to cultural etiquettes and social codes. Gilead Two Rivers, love interest symbolizes this. A brilliant academic, he is stripped off his academic position because his intended wife hailed from a Great House, and he from the socially maligned and countrified Forest Tribe. Gilead's dismissal is a miniaturization of the classism of capitalist states as it reflects the text's Cold War concealed by the "modest but immaculately constructed" Scion Quarters, where the lack of walls or fences suggests amiableness and communitarian spirit between the Houses, but only at surface level. Consuming the community from within is a vicious rivalry, redolent of Western capitalism's brazen pursuit of profit and self-preservation and neo-liberalism's cutthroat competition camouflaged as open-market mercantilism. This situation reveals how capitalist centers of knowledge embroiled in divisive rhetoric not

only stifle true knowledge but also foreclose progress, especially ones instrumental to averting extinction-level occurrences. This is true of Onwualu's story as it is true of Covid-19 and other events in the world where normal-times behavior (often sexist, classist, racist, combative, cunning, and conservative) proves highly counter-productive to progress, precluding timely resolution of issues that demand unconventional tactics, utopian-thinking, and alternative strategies.

How this is true for RBU is readable in the failures of the Houses to join forces to correct the impending crisis. The *haves* would rather resort to subterfuge, superficial niceties, and mutual deceit than apply commonsense even as the community degenerates. They would rather profess incorrigible faith in technoscience and dismiss alternative solutions, as seen in Shiloh Krestel's rejection of Alia's suggested solution as illusion: "A delusion shared does not make it reality, professor" (RBU). It is why Alia hides her elemental powers: the world of powerful machines and Artificial Intelligence earmarks such powers as aberrations. However, thanks to Gilead and his experiences as a collector of rare artifacts, he is able to provide Alia the navigational knowledge she requires in surviving Raven's Crag, a dystopian dead zone *par excellence* outside the City and populated by cannibalistic creatures and fire-breathing dragons. In decolonial fashion, it is there the alternative solution to the city's crisis, the *Mechanichron,* is kept.

The *Mechanichron* is a sort of engineering manual created by the Ancients, a tribe of Master Builders who lived before the Catastrophe. These Ancients "had a source of unlimited energy that powered all their artifacts [technologies]" (RBU). They recorded their knowledge of how to power those technologies in a manual that was hidden away. It is more spectacular than ordinary that this "myth," as Krestel puts it, is the city's only solution; also noteworthy is that it lies outside the city in a zone written off as the gutter of civilization. It is ironic that its eventual discovery would demand Alia's unconventional research methods and her knowledge of ancient languages and mythic wisdom traceable to her Zahabad heritage. This puts to shame the Council of Scribes as well as the technoscientific knowledge that could not save the city but required the intelligence and folk/mythic wisdom of a minority in remaining relevant. Alia's Zahabad heritage would prove valuable in discovering the book, as she could read the languages of books found in the library of the Master Builders. Also, this heritage improves her chances of finding the book, for we discover that the filing system used by the ancient library in storing its books is similar to that of the university in Alia's Zahabad homeland.

However, Gilead's inability to escape the web of capitalist psychology undermines Alia's progress. He reveals himself as a double agent for the House of Crow, metaphorizing Western capitalism's drive for competitiveness rather than mutual survival. His betrayal of Alia is his strategy of getting in the good graces of Obed Crow, his father. He seeks to attain his rightful place as heir which he has been denied for hailing from the Forest Tribe. In his logic, betraying Alia by stealing the book at knifepoint would confer him full "reinstatement to the Academy" and perhaps recognition as rightful heir. When Alia reminds him of the classist politics that such discovery could only hope to obliterate, Gilead responds with a classic racist speech, "I am city born with the blood of scions running through me. I am nothing like You!" What he fails to apprehend, as only Alia can comprehend the prints on the *Mechanichron's* front cover, is that the book is one of a pair. Its contents instruct only on assembling the *Mechanichron's* parts, not its use. Gilead knocks out Alia and leaves her to die at the

precipice of a mountain. The latter, in a moment of existential dread, realizes what is really at stake is the fate of humanity at the hands of technoscience. That is, those living within the City relied so much on the safety that the dome offers they do not care if their attempt at self-preservation lacks a consideration for others. In other words, the dome cultivated a selfish kind of humanity.

It is thus commonsense that Alia thinks up when she concludes that "it was time for the machines to die. Perhaps if the dome were to come down, the proud scions would finally be forced to open up their city" (RBU) and face their humanity in all its inter-relational magnanimity, conviviality, and mortality—the same commonsense knowledge that eluded Gilead, since he forgot that saving the City means he gets to save his heirship. In Alia's words, "maybe, in time, they would come to appreciate the richness of the worlds beyond their own, and understand that they were no better than those they scorned" (RBU). This is *weltschmerz* at its most spectacular, provoking a commonsense of openness that ridicules the grandstanding of science and emphasizes its dogmatism and imperfections with its own lucidity, practicality, and correctness, while also offering the decolonial and age-old wisdom that conviviality and selfless love is the way. Besides, it unveils the real chaos and threat in Satellite City as classism coupled with racial/ethnic bigotry. Deciding her choice as best, Alia sets herself and the second part of the *Mechanichron* pair ablaze, reducing to flames any hope of saving Satellite City from the specter of a dystopian fate, and kick-starting a social nightmare required to achieve a utopian society. This social nightmare, to appropriate Rosen, is the punishment-as-a-corrective-measure apocalypse as myth-of-ending metes out to people like Gilead and the Houses for "not only [having] failed unpardonably, but hav[ing] also demonstrated an inability even to right [their] own wrongs" (Rosen xii).

In light of the afore-discussed, it is important to see Alia's martyrdom not as a total denunciation of technoscience, but its unveiling as limited, fallible, and, therefore, a mortal epistemology. Equally significant is to see it as an expository critique of the postcolonial social real. Onwualu's Africanfuturist post-apocalypse dystopia is buoyed by postcolonial archetypes, and it anchors its chronopolitical campaign on this. For throughout the narrative we see how true this decolonial submission is. As Yaszek puts it, for African writers, "the path toward a truly balanced future is most likely to emerge at the intersection of Western and indigenous practices," particularly to the extent that this refers to magic, myth, and technology and the realms they validate (56), but on Africa's terms. This intersection accounts for the earlier-discussed re-enchantment of the different alternative rationalizations shaping Africa, where the rational and scientific are transformed into the mystical and magical, as well as the technologization of these rationalizations as components of an increasingly digitalized space. This is visible in the coupling of old and new in Alia's character as a modern researcher able to produce fire to facilitate her research, as well as operate AI technologies to ease her quotidian experiences. More importantly though, the story allows us to conceive how social nightmares can be repurposed as correctives in post-apocalyptic dystopian Africanfuturist narratives, evidenced by how they disambiguate social chaos to tease out solutions from them and also promise redemption.

Works Cited

Adesanmi, Pius. "Of Postcolonial Entanglement and Durée: Reflections on the Francophone African Novel." *Comparative Literature*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2004, pp. 227–242.

Barton, Riven. "Dystopia and the Promethean Nightmare." *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, edited by Louisa Mackay Demergian, Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2016, pp. 5–18.

Baumlin, James. "*King Lear,* Mandel's *Station Eleven*, and the Shakespearean Apocalypse: Meditations on Pandemic and Posthumanism." *LLIDS: Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. 13–30.

Broeck, Josef. "The Apocalyptic Imagination in America: Recent Criticism." *The kritikon litterarum*, vol. 14, 1985, pp. 89–94.

Bryce, Jane. "African Futurism: Speculative Fictions and 'Rewriting the Great Book.'" *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1–19.

Dussel, Enrique. "Agenda for a South-South Philosophical Dialogue." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, vol. X1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 3–18.

Eatough, Matthew. "African Science Fiction and the Planning Imagination." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2017, pp. 237–257.

Enwezor, Okwui. "Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 109, no. 3, 2010, pp. 595–620.

Eshun, Kodwo. "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism." *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003, pp. 287–302.

Garuba, Harry. "Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society." *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2003, pp. 261–285.
---. "On Animism, Modernity/Colonialism, and the African Order of Knowledge: Provisional Reflections." *Contested Ecologies: Dialogues in the South on Nature and Knowledge*, edited by Lesley Green, HSRC Press, 2013, pp. 42–54.

Heffernan, Teresa. "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children.'" *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2000, pp. 470–491.

Hicks, Heather. *The Post-Apocalyptic Culture: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Twentieth-Century Novel.* U of Toronto P, 2008.

Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction with a New Epilogue.* Oxford UP, 2000.

Landon, Brooks "Extrapolation and Speculation." *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction,* edited by Rob Latham, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 23–34.

Lvakhiv, Adam. "Cinema of the Not-Yet: The Utopian Promise of Film as Heterotopia." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2011, pp. 186–209.

Mignolo, Walter D. "Coloniality Is Far from Over, and So Must Be Decoloniality." *Afterall*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2017, pp. 38–45.

---. "Cosmopolitanism and the De-colonial Option." *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2010, pp. 111–127.

Moylan, T. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Westview Press, 2000.

Murphy, Graham J. "Dystopia." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction,* edited by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint, Routledge, 2009, pp. 473–477.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. "Geopolitics of Power and Knowledge in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Decolonial Reflection on a Global Crisis." *Journal of Developing Societies,* 2020, pp. 1–24

Okorafor, Nnedi. "Africanfuturism Defined." *Nnedi's Wahala Zone Blog*, www.nnedi.blogspot.com/2019/10/africanfuturism-defined.html.

Onwualu, Chinelo. "Read Before Use." *Uncanny Magazine Issue Sixteen*, 2017, www.uncannymagazine.com/article/read-before-use.

Praxis Editorial. "The 2020 K & L Prize: Africanfuturism." *Praxis Magazine*, 9 Aug. 2019, www.praxismagonline.com/the-2020-k-l-prize-africanfuturism.

Rosen, Elizabeth K. *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination*. Lexington Books, 2008.

Santos, Boaventura de S. "Oppositional Postmodernism and Globalizations." *Law & Social Inquiry*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1998, pp. 121–139.

---. "Room for Manoeuver: Paradox, Program, or Pandora's Box?" *Law & Social Inquiry*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1989, pp. 149–164.

---. "Three Metaphors for a New Conception of Law: The Frontier, the Baroque, and the South." *Law & Society Review*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1995, pp. 569–584.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1994, pp. 1–37.

Sarr, Felwine. *Afrotopia.* Translated by Drew Burk and Sarah Jones-Boardman. U of Minnesota P, 2019.

Sunstrum, Pamela P. "Afro-mythology and African Futurism: The Politics of Imagining and Methodologies for Contemporary Creative Research Practices." *Paradoxa: African SF*, edited by Mark Bould, 2013, pp. 113–129.

Suri, Deeksha, and Faizan Moquim. "Editors' Note." *LLIDS: Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. v–vii.

Wabuke, Hope. "Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and the Language of Black Speculative Literature." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Aug. 2020, http://www.lareviewofbooks.org/article/afrofuturism-africanfuturism-and-the-language-of-black-speculative-literature.

Yaszek, Lisa. "Rethinking Apocalypse in African SF." *Paradoxa: African SF*, edited by Mark Bould, 2013, pp. 47–64.