p-ISSN: 1652 - 7189 e-ISSN: 1658 - 7472 Issue No.: 26 ... Rajab 1442 H – March 2021 G

Albaha University Journal of Human Sciences

Periodical - Academic - Refereed

Published by Albaha University

دار المنار للطباعة 017 7223212

Email: buj@bu.edu.sa https://portal.bu.edu.sa/ar/web/bujhs

مجلة جامعة الباحة
للعلوم الإنسانية

العدد السادس والعشرون ... رجب ١٤٤٢هـ - مارس ٢٠٢١م ردمد: ٧١٨٩ - ١٦٥٢ ردمد (النشر الإلكتروني): ٧٤٧٢ - ١٦٥٢

المحتويات

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة التعليم

جامعة الباحة

وكالة الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

مجلة جامعة الباحة للعلوم الإنسانية

تصدر عن جامعة الباحة

مجلة دورية ـــ علمية ـــ محكمة

الرؤيـــة: أن تكون مجلة علمية تتميز بنشر البحوث العلمية التي تخدم أهداف التنمية الشاملة بالمملكة العربية السعودية وتسهم في تنمية القدرات البحثية لأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومن في حكمهم داخل الجامعة وخارجها.

الرسالة: تفعيل دور الجامعة في الارتقاء بمستوى الأداء البحثي لمنسوبيها بما يخدم أهداف الجامعة ويحقق أهداف التنمية المرجوة ويزيد من التفاعل البناء مع مؤسسات المجتمع المحلي والإقليمي والعالمي.

ردمد النشر الورقي: 7189 ـــ 1652

ردمد النشر الإلكتروني: 7472 ـــ 1658

رقم الإيداع: 1963 ـــ 1438

ص. ب: 1988

هاتف: 00966 17 7250341 / 00966 17 7274111

تحويلة: 1314

البريد الإلكتروني: buj@bu.edu.sa

الموقع الإلكتروني: https://portal.bu.edu.sa/ar/web/bujhs

Magical Realism in Ben Okri's Novel *The Famished Road*

Dr. John Kuriakose
Associate Professor in English, Department of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Albaha University

Abstract:

Notwithstanding that Ben Okri does not attach himself to magical realism, his magnum opus *The Famished Road* (1991) displays all the fundamental attributes of the genre. Magical realist features are obvious in the way the principal character Azaro perceives events and things, the cultural and religious traditions of the society the book portrays and the fictional strategies of the writer. The book is a product of the African conception of the world as a realm in which the living get intermingled with the spirits, and the poverty, squalor, exploitation and corruption that existed in the postcolonial Nigerian society it portrays. The fictional world of *The Famished Road* is a phenomenal world, which is unveiled through the dreams and hallucinations of Azaro and populated by spirits. It is also a mythical world inhabited by abikus, spirits, fauns, fairies, gentle and kind spirits, ancestral spirits which are the essential ingredients of the African cultural tradition and a world that disturbs the conventional ideas about time, place and identity. Strewn within the magical narrative passages of *The Famished Road* there are also realistic passages, which express the trauma of the colonialist and capitalist exploitation and destruction of nature. As in the case of other magical realists in general, Okri use techniques such as focalization, stories within stories, absence of a definite beginning and ending and mongrelism. Postmodernist features are visible both in the form and the content of the novel: it does not follow the established conventions of storytelling, it invites the attention of the reader to its structure that is organized in terms of frames, and like postmodernist texts in general, it does not have a formal beginning and ending, and indicates a temporal process that is unending.

Keywords: Magical Realism, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, Symbolism, Mongrelism.

الواقعية السحرية في رواية بن أوكري طريق الجوع

د. جون كرياكوس
الأستاذ المشارك بقسم اللغات الأجنبية
كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية في جامعة الباحة

الملخص:

يُعتبر الكاتب بن أوكري بشكل عام من كتاب ما بعد الحداثة ويمثل أفريقيا ما بعد الاستعمار الأفريقي والواقعية السحرية، غالبًا ما تتم مقارنتها بـغابرييل غارسيا ماركيز وغيره من الواقعيين السحريين.مع أن أوكري لا يرتبط بالواقعية السحرية، تستعرض روايته "طريق الجوع" جميع السمات الأساسية للواقعية السحرية مثل السحر والواقعية وجود العالم الخارق ودمج العالمين الواقعي والظاهري وجود عالم ظاهري ، ودمج العالمين الواقعي والظاهري والأحداث التي يصعب فهمها وتفسيرها و الأساطير والفولكلور بأحداث غريبة وخارقة، عالم يعكر صفو الأفكار التقليدية حول الزمان والمكان والهوية وصدمة الاستعمار/ الحروب العالمية وخصائص ما بعد الحداثة، وينبع العنصر السحري في رواية "طريق الجوع" أساسًا من الإيمان الأفريقي بعالم الروح الذي يتحكم في شؤون جميع البشر.على سبيل المثال يتم تقديم أزارو، الشخصية المحورية، كطفل روحي/ أبيكو، الذي يخرج بين الحياة والموت، كما هو معروف في التقاليد الأفريقية. ويقدم الكتاب تصورًا للعالم الذي يختلط فيه الأحياء بالأرواح. تتجلى الواقعية الاجتماعية للرواية في تصوير بن أوكري للفقر والبؤس والمرض والوحشية التي يقضي فيها سكان الأحياء الفقيرة والتعساء أيامهم. يعد العالم الاستثنائي "لطريق الجوع" هو عالم فلسفي خارق، يتم كشف النقاب عنه من خلال أحلام وهلوسة أزارو الذي تسكنه الأرواح. يسيطر على أبيكوس العالم الأسطوري للرواية والأرواح والحيوانات والجنيات والأرواح اللطيفة والرقيقة وأرواح الأجداد، وهي مكونات أساسية للتقاليد الثقافية الأفريقية، وهو عالم يعكر صفو الأفكار التقليدية التي ترتبط بالزمن والمكان والهوية. تتناثر المقاطع السردية السحرية "لطريق الجائع" وكذلك المقاطع الواقعية التي تعبر عن صدمة الاستغلال الاستعماري والرأسمالي وتدمير الطبيعة. يتعبر فضاء "طريق الجوع" هو فضاء رمزي، ويرمز فيه ملك الطريق إلى حكم البيض في أفريقيا، ويتم تقديم الانتقام العنيف والغاضب من الطبيعة لفظائع الإنسان بلغة رمزية، مثل روايات ما بعد الحداثة بشكل عام. لا تتبع الرواية أي أعراف راسخة في سرد القصص؛ هذه النزعة واضحة في كل من شكل الرواية ومحتواها. تفجر هذه النزعة المفاهيم الراسخة للتنظيم النصي والسرد القصصي، وتدعو القارئ إلى الانتباه إلى بنيتها التي يتم تنظيمها من حيث الإطارات. وكحالة الواقعيين السحريين الآخرين بشكل عام، يستخدم الكاتب الأفريقي أوكري تقنيات مثل التكثيف والقصص داخل القصص وعدم وجود بداية ونهاية محددة ولا ترابط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الواقعية السحرية؛ ما بعد الاستعمار؛ ما بعد الحداثة؛ الرمزية؛ المنغرية.

1. Introduction

Ben Okri is generally considered as a postmodernist and a representative of African postcolonialism and magical realism, often compared to Gabriel Garcia Marques and other magical realists. However, Okri does not attach himself to magical realism; rather, he identifies himself as a representative of the cultural and spiritual traditions of his upbringing and looks at reality from an African perspective.

Okri's magnum opus *The Famished Road* (1991) is generally looked upon as a representative work of African magical realism. The novel has its setting in an urban ghetto in Nigeria, which obviously evokes Okri's own days in a similar place in Lagos. In this setting, he tells the story of a spirit-child/ abiku by name Azaro, against the backdrop of postcolonial African life, which is under the grip of poverty, corrupt politics and large-scale destruction of nature. The extremely poor social conditions of the people are portrayed along with their religious, mythical and cultural traditions and strong family connections. Also, it presents their frustrations, resentments and hopes for a better future, in a language that is aided by symbolism and allegory. Magical realism is found in the character Azaro, the spirit child whose existence is shared between the earthly world and the spirit world, the way he perceives events and things, the cultural and spiritual traditions of the society the book portrays and in the fictional strategies of the writer.

Themes similar to that of the abiku identity of Azaro are common in West African cultural tradition--in written as well as oral narratives. Writers like Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Goke Ajiboye, Syl Cheney-Coker and Debo Kotun have treated the spirit-child notion in their writings in the English language and, Olympe Bhejy-Quenum has done it in the French language (Soliman 2004, p. 150).

Today, magical realism as a literary strategy is prevalent all over the world. Kim Sasser rightly observes: "Magical realism has traversed boundaries of many kinds: temporal, geographical, linguistic, and formal. Since its transformation from philosophy and painting to literature, a more recent trend has been the metamorphoses from literature to theatre and film" (Sasser 2014, p.3).

Even though scholars like Hutcheon, Farris, Cooper, Quayson, Sasser, Spindler, Chanady, Cezair-Thomson, Aldea et al have systematically studied postcolonialism, magical realism and West African magical realism in general and also in reference to Ben Okri, still there is relevance and need of a systematic attempt to identify and delineate the magical realist elements of *The Famished Road*.

2. Magical Realism: An Overview

The term 'magical realism' was first used by Franz Roh the German historian, photographer and art critic in 1925, in reference to a new trend that appeared in the wake of the First World War, among European painters who abandoned expressionism and turned to the representation of reality in a new way. He used the term as "a way to uncover the mystery hidden in ordinary objects and everyday reality" (Spindler 1993, p.75). Roh also made a clear distinction between expressionism and magical realism; in his view, when expressionism created a "fantastic dreamscape," magical realism involves a realist component (Roh 1995, p. 17). He found magical realism a potent strategy for representing the "horrors of our own time" (Roh 1995, p. 17). In the early days, the term magical realism was applied to European writers Kafka, Bontempelli, Cocteau and Chesterton; and later, it came to be applied to Latin American literature, particularly to Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* of 1967. Still later, the term was applied to postcolonial studies in general--in the words of Homi Bhabha, to "the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world" (Bhabha 1995, p. 7).

However, the term magical realism was popularised among critics only in 1954 by Angel Flores with his lecture "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" before the Congress of the Modern Language Association held in New York. He further expanded the scope of the term by including in it all narratives that present "transformation of the common and everyday into the awesome and the unreal" (Flores 1955, p. 190) and where "time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality" (p. 191). Thus, he included in the genre the works of writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Maria Luisa Bombal, Juan Jose Arreola and others. However, due to the wide application of the term in reference to the blend of the real and the magical in various forms and degrees in Latin America, Africa, Caribbean islands, India and beyond, the term still fails to have a definition. Today, magical realism as a literary strategy is prevalent all over the world. As Kim Sasser points out, "since its transformation from philosophy and painting to literature, a more recent trend has been the metamorphoses from literature to theatre and film (Sasser 2014, p. 3).

Critics have expressed appreciation for this new literary trend: Homi Bhabha welcomed it as "the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world" (Bhabha 1990, p. 6), Fredric Jameson found it "a possible alternative to the narrative logic of contemporary postmodernism" (Jameson 1986, p. 302) and Jean-Pierre Durix called it "a new multicultural artistic reality" (Durix 1998, p. 162). However, there have also been scholars who have condemned this trend; for instance, Francis Barker rejected it as "dangerous and shallow" (Barker 1994, p. 14) and Martin condemned it as "pernicious – even racist – ideologies" (Martin 1987, p. 99).

3. Characteristics of magical realism

Debates among critics on the characteristics of magical realism have led to two types of understanding of the term: 1. Literary works that present details in an unusual way without transcending the limits of the natural, yet giving the reader an experience of the unreal, and 2. Literary works that present the rational and the magical by relying on the myths and beliefs of ethno-cultural groups in a way that makes no contradiction between them (Spindler 1993, p. 78).

By unifying various definitions of magical realism expressed by critics in Europe and America, William Spindler has identified three types of magical realist writings, which he names as metaphysical magical realism, anthropological magic realism and ontological magic realism (Aldea 2011, p.3). Metaphysical magical realism is commonly found in painting, which presents real objects in unusual perspectives and angles producing a magical effect as examples of this type Spindler points out the works of the Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico. In literature, this kind of magic realism produces the effect of the uncanny by presenting natural and familiar circumstances with no direct use of the supernatural as in Franz Kafka. Spindler cites Albert Camus' *La Peste* (1947), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) as examples of this type of magical realism. Anthropological Magic Realism makes use of two narratorial voices--one rational and realistic and the other magical. This "antinomy" is resolved by making use of mythical, cultural and ritualistic traditions ("collective unconscious" of ethnic communities). As examples of this type, Spindler cites the treatment of the Mayan ethnic/cultural traditions by Asturias and that of Black Haitian by Carpentier, and similar treatment of the Mexican and Columbian traditions by Rulfo Paraje Latino and Garcia Marques. In ontological Magic Realism, magical and fantastic situations appear with no logical explanation and without the support of any mythical or cultural/ritualistic traditions. The supernatural occurs in such works in a matter of fact manner with no rational explanation. However, it differs from the fantastic in that it appears as natural as a part of the normal course of life. Spindler cites examples of this type from Kafka and Carpentier, *Die Verwandlung* (1916) and *Viaje a la Semilla* respectively. However, Spindler points out that there are literary works in which these different forms of magical realism overlap. Spindler also points out examples of magical realist writings that resist classification; for instance, according to Spendler, Italo Calvino's trilogy *Nostri Antenati*, are difficult to categorize. Spindler also comments on the unique features of Marques's *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* which with its characteristics of classical Greek tragedy appears metaphysical while being anthropological at the same time. It is also noted for the absence of the supernatural in it.

As Brenda Cooper observes, magical realism is born out of postcolonial societies through the conflict between capitalist and precapitalist forces. Cooper writes: "magical realism arises out of particular societies--postcolonial, unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist" (Cooper 1988, p. 216). Linda Hutcheon finds in magical realism the "conjunction" of postmodernism and postcolonialism (Hutcheon 1995, p. 131), and Fredric Jameson finds it "a possible alternative to the narrative logic of contemporary postmodernism" (Jameson 1986, p. 302). As Farris observes, "the magic in these texts refuses to be entirely assimilated into their realism; it does not brutally shock but neither does it melt away, so that it is like a grain of sand in the oyster of that realism" (Farris 2004, p. 8-9).

Magical realists generally make use of spiritual and cultural traditions, dreams and hallucinations. Roland Walter refers to the harmonious relation of humans, nature and cosmic spheres based on dream connections and having spiritual connections in magical realist writings (Walter 1999, p.64). He points out that it is this connection between the natural and spiritual worlds that facilitates magical occurrences. The Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias has observed that "between what could be called a 'real

reality' and a 'magical reality' which is lived by the people, there is a third reality which is not only the product of the visible and tangible, not only hallucination and dream, but the result of a fusion of the two . . . what we could call 'magical realism'" (qtd. in Walter 1999, p64). Alejo Carpentier also had referred to this unusual relationship between human beings and their surroundings as "an unexpected amplification of the categories of reality, perceived with particular intensity by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads it to a kind of extreme state" (qtd. in Walter 1999, p. 65). Thus, magic in magical realism becomes a product of the natural and the supernatural and an integral part of reality.

When critics in general discussed magical realist texts in the tradition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in terms of their magical content, Todorov, by identifying the structure of the fantastic, brought about the structuralist approaches to magical realist texts (Todorov 1975). Following the tradition of Todorov, Chanady put forward a taxonomy for magical texts. She identified the essential elements in a magical realist text as: 1. Display of visible codes of both the natural and the supernatural in the text, 2. Resolution of the antinomy between the real and the magical in due course of the text, and 3. Coexistence of the two codes in the text in a controlled manner (Chanady 1985, p. 3-6). Wendy B. Farris has identified the essential features of magical realism as follows:

"As a basis for investigating the nature and cultural work of magical realism, I suggest five primary characteristics of the mode. First, the text contains an "irreducible element" of magic; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and, finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity." (Farris 2004, p. 7)

Based on the features outlined above, the common elements of magical realist texts may be enumerated as: 1. Element of magic, 2. Realism, 3. Strong presence of a phenomenal world, 4. Near merger of the real and the phenomenal worlds, 5. Events that are difficult to comprehend and interpret, 6. Myths and folklore, and weird, uncanny events, 7. A world that disturbs conventional ideas about time, space, and identity, 8. Trauma of colonialism/world wars, and 9. Postmodernist features.

4. Elements of magical realism in *The Famished Road*

4. 1. Magic

In *The Famished Road*, the magical element primarily comes from the African faith in the spirit world that controls the affairs of all humans. Azaro, the central character, is introduced as a spirit child/abiku, who, according the African tradition, exits between life and death. The book presents a conception of the world in which the living gets intermingled with the spirits. Okri writes: "In that land of beginnings spirits mingled with the unborn. We could assume numerous forms. Many of us were birds. We knew no boundaries" (Okri 1993, p. 1). About the King of this spirit world, he writes: "He had been born uncountable times and was a legend in all worlds…. He always lived the most extraordinary of lives …. Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman…" (Okri 1993, p. 1).

There are several occasions in the novel in which the supernatural gets directly involved in the affairs of humans. Okri constantly reminds the reader of the presence of the spirits everywhere and maintains the link between the terrestrial world and the spirit world. The boxing events of Azaro's Dad involve the intervention of spirits, Madame Koto's bar is presented as a meeting place of spirits, and the herbalists are presented as capable of bringing about magical cure and bringing humans prosperity and money by means of magical incantations. Okri reminds the reader that in spite of the advance of technology, the spirits are there; instead of getting destroyed, they get adapted to the changes in the world. He describes the behaviour of spirits in the flash light of the photographer's camera:

……the photographer lifted up his camera. He was surrounded by little ghosts and spirits. They had climbed on one another to take a closer look at the instrument. They were so fascinated by the camera that they climbed on him and hung on his arms and stood on his head…. The spirits and the children gathered round it, pointing and talking in amazed voices. (Okri 1993, p. 31)

In another instance, the mask which Azaro finds in the forest is introduced as something that transforms reality. Azaro describes it as a supernatural object, as a living entity with its own living eyes and thoughts. When he puts it on his face, he finds "a grand palace with beryl colonnades and jade green verandas, parapets of gold, mistletoe clinging to the fierce yellow walls, with sculptures in dazzling marble

all around" (Okri 1993, p. 184). Looking through the mask he finds a creature "like a prehistoric dragon, with the body of an elephant, and the face of a warthog" (Okri 1993, p. 185).

While describing Azaro's journey with the spirit to the spirit-world, Okri describes a river and in the river "a canoe, a naked young woman, with an old woman's face and with the eyes of a tiger. Her eyes were harder, and glinted brighter, than diamonds" (Okri 1993, p. 251). Her eyes were those of a tiger. Azaro reports: "I saw people who walked backwards, a dwarf who got about on two fingers, men upside down with baskets of fish on their feet, women who had breasts on their backs, beautiful children with three arms. A girl with eyes at the side of her face" (Okri 1993, p. 10). In another instance, while describing the poverty of his family and the sufferings of his parents, again magical realism steps in; Aazaro says:

"One night I managed to lift myself out through the roof. I went up at breathtaking speed and stars fell from me. Unable to control my motion, I rose and fell and went in all directions, spinning through incredible peaks and vortexes. Dizzy and turning, swirling and dancing, the darkness seemed infinite, without signs, without markings. I rose without getting to heaven. I soared blissfully and I understood something of the inhuman exultation of flight." (Okri 1993, p. 140)

Here, Okri uses the theme of levitation as Gabriel Marques uses in *Hundred Years of Solitude*. In this scene, Azaro is lifted into the air through the roof, soaring blissfully and flying in the sky. This is followed by the magical theme of the little girl appearing in Madame Koto's bar. Strangely enough, the girl is visible only to Azaro. This is something similar to the mysterious appearance of the girl in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

Azaro finds "people with serene bronze face emerging from the trees." He finds "a bird with a man's hairy legs flying clumsily over the branches of the rain-tree," "an antelope with the face of a chaste woman" staring at him and an old man emerging from an anthill and "hobbled" after him and tripping over a skull (Okri 1993, p. 183). Azaro finds that the old man has "hooves for feet" (Okri 1993, p. 183). When Azaro and Dad are sitting in the bar, a three-headed spirit comes into the bar; Azaro describes it: "Each of its heads was a different shape. One was red with blue eyes, the other was yellow with red eyes, and the third was blue with yellow eyes. The spirit had about ten eyes in all" (Okri 1993, p. 219). The spirit now reminds Azaro of his abiku identity and urges him to return to the spirit world. It reminds him of the pact he had made before he was born and warns him that if he failed to keep the promise, his spirit companions would send a four-headed spirit, and then a seven-headed spirit, and later the spirit companions themselves would come to take him back to the spirit world. In Section Two, Book Six, Chapter One, after Dad's victory over Yellow Jaguar the boxer, it comes out that it was a man who had died three years ago.

4. 2. Realism

Ben Okri's portrayal of "the grinding poverty, squalor, disease, and brutality in which the hapless slum dwellers pass their days" is a clear instance of social realism (Wright 1997, p. 152). The novel gives the reader a graphic picture of their difficulties and sufferings in a society that is under the grip of extreme poverty and corruption. Azaro's Mum every day goes to the ghetto hawking her little provisions and returns home without selling anything. Poverty makes her thin and sad. In the evening, tired, exhausted and desperate, Mom sits "quivering under the bad wind, her face taut, her nose sweating, her eyes a little distracted." Dad goes to the market in search of job and returns in utter frustration; having failed to find any job, he accepts the job of carrying nightsoil. Like many others they remain poor and houseless, and their landlords come each day asking for unpaid rent.

The picture of the mad man eating a lizard evokes the extent of poverty in the society. In the name of development, on massive scale, everywhere, bushes were burnt, and trees were felled. Everywhere, there is the sound of dredging, of engines and of road builder. As Azaro describes, "Each day the area seemed different. Houses appeared where parts of the forest had been. Places where children used to play, and hide were now full of sand piles and rutted with house foundations. There were signboards on trees. The world was changing, and I went on wandering as if everything would always be the same" (Okri 1993, p. 76). Okri sums up the whole process in a beautiful sentence: "It seemed that the trees, feeling that they were losing the argument with human beings, had simply walked deeper into the forest" (Okri 1993, p. 76). Amid these sad realities hungry rats ate into the lives of humans, and political thugs moved around wreaking violence. The whole place becomes a scene of conflict between poverty and greed.

In reference to the African counterpart of Latin American magical realism, Appiah uses the term "spiritual realism." In the words of Appaiah, "for Okri, in a curious way, the world of spirits is not metaphorical or imaginary; rather, it is more real than the world of the everyday" (Appiah 1992 p. 147). However, Douglas Mccabe prefers to identity this realism of Okri as postmodernism; in his words, "…Appiah's sense that the world of spirits is more real to Okri than the everyday world runs athwart of the widely held idea that Okri's novel is postmodern" (Mccabe 2005, p 1).

4. 3. Strong presence of a phenomenal world

The magical realist world of *The Famished Road* is a Kantian phenomenal world which is unveiled through the perspective of Azaro. It is a product of the outside world which consists of the real as well as the unknowable, and the perceptions of Azaro can be interpreted from this perspective. Azaro's perspective is influenced by the poverty in the ghetto, the struggles of his parents and others to keep both ends meet, deep-rooted corruption and large scale destruction of nature in the name of development as well as the cultural, mythical and religious traditions of the place. The mask mentioned in the novel is symbolic of this perspective, and the point of view of the narrator is a version of the reality that is filtered through the perspective/mask of Azaro. The magical realism of the novel is such a picture of the phenomenal world which appears through the perspective of Azaro, and it is unveiled mainly through his dreams and hallucinations. It is this phenomenal world which gets easily populated by spirits.

The supernatural power of the mask is the African culture which Okri and his characters are unable to take off; even though Azaro tries to take it off, it stays on his face. Azaro thinks: "I desperately wanted to take the mask off so I wouldn't have to see anything. I tore off the vegetable string, but the mask stayed on, stuck to my face. I tried to tear it off again, but it was like stripping the skin off my own face. And then the transformation of the wood into flesh became complete (Okri 1993, p. 185-186). The third eye that is mentioned in the novel is a symbolic culture filter through which Okri and his character Azaro perceive reality. Azaro recalls:

"And then suddenly, out of the centre of my forehead, an eye opened, and I saw this light to be the brightest, most beautiful thing in the world. It was terribly hot, but it did not burn. It was fearfully radiant, but it did not blind. As the light came closer, I became more afraid. Then my fear turned. The light went into the new eye and into my brain and roved around my spirit and moved in my veins and circulated in my blood and lodged itself in my heart. (Okri 1993, p. 173)

The influx of foreign culture with its concept of development that necessitates technology, electricity, traffic system, capitalist social framework and the Western political model brings the African culture and its belief system based on spirits, ghosts, monsters, witches, herbalists, priests and magicians under existential threat. It is the resultant angst that shapes the phenomenal world of Azaro and populates it with the spirit world; his visions of the river canoe and the naked woman, the people walking backward and the little girl who appears in the Madame Koto's bar whom Azaro alone was able to see, all belong to this world.

4. 4. Merger of the real and the phenomenal worlds

As a method, when Okri presents realistic scenes interlaced with improbable and magical elements, the effect is a near merger of the two worlds. Okri's strategy is to mingle descriptions that are highly realistic with elements of magic or dreams or hallucinations. The way Dad's fights are described is a clear instance. In one instance, while the fight is progressing, Azaro is having conversation with the spirit which has come to take him to his spirit companions. Azaro's response to Dad's punishment in Book Five, Chapter One, is another instance. In protest against Dad's punishment, Azaro refuses to take food as a form of self-torture. Dad's ego keeps him away from the boy; however, he is much sad and worried about the declining health of the boy. It is at this point Okri introduces the conversation between the three-headed spirit and Azaro. In the following instance, for urging Azaro to return to the spirit world, the spirit is criticising Azaro's parents for their insensitivity to their son:

And because Dad said nothing to me, because he made no attempts to reach me, did not even attempt a smile at me, I listened to what the three headed spirit was saying.

'Your parents are treating you atrociously,' he said. 'Come with me.

Your comrades are desperate to embrace you. There is a truly wonderful feast awaiting your homecoming....'

Dad got up from his chair and stood over me.

His breathing manifested itself as a heavy wind in the world in which I was travelling.

'Don't fly away,' the spirit said. 'If you fly away, I don't know where you will land. There are many strange things here that devour the traveller.

There are many spirit-eaters and monsters of the interspaces.

Keep on the solid ground.'

Dad coughed and I tripped over a green bump on the road. (Okri 1993, p. 243)

Here we find different streams of thought and different perspectives appearing simultaneously: Azaro is thinking of the cruel behaviour of his father, the spirit is speaking to Azaro urging him to return to the spirit world, and simultaneously, Azaro is listening to the coughing sound of Dad. He feels Dad's touch on his face, listens to the weeps of his mom, and feels her face against his own face.

However, the account of the phenomenal world intensifies the reality and makes it more poignant. While being torn between the two worlds, the human side of Azaro is pained by the hardships of his mother and father, and he loves them like any other earthly child. Watching the weak and fragile figure of his mother going into the market for the subsistence of the family, Azaro reflects in pain:

She looked much leaner, and her blouse hung from her, and the straps fell over her shoulders as if she had shrunk in her clothes…. As I walked behind her to the junction where we parted I felt very unhappy about the thinness of her voice amongst the noises of the ghetto. As she went off on her arduous journeys, she seemed so frail that the slightest wind threatened to blow her away into the molten sky. Before she went, she gave me a piece of bread, and told me to behave myself at school. (Okri 1993, p. 57)

As in the above passage, Okri's descriptions are full of life, especially when he deals with human affections; they touch the hearts of his readers.

Even when shamans/herbalists perform their magical cures, the reader finds it an integral part of the daily lives of his characters. It is this effect, which Ato Quayson calls "animist realism" (Quayson 1997). Acknowledging this view of the world Graham Harvey observes: "the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others" (Harvey 2005, p. xi). In Ogunsanwo's view, this "portrayal of 'animism' that underlies African religious belief and informs the mythopoeisis of their fictions…deserves an in-depth analysis in any examination of magical realism" (Ogunsanwo 1998, p. 228).

4. 5. Events which are difficult to comprehend and interpret

It is the phenomenal character of Okri's fictional world that makes it difficult to comprehend; for presenting this fictional world he uses a symbolic mode. In Section One, Chapter Two, it is mentioned that Azaro was ill; and one day, when he wakes up, he finds himself in a coffin. Later, it is mentioned that he "lingered between not dying and not living for two weeks" (Okri 1993, p. 4). This is followed by long descriptions of his hallucinatory wanderings. It speaks about visits from his spirit siblings urging him to return to the spirit world; and there are instances of the spirits attempting to cause motor accidents, drowning, fire accidents etc. from which he makes narrow escape. Then Azaro gets separated from his mother and starts wandering, and this is followed by a chain of hallucinatory passages. The reader finds it difficult to say whether these events are magical or hallucinatory. Azaro recalls:

'They followed me. One of the men had red wings on his feet and a girl had fish-gills around her neck. I could hear their nasal whisperings.…. That was the first time I realised it wasn't just humans who came to the marketplaces of the world. Spirits and other beings come there too. They buy and sell, browse and investigate. They wander amongst the fruits of the earth and sea. (Okri 1993, p 10)

There are mentions of "a baby spirit with the face of a squirrel who dragged a great sack," spirits having "yellow webbed feet, another the tail of a tiny crocodile, and the most interesting had the eyes of a dolphin" (Okri 1993, p 10); and there are "white forms floating, blue shadows flying about the ceiling" (Okri 1993, p.14). Then Azaro reaches the house of a police officer; of this experience, he recollects:

"…when the clock stopped chiming, an orange light suddenly shot through my brain and the darkness became faintly illuminated and I saw the disconsolate ghost of the boy in a corner of the room. After a while it got up and floated towards me and stared down with its burst eyes and lay just above me, its wings stirring the air…. The walls in the house began to whisper about the seventh man and of how he had been run over by a lorry while directing traffic." (Okri 1993, p.17)

Azaro opens the door and finds his mother standing at the door. Now the reader might conclude that all these were just hallucinations of the boy during his illness. However, later, during the celebration, the reader comes to know that the boy was really lost. Okri explains:

"That night she was lamenting her condition, blaming herself for having lost the only child she had, a child who had chosen to live, when a distant relation paid a visit. She had heard of Mum's troubles and had come to offer consolation. She brought a few gifts and congratulated Mum on finding me.…Then it emerged that the relation had seen a picture of me in the newspaper on the day after my accident. That was how Mum traced me to the police station and eventually to the officer's house." (Okri 1993, p. 20)

The spirit who leads Azaro into the forest explains to him that the people who are building the road are dead people. Here the reader is forced to think that even the road is a part of the spirit world.

The perceptions of Azaro are not easily understood even by his parents. Azaro's Mum says to him: "When I caught you… I saw you had no eyes and no mouth, and you had little legs on your head. There was a white rope round you and it went up to the sky. I pulled the rope and it pulled me" (Okri 1993, p. 40). Even Azaro, the spirit child who mediates between the two worlds, fails to understand many things. Even though he keeps on asking questions to the three-headed spirit, he fails to understand the meaning of its words:

'Are we travelling this road to the end?'

'Yes,' the spirit said, walking as if distance meant nothing.

'But you said the road has no end.'

'That's true,' said the spirit.

'How can it be true?'

'From a certain point of view the universe seems to be composed of paradoxes. But everything resolves. That is the function of contradiction.'

'I don't understand.'

'When you can see everything from every imaginable point of view you might begin to understand.' (Okri 1993, p. 242)

Having been lead to the river by the spirit, Azaro reflects:

It was only when I looked at the river properly that I realized it was a vast, undisturbed mirror. The canoe stood on a haze of light, without troubling the mirror's surface. The lights of that world, converging on its shimmering surface, made me utterly transparent, as if I had disappeared from reality, become a ghost. For a moment my eyes, suffused with light and silver, were blinded. (Okri 1991, p. 250)

Here, the reader might take the narrative for a dream fragment as in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." It is on this incomprehensible character of the novel Cooper writes: "We have already seen how hard it is to pin the narrative down at quite crucial moments, such as the meaning of Dad's wrestling matches against his destiny, or Mum's stories, or the nature of Madame Koto and the meaning of her bar, or even of the central road imagery itself" (Cooper 1998, p. 103).

4. 6. Myths and folklore with weird, uncanny events

In the view of Ato Quayson, "…the magical is an umbrella term to denote elements drawn from mythology, fantasy, folk tales, and any other discourse that bears a representational code opposed to realism" (Quayson 2009, p. 164). The central myth of *The Famished Road*, the theme of abikus and a world inhabited by spirits, fauns, fairies, gentle and kind spirits, and ancestral spirits are a part of the African cultural tradition. The folkloric tradition of African life generally includes myths, legends, tales, riddles, proverbs and songs. Writers like Achebe, Tutuola and Okri have made profuse use of myth, folktales and sayings in their works. *The Famished Road* begins by clearly echoing the Book of Genesis of the *Bible*. The two opening verses of the Bible say: "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2). Somewhat similar to this, Okri writes: "In the beginning there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river it was always hungry" (1). When the Bible refers to the state of the Earth before God created it, Okri refers to such a beginning in the prehistoric times. He refers to the existence of a river in the beginning, which became a road, and then branched out in the whole world. Azaro's Dad gives the boy warnings about the dreadful character of the road: "the road swallows people and sometimes at night you can hear them calling for help, begging to be freed from inside its empty

stomach" (Okri 1993, p. 91). There are also references to African practices like sacrifices for appeasing supernatural forces. In the forest Azaro comes across "an enamel plate of sacrifices to the road," which contains typical African dishes like "fried yams, fish, stewed snails, palm oil, rice and cola nuts" (Okri 1993, p. 86). Azaro's grandfather, a man who was able to walk without any aid though completely blind, is referred to as the priest of the God of Roads.

In the traditional African communities, folklore, especially tales and proverbs, are found to be an effective educational tool. Azaro' parents tell him such stories; when Azaro asks Mom to tell him a story, she tells him the story of the medicine man who flies to the moon at night to attend an important meeting concerning the future of the wold.

A world view rooted in myths and legends and ritualistic traditions is an essential feature of both American magical realism and its African counterpart. For instance, many of the elements of the Lakota belief system, which Paula Gunn Allen has identified, such as "transformations of objects from one form to another, the movement of objects from one place to another by teleportation, the curing of the sick (and conversely creating sickness in people, animals, or plants), communication with animals, plants, and nonphysical beings" (Allen 1986, p. 22-23) are found in the belief system of Africa as well as in *The Famished Road*.

4.7. A world that disturbs conventional ideas about time, space and identity

In *The Famished Road* there are so many instances that disturb the conventional ideas about time, place and identity. The opening of the novel, "Once there was a river…," takes the reader to a prehistoric time, and the reference to the King of the road as "had been born uncountable times" gives him a timeless identity. Azaro's journey with the spirit to the spirit world, the mention of the river, the canoe and the naked young woman with an old woman's face etc. challenge the existing notions of identity, spatiality and temporality. The theme of the mask and what Azaro sees through it-- "a grand palace with beryl colonnades and jade green verandas, parapets of gold, mistletoe clinging to the fierce yellow walls, with sculptures in dazzling marble all around" (Okri 1993, p. 184) -- transport the reader to a dream world. Azaro's levitation through the roof of his house and the appearance of the little girl in Madame Koto's bar whom only Azaro was able to see suggest a world that is magical. The many-headed spirits and Azaro's communications with them give him a mysterious nonhuman identity. The way the road is described makes it a part of the spirit world. The blind old man with the accordion, who is able to see when he needs, remains a mystery which is never resolved. The old man who runs a shop in the far end of the town poses another mystery; here, it is the narrative style that makes him a part of the phenomenal world. Okri writes: "He picked up another root. It was shaped like a child with big head. He bit off the head of the child, spat it out, and bit at its arm, and chewed" (Okri 1993, p. 124).

The reader often finds it difficult to locate many things in the story spatially and temporally, and to decide whether certain things in the story are real or magical. The story of the King of the Road is difficult to interpret. Similarly, the references to the "land of origins" with unborn spirits and a king who does not have a sexual identity take the reader to a timeless and mythical realm and a new conception of God. Azaro himself says, "I felt on the edge of reality; and Madame Koto's bar seemed like a strange fairyland in the real world, a fairyland that no one could see" (Okri 1993, p. 156). In reference such features, Wendy B. Farris remarks that *The Famished Road* has a "mythopoetic framework" (Farris 2004, p. 99). Ivan Todorov calls it "the fantastic"; in his view, it occurs when there is ... a hesitation between deciding whether a series of apparently miraculous, supernatural events narrated in fiction are indeed supernatural or rationally explicable and within the rules of natural law (Todorov, 1975, p. 28).

4.8. Trauma of colonization

Strewn within the magical narrative passages of *The Famished Road* there are realistic passages, which express the trauma of colonialist and capitalist exploitation and destruction of nature. Dad shows Azaro the scenes of destruction and devastation in the forest. The conversation between the father and the son expresses the hurt feelings of the Africans towards the large scale exploitation and destruction of the forest which is an integral part of African cultural life:

"Do you see all this?" Dad said, waving his good arm to indicate the forest and the bushes.

"Yes," I replied.

"It's bush now, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"But sooner than you think there won't be one tree standing. There will be no forest left at all. And there will be wretched houses all over the place. This is where the poor people will live" …

"This is where you too will live. Many things will happen to us here. If I ever have to go away, if I ever disappear now or in the future, remember that my spirit will always be there to protect you." (Okri 1993, p. 22)

The victims of the road are both the flora and the fauna. Okri chooses symbols from humans, animals and plants as victims of the road. There is the symbol of the iroko tree that is felled: "The tree was mighty, its trunk gnarled and rough like the faces of ancient warriors. It looked like a great soul dead at the road's end…. Strange sounds lisped in the tree trunk, voices echoed in its hollows" (Okri 1993, p. 86). Similarly, there is the figure of the "two-legged dog" that emerged from the forest. It is one of the most moving images in the novel. Okri writes:

"It had a left forefoot and a right hind foot, and it stood, wobbling, as though on invisible crutches. The dog stared at me. And with a heavy, inconsolable sadness it turned and limped away. In my astonishment at seeing, it walk I followed it as it limped on curiously… I watched it go and it stopped only once to look at me. I waved, but the dog did not understand my gesture. It went on limping, a solitary and heroic dog, surviving with only two legs and a sad face." (Okri 1993, p. 86)

Okri's image of the two-legged dog is one of the most poignant pictures of deprivation and misery the book presents. Dad's three-legged chair which summarizes the furniture luxury of the household may be considered in parallel with the image of this two-legged dog.

Margaret Cezair-Thompson's paper explores the meaning of the road in *The Famished Road* and attempts to describe the European sponsored havoc in Africa as "an error of cosmic proportion" for which "neither human being nor historical event is to blame" (Cezair-Thompson 1996, p. 35). However, the road that represents the colonialist territorial expansion was hungrily swallowing up all the virginity and cultural traditions of the African continent, which was the cradle of Homo sapiens and all his traditions. It destroyed not only the traditions of the land but all its natural riches as well. The road for exploitation was made into the very heart of the continent and it branched out into its every nook and corner, eating up trees, animals and even humans—everything that could be converted into money. Thus, the hunger of the road is the hunger for wealth, and it is not any unavoidable, unseen cosmic force as Thompson describes.

4.9. Modernist and postmodernist features

4.9.1 Symbolism

The major symbols of *The Famished Road* are the abiku child, the road and the King of the Road. The road symbolizes the rush of Europeans to Africa for exploitation in the name of civilization and development. Margaret Cezair-Thompson's reference to road symbolism in *Mister Johnson* is relevant to *The Famished Road* as well. Cezair-Thompson writes:

By 'roads and road making' I mean the imperialist penetration of the African landscape with the intention to rule, as epitomized in Cary's *Mister Johnson*, and also in works where an actual road is not present but where the ideas of imperialist exploration and conquest are predominant, as in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Examples of postcolonial responses to imperialist roads and road making are Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood* where the railway takes the place of the road, and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where the appearance of "iron horses" (bicycles) signifies the missionaries' penetration of African villages. (Cezair-Thompson 1996, p. 44)

The King of the Road symbolizes the white's rule in Africa. Nature's violent and furious retaliation to man's atrocities is presented in a symbolic language:

"And then terrible wonders unfolded. Lights flashed three times in a frightening succession. Two birds fell from the branches of a tree, wings vainly fluttering. I heard sheets of zinc crumpling and twisting, heard nails complaining, wood splitting, and then saw the entire rooftop of a house wrenched away and blown across the floodtide in the air. Children howled. Women wailed. It could have been the end of the world (Okri 1993, p. 212)

Okri's use of abiku symbolism is evident in the thoughts of Azaro's Dad. Of Dad, Okri writes: "In his journeys Dad found that all nations are children; it shocked him that ours too was an abiku nation, a spirit-child nation, one that keeps being reborn and after each birth come blood and betrayals, and the child of our will refuses to stay till we have made propitious sacrifice and displayed our serious intent to bear the weight of a unique destiny" (Okri 1993, p. 360). Similar to the fate of an abiku child who is

destined to live and die again and again, Nigeria is presented as a victim of colonialism and exploitation; however, Okri stresses the need of a resolution for the nation to endure and prevail. In *The Famished Road,* when the herbalist comes to treat Azaro, he advises his parents to treat the child kindly; this is in fact a reference to Nigeria. The herbalist advises Azaro's parents to be kinder to their child, not to shout at him, not to restrict him and "to not quarrel amongst themselves" (Okri 1993, p. 254). Here, it is Okri himself who appears in the guise of the herbalist, as a Nigerian who is concerned about the well-being of the nation. Quayson comments on this: "Since the abiku is caught in a cyclical web of births, deaths and re-births, it fractures history. … If the country is like the abiku, the affective status of its history is thrown into doubt precisely because it is trapped in a grid of non-progressing motion" (Quayson 1997, p. 132).

The story of the King of the Road refers to a certain "land of origins" with unborn abiku spirits; Azaro who is not yet born refers to the King who does not have a definite sexual identity. Azaro himself mentions the King as one who has become both man and woman many times. Here, like the abiku child's cyclical birth and death, the King has such an identity too. Azaro gives the following description of the King:

He had been born uncountable times and was a legend in all worlds.… It never mattered into what circumstances he was born. He always lived the most extraordinary of lives. … Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, he wrought incomparable achievements from every life. If there is anything common to all of his lives, the essence of his genius, it might well be the love of transformation, and the transformation of love into higher realities. (Okri 1993, p. 1)

The King who presides over the land of unborn spirits might be the god himself/herself of Okri's imagination.

4.9.2. Postmodernism

The Famished Road, like postmodernist narratives in general, does not follow established conventions of storytelling. This tendency is visible both in the form and the content of the novel. It undermines the established concepts of textual organization and storytelling and invites the attention of the reader to its structure that is organized in terms of frames; this feature, as Patricia Waugh points out, is a feature of modernist and postmodernist writings (Waugh, 1984, p. 28).

Magical realists usually rest their technique mainly in the choice of focalization. So, it becomes a part of the reading process to locate the origin of perception in a narrative. In *The Famished Road,* Ben Okri uses the perspective of Azaro the abiku or spirit-child, which exists and mediates between the everyday and the spirit worlds. The images of the spirits and the weird images of humans and animals appear in a delirious mental state of Azaro; they appear in binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that of fantasy.

To use the words of Wendy B. Farris, "there-- the focalization--the perspective from which events are presented--is indeterminate; the kinds of perceptions it presents are indefinable and the origins of those perceptions are unlocatable" (Farris, 2004, p. 43). Thus, as Farris observes, the reader is given "a sense of contact with an indeterminate and undefinable domain, a feeling that endows the text with a slight and occasional mysterious aura" and "glimpses of the transcendent within the everyday" (Farris, 2004, p. 64). Thus, the weird images which Azaro sees during his sickness, during Dad's fights, and the images he sees in Madame Koto's bar such as the appearance of the spirit girl, the three-headed spirit and his travel with the spirit to the spirit-world, all appear as separate abstract images.

As another postmodernist feature, Okri tells 'stories within stories. Mom tells Azaro the story of the white man who has to learn to be an African for his redemption; within this story comes the story of the tortoise, which does not disclose what the tortoise tells, but leads to the final lesson that "all things are linked," that is, there is no essential divide between humans and animals. There is the story of the King of the Road told by Dad, which symbolises the greed of the colonizer; and there are the two different versions of the story of the man with stomach told by Dad and Mom. There is Mom's story of the medicine man who would fly to the Moon at night to visit the country of the white people, and there are the stories of the man without stomach, and of the stomach without a body.

Another postmodernist feature is the way the book begins and ends, and the sense of ending it creates. The story does not have a definite beginning: it begins with a vague reference to a certain mythical river and a land where "the spirits mingled with the unborn." It does not have a formal ending too; Azaro concludes his narrative in the following way:

It was so silent and peaceful that after some time I was a bit worried. I was not used to such a gift of quietude. The deeper it was, the deeper was my fear. I kept expecting eerie songs to break into my mind. I kept expecting to see spirit-lovers entwined in blades of sunlight. Nothing happened. The sweetness dissolved my fears. I was not afraid of Time.

And then it was another morning. The room was empty. Mum and Dad were gone. And the good breeze hadn't lasted for ever.

A dream can be the highest point of a life. (Okri 1993, p. 365)

In fact, the story does not end; it indicates a temporal process that is unending. This is in agreement with the concept of Modernism that "modernist texts begin by plunging in *medias res* and end with the sense that nothing is finished, that life flows on…" They often end with a choice of endings, or they may end with a sign of the impossibility of endings (Waugh, 1984, p. 29).

4.9.3. Mongrelism

The society which Okri portrays in *The Famished Road* is a complex of different temporal and cultural mix; there the reader finds poor Nigerians living in the ghetto, herbalists, many-headed spirits, politicians, primitive forests, cars and modern skyscrapers. This sense of complexity is accentuated by mythical and folkloric themes. Cooper calls it a "bizarre product of both new and old, tradition and burgeoning change" (Cooper 1998, p. 80). In reference to Okri's fictional world Cooper observes: "Here, the mongrel culture is threatening and demonic, linked to the image of the labyrinth and the archetypal myth of the prison of the snake devouring its own tail" (Cooper 1998, p. 81). In this mongrel culture one culture subverts the other and realism and magic subvert each other. The novel makes use of all the three Magical Realist Modi Operandi, "subversion, suspension, and summation." In the story, magic subverts realism, magic and realism are suspended between each other, and magic adds to realism. (Sasser 2014, p. 25)

5. Conclusion

Magical realism in *The Famished Road* is primarily a product of the African conception of a world wherein the living get intermingled with the spirits and social realism that reflects the poverty, squalor, exploitation and corruption in the postcolonialist Nigeria where Ben Okri spent his early days. It is a phenomenal world which consists of the real as well as the unknowable unveiled through the perspective of Azaro and influenced by the cultural, mythical, and religious traditions of the place, poverty in the ghetto where people struggled to make both ends meet and deep-rooted corruption and large-scale destruction of nature on the pretext of development.

As a strategy, Okri presents realistic scenes interlaced with improbable and magical elements with dreams and hallucinations, mythology, and folk tales, and achieves a near merger of the two worlds by using a symbolic mode. This strategy disturbs the conventional ideas about time, place, and identity, challenges the existing conceptions of spatiality and temporality, resulting in lack of certainty between the real and the magical.

As a postmodernist work of fiction, both in form and content, the novel does not follow established conventions: it undermines the established concepts of textual organization and storytelling and invites the attention of the reader to its structure that is organized in terms of frames. Like other magical realist texts, as a major strategy, it relies on the choice of focalization; the book uses mainly the perspective of Azaro the abiku child, which mediates between the everyday and the spirit worlds. The images of the spirits and the weird images of humans and animals appear in the delirious mental state of Azaro, and they appear in binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that of fantasy. As other postmodernist features, the book uses the method of telling stories within stories; it fails to have a definite beginning and ending and indicates a temporal process that is unending. The book also employs mongrelism, mutual subversion of realism and magic and African and Western cultures.

References

Aldea, Eva. *Magical Realism and Deleuze: The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature*. London: Continuum Literary Studies, 2011.

Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop. Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon, 1986, pp. 22-23.

Appiah, Anthony, "Spiritual Realism." *The Nation.* Vol. 255, No. 4, (3-10 August 1992), pp. 146-148.

Barker, Francis, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen. (Ed.), *Colonial Discourse/ Postcolonial Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994.
Bhabha, Homi K. "Introduction" in *Nation and Narration.* (Ed.), Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 1–7.
Cezair-Thompson, Margaret. "Beyond the Postcolonial Novel: Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and its "Abiku" Traveller." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. 31, Issue 2, 1996.
Chanady, Amaryll. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy*. New York: Garland, 1985.
Cooper, Brenda. *Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing with a Third Eye*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
Durix, Jean-Pierre. *Mimesis, Genres, and Post-Colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magic Realism*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998.
Farris, Wendy B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004.
Flores Angel. "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction", *Hispania* 38, 2 (May, 1955), 187-192. 10.2307/335812
Harvey, Graham. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
Hutcheon, Linda. "Circling the Downspout of Empire." *The Post-colonial Studies Reader.* (Eds.), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 1995.
Jameson, Fredric. "On Magic Realism in Film." *Critical Inquiry* 12.2, 1986, pp. 301–325.
Martin, Gerald. "On 'Magical' and Social Realism in Garcia Marques," in *Gabriel Garcia Marques: New Readings*. (Ed.), Bernard McGuirk, Richard Cardwell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 95-116.
Mccabe, Douglas. "Higher Realities: New Age Spirituality in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road.*" *Research in African Literatures*, Volume 36, Number 4, Winter 2005, pp. 1-21
Ogunsanwo, Olatubosun "Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing with a Third Eye, by Brenda Cooper. London: Roudedge, 1998." *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Summer, 2000), pp. 226-228 Published by: Indiana University Press Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3821061 Accessed: 09-01-2016 21:04 UTC
Okri, Ben. *The Famished Road*. Anchor, 1993 https://libgen.is/book/index.php?md5=0C57A57C8AC9CC1999566BC736E85FED
Quayson, Ato. *Strategic Transformations in Nigerian Writing*: *Orality and History in the Work of Rev. Samuel Johnson, Amos Tutuola, Wole Soyinka & Ben Okri*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.------ . "*Magical Realism and the African Novel*." (Ed.), Abiola Irele, *F. The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2009, pp. 159-76.
Roh, Franz. ''Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism'' (Trans.), Wendy B. Farris, in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995.
Sasser, Kim. *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism: Strategizing Belonging*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
Spindler, William. "Magical Realism: A Typology." *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Volume XXIX, Issue 1, January 1993, Pages 75–85. https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/XXIX.1.75
Todorov, Tzetvan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. (Trans.), Richard Howard. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.
Walter, Roland. Pan-American (Re) Visions: Magical Realism and Amerindian Cultures in Susan Power's "The Grass Dancer", Gioconda Belli's "La Mujer Habitada", Linda Hogan's "Power", and Mario Vargas Llosa's " El Hablador". *American Studies International*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (October 1999), pp. 63-80
Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1984.

ردمد: ٧١٨٩ - ١٦٥٢ ردمد (النشر الإلكتروني): ٧٤٧٢ – ١٦٥٢ العدد السادس والعشرون ... رجب ١٤٤٢ هـ - مارس ٢٠٢١ م

مجلة جامعة الباحة

للعلوم الإنسانية

دورية - علمية - محكمة

مجلة علمية تصدر عن جامعة الباحة

البريد الإلكتروني: buj@bu.edu.sa الموقع الإلكتروني: https://portal.bu.edu.sa/ar/web/bujhs