



St. Joseph's Journal of Humanities and Science

ISSN: 2347 - 5331

<http://sjctnc.edu.in/6107-2/>



Culturism in Nnedi Okorafor's Fictions "*Who Fears Death*" and "*The Book of Phoenix*"

Ahelesh Acharya^a

L. Ravi Shankar^{b*}

ABSTRACT

In this paper presentation, the two fictions of Nnedi Okorafor, who is a Nigerian – American writer of fantasy, science and speculation fiction, are taken for literary analysis. The second fiction is the prequel to the first one. According to that, the first one is, the novel takes place in a fictionalized post-apocalyptic future version of Sudan, where the light-skinned Nuru oppress the dark-skinned Okeke. The Nuru have long been persecuting and killing the Okeke, but now seem intent on launching an actual genocide. The dark-skinned Okeke are, according to *The Great Book*, suffering punishment by the goddess Ani for their exuberant creativity in producing technology like computers. The second fiction for this thesis is, it's the story of an accelerated woman who has been genetically engineered in a New York lab. *The Book of Phoenix* is a story of genetic manipulation with an extremely sinister edge. Phoenix and the other specimen in the Towers are created not to exist as people in their own right, but for the benefits they are expected to provide their creator-owners. *The Book of Phoenix* hits America's bloody history of oppression, slavery and colonialism with all the incendiary rage it's earned.

Keywords: Technology, oppression, slavery and colonialism.

The Phoenix travels from the United States to Africa and back, changing the entire course of humanity's future. These literary theories could be applied while analyzing the two fictions that there are Absurdism, Humanism, Male chauvinism, Mythicism, Ethnocentrism, Capitalism, Political Radicalism and colourism. Ultimately, culturism has played a major role to genocide the Okeke who were considered as equal human beings like the Nuru. So, culturism makes people hatred belong to other cultures, even today, while we all are living in the modern world.

The high-lighted views from the novel are genocide and enslavement which are done by the Nuru people against the Okeke who were murdered and raped. In addition, even love between two groups is forbidden. So, the children of rape are called as Ewu, who are not accepted by either group. Those children are considered as the third race. The women are oppressed by the Nuru people by using weaponized rapes. And also, human beings inflict upon one another. Mainly, the Nuru are inflicting genocide on the Okeke people. It is observed that the racial oppression in the novel is shown by

^aResearch Scholar, Department of English, Govt. Arts College, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, India.

^bDepartment of English, Govt. Arts College, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, India.

*E-mail: aarush.lrs@gmail.com.

punishing the women society using weaponized rapes by the male dominated society using weaponized rapes by the male dominated society such a painful life is given to the women society by the men in the African countries. So, the women are not given any kind of freedom instead their life is hunted very cruelly by the men.

“The blood of the Okeke runs like water

We take their goods and shame their forefathers.

We beat them with a heavy hand

Then take what they call their land.

The power of Ani belongs to us

And we will slay you to dust

Ugly filthy slaves, Ani has finally killed you!”
(WSF 18-19)

Throughout this novel we see weaponized rapes, female genital cutting, Ethnic, Genocide, Institutional Racism and the never-ending cruelty a lot. The women are living such worst environment where they cannot have a normal life generally; the women nature is that they expect love and protection from the men by which they could have such so satisfied life. But, here the women life is crushed by the women. In addition their feelings are ignored by the men completely. They are ill treated by the whole men society. We could apply absurdism by the major scenes of the novel because the people's customs, following the wrong belief, which they indicate that by the great book and love is forbidden between the two groups. The Okeke society is punished severely and brutally by the ruling society the Nuru.

The reason is that the Okeke has done technological development, which made the Goddess Ani angry. So, the Nuru is given the duty to punish the okeke people, which are insisted by the great book. This is the belief held by the Nuru community, because the Nuru saw technology as evil. The Nuru have the strong belief that the great book justifies the enslavement and subjugation of the Okeke by the Nuru for technological improvements. The conflict is between the light skinned Nuru and and the dark skinned Okeke in the novel, by which we can apply colourism theory in the novel. The Cruellest thing, which it is personally felt for

the women society, misogyny is existed in two sides strongly. So, we can confirm that the society is highly male dominated one, by whom the women security is questionable in the world. The women are suffered in these manners that they are wandering from a place to another because of fear as well as losses. They are hunted by the male society, by which sexism is existed in the society in a too much manner.

In the analysis part of science fiction, it is realized that the core concept of all the evils faced by African people is political Radicalism. Through American and the western political radicalism the complete exploitation on African people has been done mercilessly. The main character in the Science fiction experiences the sufferings of the people and realizes her own genetic and magical powers to fight against it to save her society. The phoenix leaves Newyork from Tower 7. The central story deals with the complex realities of biological and technological engineering, the contemporary economic system, and the continuing exploitation of the countries and peoples of Africa by the west-while also being a compelling story of a woman's journey to discover her genetic and magical powers, free her compatriots, and change the world with her gifts alongside a man she loves and a man she loves like a brother.

“The old African man took the bones, blood, and quivering flesh of phoenix's book, digested its marrow and defecated a tale of his own. Then he and his oracle of a wife spread this shit far and wide. And their great book deformed the lives of many until the one named onyesonwu came and changed it again. But that is another story.” (Okorafor, Nnedi, The book of Phoenix, Science (PSF 232)).

In the science fiction, The Book of Phoenix is a crystal clear that Block people were not treated equally as human beings like them, because they are developed in all aspects in material life. So they showed their capitalism by exploiting them and their resources and spaces also were captured. Even in present world, the impact of capitalism is seen everywhere in the world. So far it has not been eradicated from the society. That is why natural resources are exploited by the capitalist, even today.

In this battle, African women were raped by the light skinned people for the purpose of destroying their entire race in the African region, abusing women is still continued even in the civilized society around the world. In this story, an affected and discarded women brings the change in the entire society. The woman uses their own genetic and magical powers to win in the battle and frees her own country citizens from all cruel things they faced by the light – skinned exploitators. On the basis of culturism, the whole incidents and its consequences are moved from the analysis of the above two fictions. Nnedi Okorafor wrote this science fiction for her own race. From my view, the author projects herself indirectly in the woman character that saves her own people. Though she is American born African woman, even, she is living and working there, she raises her voice for the people and place she belonged actually. In the last scene of the fiction confirms clearly that the phoenix departs from New York's tower 7 to a small village in Ghana and back to New York after changing the Society for her own people. It shows the author's will power, concern for the people and determination by raising her voice for the African in her writings.

In the post – apocalyptic fictions of Nnedi Okorafor, Nigerian – American writer, the scenes clearly highlight us colourism by the oppression of the light – skinned Nuru on Okeke. There is a myth about the

great book, suffering punishment by the Goddess Ani for their exuberant creativity in producing technology. In the second fiction, the story about an accelerated woman, who travels to Africa, and change the entire humanity's future. It is a surprising and shocking by reading such incidents have occurred and the terms used in the fictions are really horrible.

It is clearly shown that the people belong to the two communities have a lack of education and democracy based government. The origin and the solution of their crisis have been on their myth basis. And, capitalism has played a major role to keep them ignorant. Even, natural resources have been exploited by the ruling people. Ultimately, their cultures have tied them blindly. So, culturism is the root cause of Racial discrimination in numerous forms. It could be come over through leading democratic government and offering a quality of education to the children belong to those communities.

WORKS CITED

- Okorafor, Nnedi, *Who Fears Death*. Penguin Publications, 2010. Print.
- Okorafor, Nnedi, *The book of Phoenix*, Hodder Publications. 2015. Print