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Sarah Cerveny, BEd

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1 INTRODUCTION

Afrofuturism is a cultural movement whose origin dates back to the 1960s' and 1970s' North American Black Arts Movement, which not only included authors but also musicians from different genres, ranging from jazz to R&B and hip hop (Anderson and Jones ix). Much research has focused on Afrofuturism, particularly afrofuturistic writings by African American authors such as Octavia E. Butler with her novel *Fledgling* and Samuel Delany with his short story *Aye, and Gomorrah* (Womack; Morris; Colmon). However, researchers in the field of English Literary Studies have failed to recognize the need for a thorough analysis of the role of Afrofuturism in other contexts that deviate from the original North American setting. Consequently, the following master thesis is an initial attempt at closing this gap in this field of research of English Literature.

The aim of this master thesis is to determine the role of Afrofuturism in contemporary British novels. For this purpose, two British novels by two black British authors, namely Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* as well as Tade Thompson's *Rosewater*, have been selected for an in depth analysis. Both novels include features of Afrofuturism to some extent. The analyses of these two British writings will illustrate Malorie Blackman's and Tade Thompson's manner of incorporating Afrofuturism in their novels. Finally, since the question this thesis tries to answer is how Afrofuturism is portrayed in contemporary British novels, the primary focus lies on identifying popular afrofuturistic themes such as racism, feminism and the reclamation and reimagining of the past, present and future of black lives (Dery; Yaszek; Morris; Hollinger).

Apart from the introduction (1) and the conclusion (5), the following master thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter (2) aims at providing a theoretical background about Afrofuturism, which is based on a review of existing literature about this topic. The term Afrofuturism as well as science fiction is defined and a brief overview over the history of science fiction as well as the characteristics and afrofuturistic potential of science fiction are provided. Additionally, the first main chapter outlines the beginnings of Afrofuturism and discusses the African American themes and concerns addressed in Afrofuturism. This theory chapter is subsequently used as the basis for the analyses of the two British novels *Noughts & Crosses* and *Rosewater*.

The second chapter (3) focuses on the analysis of *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman. This novel plays in an alternative twenty-first century universe called Pangaea where black people represent the dominant group and the white population embodies the inferior group. Typical afrofuturistic elements are at the core of the analysis. *Noughts & Crosses* depicts racism in different areas of life, including education, home life, politics, the media and court. Furthermore, the author tries to reclaim and re-imagine the past, present and future of black people in her novel.

The third chapter (4) discusses the role of Afrofuturism in Tade Thompson's science fiction novel *Rosewater*. The protagonist and former criminal Kaaro is forced to work for a secret agency named S45 in order to help uncover the origin of the alien invasion taking place around the world and to examine the alien biodome in Rosewater and the alien powers of sensitives. The sensitives are the Other created for the purpose of depicting difference and, consequently, racism in the author's work. Tade Thompson reflects upon interracial relationships, scientific racism, internalized racism as well as police violence and corruption. Moreover, the novel depicts the reclamation and the re-imagining of the past, present and future of black people in Africa, particularly Nigeria, and America.

2 AFROFUTURISM

The following chapter presents a theoretical background on Afrofuturism. Since Afrofuturism is a cultural movement that arose predominantly in the context of North America rather than Great Britain (Anderson and Jones ix), the subsequent chapters also focus on an American context rather than a British context. Even though the role of Afrofuturism in British novels is not mentioned in the following chapters, it will be addressed in chapters 3 and 4 during a thorough analysis of the two selected British novels that is based on the information provided in this chapter.

2.1 Defining Afrofuturism

The contemporary cultural movement named Afrofuturism combines the realities of being a black person with possible optimistic futures for blacks (Youngquist 297). According to Kodwo Eshun (*Weiterführende Überlegungen* 63), Afrofuturism is characterized by the creation of counter entries for the reappropriation of history. Moreover, its focus is on the African continent and the African culture around the world.

Science fiction as well as other speculative fiction such as utopian fiction, fantasy or superhero fiction has a great impact on this movement. Additionally, Afrofuturism is influenced by new technological advancements of the digital era whose works may include novels as well as other forms of expression such as paintings, music, comics, and graffiti (Dery 182-183; Dean and Andrews 2). Kodwo Eshun (*Further Considerations* 291) argues that the continent Africa is the focus of Afrofuturism and the body of predictions of the future whereby the metaphor of Africa as a pessimistic dystopia is threatened by a positive looking forecast of a certain future for this continent.

Afrofuturism ascended from the belief that the development of new technologies would result in a world were race, gender, national origin and the human body would no longer be of concern, transforming the world into a better place without discrimination and marginalization. This view of a potential future world that is regularly addressed in science fiction writings of authors of white skin color is quite problematic, as it implies that differences on the basis of race, for instance, have no place in the future and are, therefore, also not recognized as important issues. In consequence, a counter movement in science fiction developed to tackle this precarious situation. The combination of characteristics of science fiction with the politics of race and belonging focuses on unraveling and relating to the pasts of African Americans and raising awareness of African American history's relation to racial politics in the present (Barber et al. 136-137). Finally, Lisa Yaszek states that Afrofuturism does not only aim at the reclamation of the past but also of the future (Yaszek, *An Afrofuturist Reading* 300, cited in Barber et al. 137).

In order to reclaim the past as well as possible futures, the historical events of African Americans, which include slavery and the resulting forced relocation of black people are, for example, compared to invasions of extraterrestrials also known as aliens and metamorphosis of the human body in afrofuturistic literary texts. Typical elements in these science fiction writings are machines such as robots and cyborgs and space and time travel. Racism and blackness are located at the core of these science fiction texts, which more often than not incorporate either a fairly high number of black characters or they are characterized by a lack of black roles (Barber et al. 137). In addition to these popular topics, figurative meanings appear frequently in afrofuturistic science fiction writings. This entails differentiating between the words that are said and the meaning that lies underneath, in other words, the reader needs to have the ability to read between the lines (Dery 185).

There are many examples of Afrofuturism from music to film and literature. One of several examples of Afrofuturism in music is, for example, Janelle Monáe who represents both herself and her artistic persona Cindi Mayweather (Van Veen 8). In her song *Cold War* from 2010 Cindi Mayweather, who is a robot in a human form, reflects upon a war taking place between "slave and master or robot and human" rather than between countries (Hampton 73). In the refrain of the song the question is repeated whether the goal of the fight is clear, which is to be free and to leave the hardships associated with being a slave behind (Hampton 73). Jean-Pierre Bekolo with his film *Les Saignantes*, which was first released in the year 2005, as well as Wanuri Kahiu's Rumzi published in 2009 are further examples of Afrofuturism in the film industry. Both of these movies confront the common representation of Africa as being backwards and without a possibility of an optimistic future. Mich Nyawalo (209) states that the following questions are raised in *Les Saignantes:*

> How can you make an anticipation [or futuristic] film in a country that has no future? How can you make a horror film in a place where death is a party? How can you make an action film in a country where acting is subversive? How can you make a crime film in a country where investigation is forbidden? (Nyawalo 209)

Jean-Piere Bekolo as well as Wanuri Kahiu create a space in the future for Africans and, thereby, contradict the notion that Africa cannot be characterized by nouns such as "progress" and "modernity" (Nyawalo 210). Moreover, Octavia E. Butler's *Fledgling* from the year 2005 is an example of Afrofuturism in novels. This novel represents a black vampire rather than a white vampire. The vampires in *Fledgling* are confronted with a number of issues in relation to "race, gender, [and] sexual orientation" (Morris 147), which are comparable to those issues experienced by groups of less social status in our society (Morris 147).

A distinction is also made between Afrofuturism in a more traditional sense and Afrofuturism 2.0. While early Afrofuturism refers to the attempt to resist the imagined raceless and genderless future created through new technologies such as the World Wide Web, Afrofuturism 2.0, which developed since the beginning of the twenty-first century, also includes Astro-Blackness (Anderson and Jones vii). Astro-Blackness involves the ability to imagine possible positive futures in the cosmos for a person of color by way of first uncovering a "person's black state of consciousness" (Anderson and Jones vii) that is not marked by the past of African Americans including the paralyzing times of slavery and colonialism (Anderson and Jones vii). Ulti-

mately, the early focus was on determining if there would even be a future for black people whereas more recent developments in Afrofuturism have led to the assumption that race will have an important place in future societies (Yaszek, *Afrofuturism, SF, and the History of the Future* 43).

2.0 in Afrofuturism 2.0 indicates all the technological advancements that arose since the beginning of the twenty-first century, for instance, social media and, therefore, new forms of afrofuturistic representations. Afrofuturism 2.0 is not confined to Web 1.0, which was characterized by only having the function of reading rather than the coexistence of reading and producing content (Anderson and Jones vii-ix). The interest of Afrofuturism before the introduction of Afrofuturism 2.0 was the digital divide as well as sonic, literary and visual texts (Anderson and Jones x). The digital divide is the fact that Afro-American people had less access to technology than white people. However, this changed towards black people also getting in contact with technological advancements and experiencing their potential and, therefore, closing this gap between the two groups. As a result, the notion of a digital divide is challenged by Afrofuturism and by the ability to use technology (Nelson 1). The goal of this equal access to technology was and still is to lower inequality and to broaden the possibilities for people of color (Womack 17-18). In contrast, Afrofuturism 2.0 is concerned with

> the early twenty-first century technogenesis of Black identity reflecting counter histories, hacking and or appropriating the influence of network software, database logic, cultural analytics, deep remixability, neurosciences, enhancement and augmentation, gender fluidity, posthuman possibility, the speculative sphere [and] with transdisciplinary applications […]. (Anderson and Jones x)

Resulting from this view of Afrofuturism, this cultural movement contests the idea of African stereotypes that imply that people of African descent are less developed or primitive, which mostly originate from Western countries such as the United States and European countries. Most futures imagined by white people see Africa as doomed to end up in a catastrophe. While Afrofuturism also aims at the reevaluation of the past, it invents optimistic futures for people of African decent who challenge the futures that are presented to them by the white population (Elia 85).

Before providing a more detailed insight into the history of Afrofuturism and its characteristics as well as typical themes, the following chapter will first be an introduction into science fiction, as afrofuturistic novels are at the same time science fiction writings (Barber et al. 137).

2.2 Science Fiction

Science fiction and its connection to utopia as well as dystopia have been of concern in many current studies of this genre (Milner 89). According to Milner (90) science fiction and utopia are closely related. A utopia is a text that is characterized by the creation of a possible world that is imagined by the author as a response to the predominant social structure they are faced with in the real world. That imagined alternative world follows a separate time and space; however, simulating reality is one of its main characteristics. Thomas More's *Utopia* written in 1516 is the representative text for writing a utopia and taken as an example for arguing for a utopia as a literary genre. Ultimately, a utopian writer is a critic of present societal structures who creates a radical counter world to society in order to challenge predominant power structures. Through this close connection between the real and the imagined, this world is usually detested by society but hope for those who are looking forward to the possibility of a better tomorrow (Fortunati 635).

The opposite of utopia is dystopia. A dystopia can be characterized by the selection of certain elements of the real world and their magnification in the text (Haworth 47). The Cambridge Dictionary describes dystopia as "a very bad or unfair society in which there is a lot of suffering, especially an imaginary society in the future, after something terrible has happened" (The Cambridge Dictionary). *Brave New World* by the author Aldous Huxley is one of the examples of an earlier dystopian novel. It presents scientific developments in an exaggerated optimistic way, which aims at warning society about the power of science and technology (Haworth 46-47).

The following chapter focuses on providing a comprehensive definition of the term science fiction.

2.2.1 A Definition of Science Fiction

Defining science fiction appears to be rather easy when viewing the effortless way in which librarians and bookstore employees organize their shelves, including a section on science fiction. However, not every book containing imagined worlds can automatically be characterized as science fiction since a distinction should be made between these and fantasy novels, for example (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 1-3). Science fiction is a term coined by Hugo Gernsback in the 1920s when he founded the first science fiction magazine called *Amazing Stories*, though science fiction writings predate the

introduction of this term. For example, already Greek epics were concerned with humans who had superhuman powers, journeys to unknown spheres and metamorphosis (Umalkar and Kulkarni 42-43). As becomes apparent from the selection of science fiction texts in the field of English literature for an exhibition about this genre in the British Library in London in 2011, *The Time Machine* from the year 1895 written by Herbert George Wells as well as other texts such as Shelley's *Frankenstein* published in 1980 and Huxley's *Brave New World* from 1932 are important writings of science fiction (Milner 136).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, science fiction is "imaginative fiction based on postulated scientific discoveries or spectacular environmental changes, frequently set in the future or on other planets and involving space or time travel" (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 2). Imaginative fiction can invent a kind of life and world that does not resemble real life such as in realist fiction, which increases its freedom. As mentioned in the definition, scientific discoveries as well as spectacular environmental changes may be space and time travel in science fiction writings. The authors and their imagination are given free rein hereby, since they can incorporate many more elements that belong to these two categories such as cyborgs or alternative universes (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 2-3). The worlds that the authors create through their imaginative writings are oftentimes set in the future and aim at challenging societal changes as well as political, technological and scientific ones (Umalkar and Kulkarni 42). Ultimately, science fiction is based on the fact that a certain idea can be realized due to certain differences between the real and the invented world (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 2-3).

These differences also occur in fairytales, surreal fictions or magic realism, however. The distinction between these genres can be explained when comparing the two novels *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka and *The Jonah Kit* by Ian Watson. In terms of the storyline both novels are concerned with metamorphosis. While the first novel deals with a man transforming into a beetle, the latter is about a man transforming into a whale. Nevertheless, Ian Watson's work is considered science fiction, whereas Franz Kafka's is not. This distinction is made due to one crucial factor that differentiates the two stories. Because of the way *The Jonah Kit* is written, the reader can reconstruct and understand how the change from human to animal is made possible in the story. The transformation is based on science and scientific technological advancements (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 3-5).

This may also be the truth for the second novel by Franz Kafka; however, the reader is not informed about the transformation process since the focus is on portraying the alienation of the former human being. For the readership, there is no reasonable explanation of how anyone can ever be transformed into a beetle, making this event scientifically impossible. In consequence, science fiction is, then, characterized by rationality rather than the supernatural (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 3-5). This rationality is not solely based on science that exists in the real world. Sometimes real scientific principles are used and sometimes certain principles of science are invented in a way that follows human logic (Umalkar and Kulkarni 42).

Another definition of science fiction by Isaac Asimov states that it "can be defined as that branch of literature which deals with the reaction of human beings to changes in science and technology" (Umalkar and Kulkarni 43). Science can be reduced to what is known nowadays under the term, which first emerged in the nineteenth century. Science aims at giving explanations to the various mysteries of the world by way of materialism through experiments that create empirical data against certain theories. In the nineteenth century, science was key for the various technological developments, which, in turn, were the focus of science fiction works in the twentieth century. As a result of this definition, it is often argued that science fiction was only possible from the 1800s onwards. However, science also includes mathematics, biology, and chemistry, which were disciplines that were already practiced many centuries before. Technology is the result of putting the scientific theories into practice for creations useful to society and industry such as tools and machines. While machines can work more or less independently from the human body, tools aid humans in carrying out certain tasks. Consequently, science fiction could have also existed prior to the nineteenth century (Roberts, *The History of SF* 3-9).

In general, it can be said that there is no true consensus about one definition that explains the term science fiction perfectly. Nevertheless, the definitions mentioned in this subsection try to address the most important aspects. The following chapter outlines the history of science fiction.

2.2.2 A Brief History of Science Fiction

Mapping out the beginnings of science fiction is quite difficult, as some believe it to be with the great epics written even before Christ, while other critics suggest that the origins of science fiction date back to the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in

the late eighteenth century (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 47-48). However, there is an agreement over the golden age of science fiction, which occurred between 1940 and 1960 (Roberts, *The History of SF* 195). Most authors during this time were white, male North Americans, which is to say that there are only few records of black science fiction authors (Roberts, *The History of SF* 203).

During the period between 1940 and 1960, it was hard science fiction that was on the rise (Roberts, *The History of SF* 195). Hard science fiction can be defined as follows: “[A] work of sf is hard sf if a relationship to and knowledge of science and technology is central to the work” (Cramer 187). In general, its characteristics as outlined by David Hartwell include that hard science fiction works along the truth-value of statements. Not only does hard science fiction appear to be genuine through making scientific elements believable, but oftentimes real science is used and described as well. Furthermore, hard science fiction writings also include descriptive passages rather than just purely literary ones for the purpose of providing an explanation for certain facts of existence. In addition to these descriptions, the science fiction author depends on a general knowledge of science by the reader. Finally, a didactic element is part of hard science fiction, since hard science fiction authors offer a variety of scientific details in their writings (Hartwell, cited in Cramer 188).

In addition to hard science fiction, the golden age was also marked by what John W. Campbell, a well-known science fiction writer and editor of the science fiction magazine *Astounding*, perceived as being science fiction at the time. He was highly critical about science fiction writings and postulated that these must include real science and later on pseudo-scientific elements such as telepathy, for instance. His stories often evolve around the common plot of superhero against villain and they contain potential future technological advancements and their effects on society and humanity. John W. Campbell also states that before the golden age, science fiction was considered pulp literature that never reached any prestigious status. This has changed in this age through the incorporation of new elements, new ideas, and new machines whereby the man occupies the center stage (Roberts, *The History of SF* 195).

After the golden age, between 1980 and the beginning of the twenty-first century, science fiction magazines were already outdated and most science fiction writings were published in the form of books. Furthermore, the audience changed, as the target group was not restricted to young men anymore. In addition, science fiction

adopted various modes besides the written one, including the visual such as in film, television, and computer games. The most popular film at the time was probably *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. By the end of the twentieth century, science fiction was much more complex to comprehend. Most science fiction authors from the 1920s onwards were not alive anymore and, therefore, the traditional science fiction texts were situated rather in the past than the present or future. Moreover, science fiction failed to imagine the futures that were, then, becoming reality. Through new technological developments such as the Internet in the 1990s, a form of science fiction called Cyberpunk gained popularity, as it addressed the overload of information through the new invention called the Internet by way of incorporating artificial intelligence, for instance (Clute 64-70).

Adam Roberts is of the belief that science fiction will become more and more visually through cinema, television, computer gaming, and comics since the visual is more popular than the written in the twenty-first century. However, a great number of science fiction books with positive reviews is still published every year. In contrast, African science fiction, which does not exist in the history of science fiction from the 1900s, is on the rise. A reason behind this lack in African science fiction may also be the cultural differences, since African cultures are often believed to consider science less trustworthy than their own religious beliefs in spirits and magic. Ultimately, these contradictory discourses between the materialistic and scientific in contrast to the religious and spiritual may have led to a rise in science fiction writings (Roberts, *The History of SF* 343-344).

The following sub-section will focus on describing the characteristics of science fiction and on presenting the potential that science fiction has for people of color.

2.2.3 The Characteristics and Afrofuturistic Potential of Science Fiction

There are various characteristics that help identify a science fiction novel. Darko Suvin marks one of the most important features in science fiction as the Novum. The Novum is something new that supports the notion that a literary writing belongs to science fiction in contrast to any other genre. This distinction can be based on materialism, in other words, a new thing such as a spaceship or time machine as well as on conceptualism, for example, through the creation of a new societal structure (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 6-7, 190-191). The extreme contradiction to what is known

as real aims at enabling the reader to consciously perceive what has always been in front of their eyes in order to provoke critical thinking (Parrinder 4, cited in Roberts, *The History of SF* 1). Hereby, science fiction authors have to master the difficult task of finding the right balance between the Other and the familiar. The ultimate goal of the incorporation of Nova is to address social issues such as race and gender (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 26-28).

Another characteristic of science fiction is the foregrounding of having ideas, which sometimes are plot building mechanisms. Characters, too, may aim at the personification of certain ideas. Furthermore, the plot, characters, and ideas in science fiction writings depend on the use of metaphors, allegories, and symbols. The recurring technologies and science are symbols that represent the fulfilling of wishes, hopes as well as negative feelings of unease, concern and alarm. Aliens and invented realities are metaphors for human hardships (Umalkar and Kulkarni 44).

As mentioned by Umalkar and Kulkarni (40) as well as Dery (192) technology is highly important to science fiction stories. Nowadays technology has become different, as it is more complex. Samuel R. Delany argues that older technology was easily repairable while nowadays there are computer specialists for the job of repairing and dealing with technology. However, sometimes even these cannot handle certain technological problems. In consequence, technology of the twenty-first century can be compared to magic since only a small group of professionals know what magic lies underneath it (Dery 192). Nevertheless, technology and science remain fundamental elements of science fiction. Invented worlds and things are created that operate based on scientifically proven theories that are accepted in the real world (Umalkar and Kulkarni 43-44).

In addition to these characteristics, science fiction often has a didactical objective. While a catastrophe may arise, people are blind to what is to come by not focusing on the developments new technologies or life forms undergo. Consequently, science fiction mirrors long-established myths that usually include a piece of advice or a few words of wisdom (Dery 208). Similarly, science fiction is often perceived as modern mythology whereby science replaces the heroes of the ancient myths such as gods (Umalkar and Kulkarni 44).

By incorporating the characteristics of science fiction, this genre aims at bringing to the surface those events and social conditions that society would prefer to remain in the background such as the influence of new media technology on everyday

lives. According to Dery, in black literature from the twentieth century, the focus lied on making the silence and the intellectual disregard visible (Dery 211). In addition, the potential of science fiction of identifying what is not known yet was highly attractive to black writers. This process led to uncovering their history, their culture and, in consequence, their identity as black people, since contrary to the white population, this was not provided institutionally (Dery 210). Nowadays, African American history is recognized institutionally, for example, through African American history museums in the United States such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington (Will 10). Another example of the acknowledgement of African American history is the Black History Month celebrated in the United States (Henry 88).

Incorporating the unknown and potential futures in science fiction writings influence the reader in that they become more flexible and ready for change. Typical topics are “overpopulation, pollution, ecological imbalance, automation, mind manipulation, transplantation of tissues, travel in space, encounter with aliens, etc.” (Umalkar and Kulkarni 43). The futures that are created provide a space for extrapolation, in other words, for revealing the consequences that scientific and technological advancements can have on the futures of human lives. Even political and social changes in relation to the current reality are anticipated (Umalkar and Kulkarni 44).

In general, it can be argued that the history of African Americans resembles a science fiction story. The history of African Americans in the United States starts already in the fifteenth century with the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Approximately 12.5 million Africans were forced into slavery and transported across the ocean in order to be sold like goods and work under inhuman conditions for North America and the white colonizers. The journey to another continent was very cruel and oftentimes deadly to many passengers. The slaves were crammed closely into boats and had to wear shackles that would harm their skin during the month-long boat ride, which was also highly unsanitary and caused many diseases. After the arrival in North America, race would be the decisive factor for the determination of one’s social status. White people were free and in power simply because of the color of their skin, while black people would be deprived of their freedom for the very same reason, making them out to be the undesirable Other. Finally, many families were also separated during slavery because children of female slaves were sold, making it impossible to have complete knowledge over black lives’ histories and ancestors (El-

liott and Hughes). As can be seen from this brief insight into the history of African Americans, not only did their ancestors experience an alien abduction by being forced into labor by strangers, but they were also paralyzed by a force field created through the immense bigotry and prejudice of their abductees. Additionally, official records on African American history did not reflect reality completely in the twentieth century and often aim at erasing certain historical events. Finally, also technology plays a crucial part in the hardships black people face in their lives. Branding, forcing black people to be sterilized, the Tuskegee experiment but also more recent events such as the use of tasers are only few examples of how black people suffer from technological equipment (Dery 180).

To be more precise, branding was a highly violent practice by slaveholders who branded their slaves with a symbol, which is to say mutilated human bodies, in order to indicate that they were their property similar to the practice of branding animals. This was a custom that dehumanized enslaved black people. However, this is one of the historical events where only little information is available in official records (Keefer 660-662). Another cruel historical event in which African Americans had to suffer is the Tuskegee experiment. The American Social Hygiene Association conducted this study in Alabama from 1932 to 1972. The focus of this study was to see how the disease syphilis develops in black people when untreated. They did not receive treatment because it was presumed that it would not be effective and, therefore, the perfect opportunity arose to uncover more about this widespread disease. The recruitment process for this experiment relied on lies, as many subjects were told that they would receive treatments for various kinds of invented diseases they did not even have such as bad blood and rheumatism. Consequently, black people were subjected to a number of negative experiences in relation to technology (Sharma 255-256).

2.3 The Beginnings of Afrofuturism

The term Afrofuturism was first introduced by the American author Mark Dery, after he had conducted three interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose, which were, then, published in *Flame Wars: Discourse of the Cyberculture* (Avanessian and Moalemi 10; Dery). Samuel R. Delany is a science fiction author working in the field of semiotics, Greg Tate was a cultural critic who wrote for *The Village Voice* and Tricia Rose worked at the New York University as an Assistant

Professor in the field of Africana Studies and History at the time of the interview in the 1990s (Dery 187). Mark Dery (180) states the following when introducing the term Afrofuturism:

> Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture – and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future – might, for want of a better term, be called "Afrofuturism". (Dery 180)

Mark Dery's interview was the starting point of identifying Afrofuturism in novels. Samuel R. Delany proclaims that his writings aim at engaging his readers in dealing with political questions black people need to confront. Their rights were taken from them in the name of a white nation that made black people the victims of life-long oppression. However, overcoming these questions is only possible by way of facing the notion of power that is implied in the term nation. Ultimately, the author states, however, that he does not want to write from any one stance in particular such as Black Nationalism or feminism (Dery 188-189).

A rise in African American novelists is highly important for Samuel R. Delany because he is of the belief that "for [his] people" (Dery 190), which is to say the black population in North America, it is more crucial to have an image of the future than for any other oppressed group of people confronted with prejudices and stereotypes such as the immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Germany or Scandinavia. The reason why there were so little images of the future, though, is that African Americans were often prohibited from investigating their past and to this day it is highly difficult. Records of slaves transported from Africa to America were oftentimes erased. It was illegal for slaves to speak to each other in their vernacular and punishment was quite brutal since they were either beaten or murdered. Furthermore, children were bought like stock. The goal was to eradicate the African culture (Dery 190-191).

Greg Tate is of the opinion that the number of African American writers and readers is not actually as low as many believe in the 1900s. He states that especially in comic-book fandom African Americans account for 25 percent of the readers. Milestone Media is also well known for being founded by black people and for producing comics with black superheroes. This company postulates that 50 percent of their readers is of dark skin color through being black, Asian or Latino. In general, comic books are perceived to have the most potential for attracting black readership (Dery 207-208).

Through the publication of *Afrofuturism* by Alondra Nelson, the term Afrofuturism became academically credible in 2002 (Youngquist 297). Afrofuturism differs from futurism in the following manner. On the one hand, futurism is a European avant-garde movement from World War II onwards. Futurists such as Isaac Asimov aim at attaining power from futuristic creations (Eshun, *Further Considerations* 289, cited in Anderson and Jones ix). On the other hand, Afrofuturism is grounded in the North American Black Arts movement from the 1960s and 1970s, including musicians such as Sun Ra (Anderson and Jones ix). Finally, the combination of these two terms is quite contradictory since futurism has a positive connotation signifying progress while afro has historically been used to refer to African Americans as a primitive culture and people, though this might have been on purpose in order to make afro be associated with progress (Elia 84).

A famous afrofuturistic musician and progenitor of Afrofuturism Sun Ra was born in 1914 in Alabama. As he never felt at home on earth he used his jazz music in order to spread his belief of a better world and life for him and his fellow African Americans who are living in the brutal times of segregation (Youngquist 1-9). From 1953 onward, he became a well renowned musician (Youngquist 23-31). This artist inspired many more after him with his musical creations and imagined futures for black people beyond the request for equality and liberty. Sun Ra was the pioneer of using science fiction in relation with African Americans. While claiming that African Americans are aliens in their own country having been controlled by American societal structures, he saw Afrofuturism as the great answer. Finally, through Sun Ra's work, culture became a popular tool to attempting to change the world in a positive manner rather than politics (Youngquist 1-9, 259).

In the twentieth century, only a small number of African American authors was eager to create science fiction novels (Butler; Samuel R. Delany) even though the main focus of this genre is "the Other – the stranger in a strange land" (Dery 179-180). Presumably, these topics would attract the attention of authors of African American origin. However, only few African American writers are known to compose science fiction works during the end of the twentieth century including Samuel R. Delany, Octavia Butler, Steve Barnes, and Charles Saunders. Perhaps the reasoning behind this development is that science fiction was labeled as a pulp genre (Dery 180). From the 1900s to the 1930s, pulp magazines were magazines available to the general public for a relatively low price due to the fact that the adventure stories were

printed on wood pulp. Moreover, they were easily disregarded again since there was no underlying intention of taking a place in 'real' literature. Nevertheless, the term pulp science fiction would live on with the purpose of identifying with the drive of early science fiction works (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 191-192).

2.4 African-American Themes and Concerns Addressed in Afrofuturism

The following three subchapters discuss African-American themes and concerns focused on in afrofuturistic writing. These include racism and alienation, reclamation and the re-imagining of the past, present and future as well as feminism.

2.4.1 Racism and Alienation

Traditional topics of Afrofuturism include racism and alienation. Samuel R. Delany as well as Octavia Butler are well known authors who incorporate these topics in most of their writings (Dery 208-210). Racism is something that black people encounter almost daily in their lives as African Americans in the United States of America (Dery 212). Both authors use the attribution of superpowers to their characters as a means of improving the present and future lives of black people. Moreover, they comment on the reason behind the fact that black people are marginalized throughout history, which is that their fellow citizens were – some still are – unaware of their cultural and historical background. This is the point where science fiction can be used as the key to reverse this situation (Ciambelli; and Hicks. C., cited in Elia 92).

Audrey Smedley, professor of anthropology at the Virginia Commonwealth University, defines racism as "any action, practice, or belief that reflects the racial worldview – the ideology that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called 'races'" (Smedley). This division into races is, then, used to justify that some races are inferior to others because of physical attributes that people are born with such as skin color. The construction of a superior and inferior race implies certain personality traits as well as assumptions about these races' intelligences and behaviors (Smedley). Furthermore, racism must be distinguished from prejudice. While the former usually suggests that a self-proclaimed superior group such as white people that profit from it is involved, prejudice works on the basis of a person's individual preconception. Ultimately, people of any physical traits, be it black or white people, Indian or Asian people, can act based on their own prejudice; how-

ever, the center of racism is the distinction between a dominant group and an inferior group with less power. People from the dominant group, then, act on the basis of shared prejudice with this group (Dutt 2).

A variety of developments on a legal level took place in order to reduce racism in society. Racism was fought, for example, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations from the year 1948 as well as through the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The United States passed a law in 1964 whose purpose it is to eradicate the obstacles to the African Americans' right to vote. Despite these efforts, racism is an issue that persists to this day (Smedley), for instance, in the form of colorblindness. It is defined as "the declaration that someone simply does not see color, denoting a subtler form of racism than overt racism" (Dutt 2). When colorblind, white people state not seeing color without any intended racist behavior; however, this statement denotes that race is something that is evaluated and described from the power position of white people, which implicitly marks other races as inferior once more (Dutt 2).

In contrast, alienation is a psychological state, as it is described as "indifference and internal division, but also powerlessness and relationlessness with respect to oneself and to a world experienced as indifferent and alien" (Jaeggi 3). Social relationships to other people as well as associations to objects, establishments and oneself are extremely difficult and near impossible. As a result, the world in which this 'alien' lives does not feel like a home because it appears without meaning. The 'alien' does also not believe that it can influence this state and is, as a consequence, marked by passivity. Ultimately, when actions are not perceived as one's own or a person believes to be living outside the human body observing what is being done it is referred to as alienation (Jaeggi 3).

There are a variety of different ways to define alienation. From a linguistic view point, inauthentic and artificial can be used as synonyms of alienation. In the process of alienation, people act according to the beliefs of other people, resulting in them conforming to certain norms. Moreover, alienation can be defined as a "detachment from one's social involvements" (Jaeggi 4-5), which can be family and friends as well as the country of origin and its culture. In consequence of this detachment, there is no feeling of belonging to the 'foreign' society, politics, and establishments. A result of alienation may also be the process of isolating oneself from society and withdrawing to the private sphere (Jaeggi 4-5). Ultimately, alienation is a consequence of the

racist behavior African Americans are subjected to and it is often addressed in afrofuturistic literature (Dery 208-210).

Science Fiction of the twentieth century is concerned with racism because it is a genre that is closely linked to the American context. Since science fiction mostly involves the experience with divergence and finds greatest resonance in American culture, it is not surprising that race and racism are at the core of science fiction literature. Racism is not limited to or simply addressed by introducing a character of black skin color. Blackness is also portrayed through characters such as the space alien and the robot (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 118-134). In 'white' science fiction writings, the aliens may also have dreadlocks and piercings in the face and are used in a stereotypical sense to represent the "white fears of black violence" (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 120). Moreover, the alien often embodies the Other in American society, which constructs difference on the basis of skin color, as aliens, in a traditional sense, are different because of their green, blue or grey skin. Likewise, through alien abductions, which are an allusion to the slave trade, white Americans take up the role of victims instead of oppressors. The alien in afrofuturistic writings has other functions such as showing that difference is not to be feared (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 118-134).

Another feature of afrofuturistic novels is the collapsing of time, which aids the process of addressing the issue of racism and it alludes to Africa and African myths about time. For example, Ishmael Reed often combines future times with ancient ones in his novels (Dery 208). Especially the history of African Americans shows how their status in society depends on time. For example, there is a connection between the years of slavery and racial segregation and its social consequences, which continue to this day and are predominantly seen in the political sphere of the United States of America (Avanessian and Moalemi 10-11; DeIuliis and Lohr 180).

Out of the element of the collapsing of time, the following two key figures have emerged, namely the fugitive and the time traveller. The introduction of these two characters enable the writer to view the present from the future in order to create greater distance to the present (Avanessian and Moalemi 11-12). Moreover, an alien or extraterrestrial perspective can be used to create a space to discuss the history of black people from the times of colonization and slavery to the conditions of today. In this space, the black writers can distance themselves from racial hostility and, there-

by, develop potential futures for the black population (Eshun, *Weiterführende Überlegungen* 59-60).

North America and Europe used racism to legitimize slavery from the 1700s onwards. Africans and African Americans were attributed inhuman characteristics in order to be able to portray the United States as a land of freedom for humans and of democracy and equality, even though slavery was predominant throughout the country. If the slaves were not represented as inhuman, then there would not have been a justification for the slave trade in the United States. Other parts of the world, especially those with a history of colonialism, soon followed to adopt racism in the colonized countries through the discrimination and exploitation of citizens of proclaimed inferior groups (Smedley). Ultimately, racism was a necessary evil that came to be after the creation of slavery in order to justify it (Womack 27).

Barber et al. (137) postulate that "[…] the traumatized black body [is] the ultimate signifier of difference, alien-ness and otherness". Afrofuturistic writings include the metaphor of the alien for the slave, which marks slaves as people or rather things that are not human and are, thus, marginalized (Eshun, *More Brilliant* 113, cited in Elia 85). Likewise, the robot and cyborg are different from the 'normal' inhabitants by being part machine and, consequently, also allusions of Africans or African American lives.

The spaceship is a metaphor of the boats that transported many slaves across the universe, which is to say over the Atlantic Ocean (Elia 85-94). In the twentieth century, Paul Gilroy centered the emerging of the black Atlantic culture in these historical events of slave ships, where black people were positioned in-between two different parts of the world. The Black Atlantic is black culture that is characterized by a combination of different cultures including American and British cultures as well as African and Caribbean cultures. The black peoples' double-consciousness and mixed culture is the result of Blackness not being fixed to one specific location (Gilroy 1-5). Their destination was an unknown land or "alien planet" named America, where the black aliens would be confronted with the trans-Atlantic trade market and the subsequent years of segregation in the United States (Elia 85-94). Finally, this allusion towards the Middle Passage is often also associated not only with the forced relocation of many Africans but also refers to the present day circumstances of migration that are often triggered by war and famine (Mayer 556).

2.4.2 Reclamation and the Re-Imagining of the Past, Present and Future

According to Yaszek, Afrofuturism is concerned with two kinds of reclamations namely the reclamation of the past as well as the reclamation of the future (Yaszek, *Afrofuturism, SF, and the History of the Future* 47). According to Kodwo Eshun (*Further Considerations* 291-292) dominant imagined futures in society have their origins in three pillars, namely science, business, and media. Science makes predictions about the future on the basis of collected numbers, figures, and records of historical events as well as of today. This pillar is interrelated with the power of different corporate businesses which provide financial support for research and whose actions are based on research outcomes. Finally, the media adopts the task of constructing a persuasive narrative around this process and circulates it on a global level. As a result, the futures of African American lives are often equated with a disaster to come. These futures include, for example, predictions on life expectancy of black people or research results about AIDS, which are rather depressing. Afrofuturism works hard at revising these mainstream futures in order to offer a different and more positive alternative for black people (Eshun, *Further Considerations* 291-292, cited in Yaszek, *Afrofuturism, SF, and the History of the Future* 47-48).

Afrofuturism also aims at expanding the tradition of rememory through prolepses and retrospectives (Avanessian and Moalemi 14-15). Rememory is a term introduced by Toni Morrison in her fictional text *Beloved* published in the year 1987 and describes the way in which the problem of re-imagining an unknown past and ancestors of people of color can be solved, since it implies “the interconnectedness of minds, past and present” (Rody 101). In *Beloved*, the protagonist Sethe, once confronted with an unknown girl who declares not knowing anything about even having a past, asks whether this girl “disremember[s] everything” (Morrison 118-119, cited in Rody 101). Later in the novel, Sethe also exclaims the following: “I don’t ‘spect you rememory this, […]” (Morrison 160, Rody 101). Rememory, hereby, transforms memory into a conscious process that intensifies the ability to imagine the past (Rody 101-102). Worshipping these ancestors is often associated with black writings because the intention of these texts lies in recovering some of the once lost African American history (Dery 215). Ultimately, Afrofuturism aims at reiterating mainstream views on black peoples’ history as well as cultural movements in a different manner by changing certain characters or surroundings through the use of real theories and

concepts such as heliocentrism and astronomical maps (Gaskins 30). In consequence, African Americans can liberate themselves from the white gaze and work freely to become visible and develop their own voice in the world, which is often suppressed by views of white people about black people, such as the perceived innate violent behavior of African Americans, which justifies white people's fears about the black marginalized group (DeIuliis and Lohr 176-177).

Through reclaiming the history of futures and re-imagining these, the future also transforms into a space that is going to be black rather than white since society and its survival depends on practices from the African culture (Morris 153). The process of reclamation can involve reshaping certain stereotypes through turning difference into a positive feature (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 126). An example of the reclamation of the history of futures is aliens, who are usually a representation of the Other and depicted as the enemy who will bring about the extinction of the human race in literature written by the dominant group, which are usually people of white skin color (Malmgren 38, cited in Edwards 61). Contrary to alien stories by white authors, afrofuturistic texts from authors such as Octavia Butler present the alien not as a creature that is more dangerous than humans. Quite the opposite is the case; the aliens are interested in living alongside humans in order to participate in their economic and social world, which provokes a discussion about a variety of societal problems such as racism and the process of Othering (Edwards 60-61).

Othering encompasses two different processes, according to Alexander Hinton (6-12), namely "essentializing Others" and "annihilating Others". The former involves the creation of distinctive features such as proclaiming that the Other is animal-like, dirty, and inhuman while the latter suggests destroying the marginalized group in a direct physical manner (Hinton 6-12, cited in Holslag 96). In addition, destroying the Other's social sphere, including the prevention of their participation in society, is a prerequisite for a successful process of Othering. This process is triggered by a social or political disaster that causes a particular group to feel inferior rather than superior. In order to reverse this feeling and to construct a more positive version of Self, which is superior, the Other is created. Ultimately, Othering is the result of an identity crisis (Holslang 96).

In conclusion, re-imagination is a key feature in Afrofuturism that triggers certain expectations and hope. With a lack of hope and a vision for future improvements,

no social change can be achieved but rather social stagnation, resulting in going backwards instead of forward (Womack 42).

2.4.3 Feminism

Even before the rise of this contemporary cultural movement named feminism, women's science fiction literature was increasing from the 1960s onwards. In the beginning, authors such as Ursula Le Guin would keep reproducing the all too well known male protagonist, be it a robot with male features such as extra strength or a superhero. However, with an increase in followers of their writings and, therefore, also by becoming more confident as writers, these first female science fiction authors soon started to incorporate women into their literature (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 93-94). In the twentieth century, a high number of speculative fictions was written by white men incorporating characters in their stories that have the same features namely white and male. However, afrofuturistic authors from the end of the twentieth century onwards such as the black women Octavia E. Butler, Tananarive Due and Nalo Hopkinson but also black male authors such as Samuel Delaney wrote fiction too (Morris 152).

As a result of the increase in female and black writers in science fiction, feminism became a predominant theme in Afrofuturism. According to Hollinger, white, male and middle-class were the characteristics associated with being human in the past, which was the kind of representation that feminism tried to eradicate. Feminist movements aim at equality for women and standing side-by-side with men instead of being the Other, different from men (Hollinger 125-126). Feminism seeks gender equality on various levels, namely in society, economy, and politics, in order to move away from the traditional gender roles women occupied. While men had a place in the public sphere in the nineteenth and even twentieth century, women were banned to their houses and to working in domestic areas by assuming tasks such as cooking and cleaning. In some parts of the world, women still have little to no opportunity to receive a proper education or access to certain jobs because of their physical attributes of being female (Brunell and Burkett).

Feminist movements usually achieved some progress for women such as an initial attempt at closing the gap between the wage inequalities between women and men in the 1960s. However, progress was usually restricted to women of white skin color belonging to the middle class. Black feminism arose as a result of this troubling

situation whereby white women are equated to men as being the people that are oppressing black women. Its focus is on initiating a thought process in white women to acknowledge racism and in black men to consider the issue of gender inequality in society. Even though white and black women have different concerns at times, they also share some objectives such as abortion and maternity leave (Brunell and Burkett).

In the same way that black people are portrayed to be essential to possible futures and cultural practice as well as in the fight of oppression in Afrofuturism, black feminism also places the lives of people of color in the center. Patricia Hill Collins (32) defines black feminism as a "thought [that] affirms, rearticulates, and provides a vehicle for expressing in public a consciousness that quite often already exists" (Collins 32, cited in Morris 153). Likewise, Afrofuturism is characterized by the liberation of possible black futures, and black feminism aims at separating authority and dominance by way of inserting the power of black people. Black feminist thought is, then, a means of rebellion for black people who confront their history of being silenced through speaking up in order to move from an object position towards a subject position. However, the goal is to share the power between the dominant and the marginalized groups rather than replacing one with the other (Morris 153-154).

The connection between Afrofuturism and black feminist thought is referred to as Afrofuturist feminism. This term implies the interrelation between these two movements. Octavia Butler is one of the best-known Afrofuturist feminists. In her afrofuturistic writings, she often thematizes central topics to black feminist theory such as the relation between race, gender and sexuality. Black women are oftentimes protagonists in her works and egalitarianism as well as total equality plays a central role (Morris 154-155). For example, in her novel *Xenogenesis* an alien woman is selected to be the leader of a number of individuals because of the fact that she is a woman. As a result, her femaleness and racial background turn into positive aspects that give her strength and power, which would not be the case in the real world since these features make her part of a minority group (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 136-137).

Feminism in the twenty-first century belongs to the forth wave of feminism and is predominantly concerned with the effects of the internet and fights against sexism in a variety of media productions including advertising, movies, books, and social media. For example, in 2013 a feminist movement urged the social media platform Facebook to take action against "gender-based hate speech", since initially these did

not break Facebook's terms and conditions. The Internet was used as a means to gain support by the public for feminist activism (Munro 22-25).

In addition to the variety of feminist perspectives in Afrofuturism, science fiction has much potential in discussing gender issues and, therefore, afrofuturistic science fiction writings do too. Gender can be defined as personality traits that are associated with different biological sexes. This association is a construction by society and the gender roles are often enacted and, thereby, reproduced by the people of different sexes. Gender is usually represented in science fiction through roles such as the female alien or mother Earth, who intimidate society because of their representation of the abnormal Other. However, gender is also portrayed in a more metaphorical sense in science fiction in which nature reflects femininity and science suggests masculinity. In order to re-imagine gender and achieve equality, science fiction tries to either eliminate the comprehension that being human equals being male or to allocate new qualities to women that differ from current stereotypical female attributes. In consequence, humanity should change to be understood as the combination of being male and female. One gender alone cannot equal humanity as they complement each other (Merrick 241-242).

The character of the alien functions as a means of portraying the kind of different experience women are confronted with in their lives. On the one hand, some science fiction works mark women as different by depicting them as aliens in order to reinforce the social norm that men are perceived as normal and, therefore, more desirable while women vary from this normal state of being human, which is highly sexist. On the other hand, the author can use the alien to illustrate how gender differences create a distinction between them and us and, as a result, a different life experience by being categorized as abnormal. While stereotypes about women are based on certain metaphors, science fiction has the potential to eradicate these metaphors by introducing female aliens in their stories. Likewise, the cyborg, which is a representation of humans interacting with technology, including women, reflects women's lives, thus, deconstructing stereotypical views of what it is to be a woman (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 100-106).

The two chapters that follow this theoretical outline of Afrofuturism and science fiction will include an in-depth analysis of the two British novels *Noughts & Crosses* by the author Malorie Blackman and *Rosewater* by Tade Thompson. Both novels

portray Afrofuturism to some degree, which will be the focus of the subsequent analysis.

3 THE ANALYSIS OF *NOUGHTS & CROSSES* BY MALORIE BLACKMAN

3.1 A BRIEF CONTEXTUALIZATION OF *NOUGHTS & CROSSES*

Noughts & Crosses, which will be the focus of the subsequent analysis, is a young adult fictional dystopia. Malorie Blackman is the author of the *Noughts & Crosses* series, which include *Noughts & Crosses* as well as *Knife Edge*, *Checkmate*, *Double Cross,* and *Crossfire*. Born in London in 1962, she published her first book *Not So Stupid!* in the year 1990 (British Council). Nowadays, almost thirty years later, she has become a very famous and well-known writer not only in Great Britain, her country of origin, but also around the world (British Council). For her number of writings she won a variety of different prestigious awards. For instance, she received the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Award, the Silver Award from the Nestlé Smarties Book Prize in 2004, the Red House Children's Book Award, the Fantastic Fiction Award, the Eleanor Farjeon Award and the OBE, the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, which contribute to her being known throughout many parts of the world (British Council).

Malorie Blackman's success led to her actively thematizing the social issue of race and racism for the first time with her publication of *Noughts & Crosses,* by including characters of black skin color. Her motivation for this series is grounded in politics such as her shock and terror about the case Stephen Lawrence (British Council). The Stephen Lawrence case is about a black teenager who was brutally murdered in the year 1993 by a group of white teenagers while waiting with a friend for the bus in Eltham, London. That friend, Duwayne Brooks, later identified two of the teenagers as suspects for the police investigation. However, nobody was convicted of that crime. A few years later, the police were investigated for racist conduct. Only in 1998 did the Police Commissioner apologize and confess that the murder case and its investigation were not conducted appropriately. Finally, two of the suspects for the murder, namely Gary Dobson and David Norris, were prosecuted for Stephen Lawrence's murder. Ultimately, both were convicted of his murder and sentenced to life in prison in January of 2012 (Roberts, *The Stephen Lawrence Case* 18-20; Jacobs and Boin 74-75). Moreover, Malorie Blackman's personal experiences of

being a black woman in a world dominated by white people motivated her book Noughts & Crosses, including the realization that plasters are made in the color pink for the white population in order to make it near invisible while they highlight injuries on black skin (British Council). The idea for *Noughts & Crosses* arose not only from Malorie Blackman's personal experience with racism but also as an attempt to show that racism is still prevalent in the twenty-first century because of the interplay of certain events in history (Malorie Blackman.co.uk).

Malorie Blackman also talked about *Noughts & Crosses* with Radio Times, as a TV adaptation has been released on March 5th, 2020, which is closely based on her novel. After films such as *Black Panther* and *Hidden Figures*, it is clear that diversity has turned into success rather than a problem for the mainstream film market. As a result of this development, *Noughts & Crosses* also has much potential (Campbell). This book series has contributed to her success tremendously, as she has sold over one million books whereby 300.000 of these were solely from sales of the *Noughts & Crosses* series. She is the first black author of children's books who has accomplished this (Horn 9). Finally, Ellen E. Jones, journalist for The Guardian, suggests that the TV adaptation, which is based on the novel, depicts some of the afrofuturistic elements that were the reason for *Black Panther* to win an Oscar (Jones).

Malorie Blackman's target audience for her over fifty published books includes children and young adults (British Council). *Noughts & Crosses* is also aimed at this audience. It is set in a parallel universe of twenty-first century Great Britain called Pangaea with black Crosses being the dominant group while the white Noughts represent the inferior and oppressed group. The plot of this novel evolves around the tragic love story of the two protagonists Sephy (short for Persephone) Hadley and Callum Ryan McGregor. While Sephy is the Cross daughter of her highly rich parents Jasmine Hadley and the Home Office Minister Kamal Hadley, Callum is the Nought son of Meggie McGregor and Ryan McGregor, who are fairly poor. Though belonging to two different worlds, these two protagonists meet and become friends against all odds. Their first encounter is during early childhood at Meggie McGregor's work place with Sephy's mum being her boss (Blackman).

Several years after the layoff of Mrs. McGregor, Sephy and Callum are still friends, as they stayed in contact even after this incident. This friendship is challenged as Callum starts attending her school, Heathcroft High School, which is a formerly all black school. Many Crosses do not perceive the ending of segregation as

positive. Callum becomes the victim of several racist attacks in school from his classmates and teachers as well as the principle. Once Callum's sister commits suicide and his brother Jude as well as his dad get involved with a terrorist cell named the Liberation Militia everything changes for Callum and his relationship with Sephy. Callum turns from a well-behaved child into a terrorist, who the police are looking for. This development is activated through the imprisonment of Callum's dad Mr. McGregor, his death and the subsequent expulsion of Callum from school (Blackman).

When Sephy comes home from boarding school, she is kidnapped by Callum and his cell and kept as a hostage. During this time, she reconnects with her love Callum, who impregnates her. Once he realizes this, he returns home to find Sephy and is arrested for the kidnapping and presumed rape by her father's security guards. He is also sentenced to death while Sephy is confronted with an impossible decision. Should she give in to her father's extortion and have an abortion in return for Callum's life or not? She decides to keep her child Callie Rose not letting her father win. In the end, she also has to endure the execution of her true love (Blackman).

The analysis of *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman in the subsequent chapters examines in how far this British novel can be considered part of the African American cultural movement of Afrofuturism.

3.2 General Observations about *Noughts & Crosses*

3.2.1 Noughts & Crosses as a Coming of Age Novel

Besides the afrofuturistic elements of *Noughts & Crosses* that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, this novel is also a coming of age novel. A coming of age novel involves a variety of different stages that characters in the novel go through, which lead towards adulthood. In the beginning, the child is sheltered by his or her home and family. Throughout the upbringing of the child, certain events and characters such as the father figure disturb this perfect world. As a result, the child matures into a young adult by declaring his or her own self-discovered values (Buckley, cited in Heineman 23-24).

The protagonist Sephy matures and transforms from a naïve girl into a knowledgeable woman aware of her surroundings. In the prologue, it is mentioned that the Hadley family, presumably because of their social status, does not have hardships.

However, soon it is revealed that this is not true. Through the different perspectives of events, it is clear that Sephy, first unaware of present social issues, particularly for the Nought community, undergoes a process from being an innocent girl blind to social injustice towards maturing into a young woman able to recognize the wrong in the world (Blackman 1-11, 17, 406). In the first chapter, she states that "[n]othing bad could ever happen on a day like today" (Blackman 11), not realizing that any given day is a day that a Nought experiences injustice simply for being a Nought. In the end, however, her eyes are wide open because of all the incidents that happen ever since Callum has started attending her school and all the events that follow. She has established her own set of values on the basis of which she wants to live her life and, therefore, her dad's blackmail to have an abortion is not successful, for instance (Blackman 11, 423, 435, 109).

Sephy and Callum often also just appear to be regular children or, later in life, as being regular teenagers who are in the process of growing up. Their love story, though under much prejudice, develops over time. In the beginning, they explore each other by kissing, whose idea and subsequent execution triggers a response of disgust and revulsion, whereby the author uses humor in order for her readership, who are also young adults, to be amused rather than experience a feeling of repulsion (Blackman 11-12). She does so by comments such as "'Yeak!' […] '… our spit will mix up'" (Blackman 11-12). In their dialogue their innocence becomes quite apparent as can be seen in the following extract:

> 'D'you want me to tilt my head to the left or the right?' I asked, impatiently.
> 'Er . . . which way do girls usually tilt their heads when they're being kissed?' asked Callum.
> 'Does it matter? Besides, how should I know?' I frowned. 'Have I ever kissed a boy before?' (Blackman 12)

Over time, kissing becomes enjoyable and the two lovers eventually even have intercourse and loose their virginity once they are both older already, which is another common theme of growing up (Blackman 13, 222, 374-377).

Oftentimes, it is portrayed that not race but age is a factor of conflict between Callum and Sephy. "'I'm only a year and a bit younger than you, so don't start talking down to me'" (Blackman 20) is what Sephy tells Callum when she, once again, does not understand the hardships a person of white skin color has to endure in this society. His patronizing tone is infuriating for her since she wants nothing more than to understand what the issue is and their difference in age has nothing to do with the

fact that she does not understand. As a result of Sephy's young age, Callum does not even attempt to explain the problem in more detail even though he is only about one and a half years older than she is. Consequently, he is also still a child just like Sephy. This scene is reminiscent of an everyday relationship between siblings or very close friends who have known each other from a very young age and who, as they grow up, see factors such as age difference as highly important because they themselves do not want to be perceived as children any longer but rather young adults who understand adult topics (Blackman 20).

Another typical coming of age topic that is portrayed in the novel is children staying out for too long. While feeling adult through being allowed to roam the city with friends or going to the private beach in this case, it is easy to forget the fact that Sephy, being a child, still has to report to her parents since these are concerned if they do not know about their child's whereabouts (Blackman 21). This is why Callum reminds Sephy that they should "better be getting back – before [her] mum has every police officer in the country searching for [her]" (Blackman 21). This situation also displays a double standard for male and female children in the novel whereby girls have stricter rules to uphold about going out in contrast to boys, who from a stereotypical point of view can fend for themselves while Sephy is imposed the role of the damsel in distress who needs a savior (Blackman 21).

3.2.2 Sephy's Confrontation with Alcohol Abuse

A predominant topic in this novel is also alcoholism and how children live or endure living in a household where a parent is an alcoholic. Sephy's mother's alcoholism takes a psychological toll on Sephy as well as her sister Minerva. Though they are both still children, her mother behaves more like a child than they do. She has mood swings that even result in increased violent behavior such as when she grabs Sephy's arm hard because she has not come home in time. In addition, her mother's alcoholic state changes Sephy's behavior in a way that makes her fear to speak up and think critically (Blackman 23-24). Her mother once even prohibits her from expressing her thoughts and from questioning her mother's actions by saying the following: "'[…] [S]top asking so many questions'" (Blackman 23-24). Overtime, Sephy starts drinking her problems away just like her mother does. One of the results of her mother's alcoholism is the feeling of not being important because alcohol is more important to her mother and the feeling of helplessness due to her inability to change

anything about her mother's disease (Blackman 201, 120-121, 185). The author reflects upon the fact that children of alcoholics have to be highly resilient in order to not be affected negatively by their parents' lifestyle because of them still being "immature and vulnerable" (Park and Schepp 1222). Studies have shown that children of parents who suffer from alcohol abuse may be more likely to develop depression resulting from low self-esteem than children of non-alcoholics, for example (Park and Schepp 1222-1223).

3.2.3 A Didactical Goal in Noughts & Crosses

The author has a didactic goal, which is questioning what kind of power the media has in constructing a certain reality. For example, when a Nought is accused of a crime, there is always an emphasize on being a Nought while a Cross is never explicitly stated as being a Cross criminal. As a result, a Nought is associated with negative attributes while a Cross is not (Blackman 87). By having Lola recite that all Noughts are criminals and that "[t]he news doesn't lie" (Blackman 79), Malorie Blackman portrays the power of the media in the novel and provokes the reader in examining the truth-value of this statement, as the Nought perspective is often evidence that the contrary is the case. Overgeneralization is also a means to achieve this objective. Lola states, for instance, that "they all belong to the Liberation Militia" (Blackman 78) meaning, of course, all Noughts. However, it is clear that not all white people of the world are part of that terrorist cell located in Pangaea. This would be highly unlikely (Blackman 78-79).

3.3 Racism in Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses*

Racism is the most prominent theme in Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* and a popular topic in afrofuturistic writings. The author writes about Callum's hardships as well as his family's racist experiences and those of other Noughts. These experiences are closely linked to real life racism from the past to the present that remains invisible to many white people or is simply ignored. The social domains where racist behavior and attitudes are observed include education, family life and relationships, politics and the media as well as juridical institutions. As a result, racism and its effects are made visible to the target audience (Blackman; Dery 208-210).

Language is a highly powerful tool in this novel to represent racism. This starts already by the way Noughts and Crosses is spelled throughout this book. Cross or Crosses is always capitalized whereas Nought is always written in lower case letters. This differentiation in spelling implies the social hierarchy and status of these two groups since the Crosses belong to the dominant group and the Noughts are the marginalized group oppressed by the Crosses (Blackman 2; Reichl 214). Furthermore, both parties have rude curse words for one another. While the Noughts also refer to Crosses as “daggers” (Blackman 26), Crosses insult Noughts by calling them “blankers” (Blackman 51) similar to the insulting word *negro* for people of color in our world (Blackman 26, 51). *Negro* was used for addressing people of African decent from the times of colonialism to the middle of the twentieth century when it was deemed a racist insult. The word signifies black in the Spanish language (Agyemang et al. 1016).

A dagger is actually a sharp instrument, which is used as a weapon to hurt people. In consequence, the insult is highly fitting as it refers to the fact that Crosses hurt Noughts either physically or emotionally through their racist behavior. This is, of course, a reference that the black oppressors do not want to be associated with because it reveals their inhumane behavior and this could awaken a process in which the dominant group starts questioning existing societal structures that could threaten life as they know it. Blanker is insulting to Noughts because it implies that Noughts are blank, which is to say that they are not intelligent or do not have emotions. They are reduced to being animals without human qualities. The relation between Noughts and blanker is similar to Blacks and Negroes, as the term *nought* means zero or nothing, which creates a close link between the two expressions (Walter et al. 970). While calling a Cross a dagger has negative effects on the insulter because of being a Nought and belonging to the inferior group, Crosses do not have to fear any consequences that would affect them negatively when insulting a Nought by calling him or her blanker due to their dominant position in society. In addition, blanker refers to innate characteristics of Noughts while dagger alludes to behavior that is learned. In this manner, these two insults differ in the way they are perceived and acted upon (Blackman 50-51).

Meggie McGregor is often confronted with certain power relations and their negative consequences due to racism prevalent in society. These are already visible from the way she and her employer Mrs. Hadley address each other. While Meggie’s

boss claims that they are “such good friends” (Blackman 1), an outsider soon realizes that friendship is not the correct word for their relationship, as it would imply trust, equality as well as respect, which are the features that distinguish friends from mere acquaintances (Berger et al.). Equality is definitely not given in their relationship since Meggie calls her employer “Mrs Hadley” (Blackman 1), which is a highly formal manner of speaking to a friend. Likewise, Mrs. Hadley addresses Meggie McGregor by her first name, which is rather informal. Ultimately, this is how their status and the type of relationship they really have is made visible. Mrs. Hadley belongs to the dominant group and Meggie to the inferior group due to the social status that their skin color affords them. Moreover, they have a work relationship whereby Mrs. Hadley is the one in power because she is paying Meggie’s salary, which automatically makes her a person of high authority, and Meggie is the person that needs to uphold a respectful tone and demeanor in order to keep her employment as a nanny (Blackman 1).

Silence is the way in which Noughts in that world live because of the constant fear of punishment whether through violence, layoffs or detentions. This behavior shows how their oppressors paralyze Noughts. The reason why Sarah Pike, Mrs. Hadley’s Nought secretary, never befriends Meggie McGregor, for instance, is fear (Blackman 3). Likewise, silence is a way to confront the fear of saying something wrong, as when Meggie hides her dreams of a world in which Sephy and Callum will always stay the kind of friends they are at primary school age when talking to Mr. Hadley. Already his facial expression and tone make it evident that only the implication of that relationship would bring about trouble. As a result, Meggie has adopted the skill of quick thinking, which she shows when she changes from talking about her hopes and dreams towards a platonic conversation about having their children never grow up (Blackman 3). Callum is also often paralyzed by being a Nought in a Cross dominated world. He wishes to revenge Sephy’s attack; however, he realizes that he is helpless because he is white and, thus, his punishment would be much more serious than that of a Cross classmate, involving, for example, expulsion (Blackman 112). Over time he realizes that silence will worsen the Noughts’ situation in society because “things that go unsaid soon get forgotten” (Blackman 135). This is the author’s attempt at raising awareness towards the fact that black people should speak up for themselves and their black history (Blackman 135).

Quick thinking did not help Meggie in the instance that should cost her her job. Mr. Hadley was questioning her about the night before and Meggie answered truthfully not knowing that this would be the end of her employment at the Hadley house or any other house since she failed to recognize that Mrs. Hadley used her as an alibi for her affair (Blackman 3-5). This is again a demonstration of Cross power. Mrs. Hadley's subsequently boycotts any chance of further occupation as a nanny in Cross households. This act of revenge is not remotely justified since Meggie did not do anything wrong except tell the truth. Ultimately, in order to survive in the Cross world it is necessary for a Nought to always keep one's guard up as a Nought (Blackman 4-7). Meggie calls this behavior towards Crosses as "walking on egg-shells" (Blackman 4), which may or may not avoid something unpredictable and unfair from happening (Blackman 4-7). According to Audre Lorde, the oppressed minority always "had to be watchers" in order to survive during the times of oppression in America (Lorde 284). Finally, this makes it also clear again that these two women are not real friends because real friends would not exploit one another for their own benefit and retaliate in a way that would influence lives negatively such as Jude's, as his family is not able to afford his education due to his mum's layoff (Blackman 7).

3.3.1 Racism in Education

Malorie Blackman also treats the topic of education and racism. Since in the fictional world of the author there is no free access to education, all families have to pay for the education of their children. This is highly problematic, as it enables the rich Crosses to remain in a dominant position through a higher and more prestigious education while the lower class consisting of Noughts are confronted with the challenge of breaking the vicious circle. However, this is nearly impossible due to their fairly low and often unfair salaries that keeps them in the poor neighborhoods and, consequently, poor schools such as in Meadowview (Blackman 7).

In addition to the difficulties of receiving a proper education, Malorie Blackman discusses the fact that people of color often have to work twice as hard as white people in order to not be reduced to the common racist stereotype of being of less intelligence due to someone's racial origin and to not provide a reason for unjustified racist acts. For example, Callum keeps working on school subjects even after being accepted to Heathcroft High School by way of passing the entrance exam. While Sephy does not understand his actions, living as a privileged black person, Callum justi-

fies his extensive studying for fear of being expelled because he is not good enough in the eyes of his soon to be black teachers. Showing the Crosses that a Nought can also pass this difficult test is the first step towards negating that Noughts are unintelligent (Blackman 16, 43). Though maybe formally accepted, acceptance by other people such as schoolmates and teachers takes much more than just passing an exam. Callum receives a poor grade in History, for instance, even though his work is much better than that of his Cross colleagues. His grade reveals his teacher's racial bias and is rather subjective than objective (Blackman 149).

The High School he attends puts him in a class that is a lower grade than he should be in, which is humiliating for Callum. The justification is that Noughts know less because they work slower in all-Noughts schools (Blackman 16-17). Though true, the reason is that they have less "money or resources" (Blackman 17) for a proper education and during the times of segregation Nought education stopped at age fourteen. Crosses, who want to maintain their superior status in society, could come to the conclusion that Noughts are, indeed, not very intelligent and, therefore, they had to be downgraded. On closer examination, however, the real problem becomes apparent. The rich and poor divide due to skin color renders quality education impossible for Noughts unless they can afford a previously all-black school that provides children with the education that every child would deserve (Blackman 16-17).

Ironically, Sephy states that "[h]e […] seemed so much older, not just in years but in the things he knew and had experienced" (Blackman 20). Those "things" that Sephy cannot quite define are the hardships that she does not know about, being a Cross in a world of Cross power. These hardships that Callum had to endure make him appear more grown up to Sephy. Consequently, sitting in the same class with Sephy and other Crosses of her age is also problematic because he does not share the experiences that his classmates have as Cross children, thus, not feeling a sense of belonging but rather the opposite would be the case (Blackman 20).

In addition to this issue, Noughts are only able to break out of their poverty-stricken lives through the help of the dominant group, which is a quite challenging realization since these are the same people who brought this life upon the white population. For example, Callum only succeeded in his attempt to attend Heathcroft High School because Sephy, a black Cross, helped him study with the study material and knowledge that is unavailable to the poor Noughts (Blackman 18). While a 'normal' reaction would be to be thankful, when asked whether other Noughts had passed the

entrance exam as well, though, he “made it sound like an accusation” (Blackman 18) that Sephy studied with him. Likewise, only through black political power could he even take that exam. It is again a very humiliating situation for Callum that the two-years younger Sephy knows more than him and it raises awareness of the faults in the present educational system. Ultimately, Callum should not have to thank anybody for a privilege that he should have had from birth onwards and that was taken from him by the same people who pretend to right their wrongs (Blackman 18). The author, hereby, alludes to the issue of segregation in Britain’s schools on the basis of race, which continues to this day. Finally, this is a problem in so far that having segregated schools and, therefore, segregated communities leads to anxieties and prejudice and, as a result, racism (The Challenge 4-8).

When Sephy’s dad is questioned about the Liberation Militia on TV and the organization’s involvement in allowing Noughts to attend Heathcroft High School, he immediately says that he was not coerced in agreeing to this demand. This reaction shows how Sephy’s dad does not want to loose his power by admitting that a group of Noughts has succeeded in achieving one of their goals because this would encourage other Noughts to take action in the name of social change (Blackman 58-59). Likewise, he talks about equality in education, which can only be achieved “for those noughts with sufficient aptitude …’” (Blackman 59). First, he fails to recognize that not only aptitude but also money is a reason for many Noughts not to be able to attend former all-black schools. Secondly, his implication is that Noughts are unintelligent and will, therefore, never reach equality of education anyways (Blackman 58-59). Finally, because of their lack of quality education, “a civilized society” (Blackman 59) will never be possible, which is apparently the fault of the Noughts and not of the Crosses (Blackman 58-59).

The novel also questions whether Cross education is the right way to bring about social change. The desire for social change in the novel is portrayed through the introduction of a new initiative by the Pangaean Economic Community to allow Noughts into formerly all-Black schools (Blackman 35-36). On the one hand, Ryan McGregor is eager for his son to attend the new school because he believes that it will change the world and it is a start towards equal rights between Noughts and Crosses (Blackman 29). On the other hand, Callum’s Mum is scared for her son and would prefer a future where Noughts will have “the same opportunities that the Crosses enjoy” (Blackman 29) in education (Blackman 29, 42). This is a valid sug-

gestion, as going to a former all-Cross school will not change the way people perceive Noughts. Quite the contrary is the case. Already existing racist thought in the school has much more potential to be reproduced and lived if the oppressed group is present. This is demonstrated on the first day of school where Noughts are faced with a demonstration against them and not even the headmaster stops his students' racist behavior (Blackman 48-50, 56). Moreover, through the lack of Nought teachers, Callum is prone to feeling like an outsider since he does not have anyone who looks like him except his other three Nought colleagues. As a result, he is not only marginalized by his fellow classmates but also by most of his teachers who live their black power and have double the authority by also being Callum's teachers (Blackman 65, 133).

In the end, the Cross society wins in portraying Noughts as failures through getting rid of them one by one, the last being Callum, who is suspended due to his father's involvement in the Liberation Militia and his subsequent conviction. Crosses are confirmed in their belief that mixing with Noughts will never be successful and, thereby, being in favor of segregation is a valid idea. However, they fail to recognize that the reasons for suspension are not justified. Callum, for instance, is punished for being the son of Ryan McGregor rather than his own actions (Blackman 247).

3.3.2 Colorblindness and Black Privilege in Noughts & Crosses

When Callum is already older and Sephy is still considered a child, she is quite naïve not seeing the faults of the society she lives in. Callum, however, has already recognized in how far this society benefits one group by way of marginalizing the other through the racist behavior he is confronted with (Blackman 15). As a result, he wishes to escape though "[t]his place is like the whole world and the whole world is like this place" (Blackman 15) which is to say that escaping racism is impossible since it is prevalent throughout the world. This realization leads to feelings of frustration and helplessness in Callum (Blackman 15).

On the one hand, Sephy is colorblind, thus, she does not want to understand why living where they live is "so bad" (Blackman 15). Callum tries to explain by stating that evaluating a situation always depends on the point of view. From Sephy's perspective everything is fine, however, from Callum's perspective it is not. A problem is addressed whereby the oppressors want no social change due to their rich lives, while the oppressed are longing for a world where they are not exploited for the

benefit of others. Through Malorie Blackman's selected mode of narration, she has Sephy as well as Callum report on various events as well as their feelings and thoughts towards these, which gives an insight into the lives of the superior and inferior group in *Noughts & Crosses* (Blackman 15).

At the same time, the readership is made aware that they have reversed roles in this novel. Sephy's comment on the fact that she has "never seen a nought in any of [her] mother's magazines" (Blackman 119) alludes to the underrepresentation of minority groups in magazines and other media outlets. This is not an issue for her since she belongs to the dominant represented group (Blackman 119; Covert and Dixon 232-235). However, since magazines pretend to portray reality, an underrepresentation of Noughts in these magazines may lead to them not feeling as though they belong to that world, which marks them as outsiders (Covert and Dixon 236). As a result of a change of perspectives, the readers can empathize with living as a person of lower social status, for example, for being – in this case – of white skin color. Ultimately, this could bring about change in the minds of the readers, thus, maybe also reducing racist thought and behavior (Blackman).

On the other hand, Sephy does make a distinction between the races in different situations. For example, she asks Callum after their kiss if he has ever kissed "any other girl" (Blackman 14). While Callum's response is that he has not, she confirms by first asking if he has ever kissed a Cross girl and later on if he has ever kissed a Nought girl, as though "other girl[s]" would not include both races (Blackman 14). In addition, she yells "'STOP IT! YOU'RE ALL BEHAVING LIKE ANIMALS' […] 'WORSE THAN ANIMALS – LIKE BLANKERS!'" (Blackman 50) when she tries to stop the demonstration on the first day of school. Through this spontaneous exclamation, she reinforces that Noughts are not like animals but even inferior to animals and, thereby, justifying the concept of racism prevalent in society. She did not think about the aftereffect of her racist words such as that she insulted her dear friend Callum. Moreover, Sephy pushes away her responsibility for her actions and claims that she "[doesn't] quite understand what [she's] done" (Blackman 51) because of the positive outcome of stopping the riot. In consequence, she has already learned racism through the society she is surrounded by daily. However, she is unaware of these circumstances and has yet to learn about the power of her words that help reproduce and maintain racism in the Pangaean society. Finally, these words may have

upset Callum even more than if Sephy would have hurt him physically (Blackman 50-51).

The author also thematizes white privilege or rather black privilege in the parallel universe. White privilege involves having "greater access to power and resources than people of color" (Kendall 1). This advantage due to belonging to the 'right kind' of race, which is to say the dominant white group, however, is perceived as normal and not out of the ordinary, as presumably everybody has these privileges (Kendall 1). That this is not the case is shown in various instances. For example, Sephy Hadley is unaware that there are no white plasters for the white minority group but only brown plasters that hide injuries on black people (Blackman 67-68). Through Sephy's ignorance, her statement that "'[t]hat plaster's a bit noticeable'" (Blackman 67) is quite impolite and highlights her power position (Blackman 67-68). Furthermore, Sephy is also not aware of her white privilege in education. She has free access to any school she wishes to attend, while Callum is only able to attend her school because an initiative to stop segregation in schools allowed him to take an entrance exam for a former all-black school. Also she is unaware of her advantage in terms of punishment, as she is "puzzled" that Callum already fears being "kick[ed] […] out" because of a lack of knowledge whereas she does not need to fear such drastic measures due to her dominant position (Blackman 16).

All the privilege in the world, however, is not necessarily a guaranty for happiness. Sephy has everything including a big house with "seven bedrooms and five reception rooms for four people" (Blackman 22). Nevertheless, she is unhappy because home does not feel like home due to the cold atmosphere of her house and her family, who never enjoys and appreciates what they have and rather withdraw than participate in a real family life. Callum's home is a home away from home for her, as she remembers the positive atmosphere in his house, though she is not welcome there anymore. While Sephy believes the reason to be Callum's sister, the true motive is that inviting her to his place could get him and his family into trouble. After all, Sephy's mother has retaliated before and she would not think twice to do the same if she found out that Sephy spends time with a Nought. She would not approve since she would fear that this would become public and shed a bad light on the whole family. As a consequence, Sephy has no other choice than to retreat to her 'palace' and family who is happy on the outside but quite sad and lonely from within (Blackman 21-22, 35).

3.3.3 Police Brutality and Racial Bias

Another domain in which racism is prevalent is the police and other juridical institutions. The first instance of police brutality as a result of racial bias is reflected during the demonstration on the first day of school. Even though the police's job is to protect all citizens, they fail to protect the four Noughts Julianna, Adam, Ezra, and Callum, who find themselves surrounded by a crowd full of hateful and even violent Crosses who wish "NO BLANKERS IN [THEIR] SCHOOL" (Blackman 48). Despite not actively hurting these four Noughts, they do as much by pretending to do their job but in reality avoiding any kind of protective behavior that would hinder the Noughts from getting hurt. This becomes apparent when Julianna is in need of medical assistance due to a wound on her head inflicted by the protestors (Blackman 48-49).

While the media portrays that the Crosses' behavior was only hostile to "some" (Blackman 62) degree, Callum clarifies by communicating to the reader how the incident was from his perspective. For instance, he was spit at, which is a highly disrespectful action. Moreover, the police officers were only present because of the fear of "nought extremists" (Blackman 62). As a result, the Crosses involvement in this riot is downplayed whereas the Noughts are referred to by highly negatively connoted words such as extremists even though they were the victims in this scenario. This is a way to assure that Noughts will not be perceived as the people who need protection from the animal-like behaving Crosses who would, then, assume the role of criminals (Blackman 62).

The police also have a double standard in terms of people who are allowed to enter Heathcroft High School. Since the riot was covered by a variety of news channels, Callum's dad knows about the incident at school. His son does not return home straight away. As a result, he goes to seek information at school. When he arrives at the school, however, the police tell him that he "had no official business on the premises" (Blackman 55), as though he had to file a formal inquiry with the headmaster Mr. Corsa in order to ask about his son who attends said school. Despite his son being part of the student body now, he does not have the right to ask about the Heathcroft High School's issues and current matters. The police hide behind their uniform and authority in order to justify their racist behavior towards Ryan McGregor (Blackman 55-62).

When visiting Celebration Park, the police confront Callum with racial bias as well. During his first-class train ride to that sight, Callum's encounter with the police is much different than that of the Crosses such as Sephy's. Everyone in the train has to show their ID passes. However, Callum showing his ID pass is not sufficient for the suspicious police officers. Even though Callum's information in hand, they take much time to question him about his name, address, age as well as his reasons for travelling that day. Only through Sephy's influence does he not get falsely accused of a crime such as stealing that train ticket. Callum does not trust these two officers from his first glance at them (Blackman 99-104). Malorie Blackman hereby alludes to the fact that many black people in Britain's society do not have faith in the police; as research has shown, rightfully so. Black people are much more likely to be suspected of a crime than white people and, therefore, much more likely to be stopped by the police and searched either while on foot or in a car. Moreover, the number of times police uses tasers on black people is higher than for the white population indicating that police uses more violent force on blacks (Long and Joseph-Salisbury 199). A result of Callum's distrust and lack of confidence in the police is that he self-restricts himself to certain areas since at stores there is always a chance of a wrongful accusation about stealing an item, for example (Blackman 105).

Callum's family is also faced with increased police violence and corruption. The police does not uphold the data protection laws and identifies Jude as a suspect of the shopping center bombing due to fingerprints from his ID pass, whose information is stored at the server of a Nought hospital (Blackman 208, 227-228). As a result, the police invade Callum's home. Instead of knocking and bringing the family to the precinct for questioning, the police use tear gas, which is a quite extreme measure since only Jude's involvement is proven and the other members of the family remain innocent unless proven otherwise (Blackman 220-221).

Callum, though still sixteen years old, is interrogated without a council or his parents present, which is also questionable. Moreover, the interrogation is taking a psychological toll on Callum, as his basic human needs such as sleep are disregarded. These measures would probably not be taken if the suspect were of black skin color because it would result in a lawsuit for emotional distress or similar actions (Blackman 225-226). The police are looking for a scapegoat and do not fear loosing a case against a Nought because they have less access to proper legal council (Blackman 231). They make Ryan McGregor sign a false confession, which they are

confident about because it does not matter for them which Nought they incarcerate as long as it is a Nought; the public will believe he is the criminal (Blackman 235). The defendant does not stand a chance in court either because the people who are responsible for his sentencing, which is to say the jury and the judge, are all Crosses belonging to the superior group who uphold the racist society they live in. They do not decide on the basis of the facts that they are presented with but rather base their sentencing on the dominant racist stereotype that Noughts are criminals. Ryan McGregor pleading not guilty and his son's testimony, which against all efforts by the prosecutor is verified by a retired Cross (therefore trustworthy) police officer is evidence of that. Throughout the whole trial, it is apparent that the opposition wants to portray Callum as a liar through questioning his given answers. Kelani Adams objects this questioning technique several times. Despite her effort, the jury is still affected by the withdrawn statements in a way that negatively influences Ryan McGregor's outcome (Blackman 256-267, 277-278, 299).

Ryan McGregor is an innocent man sentenced to death, thus, a reflection for the many black people around the world who receive an unfair trial because of their disadvantaged lives due to their skin color (Blackman 278, 284; O'Brian and Parker). In the United States, the possibility of people of African American origin, who have been declared guilty for murdering someone, to be innocent is 50 percent more likely than for white incarcerated murderers. This is also especially true for rape and drug offenses. The latter often a crime invented by the police to assure that a selected black perpetrator is convicted of said crime (O'Brian and Parker). While many innocent prisoners are exonerated and the number of exonerations keeps increasing in the United States, Ryan McGregor remains wrongfully accused in prison and dies there during his attempt to escape in *Noughts & Crosses*, presumably (O'Brian and Parker; Blackman 284-287, 309). Callum believes his father's death is the result of him being a Nought and, therefore, the assumption can be made that one of the officials in the prison has murdered his father, which is another example of the kind of corruption that is prevalent in the justice system (Blackman 310).

The most obvious incident of corruption and racism is Sephy's persistent statement that Callum has not raped her, but him still being convicted of this crime and sentenced to death because her testimony is not allowed in court (Blackman 412, 422). This also mirrors data about the death penalty in American History, which shows that between 1866 and 1945, African Americans were more likely to be sen-

tenced to death for a non-lethal crime such as rape than white Americans. To be more exact, 475 out of the 500 executions in this period because of the crime rape were of African Americans (Allen and Clubb 74).

3.3.4 Interracial Relationships

Malorie Blackman also discusses interracial relationships in her novel. Sephy and Callum become friends when they are still very little. As children, they do not see color yet, which alludes to the fact that racism is not innate but rather developed and learned over time through living in a society that lives racism on a daily basis. In this first scene of Sephy's and Callum's friendship, the author uncouples race from friendship to emphasize the constructedness of the category (Blackman 1).

The notion that friendship between a Nought and a Cross is impossible is deeply inscribed in society. When Callum refers to Sephy as a friend during his father's trial, "someone up in the public gallery started to whisper at that" (Blackman 266) presumably because he must be lying about the fact that a girl from a renowned family would spend time with a perceived low-life Nought like him (Blackman 266).

When Sephy is fifteen already, she states that she wishes that "Callum wasn't a nought" (Blackman 25) because, then, they would not have to hide their friendship. This thought is highly provocative because it implies that the problem is that Callum has white skin color and is, therefore, a Nought, which is to say part of a minority group. However, being of white skin color is a biological trait that cannot be changed because he is born in this way. As a result, rather than wishing for Callum to be of black skin color, their relationship should be the driving force to taking action in changing society in a way that their friendship is not perceived as wrong. The ultimate goal is equality between the two races, which would make their friendship acceptable (Blackman 25).

Once attending Heathcroft High School, Callum insists that Sephy and Callum are not friends in public because he wants to prevent her and himself from getting into trouble (Blackman 53). Nevertheless, she insists on sitting on the 'white' lunch table, which causes Sephy to be punished because she is mixing with another kind. As a result, she is beaten by her black schoolmates because they cannot understand that behavior, which threatens societal power structures (Blackman 68-69, 77). This can be interpreted as a reflection upon the issue of interracial relationships in the real world. Nowadays, mixed race makes up a large number of the racial groups in Great

Britain. However, throughout history this was not always the case, as interracial relations were unacceptable in society. Nevertheless, this did not mean that racial mixing did not take place. In South Shields, Liverpool's Toxteth, Cardiff's Tiger Bay and London's Docklands, for example, interracial partners and families built separate neighborhoods to share their cultures in the years between the 1920s and the 1950s already even though they were confronted with prejudice due to the relationships they kept (Smith). These communities were said to be "dangerous and transgressive, rife with crime, prostitution and gambling" (Smith). No wonder, then, that Heathcroft High School does not want any Cross student to be associated with Noughts and, consequently, these attributes that would reflect negatively on the whole Cross community (Blackman 68-69, 77).

In the twentieth century, the female partners in interracial relations were also characterized by being immoral or belonging to the lower class (Smith). Likewise, Sephy is treated like a Nought, who she shares these character traits with, since Callum is her friend. Sephy's Cross classmates cannot see past Sephy's and Callum's friendship (Blackman 76-77). Consequently, just like her Nought classmates, people bully her by "pointing and whispering" (Blackman 76) behind her back and, ultimately, through violence. They cannot understand why a Cross would keep the company of a Nought who "smell[s] funny", "eat[s] peculiar foods" and are not "friends with soap and water" (Blackman 77). This is a threat that should warn her about ever mixing with 'that' kind again, which is assigned the stereotypes of black people such as being dirty and primitive (Blackman 76-77; Hooks 120).

In this parallel universe, a love affair between a Nought and a Cross is forbidden by the law. This becomes apparent through Sephy's thoughts during the intercourse with Callum where she states that this is "[a]gainst the law" and "forbidden" (Blackman 376). After Sephy's escape from the kidnappers, the public is informed about her pregnancy, which is assumed to be the result of her having been raped (Blackman 403). Even though she insists that they have had sex out of her own free will, everyone else, particularly her father, insists that it has not been. He wants to force an abortion on his daughter (Blackman 405). Reasons for her father's behavior may include that children of interracial couples were perceived as abominations and, therefore, not accepted in society, presumably because "loving, stable families" would never be possible for these children due to who their parents are. In twentieth century Great Britain, there was also an attempt at introducing anti-miscegenation

laws such as in North America and South Africa because the government's advice to avoid marriage with black people, for instance, failed to be recognized by British women (Smith). In consequence, Kamal Hadley is worried about his image and public standing (Blackman 405).

In the 1930s, this notion that mixed race children were dangerous also spread through the high number of members of the British Eugenics Society. They conducted studies to test the connection between physical traits such as skin color and intellectuality but also supported the idea of sterilization of these children at birth in order to avoid the spreading of the mixed race. Families of mixed race were faced with further hardships that came from the government such as curfews, identification at all times and police monitoring through regular reports (Smith).

3.3.5 Radicalization as a Result of Racism and Its Representation in the Media

Meggie McGregor has a strong will and character and does not give in to the feeling of frustration. For instance, she even begs for her job back at the Hadley house after she is fired, which is highly humiliating and degrading, as it is a sign of submission and also a confirmation for Mrs. Hadley that she is in the right with the action she has taken (Blackman 6-8). Her son Jude and her husband Ryan, however, do not have the strength to do nothing and the death of their sister and daughter is decisive for them joining the Liberation Militia (Blackman 167, 181, 198). Their frustration over the poor life they are living and the hardships they endure due to racism is the force that leads to their radicalization. It is also the sense of belonging that encourages them to join this organization (Blackman 37, 182,123,192). What they believe to be is "Freedom Fighters" (Blackman 37), which is to say that their goal is equality but they do not see any other way than to use violence in order to be heard and to accomplish this objective (Blackman 37, 182,123,192). Even when Jude questions his involvement with the Liberation Militia, it is too late to change his mind and retreat from this terrorist organization. As a result, the racist society Jude and Ryan live in turns them into terrorists (Blackman 197).

Ryan McGregor's death later on drives Callum to join the Liberation Militia as well. He has experienced first hand that as a Nought he cannot trust the authorities and, therefore, he feels helpless. The Liberation Militia is a way to reclaim control and feel as though he can change the lives of the generations to come because any other way has not been successful (Blackman 312-312). Even Sephy does not believe that

she and her dissident group can achieve total equality from behind the scenes. Public outcry is necessary (Blackman 328-329). Finally, Callum has also found a place where he feels a sense of belonging and where he is not discriminated and underestimated because of the color of his skin (Blackman 318). Nonetheless, he has to give up a lot for this life. He turns from being a driven intelligent boy into a violent one who loses himself in hatred (Blackman 331-335).

Through Kamal Hadley's focus on counter-terrorism and punishment for the crimes of the Liberation Militia, he indirectly marks all Noughts as being violent and dangerous (Blackman 59-60, 195). The only way to catch those who are part of the Liberation Militia, however, is by having a Nought informant, which is quite ironic since he trusts the information of a person that he claims to hate because of his skin color (Blackman 37-38). Similarly, past and present accomplishments in terms of eradicating racism and other forms of discrimination led to believing that racism does not exist anymore. Nevertheless, through measures against terrorism in Great Britain, which started after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, people whose religion is Islam, for example, are becoming the center of attention for these strategies. As a result of generalizations about Muslims that portray them as being criminals and terrorists, fears against 'brown' people with potential Muslim backgrounds arise and, consequently, they become victims of racist behavior. However, obviously not every 'brown' Muslim in the world is an extremist (Patel 3-4).

The media plays a central role in depicting Noughts as being dangerous. Using the attacks of the Liberation Militia, Kamal Hadley states that he will seek justice for any "death or serious injury of even one Cross", which is "a capital crime" (Blackman 59-60). This statement implies that Crosses deserve justice while Noughts do not because they belong to the minority group that is responsible for attacking Crosses. The Crosses are portrayed as the victims while the Noughts are depicted as criminals. As a result, a generalization is made about Noughts, who are characterized as being dangerous terrorists. This is a stereotype that they also assume in many movies (Blackman 194). A constant activation of stereotypical negative views of the oppressed group in the media results not only in the dominant group perceiving the marginalized group through these stereotypes inherent in people's minds but also in the marginalized population identifying with these negative stereotypes (Covert and Dixon 233).

3.3.6 The Psychological Impact of Racism

Racism can have a number of negative psychological effects on its victims. On the day that Meggie McGregor went to ask for her job back, Lynette “disappeared” (Blackman 8). Ever since that day, she only reappears on occasion but mostly living in her own world. Though she was attacked by a group of Noughts because she was in a relation with Jed, a black Cross, this attack is referred to as an accident. An accident would imply that this incident was her fault and not a vicious act of strangers who should be held accountable for their actions. However, from the point of view of the attackers, Sephy’s relationship may have been perceived as a form of betrayal towards Noughts because she is showing affection for her oppressor (Blackman 28).

Through being attacked by her own kind and perhaps because it is referred to as an accident, she can no longer relate to being a Nought. It associates her with the very same people who hurt her and her boyfriend Jed. As a result, she retreats to her private sphere and breaks off from social life, in other words, she alienates herself from the world because her world is not hers anymore, neither her culture, her origin nor her family. In order to escape this awful world where white people attack white people, which causes her to hate herself, she imagines being a person of color because they are in a dominant position and, therefore, safe (Blackman 44-45, 114, 118).

Lynette may also be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) whereby she keeps envisioning the attack, which may be the cause of her disappearing from real life because she cannot bear to relive that incident over and over again (Blackman 44-45, 117). PTSD can be triggered by an extremely violent event such as Lynette’s attack and its symptoms often present as experiencing negative emotions as a consequence of repeatedly remembering that traumatic event (Arterburn, *Chapter One*). Since this kind of behavior should result in treatment by a psychiatrist, Lynette’s psychological state and absence of treatment reflects upon the lack of good health care and also affordable health care for marginalized groups, which lead to psychological problems not being treated (Blackman 169; Priebe et al. 98). It is also an allusion for a more general problem in society that makes mental illness a taboo subject. Finally, the result of untreated PTSD is violence and suicide (Stern 256). Similarly, Lynette commits suicide as a result of her illness, though officially the police render it a “tragic accident” (Blackman 162, 157).

Racism also affects Callum's psyche. Through his constant contact with Sephy, he often questions why he has to live in a run-down house. He feels shame for where he comes from and tries to imagine a different home for himself similar to the one Sephy lives in. This is very dangerous as it can also lead to guilt for not being thankful about what is provided to him by his parents. In addition, being ashamed of his origins may also lead to resentment towards being white. This would result in low self-esteem and self-love (Blackman 25-26). The same is true of his constant fears of "standing out", "being invisible", "seeming too big" or "being to small" (Blackman 93). These insecurities about himself originate from living in a racist society that claims that Crosses are good and Noughts are wrong (Blackman 93).

In the beginning, Callum's father believes that change can be accomplished by working within the established systems. As a result, he expects perfection from his son in school because it is his assumption that a perfect person cannot be discriminated, which increases the kind of expectations he also has for himself. Moreover, he is of the opinion that stereotypes and prejudice about Noughts will be overthrown and revised. Through this strategy, however, Callum is reduced to representing the marginalized group of Noughts and is not seen as an individual anymore, not even by his own father. This causes much pressure for Callum as well as anger towards his father, who imposes this impossible task on him. Consequently, Ryan adds to Callum's stress, which may result in a variety of health issues such as high blood pressure (Blackman 30-31, Rosenbluh 80).

Though changing along the novel, education is first perceived as the corner stone for a good life for Noughts. Callum imagines that a "proper education" equals becoming someone who is appreciated in society (Blackman 33). Afterwards, Callum realizes that even if he ever graduates, he will never be accepted (Blackman 72). This is an allusion towards the fact that racism is not limited to uneducated people but also affects the educated black population. Oftentimes, black people perceive more racism because of their higher education and are, therefore, more likely to feel hopeless and powerless (Vines et al. 105-106). This is the same way Callum feels when he realizes that he cannot do anything to avoid his father's conviction (Blackman 277). These feelings can lead to a variety of physiological issues such as depression and anxiety (Vines et al. 105-106).

3.4 Reclamation and the Re-Imagining of the Past, Present and Future in *Noughts & Crosses*

Since the novel is set in a parallel universe where black people are in power and segregation is still prevalent even after its abolishment, the setting is a way of re-imagining the past, gaining the control that was taken away from black people and turning the oppressors into the oppressed in order to demonstrate that the brutal history of colonialism, slavery, and segregation could have also affected the white population (Smedley; Dery 180). Africa could have had the colonial power and could have colonized North America and Europe. As a result, white people would have been the race deviating from the norm, which is to say from black people. Ultimately, the objective is to show a world where both races have the same abilities because both are human. However, the influencing factor that leads to the forced creation of distinction is the humans' urge for power in *Noughts & Crosses* just like Sephy's dad asserts his power onto white Noughts in order to achieve his political goal of becoming the next Prime Minister (Blackman 35, 132). Moreover, through the multiperspectivity in the novel, whereby Sephy as well as Callum narrate the story, an insight is given into how the world is received by people belonging to the dominant and the inferior group, which opens a gateway to the reader to experience both sides and accounts of events that might be distorted otherwise (Blackman).

Portraying segregation in a twenty-first century universe aims at raising awareness for the invisible and oftentimes ignored segregation taking place in many countries around the world to this day even though segregation has been abolished for many years as well. In America, for example, many cities and states have segregated districts and communities. Residential segregation is quite a big issue since it causes a lack of opportunities for many black people and other ethnic minorities. They may have less access to quality education and, therefore, well-paid jobs. In consequence of their lower income, these communities are characterized by having poor health care and infrastructure (Quick and Kahlenberg). Callum comments on the issue of segregation in relation to education when he states that Noughts "don't have a quarter of the money or resources that your [Cross] schools have" (Blackman 17). Hence, he does not see a way out of the segregated world he lives in because even with the same qualifications due to his education at Heathcroft High School, he will never acquire a job which is not a 'white' job reserved for Noughts (Blackman 72).

However, the author portrays a rich Nought lawyer named Adam Stanhope through whom Malorie Blackman revises Callum's negative imagery of himself in the future, as this lawyer is evidence that Noughts can have a positive future with a prestigious occupation (Blackman 231-231).

Black people are using certain technology in *Noughts & Crosses* through which the digital divide is addressed. For instance, Sephy has her own computer and loudspeakers (Blackman 34). The author demonstrates that black people are also capable of using information and communication technology if they are given the means to purchase them. Moreover, because Callum also has a television at home, the author alludes to the fact that the digital divide is partly a construction by the dominant group that cannot imagine people of the subordinate group to get in contact with this kind of technology (Blackman 43; Nelson 1). Nevertheless, there is still no equal distribution in terms of access to communication technologies in the novel (Blackman 34, 43).

Since Callum has only Cross teachers, he often has to fight to make Noughts' accomplishments in history visible. Heathcroft High School is a former Cross school with Cross teachers and a Cross curriculum. This becomes apparent when only black scientists are mentioned in the history lesson such as Garrett Morgan, who invented a special kind of gas mask, Dr. Charles Drew, who was the first to create blood banks, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, who pioneered open-heart surgery, Matthew Henson who was the first to explore the Arctic region and, finally, the inventor Elijah J. McCoy. In order to change this one sided view on history, Callum mentions other white pioneers including Robert Peary (Blackman 128-131). Not only does the author hereby emphasize certain black people who have always been neglected in national curricula but she also underlines the issue that official records need to be revised in order to include not just history from the perspective of white people but also from the perspective of the black population (Campbell). It is a way of reclaiming the past by way of honoring those who have been marginalized in the name of maintaining the stereotype of the simple, primitive black person that is used to justify racism (Elia 85).

The author reclaims the past of slavery by describing in how far Noughts are treated like animals at the execution of Callum's dad. In the times of slavery, black people were also equated to being animals in order to justify their exploitation as slave workers (Smedley). While the Crosses can take a comfortable seating position, the Noughts "[are] penned in and [have] to stand up like cattle" and they "[are] herded

in through a side gate" (Blackman 289). Moreover, the Noughts are also "scanned and searched" (Blackman 289). Ultimately, Malorie Blackman not only portrays the disrespect black slaves and black people during the times of segregation were treated with but also imagines that black people were not the victims of these racist acts because the Crosses are not met with this kind of precautions (Blackman 289; Smedley).

Internalized racism and color caste systems are thematized in *Noughts & Crosses* in order to portray a part of history, which white people erased to avoid claiming responsibility for their actions. In the nineteenth century, many white oppressors behaved differently towards lighter-skinned black people than darker-skinned black people (Hooks 120). As a result, color-caste systems formed whereby "the lighter one's skin the greater one's individual social value" (Hooks 120). This is depicted through the following statement by Callum's father who makes a distinction between being black, brown and white as follows: "'If you're black, that's where it's at. If you're brown, stick around. If you're white, say goodnight'" (Blackman 128). In other words, if you are darker or beige such as the mixed-race history teacher Mr. Jason, you are not relegated to the margins but may have the opportunity to live and be accepted as a privileged Cross. Nevertheless, this teacher lives in constant fear of being associated with being a Nought (Blackman 128, 136, 151). Because of the advantage through having darker skin, Callum even dreams about having his skin artificially made darker (Blackman 167). Ultimately, the author hereby reclaims black people's history and raises awareness on the white population's involvement in creating the color-caste systems, which is often negated (Hooks 120).

The culture of the subordinate group has mostly disappeared in the novel. The Noughts do not even have their own holiday but celebrate a holiday called Crossmas much like Christmas in our society. Through marking it as a Cross festivity, Noughts are excluded from it and there is no shared culture. They have to adopt the culture of the dominant group and, thereby, lose their own. This part of the narrative raises awareness towards African American history whereby Africans were banned from practicing their own culture and punished for it by their slaveholders (Blackman 180; Dery 190-191).

Meggie McGregor is one of the few characters through which the author Malorie Blackman tries to imagine a positive future for black people and other inferior groups (Blackman 2). While watching her son and Sephy play in the Hadley estate,

she hopes that “things would be different for them … Better” (Blackman 2). Though not very specific on how this better life would look like, she believes that a relationship between Callum and Sephy could set this progress into motion. At the same time, the statement that Ryan McGregor’s fantasies about a deadly virus for Crosses or a violent uprising would always remain a dream may be an allusion towards the author’s believe that violence is never the answer not even for changing potential black futures for the better (Blackman 2-3).

Callum imagines humans getting in contact with aliens at some point in the future. In addition, he talks about Maths being the language of choice in order to talk to each other. Callum uses this metaphor of alien contact in order to open Sephy’s eyes for diverse cultures and the possibility for a better future where there is no more distinction between Noughts and Crosses but rather total equality where difference is appreciated (Blackman 19). However, Sephy does not want to hear this because it implies that there is a distinction between “*Us* noughts and *you* Crosses” (Blackman 19) at present times, which is a reality that Sephy would like to remain hidden in order to not feel guilty about all the benefits she has through being a person of color in this racist society. At the same time, it emphasizes the fact that racism still exists in the twenty-first century parallel universe and it is not as easy as saying that it does not in order to reverse this status (Blackman 19). This is reflected in the following dialogue between Callum and Sephy:

> ‘Maybe we are in different places . . .’
> ‘No, we aren’t. Not if we don’t want to be, we aren’t.’ I willed Callum to look at me.
> ‘I wish it was that simple.’ (Blackman 19)

The author, hereby, contests the idea of a raceless future (Anderson and Jones vii).

Kamal Hadley’s political opponent Minister Pelango is also an important character used to verbalize society’s faults to change it and to make sure that a future can even be possible for Noughts and Crosses alike (Blackman 61). He exclaims that it is his “duty to drag them [this government including Mr. Hadley] into the present or none of us – noughts or Crosses – will have a decent future” (Blackman 61). In other words, a future is only imaginable when the past is left in the past. This means that the power-stricken black Crosses need to let their belief go that segregation and racism is the only way to live because another reality would have a negative impact on the black population. Quite the contrary is the case. Both parties will have a pessimistic future unless racism becomes part of the past, however, never forgotten. Final-

ly, it is an allusion to not living in a raceless society in reality (Anderson and Jones vii; Blackman 61).

To conclude, it is important to mention that while Malorie Blackman successfully reclaims and reimagines black history through portraying it through the eyes of Callum, for example, there are few instances where she imagines an optimistic future for black people (Blackman 43, 132, 231-238). Through the horrific end of Callum's and Sephy's story, the author emphasizes that the future lies in the realization that it does not matter who is in power because either way it will result in tragedy. Moreover, it becomes apparent race, culture or ethnicity is not the issue but rather social processes. The ultimate goal to secure a civilized society is total equality through the appreciation of difference (Blackman 435). The birth of Callum's and Sephy's child and her birth announcement on the very last page of the novel show how this equality might enter society. This child, Callie Rose, is both white and black being a mixed-racial girl from both a white and a black parent. Callie Rose signifies hope for the future where race becomes less important because one cannot make a clear-cut distinction between the two races due to interracial relationships that change society (Blackman 437).

3.5 *Noughts & Crosses* from a Feminist Perspective

Malorie Blackman assigns men and women in her novel highly traditional gender roles no matter their race. In the Hadley family, Mrs. Hadley stays at home while her husband goes off to work and earns money. Meggie McGregor is also assigned the role of the housewife who is responsible for cooking and cleaning, however, not only in her own home but also at work as a nanny taking care of Mrs. Hadley's children in addition to her own. As a result, Mrs. Hadley does not actually occupy the tasks associated with a housewife though she does delegate them to her staff and is confined to her home. In some way, Meggie McGregor has more freedom as a woman in this society by being free to leave the house to go to work. Nevertheless, she basically has to handle two extremely hard jobs while her husband, for instance, only has to go to work and does not help with household chores. Moreover, she is still exploited through working for a low salary (Blackman 1, 27, 57). As a result, the fight for gender equality means two different things for Mrs. Hadley and Meggie McGregor since the latter has to open not only her husband's eyes towards gender inequality but also those of her female oppressors who need to realize that life as a woman is distinct for

Noughts and for Crosses. An exception to the assignment of typical gender roles is Kelani Adams, who is a successful female black lawyer (Blackman 242).

Violence against women is also thematized in Malorie Blackman's novel. Mr. Hadley, for instance, slaps his wife for lying and accusing his wife of having an affair. Though maybe the first time, she just accepts his violent behavior and blames Meggie in order to assert her power. She also reclaims control by way of firing Meggie (Blackman 4-6). Instead of joining forces to prevent this kind of behavior because they are both women who wish gender equality, Mrs. Hadley focuses on the way they are different and, as a result, takes those kinds of actions that prevent progress for all women in the novel. This is an example for why there is a distinction between feminism and black feminism or rather white feminism in *Noughts & Crosses*, as Nought women have to fight not only male power but also female black power.

Another example for thematizing feminism is the portrayal of a patriarchal society whereby men have most of the power while women do not (Golash-Boza et al. 1741-1759). This is observed not only in the public sphere through a lack of women in powerful positions and where Mr. Hadley seeks to become Prime Minister but also in the private sphere. In Sephy's and her dad's relationship it is evident that her dad has all the power in the family and dictates what is done. As a result, Sephy confronts him with respect but also fears him sometimes because of his status in the family and society, which is a privilege he has due to being male. When Sephy accidentally observes her father talking to his informant, he notices her and, consequently, she is afraid of his punishment even though he is the one with illegal business (Blackman 35, 37-40). Once going back to her room she walks "carefully careless", as though she is expecting him to punish her at any moment (Blackman 40). In addition, Sephy's mum also perceives it as her and her families "duty" to support her husband even if she does not accept his opinion or actions (Blackman 291). Ultimately, portraying this kind of society reflects upon a problem that is still prevalent, which becomes apparent when looking at how many females occupy executive power positions in their countries. Since 1960, the number of women in power, as prime minister or president, has never reached above 18 in UN countries, thus, a fairly low number, as there are 193 countries belonging to the United Nations (Statista).

Abortion is also an important topic in *Noughts & Crosses*. While abortion should be a personal decision taken by the two involved parties, Kamal Hadley believes that he can blackmail his daughter into aborting her child. He trusts in his pow-

er as the head of the family and also as an influential male politician of the state. He does not expect that Sephy finds the strength to speak up for herself and her baby. His argument for not being able to make her own decisions is that she cannot focus while under the influence of the hormones released during her pregnancy (Blackman 405-406). Feminists' views on abortion, however, focus on the fact that every woman is responsible for her own body and can choose to do with it as they see fit; in other words, they should be in control over whether to have an abortion or not. This is not an issue that can be dictated from above such as from Sephy's dad. It is an allusion to many feminist protests against anti-abortion policies that prevent a woman from living independently (Markowitz 1).

Finally, as can be seen from these examples, white women and black women sometimes share certain feminist goals such as the right to decide for or against an abortion in *Noughts & Crosses* (Blackman 405-406). However, other times, the oppressed black female population has to engage in a feminist fight that differs from those of the dominant white female group in *Noughts & Crosses* (Blackman 4-6). The following chapter will focus on an in-depth analysis of the science fiction novel *Rosewater* by Tade Thompson.

4 THE ANALYSIS OF *ROSEWATER* BY TADE THOMPSON

4.1 A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF *ROSEWATER*

Tade Thompson is the author of *The Wormwood Trilogy*, which includes *Rosewater*, *The Rosewater Insurrection* as well as *The Rosewater Redemption* (Nussbaum). The author received the Arthur C. Clarke award, which is a prestigious literature award created by Arthur C. Clarke for the promotion of science fiction in Great Britain, for the first novel of this trilogy in the year 2019 (Nussbaum). In addition, he won two Nommo Awards for African Speculative Fiction for *Rosewater* in 2017 as well as *The Murders of Molly Southbourne* in 2018. *Making Wolf*, which is his first novel, was published in 2015 and even in the beginning his work was already highly appreciated through winning the Kitschies Golden Tentacle Award (Babelio.com). Finally, he was already nominated five times for the British Science Fiction Association Awards for novels such as *Rosewater*, *The Rosewater Insurrection*, and *The Apologists*, though he never won (Kelly). Tade Thompson was born in London (Babelio.com). However, Tade Thompson once stated in an interview that he feels as though he is "as much

English as [he is] Yoruba" (Ryman) and some of his work is even concerned with his personal British life (Ryman). Nowadays, he calls the south of England his home, where he writes science fiction, fantasy and horror stories (Babelio.com).

One of these science fiction writings is *Rosewater.* This novel is set in Nigeria in the year 2066. Rosewater is a town that emerged after the first alien settlers arrived at this place including Anthony Salermo also known as Wormwood, the head of the alien invasion on Earth. The alien occupies this human body to infiltrate the Earth and to see if his kind can inhabit this new planet. Because of several attacks by the government, Wormwood raises a wall that forms a dome around their inhabited land. Later on, the world learns that the dome opens once a year in order to heal people from illnesses, even though the government tries to hide this fact as long as possible. As a result, Rosewater is confronted with a stream of immigrants from all over the world who come to be healed while many stay permanently because of religious beliefs and the like. Sometimes healings go wrong and reanimates emerge whose bodies are healed but souls are not (Thompson).

The protagonist Kaaro Goodhead lives a double-life working as a contractor for the Integrity Bank and at the same time as a secret agent for the S45, which is a secret government agency that is also investigating the dome and the alien invasion. At the Integrity Bank, Kaaro is responsible for fending off hackers, which is to say wild sensitives, through reading classics and inserting additional information into the xenosphere. This is the cyberspace only sensitives can access. Kaaro only discovers his powers over time. He finds out that he is a finder and by stealing from his mother he loses his relation to his family for good (Thompson).

Kaaro is recruited by the S45 in order to find an urban legend named Bicycle Girl, who is supposed to have disappeared together with the citizens of the Arodan village. In his search for this girl he discovers Wormwood. Over time, the sensitives get ill and die and the secret behind the biodome and Wormwood is revealed. In the end, Anthony reveals that all humans who have been healed are infected by alien cells and will become aliens eventually. Kaaro reveals his gained insights but the S45 and the rest of the government does not care about the alien invasion from within. While Kaaro and Aminat decide to live their lives as peacefully as possible, Oyin Da and Tolu Eleja, who has been freed by Kaaro, fight to avoid the progression of the alien invasion and the death of human kind (Thompson).

When asked about how the idea for *Rosewater* has arisen, Tade Thompson said that this story is founded in two different instances of his past. First, his inspiration came from Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* and, second, from an incident during his childhood where he fell into a hole and started imagining the very same alien invasion that he thematizes and whose effects he further develops in this novel. Ultimately, his favorite character in *Rosewater* is Aminat because she has a variety of contradictory personality traits such as being serious but, at the same time, fun while Oyin Da was the hardest character to write because of her unique English and her high IQ that makes her thoughts quite complex (Thompson, *Interview* 396-397).

In conclusion, *Rosewater* is an example of the way the author combines a variety of movements into one novel, as it is not only a first-contact novel but also a thriller as well as a biopunk science fiction novel that focuses on biotechnology and an afrofuturistic novel. As a result, Tade Thompson is part of the contemporary cultural movement of Afrofuturism even though he is of British Nigerian origin (Golkonda-Verlag.de). Ultimately, Tade Thompson never wanted to be confined to a label such as black African science fiction writer. This process of categorization that is oftentimes initiated by publishers is another element originating from oppression. The urge to label someone as an African science fiction writer may derive from the issue that Africans usually just assume the role of the primitive assistant with magical powers whose solely task is to make some white protagonist the hero in white people's science fiction stories. However, Tade Thompson always wanted to write everything from horror to fantasy, from crime fiction to science fiction and, therefore, the identification of the author as being human has always been his goal (Ryman). However, Tade Thompson is associated with belonging to the group of black British writers, as he is an author who is London-based and of black skin color (Ryman; Babelio.com).

Following this introduction into *Rosewater* and Tade Thompson's life and writings is a detailed analysis of the first novel of *The Wormwood Trilogy* called *Rosewater*.

4.2 General Observations about *Rosewater*

Among many other afrofuturistic themes and concerns in *Rosewater* discussed in chapter 4, there is an emphasis on the topic of climate change. Throughout the novel, the author comments on climate change starting with the first chapter. He, hereby, critiques that climate change will be an issue in the future such as in 2066 because

little is done by global players in order to prevent its progression (Thompson 1; Purdey 76-77). Economic growth is the overall goal rather than reducing the production of greenhouse gasses (Purdey 76-77). The Integrity Bank where Kaaro works, for instance, has to pay a fine every week for wasting energy to control the temperature in the room. On the one hand, this demonstrates that not working towards a better future in terms of climate change has consequences for the Nigerian population in *Rosewater*. On the other hand, this also shows in how far money plays a role in the debate on climate change. The bank believes that by being able to afford to pay a certain amount of money for their non-environmentally friendly installations that their actions are acceptable not thinking about the consequences for future generations (Thompson 1).

The International Energy Agency has predicted that there will be a rise in energy use of more than thirty percent by the year 2035 predominantly originating from fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and gas (Purdey 77). However, in order to reverse the fatal effects of climate change, it would be necessary to cut the greenhouse gasses by half until the year 2050 (Purdey 80-81). The novel reflects upon the issue of climate change. Since Kaaro does not use all the technological advancements offered to him, many see him as a person who believes climate change to be insignificant. For instance, if Kaaro had the newest phone implant, his friend Bola would not have to use a paper to share an address but could simply send it to that implant. This is how certain technology is imagined to be the solution to fighting the battle of climate change (Thompson 6).

Nigeria is well known for producing crude oil, which is another source of pollution (Abarikwu et al. 413). This is also addressed when Klaus states that he loves Nigeria because he can get wealthy here through the oil and gas that is prevalent in the country (Thompson 121). In reality, the risks that are associated with this industry, though, are tremendous. Not only does it contribute to the production of greenhouse gasses throughout the world but it is also responsible for polluting waters and soils in Nigeria resulting in health issues caused by eating vegetables grown on these polluted soils such as heavy metal poisoning (Abarikwu et al. 413). However, in the novel, Klaus does not care because his main interest is making money in this foreign country (Thompson 118-121).

Throughout the novel, evidence is presented for light pollution in Nigeria, particularly in Rosewater. During the Opening in 2066, Kaaro is unable to observe the

sky because of the persistent glowing of the biodome, which causes light pollution in Rosewater (Thompson 12). Tade Thompson, hereby, alludes to the real life problem of the same issue. Through a growing economy and population, light pollution is a huge concern in many parts of the world. This pollution originates from street lighting as well as factories, supermarkets, and houses. As a result, more than sixty percent of the world's population has to endure light pollution. The effects of light pollution include health issues for humans in addition to negative impacts for plants and animals whose natural cycle is interrupted through artificial lighting. Despite researchers' evidence for these negative effects of light pollution, it is still an underestimated concern in today's society (Azman et al. 1). By depicting it as an issue still prevalent in the future, Tade Thompson thematizes this problem in order to make people aware that it should already be of concern in the present to ensure that it is not a problem in the future (Thompson 12).

From the above-mentioned examples of chapter 4.2 one can come to the conclusion that *Rosewater* can also be categorized as being an ecocritical novel. Ecocriticism has emerged in literature in the 1990s and is concerned with the interconnectedness of humans with nature (Bracke and Corporal 709). Astrid Bracke and Marguérite Corporal have come to the conclusion, after examining a variety of different contemporary English literary works such as *There Is a Tide* by Lindsey Collen or *The Rapture* by Liz Jensen's, that in ecocritical novels nature can be "either idealized or lamented; present or irretrievably lost" (Bracke and Corporal 709). Nowadays, the global issue of an environment in crisis is the focus of many ecocritical writings rather than "American nature writing" (Bracke and Corporal 710), which was the previous emphasis (Bracke and Corporal 710).

4.3 *Rosewater* as a Science Fiction Novel

Rosewater is a novel that combines science fiction with the supernatural. The xenosphere is the cyberspace created by xenoforms that make it possible to receive and store information in people's minds. Even though it is not a physical space, it appears to work similar to a computer. Therefore, it can also be the target of hackers that enter the xenosphere, in other words, the mind in order to get personal information. Protection is made available through inserting additional information in order to obscure the content in the xenosphere and to make it more difficult for intruders to find the information they are seeking (Thompson 3, 17). This mirrors the workings of a

firewall, which aims at “[preventing] unauthorized access to private data” (Merriam-Webster) by hackers (Merriam-Webster). In addition, there is a ‘human’ component, namely the sensitives that can read minds through the xenosphere, though they cannot do an entire backup of a human’s mind, as this would lead to an information overload (Thompson 17). Adventures in the xenosphere are oftentimes characterized by the incorporation of allusions. For example, when Kaaro has sex with Molara in the xenosphere, he does not state this directly. Molara, in a woman’s body with butterfly wings “pushes her posterior in [Kaaro’s] direction [and he] get[s] behind her. As [they] rut, the field around [them] fills with butterflies […] (Thompson 91). This description alludes to the fact that they are having sex in the xenosphere and that it is enjoyable for them (Thompson 91).

In order to remain undetected, sensitives can create a character in the xenosphere that deviates from the real person, which, in addition, can also be an animal, for instance. Kaaro chooses to be a gryphon (Thompson 4). This is a bird with the head of an eagle and a strong beak, which is very powerful and always alert. This alternative character that Kaaro has created for himself does not only enable him to hide in plain sight but also to retake control over his life, which is usually in the hands of others such as the S45, which controls his every move and knows about his whereabouts at all times. For instance, they follow him when he tries to go to Lagos with Aminat (Thompson 62, 70, 82). In addition, this strategy that makes it possible for Kaaro to hide in the xenosphere resembles the common issue that arose with the introduction of the Internet in the late 1900s. Many people wanted to stay anonymous on the Internet and did so by using a decoy to hide their identities. For example, in order to send emails that could not be traced, the remailer penet.fi was often used. As a result, the senders’ identities were hidden in certain combinations of numbers that rendered identification impossible. Especially hackers enjoyed the benefits of this kind of anonymity on the Internet (Schwartau 39-40).

Sensitives such as Kaaro receive their powers through the xenoforms or xenosphere conduits. At first, these powers appear to be supernatural. However, later in the novel the science behind these powers is explained in more detail in order to rationalize them (Thompson 75). When the first extraterrestrial came to earth, “macro- and microorganisms” (Thompson 75) were released into the biosphere. The xenosphere is “made of the neurotransmitters dopamine, serotonin and noradrenaline” (Thompson 76) and these “form multiple links with natural fungi on human skin”

(Thompson 76), which, in turn, make it possible for sensitives to enter the xenosphere (Thompson 76). When in a “sterile room” (Thompson 65), for instance, Kaaro is unable to enter the xenosphere because of the lack of xenoforms. Likewise, the dome is not magic but functions through electrical currents (Thompson 65, 69). The sensitives are suffering from a kind of fungal infection caused by alien matter. As a result, they can suppress their abilities by using an anti-fungal cream called ketoconazole cream that permits them to prevent involuntary entry into the xenosphere. In this way, a logical and rational explanation is given for the supposedly supernatural powers that the sensitives have as well as a medical solution for reversing the effects of the alien matter combining with human cells (Thompson 25, 76). Likewise, the Opening, which is celebrated similar to New Year’s Eve with fireworks and big festivities, is first cherished as though it is a God given gift; however, it is actually an alien invasion taken place behind the scene without the knowledge of the people. The alien microbes in the novel work like human stem cells that can transform into human cells for healing. This explanation of the dome and the extraterrestrials transforms the fantastic and magical elements of the narrative into features of a science fiction story (Thompson 11, 316, 330, 357).

The novel incorporates a variety of new technology that is used by the Nigerian population without reflection about its impact on themselves and society. However, an exception to this unreflected use of technology is Kaaro. Despite the fact that he earns enough money to buy all the technology he wishes to, he prefers not to (Thompson 8). For instance, he could live in an apartment with “fully humanized AI” (Thompson 8). Though not explained in detail, I suspect that this would be an improved version of the now known speakers with artificial intelligence such as Alexa. Judith Shulevitz has written an article in The Atlantic about the experience with Alexa. This artificial intelligence speaker is installed in the home in order to function as assistant for a variety of different tasks such as turning on music or searching for specific information. It appears to be a rather helpful device (Shulevitz). Kaaro even benefits from his “partially automated flat” (Thompson 7). He regulates his flat’s temperature by texting it a message (Thompson 7). However, technological installments are also associated with dangers such as the involuntary uploading of private information, as the speakers sometimes even record when they should not, enabling exploitation by the receivers of this information. This is a warning that the developments

now and in the future in terms of virtual assistants may not be as desirable as is promoted in society, as it is accompanied by a variety of risks (Shulevitz).

The technology that is presented in the novel includes holographic teleprompters, phone implants, and drones (Thompson 2, 30). There are also new programs similar to ours such as Nimbus, which is a search engine such as Google (Thompson 49). A holographic teleprompter is a teleprompter that shows text but does not have to be physically present in front of the person that speaks. A phone implant makes it possible to send phone numbers to another phone without previously knowing the receivers phone number. This is a highly intrusive technology even though the receivers' permission is needed to provide this information (Thompson 5). Drones are flying objects that can enact a variety of different tasks according to their commands (Thompson 2, 30). On his way home, Kaaro is once confronted with a drone that "read[s] [his] identity" (Thompson 30). As a result, his location is known to the operators of the drone and he cannot hide from anyone, as he is always under surveillance by different technologies such as his implant and drones (Thompson 2, 30).

The science and logic behind the sensitives, their superhuman powers as well as Kaaro's account on how alien came to live and invade earth are narrated in an achronological order. The present time lies in the future of 2066. However, the novel is characterized by analepsis, as many chapters are also concerned with past events such as the year 2055. As a result, the reader is not presented with all the information necessary to understand everything that is happening in the present and only slowly uncovers the truth through Kaaro's accounts of past events. Moreover, *Rosewater* is written in the first person and narrated by the protagonist Kaaro (Thompson). Kaaro can also be referred to as a "competent character" (Mendlesohn 11). This is a term introduced by John Clute who defines it as "the point-of-view character who understands his or her own world and feels no need to explain its strangenesses to us" (Mendlesohn 11). For example, when Kaaro goes to work at the Integrity Bank, he describes his work where he works within the xenosphere to avoid any security issues. However, at that point in time the reader is still unaware of what the xenosphere is exactly, as Kaaro does not provide an explanation because it is 'normal' in his world in *Rosewater* (Thompson 3).

According to Farah Mendlesohn, who draws on the concept of "full fantasy" introduced by John Clute, science fiction can be characterized by the following struc-

ture, namely “DISSONANCE, RUPTURE, RESOLUTION, [and] CONSEQUENCE” (Mendlesohn 10). The novum is at the center of the first term of the structure of science fiction and causes a “rupture” between the ‘real’ world that is known to us and the science fiction world in the novel (Mendlesohn 10). In *Rosewater*, this novum is the existence of xenoforms, sensitives, xenospheres as well as aliens (Thompson). The reader, hereby, has the task of uncovering the new and strange world presented in the novel. The ultimate goal of the dissonance and rupture in science fiction is the identification with this new created world (Mendlesohn 11-12). Resolution is the subsequent characteristic of the “full sf story” (Mendlesohn 10). This resolution does not have to take place on a personal level. It is rather concerned with providing a resolution on the story level (Mendlesohn 12). In *Rosewater*, the resolution is provided at the end of the novel as it is revealed that Oyin Da and Eleja will be working towards stopping the alien invasion. However, for the reader, this revelation is not very satisfying, as there is no certainty that this will actually happen. Kaaro stating that he will not be involved in this fight suggests that humanity will probably lose (Thompson 390). These are the potential consequences of the alien invasion on earth and constitute the fourth term associated with the structure of science fiction (Thompson 390; Mendlesohn 13). Consequence is a characteristic of science fiction that is highly important, particularly in modern science fiction writings and differs from fairy tales in that they usually do not end in a happy end (Mendlesohn 13). Farah Mendlesohn (13) argues that this wishful thinking in fairy tales is associated with the “inability to speculate about the future and the chaotic effect of new modes of production or new scientific theories”, hence, science fiction is characterized by the ability to do so (Mendlesohn 13).

4.4 Racism in Tade Thompson’s *Rosewater*

Tade Thompson portrays racism in *Rosewater* through creating a new species called the sensitives. These are humans with alien abilities, which is their marker of difference from “regulars” (Thompson 51) similar to skin color that is used to create a distinction between white people and black people (Thompson 17; Smedley). Though technically still human like the other Nigerians, they are treated differently by being exploited for their powers, for instance, by the S45. Kaaro has to do certain tasks for the S45 that he detests such as interrogations. Additionally, sensitives have to register themselves for belonging to this group of people. This is a kind of process that

alludes to the registration of slaves, which included branding, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (Thompson 3-4, 17; Keefer 660-662).

By declaring that “the alien is not a legal entity” (Thompson 32), Kaaro with his alien supernatural powers is also addressed by this declaration from the House of Assemblies, as he partly consists of alien matter (Thompson 32). A legal entity is “a person [that can] take part in legal action” (Collins Dictionary). Consequently, Kaaro and the other aliens in *Rosewater* do not have the legal rights to hold people accountable for unjust behavior such as for the exploitation of Kaaro’s powers by the S45 because aliens are not considered to be legal persons under the fictional Nigerian law (Thompson 17). Similarly, black slaves did not have many rights because they were not considered to be human but rather a possession owned by the slaveholder during the years of slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. They were not allowed to testify in court if the perpetrator was of white skin color. Neither were they permitted to possess their own land or sign agreements. In addition, it was prohibited to a black slave to hit someone of white skin color even if that person were to start a fight. Moreover, only with the authorization of the slaveholder could a slave leave the property of his owner, marriage was forbidden as well as education in order to prevent slaves from learning the basic skills of reading and writing. Finally, the possession of guns was prohibited (Augustyn et al.).

Through being used and exploited by the S45 as a secret weapon that can read minds rather than a person that is human like the other S45 agents, Kaaro is exposed to a variety of mental health threats due to the extensive use of his abilities. In addition, he is paid very little for the high risks he is taking. When interrogating a murderer and reading his mind, Kaaro starts to identify too much with that person and loses his own personality temporarily in the process. As a result, he feels guilty for murdering his own wife though never married and falls into a deep depression that lasts for several months (Thompson 28-30, 17). The author, hereby, thematizes the topic of “[o]veridentification” (Thompson 28). The origins of overidentification are located in the times of slavery when slaves imitated and began identifying with their slaveholding tormentors (Abdullah et al., cited in Hicks, S. R. 205).

Interracial relationships between sensitives and S45 agents are prohibited. If these agents were to bare sensitive children, it would have to be reported to the agency, as it is considered dangerous that they can seek confidential information from the xenosphere. This is also the reason why Femi rarely ever talks to Kaaro

personally but rather through video chats and other forms of communication that ensure that they are not present in the same room together, which would make mind-reading possible. In this way, sensitives are discriminated for being different and having superhuman powers again. They are being alienated, as direct contact is avoided (Thompson 20).

An indirect reference towards scientific racism is created in the novel when Kaaro rejects the National Research Laboratory's invitation to visit them in Lagos. They invite him because they would like to examine him and his powers. What they would do with their findings remains unclear (Thompson 22-23). However, the goal may be the same as that of the scientists that used their scientific research about black people to justify racism towards black people. The most well known scientifically argumented justification of racism by establishing that one race is superior to another is *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (Rutledge 243).

The identification with sensitives, which Kaaro undergoes when he first learns about belonging to this group during the gathering of sensitives for a funeral of a sensitive leads to a kind of racial group identity (Thompson 47). Korede, a fellow sensitive, exclaims the following: "[P]eople like us are always aware of each other […]" (Thompson 47). By using the pronoun *us* Kaaro is associated with this group as well (Thompson 47). A positive effect of a racial group identity such as belonging to the sensitives, which is to say, "identify[ing] with others of their racial group" (Christie-Mizell et al. 644), is that discriminative behavior towards them has less negative impact on the health of the victims, both psychologically and physically. This is a fact resulting from research on black Americans. In consequence, Tade Thompson alludes to the positive effects of racial group identity (Williams and Mohammed; and Paradies, cited in Christie-Mizell et al. 644), for instance, of black Americans in the United States by establishing that Kaaro is not the only Nigerian with supernatural abilities but has other "brother[s]" (Thompson 46) who are like him. These help him, for example, from being attacked by his neighbors for using his powers for stealing because they all belong to the same group, thus, cooperating (Thompson 102).

4.4.1 Sensitives as Criminals

Sensitives are portrayed to be "thiefs" (Thompson 17), therefore, assuming the stereotypical roles of black people as criminals (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 120). Because of this emphasis on difference between sensitives and the rest of the Nigerian popu-

lation, Kaaro feels different. He states that he “[doesn’t] understand humans” (Thompson 15), as though he does not belong to this category. He has a different experience in the world as a sensitive similar to black people having a different experience, for instance, during the times of segregation that included the development of separate communities (Smedley; Thompson 15). As a result, he alienates himself not having any connection or identification with his fellow humans. Even reading their minds does not make him understand them better. He retreats to the private sphere, as it makes him feel better than being out in the world (Thompson 15, 21).

Internalized racism is another type of racism prevalent in the novel. When Kaaro is at work at the Integrity Bank, he uncovers an intruder in the xenosphere that he wishes to stop (Thompson 4). When describing the sensitive hacker, he describes him as “reedy and very dark-skinned” (Thomopson 4), as though his skin color matters in terms of identifying him as someone who is willing to do harm (Thompson 4). It is a reflection towards the notion that lighter skinned black people are better than darker skinned people, which are met with suspicion even by fellow blacks because they are more likely to be associated with being criminals due to their skin color (Hooks 120). Similarly, the first characteristic that Kaaro mentions when describing the prisoner he is about to interrogate is “black” (Thompson 17). These established color-caste systems are a remainder from the times of colonization by the white colonial powers that are still present in the minds of the Nigerian population (Thompson 4; Hooks 120).

4.4.2 Police Violence and Corruption in Rosewater

The Nigerian population is confronted with discrimination, violence, and corruption by the police force (Alemika and Chukwuma 10). An allusion is made towards this fact by stating that Kaaro is not harassed by a police officer on his way to celebrating the Opening with Bola and her family and friends because he is “wearing a suit” (Thompson 7). This implies that if he would have chosen a more casual look, he might have been the victim of police violence because he would have been considered to be of less social status. Consequently, the police tend to judge its citizens on the basis of appearance and need to work towards eradicating certain bias by the police force (Thompson 7). Research has shown that these events, which are depicted in the novel, lead to a lack of trust in the police, although the police roles include the “reinforcement of trust in communities” (Alemika and Chukwuma 11, 65). As a result of

distrust of this governmental institution, Kaaro is met with the force of the neighborhood watch, which enforces its own laws in terms of the punishment of certain crimes such as Kaaro's stealing. Fortunately, he can escape his sentence (Thompson 98-102). Moreover, Kaaro is blackmailed by the S45, a government agency, and threatened to "die in jail" (Thompson 71) unless he joins this institution. Finally, officials create a cover story for hiding the origins of the biodome by stating that it is "an experiment in sustainable energy" (Thompson 71), whereby the authorities in the country lie to their own citizens and are, therefore, at risk of losing their trust (Thompson 71).

In addition, on the days of the Opening, the police are tasked with the responsibility of keeping peace between the visitors (Thompson 12). Nevertheless, they have used extensive force before and appear to be ready to "shoot to kill" (Thompson 12) during the Opening of the year 2066. Their reasoning behind their readiness to use violence is incomprehensible because shooting into a crowd of already agitated people will only do more harm than good because one cannot aim at a specific violent person in an overcrowded space, which may cause a higher number of casualties. Moreover, there is less harm done if access to the dome is not denied than if the police stand in-between. The police are not affected by the healing one way or another, as far as they know. As a result, they should remain on task rather than give in to their power-stricken selves, which causes distrust in the whole police force (Thompson 12).

4.5 Reclamation and the Re-imagining of the Past, Present and Future in *Rosewater*

4.5.1 Colonization and Its Effects

Rosewater mirrors the colonization of the American continent by using this city as a symbol for that continent. First, Rosewater was a plain land with only a few inhabitants (Thompson 9). Then it transformed into a "frontier town" (Thompson 9) when people started living around the biodome. Ultimately, a whole city is formed around this dome with proper infrastructure. The residents come from all over the world and become the new citizens (Thompson 9, 12, 68, 83, 89; Turner and Bogue 1). Likewise, people from different European countries came to colonize America and Africa (Turner and Bogue 3; Carland 1). The Nigerian people and country is viewed as a

desirable place to live rather than a country that is backwards (Thompson 9, 12; Elia 85). By creating a world where Great Britain and America are not equipped to handle an alien invasion, as America shuts itself off from the rest of the world, Africa turns its history of colonization into a positive experience that provides it with the abilities to better handle this future invasion (Thompson 75, 313-314; Smedley). In addition, the alien biodome is seen as a source for natural energy. In consequence, Nigerians profit from the alien invasion (Thompson 84).

By portraying Kaaro and other sensitives as people who can stop intrusions into the xenophere, the author reimagines Nigerian history by giving Nigerians the power to fight against intruders and succeed, as they were not able to do as much when Nigeria was occupied and transformed into a British colony (Thompson 3; Carland 1). Additionally, this power is also allocated to wild sensitives who are not registered and represent the intruders (Thompson 4-5). As a result, Nigerians are also given the dominant position of being the invaders who can assert their power on other people and reclaim their control, which was taken from them during the years of colonization in real life, where the British were the ruling power (Thompson 4-5, Carland 1) that established “the Crown Colonies of Lagos, Southern Nigeria, and Northern Nigeria” in the 1890s (Carland 1).

The roles of the former colonial power America and Africa are presented differently. The Americans used to exploit the African continent and its inhabitants (Smedley). However, in the future depicted in the novel they are the ones who need help by the Nigerians. They seek refuge after fleeing America and taking the dangerous way over the ocean to reach Nigeria. They are in luck because they find an abandoned raft in the ocean. When they arrive, they do not remember what has happened to them. In this way, the author lets Americans experience the Middle Passage and the erasure of their own culture (Thompson 97, 118, 371-374; Mayer 556; Elliott and Hughes; Dery 190-191).

The novel discusses the effects of colonialism on the Nigerian population. It alludes to the fact that Nigeria was a British colony and that the British colonies randomly “carved up Africa at the Berlin Conference” (Thompson 314; Kabia 36). Nigeria has citizens of approximately 250 different ethnicities, whereas the number of people belonging to the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo is the highest. English is Nigerian’s official language. Nevertheless, there are 500 further languages spoken by the different ethnicities (The Federal Ministry of Health 3). Through the high number of ethnic groups

that have to live alongside each other in the same country, though they are from different tribes, hence, cultures, it becomes apparent that the colonial powers have a great responsibility for the conflicts in this country (Kabia 36). The colonial powers parted the continent among themselves and created borders in 1884 without paying attention to the already existing "natural borders" (Kabia 36). However, since the Nigerian people in the novel rise above this circumstance and there is no genocide of the Igbo but rather collaboration, as they all seek refuge in the Lijad with Bicycle Girl, the author imagines peace between the different ethnicities. Therefore, the history of colonialism in Africa does not receive the power of influencing the African population in a negative manner (Thompson 164, 288-299; Kabia 36).

In the novel, the indigenous languages are spoken and the reader is made aware in which instances the English language is the language of conversation. Even though everything is written in English, sometimes the author inserts Yoruba expressions that are subsequently translated and explained (Thompson 23, 213). English is, however, not the language of conversation between the characters in *Rosewater*. Usually English is only used in specific situations. It is made clear by explicit statements, when the English language is chosen as a means of communication (Thompson 213), for example, by the statement "[…] I say in English" (Thompson 213). As a result, there is an emphasis on the use of indigenous languages (Thompson 213). Much research is focused on revitalizing African languages. For example, in Nigeria a study in the field of education by Osungbemiro from 2013 aimed at teaching science and technology in English as well as an African language, which was, in this case, Yoruba. Osungbemiro et al. stated that the level of knowledge in the subject matter of science and technology improved when taught in Yoruba and that motivation increased as well. The suggestion was made to the Federal Government of Nigeria that in the future educational instruction should be characterized by the use of African languages, since communication would improve when being fluent in one or two native languages (Osungbemiro et al., cited in Babaci-Wilhite 81-83). This suggestion goes hand in hand with the claim by the Nigerian Policy of Education that languages are not solely important in education but also have a positive effect on "preserving the people's culture" and should, therefore, be maintained (Babaci-Wilhite 84). This is evidence that African languages are considered important in the future, which Tade Thompson alludes to by using Yoruba and English language in his novel (Thompson).

Another allusion to colonialism and its effects is the portrayal of manual labor and its lack of appreciation in the novel. Those who work with their hands as cleaners, in agriculture and the like are paid a “less-than-minimum wage” (Thompson 21), in other words, they are exploited for the hard work that they are doing. As slaves, Africans were also responsible mostly for manual jobs such as working in cotton fields and they did not receive any money because slaves were considered property that provided free labor (Creighton 182). Consequently, it can be assumed that old colonial structures are still present in the minds of Nigerians in *Rosewater* (Thompson 21).

By giving the sensitives the ability to read minds and enter the xenosphere, it is possible to reveal memories of events that have happened already. Kaaro uses this power to uncover the perpetrator of the murder of a woman. The suspect is interrogated by reading his mind and memories of the day the murder took place. This technique confirms that this man is the murderer and exposes the events leading up to the murder (Thompson 27). As a result, the sensitives and their powers can be used to reclaim past events through interrogating those who might have been involved. Likewise, sensitives can gain access to the events of Nigerian’s past. They also become vital to society by solving unsolvable crimes (Thompson 225). However, “[m]emory is always distorted by time” (Thompson 42-43). In addition, it is also possible to artificially create a certain memory about specific incidents in the xenosphere, as does another prisoner at the S45 who is aware of the presence of sensitives and their powers. He constructs a memory of two uniformed Nigerian policemen beating on another man (Thompson 18). This is an allusion towards the ability to present past events in different manners creating different histories. Similarly, the former colonial powers present the slave trade and its consequences for the African people differently than maybe a person of African heritage would do (Dery 190-191).

Historically, colonialism has led to a specific political structure in Nigeria that is upheld to this day, which is characterized by centralization. A consequence is the mismanagement of the economy. The citizens do not profit from the economic revenue but rather the already rich population in Nigeria does. As a result, the rich and poor divide becomes larger every day leading to a wide gap that is the cause of increased crime rates in the country (Alemika and Chukwuma 64, 35). The rich and poor divide is reflected upon through different parts of town in the novel that distinguish themselves by being more or less wealthy and prosperous (Thompson 36). While Kaaro’s neighborhood in Atewo is a rather poor district, Aminat lives in Taiwo,

which is characterized by “cars in every garage, barbed wire and security systems” (Thompson 36). Consequently, it can be said that the wealthy Nigerians live in this part of Rosewater because they can afford amenities such as cars and have many valuable items that need protection by fences and other protective installments in order to prevent theft by those who have less (Thompson 36). By stating that Nigerians “celebrate and venerate the rich” (Thompson 64), Kaaro implies that the rich and poor divide does not lead to more crime in Nigeria, thus, imagining a future with less criminal activity (Thompson 64).

4.5.2 (Mal-)Nutrition and Health in Rosewater

Tade Thompson successfully alludes to Nigerians’ cultural heritage. The characters in the novel eat traditional Nigerian foods such as moin-moin and akara (Thompson 3, 8). Moin-moin is a bean-based pudding that is made out of flour produced from beans, as Africa is well known for its production of a variety of different beans including Bambara nut (Olapade and Adetuyi 150). Akara is also a dish based on beans in the novel. By suggesting that this dish is “old style” (Thompson 3), Kaaro refers to its origin being anchored in the past; however, it is still consumed in the future presumably because Nigerian traditional foods are delicious, even though their creation is based on rather simple and local ingredients such as beans (Thompson 3, 8, 10).

The promotion of the topic of food in *Rosewater* functions as a means to reflect upon a history of (mal-)nutrition in Nigeria (Thompson 3; The Federal Ministry of Health ix-x). According to the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition by the Federal Ministry of Health (ix-x), malnutrition is an immense problem in Nigeria mostly caused by poverty. Almost a third of the world’s children who are stunted because they do not receive the nutrition they would need to grow reside in Nigeria. While many rich Nigerians suffer from health issues due to obesity, a high number of Nigerians, particularly of Nigerian children, starves because of a lack of access to and money for food (The Federal Ministry of Health ix-x). Throughout the novel, characters such as Bola Martinez have sufficient food to nourish themselves and in Bola’s case also her unborn child and her other three children. This leads to believe that the government’s efforts in terms of assuring nutrition for all has led to positive effects in the future, which is a highly optimistic view on the Nigerian issue of malnutrition (Thompson 3).

By portraying Nigerians seeking medical help through the Opening of the biodome and by being aware of its malfunctions (Thompson 9), it appears that, in the future, health institutions have to improve in order for its citizens to not regard alternatives such as the healing powers of the biodome because they are not provided with proper health care. Most people, such as Aminat, are healed of cancer as well as HIV by the biodome (Thompson 59, 89). Especially in terms of fighting the HIV epidemic in Africa, much progress is needed in real life. Despite the United Nation's efforts to guarantee HIV treatments to the entire world starting in the year 2000, only 42 percent of Africans received treatment for their HIV infection in the year 2008. Those who are not treated have a 95 percent chance of dying from this disease (Katzenstein et al. 1). At the end of the novel, the healing via the Opening is revealed to be a hidden form of alien invasion. Moreover, it is associated with the risks of becoming a reanimate, a healed body without a proper soul (Thompson 31, 386-390). The healing and its consequences in *Rosewater* is a form of warning for the government and its citizens that nothing can replace a proper health system and that action has to be taken now in order to ensure a positive future for the African population (Thompson 86, 386-390). However, regular testing for the HIV virus is made available for Aminat, implying that a future Nigeria is imagined with better health care for Nigerians than in the year 2000 (Thompson 59; Katzenstein et al. 1).

In terms of health risks, *Rosewater* addresses the issue of the illness malaria in African countries. Tade Thompson imagines a cure against malaria in the future that is founded in technology (Thompson 77), as a "subdermal implant" (Thompson 77) prevents the infection with this disease through mosquito bites. In this way, a more positive future is created for Nigerians (Thompson 77). In 2010, 216 million people were infected with malaria, whereby 81 percent of these people resided in Africa. The number of malaria cases and deaths around the world is highest in Nigeria. 300.000 people die yearly due to a malaria infection in Nigeria, which is higher than the number of deaths because of HIV and AIDS in this country. Children are most at risk of dying of a malaria infection, as it is one of the most frequent causes of death for children aside from pneumonia and diarrheal disease (United States Embassy of Nigeria).

4.5.3 Reflections on the Infrastructure in Nigeria

The infrastructure in Nigeria is commented on indirectly in the novel and focuses on transportation by plane, car and train. By stating that Nigeria invested in "old trains imported from Italy" (Thompson 32), the author alludes to the history of the railway in Nigeria and the rest of Africa. The rail transport in Africa is a result of colonialism, as the colonial powers built railways in a variety of African countries for the purpose of transporting farming goods and minerals as well as to uphold their political power in certain regions of Africa such as Uganda. The quality of the construction of the railway was not high since cheap material was used and it did not conform to the European and North American standards. Moreover, in the beginning it did not develop into a railway system, as it did not connect with other countries, for example. The first railroad in Nigeria was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and the groundnut used for food manufacturing in the North of Nigeria depended on the railway in the country. From the 1960s onwards, the Nigerian railway went into the red. In the 1970s, road traffic became more important in Nigeria than railway transportation and a high number of trains were not available due to deterioration. Many governments in Africa paid little attention to the issue of the railway. However, in 1975 Nigeria revitalized its railway through the introduction of the Development Plan (Due 375-392). Similarly, the old Italian trains in Rosewater are substituted by "modern trains" (Thompson 32).

In addition to the railway system, the transportation by car is addressed in *Rosewater*. When Kaaro is on his way to Esho in order to pay his respects to another sensitive who has died, though he does not know that person (Thompson 43-46), he states that "[t]he road is untarred but strangely lacks potholes" (Thompson 43). Tade Thompson, hereby, imagines a future that is characterized by a lack of potholes in the streets of Nigeria, which is desirable as ruined streets can have a negative impact on the vehicle and driver. When driving on deteriorating streets, cars use more fuel and break down faster; therefore, driving is more expensive (Johanneck, cited in Aigbe et al. 136). Lagos' streets are only one example of the lack of street maintenance in Nigeria as these have many potholes and broken streetlights and signs (Aigbe et al. 136). By imagining an optimistic future without potholes on the streets of Nigeria, CO2 emissions that cause climate change are also reduced because cars need less gas. Finally, there are fewer accidents due to better road conditions and,

therefore, the number of deaths of Nigerian citizens is reduced (Thompson 43; Aigbe et al. 147).

Moreover, an allusion is made towards the history of plane crashes in Nigeria (Thompson 2). Particularly in the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been an increased number of reported plane crashes in Nigeria which resulted in a high number of casualties. The cause for this high number is that only very few airlines in Africa keep high aviation standards. Most Nigerian airplanes did not and are bought off European airlines because the aircrafts can no longer pass the high regulations for planes in Europe. This is why many planes in Nigeria were very old reaching up to thirty-two years. However, since 2002 the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority does not approve of aircrafts older than twenty-two years anymore. In addition, runways at airports were maintained very poorly as were other aspects at airports important for safe travels. The death toll due to plane crashes was exceptionally high in Nigeria because there was no suitable and efficient emergency response team and protocol available. The Nigerian Aviation Safety Initiative pressured the government by raising awareness towards these issues in order to promote change. Nowadays, the aviation accidents have been reduced drastically due to new standards and supervision (Edeaghe et al. 2-9). Through Nigerians wearing metal from crashed airplanes of the past in the novel, the author raises awareness of these past issues (Thompson 2) and by mentioning that the mental comes from crashes on “every domestic route in Nigeria since the early 2000s” (Thompson 2) he implies that proper aviation regulations are still a concern today and in the future. Tade Thompson is also mocking the governments incompetence in implementing a safe aviation industry in Nigeria by having its citizens use metal from crashed planes as “protective charms” (Thompson 2), as these planes were actually the reasons for a high number of Nigerian’s dying (Edeaghe et al 2-9). Instead of bringing luck, these metals belonging to crashed aircrafts bring about death (Thompson 2).

4.5.4 Child Labor in Rosewater

The novel indirectly reflects on the issue of child labor in Nigeria by portraying a child “selling water, oranges, nuts, soda and some other shit” (Thompson 31) on the train that Kaaro takes to get home to Atewo from his work place at the Integrity Bank (Thompson 31). While records show that there have been approximately 211 million children working in the year 2000, the majority of these children reside in developing

countries rather than developed ones with Nigeria being one of the countries with the highest number of child labor in the continent of Africa (International Labour Organization; International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor and Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor; and Bass, cited in Togunde and Carter 73-74). Dimeji Togunde's and Arielle Carter's (85) study on child labor in Nigeria has revealed that children working and earning money is a direct result of their parents being poor and of having to train the children for a potential profession in the future. Child labor has a positive effect on a family's existence and the future occupations of the children who work from a young age onwards. Consequently, measures to reduce child labor in Nigeria may also be harmful. However, it also affects children's educational career negatively, as they cannot attend school regularly due to being involved in the world of work (Akabayashi and Psacharopoulos; Beegle et al.; and Togunde, cited in Togunde and Carter 85). Children of child labor have also reported on the dangers of child labor including becoming victims of rape and car accidents (Togunde and Carter 85).

In conclusion, after realizing that Wormwood and the xenosphere and xenoforms as well as the sensitives are all part of a hidden alien invasion through the transformation of human cells, Oyin Da and Tolu Eleja keep investigating in order to reverse the alien invasion's effects on humanity. Aminat and Kaaro, however, do not wish to take part in this counter-action. The alien invasion progresses and will eventually eradicate human kind. Overall, the author does not imagine a positive future for Africans or any other humans on Earth since they will be eradicated unless Oyin Da and Tolu Eleja are successful (Thompson 380-390).

4.6 *Rosewater* from a Feminist Perspective

Even though sensitives have much power and can read minds, it is important for Kaaro to not misuse his abilities by reading the mind of Aminat and, therefore, jeopardizing his relationship by breaking her trust (Thompson 38). He states that "equality is necessary for a real relationship" (Thompson 38). Kaaro wants equality between men and women and to not assert his power onto their relationship (Thompson 38). This is a reflection of the desire for social change from the beginnings of feminism in the nineteenth century (Aronson and Buchholz 109-110). Tade Thompson imagines a future through Kaaro that is marked by men's desire for gender equality (Thompson 38). Moreover, women such as Aminat and Femi reflect how far women have come

from being restricted by stereotypical views (Aronson and Buchholz 110). Both women are agents for the government. Aminat works as an undercover agent in a drug unit and is even almost blown into pieces by a bombing once and Femi is the head of the S45 and, as a result, in charge of a highly prestigious secret government agency. In consequence, they both have jobs that are associated with a high number of risks. By being able to work in this field, these women are characterized by being strong, courageous, intelligent and independent women. In addition, they can support themselves as they receive their own salary and are not dependent on the income of a man. This becomes apparent when realizing that Femi lives on her own ever since her husband has been killed (Thompson 157, 260-261, 267-270, 277, 360).

Aminat Arigbede is a character in the novel that divorced her husband Shesan Williams, though the documents to make the divorce official are still not finished (Thompson 39, 135). The character does not appear to have any regrets or downfalls due to this circumstance of getting divorced. Consequently, a future is presented that makes separation acceptable (Thompson). Though divorce is allowed in Nigeria through the ratification of the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1990, it is also frowned upon, as it is not socially accepted. Article 29 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of the year 1981 postulates that people should do everything in their power to maintain a harmonious marriage (Therborn 116, cited in Lazarus et al. 352). Moreover, divorce usually has many disadvantages for women as these have to pay alimony and provide for their husband after having separated rather than the other way around (Rahmatian, cited in Lazarus et al. 352), even though the African Charter of Human and People's Rights states that equality between the two parties needs to be upheld at the time of divorce assuring equal "distribution of joint property" (Lazarus et al. 352).

The reason for Shesan Williams' and Aminat's break up was her fertility, as her ex-husband "wanted someone more fecund" (Thompson 39). 13 to 17 percent of women and men in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria are infertile. Consequently, it is a common problem among both sexes. However, the social impact of infertility has more negative effects on women than men in Sub-Saharan Africa, as bearing children is highly prestigious and associated with being rich in most African cultures (Jiggins, cited in Dimka and Dein 103). For a woman being infertile "may lead to rejection by her partner, social ostracism, and loss of access to land or other productive resources" (Jiggins, cited in Dimka and Dein 103), thus, infertility has both

social and economic consequences for women. Men are less likely to experience these effects due to them being infertile (Dimka and Dein 103). By portraying that Kaaro's mother becomes infertile after his birth and indicating that his father stays with his mother (Thompson 53) and that "[h]e did not take another wife, though he could have" (Thompson 53), demonstrates that Kaaro's father's belief system is more progressive than the prevalent social norm for women in Sub-Saharan African countries (Dimka and Dein 103).

Marriage between two people of the same sex is against the law in Nigeria (Lazarus et al. 352). There is an allusion towards this fact in *Rosewater*. When Kaaro is saved by two sensitives, namely Alhaji and Valentine, he first assumes that these two men are brothers. However, they are actually a gay couple even though homosexuality is still against the law in the future of the 2040s and later in the 2060s. This is highly dangerous for them to admit because punishment involves incarceration as well as being burned alive. The lack of progress in this area in the future provokes a lack of understanding (Thompson 102, 248), as in reality already thirty countries have passed laws to allow same-sex marriage many of which are European and American countries. Furthermore, also an African country, namely South Africa, already allows marriage between lesbians or gays since the year 2006 (Masci et al.).

In addition to marriage and divorce, the novel reflects upon women's desires about having cosmetic surgery, though only on close examination. When Kaaro is in the xenosphere, he sees a woman who has difficulties deciding what to do about the fact that she does not fit into her wedding gown due to having gained weight. Her options are either an alteration of the dress or liposuction, which is an operation to remove body fat (Thompson 2). Undergoing cosmetic surgery is usually a result of the media that depicts perfect bodies altered through technology and marketing strategies that portray it as a choice to undergo cosmetic surgery, which those women make consciously in order to boost their self-confidence (Dingman et al. 183-185). In this way, feminist thought about being the agent over one's own body is exploited (Dingman et al. 185) and women become "victims of internalized oppression" (Dingman et al. 185), as some body types are perceived as undesirable according to different cultures. For many years, cosmetic surgery was considered to be only affordable for the rich western population. There has been a shift towards promoting cosmetic surgery in poor countries as well and this is how it reached the African continent, whereas South Africa and Nigeria became the hotspots for this kind of surgery

(Dingman et al. 183-185). By stating that “Bola is prettier when she is pregnant” (Thompson 2), the author critiques this development and portrays the belief that all body types are desirable and some people do prefer women to have a more corpulent body rather than a highly skinny one (Thompson 2).

Another issue addressed in *Rosewater* is baby dumping in Nigeria (Alichie 29; Thompson 41). The first time Kaaro experiences the abilities he has, though still unaware of them, he gets the feeling that he should “investigate a garbage can” (Thompson 41). By doing as much, he finds a baby girl in that container who is still full of blood from birth but alive. Later, it is revealed that a maid in the area, who has hidden her pregnancy, has dumped this baby and, subsequently, thrown the child she gave birth to away to keep people from uncovering her having been pregnant in the first place (Thompson 41-42). Baby dumping is a form of child abuse that is prevalent not only in developing countries such as Nigeria but also in developed countries such as the United Kingdom. These countries have taken measures such as the installment of baby boxes in order to eliminate this problem, which have shown to be successful in some countries. While the Nigerian government has implemented a variety of laws that should protect children from abuse through the African Charter on the Rights of Welfare of the Child or the Child Rights Act of 2003, for example, their execution was unsuccessful, as the number of cases of child abandonment increased steadily. In addition, another issue, namely baby factories, arose (Alichie 30-31). Baby factories include the “sale of babies and illegal adoption” (Huntley, cited in Alichie 37). Baby dumping and baby factories are a direct result of the avoidance of the social consequences that are associated with being a pregnant teenager who is not married. Due to the concern of being discriminated and bringing shame on oneself and the family, these women or girls prefer throwing away or selling their babies and, in turn, hiding their pregnancy to prevent any negative social impact. In addition, the economic status of a pregnant woman, which is to say whether the woman is poor, is a decisive factor for the rise in the number of child abandonment occurrences and the number of baby factories (Alichie 31-32). Since the baby who Kaaro finds belongs to a “house girl” (Thompson 42), it can be assumed that poverty is one of the reasons for that horrific action as well (Thompson 42).

5 CONCLUSION

The analyses of Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* in chapter 3 and Tade Thompson's *Rosewater* in chapter 4 illustrate that both novels incorporate characteristics of Afrofuturism, which have been outlined in chapter 2. Thus, both novels can be considered to belong to the category of afrofuturistic writings even though they are British novels rather than African American novels. Malorie Blackman has lived in Great Britain since birth making her a British author (British Council) and Tade Thompson was born in London, moved to Nigeria during childhood but returned to Great Britain again. Being nominated for various British Literature awards and holding a UK passport marks his novel as British as well (Babelio.com; Ryman). Consequently, an initial assumption can be made on the basis of this master thesis that Afrofuturism is not restricted to the North American context (Anderson and Jones ix).

While Afrofuturism is mostly concerned with science fiction writings, it also includes other forms of fiction (Eshun 63; Barber et al. 136-137). *Noughts & Crosses* is a dystopian novel for young adults where a parallel universe is presented, which closely reflects reality except for one major distinctive factor, namely that white people are inferior to black people in the novel's society (Blackman). In contrast, Tade Thompson's *Rosewater* is a dystopia and a science fiction novel (Thompson). Science fiction oftentimes involves space travel (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 2-3) and a representation of a future world that focuses on social, political, technological and scientific change (Umalkar and Kulkarni 42). What sets it apart from fairytales and other speculative fiction is an explanation about how certain changes arose, whose basis lies in science and technology (Roberts, *Science Fiction* 3-5). The powers by the sensitives are scientifically explained by being a form of fungal infection by xenoforms that are alien and connect with human cells. Likewise, the biodome functions through electricity rather than magic (Thompson).

According to Youngquist (297), the imagination of positive black futures in combination with real events of black lives is the focus of Afrofuturism. By portraying a world where black people are in power, *Noughts & Crosses* is a novel that imagines an alternative history and present for black people. Colonialism, slavery, and segregation affect the white population in a negative way instead of the black population. In consequence, Malorie Blackman reclaims and re-imagines the history of black people (Blackman; Smedley; Dery 180). However, since the black population

also faces hardships, it is only in the end with the announcement of the birth of Callie Rose that hope for the future is portrayed where society changes by being unable to distinguish between black and white (Blackman 437). The confrontation with racism in the lives of the black population is addressed as well, which is a popular afrofuturistic theme (Blackman; Dery 208-210); however, white people experience this racism rather than black people. Malorie Blackman thematizes racism in education, as Callum, for instance, becomes the victim of racist behavior by his schoolmates once he starts at a former all black high school. Furthermore, the character of Sephy Hadley functions as a means to portray colorblindness and black privilege in the novel, which is the equivalent to white privilege in our world (Blackman; Kendall 1). In addition, Callum and his family and fellow Noughts are faced with unjustified police brutality and racial bias in court, which reflects upon the real issue of racism by people in executive power positions (Blackman; Long and Joseph-Salisbury 199; O'Brien and Parker). Moreover, Malorie Blackman addresses the issue of interracial relationships through the relation between Sephy, who is of black skin color, and Callum, who is of white skin color (Blackman). Mixing with other races was not socially accepted in the twentieth century and bearing mixed children was not either (Smith). The author also discusses the psychological effects of racism through different characters such as Lynette, as racism leads to her suffering from PTSD and to commit suicide because her psychological problems are not treated (Blackman; Arterburn, *Chapter One*; Priebe et al. 98; Stern 256). Malorie Blackman uses Meggie McGregor as well as Callum in order to imagine a positive future for black people, where there is no distinction between different races. However, images of optimistic futures are very scarce in the novel, particularly in the end, when the reader realizes that there is no happy end for Sephy and Callum, as Callum is sentenced to death and hanged. Nevertheless, this tragedy may be a tool to represent the idea that equality is the goal to a better future for black people rather than reversed roles where black people are in power (Blackman).

In afrofuturistic writings, oftentimes a comparison is made between African Americans' history of slavery and alien invasions as well as transformations of humans (Barber et al. 137). The African continent and culture is at the center of Afrofuturism (Eshun 291). In Tade Thompson's *Rosewater* humans are transformed by alien matter into sensitives. As a result, a distinction is made between regular humans and sensitives, who are prone to being discriminated and exploited due to their pow-

ers similar to black people's history and present (Thompson; Smedley). The sensitives are depicted as criminals, for instance. Furthermore, Africa, particularly Nigeria, is at the center of the story. References are made towards real issues in Nigeria, either past or present ones such as police brutality and corruption by portraying such instances in *Rosewater* (Alemika and Chukwuma 10; Thompson). In addition, the alien invasion is used as a symbol for the history of colonization in America and Nigeria and its effects (Thompson; Turner and Bogue 3; Carland 1; Kabia 36). However, instead of a negative impact of colonialism on the African continent, Africans profit from their past in the future. As a result, the author re-imagines the past and constructs an optimistic future in this way. For instance, Nigerians can profit from their experience of being colonized by the British in the future, as they can draw from these experiences when facing the alien invasion in Rosewater and the rest of the country (Turner and Bogue 3; Carland 1; Smedley; Thompson). Nevertheless, the end of the novel turns rather pessimistic again, though for all humans rather than only one race unless Oyin Da and Tolu Eleja find a solution to the invisible alien invasion that is hidden from the Nigerians by the government (Thompson).

In addition, feminism is a predominant topic in afrofuturistic writings and this movement aims at gender equality (Hollinger 125-126). Both novels, *Noughts & Crosses* (Blackman) as well as *Rosewater* (Thompson) can be read from a feminist perspective. However, feminism is not a topic in the two novels. The former thematizes violence against women, typical gender roles, abortion, and patriarchy (Blackman). The latter reflects upon gender equality through Kaaro's and Aminat's relationship (Thompson; Aronson and Buchholz 110), divorce and the injustice for women that is accompanied by it through Aminat's break up with her husband (Thompson; Therborn 116, Rahmatian, cited in Lazarus et al. 352) and infertility and its negative effects on women in Nigeria through the characters of Aminat and Kaaro's mother (Thompson; Dimka and Dein 103).

Finally, since this is only an initial attempt at investigating how Afrofuturism is portrayed in British writings by analyzing two British novels, further research in this field of English Literary Studies is needed in order to have even more evidence for the claim that the North American cultural movement of Afrofuturism has reached Great Britain and is represented in writings by British authors as well. Nevertheless, it can be said that British Afrofuturism is not restricted to the North American context as

shown, for example, in *Rosewater*, which focuses on the Nigerian context and history.

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7 APPENDIX

7.1 ABSTRACT

Afrofuturism is a North American cultural movement that has been the focus of many academic works in the field of English Literary Studies. However, researchers have paid little attention towards Afrofuturism in British literature. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to identify the role of Afrofuturism in two selected contemporary British novels, namely Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* and Tade Thompson's *Rosewater*. This master thesis applies a systematic review of the literature in order to determine the characteristics of Afrofuturism, which is, subsequently, used as the basis for the analyses of the two selected British fictional works. Both novels depict Afrofuturism to some extent by addressing common themes and concerns of that field of writing, including racism and the reclamation and re-imagining of the past, present and future of black lives. On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that Afrofuturism is not limited to the African American context.

7.2 ZUSAMMENFASSUNG AUF DEUTSCH

Afrofuturismus ist eine nordamerikanische Kulturbewegung, die im Mittelpunkt vieler akademischer Arbeiten auf dem Gebiet der englischsprachigen Literaturwissenschaft steht. Allerdings haben Forscher dem Afrofuturismus und dessen Rolle in der britischen Literatur bislang wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Aus diesem Grund befasst sich diese Arbeit mit der Analyse der Rolle des Afrofuturismus in zwei ausgewählten zeitgenössischen britischen Romanen, nämlich *Noughts & Crosses* von Malorie Blackman und *Rosewater* von Tade Thompson. Die vorliegende Masterarbeit wendet eine systematische Literaturrecherche an, um die Charakteristika des Afrofuturismus zu bestimmen, die nachfolgend als Grundlage für die Analysen der beiden ausgewählten britischen fiktionalen Werke verwendet wird. Beide Romane spiegeln Afrofuturismus durch die Integrierung afrofuturistischer Themen und Anliegen, wie beispielsweise Rassismus und die Rückgewinnung und Neuerfindung der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft der schwarzen Bevölkerung wider. Auf der Grundlage der Ergebnisse dieser Masterarbeit kann der Schluss gezogen werden, dass Afrofuturismus nicht auf den afroamerikanischen Raum beschränkt ist.