Title

Expanding Spaces: Examining the Landscape of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism in Hollywood

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Expanding Spaces: Examining the Landscape

of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism

in Hollywood

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

in African Studies

by

NICHOLAS NATHANIEL KWEKU-EGYIR SIMONS

2021

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Expanding Spaces: Examining the Landscape

of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism

in Hollywood

by

Nicholas Nathaniel Kweku-Egyir Simons

Masters of Arts in African Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Stephanie Bosch Santana, Chair

In a *post-Black Panther*, *Get Out*, and *Lovecraft Country* era of globalized film, television, and digital consumption, there are new opportunities to expand the boundaries of genres that encompass elements not based in reality, better known as speculative fiction. Two emerging subcategories, Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism, now serve under the umbrella of speculative fiction and incorporate aesthetics of blackness in time and spaces that have scarcely depicted blackness. In addition to these two categories, another lesser-known subcategory exists—Africanjujuism, a classification that centers on mysticism and the supernatural.

Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design that allowed for a quantitative data analysis and qualitative questioning, this study sought to first examine the landscape of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism in Hollywood. Secondly, this study sought to determine if historically pervasive tropes about Africa and Africans are as present in Africanfuturistic and Africanjujuistic projects as they are in other projects about Africa and/or Africans. Quantitative results from April 2021 to June 2021 found 45 Afrofuturism projects, four Africanfuturism projects, and 15 Africanjujuism projects in development. In the pool of Africanfuturism projects, there was a 25% rate of trope saturation and in the pool of Africanjujuism projects there was 20% rate of trope saturation. However, in projects about Africa or Africans (outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism), there was a staggering 87% rate of trope saturation. A series of 20 qualitative interviews with high-profile industry stakeholders including, Nate Moore (*Black Panther*)[1], Ahmadou Seck (*Gente-fied & Raising Dion*)[2,3], and Kay Oyegun (*This Is* Us)[4] suggest industry awareness and education about the categories is varied, but has grown exponentially with *Black Panther* and the culminating impacts of social-justice movements and globalization. However, unique hurdles including a lack of advocacy are potentially inhibiting other projects in the pipeline.

This thesis of Nicholas Nathaniel Kweku-Egyir Simons is approved.

Darnell Hunt

Hollian Wint

Kris Ravetto

Stephanie Bosch Santana, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment

With sincere gratitude, I thank you, Professor Bosch Santana for agreeing to serve as my committee chair, especially considering that we have never even met in person. Attempting to write a graduate thesis, while attending school full-time, working part-time, and continuing to pursue various professional pursuits in the entertainment industry, all in the midst of a global pandemic is something I would not recommend to anyone. However, never even having taken a class with you, you signed on to this project with such a humbling enthusiasm, sincerity, and grace (for my delayed deadlines). Your support has been so incredibly encouraging and impactful. Sincerest gratitude to my other committee members as well, Dr. Holian Wint, Dr. Kriss Ravetto, and Dr. Darnell Hunt—you have all provided tremendous wisdom during this process. You have each brought such specific insights and I hope for the opportunity to continue to be mentored by you.

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To pops, mom, and David, thank you for supporting me on this journey, giving me the space and time to get it done and for the foundation of cultural curiosity that has helped me complete this project with purpose and integrity.

Introduction

In the process of defining and parsing out the terms Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, underscoring categorical distinctions can seem more important than underscoring the connections between them. While Afrofuturism has a historical definition that seeks to contextualize African Diasporic experiences, we cannot trivialize its connectedness to the African experience and the linkages between the subjugation of African Americans and the subjugation of Africans by dominant European systems and ideologies. As such, it becomes paramount to start an Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism literature review with a historical understanding of just how Africans, and subsequently the African Diaspora, have been regarded by demonstrative European powers.

After establishing this historical context, this study will seek firstly, to examine the landscape of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism in Hollywood. Secondly, this study will seek to determine if historically pervasive tropes about Africa and Africans are as present in Africanfuturistic and Africanjujuistic projects as they are in other projects about Africa and/or Africans.

Centering Black Speculative Fiction in a History of Dominant Western Ideologies

In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*[5], Guyanese Pan-Africanist scholar, Walter Rodney comprehensively details the process by which Africa and Africans were deliberately exploited for the benefit of European colonizers and the lasting ramifications of such exploitation—engendering dialectical effects that developed Europe and simultaneously

1

underdeveloped Africa. The importance of Rodney's perspective is that it disputes prevailing and dominant narratives that still often exist in Western representations of Africa and Africans, representations that have colored global perspectives. Rodney uses his text to combat the notion that Africa is "underdeveloped" when compared to Europe due to the supposed inferiority of the black race; he rather suggests that structural and economic dependence was created as a result of wealth, economic, and population drainage. This is not to absolve the African people of their responsibility in the act, but to rather underscore how larger systems contributed to the overall underdevelopment of the continent.

In reference to early international trade, Rodney highlights that Europe controlled not only the seas, but they also invented the laws that regulated trade and possessed advantages in key areas (e.g., weaponry) that allowed Europeans to obtain competitive advantages. Political dissensions across African societies were exploited so that when the European slave trade started in one specific area, no territory had the capacity to stop it. This is especially salient considering that African societies and territories that engaged in the slave trade developed significant political and economic advantages over those that did not.

In addition to the direct exploitation of Africa and Africa's resources, Rodney notes that early and pervasive histories of Africa were largely documented and disseminated by white European bourgeois and anthropologists—creating biased and grossly inaccurate accounts of Africa, African technologies, and African people, paving the way to racist ideas and the perception of the inferiority of the African, i.e. racism. This act of disseminating skewed histories of Africa is no different than what Hollywood has historically done—

telling African stories without the involvement of the African to influence and shape the narrative. Rodney points to the fact that many of these early historical accounts were assumptions and generalizations; however, they steadily became rationalized in all spheres of life, from theology to psychology to biology. According to Rodney, such pervasive exploitation, indeed the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved Africans itself, was maintained by "the simple fact that no people can enslave another for centuries without coming out with a notion of superiority, and when the colour and other physical traits of those peoples were quite different, it was inevitable that the prejudice should take a racist form" (137).

In addition to *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, *Stamped from the Beginning,*[6] written by American author and historian, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, helps to shed light on the legacy of racist ideas and narratives that have contributed to systemic racism in the 21st century. Kendi's text expands on Rodney's by illustrating how discussing how a legacy of intentional underdevelopment in Africa manifested into systematic racism in America. Kendi references one of many texts that allowed for the dissemination of racist ideas: *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*[7] by Gomes Eames de Zurara. Commissioned by Portugal's King Afonso V, the text, referring to enslaved Africans stated, "They lived like beasts, without any custom of reasonable beings. […] They have no knowledge of bread or wine, and they were without covering of clothes, or the lodgment of houses; and worse than all, they had no understanding of good, but only knew how to live in bestial sloth" (Kendi, 24). When slavery was legally abolished, ideologies like Zurara's did not disappear; they became the fertilizer through which socio-cultural, political, and economic structures germinated. In Hollywood, those structures have materialized into a

portfolio of narratives that continue to skew toward barbaric, corrupt, and uncivilized representations of Africans—films such as *The African Queen* (1951)[8], *The Last King of Scotland* (2006)[9], and *Beasts of No Nation* (2015)[10].

With this history in mind, we can better comprehend the legacy of racist ideology that *preceded* Hollywood's formation. We can also better understand how the control of popular media by Western powers could potentially disseminate racist ideologies. While popular media has adapted over time—from novels to theatre to film and television, there have consistently been racist ideologies broadcast through it. Referring to the exoticized, wild, and savage perceptions of Africa, scholar and professor of *Hollywood and Africa: Recycling the Dark Continent Myth*,[11] Okaka Opio Dokotum, writes, "This mythical construction of Africa was designed as infotainment to feed the European audience's appetite for fantasy, escape, and exoticism with picturesque, sensational material" (67). The consequence of such infotainment, as Dokotum articulates it, is that persistent tropes about black experiences become not only abundant, but also dominant, so that deviations from such tropes become perceived as radical.

The Emergence of Afrofuturism

According to Dokotum, chronicled storytelling from Western storytellers about Africa and the African Diaspora has historically upheld hegemonic perspectives by recycling themes such as: *blackness equals violence, black bodies are disposable,* and *black people need white saviors*. While the lexicon may not have been coined until the end of the 20th century, mid-19th century writers including Martin Delaney, Charles Chestnutt, and Edward Johnson,

4

were telling narratives about re-envisioned present and past histories, projecting African-American characters into alternative times and spaces. Therefore, Afrofuturism was born out of a desire to liberate black people from the confined spaces they had been relegated to by dominant racist systems. Historically, Black people have been prohibited from existing in technologically advanced, progressive, or empowering spaces. Afrofuturism, therefore, adopts sci-fi principles and structures, but interprets them differently.

The term "Afrofuturism" came about in 1994, when author, lecturer, essayist, and cultural critic, Mark Dery, released *Flame Wars*,[12] an anthology of essays on digital culture that gave birth to the discourses of cyberfeminism and cybersex studies. In a chapter entitled "Black to the Future," Dery interviewed the sci-fi author Samuel R. Delaney, sociologist and author Tricia Rose and cultural writer and musician, Greg Tate. However, prior to responses from his subjects, Dery questions why so few African-American writers write within the genre of science fiction. In his pondering, he defines the categorical basis for "Afrofuturism" as follows: "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'" (180). Over the course of the interviews, Dery mentions a broad spectrum of popular artists across mediums that have contributed to the shaping of this neologism— including visual artist, Jean Michael-Basquiat, filmmakers, John Sayles and Lizzie Borden, and musicians, Jimi Hendrix, George Clinton, and Sun Ra.

It is important to note the point in time that the definition of Afrofuturism comes into existence. Dery, a white male cultural critic, coined the term in the aftermath of one of America's significant racial awakenings, one stemming from "ocular proof" of the savage police brutality against Rodney King in 1992. The jury's acquittal of the four officers who beat King ushered a heightened awareness of the injustice and inequality against black and brown bodies. According to a National Public Radio (NPR) retrospective written by Anjuli Sastry and Karen Grigsby Bates,[13] the jury's decision served as the catalyst for over fifty riot-related deaths, over 2,000 injuries, and nearly 6,000 arrests, ultimately resulting in the forced resignation of LA Police Chief, Darryl Gates. In response to the riots, conversations about inequality gained civic attention and America's corporate, governmental and socio-cultural structures were all put under the scrutiny of a global microscope.

In Mark Dery's interview with author Samuel R. Delaney, Delaney questions the utility and emergence of cyberpunk culture, given the riots that ensued post-Rodney King verdict. While Dery postulates that cyberpunk, a genre related to science fiction, and the lawlessness of the technological dominance of oppressed societies, contributed to more favorable reception of black artistry, including rap music, Delaney argues otherwise. In the 1993 interview Delaney suggests the cyberpunk categorization and aesthetic was rather "[…] a misreading of an interim period of urban technoculture, a misreading that […] was no longer possible after the riots at last year's acquittal of Rodney King's police thugs." In this brief dialogue, Delaney seems to be arguing that an interpretation of the angst of black youth, given systematic and formulated oppression, was neither a new aesthetic nor a

confluence of science fiction and urban grunge, but rather a response to a point in time and vehement distrust of oppressive systems.

Given the backdrop of racial reckoning in America, Dery's position as a white cultural critic becomes important. Prior to the 1994 release of *Flame Wars*,[12] Dery does not have any published work that specifically addresses science fiction, cyberculture, or technoculture as these neologisms relate to African-American perspectives. This absence raises several questions: Was Dery's effort actualized in response to a larger social-cultural awareness stemming from injustice? If so, could it be plausible that Dery's positionality impacted his definition of Afrofuturism and the types of questions he posed to his subjects? Does a white cultural critic with a limited vantage point of African-American realities in speculative and science fiction possess the qualification to define and characterize the boundaries of African American works? Lastly, does he have the perspective to metaphorically suggest, as he does in his introduction to this chapter, that—"In a very real sense [African Americans] are the descendants of alien abductees; they inhabit a sci-fi nightmare in which unseen but no less impassable force fields of intolerance frustrate their movements; official histories undo what has been done; and technology is too often brought to bear on black bodies?" (Dery 180).

In addition to considering Dery's background and the time at which his definition emerged, it also becomes paramount to acknowledge that the framework for Afrofuturism was constructed in an African American context, implying that his consideration for the term did not take into account Africa or the entirety of the African Diaspora. Despite a

dialogue between Dery and Samuel R. Delaney about the significance of William Gibson's 1984 novel *Neuromancer*[14] and its inclusion of Rastafari culture, no other mentions of the African Diaspora are mentioned in "Black to the Future."[15] It therefore becomes important to consider the geographical limitations of Afrofuturism, which brings the complexity of identity to the forefront of the discussion. Rather than blanketing the category of Afrofuturism as "black" speculative fiction, the boundaries are structured in African American identity.

Lastly, contextualizing Dery's definition of African American "concerns" also bares significance, as his definition states that Afrofuturism "treats African American themes and addresses African American concerns." Without wading into a field of semantics, it does seem that Dery's definition references the efforts of African Americans to self-maneuver in a digital age where politics, representation, systemic barriers, and culture all impact future possibilities. Does Dery, once again, have the positionality to assume a position of authority over wide-ranging African American experiences? This seems to carry over into his line of questioning, as he asks a critical question that ultimately becomes a catalyst for the conversations he has with Delaney, Rose, and Tate: "Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for more legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?" In doing so, there is the dramatic emphasis placed on what it means to be Black in America with respect to whiteness in America. Embedded into the very definition of Afrofuturism is a notion that African American identity is tethered to some sort of racial trauma: abduction, enslavement, etc. Mentioning this is not to assess whether African American identity is inextricably linked to such trauma, but rather to acknowledge that it is a key delineator that separates it

from the broader sci-fi classification. As such, it seems to suggest that Afrofuturism cannot exist without the contrasting experiences of whiteness.

After Dery's the emergence of Dery's definition, other scholars, many of them from Africa or the African Diaspora, began to redefine the term. These scholars include the British-Ghanaian filmmaker, writer, and theorist, Kodwo Eshun,[16] and American writer and academic, Alondra Nelson.[17] Eshun, on the one hand, wrote "Afrofuturism studies the appeals that black artists, musicians, critics, and writers have made to the future, in moments where any future was made difficult for them to imagine" (294). Eshun's definition differs from Dery's in that it seems to be rooted in all-encompassing black identities, instead of only an African American context. However, in a special edition of the Social Text, entitled *Afrofuturism*,[17] Nelson chronicles her 1998 creation of an online listserv of Afrofuturist creators and their works, while simultaneously arguing for the patronization of Afrofuturism in response to a lack of representation and space to talk about the technological proliferation of specifically African Diasporic communities. Nelson defines Afrofuturism as "'African American voices' with 'other stories to tell about culture, technology and things to come.'" Nelson's definition seems to allow more space for the inclusion of identities outside of African Americans; however, it does not necessarily create the space for African inclusion.

Nelson posits that racist ideology has positioned Blackness as the antithesis of technological advancement, and as such, has disregarded the technological and scientific innovations employed by enslaved African Americans and the likes of Garrett Morgan, the inventor of the traffic light, Madame C.J. Walker, the inventor of hair relaxer, and other

pioneers. In marrying futurist thought, science, and black identity, Nelson seeks to create a space where these concepts can simultaneously coexist, in the hopes of combating dominant racist ideology. Her broad definition creates the room to have discussions about challenging the prevailing assumptions about race, futurism, and technology within the arenas of film, music, and literary fiction through conversations and exposés with writers and critics including Ron Englash, Anna Everett, Tana Hargest, Tracie Morris, Alex G. Weheliye, and most notably Caribbean author Nalo Hopkinson.

In her interview with Hopkinson, Alondra Nelson dives into specific questioning about how the linguistic choices present in Hopkinson's work function to respect African and Caribbean cultures, how Hopkinson uses historical fiction to steer readers to Caribbean folklore, and how Hopkinson classifies her work—as teetering between speculative fiction and science-fiction.[17] In addition to suggesting that more representation is needed at all levels of publishing, she also suggests that a systemic issue lies behind the industry's regard for works that focus on black trauma. "I look at the publishing industry, and for a while it seemed that the way to get published and recognized as an important Black author was to write about the horrible things that happen to Black people living in a system that despises us for our skin color. […] But if that is all that is getting published, I think I am justified in suspecting that the industry was and is eroticizing Black people as victims, as though that is our value to the world," states Hopkinson (Nelson 101-102). In this articulation, Hopkinson foreshadows the sentiments of a famous 2009 Ted Talk by Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi entitled "The Danger of A Single Story," in which Ngozi explores how consistently negative subject matter can contribute to polarized narratives, leading to one-

dimensional positionalities, which subsequently create corresponding and non-nuanced viewpoints.[18]

The Emergence of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism

While in recent years, the term "Afrofuturism" has gained broader popularity—largely with the release of *Black Panther* (2018)[1] and coverage across far-reaching publications such as the Huffington Post, NY Times, CNN, BBC, and even curated titles in The Criterion Collection, Africanfuturism is novel and remains at peripheral level. The term first came to light in a 2019-blog article, written by Naijamerican (Nigerian-American) author of *Binti* and *Who Fears Death*, Nnedi Okorafor.[19,20] In the piece entitled "Africanfuturism Defined,"[21] Okorafor suggests that she birthed the term because Afrofuturism was a term imposed on her, irrespective of whether or not her work could be categorized as such. Prior to defining Africanfuturism, her work was being interpreted through a lens that she did not think adequately encompassed the breadth of what she writes about; she wanted to regain control of how she was being defined and understood as an author.

In her attempt to define Africanfuturism, Okorafor acknowledges that she is not a scholar, but rather a writer and a creative. As such, she positions Africanfuturism as a sub-category of science fiction, one that is similar to Afrofuturism in that they both connote interconnectedness between the blood, spirit, history and future of black persons. However, she details that it differs from Afrofuturism in that "Africanfuturism is specifically and more directly rooted in African culture, history, mythology and point-of-view, as it then branches into the Black Diaspora, and it does not privilege or center the West." Okorafor goes on to say, "Africanfuturism is concerned with visions of the future, is interested in technology, leaves the earth, skews optimistic, is centered on and predominantly written by people of African descent (Black people) and it is rooted first and foremost in Africa."

In analyzing Okorafor's definition, she points to her positioning that Africanfuturism "does not privilege or center the West." At face value, this positioning makes sense in that Africanfuturism extinguishes conventionalism created through a Western gaze. For example, the idea of technological advancement in Western society looks a certain way— maybe it is a new iPhone, a faster microprocessor, or a self-driving vehicle. However, technology in a non-Western context might look like a *lukasa*, a handmade mnemonic device from the Luba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It might also look like a *kente* loom that allows for different embroidery styles, as is the case in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Either way, there is a decolonizing or forgoing of the manifestations and ideologies that privilege Western constructs above African constructs. This is not to say that African constructs or ideologies are then positioned above Western constructs; it rather suggests that African constructs and ideologies can stand on their own.

While writer and director Wanuri Kahiu may not have articulated the term "Africanfuturism," in a 2012 TedTalk, TEDXNairobi, she, like Nnedi Okorafor, advocated for "finding a place for Afrofuturism in Africa."[22] However, she also affirms that given Africa's history with mysticism, Africans have *always* been futuristic. Kahiu illustrates this in her TedTalk, entitled "Afrofuturism in Popular Culture," in which she mentions specific examples such as witch doctors or sangoma, people who deal with the spiritual realms, genies of the coast—exemplified in Mombasa or Zanzibar, and the Dogon people of Mali believing in a planet called Sirius B because they learnt of from a race of amphibian-like aliens, who also affirmed the rotation of planets and how they spin on an axis.[22]

In theory, Africanfuturism's positioning as one that does not center or privilege the West makes sense. However, to what extent is it practical or valid when considering the very language, story structure, and global modes of production and consumption are dominated by the West? By the very nature of recognizing Africa as a partitioned continent of 54 countries, rather than recognizing the preexisting societies and empires that previously sustained it, there is an adherence to and privileging of the West. Additionally, given her colonial past and now global connectedness, Africa is tainted by conformity—everything from language, to style of dress, to the educational system, to the architecture, to modes of transportation across the Continent have experienced some level of conformity. Just like any other continent, Africa has been and continues to be influenced, shaped, and stretched beyond what she was originally. Therefore, it becomes necessary to contextualize what is *actually* and *authentically* African—in terms of culture, history, mythology, and point-of-view and if true African "authenticity" even exists.

In defining Africanfuturism, Nnedi Okorafor specifically articulates her justification for ensuring "Africanfuturism" is written as it is, as opposed to "African Futurism" or "African futurism." Despite the subtle differences, Okorafor writes, "It is one word so that the concepts of Africa and futurism cannot be separated (or replaced with something else) because they both blend to create something new." Through its construction as one word, Okorafor attempts to diminish the posture that Africa and the future are separate entities. Therefore, in order to change the subject, a different conversation would need to be started entirely. In communicating "Africanfuturism," Okorafor is affirming that this branch of sci-fi and speculative fiction delineates an inextricable link between Africa and Africa's future,

not simply the future, but Africa's future. And as such, it has to be addressed within Africa's own context, as opposed to contexts that the world or other territories have set forth.

Along with Africanfuturism, in "Africanfuturism Defined," Nnedi Okorafor establishes another important term for interpreting her work, "Africanjujuism."[21] In a tweet-thread from December 16, 2020, Okorafor states, "I write Africanfuturism, which is a subcategory of science fiction" and "I write AFRICANJUJUISM, a subcategory of fantasy that respectfully acknowledges the seamless blend of true existing African spiritualities & cosmologies with the imaginative." While Africanfuturism converges upon futuristic technological proliferation through an African lens, Okorafor's definition of AfricanJujuism focalizes spirituality and the unseen. However, she notes that despite Africanjujuism being a subcategory of fantasy, it is not synonymous with fantasy in that Africanjujuism deals with spiritual and magical aspects that are organic and real to African cultures, in a way that they are not to the West.

For all intents and purposes, with this study, we will respect the three categorical definitions of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, as defined by their architects. They will be used as frameworks to analyze the landscape of speculative fiction as it relates to Black identities. Figure 1 conceptually illustrates how the architects of these definitions relate the subcategories to the larger categories—all under the umbrella of speculative fiction.
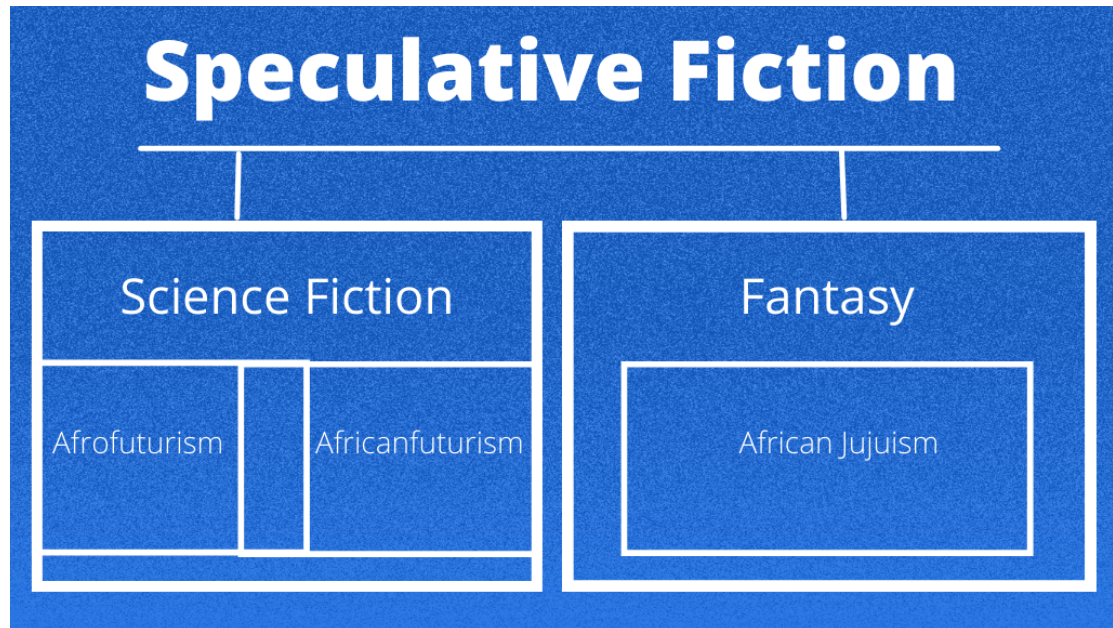
Figure 1. Categorizing Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism within Speculative Fiction

Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, this study sought to:

1) Examine the landscape of Hollywood storytelling as it pertains to Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism;

2) Analyze the prevalence of historically pervasive Hollywood tropes about Africa and Africans in Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism and also in stories about Africa and in Other African Projects (outside the categories of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism).

Methodology

A mixed-method research study design utilized both quantitative data from entertainment databases and findings from qualitative interviews with 20 participants including executives, producers, authors, agents, writers, and actors. Initially, actors were excluded from the study, as we were focused on the key creatives who played a role in a project's development. However, an interview with *Black Panther* executive producer Nate Moore expanded on Chadwick Boseman's efforts to ground T'Challa in a specific South African accent as opposed to a Western accent, as well as Boseman's questioning of T'Challa receiving an Oxford education. I found this enlightening in its suggestion that actors can and do play a role in strides toward a project's authenticity. Actors were subsequently added to the survey population.

The mixed-method study design allowed for initial quantitative data to suggest categorical prevalence and subsequent interviews to corroborate and caveat findings from quantitative data.

Quantitative Data Design

This study respected the three categorical definitions of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, as defined by their architects. As such, the definitions were used as frameworks to analyze the landscape of speculative fiction as it pertains to Black identities. Specifically, this study sought to quantify the number of speculative fictional television, film, and digital projects in development that prioritized Black identity during the given time period of April 2021 to June 2021. In assessing both original projects and intellectual property (IP), the following approach was taken:

1) Comprehensive databases were identified through conversations with industry professionals.

2) A designated time frame for data collection was specified.

3) Research-specific keywords were compiled through a randomized selection of 20 articles from the UCLA Library Article Database.

4) Using the compiled keywords to search the comprehensive databases, television, film, and digital projects were funneled through a flow chart to validate whether or not they were germane to this study and could be classified into the categories of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, or Africanjujuism.

Qualitative Data Design

Together with my foundation partner, Michelle van Gilder, founder of The Africa Narrative, a nonprofit organization dedicated toward examining and combating representations of Africa and Africans in mainstream media, a list of potential interview subjects was compiled. The list was categorized into interview subjects in various spheres of the entertainment industry: studio executives, production company executives, directors, screenwriters, authors, literary editors, professors, agents, managers, and actors. The list was populated by individuals who had proximity and/or experience with projects in the categories of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and/or African Africanjujuism. Currently serving as a board member for the African Artists Association and having worked in various capacities in the entertainment industry for over 14 years, many of our interview subjects came from direct relationships and referrals. However, there were also research participants included in the study who responded to cold emails or phone calls. Of the 20 interview subjects, there were 16 interviews conducted over Zoom, one written interview (with actress Wunmi Mosaku), and two interviews over the phone—one of the phone interviews consisted of two interview subjects (Tolu Awosika and Olumide Odebunmi had a joint phone call). A full list of the interview subjects can be found in Appendix A, with specifications as to the type of interview conducted.

A semi-structured format was utilized to develop the line of questioning, ensuring that there was consistent questioning in each of the categories of interviewees, but also that there was the space for subjects to share experiences we may not have thought to develop questions around. Interview times ranged from 36 minutes to 1 hour and 29 minutes with the

average length of time at 59 minutes per interview. The first interview was conducted on April 19, 2021 and the final interview was conducted on November 26, 2021.

Quantitative Data Collection

The data collection period ranged from April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021 and utilized three primary sources for collection: Studio System, IMDb Pro, and Deadline.com.[23–25] Both Studio System and IMDb Pro are regarded as the most comprehensive paid-service film and television databases, patronized by the global entertainment industry. Deadline.com, on the other hand, is an online version of the former print column "Deadline Hollywood" that serves as source for breaking news and project development in the entertainment industry.

Studio System allows for the tracking and analysis of film, television, and digital projects by allowing individuals to search its database through specific keywords. Projects can also be filtered by their stage of production: Pitch, Script, In-Development, Released, Completed, Active, Non-Active, etc. To ease the search process, the database allows for projects to be tagged with specific keywords such and its associated countries, in most cases, locations germane to the story. This is all in addition to other keyword filters such as genre and primary keywords that relate to logline or premise, key creatives involved, such as producers, actors, directors, writers, and production company or studio attachments.

Example 1:

To better understand how the keywords relate to the source material, consider Octavia Butler's novel *Kindred*.[26] The TV-adaptation of her 1979 novel is actively in-development

and received a pilot order from FX Studios and production companies Protozoa Pictures and CYRK.

The adaptation has the following synopsis displayed on its Studio System profile: *"Before Dana, a young Black woman and aspiring writer, can get settled into her new home in Los Angeles, she finds herself being violently pulled back and forth in time to a 19th century plantation with which she and her family are most surprisingly and intimately linked. Based on the novel."*

The corresponding tagged keywords include: 19th century, adaptation, African-American, California, discovery, drama, dramatic, family, female protagonist, interracial relationship, Los Angeles, multiple timelines, novel, romance, sci-fi, secrets, time travel, violent, writer

Example 2:

For another example, consider the adaptation of Maurice Broaddus and Otis Whitaker's graphic novel, *Sorcerers*,[27] actively in development as a television series at AMC Networks. The synopsis for the series via Studio System reads: *"When Malik learns from his dying grandfather that he is the latest in a line of African sorcerers, he goes on a quest to discover the roots of his power, and uses his magic to become a guardian of his home of Harlem."*

The corresponding tagged keywords include: adaptation, Africa, drama, fantasy, graphic, novel, Harlem, historical, inheritance, magic, New York, quest, South

As demonstrated by the two examples, tagged keywords can relate to the synopsis, the genres, and or thematic relevance of the material, itself.

In order to compile a list of keywords that would adequately encompass the breadth of what this study was looking to examine, 20 articles were randomly selected via UCLA Library's Article Database. Each of the articles had to mention "Afrofuturism" or "Africanfuturism" in the title (there were no articles found that could be associated with Africanjujuism). Combing through these randomly selected articles allowed for common keywords to be found and compiled. Once this list was compiled, these keywords were used to filter TV, film, and digital projects in Studio System, IMDbPro, and Deadline.[23–25] A compilation of the specific keywords used as filters can be found in appendix 2.

In addition to keyword criteria, in order to warrant further examination, variables had to include "Black," "African," "Africa," "African-American," any of the 54 African country mentions or their related demonyms in their loglines, synopses and/or tagged keywords (exclusive to Studio System). Doing so ensured that this study would examine dependent variables that bore relevance to Black identities. Projects or variables also had to be in-development and include the attachment to at least one U.S.-based production company, studio, or network, in addition to including at least one key creative attachment, such as a writer, producer, or director.

Flow Chart Criteria and Validation Process of Variables

The flow chart below illustrates the validation process. The blue arrows with Black outline represent the process employed to reach the categorization of the research findings. Yellow boxes represent a validation question, while purple boxes represent distinct categories. Red boxes indicate that the criteria were *not* met, and green boxes indicate that criteria were met.
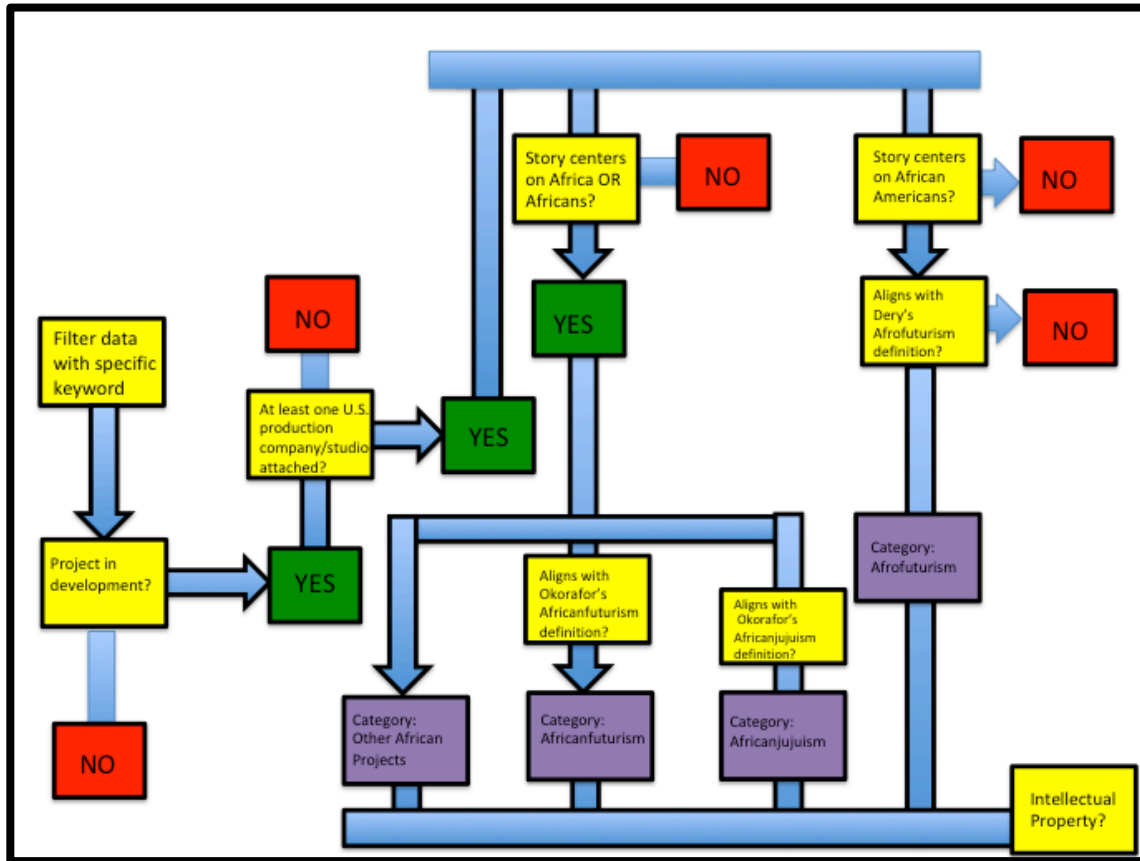
Figure 2. Flow Chart illustrating Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria for Selection of Projects

After initially filtering the data with relevant keywords, projects that were "in development," had at least one U.S. production company, studio, or network attached, centered around Africa and/or African Americans and aligned with the definitions set forth by their architects were broken into their respective categories. Once projects had been

associated with Africa or Africans, they would be funneled into one of three categories: Africanfuturism, Africanjujuism, or "Other African Projects." The Other African Projects category encompassed projects that did not align with the definitions for Africanfuturism or Africanjujuism, but still centered Africa or Africans. The impetus for this was to comprehend which African categories relied more on pervasive tropes such as "white saviors," "poverty," and or "corruption" as central components of their overall narratives. At the end of the validation process, there was an additional decision box to delineate between original and IP-based projects. The intention behind this was to examine the extent to which intellectual property was contributing to Afrofuturistic, Africanfuturistic, and Africanjujuistic projects in development.

Examining Tropes Embedded in Films about Africa

Utilizing an IMDb list of the 100 Best Films in Africa, curated by ArtiShreder,[28] films produced by U.S. production companies were extrapolated and analyzed for consistent tropes. The top ten films produced by U.S. production companies includes *Hotel Rwanda* (2004),[29] *The Last King of Scotland* (2006),[9] *Beasts of No Nation* (2015),[10] *Queen of Katwe* (2016),[30] *Blood Diamond* (2006),[31] *Gorillas in the Mist* (1988),[32] *Out of Africa* (1985),[33] *Invictus* (2009),[34] and *The English Patient* (1996),[35] and *Tears of the Sun* (2003).[36] In an analysis of this sample of ten films, six have plots that centralize war, three have plots that centralize poverty, three have plots that centralize corruption, and seven have white protagonists. After further analyzing, the loglines and synopses of films on the entire list of 100, there were 11 consistent negative tropes that seemed to define films with at least one U.S. production company: Poverty, Terrorism, Abduction/Escape/Rescue, White Protagonists, War, Corruption, Refugees, Genocide, Slavery, and Pirates. To further corroborate that these tropes were consistent among films about Africa or Africans with at least one U.S. production company, an analysis of the loglines and synopses for films nominated for Academy Awards (about Africa or Africans) was conducted. The list of five films includes:

1. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)[37]
2. *Blood Diamond* (2006)[31]
3. *Captain Phillips* (2013)[38]
4. *Cry Freedom* (1987)[39]
5. *District 9* (2009)[40]

Every one of the five films involves a white protagonist, three have stories where corruption is pivotal to the storyline, and two involve war. It should be noted that films could have more than one trope. For example, *Tears of the Sun* (2003)[36] centralizes a white

protagonist and also has a plot that involves corruption, refugees, terrorism, and war. The research findings also reflect this non-mutual exclusivity. Also worth noting is that four out of the five are based on or inspired by a true story.

Methodological Limitations

While figures from international productions may have increased the data pool, the scope of this research project was limited to productions with at least one U.S. attachment—a production company, studio, and/or network. The impetus for this was threefold: 1) to set finite boundaries on the quantity of data that was surveyed 2) to set parameters for ensuring the legitimacy of projects 3) to pull data from projects that had the potential to be consumed by the widest pools of audiences. In attempting to pull data from "popular media" or projects with the potential to be consumed by the widest audiences, it was important to consider the source of the most significant impact on global film and television, in terms of quantity, impact, and the ability to shape global perspectives—Hollywood. According to the Motion Picture Association, American storytelling accounts for $17.2 billion in annual exports, more than any other country.[41]

With regard to the approach employed by this study, it is important to note that classifying projects into the categories of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism did present its difficulties. While a validation method that relied on specific criteria helped to qualify projects, once they met initial "yes" and "no" criteria, assessing whether or not the project aligned with the definitions did involve elements of subjectivity. In terms of their categorical fit, projects were not always mutually exclusive and sometimes

there were not accessible descriptions that contained enough information to best determine fit. Additionally, there may have been outlier keywords outside of the compiled list used for this study that could have also helped to filter projects. Therefore, another tactic could have been employed to source keywords, as it is possible that this study may have missed projects. Lastly, there may also have been a number of projects in development that studios, networks, and production companies have refrained from publicizing at this stage and thus, they may not be included in the databases that were used for this study.

Results

Quantitative Research Findings & Discussion

Combing through thousands of original and IP-based film, television, and digital projects

utilizing Studio System, IMDb Pro, and Deadline as sources, the following findings were

produced:

	Original Projects	IP-based Projects*	Totals
Afrofuturism	37	8	45
Africanfuturism	2	2	4
Africanjujuism	11	4	15
**Other African Projects	52	33	85
Totals	102	47	149

Table 1. Distribution of projects across select genres of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and
Africanjujuism
*IP = Intellectual Property
**Other African Projects are defined as those that center Africa or Africans, but do not align with
Africanfuturism or Africanjujuism

As indicated by the findings, there were 45 Afrofuturism projects, four

Africanfuturism projects, and 15 Africanjujuism projects in development from April 2021 to

June 2021 that aligned with the respected definitions for this study, totaling 64 projects

within those three categories. Fourteen of the 64 projects, roughly 22 percent, were based on

previously existing intellectual properties and 50 projects, roughly 78 percent, were original

projects. Appendices C-F list the specific projects found in the categories of Afrofuturism,

Africanfuturism, Africanjujuism, and Other African Projects, respectively. Appendix F also

has projects based on true stories highlighted in pink.

According to the findings, there were 52 other original African projects and 33 IP-

based African projects (outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism) during the time

period the data for this study was extracted. The category of "Other African Projects" was

included in this study to compare and contrast the thematic associations of television, film, and digital projects outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism with projects included in the categories of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism. The intention was to comprehend if historically pervasive tropes about Africa and Africans were more persistent inside or outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism. The following table breaks down the findings:

Trope	Africanfuturism	Africanjujuism	Other African Projects**
Poverty	0	0	3
Terrorism	0	0	4
Abduction/Escape/Rescue	1	1	16
Animal-centric / Animal Poaching	0	1	9
White Protagonists	0	0	10
War	0	0	15
Corruption	0	0	13
Refugees	0	0	3
Genocide	0	0	1
Slavery	0	1	0

Table 2. Distribution of projects across select genres of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism and their association with select tropes
**Other African Projects are defined as those that center Africa or Africans, but do not align with Africanfuturism or Africanjujuism

The research suggested that in the pool of four television, film, and digital projects in the Africanfuturism category, there was only one persistent negative trope (a 25 percent rate of trope saturation). In the pool of 15 of Africanjujuism television, film, and digital projects, there were only three negative tropes (a 20 percent rate of trope saturation). However, in the pool of 85 television, film, and digital projects outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism, there were 74 negative tropes (an 87 percent rate of trope saturation).

The clustered column chart below visually illustrates the difference in the number of tropes found in the pools of television, film, and digital projects.
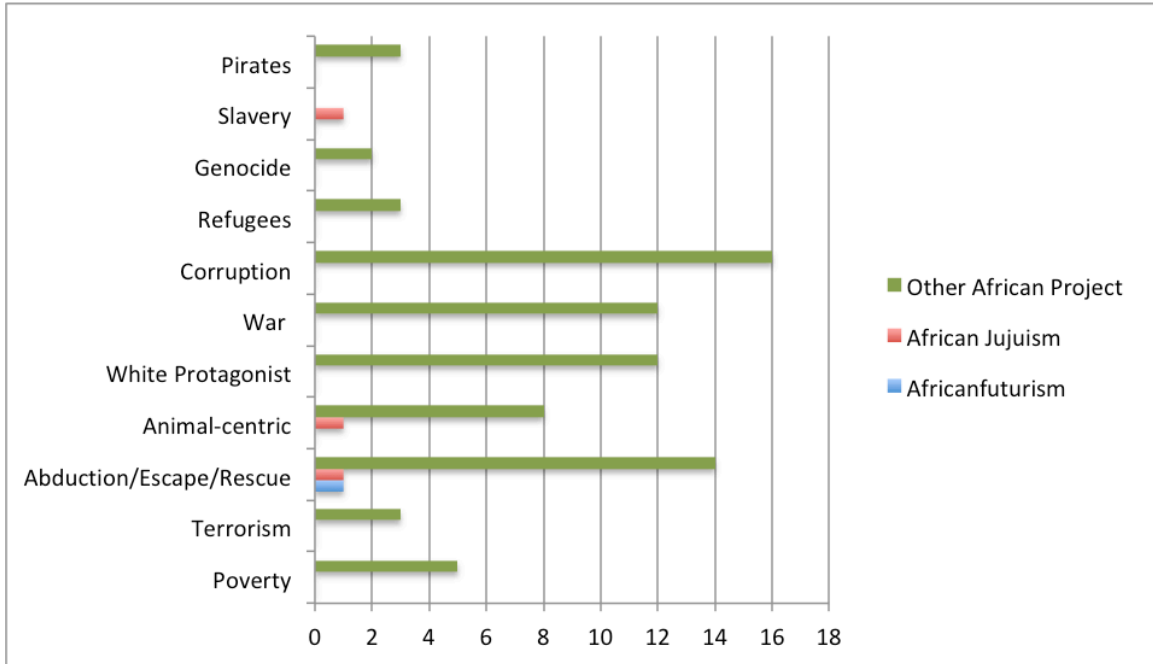
Figure 3. Bar Chart illustrating Distribution of Projects across Select Genres of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism and their Association with Select Tropes

As expected, more projects were found within the category of Afrofuturism, which is of course, in line with Hollywood prioritizing stories that revolve around American experiences, albeit, African American experiences. However, the low number of Africanfuturistic projects is noteworthy considering there were almost four times as many projects found within the category of Africanjujuism, even though a literature review suggested Africanjujuism might produce the fewest findings. These data, therefore, bear particular consideration, given that Africanfuturism highlights imaginings of the future and the future's confluence of technology, cyber-culture, but specifically prioritizes Africa. This is in comparison to the category of Africanjujuism, which highlights what we deem as the supernatural and mystical. Given the quantitative data, there still seems to be low imaginings of Africa and/or Africans as future-oriented. Is Hollywood suggesting that

representations of Africa and/or Africans as unknown, mystical, and supernatural are more palatable than representations of Africa and/or Africans as futuristic or technologically advanced?

When it comes to historically pervasive tropes about Africa and Africans, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism seem to highlight different and potentially more positive portrayals than projects outside of these categories. It is also noteworthy that negative trope association appears to be robust (87 percent) outside of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism. Given the social-cultural sensitivity of 2021 and "cancel culture," one might fathom that such sensitivities would result in more positively associated representations of Africa and/or Africans. It bears asking—who is holding Hollywood accountable for these representations of Africa and/or Africans? Are there Africans actively involved in the development and creation of these projects? And if so, what creative capacity do they have to influence these narratives?

After analyzing the projects in the category of *Other African Projects*, we found that 21 (approximately 25 percent) of these projects are based on true stories, potentially in line with the fact that this category also has the highest number of stories based on intellectual property (63 percent). Mainstream adaptations of true stories about Africa and Africans have historically relied on tropes and skew toward the negative, as exemplified by films like *The Battle of Algiers*,[42,43] *Black Hawk Down*,[44,45] *Hotel Rwanda*,[29] and *Blood Diamond*,[31] among others. Therefore, it seems plausible, that once again, not much has changed in Hollywood, when it comes to representations of Africa and Africans.

It should be noted that because a project utilizes one or more historically negative and pervasive trope(s), it does not necessarily imply that the project will be received negatively. Additionally, this study did not look outside of the given time period to determine if there were temporal changes of negative or positive trope association over time.

Qualitative Findings

A collection of 20 diverse, prominent, and accomplished executives, writers, authors, actors, producers, and agents interviewed over the course of 2021 contributed to dynamic findings that both underscore and diverge from findings in the quantitative analysis of this study. Within this population, awareness of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism ranged in quite drastic proportions. Regardless of categorical awareness, these interviews contributed to many wide-ranging findings that we have chosen to extrapolate and group into three main categories:

    1) Awareness & Acquisition,

    2) Unique Challenges,

    3) Identity and Authenticity.

In this section we will explore:

(a) How intellectual property based on Black speculative fiction is now, more than ever, playing a role in Hollywood acquisitions;

(b) How different industry stakeholders use and recognize the terms Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism;

(c) The impact of *Black Panther* and its role in potentially catalyzing other projects; and

(d) How a confluence of socio-cultural movements and globalization may have influenced Hollywood in the development and acquisition of more original Black speculative fictional projects.

Intellectual Property (IP)

While there were Black speculative fiction writers in the 19th century, it is unreasonable, possibly even sacrilegious, to open a conversation about Black speculative fiction IP without starting the conversation with the Octavia Butler (1947-2006), the first science fiction author to receive a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. During the course of 19 interviews, her name came up organically in over a quarter of them. The late author wrote over 25 books, creating innovative worlds that catapulted Black protagonists into spaces where white authors had scarcely, if ever, permitted Black characters to reside, at least not in affirming ways. However, despite winning multiple Hugo and Nebula Awards— designated to the best of science fiction and fantasy writing, Butler never quite achieved mainstream success during her lifetime. In a sense, Butler preceded her time— "Afrofuturism," as people recognize it today, had not yet emerged and the larger sci-fi industry was unwilling to create the space for Butler's stories or any other Black sci-fi and fantasy writers to be seen or heard. Author, screenwriter, and lecturer Steven Barnes was writing sci-fi during the same time period and posits that it was he, Butler, Samuel R. Delaney for quite a long time. Referencing Butler's sentiments about the industry's disregard for Black writers, Barnes suggests "She was hurt by the rejection in the field. They put green women on the covers of her books, but not Black women." Writing in the 1970s and 1980s, dominant thought was that Black people were not represented in science fiction because Black people did not like science fiction. During his earlier days, Barnes acknowledges that he did not talk about race in his books because there was no way to make a sustainable living as a Black sci-fi writer tackling issues of race in sci-fi.

With this historical context in mind, we can now shift back to the present, where a significant number of Octavia Butler's novels have been optioned, and not just optioned, but are actively moving forward in development. According to Butler's site, Issa Rae and J.J. Abrams are executive producing an adaptation of Butler's *Fledgling*,[46] A24 (production company) has acquired the rights to Butler's *Parable of the Sower*,[47] a pilot adaptation of *Kindred*[26] at FX recently attached a director and cast, an adaptation of *Dawn*[48] is being developed by MACRO, and Viola Davis's JuVee Productions is developing an adaptation of *Wild Seed*[49] at Amazon Studios.

Butler's intellectual property, once undervalued in the entertainment industry, is now serving as a foundation for Afrofuturistic TV, film, and digital adaptations. It is possible that when Afrofuturism gained recognition among Black creatives in Hollywood, there was an initiative to find robust sources of intellectual property and Octavia Butler was that source. Given the acquisition of Butler's work alone, it is surprising that quantitative data suggests that only 18% of the current Afrofuturistic projects in development stem from intellectual property; it would seem that this number would be higher.

Regardless of the specific number, it can be presumed that as the Afrofuturistic, Africanfuturistic, and Afrojujuistic pools expand, there will be more TV, film, and digital projects based on that IP, especially when those projects perform critically and commercially. Ahmadou Seck, a Senegalese-American VP of TV Development at production company MACRO (*Fences*, *Judas & The Black Messiah*, and *Raising Dion*) agrees. "IP is super important in this industry," he said. "Across the board, whether it is a

book, graphic novel, a comic, an article, life of rights; it is something the industry just has been moving more towards—a trend of […], if it was successful here, it should be successful there." This is especially true when considering both Marvel and DC create films that gross in the hundreds of millions; even billions of dollars, and most of those projects are predicated on intellectual property.

Awareness Among Industry Stakeholders

As expected, a common theme among many of my research participants was some familiarity with Afrofuturism, but not as much recognition of the specifics of its categorical depth as a genre that encompasses various aesthetics and art forms or its intention of creating space for African-Americans to project themselves into the future. There was even less familiarity with Africanfuturism and almost no knowledge of Africanjujuism. However, use of the terminology seemed to change depending on the population, with 1) industry profession and 2) race potentially impacting the degree to which such terminology is used. However, more qualitative interviews would need to be done to corroborate this conjecture. Despite Mark Dery, a white cultural critic and author serving as the constructor of the specific term "Afrofuturism," it is possible that ownership of the term is now more salient among Black populations (Afro-Caribbean, African-American, and African populations). Despite her personal familiarity and the familiarity of Afrofuturism amongst her clients, Lubna Salad, a Somali international television agent at Creative Artists Agency, who works primarily on the African continent and in the Middle East expressed, "I am yet to be on a call where someone is like 'I have got an Afrofuturistic project.' [In terms of selling] It would be this is a grounded sci-fi piece with an African protagonist centered around a mother in Kenya, who is looking for her son, who disappeared on a spaceship, when she first had him. […] I do not know that I have personally had someone say, 'it is Afrofuturistic.'" Sean T. Daily, a Caucasian book to screen agent at Hotchkiss & Associates in New York, seemed to concur with Salad's sentiments on the use of the terminology. Daily, who represents African-American Hugo-award-winning, science fiction and fantasy author N.K. Jemisin (who many associate with Afrofuturism) had this to say about selling

her trilogy *Broken Earth*, currently in development at both TriStar Pictures and Michael B. Jordan's Outlier Society: "I actually did not use the term Afrofuturism or Africanfuturism. I do not use that term. […] I was not confident enough that it applies to use it as part of my pitch. I am fine if people categorize it that way."

A 2020 research study conducted by Dr. Darnell Hunt, Dean of the Social Sciences at the UCLA College of Letters, found that 84% of senior executives in the entertainment industry identify as White. Therefore, if the categories of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, which have been associated with "positive" or more holistic representations of Black identities, are largely used, owned, or seen as belonging primarily to Black people, it makes sense that individuals selling projects to such executives do not (and could not) use the term to sell projects because of a possible lack of awareness (and or education) on the part of the executive population that make decisions.

While agents might not use the terms as frequently, a conversation with MACRO's Ahmadou Seck suggests that Black development executives and Black production companies may possess more of an awareness of the terminologies and actively use them in their development. Seck claims that conversations are happening, however, they may be relegated to the Black creative community in Hollywood—"One is sort of from the African fantasy folklore aspect of it. And the second is far more of the sci-fi, IP, novel piece of it all," he says. And in that effort, Seck and MACRO are not only actively having conversations; they have (and are aware that they have) projects in the categories of Afrofuturism and Africanjujuism. MACRO has the TV adaptation of Octavia Butler's

Dawn, which revolves around a Black woman resurrecting the entire human race centuries after a nuclear war with the help of aliens, set up at Amazon with Victoria Mahoney and Ava Duvernay. They also have an African fantasy project that they are developing with writer/director Blitz Bazawule (*The Burial of Kojo*[50] and the upcoming musical adaptation of *The Color Purple*[51]) that is set in Ghana during Kwame Nkrumah's presidency.

There may also be distinctions in awareness and understanding in TV and film versus the publishing industry, as an interview with David Pomerico, editorial director of Harper Voyager (a division of Harper Collins) suggest. However, Pomerico's awareness might be higher since he specifically works in a division that focuses on adult science fiction and fantasy writers. Pomerico acknowledges that his division this year will release novels from writers of whom 90% identify as white and affirms that he is committed to making concerted efforts to acquire works from more biracial, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) authors, even allowing for open submissions from BIPOC authors on Twitter. Pomerico underscores that Afrofuturism has a hope and a pride that saturates projects within these categories, noting that "[they] envision a hopeful future where everything is not predicated on both maleness and whiteness."

Black Panther's Industry Impact and Role in Increasing Awareness of Afrofuturism

On February 16, 2018, Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther* was released into U.S. theaters and ultimately went on to gross over $700 million domestically and over $1.3 billion worldwide. The film received 11 Oscar nominations, including "Best Picture"—a first for a Marvel film. *Black Panther* clearly resonated with audiences and critics and thus had an impact on an industry that once claimed "Black films do not perform well overseas." While quantifying and assessing that impact presents its challenges, its bearing on not just Black speculative fiction, but also TV shows and films with African protagonists, and even TV, film, and digital projects with *any* underrepresented population cannot be trivialized. Culturally, it became one of, if not the predominant work associated with Afrofuturism. Mentions of *Black Panther* came up organically with nearly every single one of the 19 interview participants, so much that multiple participants referenced it as "The Black Panther Effect" in parallel fashion.

Initially, this study sought to quantify the number of Afrofuturistic, Africanfuturistic, and Africanjujuistic film, TV, and digital projects in development or released three years prior to *Black Panther* and three years after *Black Panther*—as the film occupies a definitive point in history: pre and post *Black Panther*. However, initial data suggested that the number of Black speculative fictional film, TV, and digital projects released, or in development, prior to *Black Panther* was so minimal that a further examination would have produced little findings. However, post-*Black Panther* (as indicated by the quantitative data), there seems to be a surge in the number of projects in development and moving forward beyond development.

Based on Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Marvel comic, the original *Black Panther* source material dates back to 1966. However, it was not until African-American executive producer Nate Moore joined Marvel in March 2010 that development on a *Black Panther* film was invigorated. According to Moore, prior to that point, it had been something that Marvel was thinking about, but had not necessarily put into active development. After making a slew of other superhero pictures, including the first *Thor* movie and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, Moore pitched the idea of introducing the Black Panther in *Captain America: Civil War* to the president of Marvel Studios, Kevin Feige, and Feige cosigned. This effort has to be underscored; Moore played a role in the reason why *Black Panther* made it to the screens. *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) ended up serving as a case-study for how audiences might receive *Black Panther* and Wakanda, as it introduced Boseman as T'Challa, John Kani as King T'Chaka, and Florence Kasumba as a Dora Milaje Security Chief. Given the favorable response, *Black Panther* was fast-tracked into development and thus reached domestic and global audiences in 2018.

In interviewing Moore for this study, he described how *Black Panther* served as a template for how stories could dive further into cultural specifics. Even at Marvel, it gave both a permission and obligation for the storytellers behind subsequent projects like *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*[52] and *Ms. Marvel*[53] to dive deeper, steeping their characters in authentic and culturally-enriched worlds. Moore and director Ryan Coogler were well aware of the weight in being "a first" with Moore articulating, "To me, the weight

was making sure the movie worked. Because if the movie did not work, it would prevent other movies like this from being made."

The impact of *Black Panther* on the industry can be summed up in the sentiments of BAFTA-award-winning Nigerian-British actress of *Lovecraft Country*[54] and *Loki*,[55] Wunmi Mosaku. In our written interview, Mosaku stated, "I never had much interest in horror, fantasy or sci-fi genres. I think that was because of lack of representation in many ways, not just a lack of people who looked like me leading these stories, but a lack of representation of ideas and issues I care about. I felt that way until I watched *Get Out*[56] and *Black Panther,*[1] and I was invigorated by both, which is why I really wanted to be a part of *Lovecraft*." Mosaku and others might agree that it is not that Black stories and characters need permission to exist in futuristic spaces, but when they do and when they deal with issues innate to Black experiences, it unlocks barriers, enabling other stories, characters, and worlds to potentially be seen in similar spaces. The inverse of this is that when there are not stories specific to Black experiences within speculative fiction, it can make one feel like those stories cannot reside in those spaces. And if anything, it potentially steers stories and storytellers away from those areas.

Nigerian-American writers and creators of the upcoming series, *Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation*,[57] in pre-production with director Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*)[58] at Showtime, Tolu Awosika and Olumide Odebunmi, acknowledged that *Black Panther* cracked the door open for them. They suggested that the film allowed the industry to be more receptive to hearing stories about African greatness. When I asked Awosika and Odebunmi to rate (on a

scale of 1 to 10) how much *Black Panther* opened the door for a project like *Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation*—10 being it was all *Black Panther* and 1 being it did not do anything, Odebunmi replied, " I think it is got to be like an eight. These stories existed and of course, they were rich and amazing and great. Filmmakers always existed to tell them, but for people to actually say, 'oh my goodness,' we want to make a story like this, *Black Panther* really changed the narrative for this kind of scale."

Fatmata Kamara, a Sierra-Leonean agent at Creative Artists Agency (former) and now A3 Artists Agency, represented Winston Duke at the time of his casting as M'Baku in *Black Panther.* She believes that the film started a conversation. However, this conversation had been taking place prior to *Black Panther* and prior to Hollywood's recognition of Afrofuturism. MACRO's Ahmadou Seck echoed this sentiment in stating, "With *Black Panther* and the "Black Panther Effect," there were a lot of books that were bought up across the board from African fantasy writers. […] And we are going to start to see these types of stories come out, not only in film, but in TV pretty soon." Actor Bambadjan Bamba (*The Good Place*, *Bosch*) who played the Militant Leader in *Black Panther* (a scene when T'Challa rescues Nakia and young women from a Boko Haram-esque raid) says that with the film on his resume, he is able to get into more casting rooms and has been considered for more opportunities. Other actors who had starring roles in *Black Panther* have subsequently banked the cache to lead TV, film and digital projects, even if they had not done so previously—Letitia Wright in *Small Axe*, Winston Duke in *Us* and *Spenser Confidential*, for example. The reverberating impact is that Wright, Duke, and other stars of *Black Panther* have been established in the science-fiction genre and it is likely that they will receive

consideration for other projects in similar scopes and sizes, helping to project more Black

faces into futuristic and fantastical spaces.

Culminating Effects: Social-Cultural Movements & Globalization

Like other incidences of police brutality, the 9 minutes and 29 seconds that George Floyd was pinned down under the weight of Officer Derek Chauvin's knee resulting in Floyd's murder—the public response was something that could have been nothing more than a short-lived hashtag. However, there was something different about this specific incident that triggered not just America, but the entire world. Maybe it was the legacy of frustration from unjust murders, systemic discrimination, and racial violence. Maybe it was the timing—a global lockdown due to COVID-19. Maybe it was the social media visibility. Maybe it was the organizational banner of Black Lives Matter. Regardless of what it was, the impact was unprecedented—protests erupted across the globe—Kyoto to Nairobi to Prague to Lyon, garnering the attention of policy makers and industries, alike. Compounded with years of groundwork for other social-justice movements including #OscarsSoWhite, Time's Up, Marriage Equality, Me Too, Immigrant Rights, and Indigenous Sovereignty—the murder of George Floyd was viewed by many as a final tipping point. There is a trend to view these movements in isolation. However, looking at a macro view, these movements shared the common denominator of deconstructing and diminishing systemic inequalities in all spheres of life. Therefore, progress from one movement often generated progress for another movement.

With George Floyd's murder as the final tipping point, companies in historically inequitable industries, companies that had never taken a political stance against systemic racism, not only issued public statements, but made financial contributions to organizations fighting injustices, vowing to do better, themselves. Organizations like the National Football

46

League, which, just a few years prior had blackballed athletes like Colin Kaepernick for taking active measures to speak out against systemic racism, were now donating to causes in support of those same stances. The ensuing result was that Hollywood, a reactive industry, was forced to look at its internal operations and development slates and consider if they were part of the problem or part of the solution.

According to an article written by Greg Braxton and Ryan Faughnder of the Los Angeles Times, J.J. Abrams Bad Robot pledged $10 million to social justice organizations including Black Lives Matter, Comcast pledged $100 million, Sony pledged $100 million, and Viamcom pledged $5 million.[59] In addition to monetary pledges, companies created pipeline programs to funnel more diverse talent into opportunities and positions that have historically have low representation. According to Braxton and Faughnder, Amazon developed The Howard Entertainment Program, the first fully accredited partnership between an HBCU and a major studio and Sony also created a pipeline program and first-look-deal with Jeff Friday, who founded The American Black Film Festival.

Despite initially being cynical about whether or not Hollywood was truly progressing, Ahmadou Seck of MACRO affirmed, "We are starting to see quotas being put [in place] for shows and diversity and metrics to be hit. And then a lot of these first-look deals that are taking place or whatnot. I do think people are, you know, having the opportunity to tell the stories they want to tell and have them out there to be consumed."

Connecting the dots, it is possible that in recent years and even in recent months, the industry's shifts have contributed to more open doors for Afrofuturistic, Africanfuturistic, and Africanjujuistic projects. Given the national awareness and sensitivity to incidences of trauma and brutality against Black and Brown bodies, Hollywood has had to make pivots away from narratives that showcase Black and Brown trauma, in favor of more nuanced stories that include redemption and empowerment. Regarding George Floyd's murder and national protests, agent, Sean Daily of Hotchkiss & Associates said, "I feel like there was a push for more stories that are triumphant, or comedies, or action films or sci-fi with Black leads, and Black interests, you know. And it does not mean that those stories ignore race or do not deal with it, but we are not making *12 Years A Slave* over and over again right now."

In addition to increasing awareness and public sensitivities, the world is more globally connected and in a similar fashion, so is Hollywood. A trend that started with the advent of the Internet and led to social media and now, the increase of streaming services— it has all resulted in more curious, educated, and global audiences. A number of phenomena have occurred that point to the validity of such a conjecture: global streaming hits like *Indian Matchmaking*,[60] *Money Heist*,[61] *Squid Game*,[62] and critical awards and nominations for more foreign-language films like South-Korean thriller *Parasite*[63] and Mexican drama *Roma*,[64] or even the global rise of K-Pop artists like Black Pink and BTS—it is all highlighted that entertainment can reach and be consumed by global audiences. According to reports from Variety Magazine, Hwang Dong-hyuk's *Squid Game* is now the most watched original show on Netflix, besting Shonda Rhimes' *Bridgerton*[65] with 1.65 billion hours streamed in the show's first four weeks,[66] 2.6 more streams that Bridgerton's first four

weeks. Hollywood now has to consider global audiences now more than ever—so the idea creating a global hit with all white protagonists is no longer a viable economic model. Report from Creative Artists Agency and Parrot Analytics found that the demand for shows where at least 40% of the cast is diverse has more than doubled in the past three years (112%).[67] In considering the viability of projects, executives can no longer ignore the African continent. Netflix has been a pioneer streamer in this area, developing Netflix Africa, an entire collection of original and acquired films and television shows that showcase African voices and experiences. Films and shows like The *Wedding Party*[68] and shows like *Blood & Water*,[69] and Q*ueen Sono* [70] have scored huge for Netflix and as a result are helping to build a devoted audience.

To tackle more global opportunities, agencies like Creative Artists Agency (CAA) are becoming more intentional about having representation on the ground in various regions and developing internal initiatives to recruit and secure more opportunities for African individuals. Interviews with CAA agents Lubna Salad, Ozi Menakaya, and Rukayat Giwa confirm that CAA is well aware of the need to have continentally-based and continentally-focused talent and literary agents. Menakaya affirms that he and other agents are building something known as "CAA Africa," a division of CAA that prioritizes African voices. With this focus, there is clearly an increasing awareness at the agency level. And that awareness comes with a more nuanced cognizance of the broad spectrum of stories that can be developed and sold, including the categories of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism.

Unique Barriers for Black Speculative Fiction

While a broader array of intellectual property, more global social-justice movements, and globalization have all contributed to the increased consciousness for Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, these projects still encounter specific barriers, in addition to the general ones associated with Black stories. According to a March 2021 report on Black Representation in Film and TV, McKinsey & Company found that "By addressing the persistent racial inequities, the industry could reap an additional $10 billion in annual revenues" (McKinsey & Company).[71] Along with this, the study found that Black stories are consistently underfunded and undervalued, despite earning more in relative earnings than projects in other categories. Therefore, in addition to still having to combat sentiments such as 'projects with Black protagonists do not sell globally,' data from McKinsey & Company's report as well as interviews with various industry professionals, there are unique barriers that projects in these categories and projects about Africa and/or Africans often face including:

1) A consistent trend of having to educate about Black experiences;

2) A lack of advocacy to push projects up the pipeline;

3) A "crabs in the barrel" choke with BIPOC projects, where only "one"   can move forward.

While the art of Hollywood pitching encompasses painting worlds and bringing multi-dimensional characters to life, Black storytellers often have to provide a foundational education on historical Black experiences. This is not just a problem that exists in Hollywood. The benchmark for education about Black experiences outside of slavery and

Civil Rights has historically been minimal, often totally neglecting African history. In the United States, there is no national curriculum for teaching U.S. History. It is therefore not surprising that a 2015 study conducted by the National Museum of African American History and Culture and Oberg Research found that only 1-2 lessons or 8-9% of class time is devoted to Black history in U.S. classrooms.[72,73] A tenant of both Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism includes a re-envisioning of lost pasts to envision better futures and as such, understandings of Black histories are critical; while Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism do not necessarily subscribe to the same linearity in science fiction, they do involve a reification of past traumas. However, in telling stories that deal with Black experiences, Black storytellers are not only tasked with educating pitch rooms on the characters and the world, but also providing additional factual histories that contextualize these characters in these worlds. While educating pitch rooms to some degree is expected, the degree to which Black storytellers have to educate may cause hurdles that other storytellers do not have to endure, potentially inhibiting projects from moving forward. The human instinct to gravitate towards what is familiar then becomes problematic, especially, when pitch rooms are not diverse. Tolu Awosika and Olumide Odebunmi recall such an experience when pitching a project about Nigeria. "We went in with so much pictures and decks and reference points. Like, this is what Nigeria looks like today. […] We would have to visually inundate every room about what was going on [in Nigeria]."

In addition to a lack of general education about Black experiences and more specifically, a lack of knowledge about Africa and African experiences, we have to acknowledge how the media, and not only classrooms, have contributed to both one-

dimensional and negative associations. A 2019 inaugural research project conducted by The Africa Narrative, formerly based at the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, analyzed 700,000 hours of television programming and found that 44% of TV shows and movies solely mention "Africa," without referencing particular countries.[74] Additionally, in that 700,000 hours of television programming, there were only 25 major scripted storylines about Africa, and over half of those storylines revolved around crime. According to the study, "Overall, viewers were more than twice as likely to see negative depictions of Africa than positive ones in major storylines about Africa".[74] And it seems that little is changing, when considering the broad category of stories in/or about Africa and Africans, as this finding correlates with data from the quantitative portion of this study where current projects in development (outside of the categories of Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism) have an 87 percent rate of trope saturation, skewing largely toward the negative.

With this understanding, what is the impact of these dominant one-dimensional and negative associations when it comes to pitch rooms? Do potential conscious and subconscious biases and a lack of education contribute to barriers that inhibit projects from being greenlit? If 87 percent of TV executives and 92 percent of film executives are white,[71] one has to ask, do these individuals have the understanding and background to advocate for these projects. Do the projects that make it up the pipeline have a 'white gaze'? What reference points do executives have when determining if a project can move forward? And even if executives do not possess the fundamental understanding or background, do they possess the ability to develop questions that can move them toward an understanding? In

this regard, would have Black Panther manifested onscreen, if executive, Nate Moore, was not there to advocate for it? A potential problem also lies in the fact that former studio executives have a track record of getting production deals as independent producers—so if those same executives, who *potentially* do not possess a foundation to advocate for nuanced Black stories are now creating stories, but have built-in advocacy for their projects, we fall into a pattern of seeing recycled tropes, especially when it comes to Africa and/or African projects.

The various levels of gatekeepers in the entertainment industry demand that each level needs an advocate. A huge part of advocacy has to do with tastes and personal preferences. The first of these advocates include agents and managers, the second include production company executives, and the third include studio or network executives. However, within each of these levels, there are additional levels and gatekeepers, multiple approval processes—collective decisions, and projects do not move forward unless they have the backing to propel them up the development chain. Screenwriter and producer, Kay Oyegun (*This Is Us*), [4] re-envisioned an adaptation of Tomi Adeyemi's New York Times best-selling Nigerian fantasy, *Children of Blood and Bone*[75] over two and half years ago that still has not gone into production. Oyegun described the development bottleneck where things are bought, but not necessarily developed. "I think there is always going to be a buying spree, but then what they are struggling with is sort of like a pulling the trigger on making the decision. Therein lies the big conundrum. It is like you will buy it, but will you program it? You will buy it, but will you put it on screen?" she said. While this bottleneck is not unique to Black speculative fiction, it is concerning when there is already such a small

pool of projects in that category. Rukayat Giwa, a Nigerian-American scripted agent at Creative Artists Agency suggests this contributes to a "crabs in a barrel" reality, where we only get *one*. "If a production company or studio or network has one project centered around Afrofuturism, they are like 'okay,' we have that covered, even it deals with different things, but I do not think that is specific to African content, more just specific to content that is not from a white angle." Sean Daily echoed similar sentiments, providing a point of comparison in suggesting that there might only be one huge Afrofuturism project greenlit, but "You could probably develop a huge sci-fi with Chris Pratt, at the same time as you develop a huge sci-fi with Chris Pine. I do not think they would say 'Oh, we have our one.'"

When advocates are in the room, there is the potential for stories to be enriched. Looking at TV productions, McKinsey & Company's report on Black Representation in TV and Film found that Black advocates advocate for other Black creative, as four out of five shows with Black creators also have Black showrunners.[71] This has implications for how other departments run and operate. However, only 5% of TV showrunners are Black.[71] Zimbabwean actress, Sibongile Mlambo (*Sirens*,[76] *Lost In Space*,[77] *Teen Wolf*[78]) recalls how working on *Lovecraft Country*[79] was her first experience with a Black showrunner, Misha Gren, and the difference in terms of story enrichment. Mlambo, who usually brings her own supplies to make-up and hair departments because of prior experiences, admits to feeling silly in doing so on *Lovecraft Country* because she felt "taken care of" with Black department heads, suggesting that the overall story can improve when actors can just be actors.

Kay Oyegun recalls how having a diverse writers room led to an episode of *This Is Us* focused on Beth's (Susan Kelechi-Watson) Jamaican heritage. Oyegun detailed how the assumption can often be that Black is African-American, but when you have the advocates that know how to ask the right questions, it can lead to revelations that spark organic findings, which create richer stories and characters. Because of the advocates and conversations had, *This Is Us* writers found out that Kelechi-Watson is of Jamaican heritage. This allowed for a more collaborative process where her actual experience as a Jamaican could inform the storyline and character. Having Oyegun in the *This Is Us* writers room also helped lead to a storyline about Chi Chi (Yetide Badaki), a Nigerian immigrant, who served as the bridge for Randall (Sterling K. Brown) and his late father's city of Philadelphia.

Authenticity & Identity in Afrofuturism: Black Panther as a Case Study

In an era of "cancel culture" and increased sensitivity to media representations, deciphering what "authenticity" entails can often be a slippery slope. "Does it feel real?" is a question that many research participants alluded to when asked about authentic representations. However, the inherent subjectivity of what feels real to one person versus another person creates a chasm where the resulting effect is an analysis paralysis that actually has the potential to become an impediment. Actor Tongayi Chirisa (*Another Life,*[80] *Palm Springs,*[81] *Antebellum*[82]) believes that authenticity is important, but, "When it is an African story, [filming] outside of the borders of a said nation, who do they consult? Are they going to bring in actors from that nation? [However] If it is for the purposes of getting the project made, because of a certain name, we should also learn to embrace that." Chirisa brings attention to an important consideration—with the overwhelmingly negative representations of Africa and Africans, when it comes to films that depict Africa and/or Africans, who or what is helping to steer those projects toward authenticity? The danger of underrepresentation is such that one project becomes a beacon and is expected to speak to everyone from that underrepresented background.

With regard to authenticity, *Black Panther* executive producer, Nate Moore describes *Black Panther* as a "love letter to Africa," suggesting that it operated with the intention of highlighting cultures in Africa that have scarcely, if ever, been depicted in an empowering way. Director, Ryan Coogler, who had never been to Africa, requested the ability to travel to various countries before tackling the film, stating, according to Moore, that, "If Wakanda is going to be a real place, we really have to anchor it in as much African

language, design and texture as possible, because otherwise it is going to ring false." Balancing the tightrope between authenticity, appropriation and appreciation, Moore stated, "We made sure we had cultural advisors that we could reach out to, making sure that the people who were from the cultures we were borrowing from felt comfortable with it. And we did not always get it right. […] But we tried to make sure it was as authentic as possible for the story we were telling." Boseman, who Moore said was really the only choice to play T'Challa, was intentional with the line of questioning he had about the project, insisting that T'Challa not speak with a Western accent. Bosman also pushed back on why T'Challa would have gone to Oxford University to obtain a PhD (as original source material suggested), if Wakanda was self-contained and did not hold itself to Western standards. Boseman's impact on shaping the character and the world of Wakanda to the extent of rejecting concepts from intellectual property, needs to be underscored, as do the efforts that Moore and the creative team took to help steer the project toward authenticity.

However, it is noteworthy that out of the nine producers credited on *Black Panther*'s IMDb Pro page, Nate Moore is the only Black producer. While the project relied on its diverse collective of African and African Diasporic cast, as well as cultural advisors, there was not a single African producer on the film—a film that for many, was a first glimpse into the positive potential of narratives about Africa and Africans. This acknowledgement is by no means an effort to discredit the incredible work and great lengths that the producers and Oscar-winning production design by Hannah Beachler, and Oscar-winning wardrobe by Ruth E. Carter, but it is rather a probe into assessing the reality of what authenticity entails, especially when it comes to diverse projects.

58

In terms of its subject matter and its borrowing from a spectrum of different African cultures and societies such as the Himba, Ashanti, Igbo, and Zulu to build the world of Wakanda, Afrofuturism Professor John Jennings of the University of California, Riverside believes that *Black Panther* skews more Afrofuturistic than Africanfuturistic. "I do not think [Black Panther] is for people who are on the continent. You know, people who live in Africa do not need to feel a connection to Africa." This reality of the *Black Panther* creators piecing together the culture of Wakanda is apropos as the reality of slavery dictated that a chain was severed, and the African Diaspora was detached from the African continent. In a sense, those in the African Diaspora are also piecing together histories to gain a sense of connectedness to Africa. Therefore, *Black Panther* and the broader concept of Afrofuturism can be seen as a reclamation of that connection. Nate Moore acknowledged this theory, stating, "I think Kilmonger is very much representative of people who feel lost and feel divorced from the roots of where they are from. And the pain and the anger that comes along with that, I think is a part of what the movie tries to talk about with his character specifically."

Conclusion

At first glance, it is easy to diminish the importance of comprehending the nuance between Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism. When we however examine the historical significance of such lexicons, we understand how their existence allows for futuristic representations of Black identities to be seen as *less* radical. If the number of TV, film, and digital projects quantified under the umbrella of Black speculative fiction during this study is any indication about the future of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism, then there is at least data to suggest that audiences *should* see more projects in these categories. With the "Black Panther Effect," increasing sociocultural movements, and globalization, there are reverberations within Hollywood that are contributing to potential future growth for Black speculative fictional projects. However, awareness and recognition of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism may not reside with the gatekeepers who are making decisions on whether or not projects move forward.

When projects in these categories do make it past initial gatekeepers, they potentially face other unique hurdles that include having to educate other potential gatekeepers, not having enough advocacy, and facing issues of systemic oppression where they do not get to see the light of day because "one" project in that category already exists. Regardless of the challenges, there is a recognition that these projects occupy a unique space for both Africans and African Americans that helps steer past historical tropes, highlighting Black identities in ways that are affirming.

In the future, there are a number of considerations that could contribute to additional illuminating data. These considerations include: 1) following up after a given amount of time to see how many of the Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjujuism projects that are currently in development actually get made, 2) surveying agents and managers in Hollywood to comprehend their recognition of Black/African history and their understanding of the terms encompassed under Black speculative fiction, and 3) comprehending how Black speculative fictional storytellers across the African continent perceive their narratives and if there are initiatives to use their stories to help combat the negative perceptions and historical tropes that often color Africa and Africans in the Western media.

Appendices
Appendix A: List of Qualitative Interview Subjects

Zoom Interviews:
1) Ahmadou Seck, Development Director, Macro
2) Bambadjan Bamba, Actor, *Black Panther*
3) David Pomerico, Editorial Director, Harper Collins
4) Fatmata Kamara, Talent Agent A3 | Former Creative Artists Agency Agent
5) Josiah Akinyele, Talent Agent, Innovative Artists
6) John Jennings, Afrofuturism Professor, University of California, Riverside
7) Kaylon Hunt, VP of Development & Production, JuVee Productions
8) Kay Oyegun, Writer, *This Is Us* & Upcoming Adaptation of *Children of Blood & Bone*
9) Lubna Salad, Taent Agent, Creative Artists Agency
10) Megan Reid, VP of Development, FX
11) Nate Moore, Exec Producer, *Black Panther*
12) Rukyat Giwa, Talent Agent, Creative Artists Agency
13) Sibongile Mlambo, Actress, *Love Craft Country*
14) Steven Barnes, Author
15) Tananrive Due, Author & Professor
16) Tongayi Chirisa, Actor, *Another Life*

Phone Calls:
1) Olu Odebunmi, Writer and Creator, *Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation*
2) Ozi Menakaya, Talent Agent, Creative Artists Agency
3) Tolu Awosika, Writer and Creator, *Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation*

Written Interview:
1) Wunmi Mosaku, Actress, *Love Craft Country*

Appendix B: List of Keywords Utilized

Afrofuturism		
Africa	Apocalypse	
African	Apocalypse	
Black	Apocalypse	
Africa	Apocalyptic	
African	Apocalyptic	
Black	Apocalyptic	
African	Futurism	
Africa	Futurism	
Black	Futurism	
Africa	Futuristic	
African	Futuristic	
Black	Futuristic	
Africa	Future	
African	Future	
Black	Future	
Africa	Scientific	
African	Scientific	
Black	Scientific	
Africa	Sci-Fi	
African	Sci-Fi	
Black	Sci-Fi	
Africa	Fiction	
African	Fiction	
Africa	Fantasy	
African	Fantasy	
Black	Fantasy	
Africa	Imagination	
African	Imagination	
Black	Imagination	
Africa	Technology	

African	Technology	
Black	Technology	
Africa	Mythical	
African	Mythical	
Black	Mythical	
Africa	Myth	
African	Myth	
Black	Myth	
Africa	Mythology	
African	Mythology	
Black	Mythology	
Africa	Dystopian	
African	Dystopian	
Black	Dystopian	
Africa	Magic	
African	Magic	
Black	Magic	
Africa	Magical	
African	Magical	
Black	Magical	
Africa	Cyber	
African	Cyber	
Black	Cyber	
Africa	Cyborg	
African	Cyborg	
Black	Cyborg	
Africa	Cosmic	
African	Cosmic	
Black	Cosmic	
Africa	Android	
African	Android	
Black	Android	
Africa	Supernatural	

African	Supernatural	
Black	Supernatural	
Black	Alternate	Universe
African	Alternate	Universe
Africa	Alternate	Universe
Africa	Time	Travel
African	Time	Travel
Black	Time	Travel
Africa	Science	Fiction
Black	Science	Fiction
African	Science	Fiction
Science	Fiction	
Fantasy		

Africa
African
Angola
Angolan
Benin
Beninese
Botswana
Motswana
Burkina Faso
Burkinabe
Burundi
Burundian
Cape Verde
Cape Verdean
Cameroon
Cameroonian
Central African Republic
Central African Republican
Chad

Chadian
Comoros
Comorian
Congo
Congolese
Djibouti
Djiboutian
Equitorial Guinea
Equatoguinean
Eritrea
Eritrean
Eswatini
liswati
Ethiopia
Ethiopian
Gabon
Gabonese
Gambia
Gambian
Guinea
Guinean
Guinea
Bissau-Guinean
Kenya
Kenyan
Ivory Coast
Ivorian
Lesotho
Basotho
Liberia
Liberian
Madagascar
Malagasy

Malawi
Malawian
Mali
Malian
Mauritania
Mauritanian
Mauritius
Mauritian
Mozambique
Mozambican
Namibia
Namibian
Niger
Nigerien
Nigeria
Nigerian
Sao Tome
Sao Tomean
Senegal
Senegalese
Seychelles
Seychellois
Sierra Leone
Sierra Leonean
Somalia
Somali
South African
South African
South Sudan
South Sudanese
Sudan
Sudanese
Tanzania

Tanzanian
Togo
Togolese
Uganda
Ugandan
Zambia
Zambian
Zimbabwe
Zimbabwean

Appendix C: List of Afrofuturism Projects in Development

Astonished
Black (Warner Bros.)
Black Magic
Blade
Blink
Buffy the Vampire Slayer
Dawn
Fast Color
Free Will
Friday Black
I'm a Virgo
Inkwell
Into the Zombie Underworld
Ironheart
Kill Whitey Donovan
Kindred
Lando
Last Days
Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur
Metropolis
Naomi
Painkiller
Pride
Reawakening
Shadowman
Slay
Soulville
Stampede
Static Shock
The Archer Connection
The Conductors

The Fifth Season
The Leviathan
The Red Flag
The Rocketeers
The Wonder of All Things
Thirst
Timewasters
Tom Swift
Trader
Trill League
Untitled (Disney+Wakanda Series Project)
Untitled (Quentin Tarantino/Django/Zorro Project)

Appendix D: List of Africanfuturism Projects in Development

Binti
Nigeria 2099
Super Sema
Who Fears Death

Appendix E: List of Africanjujuism Projects in Development

Blacula
Death and the King's Horseman
Gordon Hemingway & The Realm of Cthulhu
Iwájú
Kiya and the Kimoja Heroes
Mama K's Team 4
Nanny
Sorcerers
The City of Brass
The Gilded Ones
The Gods
The Serpent's Shadow
The Upper World
Tunga
Untitled (Netflix/Rififi Pictures/Akin Omotoso Reincarnation Drama Series Project)
Wild Seed

800
A House in the Sky
A Lion Called Christian
It's What I Do
African History Y
African Princess
African Violet
Are We Getting Married?
Ares (Warner Brothers)
Biotechnicality
Black Leopard, Red Wolf
Blacula (remake)
Blood Horn
Bloodshot
Born A Crime
Born Free (Remake)
Charlie Johnson in the Flames
Chasing Black Gold
Chighali
Circling the Sun
City of Saints & Thieves
Clearance
Culture Clash
Dada Safaris
Drone Warrior
Emma's War
Escape From Angola
Every Second Counts
Far From Home
Gaddafi
Girl Soldier

God is Good
Good Luck, Mr. Anthony
Gorge
Happiness Ever After
High Value Target
I Am All Girls
Impossible Odds
In The Garden Of The King
Jane
JIVA!
King Leopold's Ghost
King Peggy
My Victory at Dakar
One Goal
Operation Somalia
Poisonwood Bible
Queen of Glory
Sandstorm
Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation
Silverbird
Stringer
TauTona
Tether
The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives
The Legend of Sinbad
The Shadow King
The Woman King
To the Lions
Unreasonable Behavior
Untitled Adewunmi Family Project
Untilted African Mercenaries Project
Untitled African-Set Spy Romance

Untitled (Amazon Studios/Big Beach/Hillman Grad Ole White Sugah Daddy Adaptation Series Project)
Untitled Big Talk Making Wolf Adaptation Series Project
Untitled Kunle Afolayan Feature
Virunga
Wahala
Warrior Queen
Yasuke
You Made a Fool of Death With Your Beauty
Zebras

NB. All highlighted projects indicate projects based on true stories

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