

Reflecting Racism and Police Brutality in Tochi Onyebuchi's riot baby

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Abstract

The need to present a new future or a vision that defies all stereotypes and questions how things are structured and told has grown due to historical slavery, current police brutality, and prejudice against African Americans. Afrofuturism may be the solution to seeing a different future and a new course that is established, created, and explained by African Americans. Although it aims to give black people in the future a better alternative, it also captures all of the problems that African Americans confront in daily life. An important artistic and cultural trend that has a big impact on modern civilization is Afrofuturism. Afrofuturism, which is based on the experiences of Black people, combines science fiction, fantasy, and technological aspects to imagine alternate worlds that subvert established myths and give underrepresented voices more power. In addition to providing a forum for artistic expression, this movement also helps to reimagine the past and the present in order to create a future that values equality, justice, and freedom for Black communities. The goal of the essay is to use Afrofuturism to analyze contemporary themes in Tochi Onyebuchi's novella Riot Baby. Beginning in Compton, California, USA, Riot Baby explores issues like racism, police violence, gang banging, and many others. The thing Ella has. She observes a former classmate blossom into a kind nurse. A drive-by gunshot killed the neighbor's son. Things that have not yet occurred. Ella has a Thing. She sees the future of her classmates and neighbors, Things that haven't happened yet. Kev, born while Los Angeles burned around them, wants to protect his sister from a power that could destroy her. But when Kev is incarcerated, Ella must decide what it means to watch her brother suffer while holding the ability to wreck cities in her hands. Rooted in the hope that can live in anger, Riot Baby is as much an intimate family story as a global dystopian narrative. It burns fearlessly toward revolution and has quietly devastating things to say about love, fury, and the black American experience. Ella and Kev are both shockingly human and immeasurably powerful. Their childhoods are defined and destroyed by racism. Their futures might alter the world.

Keywords: *Afrofuturism, riot baby, police brutality, anger, powers.*

Introduction

The need to present a new future or a vision that defies all stereotypes and questions how things are structured and told has grown due to historical slavery, current police brutality, and prejudice against African Americans. Afrofuturism may be the solution to seeing a different future and a new course that is established, created, and explained by African Americans. Although it aims to give black people in the future a better alternative, it also captures all of the problems that African Americans confront in daily life.

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As Adriano Elia (2014) describes, the marginalization of allegedly "primitive" African diaspora people and "modern" technology and science fiction form the basis of the transdisciplinary cultural movement known as Afrofuturism. Afrofuturism may appear to be an oxymoron at first. "Afro" and "Futurism" are likely to be seen as terms in conflict, the latter celebrating speed and modernity while the former conjures up notions of primitivism and backwardness. (p. 83) An important artistic and cultural trend that has a big impact on modern civilization is Afrofuturism. Afrofuturism, which is based on the experiences of black people, combines science fiction, fantasy, and technological aspects to imagine alternate worlds that subvert established myths and give underrepresented voices more power. In addition to providing a forum for artistic expression, this movement also helps to reimagine the past and the present in order to create a future that values equality, justice, and freedom for black communities. Afrofuturism promotes cultural resilience by examining issues of identity, history, and social change while also helping to topple oppressive systems. It gives black people a platform to affirm their agency and dispel harmful preconceptions, promoting a sense of empowerment and self-determination. Furthermore, Afrofuturism has influenced a wide range of artistic disciplines, including literature, music, visual arts, and film, thereby inspiring and influencing future generations of creators. Afrofuturism is a catalyst for critical conversations, offering fresh perspectives and challenging existing power dynamics, making it a vital and necessary movement in contemporary society (Eshun, 2003; Dery, 1993).

As stated by Ytasha L. Womack (2013) This emerging culture is distinct. Today's artists can express their tales, share their experiences, and connect with audiences affordably, which was unimaginable at the turn of the century, thanks to the power of digital media, social platforms, digital video, graphic arts, gaming technology, and more. High-speed modems eliminated the storytelling gatekeepers, allowing people of color to project their own tales more than ever before. (p. 9)

One of the ways that made people aware of Afrofuturism, was the movie black panther, as stated by Nathan Holbert, Michael Dando & Isabel Correa (2020), is the Wakanda project, in which Wakanda is the name of the fictitious country, that is environmentally friendly and technologically advanced all led by the Black Panther, Black youth are involved in the project's critical analysis of Wakanda's meaning as well as in envisioning and building their own Wakanda. After interviewing and gathering data from the people who supervised and constructed the project, showed how this Afrofuturist lens welcomed contributors to create futuristic objects that critique current social injustices and environmental instability using their own local and personal experiences from the present, as well as their familial and cultural past. Participants in the definition of Afrofuturism argued that in order for themselves and their societies to survive and thrive in the future, there will need to be a conscious effort to demolish and rebuild social structures that are based on harmony and respect for others, as well as a renewed focus on community and self-care, an understanding of how closely connected humans are to nature, and perhaps even a little bit of magic.(p. 2) The epistemic reconceptualization of STEM spaces away from Eurocentric understandings is a clear goal of Remixing Wakanda. In order to do this, this project invites young people of color in America to participate in this critical constructionist design methodology that prioritizes the knowledge, viewpoints, and values of the Afrodiasporic community. Participants also push for significant change through their creations.(Holbert et al., 2020)

As stated by Nicholas Nathaniel Kweku-Egyir Simons (2021) 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(p.5) in his wondering, Dery drops a very good question that sparks the term Afrofuturism:

Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures? Furthermore, isn't the unreal estate of the future already owned by the technocrats, futurologists, streamliners, and set designers—white to a man—who have engineered our collective fantasies? (Mark Dery, 1993, p. 181)

From this question born the term Afrofuturism, as confirmed by Alondra Nelson (2002) Afrofuturism is the voices of African Americans with other tales to tell about culture, technology, and possible things to come in the future(p. 9) as detailed by Myungsung Kim(2017) in his dissertation entitled, “Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, and the Reinvention of African American Culture” he explains that In addition to emphasizing the techno-aesthetic practices of contemporary black culture, Mark Dery's definition of Afrofuturism also suggests that the African American diaspora was a vital source of futuristic vision. African Americans were sacrificed by the colonial west because they are "descendants of alien abductees,"(p. 2)

Afrofuturism is a style of design in this sense. An aesthetic that focuses experiences, viewpoints, and ideals actively rejected and repressed in a society that celebrates white supremacy and includes certain aspects and features that have been altered, remixed, and repurposed. Afrofuturism specifically confronts oppressive systems by redefining them as tools used to separate and enslave people of color, as well as race itself.(Holbert et al., 2020) In this regard, Afrofuturism portrays the true difficulties of the past and present, one of which is racism, which continues to have a significant negative impact on African Americans. Aisha P.L. Kadiri(2021) affirms that Afrofuturism's roots are in reaction to and fight against enduring structural racism and the bleak future it brings forth.(p. 2) as stated by Janice Gassam Asare(2021) in an article entitled “How Afrofuturism Can Be Used As A Tool For Black Liberation” she argues that black psychology alongside with Afrofuturism has a role in treating the mental scars left by discrimination, expurgation, that are endured by black people for centuries, Both of them have their roots in Afrocentric ideas and actively refute the myths that conventional psychology and science have spread about our race. (para. 5)

What is then the difference between science fiction and Afrofuturism, in her Ted talk, Nnedimma Nkemdili "Nnedi" Okorafor a Nigerian-American writer of science fiction and fantasy, explains the difference between classic science fiction and Afrofuturism through what she calls the octopus analogy, as she states that:

Like humans, octopuses are some of the most intelligent creatures on earth. However, octopus intelligence evolved from a different evolutionary line, separate from that of human beings, so the foundation is different. The same can be said about the foundation of various forms of science fiction. So much of science fiction speculates about technologies, societies, social issues, what's beyond our planet, what's within our planet. Science fiction is one of the greatest and most effective forms of political writing, still, not all science fiction has the same ancestral bloodline, that line being western rooted science fiction, which is mostly white and male. (TED, 2017, 3:35)

in his dissertation, entitled “Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, and the Reinvention of African American Culture”, Myungsung Kim(2017) argues that , The use of colonial history and technological advancement in science fiction highlights how hegemonic discourses on racial difference aided western philosophical and theological traditions' quest to identify characteristics of humanity that would define humanity as a universal condition of being.(p. 9)

Gassam Asare(2021) By providing black people with a positive portrayal, a sense of optimism, and a sense of action, Afrofuturism can aid black people in overcoming racism

and trauma. Traditional science fiction works frequently employ color blindness or connect heroism with xenophobia and colonization. Works of Afrofuturists frequently celebrate differences in order to resolve problems that hurt everyone. The estrangement that [Black] people have experienced as a result of racism, segregation, colonialism, and enslavement can also be expressed in this genre. It enables us to create new historical narratives and archetypal scenarios for a just future. We may reimagine what blackness could have been and how it might seem in the future, where it won't be a disadvantage or a quality that should be minimized or eradicated. (Para. 9)

There for, Nicholas Nathaniel Kweku-Egyir Simonsn (2021) explains in his thesis entitled "Expanding Spaces: Examining the Landscape of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Africanjuism in Hollywood" that Afrofuturism is created mainly with the aim to liberate black people from the oppressive environments to which they had been consigned by prevailing racist regimes. Black people have historically been excluded from settings that are progressive, technologically sophisticated, or empowering. Therefore, Afrofuturism adopts sci-fi structures and principles but interprets them differently.(p. 5)

An interview with nalo Hopkinson, when asked how did she reconcile her affinity for the genre with its racial politics? Along the lines of her answer, she speaks on the idea of the value of black lives in the literary works:

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. And I think it's vitally important to write about that... But if that's all that's getting published, I think I'm justified in suspecting that the industry was and is eroticizing black people as victims, as though that is our value to the world. (Nelson, 2002, pp. 101-102)

As stated by Myungsung Kim(2017) while science fiction generally adheres to the theological indecision, incredibility, and doubt of the late 20th century, the post-humanistic mission of Afrofuturism focuses on the rediscovery of the fundamental principles of classical individualism. The politics of black futurism are not based on a modern reinterpretation of Enlightenment knowledge, reason, and the improvement of human condition through them, but rather on how their ideal principles, which were adapted into discriminatory practices, have been transformed into its modern variation within the contemporary techno-scientific cultures of cybernetics, bio/nanotechnology, and information technology. Afrofuturism is positioned within a discursive field where a different time and space and black agency converge to decenter Western logocentric cosmologies and configure a location of black presence in a world where technology plays significant roles in the formation of race and gender. This is known as the posthumanism to black culture crossover.(pp. 19-20)

According to Ytasha L. Womack (2013), British author Mark Sinker was perhaps the first to pose the question, "What does it mean to be human?" This eventually came to be known as the Afrofuturistic framework. In addition to exploring the goals, sci-fi themes, and technology in jazz, funk, and hip-hop music, Sinker raised the query.(p. 32) To put it another way, Mark drew comparisons between slavery and alien abduction by connecting the movie *Blade Runner*, whose protagonist is African American, to the idea of slavery. On the other hand Mark Dery, as further explained by Ytasha L. Womack (2013), Dery identified the parallels in "Black to the Future" as well. "African Americans are, in a very real sense, the descendants of alien abductees," (p. 32) Mark Dery (1993) contrasts the horrifying acts of racism suffered by black Americans to what he calls:

a sci-fi nightmare in which unseen but no less impassable force fields of intolerance frustrate their movement; official histories undo what has been done; and technology is too often brought to bear on black bodies (branding, forced sterilization, the Tuskegee experiment, and tasers come readily to mind)...Moreover, the sublegitimate status of

science fiction as a pulp genre in Western literature mirrors the subaltern position to which blacks have been relegated throughout American history. (p. 180)

As Frantz Fanon (2008) explains that black people There is nothing comparable when it comes to the black man. He has no culture, no civilization, and no “long historical past.” Perhaps that is why today’s Blacks want desperately to prove to the white world the existence of a black civilization.(p. 28) in his conclusion to his book, *White Masks*, black skin, he says that:

The discovery of the existence of a Negro civilization in the fifteenth century confers no patent of humanity on me. Like it or not, the past can in no way guide me in the present moment... In no way should I dedicate myself to the revival of an unjustly unrecognized Negro civilization. I will not make myself the man of any past. I do not want to exalt the past at the expense of my present and of my future.(pp. 175-176)

Afrofuturism attempts to move towards a future in which Black people are not constrained by the past but instead create a future that will outweigh the past and its unpleasant memories. By examining his lines from this perspective, it is clear that he refuses to be attached to the past and exalt the past at the expense of the present and the future.

some of the early works that pioneered for Afrofuturism, (Womack, 2013) argues Although Dery first identified afrofuturism in 1993, its characteristics appear to have been present in a number of earlier works across many different media. As we'll see in the section below, among the forerunners, writers like W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, and Octavia E. Butler, musicians like Sun Ra and George Clinton, and artists like J. M.(p. 86)

as written in ADRIANO ELIA (2014) Born Herman Blount in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1952 he changed officially his name to Le Sony'r Ra in reference to the Egyptian Sun God. He is a jazz composer and poet Sun Ra (1914-1993) was extremely influential for later musicians and artists of different genres. (p. 87) Sun Ra was a mainstay on the South Side of Chicago during the heyday of jazz bands and clubs. He was regarded as one of the most learned musicians around and would frequently distribute books about his views in Washington Park before he adopted the flashlights, solar helmets, and futuristic African clothing that would become his signature. This jazz musician wanted to heal people through his music. He was inspired in a moment of revelation, which both spiritual revelation and self-described alien encounter, Sun Ra believed he came to the world to heal people. His aim to fill the gaps, and to find the contributions of color people who are erased from history, resulted in an information trek that would last for much of his life.(Womack, 2013, p. 60)

Sun Ra's cosmology project had the dual goals of highlighting the potential of black people who had been oppressed and denouncing racism. Sun Ra and the Myth Science Arkestra provided live musical accompaniment for *A Black Mass*, a divisive play by Amiri Baraka based on the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam, the black activist movement.(Elia, 2014, p. 87) Baraka challenges the stereotype that blackness is a sign of wickedness and whites of righteousness in this play, sending a message that blackness may also be connected with positive ideals of beauty. Ra desired to be an alien because he despised people and lived in what he perceived to be a dangerous planet. Full of treachery , he explains how he's not part of America, white, nor black, cause according to his understanding, black people live in the past,” black people, they back there in the past, a past that somebody manufactured for ‘em. It's not their past, it's not their history.”(Eshun, 1998 as cited in ELIA, 2014, p.88)

The novel's plot summary

As indicated by Sayed Sadek et al (2023) tells the tale of two siblings with extraordinary abilities, Ella and Kevin. The story opens in 1992, the year of the infamous Los Angeles riot, which broke out after four LAPD officers were cleared of all charges for beating unarmed African American citizen Rodney King. The incident had been captured on camera and broadcast around the nation, causing discontent that peaked when the policemen were exonerated. Author Onyebuchi, a Nigerian-American, uses science fiction and history to reflect the racial injustice, love, and rage experienced by Black people during the Rodney King riots. A dystopian story about unadulterated love, savagery, and the paranormal is *Riot Baby*.(p. 2355)

The novel begins by a brief description of a before image, Ella sits, as she watches gangs walking by holding pistils, throwing gangs' signs at each other. Ella is a young child who sees the future of things. Ella, talks to her grandma, even though she is not her mother's mother but she calls her grandma, and asks her about the incident with Rodney king, as she wonders why people are so angry with each other, killing each other. Ella tells her grandma that something awful is going to happen, she turns out to be right as she walks by some LAPD cops arresting a young boy, and stamped of black people rioting over the incident.

Aside from the novel, the incident of arresting and beating Rodney king is a real historical moment that ignited a riot, not because of the beating of king but because of the law system that freed the four policemen responsible for his assault, as explained by Peter L. Davis(1994) *The Rodney King beating that was caught on camera in recent years is without a doubt the most well-known instance of police brutality. According to the Christopher Commission, Sergeant Koon of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) twice used a Taser electric stun gun at Rodney King while he was on the ground. Three armed LAPD officers then struck King 56 times with their batons and kicked him six times in the head and body, as George Holliday's videotape horrifyingly documents. (p. 276)*

Davis further explains that these four officers were expected to be punished, as it was a clear case of police brutality, but the four police officers were acquainted and the case was dismissed after the riots over the case, president of the United states ordered the justice department to undertake their own criminal investigation, but only two officers were convicted sergeant Koon and officer Powell of civil rights violations and acquitted the two remaining officers responsible for king's beating.

What Onyebuchi has done is link the past to the future talking of repressed anger, an anger that was fairly justified, he links the incident of Sean Bell and Rodney king from the past and writes about Ella a girl that is angry at police brutality, but from the standpoint of African American family, as they experience American racism on daily basis. As stated by Tiffany E. Barber(2018) "Afrofuturism combines science fiction elements to imagine alternate worlds with regard to racial politics and belonging. In so doing, it is seen as a way to make sense of the past and its relevance to our black political present." (p. 137) In the novel an alternate world is imagined by the writer where the character experiences some kind of transformation, Ella has various superpowers, she can fly, make things explode with her mind, and make things float and burn things, in one of the scenes, Kevin comes back and sees Ella :

At the center of the storm stands Ella, her eyes glazed over, her teeth bared in a snarl, one hand raised in the air like it's gripping an invisible neck and squeezing... Now furniture in other rooms starts to hover in the air. (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter two)

Ella becomes very angry with a case on t.v of a young African American named sean bell, who was as stated by World Socialist Web Site , in an article entitled" New York police kill unarmed man, wound two others", shot to death in his car by undercover New York

City police officers in Jamaica, Queens. Police fired 50 rounds from semi-automatic weapons even though Bell and his two companions in the car were unarmed. (Sandy English, 2006). At this moment, Kevin's powers appear suddenly, when he put his hands over Ella, in the midst of her anger, he sees, "Hurt shoots back and forth between my ears My eyes shut, and all of a sudden, all I see is fire. People in the streets chanting, people throwing bricks, the scritch of handcuffs closing over wrists." (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter two) Ella vanishes into thin air, as her mother tells Kev, that she is angry and needs to blow some steam off

(Barber, 2018) explains that the reality of forced migration and captivity are compared in Afrofuturism to extraterrestrial invasions and instances of body transformation in science and speculative fiction books and movies. The basis of Afrofuturist visual, literary, and auditory texts are otherworldly, interplanetary narratives that heavily incorporate robots, cyborgs, and androids as well as interstellar adventures and time travel. (p. 137) in this case Ella and Kev are two siblings who experience racism whilst having a superpower, a world where they suffer of racism and police brutality. After police captured Kevin for an armored robbery, he is put in prison, even though he is innocent, with no trial for eight consecutive years.

As the events progresses, Kevin and Ella become very close, almost wired together, their connection is so strong that they understand each other without talking,

Ella does not have to close her eyes to see what Kev sees; the vision, the memories, the past as he remembers it, all of it bleeds slowly and then with increasing volume into Ella's brain, as though a cord were connecting his mind to hers. (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter three)

this is the thing about Afrofuturism, while every classic fiction has talked only about the painful memory of racism, this novel is breaking events from past to present to the future. Every hateful act perpetrated by society brought them together, almost making them stronger each time. Through Ella and Kev, but mostly Ella, Onyebuchi was able to create his own version of the past and the future. Ella wants to be the agent of change, protecting people from social injustice and representing hope, as she thinks, "What if I'm the answer? she had asked herself. What if I'm the one we've been praying for?" (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter three)

as informed by (Womack, 2013) Afrofuturism is a fantastic method for using the imagination to foster both individual and societal development. Creating communities, cultures, and a new, balanced world requires empowering people to see themselves and their ideas in the future. These individuals may draw from the best of the past while navigating the sea of possibilities. (p.191) Afrofuturism empowers Black individuals and communities by envisioning futures where they are agents of change, reclaiming their narratives, and shaping their destinies. It promotes self-determination and challenges narratives of victimhood.

As Kevin was released on parole, the police use not an ankle monitor, but instead they cut his thump open and put a chip inside his thump to trace him whenever he does something wrong. This technology does not exist, it's a futuristic aspect in the world that Onyebuchi has created, one that exactly goes with the traditional Afrofuturist mindset. Another thing that rings of Afrofuturism is what dr. Bissell tells him that he ought to not think of the past, as it is unchangeable, "I'm sure there's a lot that happened to you inside that's never going to go away. We can't reverse time. We can't make those things happen. We can, however, move forward." (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) this sentence that the doctor says is remarkably similar to the concept of Afrofuturism, as stated by William sites (2020) "an influential mode of utopian expression that draws on mythical African pasts in order to envision new black centered worlds of the future." (p. 1)

The futuristic setting Onyebuchi creates are an alternate world but startlingly the law system and police got so advanced in their supervision on people, even though if they are on parole. In the novel Kevin choose to live in the west, away from everything but a chip is planted in his thump instead of an ankle monitor, that does not only monitor him but keeps endorphin his brain with all sort of chemicals whenever he has anxiety or depression, plus families are not allowed to visit, so it is like prison but is sugar coated. All of this is wide clear to a guy named Calvin who is sick of this place as he tells Kevin that “We completely shut off. No family comes to see us.” (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four)

That he is stuck, he can not use Facebook, YouTube, nothing, he tells Kevin that they are shut off and cut off from the rest of the world. He watches Miguel work until he gets a permit to do his own welding, he goes to his weekly meetings with Dr. Bissell, everything's an appointment. And there's no option to not do it, because there's shit else to do. In the city of Chicago, the police station is explaining to colored men and women how their algorithm works, they sat that the algorithm developed in conjunction with extremely smart people in Silicon Valley, and that has helped reduce crime in the South Side by 19 percent, “But that's raised the number of black boys you lock up without pretext by 200 percent,”(Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) as explained by Christine Sandquist(2020)The book's dystopian and science fiction aspects eventually start to emerge as the reader starts to understand how the police state functions in this other future. (para. 10) This system, wich is suppositively is racially natural:

While outside of Watts, a dozen more shootings result in a dozen more sobbing families who must endure their black grief with stoicism or who can use microphones to express their black rage, and the bodies continue to pile up higher and higher. (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four)

Ella, explains to the paster, whose talking about love and forgiveness. Ella tells him of what he will do if a white kid comes and shoot everyone in this church, he tells to trust god's plan, but Ella is so angry, she reminds the man of what happened in the 1992, she says that her brother was born in that period, ““My brother, Kev. He was born during the L.A. riots. 1992. Mama and I were trapped in the hospital when it happened. When we came out, everything was gone, but I had a baby brother.”” (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) In the end Kev, tries to be in peace with things, saying to Ella that he is tired and can not be angry anymore, ”” I can't afford to be angry anymore. I can't. I don't have it in me to keep being this angry.””(Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) he explains to Ella how he has not seen a white men in this town to be angry, and begs her to not take him out there but Ella shocks him and says its here too, as he learns that the chip is not planted in factory works or damaged people it also:

being put on cops outside to increase their reflexes, to upgrade them. That those misshapen pieces of metal we're forming make shields on their bones, beneath their skin, so that no bullet can kill them. We're building the turrets mounted on our street corners. We're working to make the police invincible. (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four)

which intel's for the kind of world they are experiencing as the system is not only planting chips inside prisoners and factory workers, it is also being planted inside the police officers to make them invincible and more reflexive. Then he asks her to show him the future, she shows him the future.

Shattered chunks of marble littering park grounds. Monuments to the Confederates pulverized into dust. Police stations turned into husks, watch posts unmanned and creaking with rust. Cities, whole cities, rising into the sky. So much death, but there's joy in it. Apocalypse sweeps the South. Vengeance visits the North. (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four)

This future is post-apocalyptic one where no whites are allowed only blacks, which means Onyebuchi manages to create not only a future for black people, he also made this future only for black people, no white people exist in his version of a post-apocalyptic America. In the end of the novel, Ella asks Kev of what he sees, he replies that he sees the after, a world where their people are free, and reddened from poisonous racist ideologies, “pull the radiation out of the air. Use our Thing, jettison it into space, make the land ready for our people. Then and only then will we clear those forty acres of poison” (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) finally Ella asks kev of what is he seeing, he says that he sees freedom. Onyebuchi was successful in creating an alternate future for the black community, but the anger never goes away and it appears that the way freedom is obtained is through anger, as ella tells kev. That their mother prayed for them to exists, and that ““God is a loving God, but he’s also the architect of our revenge. He delivers us from Egypt. But he also brings the locusts and the frogs and the rivers of blood.”” (Onyebuchi, 2020, chapter four) which means that the book offers no solutions to the real life issues of their world and that vengeance for black people is the only way they can get freedom.

Conclusion

While Onyebuchi's *Riot Baby* is a tale of two brothers with odd superpowers, it doesn't give any remedies to the racial scourge other than to get revenge and remain vigilant at all times. Onyebuchi did succeed in creating a world where African Americans have a future, though. This novella is unquestionably an Afrofuturist work since Onyebuchi not only imagined a different future for African Americans but also blended their traumatic past with the present to envision a more hopeful future. Onyebuchi uses the tragic events of the Rodney King beatings and the Sean Bell shooting and infuses them with other similar factitious incidents of police brutality, making two characters, Kev and Ella, the spokespeople for racial prejudice. This means that, in accordance with Afrofuturism, the story is seen through a black cultural lens, and Onyebuchi has been careful in its creation.

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