

**AFRICAN LITERATURE AND MAGICAL
REALISM: DECONSTRUCTING
LIMINALITY MODEL IN AMOS
TUTUOLA'S —PALMWINE DRINKDARD
AND BEN OKIRI'S THE FAMISHED
ROAD**

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**OGUNGBEMI AYOBAMI EBUNOLUWA
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~~AN ESSAY TO BE SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR ARTS OF (HONS) DEGREE
ENGLISH AND~~

~~BEING A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
LITERARY STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE- EKITI,
EKITI STATE, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS) IN ENGLISH AND
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~~_____ TO~~

~~_____ THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES~~

~~_____ FACULTY OF ARTS, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE EKITI, EKITI STATE.~~

NOVEMBER, 2018.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, the omnipotent, omniscient, the ~~beneficent~~beneficent, for making it possible for me to be alive and ~~well to~~ complete this academic hurdle ~~and his mercies upon me~~. Also, to my parents, Mr and Mrs Akinwola ~~S.~~ Ogungbemi, and the Unification family, FUOYE. -

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for the success of my project and for seeing me through my studies in the last four years. Also, my sincere gratitude goes to my energetic, able and wonderful supervisor Dr. Emmanuel Adeniyi, whose scholarly inspiring comments provide the impetus which made this project work success. I am sincerely grateful. My love goes to the best mum and dad in the world, Mrs. J. O. Ogungbemi and Mr. S. A. Ogungbemi Thanks for your prayers; I pray that God almighty will grant you long life to reap the fruit of your labour. To my best friend Adebayo Deborah Oluwayemisi, I thank you so much for your love and ever ready attitude to support me in all that I believe in, thank you so much for not letting me fall even when I nearly slipped you have been wonderful I say a very big thank you. Aunty Folakemi this project work is specially dedicated to you, thank you for letting me go to achieve these. I LOVE YOU.

To my ever loving siblings Seun, Folakemi, Semilore, Damilola, and Oyinlola, I thank you all for your relentless encouragement and moral support. You shall all grow from strength to strength and from glory to glory.

I appreciate my ever supportive fellowship members Bro. Okanlawon Olayemi, Bro. Olalekan Ibuowo, Bro Abolaji Sunday, Sis. Ayobami Arowolo, Sis. Omotayo Osungbure, Sis Tomisin Ayeni and many others. You all have also been a great pillar of strength. May God in his infinite mercy reward your great deeds and bless you greatly (Amen). My appreciation will be incomplete if I fail to mention my beloved and wonderful friends; Ajayi Gbenga, Ojo Olabisi, Taiwo Adeyemo and Comfort Fabunmi thanks for the inspiration you are loved, and many others who have contributed their own quota in one way or the other to the successful completion of this part of my career, I say thank you, may the merciful God reward you accordingly.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by OGUNGBEMI, AYOBAMI-EBUNOLUWA under my supervision, essay has been read and approved as meeting part of the requirements for the Award of the Bachelor of Arts Degree (Hons.) in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State.

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DR. EMMANUEL ADENIYI

DATE

SUPERVISOR

DR. PAUL ONANUGA

DATE

H.O.D. ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE

ABSTRACT

This study is set out to deconstruct the liminality model in Ben Okiri's *Famished Road* and Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinkard*. The purpose is to make people aware of the liminal spaces that exist in the world. The Magical Realism theory is adopted for the analysis of this study. The result is that there are liminal space, which involves an interface between visible and invisible world while portraying the liminal characters and location, which centres on magic realism as propounded by Garcia Marquez

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

African literature is a corpus of literary activities that celebrate, condemn, criticize or record various happenings on the continent. It is a unique literature borne out of colonial experience and the quest of African writers to reject negative stereotypes used against Africa and its people by racist European anthropologists. As a result of their racist disposition, the European anthropology had inadequate perception about African literature and termed it “premature” “primitive” and “preliterate”, because they had been using Western principles to ~~new-read~~ it. It is a ~~liberating~~ literature that attempts to ~~educate-coorrect~~ the misconception about African culture and the erroneous information about Africa generally. African Literature is a reflection ~~to-of~~ the value system and the expectations of the African society from which it springs. African literature retains many oral elements including, proverbs, chants, riddles, folktales and so on. These elements are evident in the works of Amos Tutuola of Nigeria, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o of Kenya, ~~among, among~~ others. For instance, Chinua Achebe uses the power of proverbs to stress the didactic value of African societies. African Literature is a type of literature that takes inspiration from African realities. ~~This is why~~ Soyinka observes~~ed~~ that African Literature is influenced by African world-view which is cyclical unlike the Western linear worldview (15). For instance, in Yoruba cosmology, human existence is described as the world of unborn, living, and dead. Some prominent African writers stated earlier on, have utilised materials from tales, fables, myth, chants, proverbs to project this worldview in their works.

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According to Roscoe, “much of Africa is still a land of myth [...] of people who continue to stay close enough to the earth to hear its pastoral symphonies and to feel strongly the spin of fate’s wheel and to learn to endure” (57).

~~According to Roscoe~~

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-pastoral symphonies and to feel strongly the spin of fate’s
- wheel and to learn to endure” (57).~~

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The literature must be concerned with the artistic tradition of the African people, their past, present and future. Africa has its cultural tradition, its religious, economic or political backgrounds and a rich history of oral art. The African writer, who has chosen today to write about divination, witchcraft, benevolent or malevolent spirits in human affairs, ~~most often consult revisit the~~ various African folktale tradition to learn the ~~traditional~~ conventions for handling ~~such~~ characters, incidents, and settings in African traditional stories.

Folktale, myth and fantasy have contemporary social relevance in magical realism. The African society believes in supernatural world that is rooted in their traditional religion. Magical realism is defined as “something that happen[s] when a highly detailed, realities setting is invaded by something too strange to believe” (qtd. in Strencher, 1999). Writers do not invent new worlds but reveal the magical elements existing in this world. It portrays fantastical events in a realistic tone. It’s a literary trend in post-modernism, in which magical elements are introduced into a

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realistic atmosphere with a view to having a deeper understanding of reality. Arva posits that “the plots in magical realistic novels “characteristically employ hybrid multiple planes of reality that take place in juxtaposed arenas of such opposites as urban and rural, western and indigenous, and so on” (76). Overall, they establish a more profound and genuine reality than conventional realistic techniques. Most of the magic realist texts have the capacities of myth and magic to create a version of reality that distinguishes itself from what is normally supposed as real life. Literature has thousands of threads which can be woven into the beautiful piece of art. Each thread has its own importance in the creative techniques for the narration of literature.

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African literature means different things to different people. Some consider it a new world literature or a new genre with new messages. For some, it is simply an appendage to English and French literatures. Others regard it as a political document, characterised by protest against the colonialist’s project of downgrading of the Black race or Africans. Ngugi lends his voice to this submission, noting that “says:

“I believe that Africa intellectual must align themselves

with the struggle national idea [...] perhaps in a small way,

the African writer can help in articulating the feelings

—behind this struggle” (qtd in Ngugi, 50)

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African literature does not create a piece of work that has been given much critical praise especially one that is considered the greatest work of a writer in fussy western sense of the

world. The interest lies in what the works deal with and not so much in what they constitute as poetry, prose or dramatic form. African literature is didactic and instructive. Since it can be used in quest of freeing the society from corrupt practices, Africans should then, not be left out as the decisive development of African literature.

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1.1 Statement of Research Problem

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Every research work examines the gap in poses knowledge with view to filling the gap with new information. as a problem that needs to be resolved, which bring about the questions as to how these problems that arises will be solved. The sole aim of the researcher is to find answers that will best solve these problems. Therefore, this research considers will by the end have answered question like; how magical realism is employed as a literary mode by African writers to to evaluate the liminal conditions ity model in that pervade Amos Tutuola's and Ben Okri's poetics. Palmwine Drinkard. And how the two writers used literature as a tool to diseuss about the location or area in which magical realism operates. Emphasis will also be placed on the ubiquitousness of liminality motif with notion of close proximity between worlds, between the magical and non magical. In the light of these issues, the aim of this study is to bring to the reader's notion to the importance of liminality nodel in magical realist works. These works are explored in Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinkard*.

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STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Many scholars have written so much about the nexus between African literature and magical realism, and this is done in order to validate the intersection of existence in the African cosmos. While critics have written about Tutuola and Okri as quintessential African magical realists, little attention has been paid to the deployment of cultural elements by the writers to indicate how their characters (both the living, the dead and preternatural essences) cohabit, and the liminal space of their cohabitation. This study, therefore, identifies the existing liminal spaces or imaginary gulfs between the living and the dead in the works of Tutuola and Okri. The identification of these spaces is believed to be of utmost importance to the “magical realist African literature”, because it can help in deepening our understanding of how the literature has contributed to the global convention of magical realism.

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1.3 Scope and Limitation of Study

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—The major preoccupation of this study is to interrogate the ~~dissecting of preponderance of~~ liminality ~~motifs~~ in magical realist works, ~~as used by writers under study. The study also seeks to examine the cultural tools used and how Amos Tutuola and Okri to has used African worldview to~~ navigate supernatural experience in ~~their works, a realistic tone.~~ In order to achieve this, the research work ~~shall be is~~ limited to ~~the literary explication of~~ Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinking* and Ben Okiri's *The Famished Road*, ~~as the data for the analysis of the issues.~~

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1.4 Justification

Many scholars and writers have examined petro-magical realism, magical realism and the liminal spaces and imaginal place in the born people and magic realism in English literature and its significant contribution. Though scholars and writers have examined these motifs, sometimes as a single entity and at other times collectively, readers don't yet seem to understand the liminal model in Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* and Ben Okiri's *Famished Road*, and the magical effect to form literary narratives. That is what Tutuola point out in his works. These novels were the primary sources of reference as they capture the rural experiences of the people. Tutuola unfolds the nature of the instruments of imagination which were meant for effective narration of culturally influenced world view.

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1.5 Research Methodology

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The methodology approach to be used for the effective analysis of this study is the Magical realism theory. Many scholars emphasize magical realism as a mode that transgresses ontological, political, geographical, and generic boundaries. Magical realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction. The use of Magical Realism theory approach is justified as the novelists whose work shall be used as the data for analysis share the same ideological approach which is Magical Realism.

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Apart from leveraging on the two primary texts under examination, this research endeavour uses archival materials, such as scholarly essays, published books, and other relevant materials on magical realism and the authors under study. It also uses published interviews, newspaper articles, and feature stories on African literature and magical realism.

1.6 AMOS TUTUOLA'S BIOGRAPHY

Amos Tutuola is a pioneer, master storyteller and prodigious writer. His prodigy has led to the harvest of twelve books. He was born in 1920 in Abeokuta, Nigeria. He passed on to the "dead town" on Saturday June 7, 1997 having lived a long, fruitful and often controversial life. The spiritual atmosphere of Tutuola home town and its environment during his growing years witnessed the presence of a story on Yoruba traditional belief and value system and a heavy Christian missionary activity. These religious experiences help to shape and influence his literary production. To understand his works, Tutuola blends Yoruba beliefs and cosmology with Christian belief and Western technology and transfers underlying Yoruba linguistic structures into English to produce writing that appeals to both Yoruba and English speakers alike.

He had twelve books to his credit; nine novels, two collections of stories and a book of Yoruba folktales, all produced within the span of about forty years, from 1952-1990, and published almost exclusively by Faber and Faber of London. Although two of these works; *The palmwine Drinkard* (1952) and *My Life in The Bush of Ghost* (1954) share recognition as his most famous. The two works are translated to almost twenty languages around the world (qtd in Eko 19, Thelwell 187). His other works include *Simibi and The Satyr of The Dark Jungle* (1955), *The Brave African Hunter* (1958), *Feather Woman of The Jungle* (1962), *Ajaiyi and His Inherited Poverty* (1967), *The Witch-Herbalist of the Remote Town* (1981), *The Wild Hunter in the Bush of Ghost* (1982), *Yoruba Folktales* (1986), *Pauper, Brawler and Slanderer* (1987) and *The Village Witch Doctor and other stories* (1990). Throughout his life, and long career, Tutuola

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see himself as a folklorist whose life ambition was to preserve Yoruba culture. He had spent the rest of his life trying to preserve this legacy for generations to come.

- Tutuola literary concern is to promote and maintain the continuity of Yoruba cultural heritage and Africa as a whole. Once quoted in Thelwell, he explained:

I noted that our young men, our young sons and daughters did not pay much attention to our traditional things or culture or customs. They adopted, they concentrated their minds only on European things. They left our customs, so if I do this they may change their mind [...] to remember our customs, not to leave it to die [...] that was my intention. (45)

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Therefore, Tutuola did not want young Yoruba to enjoy the fantastic and entertaining part alone. Rather he wanted them to learn “custom” and “culture”, those things that are relevant in social ordering of our society. Thus he labored to produce twelve literary works, with the depth and significance necessary to such a project. Indeed, it is relevantly appropriate that, in doing this, he drew on the central Yoruba themes of devastation, reciprocity, and reproduction. Tutuola always uses labours like narrator with the “food producing egg”, given by the ancestors. He is doing this

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in opposition to great violation of reciprocity that he finds in African culture for alien culture, and of course in Europeans who have hardly considered African tradition at all.

1.7 BEN OKIRI'S BIOGRAPHY

Ben Okri was born in 1959 in Minna, Nigeria, just one year before the independence of the country. He spent the period from 1961 to 1968 in England before returning to Nigeria to be educated in Ibadan and Ward. Wilkinson 1991 explained that "Okri is reluctant to give details about his childhood because, he says, 'I'd rather reserve that for the complex manipulations of memory that only fiction can provide', though he does state that his father studied law in London and 'returned with a library of Western classics from Dickens to Mark Twain, the Greeks, the Romans, Austen, English essays". These texts were some of Okri's formative reading experiences. His first article was published when he was seventeen, leading to publications of his stories in 'Nigerian women's journals and in the evening papers'. Wilkinson 1991 accounts that:

"After failing to get a university place in Nigeria, Okri came to England in 1978 to study at the University of Essex. Okri did not train to be a writer. He was aiming to be 'a scientist, a doctor or an engineer'" (70)

. Okri's first novel, *Flowers and Shadows* (1980), grew out of the stories he had written in Nigeria. Next came another novel, *The Landscapes Within* (1981), followed by two short story collections: *Incidents at the Shrine* (1986) and *Stars of the Nev Curfew* (1988). These early texts have been compared by critics such as Charles E. Nnolim and Ayo Mamudo to European Modernist writing, in particular, similarities between Okri's *The Landscapes Within* and James

Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) have been noted. Read 1998 stated that "this early 'imitation' of Modernist techniques was abandoned when Okri decided that he had 'made too deep a journey into modernism [and, after I had begun to feel that my ambition was better than my craft]". Okri received a bursary from the Arts Council in 1984, and in 1987 won both the Paris Review Aga Khan Prize for Fiction and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Africa.

However, his big break into 'English literature' came with *The Famished Road*, which won the Booker Prize in 1991. More books followed: *The Famished Roads* sequel, *Songs of Enchantment* in 1993; a volume of poetry, *An African Elegy* (1992); *Astonishing the Gods* (1995), a meditation on boundaries and the transformation of consciousness; *Dangerous Love* (1996), a re-working of *The Landscapes Within*; and two collections of essays, *Birds of Heaven* in 1995, and *A Way of Being Free* in 1997. In addition to the novel, *Infinite Riches* (1998), the third volume in what is now called the *Famished Road* cycle; his most recent text is his long poem *Mental Fight* (1999), which reflects on the new millennium. He contributes to newspapers.

Ben Okiri is very able at capturing the danger that lurks to pounce upon the innocent. The terror-laden landscapes of his short stories are good examples of this sort of writing. The delirium of the characters is extended to the feverish narratives. The wild manifestation of the spirit-world, the hallucinations, and the nightmarish occurrences in the ghetto-all evoke fear and dread in the reader. The darkness, the murderous cries and ritual chants of wild men, the whisperings of spirits all charge the atmosphere of the ghetto. Even in *Dangerous Love*, written in a fairly realistic mode without the intrusion of the spirit world or mythical happenings, the

protagonist gets lost in a maze. The labyrinthine narratives that depict the struggle of the characters to get out of a maze are a regular feature of most of the novels.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

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~~This chapter reviewed works already done on realism, magical realism, liminality and how other magic realist writers use liminality in their works.~~

Realism is a literary movement that started in late 18th century. The prose literature of this period was dominated by the realist novel. It focuses on ordinary things, people and places: a world that the readers can recognize as their own. Realist novels present an everyday material world. In term of location, the author present a real setting that the reader can recognize. Realist period witnessed industrial revolution, the rise of capitalism and huge rise in the number of middle class people. These events ignited curiosity in people especially the middle class to read about people like themselves. The mode of characterization is quite different from the romantic period. Unlike the romantist, the realist uses ordinary people from different classes. The main characters are

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usually middle class which middle class readers can recognize as being like themselves. There is usually a main characters development through the novel from birth to the adult age. The main desire of the main characters is to seek socially acceptable goals like marriage, freedom, maturity, wisdom, depending on their class, age and gender. Realist novels are interested in character psychology in a social class, between men and women, between personal inclinations and social restriction. The thematic preoccupation ranges from struggle to be happy and successful, difficulties for women, who often found themselves restricted by society's rules, all pervasive oppression and humiliation of the masses. These themes reflect the society and what 19th century middle-class people thought were important in life. Everyone in good society was expected to be; respectable, moral, self-helping, practical, cool-tempered and sober. As the story unfolds, lots of description and lots of details including background details which help to build up the realistic effect. There is a focus on the difference between surface and depth, appearance and reality. Realist novels describe societies where everyone is acting a part and where people cannot always speak directly because characters always have to be aware what society will think of them.

Though it's founded on the assumption that there exist a reality, but this reality can be discovered through the individual sensory perception. This was a challenge to traditional literature that made was of plots from mythology, history and legend among others. Since the focus is on individual experience, Watt asserts that the writer had to "convey the impression of fidelity to human experience" (57). As opposed to "general human types", Watt explained that the novel had characters appeared as individual who existed in the contemporary environment. This individual could be located to a specific space and time. Watt also argued that the novel had characters that were individualized and their backgrounds were developed. These characters

appeared as individual who existed in the contemporary environment. This individual could be located to a specific space and time. Watt also argued that the approximation to realities was successful because of the use of time scale “The novel’s closeness to the texture of daily experience directly depends upon its employment of much more minutely discriminated time-scale than had previously been employed in narrative” (62).

Through the creation of the character’s environment, we realized closeness to reality. Despite the observable characteristics by Watt, there is however, no single core realist theory and therefore no single concrete suitable definition of the concept of realism exists. This has in turn led to the development of branches within the realist tradition developing. Grant Damian shows this by naming the various “branch” of realism(31). These branches add up to 22 differing types from critical realism to visionary realism. These “branches” subscribe to a different type of “truth” and endeavor to characterize the literate on the basis of their own interpretation of what the inter-relation between reality and imagination should be.

Since realism concerns itself with a truthful reflection of reality, Lukac 1956 argues that one of the factors that must be emphasized is the “concrete” and “abstract” potentialities of human beings in extreme situations. Lukac’s explained through illustration, that concrete potentiality is the “dialectic between the individual’s subjectivity and objective “reality” which is in contrast to abstract potentiality that lies entirely within subjectivity (76). As a result, the writer fixes his attention on his own person; he believes that the only reality left is the one he experiences in his own consciousness. They withdraw into a personal consciousness without a personal consciousness without any concrete reality context.

After those preliminary remarks, emphasis will be on author's realistic intentions, theme, and techniques in the African novel in general and to the case of the Senegales writer Sembene Ousmane and his *Bits of Wood* in particular. The theme of Africa and the African has been frequently used in European exotic and colonial literature. It has inspired many European writers with the entire stereotype it entailed. Emmanuel Obiechina ascertained that a novel like Daniel Defoe's *The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720) already "embodies most of the stereotypes which were to characterized later European writing on Africa" (64). Many European writers gradually considered themselves "specialist of African". However, these novels did not yield any "real" information about Africa. It was against stereotypical perspective in the European novel about Africa that the first generation of African novelists started to present their own version of the same theme: the confrontation between African and Europeans in Africa. There is a need to destroy European prejudice: according to the African perspectives, the European colonial literature had not realistically dealt with the Africa dealt with the African theme. This has often been confirmed by African writers themselves. Especially Chinua Achebe, one of his reasons for starting to write was to correct Joyce Cary's Eurocentric vision of Africa in novel like *Mister Johnson*, set in Nigeria. Achebe also attached the view of Joseph Conrad in his essay "*An Image of Africa*", where he concluded that Conrad was "bloody racist" and that this simple truth is glossed over in criticism of his works due to the fact that while racism against African is such normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely indicated (52). The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot.

Similarly, to the previous view, many African writers took it upon themselves to explain the European presence in Africa and colonial "reality". Therefore, in their view, other realistic themes were chosen in conjunction with contemporary society in which European character no longer played the important role it had in African Literature. As Dan Izevbaye put it in an interesting article entitled "Issues in the Reassessment of the African Novel." the first generation of novelists reacted in various ways to the prevailing European conceptions of culture and civilization and the romantic view of Africa by "a fictional documentation of cultural, sociological details," (79)

Many African novels refer "realistically" to African history, mainly recent history. They often do this quite directly, mentioning historical names and places, referring to well-known events like wars, battles, conflicts, strikes, and the like. This is what Philippe Hamon, in his essay on realism, has called "mega History," the corresponding real history which doubles the (illusion of) reality of the literary text (10). There are many examples of such references, whether in East, West, or Southern Africa. One might think of Sembene Ousmane's *L'Harmattan* (1964), which is completely based on the theme of the "Referendum" of 1958 organized by the French authorities in order to keep the French colonies under French rule, and the struggle of the young Africans against the voting in favor of the new Constitution and the French *Communaute*. The novel is preceded by a very interesting preface by the author, who states: "I do not practice the theory of the novel. Yet I remember that in the olden times the storyteller was not only the dynamic element of his tribe, clan, village, but also the patient witness of each event. He was the one who recorded, putting down, in front of all, under the palaver tree, everybody's doings. The idea of my work derives from this teaching: to keep as close as possible to reality and the people. (iiv)"

Social realism deals with the portrayal of the totality of society. In essence, it takes the development of individual a step further by monitoring the individual's progress from isolation

to a greater participation with the new social forces. Socialist realism makes use of the “positive hero”. The positive hero begins as a somewhat naïve person. He is then brought to enlightenment by a “mentor” in his life and his consciousness is subsequently raised. He is someone that is meant to be emulated. This coming of age is a major theme in many social realist texts. Clark observes that a relatively main character is brought to see the light by some emissary of the new enlightenment. The stages of the conversion process often structured in entire work of fiction and the two characters in this process were usually identified explicitly as “mentor and disciple” (34).

However, as observed by Tertz the first all-union congress of soviet writer, held in 1934, yield a rather broad but well summed up definition of social realism and literary criticism. It demands of the historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development (85). Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic representation of reality must be linked with the task of ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism.

One way to illuminate the critical response to Amos Tutuola and Okri's texts is by looking at them in relation to magical realism. The term was invented or first propounded by Franz Roh but it flourished by the publication of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). And this time, attached to a new and exciting kind of literature Magical Realism enjoys greater currency than ever, and indeed may confidently be said to be one of the recent publications on the topic. The artist of the twenties found two important sources of inspiration; both helped them express the feelings of alienation and anxiety that were so prevalent during this time. These were the “metaphysical” painting of Giorgio De Chirico and the naïve art of Henry Rousseau. The German artists adapted the mysterious and dreamlike elements from these and other predecessors, and combined them with objects from everyday life.

They endeavor to infuse “magic” into ordinary, even banal objects (72). The effect was enhanced by sharply focused realistic style, resulting in paintings whose details held the viewer’s interest while also exploring deep emotional reservoirs.

Magic Realism may be defined through various angles but despite the efforts of great scholars there has been any single definition of Magic Realism. “Magic Realism like myth, also provides an essentially synthetic or totalizing way of depicting reality. It was firmly grounded in daily reality and expressed man’s astonishment before the wonders of the real world, and a vision of the fantastic feature of reality”. According to Wikipedia, for writers like Garcia Marquez and Allende, reality constitutes both real and imagined acts. Thus, a levitating priest, appearance of the dead, and animals that have transcendent powers all take on a matter of factors by those who observe these phenomenon. Wikipedia further explained that for Borges, reality becomes an exploration of multiple universe and existences that tear away assumption of an observed reality through innovative forms and devices that address the fantastical, magic realist writers relay the message that language itself is unable to provide an accurate depiction of reality. The Mexican critic Luis Leal has said;

“Without thinking of the Concept of Magic Realism, each writer gives expression to a reality, he observes in the people. To me, magical realism is an attitude on the part of the characters in the novel toward the world, or toward nature. He adds, ‘If you can explain it then its not magical realism’”(91).

As recently as 2008, Magical Realism in literature has been defined as “a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise

maintains the “reliable” tone of objective realistic report. Designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folktale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance. The fantastic attributes given to characters in such novels- levitation, flight, telepathy are among the means that Magic Realism adopts in order to encompass the often phantasmagorical political realities of the 20th century.

Most often used to discuss South American writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges, there has recently been a move to categorise some African fiction in this way as well. Both Okri and Amos Tutuola have been classed as magical realist writers, though not exclusively or primarily. Lois Parkinson Zamora's and Wendy Faris' book, *Magical Realism; Theory, History Community*, helps to define the identifying characteristics of magical realism, which is “a mode suited to experience—and transgress—boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical, or generic. Magical realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction. The propensity of magical realist texts to admit a plurality of worlds means that they often situate themselves on liminal territory between or among those worlds—in phenomenal or spiritual regions where transformations, metamorphoses, dissolutions are common, where magic is a branch of naturalism, or pragmatism. [...] Mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female: these are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts” (74).

Magical realist text mix traditionally realistic narrative with more fantastic elements and experimental narrative form. They also explore the permeable divisions between male and female or spirit and human, both examples of liminal territories. His hybrid use of linguistic

conventions encourages his readers to explore other dimensions of experience (dream, myth, fantasy) that transport them away from familiar routines and habits of thought and feeling so that they may perceive analogies and relations that are normally invisible. Similarly to the 'liminal territory' that Zamora and Paris suggest is favoured by magical realist texts. Magical realist resist fixed boundaries in their writing through various means: reality is not presented as two-dimensional, with every character experiencing the same elements at the same time; and meaning is found through the juxtaposition of contrasts and ideas with seemingly nothing in common. The invitation to explore variations of reality is equally present in Okri's writing. Ogunsanwo asserts that;

a distinguishing feature of [Okri's] narrative art [...] is an astonishingly swift shift from the conventional versimilar description of the world of discrete things in the Western manner of narration to the mythopocic description of the "other reality" [...] This shift occurs all the more strikingly within a single paragraph or within a single sentence, and it is [...] seamless" (53).

Though magical realism is a mode often adopted by writers from Third World, postcolonial or emerging nations, its' very play with the boundaries of reality leave it open to some of the criticisms levelled at postmodern writing. Kumkum Sangari's comments highlight the problem he perceives with what he calls the 'transformative spaces in a text'. He asserts that "The transformative spaces in a text—that is, those which do not readily give up their meaning—are the crucial node of its depoliticization. The enigma in Marquez's narratives can be read as a radical contextual figure or can be recuperated as yet another self-reflexive instance of the

postmodern meaning representation problematic. The synchronic time-space of postmodernism becomes a modality for collapsing other kinds of time—most notably, the politically charged time of transition” (43).

Features of Magical Realism

The following is a review of some features in magical realism.

Liminality

According to Cristina Sandru, “liminality is a discussion about the location or areas in which magical realism operates. This does not mean its geographical location but its ontological area of occupation between the real and the magical” (51). As expressed in her own words, It comes as no surprise that a mode expressing liminal states of being and incorporating hybrid ontologies should become the literary benchmark of those parts of the world that are similarly ‘liminal’, hybridic, inhabiting a space of inbetween peripherality. Magical realism has accordingly, been described as a mode of writing which arises out of postcolonial societies, where cultures and civilizations, often incompatible, overlap and mix uneasily; where modern and ancient, scientific and magical world-views coexist.

Michael Linkletter proposes that “Celtic literatures may be interpreted using magical realism because they possess elements that correspond with Faris’s definition of magical realism” (72). The strongest point which he identifies is liminality: There are traditional devices in the text (Mabinogi) that “are used to clue the reader into the imminence of something magical or otherworldly. These devices, or motifs, are very often associated with liminality. They frequently take the form of a passage through mist or fog, crossing of geographical boundaries such as a river, coming to a crossroad, or clearing.... Because of the ubiquitousness of this motif, one might assume that the Celtic peoples were quite comfortable with the notion of close proximity

between worlds, between the magical and non-magical; indeed, such a distinction was likely never made” (32).

Ingenuous Narrator

Charles Scheel’s study proposes a definition of the marvelous narrative mode in French fiction, using novels by Jean Giono. He compares these novels with the criteria proposed by Chanady in defining the marvelous realism. His study pays close attention to the way in which magical or marvelous realist modes play with realism; “They communicate a sort of effect produced by childlike emotional and poetic vision of (real) world expressed in colourful, idiosyncratic language” (<http://www.academia.edu/1430858>). This view is similar with Bortulossi’s definition which emphasizes the ingenuous nature of the narrator. This kind of narrator can be identified in the seminal magical realist novels such as in Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and *Midnight’s Children*. Rushdie’s narrator is exuberant with this ingenuousness in expressing the events, thoughts and building of suspense.

Baroque

Baroque can best be described as a spirit that returns through civilizations, finding expression in various forms especially through the arts. Carpentier equates “mestizaje” in America as baroque because of its “symbiosis, mutations and vibrations” suggesting that in the hybrid nature of the American and Latin American people, baroque flourishes “the awareness of being other, of being new, of being symbiotic, of being criollo; and the criollo spirit is itself a baroque spirit” (53). According to him, Academism is characteristic of settled times that are complete, sure of themselves. It is the interception of different varieties of the baroque that Carpentier refers to as the marvelous real.

Authorial Reticence

This refers to the author's lack of explanation for magical events that occur in magical realists' texts. The author gives no explanation or surprise over these events. This deliberate withholding of explanation for magical events is typical in magical realist texts, giving them an aura of truthfulness that the narrator presumes should be accepted as natural by the reader. Wendy Faris also comments on the technique in which magical realism describes impossible events with realist detail. She connects this technique to authorial reticence:

A common technique, which is related to the first one because it concerns the way that the irreducible elements are introduced into the narrative is the narrator's use of a matter-of-fact and detached style to narrate fantastic events presenting them without comment. We have just seen a prime example of that technique in the way the narrator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* recounts the journey of the trail of blood, passing seamlessly from ordinary events to that extraordinary one with no signal of surprise. Faris (1894) explained that "the seamless textual fabric actualizes Andre Breton's idea that surrealist activities aim to find and fix the "point of the mind at which life and death, real and the imagined, past and future, communicable and incommunicable, high and low cease to be perceived as contradictions"(33).

Hyperreality

Eugene Arva, reviews the notion of hyperreality as expressed by Jean Baudillard. He states that Baudillard's hyperreality is "worlds in which distinctions between signified and signifier have all but disappeared through successive reproductions of previous reproductions of reality" (34). In Arva's proposition, "magical realism uses understated imagery and language to present images that resist representation especially the traumatic experiences" (44). Imagination, and especially

the traumatic imagination, is an activity by which the human consciousness translates an unspeakable state - pain – into readable image. The traumatic imagination uses sublimative power of language in order to turn that which resists representation into a new and more tangible reality. In addition the between pain and imagination can be mapped the whole fictional strategy of magical realism, in which appearances are made real than the real. Hyperreality is worthy of note in relation to post-colonialist theory because colonialism and migration are considered traumatic experiences for the colonized and migrants.

Hybridity

Hybridity has become the defining characteristic of postcolonial literature for many postcolonial critics. Hybridity was unavoidable for those born under colonial rule; the colonizing had influenced over education, media and politics. Even the legacy of colonization remain fresh, and now is nurtured by so called neo-colonialism, in which the colonialist not only markets its production in former colonies, but own a controlling interest in many or most of the financially successful industries in those countries. As Sanjeev Uprety remarks,

“In the case of third-world identities, hybridity is not only a matter of choice, but—more than in any other context—an issue of survival. A third-world subject must memorize the history of other nations, learn other languages, and adopt other fathers if he/she is to acquire a proper place in the social and economic ladder” (79).

Uprety's comments highlight the all-pervasive nature of hybridity in formerly colonised nations.

Beyond this practical hybridity, the concept of hybridity has been accepted and celebrated with postcolonial studies. Hybridity is a concept that turns as back on the kind of 'cultural rehabilitation' that was prevalent in the early days of political independence. Rather than focusing on an idealized precolonial past, a concept of hybridity emphasizes the here and now, the early realities reflecting how a postcolonial culture and its participants have actually rather than ideally evolved.

Carnavalesque

Cuddon explained that "Carnavalesque is a term developed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895- 1975) to describe the penetration or incorporation of carnival into everyday life, and its' shaping effects on language and literature" (111). According to Jack Santino, the carnivalesque refers to "festivities generally but there are "ritualesque" aspects of these festivities which carry messages of transformation for the participants and observers" (55). In his own words: The concept of the carnivalesque is correctly restricted to Bakhtin's specifics but it has become widely used to refer to festivities generally. As a result, scholars sometimes have difficulty accounting for the underlying seriousness of intent or purpose of events that are ludic, festive or carnivalesque. Too often the tendency is to recognize the carnivalesque but overlook the aspect of an event that involves transformation ... the ritualesque is not an absolute quality. I have attempted to demonstrate that the carnivalesque and the ritualesque by no means are mutually exclusive but rather complementary.

Because magical realism is a mode full of such transformative spaces and fluidity and because it deals with the liminal, which by its nature is outside of normal time and routine, it may be interpreted as apolitical, which may in fact undermine the postcolonial project. However, Zamora and Faris (1995) would argue the opposite. They contend that; “magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologous political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women” (67).

CONCEPT OF LIMINALITY

Liminality emphasizes the position of being in-between, unavoidably connected to at least two cultures, identities, and movements or state of being. Van Gennep states that “the liminal, being (or liminar) waves between two worlds” (43). However, it is Turner’s connection between the types of liminality that occurs within the society, that invites further comparison with hybridity. Liminality is often associated with ritual powers and with the total community seen as undifferentiated. Within a globalized world, liminar is at the centre of power. Turner observes that liminal situation and roles are almost everywhere, “... regarding as dangerous,

inauspicious to persons, objects events and relationships that have not been ritually incorporated into the liminal context” (80).

The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae are necessary ambiguous, since this condition and these persons slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and position in cultural space. The concept of space as a define place, forms an important point of reference as both myths and literary or imaginative spaces relate to cultural texts and contexts that in turn relate to specific time and place. Therefore, places and homes symbolic cultural constituent that denote sense of belonging. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned by law, custom, convention and ceremonial. These indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transition. Clear connotations of liminality are made by Turner in use of the phrase ‘neither here nor there’ and ‘betwixt and between the positions’ (79).

For further amplification of this point, it is useful to introduce the theory of D.W. Winnicott, who uses a theory of spatial positioning to understand individual identity similar to the employed by Van Gennep to examine rites of passage; Winnicott’s version of Van Gennep’s ‘well defined states’ are what he call “inner or personal psychic reality and ‘the actual world in which the individual lives, which can be objectively perceived” (18). In between these states is what he calls the ‘potential space’, a highly variable factor which mutually from individual to individual, which as the other two locations, psychic reality and the actual word are relatively constant. One being biologically determined and other are being common property. The position of the potential space makes it liminal territory; this emphasized by the use of the word ‘potential’ something which is not necessarily guaranteed, but always possible. Though this

space may initially be seen as fixed between the two other 'poles', it also fluctuates and shifts depending on the situation.

However, liminal novel describes how "in between" world serve to connect disparate individual and cultures through the symbolic representation of personal shelters "homes" or house and towers. A liminal authors propose the implementation of the imagination that abstract and transcendent space to explore and resolve cultural and individual liminalities, and to induce and encourage hybrid communities and with broadened perspectives. Therefore, art as a realm of imagination serve as the connecting link that makes seemingly impossible odds, possible. Liminal novel represent the development of fictional characters in the time and space which enable the reader to experience the lives of the protagonists in a substituted fashion. In this sense, liminality concept with regard to the different stages of separation, transition and re-interaction into society is emulated in the reading process. The interstitial space provided by liminality is especially pertinent to post-colonial novels. It illustrates how fictional characters in an individual and social sense have to experience "rites of passage" in order to come to term with traumatic changes in their lives and cultures.

REVIEW LIMINAL MANIFESTATION IN MAGICAL REALIST TEXTS

This section will look into the diverse dimensions of liminality as they manifest themselves in some magical realist texts. The magical realist text can be considered the liminal literary genre par excellence, as it depicts a liminal stage in human life, and the transitory phase between childhood and adulthood, life and death. It gesture in the direction of magical realist novel and thereby opens up liminal spaces of continuity and disruption.

In Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* liminal states or ritual of transition which is birth and death may be confused. For Oliver, the transition from non-existence to existence is complicated and uncertain, partly because birth seems inevitably mixed with death and partly because fathers are excluded from the scene of birth. This confused liminal states of birth and death is link with political and cultural change which can also be seen as liminal stage for Victorian culture more generally. Specifically, in *Oliver Twist* the rites of passage can be links to the representation of the hero birth, Agnes Fleming's death and the marriage which did not take place between Agnes and Oliver's father, to the 1837 registration act which required the registration of births, marriages and death as well as to the 1884 poor law amendment act. Both acts were symptoms of the new disciplinary regime of the 1830s which included the reform of the workhouse system and continued work of the foundling hospital. Tambling's essay thus suggest that "the social narratives of Charles Dicken's novels, and his interest in children who are abandoned, ascribed the unsatisfactory rituals of birth and marriage largely to social institutions or elements of infrastructure like the work house" (56).

Concerning life and death, lineage versus environment in *Oliver Twist* Kennedy links *Oliver Twist* to the Newgate novel, notably to Paul Clifford, and she offers a comparison of the two versions of identity to be found in Dicken's novel: a platonic type view of character as innate, not influenced by experience or environment. Like Tambling and Kennedy examines the confusion of states of birth and life and death in Dicken's *Oliver Twist*, arguing that "Oliver may be said never to truly be born or grow up as an independent character. From his birth, which is barely differentiated from death at the beginning of the novel, his life is scripted in two different ways both of which seem to lead to death rather than to full existence; either he is destined to be hanged as a pick pocket or he is destined to be identified as the true son of two dead parents. In

neither case does he truly like” (86). For much of the novel, Oliver remains on the margins of society lowest rungs, in the work house or the criminal underworld. Even when Oliver finally escapes this liminal state he finds himself in the death-like state or “heaven” of the Brownlow-Maylie rural idyll at the end of the novel.

In Gordimer’s *The Pickup*, Ibrahim and especially Julie struggle to transcend the social impositions that cause individualism. While Julie wants to escape the shackles of patriarchy unravel in the character of his wealthy father, Ibrahim paradoxically aspires to her father’s lifestyle. These completely perspectives problematize the concepts of liminality in relation to identity that the opening lines of William Plomer’s poem “Another Country” a poem that thematically recurs in the novel. “Let us go to another country/ Not yours or mine/ And start again” (Gordimer 2001). Julie, as the central character in the novel is the one that genuinely embarks on a search towards a self-definition of her identity. By contrast, Ibrahim is just trying to desperately escape his background and enter the neocolonial circuits of wealth and power that people like Julie’s father control. For Ibrahim, Julie becomes the gate towards the life to which he aspires. Even though their ultimate motives are never spelled out, the relationship turns into an agonistic space where new identities especially in Julie’s case struggle to emerge.

In this sense, it is an inter-racial sexual and sentimental relationship, Julie’s and Ibrahim’s marriage can be interpreted as the means where alternative identities to the ones regulated liminal stage following the process of separation mentioned above. As Foucault has put it, “the madman’s voyage is at once a rigorous division and an absolute passage. In one sense, it simply develops across a half-real, half-imaginary geography, the madman’s liminal position on the horizon” (77).

However In their desire to express their worldview magical realist can be argued to go through some sort of rite of passage. As Victor Turner points out, Arnold Van Gennep, in *Rites of Passage* (1908) distinguishes “three phases in a rite of passage: *separation, transition* and *incorporation*” (25). For the transition stage, Van Gennep chose the term ‘limen.’, the Latin for “threshold” (37). In anthropological terms, the liminal stage operates as an anti-structure where the initiand in a given society experiences a blurring of social distinctions and strays from the prevalent order of the rest of the community. This critical term seems adequate to delve into the implications of the hybridity of post-colonial writing. Placed in the agonistic locus between center and margins, liminality is the non-space liable to generate new worlds. In Turner.’s words, “.‘[m]eaning.’ in culture tends to be generated at the interfaces between established cultural subsystems.... Liminality is a temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural .‘cosmos’”. (41). Therefore, it should be noted that the liminal does not irrevocably lead to a discursive center, but can operate as a permanently transitional space where referents stand in a catachrestic relation to cultural signifiers.

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CHAPTER THREE

LIMINAL ANALYSIS OF BEN OKIRI'S *FAMISHED ROAD*

Though the primary focus of this chapter will be liminality motif in *Famished Road*, there are important points of view in the Magical realist texts regarding the presence of the supernatural and Azaro's relationship with this other world, which strongly affects his human existence, and is an important element of his liminality. Discussion of these matters will be aided by a return to the subject of magical realism broached in the Introduction to this thesis. Though

the term is problematic, with Okri himself rejecting it,' magical realism is a useful point of entry to the examination of texts that do not present only one type of reality. As noted in the Introduction, Zamora and Faris explained that Okri's works have been classified as magical realist, a type of writing that 'often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction' (5). As will be shown, neither set of texts presents a world in which there is a rigid boundary between the spirit and the human worlds. Zamora and Faris argue that The propensity of magical realist texts to admit a plurality of worlds means that they often situate themselves on liminal territory between or among those worlds—in phenomenal or spiritual regions where transformations, metamorphoses, dissolutions are common, where magic is a branch of naturalism, or pragmatism. (6). Furthermore, the identity constructed by Okri demonstrates another element of Zamora's and Faris' definition of magical realism: Mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female: these are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts. (6) As the magical realist qualities of the texts, particularly *Famished Road* helps to illuminate understanding of liminality. The most relevant of these qualities will be examined to provide a context for the discussion of Azaro. First, a definition of the spirit world and spirits will be derived from the texts in order then to show that interactions with the spirit realm are more likely to occur in what may be termed 'liminal locations'—the forest and Madame Koto's bar in *Famished Road*. It will be shown that *Famished Road* depict a world in which spirits and politicians are very closely linked, if not indistinguishable. The chapter will then analyse Azaro more specifically as character who have a special relationship with the spirit world or the supernatural, as well as with death. Indeed, he is a character for whom death does not hold the

same terrors as it would for normal mortals. The former will be explored principally through examination of an experience Azaro has with a mask he finds in the forest. In the investigation of Azaro's personal boundaries and in the assessment of significance of Azaro's choice of the potential space will be discussed.

LIMINAL LOCATIONS IN THE HUMAN WORLD

Because Azaro is a spirit-child who refuses to cut off his links to the spirit world, *Famished Road* is marked by continual interaction between the human and spirit worlds. The spirit world in *Famished Road* is an idyllic world. It is clearly defined as the 'land of beginnings' in which 'spirits mingled with the unborn' and 'we knew no boundaries' (3). This lack of boundaries is the source of the spirits' freedom and is presented in a positive light when contrasted with the human world: "Tender sibyls, benign sprites, and the serene presences of our ancestors were always with us, bathing us in the radiance of their diverse rainbows. There are many reasons why babies cry when they are born, and one of them is the sudden separation from the world of pure dreams, where all things are made of enchantment, and where there is no suffering" (4). Therefore, in the initial stages of *Famished Road*, the spirit world is presented as a domain of 'pure dreams' as opposed to the human world, which is full of suffering. The spirit world is a refuge for Azaro from the cruelty of the human world. It is interesting to note, however, that when the spirits appear in the human world, as they often do, particularly in liminal locations, they are not presented in the text as 'benign sprites' or 'tender sibyls'. Rather, as will be seen, they are most often presented as grotesque or malevolent. Thus, though the spirit world is the ideal realm to which Azaro, apparently aspires entry, when there are 'spirits in the

material world', he is much less attractively presented. Elements of the confluence of world characteristic of magical realist texts may easily be seen in the English texts in what may be called liminal locations, sites of movement from one world to another or of other boundary transgression. It is interesting to note that the one important sites of gender and sexuality in the text, the Madame Koto's bar, is also the sites of most interaction between the spirit and human worlds in the text, with the effect this location is presented as sites of multiple transgressions and boundary crossings, emphasising their liminal qualities. This site is important because it is the physical manifestations of the symbolic threshold between the human and spirit worlds, the visible and the invisible.

Interaction between the worlds is common in the text. Azaro's spirit companions make trouble for him; he runs into spirits in the marketplace; the dead appear and reappear. Early in *Famished Road* Azaro makes the discovery that 'it wasn't just humans who came to the marketplaces of the world. Spirits and other beings come there too. They buy and sell, browse and investigate. They wander amongst the fruits of the earth and sea' (16). According to Awolalu, Such interaction of humans and spirits is consistent with the traditional Yoruba belief that there is 'a communion and a communication going on all the time between those that have gone into the life beyond and those that are here on earth' (62). As Brenda Cooper points out, the text presents a world in which 'the spirits are a routine part of the mundane every day and electric light and sound constitute the awesome and the unbelievable' (84). The forest and Madame Koto's bar are locations with a literal or figurative position at a cross-road, and in which there is some kind of obscurity; as such, they encourage closer relations with the spirit world. Each site and its overall meaning are as ambiguous as its physical environment. The reader is forced to pay close attention if she is not to ignore the complexities of these sites. This ambiguity points to

some of the challenges posed by magical realist elements in texts, which favour multiple meanings over restrictive ones.

THE FOREST

Azaro is continually drawn to the forest, and many of the breaches of his personal boundaries to be discussed in this chapter occur there. Therefore, it is important to look at this location, in order to understand why Azaro is particularly vulnerable here. Though Madame Koto's bar attracts spirits, as will be seen below, the forest is their natural home on earth; its giant trees and rampant foliage obscure vision and afford a place to hide. Azaro finds that 'the forest swarmed with unearthly beings. It was like an overcrowded marketplace. [...] They were so numerous that they interpenetrated one another' (12). This interpenetration of the spirits as Brenda Cooper points out indicates that their 'personal' boundaries (the boundaries of their subjectivity) are not fixed; they are able to be 'interpenetrated', several layers of being or reality superimposed one on another (85). It will be seen below that Azaro shares this liability to interpenetration to a certain extent, suggesting that this quality derives from his spirit heritage. And he, like the other spirits, is also attracted to the forest.

The forest is a world of visual obscurity, a constant interplay of light and dark. In the forest, the divides between reality and fantasy, human and spirit is blurred. On one occasion, Azaro wandered for a long time in the forest, "The earth gave off a potent aroma and in the heat the palm trees released alcoholic fumes deep in their trunks which I breathed in with the smell of their barks and their wine-sap evaporating into the quivering air. I listened to the curlews in the groves of wild pine trees. Intoxicated with the alcoholic fumes of sun and earth I broke through a remote section of the forest, where sunbirds clustered in baobab branches, and I emerged in

another reality, a strange world, a path which had completed its transition into a road". (241). That the word 'alcoholic' is used twice and that Azaro is 'intoxicated' only emphasises the distorting quality of the forest. In her chapter on magical realism in *Famished Road*, Cooper argues that the destruction of the forest in its role is a symbol of colonialism and the destruction of traditional beliefs in favour of modernity. She suggests that the spirits 'thrive in the safety of the darkness afforded by the uncleared bush' and that 'the widening paths and the well-lit clearings pose a threat to the spirit world' (82). The spirits' increased occupation of Madame Koto's bar may be a result of their displacement from the forest. However, though the forest is fairly consistently portrayed as representative of tradition and traditional beliefs, the road is a much more ambiguous image, being related both to the advent of modernity, and to traditional stories—the *Famished Road* itself, as will be seen. Azaro says, "Sometimes I played in the forest. My favourite place was the clearing" (143). If the forest is read as tradition and the road modernity, the clearing may be read as a zone between the two and thus, a liminal location in a similar way as Madame Koto's bar. Though Azaro laments the fact that the 'trees I got to know so well were cut down and only their stumps, dripping sap, remained' (143), he is attracted to the growing clearing; it offers him a world in the process of transformation that mirrors his own liminality. The trees, 'dripping sap', may be seen to symbolise the suffering that Azaro's choice to remain in the human world will cause him; however, he, unlike the trees, is not mutilated by his residence in the liminal potential space, as it is his *choice* to do so. Near the forest and the clearing is situated Madame Koto's bar, the other principal liminal location of Okri's text. It, too, is a site of transformation, though a less positive one.

MADAME KOTO'S BAR

Madame Koto's bar is at a junction, where multiple social groups and multiple world views come together; in addition, it is also one of the favourite meeting places of the spirits. On one occasion, Azaro says, 'I felt on the edge of reality. Madame Koto's bar seemed like a strange fairyland in the real world, a fairyland that no one could see' (208). His comment emphasises the bar's position within the real world, but simultaneously apart from it. When he goes home with Dad, he says, 'we left the edge of reality, the fairyland that no one could see, and went home through the swaying night' (213). Azaro recognises the bar as at the border between real and unreal, making it a likely place for spirits. It is also the site of some of the most vigorous pursuits of Azaro by his spirit companions. Cooper's analysis of Madame Koto's bar alludes to many of the points that make it important in liminal terms. She writes that the bar is a site of multiple meanings, the most obvious of which is the bar's own spatial positioning at the border between road and bush, at the gateway to the spirits, who enter from the bush, and haven to the new politicians, who enter from the road. (83) From this analysis, it may be inferred that the bar is a liminal location because it is itself a crossroads between the spirit and the human worlds. And, in fact, like the forest, the bar is itself in a constant state of transition as Madame Koto's fortunes change, so its meaning also changes. Cooper notes that the bar 'is the zone of the mutant and the hybrid, women-birds and bird-fish, creatures, half-human and part animal' (83). Within the bar, there are combinations of spirits and humans, incompletely transformed from man to beast and vice versa, making the liminal quality of the location explicit. Confusing the issue even further is the fact that the spirits disguise themselves as humans. Azaro says, "it occurred to me that they were spirits who had borrowed bits of human beings to partake of human reality. They say spirits do that sometimes. They do it because they get tired of just being spirits. They want to taste human things, pain, drunkenness, laughter, and sex. Sometimes they do it to spread mischief and

sometimes to seduce grown-ups or abduct children into their realm . [...] I became certain that Madame Koto's fetish had somehow been attracting them. I was confirmed in this notion by the fact that they seemed to cluster most thickly beneath the fetish". (136). The spirits in this location are truly liminal because they are confused (and confusing) and hard to distinguish. Madame Koto's fetish, a traditional symbol of power, attracts the spirits to her bar, just as her palm wine and, later, stout, attracts the politicians; and both the spirits and the politicians are certainly able to find the 'human things' of 'drunkenness, laughter, and sex' in the bar. Indeed, the bar is an excellent place for the spirits because their presence is less easily detected: Azaro, more sensitive than most to spirits, often doubts his vision and assumes the clients are all human. An average bar customer would do the same, attributing anything untoward to the effects of alcohol.

In addition, as Cooper argues, "the bar is undoubtedly in one sense a border, a gateway, a moment of change, of welding between old and new, of mutation and transformation" (85). One way in which the old and new is manifested in the bar is not only the mixed nature of much of the clientele, but the conflation of spirits and politicians. It is possible to see links between mischievous or evil spirits and corrupt politicians, both of whom like to drink there. The best illustration of this is Azaro's observation that the bar took on an evil light, "I saw its other sides, felt its secret moods. The men and women seemed like better versions of the spirits who used to come here, and who had tried to steal me away. They had a greater mastery of the secrets of human disguise. I heard their metallic voices and the laughter of their perfumes and underneath all the dancing and the energy was the invasion of a rancid smell" (273). This description uses juxtaposed opposites and mingled categories to emphasise that things are not what they seem. The use of words like 'sinister' and 'secret' further stress the more negative qualities of the bar and its clientele that they would rather keep hidden. The politicians are presented as merely more

skillful deceivers than the malicious spirits who try to abduct Azaro. The undercurrent of the 'rancid smell' signals that these beings exude menace; they are 'spoiled' despite their mastery of human disguise.

AZARO AS LEADING LIMINAL CHARACTER

The significant aspect of Azaro character is that he has a special relationship to death, which is clearly defined in the text. Very early in *Famished Road* Azaro mentions the 'fact of dying' (5). Later in the text, when he is contemplating starving himself to death to punish his parents, he sinks into 'the essential indifferent serenity of the spirit-child's soul—the serenity that accepts extremes of experience calmly because the spirit-child is at home with death' (326).

Though he later rejects this indifference, part of the reason for this feeling is his immense familiarity with the spirit world: neither death nor the afterworld, he believes, hold surprises for him. In fact, it is entry to the human world that is more terrifying for him, as the *abiku* perceives it as his place of exile. Azaro asserts that 'To be born is to come into the world weighed down with strange gifts of the soul, with enigmas and an inextinguishable sense of exile. So it was with me' (p.5). Thus, Azaro has no fear of death because he knows that the world of the spirits is a beautiful one and that his life does not end with death—indeed, death is simply another beginning. However, though Azaro's concealment of his spirit tokens is typical of *abikus*, he is unique among them, which gives added significance to his liminality. Deliberately, 'somewhere in the interspace between the spirit world and the Living' Azaro chooses to 'stay' (5). He does not give definitive reasons for this choice; rather he proposes several possibilities, among them these: It may also have been that I wanted to taste of this world, to feel it, suffer it, know it, to love it, to make a valuable contribution to it, and to have that sublime mood of eternity in me as I live the life to come. (5) The use of the speculative 'may' leaves the question open, giving Azaro

and the reader the opportunity to decide which reason, if any, is the most compelling. Azaro's willingness to suffer the world contrasts sharply with other *abikus*, however, he does not reject the spirit world completely. If he were to become human, he would agree 'to reveal where we had hidden the spirit tokens that bound us to the other world' (5). Azaro refuses to do this, and his parents' poverty delays the performance of the ceremonies that would sever his ties with the spirit world completely and transform him into a human child. Azaro's reaction to this deferral is positive: 'I was happy. I didn't want it performed. I didn't want to entirely lose contact with that other world of light and rainbows and possibilities' (9). Indeed, later in the novel when the herbalist 'said something about the importance of retrieving my spirit tokens which he believed I had hidden in secret place. [...] I immediately thought of him as an enemy' (341). Therefore, Azaro is truly liminal, and by choice: he is neither fully spirit nor fully human. In fact, Azaro observes that *abikus* like him, who chooses to stay in the human world, 'are the strange ones, with half our being always in the spirit world' (4), whereas more typical spirit-children such as Ade never fully commit to living in the human world.

A brief look at: some of the critical reactions to the text are useful to an understanding of Azaro's liminality. Margaret Cezair-Thompson disagrees fundamentally with the notion that Azaro comes to celebrate the instability of his identity, maintaining that "The formation of a new, steadfast identity is not only possible in *The Famished Road*; it is seen as a necessary, self-sustaining activity. For [Azaro], it is the sought after resolution of his "paradoxical soul" (41). The problem with this otherwise compelling reading is that she does not show through textual

evidence how this seemingly new identity is 'steadfast'. Azaro's choice to stay may be better interpreted as a choice to *celebrate* ambiguity and *sustain* his 'paradoxical soul'. To fulfil his *abiku* destiny would not be paradoxical, nor would it be so if he were to sever all links with the spirit world. This is clearly demonstrated by Azaro's words at the end of *Famished Road*: Given the fact of the immortality of spirits, could these be the reason why I wanted to be born—these paradoxes of things, the eternal changes, the riddle of living while one is alive, the mystery of being, of births within births, deaths within births, births within dying, the challenge of giving birth to one's true self, to one's new spirit, till the conditions are right for the new immutable star within one's universe to come into existence; the challenge to grow and learn and love, to master one's self; the possibilities of a new pact with one's spirit; the probability that no injustice lasts forever, no love ever dies, that no light is ever really extinguished, that no true road is ever complete, that no way is ever definitive, no truth ever final, and that there are never really any beginnings or endings? (487). The immortality of spirits allows Azaro to have the visions, which in turn allows him to make the choice to stay, not to end the paradoxes, but to give birth to new ones because 'no truth is ever final', particularly as he wishes to 'live the earth's life and contradictions' (487). The emphasis on paradox and riddle is further emphasised by the fact that this is a question, rather than an answer. Neither Azaro nor the reader has absolute knowledge in this domain. To relate Azaro's identity explicitly to his liminality, Cezair-Thompson strongly argues that his choice to remain in the human world is a sign that at the beginning of *Famished Road* 'the "abiku" returns to the womb and, once born, chooses to bring his liminal existence to an end' (41). Indeed, she suggests that "The numerous acts of recurrence within the novel [...] are not a sign of the country's unmitigable instability. They express a resolute, indefatigable quest for an inviolable form. This quest, which is expressed as Azaro's desire 'to remain' and to replace

his unstable existence as an 'abiku' with a more stable one, is the driving force of the novel".

(40) Putting the point about Nigeria's stability aside for the moment, Cezair-Thompson's view is clearly that by choosing to stay in the human world, Azaro ends his liminality, and that this choice is empowering to him. To support her argument, she uses his words: "It may simply have been that I had grown tired of coming and going. It is terrible to remain forever in-between" (5). However, this expressed attitude toward the in-between is not sustained throughout the rest of the novel, nor does Azaro ever allow his spirit tokens to be dug up: his reaction to the herbalist who suggests it to his parents is one of hatred. In fact, Edna Aizenberg rightly suggests that "Azaro 'never resolves this "in-betweenness", although the oppositional systems do permeate each other, and do provide a window of promise through their interpenetration" (28). This choice has clearly demonstrated risks to Azaro, but he chooses to live with them and move beyond them. It is in Azaro's access to spirit and human realms, admittedly sometimes unwillingly, that the paradox of his existence is presented. He resides in what may be termed a 'potential space', choosing elements from the more fixed spirit and human worlds and experiencing something entirely new. The spirit world and its 'innocent games' give him his power, and his vision of how the world could be different, enables him to bear the 'raw world of our ghetto'. His decision to stay in the human world marks his commitment to using those visions in order to better the lives of humans, as he says at the beginning of *Famished Road*, to 'make a valuable contribution' (5) to the world. In this way, his choice of the potential space is anything but apolitical.

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CHAPTER FOUR

LIMINAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS TUTUOLA'S *PALMWINE DRINKARD*

LIMINAL CHARACTERS

THE NARRATOR

The narrator of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* constantly employs the device of the magician and the trickster that his jujus make possible to activate his authority to bring into fruitful conversation

the visible and invisible dimensions of his world, thereby averting zero sum games of ambitions of dominance. Being a subject calls for the unrelenting quest to enhance one's potency. Power is seldom permanent; like game it is to be approach and apply in the context of particular relationships and interactions. If power were to be rigidly the exemption of the gods, the spirits, ghosts, the invisible world, or human leaders, there would be no end to the exposures of ordinary humans and their world of appearances. The narrator is half spirit and half human, hence his unique credentials as someone who belongs everywhere and nowhere in particular. Armed with and doubly activated by the potency of his "native juju" and his father's (9), the narrator was able to neutralise his subjection and keep the company of gods, spirits and the wild animals of the thick bushes and forests he traversed. With his native jujus he could transform or project himself into a bird, fly about and overhear conversations, and seek answers to questions to prove that he could live up to his name of "father of the gods who could do everything in this world" (10). Chased by ghosts, he narrates how "I became a big bird like an aeroplane and flew away with my wife, I flew for 5 hours before I came down" (40). The swollen left thumb of his wife gives birth to a son who "began to talk to us as if he was ten years of age" (31), who named himself "ZURRJIR" (32), was "as strong as iron," and could eat without satisfaction, and torture his parents the way only a spirit child could (34-37). Those encountered by the narrator of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* promise to help or reward him in exchange for services, often in the form of helping to resolve a challenge or predicament that defies. He must do something first, something that often threatens his very life. For ten years spent going from town to town through bushes and forests thick and thin looking for his tapster, the narrator encountered people who "would say unless I should help them to do something, they would not tell" (99). This is true of the old man who is a god who sends him to fetch a bell from the blacksmith, but which he

refuses to name, as a way of making the task more challenging for the narrator. Beaten at his own game, the old man challenges the narrator to capture Death and bring it to him. But when Death is indeed captured and brought, the old man and his family flee, for they never thought anyone could capture Death. The palm-wine tapster ability to stay alive in Death's Town show is liminal potency.

MONSTER

In *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, the passages that most illustrate liminal experience are those which describe how a mere skull came to be a complete gentleman. This is done by borrowing body parts and costly clothes to enable him to attend the famous market of a town where the beautiful daughter of the famous head of the town had turned down every suitor imaginable.

“This lady was very beautiful as an angel but no man could convince her for marriage. So, one day she went to the market on a market-day as she was doing before, or to sell her articles as usual; on that market-day, she saw a curious creature in the market, but she did not know where the man came from and never knew him before.” (18) She was instantly charmed by this “beautiful ‘complete’ gentleman ... dressed with the finest and most costly clothes” (18). Indeed, “all the parts of his body were completed”; he was both tall and stout, and had he “been an

article or an animal for sale, he would be sold at least for £2000 (two thousand pounds)” (18). The more he ignored the lady, the more she felt attracted to him. She “left her articles unsold” and “began to watch the movements of the complete gentleman about in the market” (18). When the market day ended and people were returning to their various destinations, the lady followed the complete gentlemen, despite his repeatedly “telling her to go back, or not to follow him” (19). She “did not listen to what he was telling her, and when the complete gentleman had tired of telling her not to follow him or to go back to her town, he left her to follow him.” (19). Roughly twelve miles away from the market, at a crossroads, “they left the road on which they were travelling and started to travel inside an endless forest in which only all the terrible creatures were living.” (19).

After the crossroad junction, her complete gentleman begins the process of self-deactivation by returning and paying the rental for “the hired parts of his body to the owners” (20) who had so generously lent them to him. “When he reached where he hired the left foot, he pulled it out, he gave it to the owner and paid him” (20), and continued his journey. And “when they reached the

place where he hired the right foot, he pulled it out and gave it to the owner and paid for the rentage” (20). Both feet gone, the complete gentleman “began to crawl along on the ground” (20). Frightened at what was unfolding before her eyes, as her illusion of a complete gentleman evaporated, “that lady wanted to go back to her town or her father,” but the now not so complete gentleman would not let her. This is like a metaphor for what happens when one insists on completeness that is out of this world, and that requires diminishing and debasing others for one to claim fulfilment. It is what would happen if one absolutely had to pay all of one’s debts in order to free oneself from any form of sociality possible. Since a human being is a social being, one’s humanity is of necessity a mixed of all the interconnections and relationships of association that one has cultivated and internalised, it is impossible indeed a contradiction for one to claim absolute freedoms or autonomy without the prospect of self-deactivation. To make this point, Tutuola details in all its minuteness the deactivation of the complete gentleman that he has constructed. Thus, when “they reached where he hired the belly, ribs, chest, etc., ... he pulled them out and gave them to the owner and paid for the rentage” (20). Left with “only the head and both arms with neck,” the complete gentleman could not crawl any more, and resorted to “jumping on as a bull-frog” (20). Overwhelmed by fear and forbidden from returning home to her father, the lady fainted. When he had plucked off, returned and paid for both hired arms, as well as his hired neck, the “complete gentleman was reduced to head and when they reached where he hired the skin and flesh which covered the head, he returned them, and paid to the owner,” reducing himself to a “Skull” (20-21). As a skull, “he could jump a mile to the second before coming down,” (22) so whenever the lady attempted to run away, “he hastily ran to her front and stopped her as a log of wood” (22). They got to his house, which was a hole under the ground; “there were only Skulls living in that whole” (22). Once home, the skull “tied a single

Cowrie on the neck of this lady with a kind of rope,” “gave her a large frog on which she sat as a stool,” and then “he gave a whistle to a Skull of his kind to keepwatch on this lady whenever she wanted to run away” (22). She would remain under their watch until eventually released by the narrator, “father of the gods who could do everything in this world” (23-31). This is a tale of the horrors of an insensitive insistence on magical realism, which can only be achieved by sacrificing sociality and living in total confinement. Spirits and gods in touch with humanity feel and behave the same as humans. Those humans with the gift of clairvoyance, like the narrator, can seek to out manoeuvre others with their trickery. When the skull – that is watching the captured lady whom the narrator sets out to find and bring back to her father – falls asleep and thus is not in a position to blow the whistle and alert the other skulls, the narrator is able to change himself back from a lizard into a man to speak to the lady, who is seated “on a bullfrog with a single cowrie tied on her neck” (26). And even when the cowrie on the lady’s neck “made a curious noise” that alerted the skulls, he had “changed” or “dissolved himself into air” before a cowrie could be tied around his neck as well (27). By tying the cowries round the neck of their victims the skulls were able “to reduce the power of any human being” and “also to make a person dumb” (27). When he finally snatched the lady away and started fleeing with the skulls chasing him through the forest, “rolling on the ground like large stones and also humming with terrible noise,” he “changed the lady into a kitten and put her inside my pocket and changed myself to a very small bird” [a sparrow] (28). Finally, the adventure ends with the Lady (the drinkard’s eventual wife), trapped in a hole filled with living skulls like the complete gentleman. In this fantastical passage, the Lady a figure of traditional, folk wisdom who joins the drinkard in his journey for the rest of the novel is held hostage by the monsters made by reducing once complete African bodies to capital.

. While the drinkard eventually rescues and marries the Lady, this magical realist episode nonetheless captures the tension between identities. Although the complete gentleman is wrapped in fine clothing, he does not act like a villain until he rents out pieces of himself. The gentleman does not aggress against the Lady and the traditions she represents at the apex of his modern embodiment, it is instead when he is dissolved of any identity that he and people like him are made into monsters. It is only through the fantastic that *The Palm Wine Drinkard* can adequately represent the difficulty of identifying with either the forces of modernity or of tradition. Of course, the aberration of *The Palm Wine Drinkard* overcomes the realism so completely that the “realist” themes in the drinkard’s grief and anxiety in finding a place in a transitory world can be overshadowed by the folkloric and fantastic events of the novel.

DEATH

Death might be extraordinarily frightening, but it also is very ordinary and often outmanoeuvred by its victims. Not only does Death assume human proportions, it exudes ordinary human propensities and frailties when it does. Death in human promotions has a house and a yam farm, and must cultivate, consume and ensure and assure a healthy lifestyle to stay alive and away from self cannibalisation. Even the dead of the Deads’ Town are extraordinarily ordinary in their humanness – eating and drinking and indulging in the sociality and practices of the alives, even as they train and qualify to behave like the dead, which includes walking backwards. The gods are no different, not only do they look and act human, they are quite simply ordinary, just like any other human. Similarly, the head of the town with the famous market asks the palm-wine drinkard to free his daughter from the terrible curious creature who borrowed body parts and

fancy clothes to transform himself into a complete gentleman. If Death can itself be alive as a yam farmer busy struggling for subsistence and survival even as it kills others, this makes of Death a form of circulation and not a matter of permanent severance of links with life and the living.

LIMINAL LOCATIONS

DEATH TOWN

In the Deads' Town – where the palm wine drunkard eventually locates his dead tapster, “BAITY,” after a ten-year search – where it is “forbidden for alives to come,” (p.96) alives are nonetheless tolerated. In terms of material culture and sociality, things are not that different between the world of the alives and Deads' Town. Whatever difference there is in Deads' Town is scarcely skin deep, as one can train and qualify as “a full dead man,” as did the tapster following his death (100). Despite forbidding alives from living there, Deads' Town is very accommodating, as “both white and black deads” are living there (100). The culture of gifts and gifting is the same: “he [tapster] told me that he could not follow me back to my town again, because a dead man could not live with alives ... and said that he would give me anything that I liked in the Deads' Town.” (100). As a parting present, the tapster gives him an egg, telling him “to keep it as safely as gold” upon his return home. The tapster told him “the use of the egg was to give me anything that I wanted in this world and if I wanted to use it, I must put it in a big bowl of water, then I would mention the name of anything that I wanted” (101). Indeed, the sameness between the alives and the dead of Deads' Town is so striking it begs the question: what business does the dead have living at all, and curiously, like the alives? Even more

perplexing is the fact of Death itself, living as a human being, among the alives, until he, the narrator, “brought Death out from his house,” upon the request of a god turned man, thereby rendering Death forever with “no permanent place to dwell or stay,” and since then, “we are hearing his name about in the world” (16). As half-spirit and half-human, the palm wine drinkard’s needs and deeds are no ordinary needs and deeds. The exceptional child of a wealthy father – “the richest man in our town” (7) – he had a supernatural appetite for palm-wine, an appetite which could only – or should I say, barely – be satisfied by a nine square mile farm of 560,000 palm trees. Being the richest man, his father could afford to pander to the unusual appetites of his bizarre son – the eldest of eight children, and the only one who substituted hard work with palm-wine drinking. The father recruits an equally exceptional palm-winea tapster to cater full-time for the appetite of his son. For fifteen years the narrator pleasures himself with a superabundance of palm-wine dutifully delivered by his devoted tapster. He drinks along with many a fair weather friend, but when his father and tapster die suddenly and the generous supply of palm-wine dries up, his drinking partners turn their backs on him. He becomes very lonely, sad and vulnerable, like a child doubly orphaned by losing both its biological and foster parents. Encouraged by the legendary belief that the dead are alive in the world of the living even if “in the Deads’ Town” (96), the palm-wine drinkard sets out to track down his dead palm-wine tapster.

MARKET AND CROSSROAD

Market is a liminal location that abode the intercourse between the visible and the invisible. This spatial space strengthens supernatural forces transaction with normal human being. The

transaction involves buy and selling of goods and services. This notion reinforces physical interface with the spirit world. The supernatural forces in physical appearance inhabit transactional functions like normal human being. This appearance is temporal, because there is an immediate transformation of appearance from physical to monstrous look after their transaction. It is common in Yoruba myths and legend and also Yoruba traditional religion that supernatural being pitch their abode in market; ghosts, spirits, demons, witches and wizards are known to participate in buying and selling activities during market transaction in Yoruba land. The people as matter of fact look for their dead relation and loved ones who pitch abode in market places. Some have gone to the extent of claiming to have seen the faces of their dead relatives, friends and colleagues in market haggling and negotiating prices of commodities. But, maintaining also that upon identification by earthly people, they change their physical appearance in a twinkle of an eye or disappear completely into thin air to avoid recognition. Tutuola validates supernatural inclusiveness in human economic transaction;

“There is a big market in this town from where the daughter
was captured, and the market-day was fixed for every 5th
day and the whole people of that town and from all the
villages arounds the town and also spirits and curious
creature from various bushes and forests were coming to
this market every 5th day to sell or buy articles.
By 4o'clock in the evening, the market would close for that
day and then everybody would be returning to his destination

or to where he or her came from”(17).

Tutuola also demonstrate relationship between physical and supernatural in his work by introducing a contact between curious creature and the daughter of the head of the town;

“So, one day she went to the market on a market-day as

she was doing before, or to sell her article as usual; on

that market-day, she saw a curious creature in the market,

but she did not know where the man came from and never

knew him before”(18).

Crossroads and junctions are as much places and spaces of hope and reassurance as they are zones of diminishing prospects. Thus, as they branch off the main road at the crossroads, the lady’s fantasies turns into her worst nightmare, as she becomes the journey of discovery that there is much less to her prince charming that she saw in the market, than meets the eye;

“But when they had travelled about twelve miles away

from that market, they left the road on which they

were travelling and started to travel inside an endless

forest in which only all the terrible creatures were living”.

The excerpts above project crossroad as liminal boundary between the living and the spirit.

Using the character of curious creature and the daughter of the head of the town, the narrator

unfolds the link between human world and spirit world. Amos Tutuola inhabits this shifting, liminal territory and find in it the creativity of the potential space, which allows him to engage imaginatively with the world. The nature of the narrator liminal identity is the most useful for drawing a parallel between the liminal and the artist, because of the clearly-stated benefits he receives from his connection with the spirit world.

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CHAPTER FIVE

In the writing of Tutuola and Ben Okiri research, various method have been applied for better presentation and easier comprehensive of what the researcher aims to achieve from carrying out this research. Firstly, the research work was divided into five chapters in which the first chapter introduces the readers on what the work is all about. It explained the relationship between African literature and the African society. Liminality is discussed as tool to discuss the

location in which magical realism operates. The aim of this study is to bring to the reader's notion to the importance of liminality model in magical realist works. It also states the aim and objectives, justification, scope and limitations of the work as well as the theory to be used in establishing the facts that the researcher has gathered. It also gives an insight into the biography of the two writers whose works have been used as a case study. Therefore, the second chapter looked at the review of the literature of scholars who in one way or the other discussed the theory used for the research work. Specifically, it also discussed 'magical realist' elements to demonstrate the importance of a belief in worlds and realities beyond what is normally considered to be tangible and real. It is also possible to interpret these elements as part of the 'riddle' that places the reader in a liminal position within the texts. Chapter three and four looked into the analysis of *Famished Road* by Ben Okiri and *Palmwine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola respectively in a bid to deconstruct the liminality model that has been discussed by both writers. Chapter three specifically explored liminal territory between or among worlds—in phenomenal or spiritual regions where transformations, metamorphoses, dissolutions are common in Ben Okiri's *Famished Road*. It also houses the analysis of characters who have a special relationship with the spirit world or the supernatural, as well as with death. Chapter four projects legendary belief, that the dead are alive in the world of the living. It shows how spirits and gods in touch with humanity feel and behave the same as humans. It also reinforces the narrator's ability to activate his authority to bring into fruitful conversation the visible and invisible dimensions of his world in Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinkard*. Chapter five focuses on the summary, findings, and conclusion of the research work.

This research work has to some extent tried to examine and analyse what Amos Tutuola and Ben Okiri have portrayed in their works; *Famished Road* and *Palmwine Drinkard*

respectively. In both novels, they have been able to show the liminal space, which involves an interface between visible and invisible world while portraying the liminal characters and location, which centres on magic realism as propounded by Garcia Marquez. These writers portray that the world is cyclical. There is a link between the world of unborn, living and the death. The monster also has humanistic trait.

These works exist to make people aware of the luminal spaces that exist in the world. This research has attempted to deconstruct the liminality model in Ben Okiri's *Famished Road* and Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinkard*.

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