Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism And Emergence Of Science Fiction In Africa: *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire*

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Abstract:

The tremendous growth of technology and AI had its footprint in everything around the globe and beyond it. In the field of science fiction, *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* (2023), an animation anthology series that paved the new path of Afrofuturist vision of Africa through 10 different perspectives of 10 different nations of Africa. It presents a vibrant tapestry of tales that interweave deeply ingrained traditional themes with futuristic visions. This series provides African voices a forum to examine issues of technology, mythology, and identity in ways that are both distinctively local and have a worldwide appeal. The area of science fiction in Africa can't able to with stand on its own but wants to combine with other fields to make its stance. This essay tries to explain why African nations rely on culture to establish their identities in science fiction, as well as the rise of the new subgenres of Africanfuturism (a term developed by Nnedi Okorafor in 2019) and Afrofuturism (a word created by Mark Dery in 1993). In addition to the appearance, Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire adds to the increasing acknowledgment of African science fiction as a significant and transformational genre in the international cultural sphere with its inventive tales and striking visuals. This paper attempts to identify how scifiction genre is emerging in Africa on looking as a whole through the African lens of the series, *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire.*

Keywords: Africanfuturism, Afrofuturism, Culture, Africa, Science Fiction.

Most of the world thinks that Africa has more problems to take care of like humanity crises, poverty, civil war, lack of infrastructure, pollution and much more. But rather than looking pessimistic, Africa competed with science and technology. As Africa is making its foot in every field like science fiction movies, tech innovation, start ups, producing renewable energy, content creation, space exploration, digital media and sustainable agriculture, in 2023 it made another leap. The animated anthology series *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* presents short stories by filmmakers throughout Africa, including Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. The series premiered on July 5, 2023. This series is one of its kind and stood tall as a pioneer for animated sci-fi series which was collaborated by several African directors and most importantly it got tied up with the online platform 'Hotstar' made its statement to the world that African animated sci fi exists. All the stories in this series have portrayed Africa as the most advanced continent and also represented the culture with a futuristic advanced perspective. Each story will have an approximate length of around 10 minutes each. The series' title *Kizazi Mo*tto has its root from Swahili language (one of the widely spoken languages in Africa) which means 'Fire Generation'. By this the title got its subtitle 'Fire Generation'. The title itself represents the emergence of a new wave of art in Africa and making its statement to the world. The animated series, which premiered on Disney+, was created by the South African company Triggerfish.

In order to understand the central theme of the series, it's necessary to understand the stance of Afrofuturism, African Futurism, which uproots from the culture rooted in Africa. The word 'Afrofuturism' was built by critic Mark Dery (1993) to characterise the expanding fusion of "African-American themes" and "technoculture" in an interview. In response to it, Nnedi Okorafor formulated the boundary that examines how science and technology meet the culture of the African continent and termed it "Africanfuturism". All the stories in the series imbibed the deep cultural roots of different traditions in Africa as to the above terminology.

The first story, 'Herderboy' focuses on Ndahura, a herdboy in the Chwezi kingdom, who is desperate to become a warrior. His sister, Captain Katono, along with fellow herders Dushiime and Isingoma, cultivates Chwezinite crystals from their cattle while protecting them from the Nyamiyonga beast. When the beast attacks and steals a calf, Ndahura decides to risk his life to retrieve it. His confrontation with the Nyamiyonga beast culminates in a fierce battle. Ultimately, Ndahura emerges victorious, earning the appreciation of his sister and recognition from the community through a medal that symbolizes his newfound status as a warrior. The fact that Ndahura's sister and other herders are cultivating Chwezinite crystals highlights the significance of resource management and agriculture in African culture by signifying the relationship between the soil and its inhabitants. The Nyamiyonga beast's presence reinforces the African folklore virtues of bravery and resiliency by acting as a metaphor for the difficulties and threats that face the community. The story signifies the rich culture and without being reciprocate the western influence on the animation. Much more importance was given to the native landscape and the minerals which exist in Africa that should be consumed without deliberately destroying the land and culture.

The second story "Mkhuzi: The Spirit Racer" revolves around Manzo, a half-human, half-alien teenager living with his mother, Manomi, also known as Mkhuzi. Mkhuzi is celebrated for her victory over Ogun, the Intergalactic Racing Champion, in the prestigious Soweto Super Circuit, the largest race on Earth. The story escalates when Ogun threatens to destroy Manzo's neighbourhood, demanding a rematch against Mkhuzi. However, due to her injuries, Manzo decides to participate in the race in her place, donning her mask. Through the race, Manzo receives guidance from his ancestors in the spirit world, leading to a tied outcome between him and Ogun. Ultimately, Ogun agrees to leave the neighbourhood in peace. This story highlights themes of bravery, identity, and the reconciliation of cultural heritage. The racing in the story was used as a metaphor for growth and rivalry, representing the goals of many African countries to rise in a world that is changing quickly. This style of narration enables African tales to be portrayed from an insider's perspective, opposing the frequently Western-centric narratives common in global media; this focus on representation is vital in today's media.

The third story 'Moremi' was about Luo, a young boy who resides with his mother, Malimbe, in a perilous world inhabited by soul-eating monsters. Their existence is safeguarded by a protective device that generates a barrier against these threats. Malimbe reflects on Luo's early inability to grasp the weight of responsibility that comes with protecting their world from these malevolent beings. As the narrative unfolds, a critical moment arises when an ambush is attempted by the monsters, putting Malimbe's life in jeopardy. It is during this harrowing encounter that Luo comes to a profound realization: the imperative to safeguard his mother and their world is now his responsibility. This pivotal moment marks a significant transition in Luo's character, emphasizing the themes of growth and duty in the face of overwhelming danger. Furthermore, the presence of advanced, eco-friendly vehicles and pothole-free roads symbolises a commitment to a sustainable future. The holographic communication devices, such as watches, symbolise the potential for futuristic technological advancement which can be possible. The high-rise buildings and bustling commerce signify a dynamic environment where resilience and innovation coexists.

In the fourth story 'Surf Sangoma', Njabulo's childhood was marked by a poignant memory of his grandmother, who tragically drowned in the ocean. As an adult, he transformed into a role as a surfing instructor for children. His friend, Mnqobi, introduced him to a more perilous world of surfing, characterized by high tides and the use of squid as breathing aids. Despite the allure of this new challenge, Njabulo hesitated to enter the ocean, haunted by his grandmother's memory and her words, "Go back to the waters." Mnqobi, however, embraced this dangerous surfing culture, forming connections with Mlindos and his group, known for their illegal surfing activities. The dynamics shifted when Mlindos, seeking to assert dominance, snatched Njabulo's surfboard through Mnqobi. In a moment of confrontation, Njabulo rushed to reclaim his board, only to witness Mnqobi being pushed into the water. Utilizing his surfing skills, Njabulo successfully rescued his friend, leaving Mlindos to face a fitting punishment from the squids. This narrative unfolds in a futuristic context where rising sea levels have necessitated the construction of barriers along the shores to protect terrestrial life. The story encapsulates themes of memory, friendship, and the struggle between personal history and the allure of adventure

in a transformed world. The story highlights the relationship between humanity and the natural world, emphasizing themes of survival and adaptation

The fifth story 'First Totem Problems', the narrative centers on Sheba Minki, a girl navigating life in a futuristic society where each family member possesses a totem. This totem is integral to a ritual known as the "Long Walk to Freedom," reminiscent of the eleventh rite observed in various African cultures. During the ritual, a priest explained the significance of the totem, saying that it connected one to their past and propelled them into the future. He or she added that individuals would pass through childhood and, with the ancestral gift of a totem, return as adults. This statement encapsulates the enduring cultural values inherent in African traditions. In an act of defiance, Sheba clandestinely enters ancestral lands. With the assistance of her grandparents, she acquires her totem and returns to her world. The narrative vividly illustrates a landscape dominated by towering infrastructure amidst lush, untamed nature, symbolising the juxtaposition of progress and heritage. Notably, the story features trains equipped with wings, representing the technological advancements of this society.

The sixth story named 'Mukudzei' was about Disobedient adolescent influencer Mukudzei while recording the remains of a destroyed sacred site enters into a parallel future in which Zimbabwe never experienced colonisation and grows into an advanced technological utopia. Mukudzei is lost and confused. He begs for assistance from a weird scavenger named Rumbie, but soon learns that she is hunting a robotic eagle down. In the process of rescuing Rumbie from the clutches of the eagle, Mukudzei comes to understand the profound importance of togetherness within the family unit. Through an unexpected glitch, Mukudzei reenters reality and realises the significance of familial bonds. . By exploring an alternate history where Zimbabwe flourishes without colonial interference, the story not only critiques past injustices but also celebrates the potential of African narratives in shaping future possibilities.

The seventh story was Hatima. It deals with a terrestrial nation and an aquatic tribe that are embroiled in an interminable conflict. In pursuit of their loftiest ambitions, Ntsako, the sovereign of the land kingdom, and Mati, a young warrior from the water tribe, find themselves inexorably drawn into the battle. Mati is driven by a desire to take up arms to avenge his father. The collision of their narratives serves to test the fundamental beliefs of both peoples. When both parties learned about Nhela, who served as a pioneer and a bridge between two kingdoms, they ceased hostilities. This narrative encapsulates essential elements of Africanfuturism, notably the integration of cultural mythology, the exploration of identity and trauma, and the potential for societal transformation through the intersection of diverse narratives. The story projects cultural qualities such as tolerance and the principle of coexistence, emphasizing a "live and let live" ethos.

The eighth narrative, titled "Stardust", centers on the character Nawara, a socially marginalized individual who disrupts a prestigious coming-of-age ceremony. In a bold act, she approaches the Oracle, an entity reputed for possessing comprehensive knowledge to request her personal destiny scroll. The Oracle, amused by her audacity, grants her a scroll; however, it is later revealed to be devoid of content. This realisation

incites Nawara's fury, prompting her to undertake a perilous journey into the wilderness in pursuit of the Oracle. During her quest, she discovers that she is not alone in her pursuit, as others are similarly motivated to confront the Oracle. To unearth her destiny, Nawara must navigate malevolent forces and confront the complexities of her troubled past. The narrative highlights the significance of oracles in the African belief system, where they serve as vital intermediaries between the spiritual and earthly realms, providing guidance and insight that shape community decisions and individual destinies.

The ninth story, "You Give Me Heart," centers on Sundiata, a poor artist who enters the talent competition "Who Wants To Be A God?" in a luxurious world where the Gods derive their power from worship on social media. In a last-ditch effort to gain the attention and admiration of Maadi, the Goddess of Plenty and the most revered divinity, Sundiata's journey takes an unexpected turn. By a stroke of luck, he emerges as the new Deity of Creativity, stunning everyone around him. As he ascends to the world of the gods, Sundiata learns what it means to be worshipped by the masses. Along the way, he discovers the true identity of Maadi beneath her façade, revealing deeper layers to her character and the nature of divinity itself. Finally, he understands the fake world of social media and how the influencing realm portrays a façade. The story beautifully addresses the modern problem of people viewing social media influencers as heroes while engaging in doom scrolling using the mythological perspective.

The final story is Enkai. Enkai has its origin from the Kikuyu language, where it refers to "God" or "deity." A young girl named Enkai and her mother, Shiro, a cosmic deity live in a tree-shaped home. Throughout her life, Mother Shiro battles against the technology created by man, which threatens to destroy their own existence. Enkai discovers her ability to bring life; she creates her own world and forms an entirely new future for them. The robotic mosquito, which extracts minerals from the land, projects how African culture is destroyed by multinational, profit-driven companies that extract minerals and oil wealth from the land, leaving it barren.

The anthology series "Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire" presents a variety of narratives that fuse folklore with contemporary issues. Each story addresses distinct themes, reflecting the complexities of modern life through traditional storytelling. In "Mkhuzi: The Spirit Racer," a young child confronts extraterrestrial invaders through racing, blending suspense with cultural references and presenting a universal theme of bravery and resilience. The episode "Moremi," directed by Shofela Coker, reimagines Yoruba mythology by transforming the titular character into a contemporary engineer. This narrative explores themes of sacrifice and motherhood within a science fiction context. In "Enkai," directed by Ng'endo Mukii, the relationship between a mother and daughter is poignantly depicted, humanising celestial characters while addressing social constraints and personal fears.

The anthology underscores a significant trend among African creators who place reality at the forefront of their fictional worlds, encouraging audiences to appreciate the beauty in their lived experiences. Characters fluidly transition between English and various African languages, reflecting the continent's linguistic diversity. The series exemplifies the potential of African animation to convey complex themes through innovative storytelling while celebrating the continent's rich cultural heritage. An analysis of the stories within the anthology reveals a recent surge in the growth of literature and other artistic forms in the realm of African science fiction. This body of work tends to adopt distinctive storytelling methods that intertwine culture, technology, and spiritual belief systems. Technological advancements are depicted in the lives of marginalised individuals rather than the affluent bourgeoisie.

This new generation of directors from diverse regions of Africa is igniting a movement to establish a platform that presents Africa to the world. The narrative landscape is enriched, inspiring future generations of authors through the centralization of African voices and experiences. The creation process emphasises cultural authenticity, with artists referencing both regional legends and their personal experiences. The stories deliberately avoid the pitfalls of Western-centric storytelling, instead highlighting African perspectives and experiences, demonstrating a commitment to representation.

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