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Africanfuturism, placing Africa in the future: an analysis of Pumzi (2009) and Afronauts (2014)

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ABSTRACT

Taking into consideration Africa's long historical relationship with colonialism, alienation and currently neo-colonialism, 'africanfuturism' a sub-genre of science fiction and the focus of this study, brings forward the necessity of rooting African science fiction films in the continent of Africa, created by Black people of African descent and ensuring that narratives are driven by the histories, daily social-political and cultural experiences of the people within the continent. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how the African science fiction films *Pumzi (2009)* directed by Wanuri Kahiu, and *Afronauts (2014)* directed by Nuotama Frances Bodumo portray africanfuturism.

This study used a developed africanfuturist framework inspired by the description of africanfuturism by author Nnedi Okorafor (2019) and Masego Mashigo (2018). The chosen case study films were analysed according to africanfuturist components, namely: iconography, ideology, geopolitical and socio-cultural background, semiotics and symbolism, and the filmmaker's profile to determine the extent to which they portray africanfuturism. Further research objectives of this study included the discussion on how Western science fiction films present colonial conventions and the difference between afrofuturism and africanfuturism within the literature review.

With the application of the developed africanfuturist framework, this study concludes that both *Pumzi (2009)* and *Afronauts (2014)* successfully portray africanfuturism in the capacity of their geological settings, ideological viewpoints, socio-economic and political representations and local cultural symbolisms within the continent. Finally, both films present a nuanced understanding and portrayal of science and technology as it relates to the African continent, and further dismantles preconceived notions about the African continent as described by the West. These representations essentially redefine the relationship between Africa and the science fiction genre by clearly demonstrating, transforming and representing the continent within an imaginative and realist space, coupled with scientific, technological and globalist expressions.