Afro-futurism: 1900 to 3009 Fall 2024

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| Professor Jennifer Bajorek | Wed 9 am – 11:50 am |
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**READING AND LOOKING QUESTIONS**

**WANURI KAHIU, *PUMZI* (2009)**

1. What is the name of the community where Asha (the film’s protagonist or main character) lives? What do we learn that this name means?
2. Describe 2-3 positive aspects of Asha’s community or aspects you find compelling.
3. Describe 2-3 negative aspects of Asha’s community or aspects you find problematic.
4. What is Asha’s “ailment”? That is, what is wrong with her or what is the condition for which she is supposed to take her medication?
5. What does her “ailment” cause her to do by the end of the film?
6. *Pumzi* is frequently described as Afrofuturist as well as eco-feminist in approach or philosophy. Working from your own understanding of these terms—even if very rough—what aspects of the film might exemplify these approaches or philosophies?
7. Describe in your own words how Africanness or blackness (or both) figure in the image of Asha or the image of her community in the film. Would you say that Africanness or blackness are thematically central to *Pumzi*, or do they rather enter into, and shape, the film in a different way?
8. You come from the past in Asha’s world. Write a letter or a message to Asha in which you explain to her how, in the past, people predicted a future without enough water and fraught with water wars but did not manage to stop this future from coming. Express your feelings to her about this failure.

**OR**

You come from the present in Asha’s world. Write a letter or a message to Asha in which you tell her about a dream of your own that you wish to share with her. Explain why you wish to share this dream with *her*.

**OR**

You come from the future in Asha’s world. Write a letter or a message to Asha in which you tell her about what happens in an era that comes after the end of the film.

Go the extra mile and know something about the artist/filmmaker and her context:

--Wanuri Kahiu was born in and lives in Kenya. Can you find Kenya on a map? What part of Africa is it in (North/Southern/Central/West/East)?

--The country we call Kenya was, from 1895-1962, a colonial territory of/occupied by what European power?

--Can you name 2 of Kenya’s 5 neighboring countries?

--Was Kenya a settler colony? That is, did the European colonial power send its citizens to live there or did that power incentivize resettlement of its citizens in Kenya in large numbers?

--Where did Kahiu go to university and to film school?