INTERROGATING NIGERIA DIASPORA IMAGINARY IN NNEDI OKORAFOR'S *SUNNY AND THE MYSTERIES OF OSISI*

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Abstract

This essay, engages the concept of a Nigeria Diaspora imaginary as exemplified in Nnedi Okorafor's *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi,* an African science fiction novel. The objective is to isolate a distinct category of Nigeria diaspora science fiction which speaks to the idiosyncrasies of the enabling context. This is against the backdrop of a boom in the genre of African science fiction which has seen many emerging diaspora writers embracing the form. Hinged on Okorafor's postulations of African futurism, the study undertakes a content analysis and close reading of the purposively selected text, seeking to demonstrate that, indeed, the Nigeria diaspora imaginary has emerged as a strand of African science fiction. My argument is that, in *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi*, the concept of Nigeria diaspora imaginary is aestheticized through African futurism which is foregrounded as a manifestation of imagination, rather than history. I contend that Nigeria diaspora science fiction imagines futures for its context through a combination of mytho-religious and cultural metaphors that actualized its identity. This ultimately suggests a conscious appropriation of science fiction as a form of literary expression with abiding faith in an African aesthetic.

Key Words: Interrogating, Diaspora, Imaginary, Mysteries, Boom

Introduction

African science fiction has emerged as a major strand of speculative/science fiction especially in the twenty-first century. The compelling appeal of this mode of creative expression is indubitably grounded in its alignment with imagined scientific capacity,

technological innovation, and the interconnection of these to imaginative fiction. As Moradewun Adejumobi observes in her introduction to a special issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* (2016), if all the factors and strands of science fiction have been taken into consideration, "it is surprising that a science fiction framework for reading African literature did not surface much earlier" (265). She draws a similarity between science fiction "the speculative worlds created by authors like Fagunwa, Tutuola, and Okri" which "are clearly indebted to indigenous myth and folklore", they share affinities with the definitions of science fiction in many ways as "these speculative worlds are not depicted as incompatible with the technologies of modernity such as telephones, televisions, bombs, and cameras, among others" (265). The corollary that erupts from this is a form that has remained popular in forms of artistic and cultural expressions especially in the western world.

However, there is an obvious lacuna in the science fiction universalist pretensions, which Nedine Moonsamy aptly refers to as "purist notions of science fiction" (243). This relates to its Anglo-American colouration on the one hand and the absence of the African identities to its configuration, on the other. In other words, despite the popularity of science fiction especially within the Western literary tradition, it has proven inadequate in serving the end of Africa. As such, the existence of precursor strands found in the works of African writers like D.O Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola justifiably serves the objective of evolving an African idiom to the genre of science fiction as observed earlier. African science fiction is therefore a child of necessity which seeks to tell the African story through African sensibilities that possess qualities of science fiction. This is in sync with Isiah Lavender's speculation that "[p]erhaps the ultimate dream science fiction holds out for African Americans is the prospect for freedom of social transformation through science fiction and technology" (63). Extended to Africans, this will imply that African versions of science fiction would represent not just an adaption or appropriation of form, but a conscious

rendering or convergence of the imperatives of technology, innovation and science which are no longer alien in the African space especially at the dawn of the twenty-first century. This is in addition to the fact that the African creative impulse is not alien to representations of utopia which are often replete in many tales and fables across constituent African societies.

Actually, science fiction is essentially driven by the idea of utopia through the imaginative capacity of science and technology. This quest for utopia is therefore relevant to Africa. This is in consonance with Moonsamy's point that "the speculative nature of science fiction often segues into imagined futures that insist on a better world in the form of aspirational utopias" She argues further that, "this generative Utopian capacity, however, assumes greater significance in a postcolonial context, like Africa, where various liberation struggles and nations were, and are, ideologically informed by future-oriented Utopian ideals" (329). This means that, just as obtains at other level of epistemological engagements, decolonization becomes pertinent in getting an authentic voice that speaks to peculiar conventions that are uniquely African.

Indeed, in line with Peter J. Mauritz contemplation in his article, "The Emergence of African Science Fiction", the relationship between decolonization and African science fiction, could "be understood as facilitated by a form of decolonization of SF" or, conversely, whether it could be thought of as an act of "decolonization of SF" (10). One therefore agrees that "Decolonization of science fiction involves more than inclusion of new voices: it also involves recognition, criticism and dismantling of stereotypes (and ways of reading) that echo and assist (neo)colonial projects, and aims to bring forth a reconstruction of new identities and frameworks"

African futurism as Ideological Exigency

"African futurism" is a term coined by Nnedi Okorafor. It was borne out of her desire to clearly make a distinction between

"Afrofuturism" and what she tries to do in the body of her works. As one of the most influential writers of science fiction in the twenty-first century, judging by the quantum of her works so far, she is no doubt in a vantage position to theorise the sub-genre on her own terms. Indeed, what Okorafor seeks to address is the void she notices in "Afrofuturist" texts. She claims, and rightly so, that Afrofuturism does not represent her ideology of an Africa-centred episteme in science fiction. She affirms that: "I am an Africanfuturist and an Africanjujuist. African futurism is a sub-category of science fiction. Africanjujuism is a subcategory of fantasy that respectfully acknowledges the seamless blend of true existing African spiritualities and cosmologies with the imaginative..." (11). Though she acknowledges the similarities in Afrofuturism and African futurism, Okorafor nonetheless clearly makes a case for African futurism as distinct from the former. In her words:

> African futurism is similar to 'Afrofuturism' in the way that blacks on the continent and in the Black diaspora are all connected by blood, spirit, history and future. The difference is that African futurism is specifically and more directly rooted in African culture, history, mythology and point of view as it then branches into the Black diaspora, and it does not privilege or centre the West. (29)

In *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi*, a sequel to *What Sunny Saw in the Flakes*, Okorafor deepens her artistic vision by outlining what she considers as the lacuna in Anglo Western perception of black identity and the binaries generated as a result of the seeming racial prejudices which are paradoxically intertwined:

> On that note, I'm out of here. I'm going to explore around this edifice of excessive extravagance. If my boys from the States saw this place, their eyes would pop out. I had a friend ask me just before I came here if Africans have schools! He was a Lamb, sure, but he was a black dude, like me. Black folks be so *ignorant* sometimes...Overconsumption is a universal human trait, Orlu pointed out. And so is ignorance.

> Yeah, but you've got to admit, black Americans, no, blacks of the world are into self-hate more than any other group of people. (Okorafor, 214)

The above summarizes what necessitates African futurism as a brand of African science fiction for Nnedi Okorafor. The foregoing lines foreground vital constraints of Afrofuturism. The abundance of its shortcomings as theory of African science fiction is well outlined. Just like the fervour of post colonialism which will also advocate ~~for~~ agency for black reason from the African soil. The fact that Africanity is a totalizing construct only viewed from the Anglo-American perception of blackness is resoundingly discountenanced. What this implies is a self-conscious assertion of a black identity that is anti-stereotype. This then permits a rethinking of genres and modes of cultural expressions that do not account for the African essence from indigenous African societies.

While the search for Osisi continues *in Sunny and Mysteries of Osisi*, Okorafor draws attention to its imperative of African futurism which dislodges the hitherto theory of Afrofuturism. If, as a theory, African futurism excels at a reading of African consciousness in Africa, it follows logically that the corpus of Nigeria diaspora science fiction would be expected to manifest consciousness relatable to African realities far from the monitoring gaze of the Western world. In reaffirming a peculiar ideological notion therefore, Okorafor ably demonstrates as a writer and scholar the exigencies which necessitate her theorizing. This no doubt suggests a grounding in a larger framework stressing the uniqueness of African culture in terms of ideological order and attendant facilities of cultural productions. Indeed, her aspirations are admirable as well as the basis of her counter-hegemonic distillations. This ultimately benefits not only her immediate target of Africa but also provides a robust discourse about the existential questions that underpin consistent relegation of the

black aesthetic. This can even be seen in the quest motif of demystifying Osisi in the novel.

The novel also adequately reflects Nigeria's linguistic diversity and sociolinguistic innuendos. This can assuredly be contained in linguistic flavours as well as the pan-Nigeria imagination replete in the texts. The facts that the novel is adequately rich in the use of Nigerian slangs and invokes Nigerian popular expressions demonstrate the import of decolonized aesthetics geared towards an African episteme. This is in line with the observation of Päivi Väätänen that:

> Africanfuturist narratives...take one step further: when writing their own stories, they can cut ties with the West, with the "reality" that needs to be "inverted," and establish a new normalcy that is not dependent on comparisons with Eurocentric, racist and colonialist traditions of Anglo American science fiction. By replacing the (Anglo) American context in their fiction with an African one, Africanfuturist writers like Okorafor are expanding and radically transforming the worlds of speculative fiction to be more representative of the world we live in. (2019,1)

Actually, the diction of *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* lends credence to its construction as an Africanfuturist text which can be regarded as part of the corpus of Nigeria diaspora science fiction. Examples such as the generous use of Nigerian expressions especially in the indigenous languages not only affirms the socio-cultural relevance of the text, but they also evince a kind of pan-Nigeria exploration of some of the major cultures of the country. Also, Nigerian Pidgin English is visibly employed to entrench the same identity. In addition, the pre-eminence of the 'diaspora" as a construct, would, as hinted earlier, not entirely relate to historical dialectic but a manifestation at the level of creative imagination. The association then suggests a corpus of creative engagements which domesticates the form of science fiction to account for the peculiarity of the Nigeria diaspora, in contradistinction from the umbrella black imagination privileged in Anglo-American orientations

of science fiction. It is therefore a futurist aesthetic grounded in an imaginative exercise for Nigeria and its diaspora. After all as Clark observes, African futurism uses "the speculative to challenge contentious issues around Black futurity" (Clark, 2019: n.p.). This ultimately allows Okorafor to deploy her speculative mode of engagement which can be located, as Burnet suggests, in "her imagined post-apocalyptic Africa allows her to explore the idea of a truly postcolonial Africa, free from neo-colonial bonds" (2015, 133).

The Imperative of Cultural Re-imagination

There is always the need for constant reconstruction and reinvention of the self with respect/regard to how the postcolonial subject operates to affirm, rather than validate its authenticity. This is owing to the fact that, "the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy - it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha, 64). Hence, the imperative of cultural re-imagination, which tilts towards actualizing the principles outlined in Okorafor's African futurism, suggests an epistemological journey to self-discovery.

It is therefore incumbent on African futurism to embark on "a re-imagining of the historical past and a recasting of the narrative to show what it should be" (Austen-Peters, 2018). These are visible in *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi*. Not only does Sunny attempt to understand his complex identities, he also nurtures the same through his interaction with Nsibidi, a sacred text which uncovers ontological questions of being at every contact. Sunny's dialogue with Nsibidi is at the heart of the African futurism which the novel propagates. Okorafor captures the importance of Nsibidi, a metaphor for African epistemological order thus: "Reading Nsibidi is 'give and take', it gives you experience and knowledge, and in return the magic drinks your energy…Reading Nsibidi is similar to gliding through the wilderness in many ways 'It too, involves leaving your body (Okorafor 31, 32). These

spiritual counters allow Okorafor to navigate a possible reimagined future which guarantees her idea of African utopia that denounces white supremacist subjugation, entrenched in a reimagined African cultural template that caters for the complexities in a postcolonial enclave. To be sure, the positive influence of the order of Leopard people each time Sunny and her siblings encounter a challenge speaks to this re-imagination. Caught within a terrible traffic on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, they resort to invoking rain to disperse the army of people gathered around the Redemption Camp, a major source of the gridlock:

> Outside, thy could see people running for shelter and to their cars. All around them, vehicles were starting and the paved double road ran with sludgy red mud. For several minutes, it was chaos...Thankfully, the go glow began to move. Within a half hour they'd outrun the strange weather and were cruising down the road. (Okorafor, 208)

With the above suggestive of a metaphor of potency of the African alternative and metaphysical abilities, it is deducible that Okorafor presents an alternative paradigm - an African-centred solution that provides a succour from the hold of social economic entanglements and forces of stagnation. This implies that in Okorafor, the artistic inclination towards science fiction privileges the indigenous. This enables her to activate her commitment towards an African epistemology that sprouts from liminal and spiritual bodies who exercise abilities capable of altering the status quo. In other words, "it is not enough to recognize how Okorafor's work gestures to possible futures beyond colonialism and the marginalization of black peoples; we must also investigate how those futures represent transformative and transformed outgrowths of that history, to critique how those new worlds restructure the geospatial relations of our own" (Crowley 2019 270).

However, while the fact that the above tilts towards indigenous epistemology rooted in the African mythological and religious cosmos

might be noteworthy, especially as it serves Okorafor's purpose, it no doubts raises a fundamental question. The challenge this poses is in connection to power relations or contestations for metaphysical spaces. To be clear, if Okorafor deploys her consistent African futurism as a paradigm for regulating human affairs, to what extent are these extra metaphysical powers commonplace and accessible? The answer is not far-fetched. What is obvious is that it would require another level of engagement to be able to appropriate the spiritual prowess capable of neutralizing the Judeo-Christian force that Okorafor indirectly seeks to dislodge. But taken at face value, she may merely be advocating a recourse to the indigenous whose religious may not require such gathering of the adherents on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway in Nigeria, thereby assuring free flow of traffic and not a menace to everyday living. The arguments against the Pentecostal movement in recent times by scholars, especially Ebenezer Obadare (2018), readily comes to the mind. It clearly confirms that the Pentecostal order has taken a negative toll on the postcolonial polity, especially in Nigeria, where it continues to expand and metastasize. The point from these is that Okorafor's recourse to "Afrojujuism" is not without its challenges, as there would still be the questions around the sacred structure of African traditional religion to be engaged, which is definitely outside the purview of this essay. Okorafor is therefore deploying her imaginative prowess to fictionalize Nigeria's futures in this regard.

The science fiction of Okorafor is conscious of the fact that the traditional African society has long grasped the fact that man lives in a more than human world, and so must exploit those extra-human elements if he is to sustain his existence, and justify his place in the universal order (Okpewho, 1983). Therefore, the imperative of cultural re-imagination in Okorafor's *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* is hinged on the need for internalizing the intricate resources of African mytho-religious essence in fashioning out existential meaning. This explains why in the universe of the novels, Okorafor privileges the dominance of the sacred, the mystic and the mythic. For her, the answers to a

reimagined African future lies in the exploration and perhaps exploitation of the marginalized spirituality of Africa. This evokes strains of postcolonial contention and de-colonial aesthetics which engage modernity and its discontents. This is in line with the tendency by African writers to "resort to the use of hybridity, miscegenation and grotesques to interrogate Western epistemology, and debunk their claim to cultural superiority and supremacy" (Kamalu, 2011, 54)

Reimagining culture in *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* is also responsible for the quest for roots in the search for Osisi. At the heart of the need for cultural self-retrieval is the search for Osisi by Sunny in this novel. This combines both adventure and quest motifs. The answers being sought are bound to have far reaching implications on the desire to actualize a Nigeria diaspora imaginary on the template of African futurism. The early encounters with strange beings, personifies as ideas of extraterrestrial existence, is reminiscent of earlier works especially the novels of Daniel Fagunwa. These beings are metaphors of human predicaments and aspirations which seem compounded by the exigencies of being. The question to pose is of what significance is the quest for the thematic aspirations of the novel? This is because, back home in Port-Harcourt, Sunny as a Leopard person appears fortified and immersed in mystic consciousness which accentuates her comprehension of things around her. Actually, the fact that everyone around her, including her parents, seems to accept her composition, suggests that Sunny is part of a larger whole of a society in search of self-definition.

In addition, the choice of Ajegunle, a popular Lagos ghetto, as entry point to the inner and spiritual world is significant. The market in Africa, and especially in Yoruba worldview is a place where both the living and the dead interact freely and even transact business. Okorafor therefore plunges deeper into African worldview in her quest to clearly unravel the mysteries of Osisi. On sighting Udide, the GREAT Hairy Spider", Sunny trembles and this brings her to consciousness of her spiritual essence. As such, the liminal identity of Sunny becomes a

source of strength and resilience which motivate the questing for the roots. This eminently suggests a furtherance of the decolonial epistemology that African science fiction represents. In the novel therefore, actualizing the objective of finding Osisi is akin to the search for a lost self, which is tantamount to activating a desire for self-discovery in the universe of the novel.

Nigeria Diaspora Imaginary as Construct

To underscore the place of imagination in the construction of diaspora, the idea of "diaspora of the mind" as espoused by Bryan Chette in his book, *diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History* is worth engaging here. He argues for a place of the imagination rather than actual or historical diasporas. This implies that conceiving diaspora imagination functions more effectively at the level of imagination. It is in this sense that the idea of Nigerian diaspora imagination is employed in this essay. In Chette's words:

> On the one hand, 'diaspora is deeply conservative and imbricated in historical narratives concerning a timeless exile from an autochthonous 'homeland' On the other, diaspora is also commonly understood as a state of creatively disruptive impurity which imagines emergent transnational and post ethnic identities and cultures. One definition moves in the direction of historicism while the other in the direction of the imagination. (xiii)

It is therefore in the light of the above that Sunny Okorafor's eponymous character in the novel is constructed symbolizing a metaphor that underlies Nigerian diaspora identity. While what she represents is beyond a voice in the Afropolitanist order, she also projects an image of resistance and courage which confers authenticity on marginality. She denounces albinism and foregrounds humanistic egalitarianism and the paradox of ability in disability. By using a child hero to assert a potent Nigerian diaspora imaginary, Okorafor makes a bold statement on marginality and subalternity. The possession of extra-human abilities is a pointer to the fact that, with agency well deployed,

the self is limitless in self-actualization. As a diaspora self, the identity echoes resilience and adaptability thereby suggesting the futility of the needless dichotomy of race and other segregating categories. Sunny is therefore a product of imagination which stretches to disrupt conservative Western notion of the historicity of diaspora. Rather, the Nigerian diaspora imagination comes out strongly in the imageries and symbols of pan-Nigeria mythology which permeate the novel. Hence, the Leopard people and what they represent on the novel is the appropriation, through imagination, of a distinct identity associated with African, and indeed Nigerian spiritualism and mythical-religious perception of extra-terrestrial realities.

The potency of Nigeria diaspora imaginary can therefore be taken as the sum total of the metaphors which project the identity of the plural selves, at both the physical and metaphysical realms. As such, both Sunny Nwazue at the physical level and Anyanwu, her spiritual other, orchestrate the inherent capacities of the two planes of existences, almost interchangeably. This is why the loss of Anyanwu becomes unbearable for Sunny, which Bola identifies with:

> Okay. You. Sunny Nwazue. I know of this problem you have. Never witnessed a victim of it who carried life, but I know the condition. It is called doubling. It sounds like a misnomer because you have lost part of yourself, but your spirit face is not just here. So, in a sense you've been doubled. (Okorafor, 152)

Satiric Undercurrents

Nnedi Okorafor typifies the socially relevant African writer who continues to be alive to the realities of her enabling environment. In her artistic imagination, she subtly satirizes and imagines a future Nigeria in a conscious satire of the enabling pretext. It is not surprising how she blends her vision of diaspora imaginary with the values of socially relevant art in *Sunny and The Mysteries of Osisi*. By empowering Chichi and Sunny to dislodge the cult group holding Chukwu, her

brother, to ransom, she imagines a cult free society in an idyllic African utopia, especially Nigeria. This, she suggests can only be achieved if the metaphysical capacities of the Nigerian imaginary are invoked to engage and neutralize the perversion that anti-social vices constitute in the (African) society reflected in the novel. She aptly demonstrates a deep knowledge of the issue of cultism in Nigerian institutions by tracing the history of the original idea of confraternities in Nigeria: "Did you know that these damn societies were originally formed to make sure there as always academic freedom to cure society's problems" (82)

Apart from the forgoing, Okorafor also deploys satire to interrogate the pervading level of decadence in the Nigerian society. Her intention clearly indicates a bewilderment at the state of infrastructural rot and urban chaos. While urban chaos is adequately shown to be a by-product of lack of planning and an "uncultured citizenry", the infrastructural decadence that permeates the universe of the novel is suggestive of the failure of governance and government. Okorafor exposes such ills as public immorality, especially official corruption by the police as well as other preeminent vices such as urban unrest instantiated by the many troubles encountered on the way to Lagos in the quest for Osisi. Actually, the fact that they could not make it to Lagos owing to the state of the roads is a pointer to the quality of life being experienced by the average citizen. These instances clearly show that the future imagined by Okorafor would be devoid of these shortcomings and strains of underdevelopment. The challenge posed by Okorafor can be located in the contention by Joshua Burnet. According to him:

> The answer to this question, I believe, lies in how particular cultural moments connect to resistance politics. In our current moment, while African countries like Nigeria are no longer nominally ruled by colonial powers, they continue to struggle with neo-colonialism, as well as the many failures of their own postcolonial governments. (136)

The interesting connection of the above is the comparative lens of Nigerian diaspora imaginary which enables the narrative to constantly gaze over the experiences of staying in the West and juxtaposing the same with the Nigerian experience. This put both the diaspora spaces and diaspora imaginary in constant dialogue, thereby implying that even though her ultimate goal favours an Afrocentric orientation, she benefits from the diaspora location which in turn negotiates a space for a post colony bereft of the tortuous experience of underdevelopment in the Nigerian context. This poses some self-contradiction but can easily be accommodated in the Afropolitan ideal that takes on board the experience of fluidity of home and identities. This, no doubt, goes a long way "in the African context where the Utopian imagination has proven necessary to alleviate the trauma of colonialism and current circumstances of strife while simultaneously providing a blueprint for potential postcolonial development" (Moonsamy, 330).

Conclusion

As a postcolonial space, Nigeria has peculiar traits which govern its mythic and metaphysical realities. Apart from the diversity associated with it as a geographical entity, the panoply of rich cultural traditions which coalesce in Okorafor's *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* attest to the fact that an aesthetic construct from its diaspora would have a rich blend to tap in evolving a literary category. Evidences abound in the novel that the Nigerian diaspora imaginary foregrounded can be accounted for in the synergy of multiple cultural sensibilities harnessed by Okorafor in the novel. As such, the complexities of existence and being experienced in the plot of the novel actualizes the very essence of Nigeria diaspora imaginary. This makes Okorafor's theory of African futurism an essential tool for reading the African science fiction texts exemplified through her own work. It therefore follows that, the tenets of African futurism have been adequately reflected in the novel, oscillating between individual consciousness and the metaphorical realisations of collective or communal spirituality. This may be

understood in the poser of Homi Bhabha on the "complex cultural situation where 'previously unrecognized spiritual and intellectual needs' emerge from the imposition of 'foreign; ideas cultural representations, and structures of power" (17)

To a larger extent, the novel successfully amplifies an aesthetic quality that can be unarguably described as Nigerian, and Nigeria diaspora. This is in relation to its exploration of the values and ideas enshrined in the African mytho-religious and artistic firmaments, rendered via creative imagination. It therefore goes without saying that the convention of science fiction has successfully undergone a decolonizing process which attempts to evolve a template through which Nigeria diaspora Science fiction can be effectively theorized. This is in line with fashioning out a description for African futurism as underscored by Okorafor:

> Africanfuturist literature and comics are set in Africa with African characters 'sometimes with aliens, sometimes with witches, often set in a recognisable, future Africa, with African lineages – that are not cultural hybrids[diasporic] but rooted in the history and traditions of the continent, without a desire to look towards Western culture' (2019).

In essence, this essay has therefore demonstrated that Okorafor's *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* further elucidates African futurism and makes the concept of Nigerian diaspora science fiction a paradigm for approaching recent Nigeria diaspora writing which exhibit science fiction content. This is being mindful of the fact that as espoused by Patrycja Koziel that "The futuristic representation of the world is an important aspect of understanding contemporary cultural processes, literary and musical trends, and artistic activities, both in Africa and in the African diaspora" (69). Nnedi Okorafor has stated unambiguously that "My science fiction had different ancestors – African ones". This was at a TED conference in 2017. In the context of this novel therefore, the Nigeria diaspora imaginary serves Okorafor's purpose and her idea

of African futures through imaginative canvass of science fiction. This is in line with the understanding that, "the future world Okorafor envisages is one of radically altered (and alternate) geographies as well, with expanded and porous boundaries of relation that trouble strict identity categories and open new spaces for belonging" (Crowley 2019,270). This ultimately manifests itself in a sort of epistemological revolt or cultural reawakening which reinvigorates the African episteme. This is the nature of the Nigeria diaspora imaginary as aesthetic reinvention in the science fiction of Nnedi Okorafor. If, therefore, Nnedi Okorafor speaks of African futurism as alternative agency for expressing African identities, she can be said to have actualised her artistic vision of an African aesthetic configuration of science fiction in the deployment of a Nigeria diaspora imaginary in her oeuvre, exemplified by *Sunny and the Mysteries of Osisi* examined in this essay.

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