



***TV series, adventure, drama, fantasy
adult animation***

In ancient Teotihuacan, the maimed and exiled grandson of the Supreme Leader, now trained in the use of psychoactive drugs to achieve the shape-shifting powers of the *Nagual*, returns home to defend his homeland against a rival Mayan city-state led by his evil half-sister.

SYNOPSIS

Born the grandson of the Supreme Lord of the Teotihuacan Mexica Empire, Kokopelli (Koko) is maimed at birth by the jealous Tikal prince, Nxmul, who abducts his mother, Juju, making her his unwilling consort. Secreted to the northern deserts for his safety, the infant Koko is raised by Popo, the sorceress and daughter of the mysterious alien Xlangl, regent to the Supreme Lord. Popo teaches him access to the *Nagual*, a powerful spirit world opened by psychoactive drugs.

At 18, Koko and his adopted sister, Bebe, must journey to Teotihuacan in order to help Popo avenge the death of her father, and prevent the fall of Teotihuacan to a conspiracy led by evil priests. On the road, Koko sings songs and plays flute, besieged by girls eager to lie with the strange, but prolific young poet. With a small band of derelict warriors gathered along the way, they travel through a sad and desolate land, fighting off evil priests and brutal slave masters.

Reaching Teotihuacan, Koko is captured and taken to Tikal by the evil priest, Coltal, then tortured by the evil king and his daughter, Xixi, Koko's half-sister, who knows the *dark Nagual*. Bebe and the warrior band rescue Koko, seize the king, and return to Teotihuacan. where they are in turn besieged by Tikal's army, led by Xixi and the fearsome Glass-Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl.



Koko performs songs of love and hope from the great pyramid, comforting the people. Koko and Xixi battle to the finish using the *Nagual* to resurrect an epic battle between the two forms of Quetzalcoatl: the Feathered Serpent and the Flying Serpent Eagle. When the battle turns against the defenders, threatening Koko, the peasants rise up, and with dried cornstalks from the surrounding fields, burn the core of the city, driving out the warring nobles and abandon the city and its corrupt religion forever.

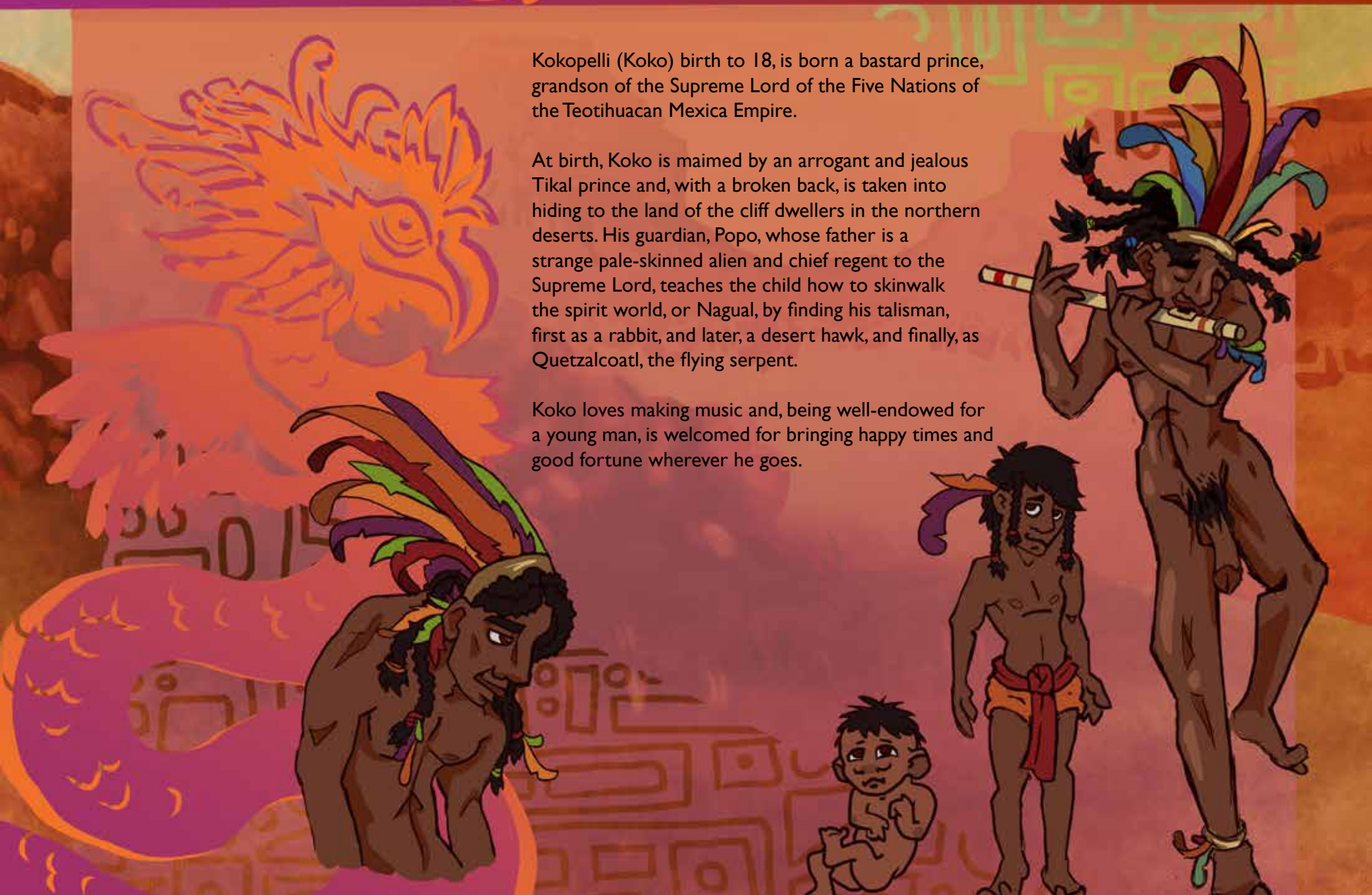
Koko and Bebe return to the northern deserts, dispensing music, love, and happiness, and leaving distinctive petroglyphs all along the way, still present to this day.

KOKO

Kokopelli (Koko) birth to 18, is born a bastard prince, grandson of the Supreme Lord of the Five Nations of the Teotihuacan Mexica Empire.

At birth, Koko is maimed by an arrogant and jealous Tikal prince and, with a broken back, is taken into hiding to the land of the cliff dwellers in the northern deserts. His guardian, Popo, whose father is a strange pale-skinned alien and chief regent to the Supreme Lord, teaches the child how to skinwalk the spirit world, or Nagual, by finding his talisman, first as a rabbit, and later, a desert hawk, and finally, as Quetzalcoatl, the flying serpent.

Koko loves making music and, being well-endowed for a young man, is welcomed for bringing happy times and good fortune wherever he goes.

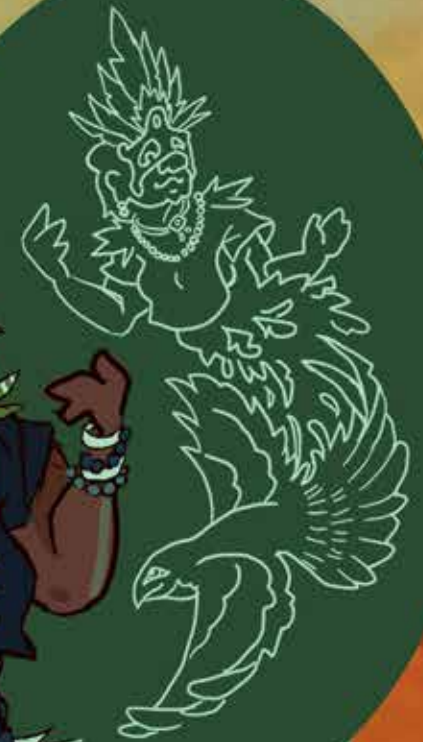


BEBE

Bebepuente (Bebe), 12 to 20, born a slave in Maya, is traded to Popo for spirit drugs. She is large for her age, very smart, and physically strong. Popo adopts her, like Koko, and together they spend their teen years learning how to access the Nagual. Bebe has a charming innocence, even as a slave, and is very open about her sexuality, as well as her desire for love and song. She assumes responsibility and leads her band of warriors through hell and back, rescuing Koko and saving the Supreme Lord. She always tries to help the weak and abused, no matter the risk.



Popomagipta (Popo), 27 to 45, daughter of the Supreme Lord's chief regent, Xlang!—a wise man rumored to be a stranded god, pale in skin and hair, washed ashore in a strange boat and claiming to be from a great city called Alexander, who uses his knowledge of science and astronomy to make him immediately indispensable to the Supreme Lord of the Five Nations. Popo is also pale-skinned and well-learned from her father and her older palace guardian, the Spider Lady. She learns to travel the Nagual as a jaguar, desert hawk, and condor. When her father is mysteriously killed, she returns to Teotihuacan to help the Supreme Lord survive an uprising of evil priests and drug-crazed slaves.



POPO

MAIN CHARACTERS

Coltal (Two-Fang Bat clan), 18 to 36, 18 to 36, a young ambitious Mayan warrior and ball player who becomes the corrupt leader of the priesthood after being maimed at the great Katun ball game by Koko's father, Arabl, the great warrior and ball player of the Serpent Eagle clan. He devises a new way to smuggle drugs for pacifying slaves, and recruiting sacrificial victims. He becomes dark and sullen, shrinking in size, and becoming starkly skinny and twisted over time. Despite being evil, he learns to skinwalk as a crow and a serpent. Nxm mul recruits Coltal and makes him his personal assassin and enforcer, who ultimately becomes Xixi's advisor when the king loses his sanity and is kidnapped by Bebe and her band of warriors when they rescue Koko and Juju.

COLTAL



NXMUL

Nxm mul (Monkey Python clan), 20 to 38, the spoiled prince (and later, king) of Tikal. In a rage after losing the Katun ball game, and learning that he was cheated from winning the promised virgin daughter of the Supreme Lord when she unexpectedly gives birth to Koko, he surprises her in birth and tries to kill the child out of spite and revenge. He kidnaps Koko's mother and takes her to Tikal, where he rapes her, spawning a female child of darkness, whom he trains to take over the empire after he executes his plan to kill Koko, her only contender. Nxm mul is highly religious and heavily tattooed, with ugly scars and sores all over his body from infections, due to blood and dirt he collects from his many sacrifices. He practices deranged bloodletting from his own genitals and those of his kidnapped wife. He becomes deranged, talking to mythical gods, and is followed by flies wherever he goes.



XIXI

MAIN CHARACTER



Xixichupaka (Xixi), Birth to 17, evil daughter of Nxmul and Juju, trained in the dark arts by Coltal and her father. She gains power through harvesting innocent souls for the gods of the underworld, giving power to her, and allowing her to see and travel in the Nagual. She gets a kick out of watching people die. She knows she will soon be ruler of the Five Nations, and makes plans about who she will honor and who she will punish. She has no ethics, except those of greed and power.



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



PLOXI

Ploxi, 45, a warrior of dubious history, now a soldier of fortune and partner to Krux. He is tall, very strong, and muscular. But he is also soft inside, often stepping in to save people, or just to even the odds in a fight.



ARABL

Arabl (Serpent-Eagle Clan), 22 to 40, is the young warrior captain and champion ball player who falls in love with the Supreme Lord's only daughter, Juju, and in turn, is Koko's true father. He goes into exile in the northern hinterland and changes his name to Krux. As Krux, he is a wandering soldier of fortune looking for strong-arm work, when he and his partner, Ploxi, meet Koko and Bebe. He does not reveal his relationship to Koko until late in the story. His one wish in life is to have vengeance against his Mayan opponent for kidnapping his love and leaving him with a broken baby and a tortured heart.



SUSU

Susu, 24, an outcast from a northern tribe that was raided by Vikings, who raped her mother and left her an unwanted orphan among her people because of her blonde hair and blue eyes. She keeps her hair dyed with soot and blackberries. She travels far from her home, looking for a place where she can be secure with her differences. She is suspicious, a loner, and a self-taught warrior. She prefers the company of other strong women.

WRITER'S STATEMENT

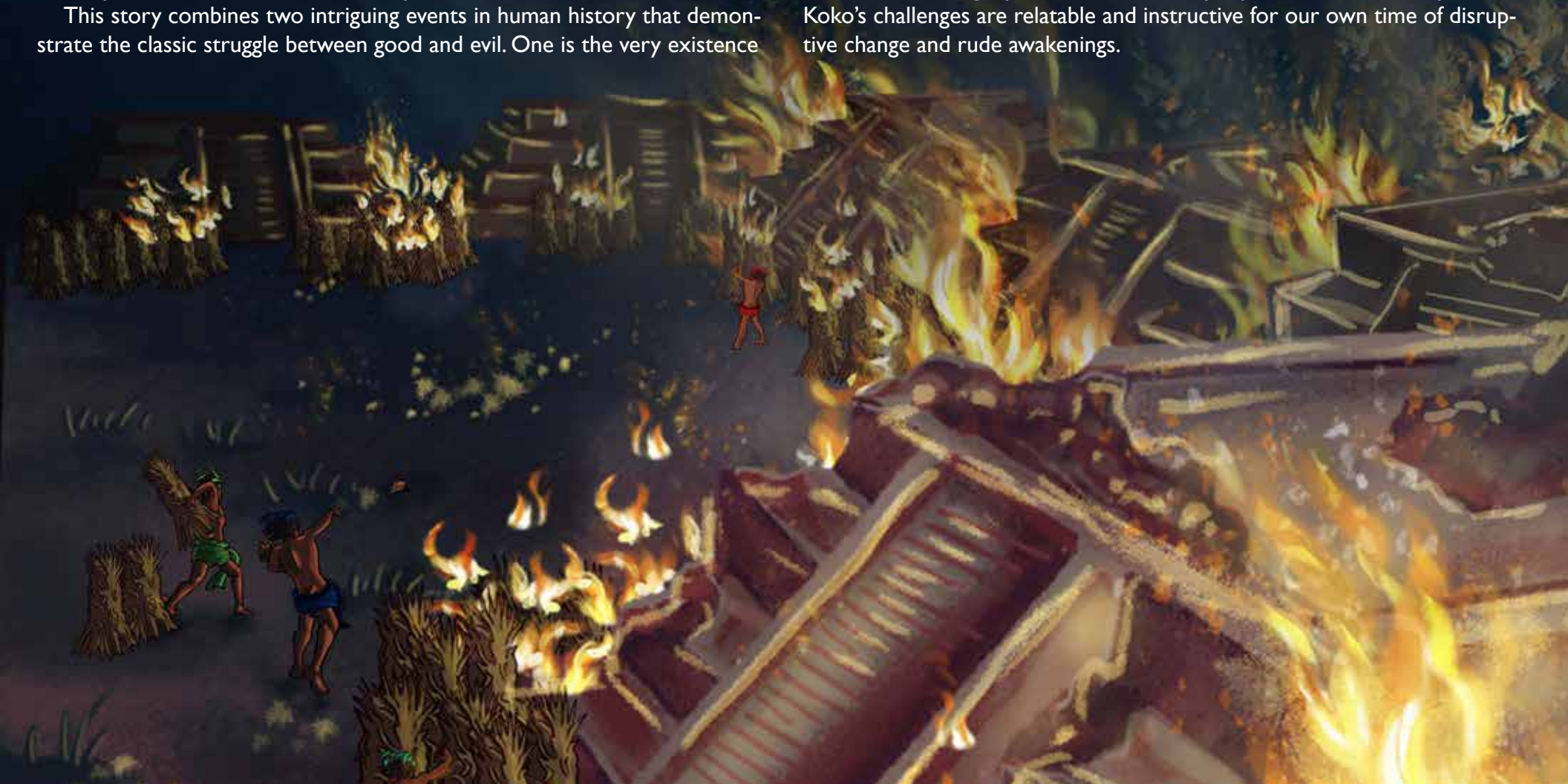
Kokopelli's icon is one of the most recognizable symbols of Meso-American Pre-Columbian culture. It consists of over 300 different distinct styles, all based on a single familiar image, in over 4,000 documented petroglyphs from Central America to North America. What stands out is that these depictions are not of a mythical god—but a real person with human flaws, yet honored for his earthly talents.

Kokopelli's image is immediately recognized by millions of people, but few know his story. Kokopelli is remembered as the bringer of good fortune, happy times, rain for the crops, and babies for the women. In spite of seemingly overwhelming deformities at a time when weakness was often terminal, he is proof that no matter the obstacles, a lowly human can keep their optimism and achieve immortality.

This story combines two intriguing events in human history that demonstrate the classic struggle between good and evil. One is the very existence

of Kokopelli—perhaps a new kind of unfettered musician bringing simple joys to the deprived, hope for the downhearted, and strength to the abused. The other is the mysterious burning and abandonment forever of the greatest city in the Western Hemisphere, Teotihuacan, apparently by a bloody revolt in a single night by common peasants overthrowing a powerful, but corrupt royalty.

Beyond this larger arc, the key features of the story are easily recognizable to a contemporary audience: long periods of wealth and power for the minority noble-born, propped up by abusive caste systems, religion, and enforced slavery; the use of highly addictive drugs and psychological brainwashing to maintain highly unequal economics and the subversion of basic freedoms. The tragedy of the Teotihuacan people is a timeless story, and Koko's challenges are relatable and instructive for our own time of disruptive change and rude awakenings.



THEME AND TONE

The main theme is the acceptance of one's destiny—not of our own making, but fated to be lived out by the choices we make. The main characters all have lives that are somehow broken, yet they come together stronger to accomplish great things, despite frailties, handicaps, and youthful naivete. Younger generations today are faced with world-shaking events that challenge them to understand and make the tough decisions necessary to assure the world continues to be a better place. The model provided by Koko and the supporting cast in meeting these challenges—with bravery, compassion and creative mindpower—are timeless qualities of those who lead the way.

The tone is one of love, respect, happiness, and freedom in the face of blind royal privilege and bloody religious repression. For the purposes of this story, there is a strong fantasy component with the use of psychoactive drugs to gain spirit powers. The drug acolyte gains the ability to assume a spirit animal, also known as skinwalking, and travels through the Nagual spirit world, which is based on Don Juan, the Yaqui sorcerer, made famous by Carlos Costaneda. There are elaborate costumes and religious ceremonies from the Teotihuacan period, along with depictions of common life, simple joys, open nudity, and free-minded love.



VISUAL STYLE

This is an adult animation film that is based on historical reality, but with fantasy elements. The style should be similar to cutting-edge graphic novels, involving computer-generated imaging, extreme views, rapid movement, and closeup dramatic action.

Many streaming services have recently developed successful limited TV drama series based on similar themes of fantasy mixed with idealized historical settings, such as *Game of Thrones*, *House of Dragons*, and *Rings of Power*.

This genre begs for fresh, new approaches to sometimes repetitive themes and styles, which Kokopelli can fulfill. The characters are relatable, likable, and believable, stylized in a raw, perhaps primitive imagery. Recent strong comparable fantasy-themed styles include Genndy Tartakovsky's *Primal*, Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*, or Tim Burton's *Coco*.



Coco

Lee Unkrich, Pixar, 2017



Coco broke many barriers for animation, primarily its setting in a fantasy world of the dead, which blends ancient Meso-American myth and legend with modern cultures and family values. The characters, though strict fantasy and bordering on the morbid, seem just as real and relatable as the audience watching. It takes on issues of traditions, family values, and freedom of expression in a very honest and provoking manner.

Primal

Genndy Tartakovsky, Adult Swim, 2019



An adult animated action horror television series created and directed by Genndy Tartakovsky for Adult Swim. Primal is set in a deliberately anachronistic vision of prehistory, portraying dinosaurs, prehistoric hominids, and Iron Age *Homo sapiens* as coexisting within the same barbaric time period and incorporating many elements of fantasy, horror, action, and adventure.

Recent comparable shows

are the acclaimed live-action series: *Game of Thrones*, *House of the Dragon*, and *Lord of the Rings*, which integrate strong human drama with a well-imagined fantasy backdrop. The *Black Panther* and *X-Men* franchises feature culturally based superheroes that are flawed but relatable in realistic situations, attracting younger, more diverse audiences.

VISUAL STYLE, COMPARABLE FILM / TV

Pinocchio

Guillermo del Toro, Netflix, 2022



Stop-action animated award-winning film set in the Fascist Italy of the 1930s, concerning the oft-told story of the lonely puppet maker whose creation escapes into a gruesome fantasy world, challenging the puppet's wish to be human. Kokopelli's story is very similar, dealing with innocent birth into brutality, fantasy and love, striving to find a true-life humanity in dark times.

Wizards

Ralph Bakshi, Bakshi Productions, 1977



Ralph Bakshi pioneered adult animation features in the seventies and eighties, bringing a whole new form of entertainment to the commercial market. He started it all.

LOCATIONS

The city of Teotihuacan, with many shrines, broad stone plazas, and among the tallest pyramids in the world: the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, the Pyramid of the Moon and the Pyramid of the Sun.

The Sonoran Desert of northern Mexico, with cliff dwelling villages such as Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon Pueblo, and the Copper Canyon mining works.

The city of Tikal, with similar pyramids and stone structures as Teotihuacan, along with the surrounding jungles.

Grand palaces for the great nobles of Meso America, with elaborate decorations, costumed warriors standing guard, and indolent lords lounging at court, gambling on anything predictable.

The traditional ballcourt, well-documented in Meso American history, with many surviving examples preserved yet today. The ball game as envisioned in this work is a violent game played for keeps. The nobles enjoy betting on the games and the priests demand the losers for slavery and eventual sacrifice.

The central plaza, where a grand marketplace is positioned with booths and stalls selling goods from all over the world of the Five Nations, and beyond. Trade over a network of roads using slaves for transport is the dominant economy, besides food production. Goods consists of exotic feathers and cloths from remote places, along with jewelry, precious stones, psychoactive drugs used in religious and shaman healing arts, exotic animals, and above all, obsidian in various colors and flavors used to make a wide variety of weapons and knives.





SAMPLE SCENE

INT. SPIDER LADY'S TAVERN BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Juju squats over pillows while an older woman, SPIDER LADY, 47, kneels in front. Servant Girl stands behind, supporting Juju as she bears down and cries out in pain.

SPIDER LADY

Here. Drink. Push when you feel the pain. Breathe! Keep breathing!

JUJU

A-a-a-i-i-e-e-h! Come my little one! G-a-h-a-e-e-i-i-a! Oh mighty Gods...help me!

Nxmul flings open the door. His team players are seen behind him cornering and killing two guards.

NXMUL

IT'S TRUE! You've been despoiled by a common snake!

SPIDER LADY

You can't be here! Get out!

NXMUL

I'm Monkey-Python, son of Stormy Sky, prince of mighty Tikal! She was to be my virgin wife! WHORE!

Nxmul grabs Spider Lady, pulling her away from Juju.

JUJU

I-i-e-e-a-g-g-h! He's coming!

Juju bears down, screaming. A baby boy flops out onto the pillows, still attached to his mother. Spider Lady drops to her knees, carefully picks up the baby, and bites off the cord. She hands the baby to Juju then turns back to confront Nxmul.

NXMUL

I'll take care of this!

He grabs the baby and swings it over his head, but loses his grasp and the baby slams against the wall behind Juju. She screams and pounds Nxmul with her fists.

JUJU

I-i-e-e You murderer! Arabl will have your head! I will eat your bleeding liver!

Servant Girl scoops up the baby, wraps him hurriedly in cloth, and runs from the room.

MUSIC EXAMPLES

Flauta de Bambu
para Meditação Repouso
Rick Jones Anderson

<https://youtu.be/kGFqN6Ykc2g?t=112>

El Condor Pasa
Leo Rojas
Matsuri

<https://youtu.be/4wYCet9rtEo?t=315>

Despacito ft. Daddy Yankee
Luis Fonsi
Flute

<https://youtu.be/12Th6-4USGU?t=171>



Dr. Norman P. Johnson

I've spent a lifetime of watching and closely studying films and the graphic fine arts. I have stage training in direction, lighting, and acting and have a thorough understanding of all aspects of the film business from conception, pre-production, location shooting and post editing, dubbing, and distribution. I am now writing and developing projects. Kokopelli is my third film script.

Credits and bio:

Studied filmmaking under George Manupelli at the University of Michigan. Made short art films for the Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1972. Credits: *Ann Arbor Summer '70*, *Challenge of Change*, and *The Tortoise and the Egg*.

35mm carbon arc projectionist and business manager for the Princess Theater in Crested Butte, Colorado, 1974 to 1980; chief projectionist for the Telluride Film Festival, 1977-80, under Bill Pence.

Experimental video with Dana Atchley, video artist and Ace of Space Showman, 1974-80.

After a career in theoretical physics and internet communications, I now split my home between Woodinville, Washington and Molokai, Hawaii. In my off hours, I enjoy volcano skiing, raising chickens, deep-sea fishing, and restoring cars.

