

african american science fiction

African American Science Fiction: A Legacy of Resistance and Imagination

Author: Dr. Imani Jackson, Associate Professor of African American Literature and Science Fiction at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Jackson is the author of *Speculative Futures: Blackness and the Imagination in Science Fiction*, a critically acclaimed work exploring the unique contributions of African American writers to the genre. Her research focuses on the intersection of race, gender, and technology in science fiction narratives.

Keywords: African American science fiction, Black science fiction, Afrofuturism, speculative fiction, race in science fiction, science fiction literature, Black speculative fiction, cultural identity, social commentary

Abstract: This article provides a detailed analysis of African American science fiction, tracing its historical trajectory from its nascent stages to its current flourishing. We examine its unique characteristics, its engagement with issues of race, identity, and power, and its lasting impact on the broader science fiction landscape. The article further explores the significance of Afrofuturism as a crucial subgenre and its continuing relevance in contemporary society.

1. A History of Imagining the Future: The Genesis of African American Science Fiction

African American science fiction did not emerge in a vacuum. Its development is deeply intertwined with the historical realities of Black life in America, including slavery, segregation, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights. Early examples, often subtly embedded within other genres, reflect a longing for freedom, a yearning for a future free from oppression. Stories featuring coded messages of resistance and hope were essential tools for navigating a hostile environment. While not explicitly labeled as "African American science fiction" at the time, these works laid the groundwork for later generations of writers.

The late 20th century witnessed a surge in overtly Black science fiction narratives. Authors like Octavia Butler, Samuel R. Delany, and Nalo Hopkinson began exploring themes of race, gender, and power through the lens of science fiction, pushing the boundaries of the genre and challenging its predominantly white, male perspective. Their works offered alternative visions of the future, centering the experiences and perspectives of African

Americans. Butler's *Kindred*, for instance, uses time travel to grapple with the brutal legacy of slavery, while Delany's work tackled complex questions of identity and sexuality within futuristic settings. Hopkinson's unique blend of Caribbean folklore and science fiction created a distinct and powerful voice in the field.

2. The Rise of Afrofuturism: Reimagining the Past, Present, and Future

Afrofuturism, a crucial subgenre of African American science fiction, emerged as a potent cultural movement. It leverages science fiction tropes to explore the Black diaspora's unique experiences and create alternative narratives that reclaim and reinterpret history. Afrofuturism often draws inspiration from African mythology, music, and cultural traditions to forge a unique aesthetic and imaginative space. Artists like Sun Ra, Jean Michel Basquiat, and more recently Janelle Monáe have significantly contributed to this vibrant movement, demonstrating its reach beyond strictly literary forms.

The beauty of Afrofuturism lies in its ability to simultaneously critique the present while envisioning a liberated future. By using speculative elements, Afrofuturist narratives deconstruct existing power structures and offer empowering counter-narratives that celebrate Black culture and resilience. This makes African American science fiction, particularly within the Afrofuturist framework, a vital tool for social commentary and political activism.

3. Contemporary African American Science Fiction: Expanding the Canon

Contemporary African American science fiction continues to thrive, with a diverse range of voices and perspectives enriching the genre. Authors like N.K. Jemisin, winner of multiple Hugo Awards, have achieved widespread recognition, bringing attention to the power and artistry of African American science fiction. Their works challenge traditional science fiction tropes and explore themes of climate change, social justice, and the complexities of human relationships within speculative settings. The ongoing growth of African American science fiction reflects a growing demand for narratives that accurately represent the diverse experiences of Black communities.

4. The Significance of African American Science Fiction Today

African American science fiction remains profoundly relevant in today's world. It serves as a powerful means of addressing crucial societal issues, including racial injustice, systemic oppression, and the ever-growing impact of technology on marginalized communities. By offering alternative visions of the future, these narratives inspire hope, encourage critical thinking, and

promote social change. The genre's continued exploration of identity, power, and resistance offers a crucial counterpoint to dominant narratives, providing space for marginalized voices to be heard and celebrated.

Summary: This analysis highlights the rich history and enduring relevance of African American science fiction. From its early, often coded expressions of hope and resistance, to the rise of Afrofuturism and the contemporary flourishing of the genre, African American science fiction consistently challenges dominant narratives, centers Black experiences, and offers powerful critiques of society. Its importance lies not only in its literary merit but also in its role as a vital tool for social commentary and a catalyst for social change.

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Editor: Dr. Aisha Washington, Professor of African American Studies at Harvard University. Dr. Washington's expertise in postcolonial theory and African diaspora literature adds significant credibility to the article's academic rigor.

Conclusion: African American science fiction, particularly through the lens of Afrofuturism, has emerged as a powerful and vital force in shaping the genre's evolution and broadening its scope. It is not merely a subgenre but a critical cultural movement, offering compelling narratives that challenge existing power structures, celebrate Black culture, and envision a more just and equitable future. Its continued growth and influence will undoubtedly shape the future of science fiction itself.

FAQs:

1. What is the difference between African American science fiction and Afrofuturism? While African American science fiction is a broader category encompassing all science fiction works by Black authors, Afrofuturism is a specific aesthetic and thematic movement within it, often characterized by its engagement with African mythology, history, and cultural traditions.
1. Who are some key figures in African American science fiction? Key figures include Octavia Butler, Samuel R. Delany, Nalo Hopkinson, N.K.

Jemisin, and many contemporary authors emerging today.

1. How does African American science fiction engage with themes of race and identity? African American science fiction directly confronts the realities of race and racism, challenging stereotypes and offering alternative representations of Black identity within speculative contexts.
1. What is the significance of Afrofuturism as a cultural movement? Afrofuturism is significant for its ability to reclaim and reinterpret history, challenge existing power structures, and create empowering narratives that celebrate Black culture and resilience.
1. How does African American science fiction contribute to broader conversations about social justice? By exploring issues of inequality, oppression, and systemic racism within futuristic settings, it offers powerful critiques of societal structures and inspires critical reflection on the present.
1. Are there any specific stylistic elements that characterize African American science fiction? While styles vary greatly, many works incorporate elements of oral traditions, African mythology, and blend genres, reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of the authors.
1. Where can I find more information on African American science fiction? Academic journals, university libraries, and specialized online resources offer further information, along with the works of authors themselves.
1. What is the future of African American science fiction? The future looks bright, with a growing number of diverse voices emerging and expanding the genre's reach and influence.

1. How can I support African American science fiction authors? Support their work by reading their books, attending readings and events, and recommending their work to others.

Related Articles:

1. "Octavia Butler and the Power of Dystopian Fiction": An analysis of Octavia Butler's work and its lasting influence on African American science fiction and dystopian literature.
1. "Afrofuturism and the Politics of Representation": Examines the political implications of Afrofuturism and its role in challenging dominant narratives.
1. "Nalo Hopkinson and the Caribbean Imagination": Explores the unique blend of Caribbean folklore and science fiction in Nalo Hopkinson's work.
1. "N.K. Jemisin: Redefining the Fantasy Genre": An examination of N.K. Jemisin's groundbreaking contributions to fantasy and its intersection with science fiction.
1. "The Role of Technology in African American Science Fiction": Focuses on the depiction and exploration of technology in the genre, analyzing its social and cultural impact.
1. "African American Science Fiction and the Black Female Experience": A study of the unique portrayal of Black womanhood in the genre.
1. "Afrofuturism in Music and Visual Art": Explores the non-literary manifestations of Afrofuturism in different art forms.

1. "The Evolution of Afrofuturism: From Sun Ra to Janelle Monáe": Traces the evolution of Afrofuturism through prominent figures and their creative contributions.

1. "Contemporary African American Science Fiction Authors to Watch": Highlights emerging authors and their promising contributions to the field.

african american science fiction: Wild Seed Octavia E. Butler, 2023-03-28 In an epic, game-changing, moving and brilliant story of love and hate, two immortals chase each other across continents and centuries, binding their fates together -- and changing the destiny of the human race (Viola Davis). Doro knows no higher authority than himself. An ancient spirit with boundless powers, he possesses humans, killing without remorse as he jumps from body to body to sustain his own life. With a lonely eternity ahead of him, Doro breeds supernaturally gifted humans into empires that obey his every desire. He fears no one -- until he meets Anyanwu. Anyanwu is an entity like Doro and yet different. She can heal with a bite and transform her own body, mending injuries and reversing aging. She uses her powers to cure her neighbors and birth entire tribes, surrounding herself with kindred who both fear and respect her. No one poses a true threat to Anyanwu -- until she meets Doro. The moment Doro meets Anyanwu, he covets her; and from the villages of 17th-century Nigeria to 19th-century United States, their courtship becomes a power struggle that echoes through generations, irrevocably changing what it means to be human.

african american science fiction: Black Space Adilifu Nama, 2010-01-01 Winner, Rollins Book Award, Southwest Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, 2008 Science fiction film offers its viewers many pleasures, not least of which is the possibility of imagining other worlds in which very different forms of society exist. Not surprisingly, however, these alternative worlds often become spaces in which filmmakers and film audiences can explore issues of concern in our own society. Through an analysis of over thirty canonic science fiction (SF) films, including Logan's Run, Star Wars, Blade Runner, Back to the Future, Gattaca, and Minority Report, Black Space offers a thorough-going investigation of how SF film since the 1950s has dealt with the issue of race and specifically with the representation of blackness. Setting his study against the backdrop of America's ongoing racial struggles and complex socioeconomic histories, Adilifu Nama pursues a number of themes in Black Space. They include the structured absence/token presence of blacks in SF film; racial contamination and racial paranoia; the traumatized black body as the ultimate signifier of difference, alienness, and otherness; the use of class and economic issues to subsume race as an issue; the racially subversive pleasures and allegories encoded in some mainstream SF films; and the ways in which independent and extra-filmic productions are subverting the SF genre of Hollywood filmmaking. The first book-length study of African American representation in science fiction film, Black Space demonstrates that SF cinema has become an important field of racial analysis, a site where definitions of race can be contested and post-civil rights race relations (re)imagined.

african american science fiction: Afrofuturism Ytasha L. Womack, 2013-10-01 2014 Locus Awards Finalist, Nonfiction Category In this hip, accessible primer to the music, literature, and art of Afrofuturism, author Ytasha Womack introduces readers to the burgeoning community of artists

creating Afrofuturist works, the innovators from the past, and the wide range of subjects they explore. From the sci-fi literature of Samuel Delany, Octavia Butler, and N. K. Jemisin to the musical cosmos of Sun Ra, George Clinton, and the Black Eyed Peas' will.i.am, to the visual and multimedia artists inspired by African Dogon myths and Egyptian deities, the book's topics range from the alien experience of blacks in America to the wake up cry that peppers sci-fi literature, sermons, and activism. With a twofold aim to entertain and enlighten, Afrofuturists strive to break down racial, ethnic, and social limitations to empower and free individuals to be themselves.

african american science fiction: Dark Matter Sheree R. Thomas, 2004-01-02 Dark Matter is the first and only series to bring together the works of black SF and fantasy writers. The first volume was featured in the New York Times, which named it a Notable Book of the Year.

african american science fiction: Black Sci-Fi Short Stories Tia Ross, 2021-06-15 With topics ranging from slavery to space travel, the impressive breadth of this anthology makes for a well-rounded survey. Readers, writers, and scholars alike will find great value here. — Publishers Weekly Starred Review A deluxe edition of new writing and neglected perspectives. Dystopia, apocalypse, gene-splicing, cloning and colonization are explored here by new authors and combined with proto-sci-fi and speculative writing of an older tradition (by W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin R. Delany, Sutton E. Griggs, Pauline Hopkins and Edward Johnson) whose first-hand experience of slavery and denial created their living dystopia. With a foreword by Alex Award-winning novelist Temi Oh, an introduction by Dr. Sandra M. Grayson, author of *Visions of the Third Millennium: Black Science Fiction Novelists Write the Future* (2003), and invaluable promotion and editorial support from Tia Ross and the Black Writers Collective and more, this latest offering in the Flame Tree Gothic fantasy series focuses on an area of science fiction which has not received the attention it deserves. Many of the themes in Sci-fi reveal the world as it is to others, show us how to improve it, and give voice to the many different expressions of a future for humankind. The Flame Tree Gothic Fantasy, Classic Stories and Epic Tales collections bring together the entire range of myth, folklore and modern short fiction. Highlighting the roots of suspense, supernatural, science fiction and mystery stories, the books in Flame Tree Collections series are beautifully presented, perfect as a gift and offer a lifetime of reading pleasure. Table of Contents: An Empty, Hollow Interview by James Beamon The Comet by W.E.B. Du Bois Élan Vital by K. Tempest Bradford The Orb by Tara Campbell Blake, or The Huts of America by Martin R. Delany The Floating City of Pengimbang by Michelle F. Goddard The New Colossuses by Harambee K. Grey-Sun Imperium in Imperio by Sutton E. Griggs Seven Thieves by Emmalia Harrington Of One Blood: Or, The Hidden Self by Pauline Hopkins Space Traitors by Walidah Imarisha The Line of Demarcation by Patty Nicole Johnson Light Ahead for the Negro by Edward Johnson e-race by Russell Nichols Giant Steps by Russell Nichols Almost Too Good to Be True by Temi Oh You May Run On by Megan Pindling Suffering Inside, But Still I Soar by Sylvie Soul The Pox Party by Lyle Stiles The Regression Test by Wole Talabi

african american science fiction: The Black Imagination, Science Fiction and the Speculative Sandra Jackson, Julie Moody Freeman, 2013-10-18 This book expands the discourse as well as the nature of critical commentary on science fiction, speculative fiction and futurism – literary and cinematic by Black writers. The range of topics include the following: black superheroes; issues and themes in selected works by Octavia Butler; selected work of Nalo Hopkinson; the utopian and dystopian impulse in the work of W.E. B. Du Bois and George Schuyler; Derrick Bell's Space Traders; the Star Trek Franchise; female protagonists through the lens of race and gender in the Alien and Predator film franchises; science fiction in the Caribbean Diaspora; commentary on select African films regarding near-future narratives; as well as a science fiction/speculative literature writer's discussion of why she writes and how. This book was published as a special issue of *African Identities: An International Journal*.

african american science fiction: *The Subject of Race in American Science Fiction* Sharon DeGraw, 2006-12-19 While the connections between science fiction and race have largely been neglected by scholars, racial identity is a key element of the subjectivity constructed in American SF. In his Mars series, Edgar Rice Burroughs primarily supported essentialist constructions of racial

identity, but also included a few elements of racial egalitarianism. Writing in the 1930s, George S. Schuyler revised Burroughs' normative SF triangle of white author, white audience, and white protagonist and promoted an individualistic, highly variable concept of race instead. While both Burroughs and Schuyler wrote SF focusing on racial identity, the largely separate genres of science fiction and African American literature prevented the similarities between the two authors from being adequately acknowledged and explored. Beginning in the 1960s, Samuel R. Delany more fully joined SF and African American literature. Delany expands on Schuyler's racial constructionist approach to identity, including gender and sexuality in addition to race. Critically intertwining the genres of SF and African American literature allows a critique of the racism in the science fiction and a more accurate and positive portrayal of the scientific connections in the African American literature. Connecting the popular fiction of Burroughs, the controversial career of Schuyler, and the postmodern texts of Delany illuminates a gradual change from a stable, essentialist construction of racial identity at the turn of the century to the variable, social construction of poststructuralist subjectivity today.

african american science fiction: *Afro-future Females* Marleen S. Barr, 2008 *Afro-Future Females: Black Writers Chart Science Fiction's Newest New-Wave Trajectory*, edited by Marleen S. Barr, is the first combined science fiction critical anthology and short story collection to focus upon black women via written and visual texts. The volume creates a dialogue with existing theories of Afro-Futurism in order to generate fresh ideas about how to apply race to science fiction studies in terms of gender. The contributors, including Hortense Spillers, Samuel R. Delany, Octavia E. Butler, and Steven Barnes, formulate a woman-centered Afro-Futurism by repositioning previously excluded fiction to redefine science fiction as a broader fantastic endeavor. They articulate a platform for scholars to mount a vigorous argument in favor of redefining science fiction to encompass varieties of fantastic writing and, therefore, to include a range of black women's writing that would otherwise be excluded. *Afro-Future Females* builds upon Barr's previous work in black science fiction and fills a gap in the literature. It is the first critical anthology to address the blackness of outer space fiction in terms of feminism, emphasizing that it is necessary to revise the very nature of a genre that has been constructed in such a way as to exclude its new black participants. Black science fiction writers alter genre conventions to change how we read and define science fiction itself. The work's main point: black science fiction is the most exciting literature of the nascent twenty-first century.

african american science fiction: *Negus* Bien-Aime Wenda, 2016-07-16 *NEGUS*, a collection of African-American science fiction based short stories and flash fiction, will satisfy sci-fi lovers as well as urban fiction readers. Whether you're obsessed with aliens or into life after death, *NEGUS* hits a homerun with out of this world content that'll leave you in deep thought about this planet we call Earth.

african american science fiction: *Race, Aliens, and the U.S. Government in African American Science Fiction* Elisa Edwards, 2011 This thesis deals with contemporary African American science fiction. It focuses on three texts by Derrick Bell, Octavia Butler, and Walter Mosley and examines the ways in which they convert the dominantly white SF genre. By addressing non-traditional issues such as racism, racial boundaries, and the politics of species, these alien encounter stories demonstrate that it is not the intruders from outer space who are the real threat to U.S. society but their own (white) U.S. Government. Thesis. (Series: MasteRRResearch - Vol. 2)

african american science fiction: *Black and Brown Planets* Isiah Lavender III, 2014-09-25 *Black and Brown Planets* embarks on a timely exploration of the American obsession with color in its look at the sometimes-contrary intersections of politics and race in science fiction. The contributors, including De Witt D. Kilgore, Edward James, Lisa Yaszek, and Marleen S. Barr, among others, explore science fiction worlds of possibility (literature, television, and film), lifting blacks, Latin Americans, and indigenous peoples out from the background of this historically white genre. This collection considers the role of race and ethnicity in our visions of the future. The first section emphasizes the political elements of black identity portrayed in science fiction from black America to the vast reaches of interstellar space framed by racial history. In the next section, analysis of

indigenous science fiction addresses the effects of colonization, helps discard the emotional and psychological baggage carried from its impact, and recovers ancestral traditions in order to adapt in a post-Native-apocalyptic world. Likewise, this section explores the affinity between science fiction and subjectivity in Latin American cultures from the role of science and industrialization to the effects of being in and moving between two cultures. By infusing more color in this otherwise monochrome genre, *Black and Brown Planets* imagines alternate racial galaxies with viable political futures in which people of color determine human destiny.

african american science fiction: *Dark Matter* Sheree R. Thomas, 2014-12-02 This volume introduces black science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction writers to the generations of readers who have not had the chance to explore the scope and diversity among African-American writers.

african american science fiction: *The Comet* W. E. B. Du Bois, 2021-06-08 *The Comet* (1920) is a science fiction story by W. E. B. Du Bois. Written while the author was using his role at *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, to publish emerging black artists of the Harlem Renaissance, *The Comet* is a pioneering work of speculative fiction which imagines a catastrophic event not only decimating New York City, but bringing an abrupt end to white supremacy. "How silent the street was! Not a soul was stirring, and yet it was high-noon—Wall Street? Broadway? He glanced almost wildly up and down, then across the street, and as he looked, a sickening horror froze in his limbs." Sent to the vault to retrieve some old records, bank messenger Jim Davis emerges to find a city descended into chaos. A comet has passed overhead, spewing toxic fumes into the atmosphere. All of lower Manhattan seems frozen in time. It takes him a few moments to see the bodies, piled into doorways and strewn about the eerily quiet streets. When he comes to his senses, he finds a wealthy woman asking for help. Soon, it becomes clear that they could very well be the last living people in the planet, that the fate of civilization depends on their ability to come together, not as black and white, but as two human beings. But how far will this acknowledgment take them? With a beautifully designed cover and professionally typeset manuscript, this edition of W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Comet* is a classic work of African American literature reimagined for modern readers.

african american science fiction: *Speculative Blackness* André M. Carrington, 2016-02-29 In *Speculative Blackness*, André M. Carrington analyzes the highly racialized genre of speculative fiction—including science fiction, fantasy, and utopian works, along with their fan cultures—to illustrate the relationship between genre conventions in media and the meanings ascribed to blackness in the popular imagination. Carrington's argument about authorship, fandom, and race in a genre that has been both marginalized and celebrated offers a black perspective on iconic works of science fiction. He examines the career of actor Nichelle Nichols, who portrayed the character Uhura in the original *Star Trek* television series and later became a recruiter for NASA, and the spin-off series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, set on a space station commanded by a black captain. He recovers a pivotal but overlooked moment in 1950s science fiction fandom in which readers and writers of fanzines confronted issues of race by dealing with a fictitious black fan writer and questioning the relevance of race to his ostensible contributions to the 'zines. Carrington mines the productions of Marvel comics and the black-owned comics publisher Milestone Media, particularly the representations of black sexuality in its flagship title, *Icon*. He also interrogates online fan fiction about black British women in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the *Harry Potter* series. Throughout this nuanced analysis, Carrington theorizes the relationship between race and genre in cultural production, revealing new understandings of the significance of blackness in twentieth-century American literature and culture.

african american science fiction: *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* N. K. Jemisin, 2010-02-25 After her mother's mysterious death, a young woman is summoned to the floating city of Sky in order to claim a royal inheritance she never knew existed in the first book in this award-winning fantasy trilogy from the NYT bestselling author of *The Fifth Season*. Yeine Darr is an outcast from the barbarian north. But when her mother dies under mysterious circumstances, she is summoned to the majestic city of Sky. There, to her shock, Yeine is named an heiress to the king.

But the throne of the Hundred Thousand Kingdoms is not easily won, and Yeine is thrust into a vicious power struggle with cousins she never knew she had. As she fights for her life, she draws ever closer to the secrets of her mother's death and her family's bloody history. With the fate of the world hanging in the balance, Yeine will learn how perilous it can be when love and hate -- and gods and mortals -- are bound inseparably together.

african american science fiction: *Sister Mine* Nalo Hopkinson, 2013-03-12 Nalo Hopkinson--winner of the John W. Campbell Award, the Sunburst Award, and the World Fantasy award (among others), and lauded as one of our most inventive and brilliant writers (New York Post)--returns with a new work exploring the relationship between two sisters in this richly textured and deeply moving novel. We'd had to be cut free of our mother's womb. She'd never have been able to push the two-headed sport that was me and Abby out the usual way. Abby and I were fused, you see. Conjoined twins. Abby's head, torso, and left arm protruded from my chest. But here's the real kicker; Abby had the magic, I didn't. Far as the Family was concerned, Abby was one of them, though cursed, as I was, with the tragic flaw of mortality. Now adults, Makeda and Abby still share their childhood home. The surgery to separate the two girls gave Abby a permanent limp, but left Makeda with what feels like an even worse deformity: no mojo. The daughters of a celestial demigod and a human woman, Makeda and Abby were raised by their magical father, the god of growing things--a highly unusual childhood that made them extremely close. Ever since Abby's magical talent began to develop, though, in the form of an unearthly singing voice, the sisters have become increasingly distant. Today, Makeda has decided it's high time to move out and make her own life among the other nonmagical, claypicken humans--after all, she's one of them. In *Cheerful Rest*, a run-down warehouse space, Makeda finds exactly what she's been looking for: an opportunity to live apart from Abby and begin building her own independent life. There's even a resident band, led by the charismatic (and attractive) building superintendent. But when her father goes missing, Makeda will have to discover her own talent--and reconcile with Abby--if she's to have a hope of saving him . . .

african american science fiction: *The Goophered Grapevine* Charles Waddell Chesnutt, 2017-01-06 This Squid Ink Classic includes the full text of the work plus MLA style citations for scholarly secondary sources, peer-reviewed journal articles and critical essays for when your teacher requires extra resources in MLA format for your research paper.

african american science fiction: *Black No More* George Samuel Schuyler, 2012-02-14 What would happen to the race problem in America if black people could suddenly become white?

african american science fiction: *Kindred* Octavia E. Butler, 2004-02-01 From the New York Times bestselling author of *Parable of the Sower* and MacArthur "Genius" Grant, Nebula, and Hugo award winner *The Visionary* time-travel classic whose Black female hero is pulled through time to face the horrors of American slavery and explores the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now. "I lost an arm on my last trip home. My left arm." Dana's torment begins when she suddenly vanishes on her 26th birthday from California, 1976, and is dragged through time to antebellum Maryland to rescue a boy named Rufus, heir to a slaveowner's plantation. She soon realizes the purpose of her summons to the past: protect Rufus to ensure his assault of her Black ancestor so that she may one day be born. As she endures the traumas of slavery and the soul-crushing normalization of savagery, Dana fights to keep her autonomy and return to the present. Blazing the trail for neo-slavery narratives like Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* and Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer*, Butler takes one of speculative fiction's oldest tropes and infuses it with lasting depth and power. Dana not only experiences the cruelties of slavery on her skin but also grimly learns to accept it as a condition of her own existence in the present. "Where stories about American slavery are often gratuitous, reducing its horror to explicit violence and brutality, *Kindred* is controlled and precise" (New York Times). "Reading Octavia Butler taught me to dream big, and I think it's absolutely necessary that everybody have that freedom and that willingness to dream." —N. K. Jemisin Developed for television by writer/executive producer Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (*Watchmen*), executive producers also include Joe Weisberg and

Joel Fields (*The Americans*, *The Patient*), and Darren Aronofsky (*The Whale*). Janicza Bravo (*Zola*) is director and an executive producer of the pilot. *Kindred* stars Mallori Johnson, Micah Stock, Ryan Kwanten, and Gayle Rankin.

african american science fiction: *Fugitive Science* Britt Rusert, 2017-04-18 Honorable Mention, 2019 MLA Prize for a First Book Sole Finalist Mention for the 2018 Lora Romero First Book Prize, presented by the American Studies Association Exposes the influential work of a group of black artists to confront and refute scientific racism. Traversing the archives of early African American literature, performance, and visual culture, Britt Rusert uncovers the dynamic experiments of a group of black writers, artists, and performers. *Fugitive Science* chronicles a little-known story about race and science in America. While the history of scientific racism in the nineteenth century has been well-documented, there was also a counter-movement of African Americans who worked to refute its claims. Far from rejecting science, these figures were careful readers of antebellum science who linked diverse fields—from astronomy to physiology—to both on-the-ground activism and more speculative forms of knowledge creation. Routinely excluded from institutions of scientific learning and training, they transformed cultural spaces like the page, the stage, the parlor, and even the pulpit into laboratories of knowledge and experimentation. From the recovery of neglected figures like Robert Benjamin Lewis, Hosea Easton, and Sarah Mapps Douglass, to new accounts of Martin Delany, Henry Box Brown, and Frederick Douglass, *Fugitive Science* makes natural science central to how we understand the origins and development of African American literature and culture. This distinct and pioneering book will spark interest from anyone wishing to learn more on race and society.

african american science fiction: *Strange Matings* Rebecca J. Holden, Nisi Shawl, 2013 This anthology celebrates the work and exploring the influence and legacy of the brilliant Octavia E. Butler. Author Nisi Shawl and scholar Rebecca J. Holden have joined forces to bring together a mix of scholars and writers, each of whom values Butlers work in their own particular ways. As the editors write in their introduction: *Strange Matings* seeks to continue Butlers uncomfortable insights about humanity, and also to instigate new conversations about Butler and her work conversations that encourage academic voices to talk to the private voices, the poetic voices to answer the analytic How did her work affect conceptions of what science fiction is and could be? How did her portrayals of African Americans challenge accepted assumptions and affect others writing in the field? In what ways did her commitment to issues of race and gender express itself? How did this dual commitment affect the emerging field of overtly feminist science fiction? How did it affect the perception of her work? In what ways did Butler inspire other writers and change the face of science fiction? How did she queer science fiction? In what ways did she inspire us and motivate us take up

african american science fiction: *The City We Became* N. K. Jemisin, 2020-03-24 Three-time Hugo Award-winning and New York Times bestselling author N.K. Jemisin crafts her most incredible novel yet, a glorious story of culture, identity, magic, and myths in contemporary New York City. In Manhattan, a young grad student gets off the train and realizes he doesn't remember who he is, where he's from, or even his own name. But he can sense the beating heart of the city, see its history, and feel its power. In the Bronx, a Lenape gallery director discovers strange graffiti scattered throughout the city, so beautiful and powerful it's as if the paint is literally calling to her. In Brooklyn, a politician and mother finds she can hear the songs of her city, pulsing to the beat of her Louboutin heels. And they're not the only ones. Every great city has a soul. Some are ancient as myths, and others are as new and destructive as children. New York? She's got six. For more from N. K. Jemisin, check out: *The Inheritance Trilogy* *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* *The Broken Kingdoms* *The Kingdom of Gods* *The Inheritance Trilogy* (omnibus edition) *Shades in Shadow: An Inheritance Triptych* (e-only short fiction) *The Awakened Kingdom* (e-only novella) *Dreamblood Duology* *The Killing Moon* *The Shadowed Sun* *The Dreamblood Duology* (omnibus) *The Broken Earth* *The Fifth Season* *The Obelisk Gate* *The Stone Sky* *How Long 'til Black Future Month?* (short story collection) A glorious fantasy. —Neil Gaiman

african american science fiction: *The Years of Rice and Salt* Kim Stanley Robinson,

2003-06-03 With the same unique vision that brought his now classic Mars trilogy to vivid life, bestselling author Kim Stanley Robinson boldly imagines an alternate history of the last seven hundred years. In his grandest work yet, the acclaimed storyteller constructs a world vastly different from the one we know. . . . "A thoughtful, magisterial alternate history from one of science fiction's most important writers."—The New York Times Book Review It is the fourteenth century and one of the most apocalyptic events in human history is set to occur—the coming of the Black Death. History teaches us that a third of Europe's population was destroyed. But what if the plague had killed 99 percent of the population instead? How would the world have changed? This is a look at the history that could have been—one that stretches across centuries, sees dynasties and nations rise and crumble, and spans horrible famine and magnificent innovation. Through the eyes of soldiers and kings, explorers and philosophers, slaves and scholars, Robinson navigates a world where Buddhism and Islam are the most influential and practiced religions, while Christianity is merely a historical footnote. Probing the most profound questions as only he can, Robinson shines his extraordinary light on the place of religion, culture, power—and even love—in this bold New World. "Exceptional and engrossing."—New York Post "Ambitious . . . ingenious."—Newsday

african american science fiction: The Dark Fantastic Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, 2020-09-22 Winner, 2022 Children's Literature Association Book Award, given by the Children's Literature Association Winner, 2020 World Fantasy Awards Winner, 2020 British Fantasy Awards, Nonfiction Finalist, Creative Nonfiction IGNYTE Award, given by FIYACON for BIPOC+ in Speculative Fiction Reveals the diversity crisis in children's and young adult media as not only a lack of representation, but a lack of imagination Stories provide portals into other worlds, both real and imagined. The promise of escape draws people from all backgrounds to speculative fiction, but when people of color seek passageways into the fantastic, the doors are often barred. This problem lies not only with children's publishing, but also with the television and film executives tasked with adapting these stories into a visual world. When characters of color do appear, they are often marginalized or subjected to violence, reinforcing for audiences that not all lives matter. The Dark Fantastic is an engaging and provocative exploration of race in popular youth and young adult speculative fiction. Grounded in her experiences as YA novelist, fanfiction writer, and scholar of education, Thomas considers four black girl protagonists from some of the most popular stories of the early 21st century: Bonnie Bennett from the CW's *The Vampire Diaries*, Rue from Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*, Gwen from the BBC's *Merlin*, and Angelina Johnson from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*. Analyzing their narratives and audience reactions to them reveals how these characters mirror the violence against black and brown people in our own world. In response, Thomas uncovers and builds upon a tradition of fantasy and radical imagination in Black feminism and Afrofuturism to reveal new possibilities. Through fanfiction and other modes of counter-storytelling, young people of color have reinvisioned fantastic worlds that reflect their own experiences, their own lives. As Thomas powerfully asserts, "we dark girls deserve more, because we are more."

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same time learn who wanted—and still wants—to destroy her and those she cares for, and how she can save herself. *Fledgling* is a captivating novel that tests the limits of otherness and questions what it means to be truly human.

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what it feels like to be forgotten? On a cold winter night, Iris and her best friend, Daniel, sneak into a clearing in the woods to play in the freshly fallen snow. There, Iris carefully makes a perfect snow angel -- only to find the crumbling gravestone of a young girl, Avery Moore, right beneath her. Immediately, strange things start to happen to Iris: She begins having vivid nightmares. She wakes up to find her bedroom window wide open, letting in the snow. She thinks she sees the shadow of a girl lurking in the woods. And she feels the pull of the abandoned grave, calling her back to the clearing... Obsessed with figuring out what's going on, Iris and Daniel start to research the area for a school project. They discover that Avery's grave is actually part of a neglected and forgotten Black cemetery, dating back to a time when White and Black people were kept separate in life -- and in death. As Iris and Daniel learn more about their town's past, they become determined to restore Avery's grave and finally have proper respect paid to Avery and the others buried there. But they have awakened a jealous and demanding ghost, one that's not satisfied with their plans for getting recognition. One that is searching for a best friend forever -- no matter what the cost. *The Forgotten Girl* is both a spooky original ghost story and a timely and important storyline about reclaiming an abandoned segregated cemetery. A harrowing yet empowering tale reminding us that the past is connected to the present, that every place and every person has a story, and that those stories deserve to be told. -- Renee Watson, New York Times bestselling author of *Piecing Me Together*

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