# Case

# K

## Framework

#### [ROJ & Womack 1] I negate. The Role of the Judge is to Center Blackness in Space Discussions, meaning that Blackness has to play a fundamental role in conversations about outer space instead of being relegated to the sidelines as usual.

**Womack 1:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 CH

I was an Afrofuturist before the term existed. And any sci-fi fan, comic book geek, fantasy reader, Trekker, or science fair winner who ever wondered why black people are minimized in pop culture depictions of the future, conspicuously absent from the history of science, or marginalized in the roster of past inventors and then actually set out to do something about it could arguably qualify as an Afrofuturist as well. It’s one thing when black people aren’t discussed in world history. Fortunately, teams of dedicated historians and culture advocates have chipped away at the propaganda often functioning as history for the world’s students to eradicate that glaring error. But when, even in the imaginary future—a space where the mind can stretch beyond the Milky Way to envision routine space travel, cuddly space animals, talking apes, and time machines— people can’t fathom a person of non-Euro descent a hundred years into the future, a cosmic foot has to be put down. It was an age-old joke that blacks in sci-fi movies from the ’50s through the ’90s typically had a dour fate. The black man who saved the day in the original Night of the Living Dead was killed by trigger-happy cops. The black man who landed with Charlton Heston in the original Planet of the Apes was quickly captured and stuffed in a museum. An overeager black scientist nearly triggered the end of the world in Terminator 2. On occasion, the black character in such films popped up as the silent, mystical type or maybe a scary witch doctor, but it was fairly clear that in the artistic renderings of the future by pop culture standards, people of color weren’t factors at all.

#### [Womack 2] AND Black people should get to control the narrative – Blackness doesn’t have to equal negativity.

**Womack 2:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 CH

Whether it’s the African futuristic fashion of former DiddyDirty Money songstress Dawn Richard—which she unveiled in her music videos for the digital album Goldenheart—or the indie film and video game Project Fly, which was created by DJ James Quake and follows a group of black ninjas on Chicago’s South Side, the creativity born from rooting black culture in sci-fi and fantasy is an exciting evolution. This blossoming culture is unique. Unlike previous eras, today’s artists can wield the power of digital media, social platforms, digital video, graphic arts, gaming technology, and more to tell their stories, share their stories, and connect with audiences inexpensively—a gift from the sci-fi gods, so to speak, that was unthinkable at the turn of the century. The storytelling gatekeepers vanished with the high-speed modem, and for the first time in history, people of color have a greater ability to project their own stories. This tug-and-pull debate over black people controlling their image shifts considerably when a fledgling filmmaker can shoot his sci-fi web series on a $500 DV cam, post it on YouTube, and promote it on Instagram and Twitter. While technology empowers creators, this intrigue with scifi and fantasy itself inverts conventional thinking about black identity and holds the imagination supreme. Black identity does not have to be a negotiation with awful stereotypes, a dystopian view of the race (remember those black-man-as-endangered species stories or the constant “Why are black women single?” reports?), an abysmal sense of powerlessness, or a reckoning of hardened realities. Fatalism is not a synonym for blackness. If a story line or an artist’s disposition wasn’t washed in fatalism, southern edicts, or urbanized reality, then some questioned whether it was even “black.” Sci-fi vanguard and writer Octavia Butler, who authored the famous Parable series and laid the groundwork for countless sci-fi heroines and writers to follow, said it never failed that she’d be confronted by someone at a conference who would ask, “Just what does science fiction have to do with black people?”

#### **[ROB] The Role of the Ballot is to Promote Black Reimaginings,** which means giving Black scholars the space to control the narrative about their own identities. Precludes generic frameworks like util, since those always forefront a “view from nowhere” that never addresses race.

## A. Links

#### 1. [EXTINCTION FRAMING: the aff’s apocalyptic representations of the end of the world are fatalistic in nature – they claim extinction is about to happen if we don’t pass their plan – from the doc: They go nuclear---AND erode nuclear deterrence.

#### 2. BAN ALL NON-GOVERNMENTAL SPACE APPROPRIATION – that includes groups of people.

SSA: United States Social Security Administration. [Independent agency of the U.S. federal government that administers Social Security] “Course 9: How to Determine an Entity’s Legal Status.” Social Security Administration, no date. https://www.ssa.gov/section218training/documents/course\_9.doc CH

Course 9: How to Determine an Entity’s Legal Status 1. What is the definition of a governmental entity? A governmental entity is that which is closely affiliated, generally by government ownership or control, with State and local governments. 2.What is the definition of a non-governmental or private entity? A non-governmental entity is that which is not affiliated, through ownership or control, with State and local governments.

#### **3.** [Three,] RELIANCE ON THE STATE: they can only imagine using governments to solve their harms – their actor is the United States Government. It seen as the entity people have to rely on.

#### **4.** VIEW FROM NOWHERE: their util/extinction framing is an “All Lives Matter” approach that assumes we all share a single conception of the good – saying pleasure and pain are the *only* things that matter assume there’s no divergence in those words’ definitions.

## B. Impacts

#### [Womack 3] DISIMAGINATION OF BLACKNESS – their framing and their ban on private space appropriation tie Blackness to death and prevent new solutions.

**Womack 3:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 CH

Can you imagine a world without the idea of race? Can you imagine a world where skin color, hair texture, national origin, and ethnicity are not determinants of power, class, beauty, or access? Some don’t want to imagine it; others are highly invested in the impossibility of it all. But let’s just talk about those who crave an end to injustice. Can these well-wishers see it? What does this world look like? What does it feel like? If you can’t see it, how do you know when you’ve achieved it? The ideal society that the nameless many have fought and died for is a world that many can’t imagine. Even those who live the dreams of their predecessors wrestle with leaving familiar notions of identity behind and imagining something new. “There’s something about racism that has produced a fatalism that has impacted futuristic thinking,” says professor and author Alondra Nelson. While statements like “We don’t know what tomorrow will bring” and “The future is not promised” are often said under the guise of well-meaning advice, they have a deeper reach into black diaspora culture, says Nelson. They’re countered by the concept of prophecy, she says, or speaking about hope to create a vision for the future. “It’s about future thinking, sustainability and imagination.” The imagination is powerful. The narrative of hope that spews from change agents working for social equality is no accident. Dr. Martin Luther King, Rev. Jackson Sr., even President Barack Obama centered their missions and speeches on hope. On the surface, hope rings as very altruistic—something simple that anyone can do if they just reshuffle their thinking caps or wish upon a star. But the results of a changed mind backed by a bit of empowerment can turn a conflicted world on its head. Hope, much like imagination, comes at a premium. The cost is a life where more is expected. Where more is expected, new actions are required. The audacity of hope, the bold declaration to believe, and clarity of vision for a better life and world are the seeds to personal growth, revolutionized societies, and lifechanging technologies. Desire, hope, and imagination are the cornerstones of social change and the first targets for those who fight against it. “You can’t go forward with cynicism—cynicism being disbelief,” says Jackson, whose catchphrase “Keep hope alive” may be one of the most popular quotes in modern history. “You have to hope against the odds and not go backwards by fear. Dr. King, Chavez, Gandhi were people who removed people from low places and had the hope,” Jackson says. Imagination, hope, and the expectation for transformative change is a through line that undergirds most Afrofuturistic art, literature, music, and criticism. It is the collective weighted belief that anchors the aesthetic. It is the prism through which some create their way of life. It’s a view of the world. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

## Thus, C. Alternative

#### [Womack 4] Reject the aff’s ban on private space appropriation and deracialized framing and replace them with Afrofuturism, abbreviated “AF,” a method that lets Black people reimagine a future in which they can appropriate outer space.

**Womack 4:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 CH

Afrofuturism is an intersection of imagination, technology, the future, and liberation. “I generally define Afrofuturism as a way of imagining possible futures through a black cultural lens,” says Ingrid LaFleur, an art curator and Afrofuturist. LaFleur presented for the independently organized TEDx Fort Greene Salon in Brooklyn, New York. “I see Afrofuturism as a way to encourage experimentation, reimagine identities, and activate liberation,” she said.1 Whether through literature, visual arts, music, or grassroots organizing, Afrofuturists redefine culture and notions of blackness for today and the future. Both an artistic aesthetic and a framework for critical theory, Afrofuturism combines elements of science fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentricity, and magic realism with non-Western beliefs. In some cases, it’s a total reenvisioning of the past and speculation about the future rife with cultural critiques. Take William Hayashi’s self-published novel *Discovery: Volume 1 of the Darkside Trilogy*. The story follows the discovery of rumored black American separatists whose disgust with racial disparity led them to create a society on the moon long before Neil Armstrong’s arrival. The story is a commentary on separatist theory, race, and politics that inverts the nationalistic themes of the early space race. Or take John Jennings and Stacey Robinson’s Black Kirby exhibit, a touring tribute to legend Jack Kirby of Marvel and DC Comics fame. The show is a “What if Jack Kirby were black?” speculation depicting Kirby’s iconic comic book covers using themes from black culture. The show displays parallels between black culture and Kirby’s Jewish heritage, explores otherness and alienation, and adds new dimensions to the pop culture hero. Afrofuturism can weave mysticism with its social commentary too. Award-winning fiction writer Nnedi Okorafor’s Who Fears Death captures the struggles of Onyesonwu, a woman in post-nuclear, apocalyptic Africa who is under the tutelage of a shaman. She hopes to use her newfound gifts to save her people from genocide.

**The images below show Kerry James Marshall’s painting, “Keeping the Culture,” and Parliament’s album, *Mothership Connection*** – two pieces of AF art that show Black people appropriating outer space as a response to anti-Blackness on Earth.





#### [Womack 5] THE ALT SOLVES THE AFF – it’s key to the innovation needed to spill over into real world policies.

**Womack 5:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 CH

Marshall believes contemplating the future is important. “It comes down to do we really imagine ourselves to be in the future? And if we imagine ourselves into the future, how are we going to be when we get there?” he asks. “Can we be agents of the future or will we be objects of the future, like we were objects of commerce when black folks were brought to the New World?” He’s an advocate of the strategic use of the imagination and urges Afrofuturists to ponder how they can have a collective technological advantage that helps shape the world and alleviate disparity. We must be “in front of the developing of the material realities that shape the future,” he says. The influencers of the future aren’t those who create the next high-profile phone, but rather those who determine whether we’ll be using phones in the first place, he adds. Afrofuturism is a great tool for wielding the imagination for personal change and societal growth. Empowering people to see themselves and their ideas in the future gives rise to innovators and free thinkers, all of whom can pull from the best of the past while navigating the sea of possibilities to create communities, culture, and a new, balanced world. The imagination is the key to progress, and it’s the imagination that is all too often smothered in the name of conformity and community standards. On the one hand, Afrofuturism encourages the beauties of African diasporic cultures and gives people of color a face in the future. But from a global vantage point, the perspective contributes to world knowledge and ideas and includes the perspectives of a group too often deleted from the past and future. Sometimes Afrofuturists address otherness dead-on, while some simply give life to the stories that dance in their mind. But all are aware that the future, technology, and the scope of the imagination have unlimited potential that culture can inform. Yet the inequities that plagued the past and play out in the present cannot be carried into the future. Afrofuturism provides a prism for examining this issue through art and discourse, but it’s a prism that is not exclusive to the diaspora alone. Whether by adopting the aesthetic or the principles, all people can find inspiration or practical use for Afrofuturism to both transform their world and break free of their own set of limitations. The myths of the Dogon or the stories of Samuel Delany can and do enrich lives all over the world. The musical approaches of DJ Spooky or the Black Kirby art show provide the cognitive dissonance that many need to rewire their limited view of the world. Good ideas transcend time, space, and culture. To quote the film V for Vendetta, ideas are bulletproof.