### Part 1

**Keeling 2019** (Kara Keeling “Queer Times, Black Futures, “It’s after the End of the World (Don’t You Know That Yet?)”: Afrofuturism and Transindividuation, NYU Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12fw90q.6>)

**Somewhere in the middle** of the 1974 film ***Space Is the Place***, Sun Ra’s band, The Arkestra, begins to play **a tune** called **“It’s after the End of the World**.” **That tune launches forth with a few bars of tentative tones and sounds. Then come lyrics—a refrain sung and shouted** in a voice that we recognize today as feminine, if not female, by its quality. **Over and again, this voice insists, “It’s after the end of the world. Don’t you know that yet?”**1 This refrain**—“It’s after the end of the world. Don’t you know that yet?”—asserts another temporality and coordinates, which exist within, but are incommensurate with, those taken as the dominant logics of ex- istence of a world (only one) characterized by statistical predictability, control, temporal continuity, and coherence.** **The feminine voice creates a “calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos,” which insists that it is “after the end of the world.” This voice “jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in dan- ger of breaking apart at any moment.**”2 This refrain opens a marvelous (im)possibility: “the world” does not cohere as such. If it once did, it no longer does. Already, it has ended. Whatever existence “we” can claim, wherever that can be claimed, and however it can be characterized, can- not take the continuity and stability of a world as axiomatic. **Soon after it begins, the refrain in *Space Is the Place*—“It’s after the end of the world. Don’t you know that yet?”—is overtaken by other sounds, another attempt to organize chaos. Perhaps the limited space organized by these sounds is not music but a wall of noise, loud yet fragile. It collapses and . . .**

#### This is an apocalyptic catastrophe. Homelessness is the home for blackness. The abyss is the place where blackness and space exist. The middle passage marks the end of the world for blackness.

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. . leaves “us” homeless. **Homelessness is our home**. We carry the abyss that Édouard Glissant characterized so well. For Glissant, the Middle Passage of the transatlantic slave trade and the formation of “the new world” mark an apocalyptic catastrophe. We are forged in its wake. With specific reference to those who can be identified as Caribbean, Glissant explains, “**The abyss is also a projection of and a perspective into the unknown. . . . This is why we stay with poetry . . . We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify. We cry our cry of poetry. Our boats are open, and we sail them for everyone**.”3 At home in open boats and spaceships launching for the unknown, we hum the refrain, “It’s after the end of the world. Don’t you know that yet?” Home- less at home. We improvise.4

#### Space offers a unique site of possibility and hope for blackness. It offers a place to set up a planet. Space is the site where colonization ends and possibilities and/or altered destinies begin.

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In the opening sequence of *Space Is the Place*, *Sun Ra’s* character announces that he **wants to set up a colony for Black people on another planet to “see what they can do on a planet all their own, without any white people there.”** About that utopian aim, he states, “**Equation-wise, the first thing to do is to consider time as officially ended. We’ll work on the other side of time. We’ll bring them here through either isotopic tele- portation, transmolecularization or better still, teleport the whole planet here through music.**”8 The rest of the film involves Sun Ra’s character playing a game of cards with a character called “The Overseer” to win a bet for control over the destiny of Black people, and traveling between 1943 Chicago and 1969 Oakland, California, to convince Black people to travel to that planet with him. The film ends with Sun Ra defeating “The Overseer” and setting into motion an “altered destiny.” As Sun Ra surveys the planet he discovered at the beginning of the film, he announces, “The music is different here. The vibrations are dif- ferent. Not like planet earth.” The idea that music might affect vibrations and energy patterns and, hence, consciousness aligns with the ideas of other avant-garde artists of the 1950s and 1960s, who used aesthetic techniques of “plastic dialogue” to articulate what was then perceived to be “a new relationship between individuals, society, and the environ- ment.”9 Sun Ra’s innovations within jazz and Big Band improvisation were part of a larger subcultural preoccupation among avant-garde art- ists with then-emergent metaphors of “energy, spirituality, metaphysicality, and freedom” and “new definitions of improvisation.”10 Various conceptualizations of Afrofuturism have drawn on the temporality of, or the organization of time within, Sun Ra’s particular version of plastic dialogue and the politics it supports.

#### But space is a place where black folks have not been invited. Blackness is a myth that relies on the impossibility of being.

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**Sun Ra continues his conversation** with the Black youth, **reminding them that white people already have been on the moon and chiding them: “I noticed none of you have been invited. How do you think you are going to exist?”** A young man calls attention to the crystal ball in Sun Ra’s hand as the sound and image tracks segue into a refrain: June Tyson singing, “**Space Age. We are living in the Space Age**.” Through a dissolve from Sun Ra’s crystal to June Tyson’s face, the sequence’s logics of space and time are suspended in her voice and image, which appear in an entirely different mise-en-scène than the recreation center where Sun Ra delivered his message to the Black youth of America. Sun Ra appears there, too, operating an audio control board, and a different geographic location, presumably still on planet Earth, is framed onscreen. I describe this sequence to call attention to the strategies through which it sonically and visually destabilizes assumptions about the logics of material reality in order to enhance Sun Ra’s proclamation, “**Black people are myths**.” In Sun Ra’s statements, we can hear echoes of earlier Afrofuturists, such as W. E. B. DuBois in his short story “The Comet,” which first appeared in his 1920 collection *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* and was later anthologized by Sheree Thomas in *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*. In “The Comet,” DuBois suggests, as Lisa Yaszek points out, “**not only that it will take a natural disaster to eradicate racism in America, but that without such a disaster there may be no future whatsoever for black Americans.”**24 In DuBois’s story, **a natural disaster precipitates a tem- porary suspension of the terms through which present reality congeals, thereby creating the conditions under which a Black man and a white woman might acknowledge a shared humanity.** Sun Ra’s appeal to Black youth anticipates, in the realm of scholarly inquiry into Black existence, theories of social death such as Orlando Patterson’s analysis of the conditions characteristic of “New World” slavery (and Grace Kyungwon Hong’s corrective to it in her book *The Ruptures of American Capital*).25 The assertion that **Black people are not real, but myths**, also **resonates with** Frantz **Fanon**’s analysis **of the im- possibility of Black being when he writes**, for instance, **“The Black is not**.”26 Referencing the unreality of Black people, Sun Ra’s statements index the myths, beliefs, and social constructions—in short, the feats of the imagination—on which the **modern world relies for its coherence**. For Sun Ra, **an acknowledgment of the material force of the “myths” that animate modern life opens onto the possibility that things might be organized otherwise**. If the terms of modern life have been constructed as such, they also might be de-created, making another organization of things possible. Such a world exists in Sun Ra’s cosmology as an impossible possibility.

#### Civil society structures itself around that the black body exist in emptiness but is not an absolute condition. Denying blackness the right to a future tries to strip blackness of its meaning. Futurity is key to understanding the future of witness and why the future is good in the context of blackness

**Baldwin, 11** (Andrew, Co-Director of the Institute of Hazard at the University of Durham’s Department of Geography, “Whiteness and futurity: Towards a research agenda,” Progress in Human Geography 2012, originally published August 3, 2011, <http://phg.sagepub.com/content/36/2/172>, )

My argument is that **a past-oriented approach to accounting for geographies of whiteness often neglects to consider how various forms of whiteness are shaped by discourses of futurity**. This is not to argue that a historicist approach to conceptualizing white geographies is wrongheaded; the past continues to be a crucial time-space through which to understand whiteness. It is, however, to argue **that such a past-focused orientation obscures the way the category of the future is invoked in the articulation of whiteness.** As such, any analysis that seeks to understand how whitenesses of all kinds shape contemporary (and indeed past) racisms operates with only a partial understanding of the time-spaces of whiteness. My argument is that **we can learn much about whitenesses and their corresponding forms of racism by paying special attention to the ways in which such whitenesses are constituted by futurity**. I have offered some preliminary remarks on how we might conceptualize geographies of whiteness qua futurity, but these should only be taken as starting points. Much more pragmatically, what seems to be required is a fulsome investigation into the way the future shapes white geographies. What might such a project entail? For one, geographers would do well to **identify whether and how the practice of governing through the future inaugurates new and repeats old forms of whiteness**. It would also be worth comparing and contrasting how the future is made present in various dialectical accounts of whiteness. For instance, what becomes of whiteness when understood through the binary actual-possible as opposed to an actual-virtual binary, which has been my main concern? Alternatively, what becomes of the category of whiteness if it is shown to be constituted by a future that has no ontology except as a virtual presence? And, perhaps more pressing, how might whiteness be newly politicized? **Futurity provides a productive vocabulary for thinking about and challenging whiteness**. It does not offer a means of overcoming white supremacy, nor does it provide white people with a normative prescription for living with their whiteness guilt- or worry-free. Futurity is, however, a lacuna in the study of whiteness both in geography and outside the discipline, and this alone suggests the need to take it seriously. But equally, and perhaps more urgently, **there is the need to study whiteness and futurity given how central the future is to contemporary** governance and politics. Indeed, at a moment when the future features prominently in both political rhetoric – in his inaugural speech, Obama implores America to carry ‘forth that great gift of freedom and [deliver] it safely to future generations’ – and everyday life, how people orient themselves towards the future is indelibly political. The future impels action. For Mann (2007), it is central to interest. For Thrift (2008), ‘value increasingly arises not from what is but from what is not yet but can potentially become, that is fromthe pull of the future’. Attention to whiteness and futurity may at minimum enable us to see more clearly the extent to which the pull of whiteness into the future reconfigures what is to be valued in the decades ahead.

### Part 2: Private Entities

#### Whitey is on the moon. There’s a glaring issue with diversity in private sector programs. Plans for space appropriation by said entities Blue Origin is only one example.

**Bogle 21** (Colin Bogle is an American-born first-generation Jamaican now based in Denver. He has experience working at the intersection of climate change and social justice issues throughout the Caribbean/Latin America region. Colin is also interested in how existing social fractures stand to be exacerbated by climate change. His specialties include community organizing, socioeconomic inequality, and sustainable development. He is now studying for a master's in International Studies with a focus on Global Environmental Change and Adaptation.) Bogle, Colin. "How “Whitey on the Moon” Perfectly Captures Bezos’ Space Joy Ride." 12 August 2021. *yesmagazine.com.* 7 January 2022. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2021/08/12/amazon-jeff-bezos-space-program>.

After Jeff Bezos returned from his 10-minute space flight in late July, there was a moment during his post-flight news conference when the crowd seemed to realize just how fucked up it all was. Bezos singled out Amazon’s customers and staff, saying “you guys paid for all this.” Realizing the gravitas of that casual statement, the audience emitted some pained laughter while the hostess looked around awkwardly, waiting for the moment to subside. It reminded me of what Gil Scott-Heron, the “godfather of rap” said in his 1970 poem “Whitey on the Moon.”Those watching Bezos might have realized just what it meant when the world’s richest man said that the public paid for the lavish goods he enjoys, especially seeing as he doesn’t seem to contribute much to the goods that the public enjoys. Maybe at a time when a raging pandemic has widened existing wealth inequality, people don’t want to hear how much they contributed to the wealth of a man whose net worth jumped by 74% over the past 13 months, while roughly 9.6 million Americans lost their jobs in the first three quarters of 2020.There is no denying the connections between wealth inequality, climate change, and racial inequality, and there’s no denying Amazon’s complicity in all three.It could also be that at a time when the impacts of climate change are beginning to be felt, people don’t want to hear much from a man who has rained down untold amounts of pollutants onto the Earth via his space joyride, and whose company has released as many greenhouse gases as a moderately sized country. Amazon in and of itself encourages climate change through its championing of overconsumption, pollution, and waste—all while stifling small businesses, raising housing prices, opposing unions and driving up wealth inequality.Bezos seems to have realized that public opinion is souring. Not only has he announced a $10 billion contribution to fighting climate change, but he also took the time after his space flight to announce twin donations of $100 million—pocket change for him—to various causes tied to an initiative he is calling the “courage and civility awards,” a thinly veiled attempt at public relations. The reality is that Jeff Bezos and Amazon are so entangled in a system of perpetuating inequality that no individual contribution can unwind the systemic oppression that makes such gross displays of wealth inequality possible.I am not slighting Bezos for his contributions, but I was all too aware of the inequality he perpetuates for me to see his space flight and donations and react with anything other than disgust. Bezos’ ugly display embodied Scott-Heron’s words, “Was all that money I made las’ year(for Whitey on the moon?) How come there ain’t no money here?(Hm! Whitey’s on the moon).The poem was a scathing critique of the 1969 moon landing and earlier space race, an act of geopolitical showboating between the U.S. and USSR whose resources Scott-Heron felt would have been better invested in fighting poverty.I believe that Scott-Heron used the word “Whitey” without racist intent. He was reflecting on the overlapping of racial identity and privilege in the U.S. In his eyes, the crowning achievement of the U.S. at that time solely benefited the White majority who stood to gain from the increasing prestige and privilege of landing a man on the moon. Scott-Heron, his sister, and the rest of Black America were not considered to have shared in any noticeable achievement as they continued to languish in racialized poverty.Scott-Heron’s observations remain timely today, as do his solutions. As he urged his (presumably White) landlord to contact his fellow “Whiteys” to pay rent on his behalf, so too do I urge the (mostly White) American political system to make Jeff Bezos pay his fair share in taxes into the public treasury. The myth of the self-made billionaire is eroded by the billions of dollars Bezos’ company receives in taxpayer subsidy, which only serve to undermine economic stability and should be revoked.We cannot rely on Bezos’ self-serving charitable whims to fight climate change and racial inequality, nor can we allow him to amass so much wealth without taxation that he can squander it on more lavish displays of excess.Systemic racism and its myriad manifestations are a difficult beast to wrangle, and the idea of significantly tackling such an issue with charitable donations from billionaires like Bezos is folly. Amazon’s commitment to racial equality is hot air, especially given its history of worker abuse, racism at the corporate level, and overall racist modus operandi, all of which contribute to a perception by former employees that the company is hardly committed to tackling its own problems, let alone those of the wider society.Amazon’s undermining of unionization efforts at its majority Black fulfilment center in Bessemer, Alabama, is a perfect example of systemic racism. Its internal memos on the threats that racial diversity poses to its model undermine any racial justice claims made by Bezos. If he really wanted to make a difference, he could start by treating his employees like human beings, reworking its employment system, and respecting third-party sellers.Ultimately the work of decentering our economic system’s focus on constant growth can never truly be accomplished by a company that relishes its ever-growing monopoly.

### Part 3

#### I affirm: The Appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

#### Affirm as a means of engaging in afrofuturist narratives and reject ideas of US domination

**McKinson 21** McKinson, Kimberley. Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine, assistant professor of anthropology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York (CUNY), research is situated at the intersections of urban security/insecurity, material culture, Caribbean postcoloniality, and critical Black historiography, Published Palimpsestic Securityscapes: Making Home and Excavating Memory in Postcolonial Jamaica.. "Do Black Lives Matter In Outer Space?". *SAPIENS*, 2021, <https://www.sapiens.org/culture/space-colonization-racism/>. <https://www.sapiens.org/culture/space-colonization-racism/>

On May 30, I tuned in to see the launch of the SpaceX Crew Dragon from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The Dragon, the first spacecraft to launch from U.S. soil in nearly a decade, was to herald the dawn of a new age of space colonization. As I watched the astronauts on TV clad in futuristic [designer-made suits](https://design-milk.com/the-design-of-the-spacex-spacesuit-explained/#:~:text=Credit%20for%20America's%20SpaceX%20spacesuit,for%20an%20actual%20space%20program) prepare for blastoff, my mind was flooded with memories of my childhood in Jamaica. As a young girl in the 1990s, I spent hours poring over my Childcraft encyclopedias. I particularly loved the thick, brightly colored volume titled *Our Universe*, where I could bury my head in the stars and nurture my obsession with planets and black holes. Moments after the SpaceX launch, the broadcasted [words of President Donald Trump](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-kennedy-space-center/) jolted me out of my reverie. He was giving a speech to the crowd gathered for the launch. “The United States has regained our place of prestige as the world leader,” he announced. The president’s usual bluster-filled language about American greatness rang particularly hollow that day at Cape Canaveral. At that exact moment, [hundreds of thousands of Americans](https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html) were protesting in response to the horrific killing of George Floyd, an African American man who was in police custody, only five days prior. Floyd’s death had embodied, in 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the ugliest of America’s fractures. Even as a girl, it had never been possible for me to escape for too long into dreams of being an astronaut. I was always acutely aware, in my own child-like way, of my precariousness here on Earth. While growing up, I faced a lost family business, a lost family home, and a lost father who was desperately seeking work in the United States. My intimate losses were statistical casualties in Jamaica, a country struggling with economic insecurity, crime, migration, and the terms of what it meant to truly be “*post*colonial” on an increasingly globalized planet. The wonders of the universe, I learned, could not shield me from the fractures in the world around me. And so, on that perfectly clear May afternoon, I was struck by this juxtaposition of images that felt strangely familiar: At Cape Canaveral, Americans were being ushered to look to the stars to imagine the utopic future of humankind in space, while in the streets, they were confronting the country’s dystopic underbelly of anti-Black racism. I have yet to realize my childhood dream of traveling to space. However, I did discover the anthropological galaxy after leaving Jamaica for the U.S. as a teenager to seek a new intellectual frontier. Today, as a Black anthropologist living and working in New York City, my position in the world has changed. But my scholarly work still ties me to Jamaica, where I came of age. My research focuses on how concerns about crime and security in Kingston, Jamaica, have come to organize social life in this Caribbean capital city. From this personal and intellectual vantage point, the two historic events of May 30—the euphoric SpaceX mission and the outrage-filled protests against anti-Black racism—do not appear at odds. Rather, they are undeniably tethered. How should Americans understand SpaceX’s goal of space colonization in a world now indelibly changed by the killing of Floyd? And will the future era of space colonization be one that is just and whole for all? Founded by the billionaire technology entrepreneur Elon Musk in 2002, SpaceX is at the forefront of efforts to colonize space. Musk insists that one way to ensure the survival of human civilization is to make humans a multi-planet species. To make this goal a reality, Musk is committed to establishing a human colony on Mars, which will necessitate altering the red planet’s environment so it can support terrestrial life. The fear that drives these efforts is that a natural or human-made planetary-scale crisis—such as climate change or resource depletion—will render Earth inhospitable for human beings. Put simply, SpaceX’s vision is one predicated on addressing future insecurity on Earth by creating and curating security for humans on Mars. Space exploration is not and has never been politically neutral. The year 2020 has tragically shown, however, that for African Americans, among others around the globe, the insecurity and inhospitableness of life on Earth is not imagined as a future eventuality. Rather, it is already being lived as a present-day reality. Furthermore, the recent spread of Black Lives Matter protests to major international cities has reminded people that the tentacles of anti-Black racism do not simply limit their reach to the United States. Black Lives Matter is not just an American cry. It is a global movement that speaks to a planetary crisis rooted in the historic negation of the humanity of all Black people. Though SpaceX is a private company with its sights fixated on colonizing an ecology beyond the bounds of Earth’s atmosphere, it is nonetheless implicated in these [contestations about racism](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2020/06/elon-musk-juneteenth-spacex-tesla/613330/). Space exploration is not and has never been politically neutral. As the history of the space race shows, the dream of colonizing space has always been tied to narratives about domination and greatness. In the U.S., the historic NASA workforce has [largely been White and male](https://history.nasa.gov/SP-4104/appb.htm). As writer Mark Dery noted in a groundbreaking essay about Afrofuturism, such men seem to believe they possess the power to design, own, and control “[the unreal estate of the future](https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822396765).” These narratives are not unlike the ones of Euro-American colonization and imperialism on Earth, which are stories of the exploitation, exclusion, and dehumanization of Black people, other people of color, and Indigenous people in the name of exploration, adventure, and expansion by White people. Today the scions of space colonization are the billionaire entrepreneurs [who have founded](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45919650) commercial spaceflight companies—Musk (SpaceX), Jeff Bezos (Blue Origin), and Sir Richard Branson (Virgin Galactic). In other words, they are no longer political leaders from ideologically opposed nation-states, as they were during the Cold War. They are still, however, privileged and wealthy White men. (The combined net worth of Musk, Bezos, and Branson is over US$273 billion.) Their endeavors to colonize Mars and their fantasies for the future of humankind must be understood in the context of the racialized histories of colonization on Earth. For African Americans, race and racism have always been specters that hover over American space exploration. The late poet, musician, and author Gil Scott-Heron captured this sentiment well in his [1970 spoken word poem](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goh2x_G0ct4) “Whitey on the Moon,” which was a critique of NASA’s Apollo program. Released on his debut album *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox* a year after U.S. astronauts landed on the moon, the poem begins: *A rat done bit my sister Nell. (with Whitey on the moon) Her face and arms began to swell. (and Whitey’s on the moon) I can’t pay no doctor bills. (but Whitey’s on the moon) Ten years from now I’ll be paying still. (while Whitey’s on the moon)* As the poem conveys, for many African Americans, the Apollo program did not conjure fantastical images of human technological advancement. The first moon landing could not obscure the painful realities of social suffering that for centuries had gnawed viciously on the African American body and psyche, and resulted in the fever-like conditions of the 1960s civil rights era. By dislodging U.S. space exploration from the realm of fantasy, Scott-Heron reminds his audience that, to the contrary, the social priorities that fueled the Apollo program and American space conquest—as envisaged by “Whitey”—were deeply implicated in Black socioeconomic dispossession and racial inequality. Moments after the SpaceX astronauts left the Earth behind, [Trump’s words rang out](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-kennedy-space-center/): “Space travel is not a feat of engineering alone. It’s also a moral endeavor—a measure of a nation’s vision, its willpower, its place in the world.” In a post-Floyd world, the U.S. will undoubtedly have to forcefully confront the ways in which she has failed to measure up to her highest moral ideals. And yet this moment also presents the opportunity to reevaluate our collective principles to articulate once again our vision for the future, both here on Earth and in outer space. Will this be a future equitable for all? Will it be one predicated not on Black alienation but on Black reclamation, one invested not in the fragmentation of Black people and their histories but in the project of making them whole? Will those in the U.S. be bold enough to envision such an Afro-future? It is such a future—brilliantly depicted and embraced by numerous generations of African American literary, musical, and visual artists—that fills me with a child-like sense of wonder, much like how I felt when I first discovered *Our Universe*. It is in this future, that I, a Black woman, would like to make my home.

#### Space is an escape from the law that Black people must do something to change the world.

**Johnson 19** Johnson, Myles E., writer and artist living in Brooklyn. Named “One of the greatest writers of this generation” by Janelle Monáe, he is the author of children’s book, LARGE FEARS, that centers a Black queer child. His work has been featured on platforms like The New York Times, NPR, Vice, Buzzfeed, Out, and Essence. Johnson is the founder of countercultural digital zine, Queer Quarantine. Above all else, he is dedicated to spreading love. "Black Utopia: Reclaiming Outerspace". AFROPUNK, 2019, <https://afropunk.com/2019/04/black-utopia-reclaiming-outer-space/>

The Disney theme song, “It’s A Small World (After All)” is a Cold War-era lullaby of affirmation, a reminder that despite borders and missiles, we’re all global neighbors and citizens. For some, this depiction of the world as a quaint neighborhood (after all) brings solace. It has always disturbed me. The world is small — too small. Whereas our histories and traumas in this world feel too big to move beyond, while the planet feels too small to fit new worlds and ways of being inside of it. On “Down With The Clique,” Solange sings, “We were falling in the deep, bathe in the delight. We were rolling up the street, chasing the divine.” This lyric operates as a type of Negro spiritual for me, proof that I’m not alone with most of the work and delight I take part in here on Earth, being a journey to escape Earth rather than to reform Earth. I roll up the street with the intentions of chasing the divine, even if I am only met with a bodega and a stray cat. My Black imagination is often thinking about transcending this planet, more than revolutionizing people and convincing them that humans can’t be illegal or alien or slave or nigger. I daydream about leaving this small world and entering the big universe. Space has been the place for a lot of Black intellectual and creative thought, when billed with the task of imagining Black freedoms. It was Ray Bradbury — a celebrated white speculative fiction author — that first pushed me to think of Blackness as both a community of people and a culture that does not have to be tethered to planet Earth. Bradbury’s short story, “The Other Foot” from his classic book of stories, The Illustrated Man, tells the story of Black Americans going to Mars to start a better, less oppressed life — sans white people and whiteness. This plan has led to a peaceful life for Black people on Mars, until a spacecraft crash happens, and lands a white astronaut. Here is where the Black people on Mars must decide what to do with the white man: Do they integrate him into the society, do they kill him, or do they return the oppression they experienced on Earth on to this white man as a type of historical-intergalactic revenge? Without ruining the conclusion, the story opened my mind to the idea of Black people finding new life in spaces and places beyond this planet. Visionary jazz musician and afrofuturist, Sun Ra said, “If you can develop an atomic bomb, I’m sure you can develop an altered destiny.” This has been the greater duty of Black people on Earth, even when engaged in cosmic fantasy there has been a loyalty to Earth — namely America. There has been an unwritten law that the most oppressed and brutalized in history are saddled with the responsibility for assisting in changing the country for the better. In America, our ideas of freedom were borne out of the enslavement of African people. It was abolitionists like Fredrick Douglass and Harriet Tubman who articulated and demonstrated for America what freedom could be and look like, using their own lives as examples. Not just for those who were enslaved, but those doing the enslaving and those witnessing. The concept of togetherness was created out of the intentional separation of Black people from white people in the Jim Crow era. It was activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks that forced us and conceptualized in real time what togetherness looks like — and what it costs. And to be clear: it costs lives. Not just lives taken, but lives that inherited a commitment to create togetherness instead of other things that a life can be dedicated to. It’s almost become foreign to believe that Black people have not been put on this Earth solely to be a pedagogy to those Americans who use domination as a way to experience “freedom.” These are tasks we inherited by proxy of wanting to reach a freedom where our lives are not overdetermined by violence and domination culture. This makes the reaction to transcend America — and truly this planet soaked in colonization and anti-Blackness — reasonable, and to the empathetic heart, that may not be Black, understandable and expected. Where cinematic and visual landscapes that artists who bend the realms of reality and often deal with the outer space like the album covers of Roy Ayers and the films by Sun Ra, soundscapes have filled those voids. As a teenager longing for something more, it was the literature of Octavia Butler and Samuel R. Delany that informed my concept of worlds where domination was broken and my Blackness’ sole purpose wasn’t to correct the toxicity borne from whiteness, but to take on my own heart’s mission — whatever that might be, but it wouldn’t be to fix the evils that are produced by living in the imperialist white supremacist capitalist-patriarchy. It was soundscapes created by artists like Alice Coltrane, Sun Ra and Rotary Connection that were my meditations on and soundtrack to my fascination with space. Sun Ra’s Arkestra cooing, “The sky is a sea of darkness when there is no sun to light the way,” was more a lullaby than “It’s A Small World.” It was an affirmation that the sky — the grander universe and everything it holds — would be a sea of darkness or Blackness, or a reflection of me, if the sun were to be dipped in Black or disappear. This was an affirmation that no matter how ostracized I might feel on Earth, we’re swimming in a sea Blackness. As we get closer to space and the phenomenons that exist there — including, this week, seeing a black hole with more clarity than ever before — the longing to space travel away from the things I inherited have only intensified. It might feel comforting for some to recognize that this is a small world, but it preserves my own sanity and radicalism to remember that this is a big black ass universe after all.

**Space is a unique site to resist antiblack violence and challenge the white denial of history.**

**Lupro**, Micahel Mooradian ,**2009** ( BA in intermedia studies at San Fransico State University, MA in Geography at Portland State University, PHD in American Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University and lecturer at North Carolina A &T State Universiy) ’Space Oddities for The Age Of Space

No mere coping strategy, making **a place in space was also a means of actively combating both “white denial of black history** (e.g., Egypt) **and white denial of access to the future** (e.g. outer space)” (Lock 61). Sun Ra’s assertions of alien-ness are read by Lock “as a deliberate riposte to the history of white American refusal to treat black Americans as human beings” and **likens terrestrial Herman Blount’s transformation into the extraterrestrial Sun Ra as akin to coming out of slavery,** “**an experience that entailed not only a change in status but virtually a whole new way of being**” (Lock 5). Ajay Heble concurs with Lock in regards to the assessment that, far from the product of insanity, Sun Ra’s space **is produced to strategically counteract oppression**. […] his wigged-out space themes all suggest **a desire to opt out of the very codes of representation and intelligibility, the very frameworks of interpretation** and assumption, **which have legitimized the workings of dominant culture.** Ra’s space-age futurism, [may] mark a shift in postcolonial struggles for identity formation: rather than critically interrogating the dominant ideology’s misrepresentation of black history (and consequently seeking to correct the historical record), Ra’s space sounds, philosophy, and paraphernalia invite us to envision new models for an aesthetic of resistance, **to generate a space outside the very framework of domination**. (Heble 125) Corbett concurs, suggesting that **treating Sun Ra as insane rather than taking him seriously “may indicate the *insanity* of its maker, it also cuts back the other direction, suggesting the fundamental *unreality* of existence for people imported into the New World servitude and then disenfranchised into povert**y” “**Space becomes a site for the recovery and the articulation of other histories, epistemologies, identities, and possibilities”** (Heble 132). And in this post-colonial configuration of black history and culture, **Sun Ra looks to space as a site of a new and radically revised model of knowledge production that counters the “dominant myths, values, and behaviors that have become institutionalized, authorized, and naturalized in American society**”

#### We advocate the use of afro-futurism to wield the imagination for personal and societal growth, giving rise to innovators of the future. Afro-futurism uses art, music, and discourse to lend a voice to deleted peoples and examine the violence of marginalized peoples.

**Womack 13** (Womack, Ytasha, award-winning filmmaker/author/journalist and choreographer, editor of [www.postblackexperience.com](http://www.postblackexperience.com/), guest editor for NV Magazine, social media and pop culture expert, B.A in Mass Media Arts from Clark Atlanta University, studied Arts, Entertainment and Media Management at Columbia College. Afrofuturism : The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture. Chicago :Chicago Review Press, 2013. Print.)

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 contrib- utes 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 inspi- ration 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 tran- scend time, space, and culture. To quote the film V for Vendetta, ideas are bulletproof.

#### Afrofuturism offers a reconceptuion of the future divorced from the master narrative and disrupts the linearity of time and its accumulation on the black body.

**Fisher 13** (Fisher, Mark, author of Capitalist Realism (2009) and Ghosts Of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Future, Programme Leader of the MA in Aural and Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London and a lecturer at the University of East London. "The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology." Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture, n.d. Web. 29 June 2017. <https://dj.dancecult.net/index.php/dancecult/article/viewFile/378/391>.)

Penman’s1995 essays howed that Afrofuturism and hauntology are two sides of the same double-faced phenomenon. The concept of Afrofuturism has always done double work. First, it liberates futurism from the master narratives of white modernity, which positioned Africa as origin, at the furthest remove from the terminus of history projected in Euro-American Science Fictional visions of the future: “ e Shape Of ings To Come—a world without war, hurt or hunger (also, tactless enough, without Fisher | The Metaphysics of Crackle 47 black folks)”, as Mark Sinker sarcastically summarised these supposed utopias in his crucial 1992 essay “Loving e Alien—Black Science Fiction”. Second, Afrofuturism unravels any linear model of the future, disrupting the idea that the future will be a simple supersession of the past. Time in Afrofuturism is plastic, stretchable and prophetic—it is, in other words, a technologised time, in which past and future are subject to ceaseless de- and recompostion. Hip-hop depended on the turntable and the mixer, which converted pre-recorded material from an inert museum into an in nite archive, ripe for recombination; Jungle could only happen when samplers allowed breakbeats to be timestretched, maintaining pitch but increasing tempo and producing the vortical, implosive whorls of sound that prompted Kodwo Eshun to call it “rhythmic psychedelia” (1999: 05[070]). e fact that Penman’s 1995 essay centred on Tricky—the UK artist too “dysfunktional” (Eshun 1998: 03[059]) to be a rapper, too ill to be illbient—was no accident. For Tricky always belonged to a time that was out of joint, a time—to use the neologism Simon Reynolds innovated to deal with sonic hauntology’s temporal displacements—that is dyschronic (Reynolds 2006). Dyschronia is Reynolds’ name for the broken-time proper to hauntology, in which it is no longer possible to securely delimit the present from the past, in which the traces of lost futures unpredictably bubble up to unsettle the pastiche-time of postmodernity. When Tricky began, everything had already ended. “A ermath”, his 1993 rst single, is set in a catatonic, post-apocalyptic psycho-geographic undead zone in which personal disaster is indistinguishable from planetary catastrophe. “My rst lyric ever on a song was ‘your eyes resemble mine, you’ll see as no others can’”, Tricky said when I interviewed him in 2008. “I didn’t have any kids then . . . so what am I talking about? Who am I talking about? My mother. My mother, I found out when I was making a TV documentary, used to write poetry but in her time she couldn’t have done anything with that, there wasn’t any opportunity. It’s almost like she killed herself to give me the opportunity” (Fisher 2008). e spectral voices come like schizo-radio signal down telepathic lines: the cross-dressing Tricky standing in the empty place where the absent father’s law would have been, ventriloquising his dead mother’s voice. So writing songs, Tricky says, is not a question of writing at all. It’s more like allowing himself to be possessed—which is to say, dispossessed of his conscious self:

**Affirmation of our historical counter-future is a gesture of defiance that heals and creates new growth and new life via transgressive black feminist epistemologies**

**Morris 2012**(Susana, Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Auburn University) Fall/Winter “Black Girls Are from the Future: Afrofuturist Feminism in Octavia E. Butler's "Fledgling"” Women's Studies Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3/4, ENCHANTMENT (FALL/WINTER 2012), pp. 146-166)//KM

Speculative fiction, that is, science fiction, fantasy, horror, and futurist fiction, has largely been (mis)understood as a genre written only by whites (mostly men) about whites (again, mostly men). However, by the end of the twentieth century black writers such as Samuel Delaney, Octavia E. Butler, Steven Barnes, Tananarive Due, and Nalo Hopkinson, among others, reflected a tradition of black speculative fiction known as Afrofu turism.6 My use of the term "Afrofuturism" is particularly informed by Afrofuturist scholars Mark Dery, Alondra Nelson, Lisa Yaszek, and Kodwo Eshun. Dery coined the term "Afrofuturism" in 1994 to "describe African American cultures appropriation of technology and SF imagery" (2008, 6). He further notes that "speculative fiction that treats African-American concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of tech nology and a prosthetically enhanced future ... might, for want of a bet ter term, be called Afro-Futurism" (8). Dery s portmanteau of "afro" and "futurism" denotes the important connection between race and futurist fiction, a circumstance that tends to go unacknowledged in mainstream speculative fiction.7 In addition to Dery's definition, Alondra Nelson's groundbreaking work—including editing the special issue of Social Text devoted to Afrofuturism and founding the Afrofuturism Listserv and website—has been vital to the development of Afrofuturism criticism and scholarship. Nelson contends that Afrofuturism forwards "takes on digital culture that do not fall into the trap of the neocritics or the futurists of one hundred years past. These works represent new directions in the study of African diaspora culture that are grounded in the histories of black com munities, rather than seeking to sever all connections to them" (2002, 9). Likewise, Afrofuturist scholar Lisa Yaszek suggests, "While early Afrofuturists are concerned primarily with the question of whether or not there will be any future whatsoever for people of color, contemporary Afrofuturists assume that in the future race will continue to matter to individuals and entire civilizations alike. In doing so, they expand our sense of the possible and contribute to the ongoing development of science fiction itself" (2006). My use of Afrofuturism is also informed by Kodwo Eshun's asser tion that Afrofuturism is "concerned with the possibilities for interven tion within the dimension of the predictive, the projected, the proleptic, the envisioned, the virtual, the anticipatory and the future conditional" (2003, 293). Furthermore, it is important to note, as Eshun contends, that "Afrofuturism may be characterized as a program for recovering the histories of counter-futures created in a century hostile to Afrodiasporic projection and as a space within which the critical work of manufacturing tools capable of intervention within the current political dispensation may be undertaken" (301). Thus, Afrofuturism is an epistemology that both examines the current problems faced by blacks and people of color more generally and critiques interpretations of the past and the future. Ulti mately, Dery, Nelson, Yaszek, and Eshun illuminate that one of Afrofuturism's foremost guiding tenets is the centrality of African diasporic histories and practices in sustaining progressive visions of the future. Put another way, not only does Afrofuturism posit that blacks will exist in the future, as opposed to being harbingers of social chaos and collapse, but in "recovering the histories of counter-futures" Afrofuturism insists that blacks fundamentally are the future and that Afrodiasporic cultural practices are vital to imagining the continuance of human society. Because much of Afrofuturism's transgressive politics align with the fundamental tenets of black feminist thought, I argue that it is critical to understand these epistemologies not only as related but as, in fact, in conversation with one another and potentially even symbiotic. Just as Afrofuturism underscores the centrality of blacks to futurist knowledge and cultural production and resistance to tyranny, so does black feminist thought contend that black peoples experience, knowledge, and culture are vitally important. Black feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins claims, "Black feminist thought affirms, rearticulates, and provides a vehicle for expressing in public a consciousness that quite often already exists" (2000, 32). Moreover, just as Afrofuturism seeks to liberate the possibilities that open up when blackness is linked to futurity, so does black feminist thought seek to uncouple dominance from power as blacks assert their agency, for as bell hooks declares, "Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of 'talking back,' that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject—the liberated voice" (1989, 9). This movement toward a liberated voice, as hooks suggests, is not about simply replacing the dom inant voice with the voice of the marginalized; rather, liberation is cast in terms of coalition and power sharing, methodologies that would incite a future quite different from the hegemony of present structures. I want to consider the synthesis of Afrofuturism and black feminist thought as Afrofuturist feminism. Afrofuturist feminism is a reflection of the shared central tenets of Afrofuturism and black feminist thought and reflects a literary tradition in which people of African descent and transgressive, feminist practices born of or from across the Afrodiaspora are key to a pro gressive future. Ultimately, I argue that recognizing Afrofuturist feminism offers a critical epistemology that illuminates the working of black speculative fiction in vital ways. Octavia Butler is certainly among the authors whose works exemplify Afrofuturist feminism. In her essay "Positive Obsession," Butler asserts that speculative fiction has the potential to catalyze progressive political change and that, for black people, this is a particularly significant project. She writes: What good is any form of literature to Black people? What good is sci ence fictions thinking about the present, the future, and the past? What good is its tendency to warn or to consider alternative ways of think ing and doing? What good is its examination of the possible effects of science and technology, or social organization and political direction? At its best, science fiction stimulates imagination and creativity. It gets reader and writer off the beaten track, off the narrow, narrow footpath of what "everyone" is saying, doing, thinking—whoever "everyone" happens to be this year. And what good is all this to Black people? (2005b, 135). Butlers rhetorical questions and subsequent answers reject the notion that speculative fiction is a "whites only" enterprise, arguing instead that the genre can incite d for a variety of people. Also, Butlers emphasis on the transformative potential of speculative fiction underscores her Afrofuturist work as being defined by a feminist sensibility. That is, her works of speculative fiction not only adhere to the tenets of Afrofuturism but also are self-consciously interested in the con nections between race, gender, sexuality, and ability that are at the core of black feminist thought. Indeed, as Marilyn Mehaffy and AnaLouise Keating note, "Octavia Butler s work is thematically preoccupied with the potentiality of genetically altered bodies—hybrid multispecies and multi ethnic subjectivities—for revising contemporary nationalist, racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes" (2001,45). Thus, Butler s work is Afrofuturist feminism in several ways. Her texts are committed to portraying compli cated (and sometimes vexed) histories of people of color and visions of the future with people of color at the center, with a particular emphasis on women of color. Butlers fiction is also fundamentally interested in critiquing conventional systems of power and dominance and offering futurist solutions based on cooperation and egalitarian ethics. Thus, Butlers writing consistently advocates transgressing repressive social norms and rejecting heteropatriarchy, while centering (or creating) a variety of experiences from across the Afrodiaspora. Nonetheless, while Butler's Afrofuturist work underscores a commitment to an equitable vision of society, it does not resort to simply offering up Utopias. Butler s visions of the future are often ambivalent ones that reveal an ongoing struggle for peace and justice. To that end, while contemporary vampires (and other principle figures and tropes of speculative fiction) are often illustrated as a way to crystallize and affirm whiteness and Western values, Butlers Afrofuturist feminism radically challenges these tenets. She (re)configures vampires as power ful beings not outside of the history of racism, but as powerful, enchant ing beings that are both vulnerable to the constraints of racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism (and their attendant violence) and committed to creating futures for them and those they love that reject these ways of knowing. Nevertheless, I am not arguing that Fledgling is (simply) a reac tionary text. As Kimberly Nichelle Brown argues, "Contemporary African American female writing is a product of choice, of agency, rather than solely a reaction to victimization" (2010, 64). In other words, I see the novel participating in a tradition of feminist resistance in literature that also taps into the potential (albeit sometimes unrealized) that speculative fiction has to interrogate and challenge normative ideologies and practice. That is not to say that Butler s Afrofuturistic vampires are not enchanted or enchanting; however, they break from many of the traditional or conventionally popular tropes. These vampires are a biological species, not a supernatural force. Some of them are "daywalkers " or, in other words, can move about in the sun. They have preternatural strength but they are not invincible. They have seductive powers of persuasion that they largely use for good, not evil. They live in nonnormative groups with or among human beings and are (generally) not antagonistic to humans. Although not magical creatures, Butlers vampires are, nevertheless, enchanted because of the power that they wield, despite their various flaws and vulnerabilities and their ability to radically alter their surroundings and challenge normative notions of how to be..

### U/V

#### Voting neg supercharges aff: not doing what Black people want is more of a reason that Afro-futurism is a valid method.