

often supported the status quo, reaffirming certain conservative notions of the period—a balancing act that perhaps facilitated its continued popularity with audiences. A key theme across the book is the way in which Serling was forced to walk a fine line between his creative vision and the commercial imperatives of network television, often railing against the advertisers while simultaneously being required to promote their products. In this, Grant offers an insightful examination of the complexities of producing speculative fiction for television and shows how Serling had to negotiate his own middle ground between light and shadow.

The book is enriched by a vast amount of production detail that firmly grounds the discussion within the show's production history. Grant's analysis is rich and convincing, and one of the strengths of this book across all the chapters is his ability to analyze multiple episodes in depth but without sacrificing the breadth of the series. Each chapter covers a great deal of ground and one comes away from the book with a clear sense of the richness, diversity, and complexity of the show, as well as of some of its inherent contradictions. Notably for the MILESTONE series, the book conveys how and why *The Twilight Zone* remains a landmark series for the science-fiction and television fan and scholar. As such the book provides an excellent overview of *The Twilight Zone* and its place in television past and present.—**Stacey Abbott, University of Roehampton**

From Afrofuturism to afrofuturism. Isiah Lavender III. *Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of a Movement*. Ohio State UP, NEW SUNS: RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN THE SPECULATIVE, 2019. xi+230 pp. \$29.95 pbk.

Afrofuturism is to sf studies today what cyberpunk and feminist sf were to the field in the 1990s and early 2000s, a period in which the English departments which many in the field called home had finally begun to embrace sf studies and the field subsequently flourished through critical works that engaged feminism, queer studies, postmodernism, posthumanism, and the growing excitement of the digital. While literary and cultural studies scholars, especially in American Studies, were turning to multicultural, ethnic, and Black literature in significant numbers, however, sf studies remained pretty firmly white in its focus. Indeed, the mainstream of the genre we study had yet to embrace any significant number of writers of color. Though the occasional luminary of Black sf—such as Octavia E. Butler, Samuel R. Delany, and Nalo Hopkinson—was regularly recognized as among “the greats,” they were rarely privileged with space in critical venues (*Science Fiction Studies*, always a leader in the field, did publish several articles on writers of color throughout the 1990s and 2000s). Carl Freedman's inclusion of Delany's *Stars in My Pockets Like Grains of Sand* (1984) in his groundbreaking Marxist study of sf, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (2000), was the first time a major work of sf scholarship paid any such attention to Black sf.

In the following years, works such as Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James's *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2003), De Witt

Douglas Kilgore's *Astrofuturism* (2003), Patricia Kerslake's *Empire and Science Fiction* (2007), Adilifu Nama's *Black Space* (2008), John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008), and the occasional edited collection began to shape more nuanced conversations about race in sf. The efforts of scholars were paired with the efforts of authors and anthologizers such as Sheree Renée Thomas, who put together *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* in 2001 and a sequel in 2005. The snowballing of work on race in science fiction exploded in the last ten years, thanks in large part to new cohorts of Black scholars and scholars of color entering the professoriate in larger numbers after decades of (still ongoing) struggles against inequality in the academy.

Enter Isaiah Lavender III, a scholar whose first monograph, *Race in American Science Fiction* (2011), defined a generation of scholarship on race in sf. Lavender's book offered readings of sf by white and Black writers alike to look at the construction of race across the long history of the genre, identifying how race became a useful metaphor for (often white) writers to explore social and racial difference, usually without the baggage of American racial history (e.g., casting aliens/AI as racialized others). Race, in Lavender's first book, was largely defined as a Black and white issue in part because he drew on his background as an African Americanist, but also because the history of white racial supremacy in the US has so thoroughly defined "race" as a category of difference that the oppression of Blackness became mimetic in the othering practices of American sf. Despite its vague title, Lavender's *Race in American Science Fiction* was really about Blackness and the othering capacities of its metaphorization in American sf, and the book acknowledges this through its emphasis on reading the "blackground" of the genre.

Before Lavender's book, studies in this area had tended to focus broadly on "race" in sf generally as a marker of difference, but scholarship took a turn toward the more particular in the years following Lavender's intervention—one with which we are still reckoning as the culture of sf and fantasy also embraces greater levels of cultural specificity in writing and publishing through movements such as Afrofuturism, Latinxfuturism, Indigenous Futurism, Silkpunk, and more. Scholarship has begun to recover racial narratives long ignored, as may be seen in the work of scholars such as Grace Dillon, Mark Jerng, Aimee Bhang, Ytasha Womack, Taryne Taylor, André Carrington, Cathryn Merla-Watson, Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, and many others. Lavender has continued to contribute to and shape these conversations, in the form of edited collections and journal special issues and in the increasing cultural and scholarly attention to Afrofuturism.

Lavender's second monograph, *Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of a Movement*, is an ode to Afrofuturism's development as a topic of scholarly inquiry, a celebration of the movement's literary background and political investment in the liberation of Blackness and Black bodies, and an acknowledgment of the necessity of such an artistic movement in an era of heightened racial injustice and inequality. Lavender builds on his work on

“race” and its always fraught construction of Blackness within the context of American sf, focusing on Afrofuturism as a particular mode of expression. Lavender traces this mode of expression, this way of thinking Black futurity in times of Blackness’s oppression—which is, well, all of colonial history—from the beginnings of the slave trade in the Americas to the Black Arts movement of the 1970s. *Afrofuturism Rising*, then, is less a particularized study of sf than a wide-ranging investigation of how a science-fictional and utopian sentiment—the futurity inherent in the Black struggle for liberation—has developed over hundreds of years, occasionally intersecting with the history of the genre we call sf, but not beholden to the strict market and audience pressures that canonize the boundaries of genre.

Critical to Lavender’s project are (1) the affective dimensions of Black hope, of the longing and desire for freedom, and (2) the framing of “future” and futurity as a temporally grounded reading practice (as opposed to, but necessarily moving toward, a time-to-come) used by subjugated folks as an “imaginative apparatus of subject-making” (4). With this in mind, Lavender is able to read Afrofuturism not as a specific historical movement that arose, say, in the last two decades as a particular response to post-Civil Rights twenty-first-century social justice movements against racist neoliberal regimes, but rather as a transhistorical mode of thinking Blackness and futurity together. Hence both Lavender’s promise of a literary prehistory of a movement and his insistence on using the term “afrofuturism” in distinction to the reified genre-market vision of “Afrofuturism.” This runs somewhat counter to the recent historical turn pushed by John Rieder and others (myself included), but is a nonetheless welcome approach to afrofuturism as a mode of thinking—and also of reading—which opens the field to broader conversations within literary and cultural studies.

Lavender’s new monograph is bifurcated, approaching afrofuturism, African American literary history, and Black liberation struggles in two distinct methodological ways. His thesis across the book’s six chapters is threefold: that afrofuturism begins with the enslavement of Africans (thus making it obviously different from the more recently coined term Africanfuturism; that the canonical texts of African American literature are quintessentially afrofuturist in their attempt to deal with the “alien” subjectivity of Black folks imposed on them by the history and legacy of enslavement and racialization; and that afrofuturism is a fundamentally metaphorical approach to both reading and representing the word, thus speculative at base and capaciously transhistorical.

The first part of *Afrofuturism Rising* includes three chapters that provide a sweeping look at Black life and literature in the US from 1619 (the arrival of enslaved Africans in Virginia) to 1903 (the publication of Pauline Hopkins’s *Of One Blood*). The approach here is akin to Lavender’s earlier book: a reading across texts that pinpoints a particular strategy for afrofuturist meaning making. Here Lavender takes texts as disparate as novels, rebellions, and enslaved persons’ subversive communicative strategies to build a vibrant and refreshingly new canon of futurist tools. The second part of *Afrofuturism*

Rising approaches the Black literary canon of the twentieth century and demonstrates how major texts such as like Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), and John A. Williams's *Captain Blackman* (1972), each a product of distinct African American literary-political formations, are in their own rights afrofuturist texts.

The real genius of *Afrofuturism Rising* lies in this recovery work that builds connections among Black texts, times, and theories—connections through which Lavender is able to convincingly cast social movements and historical phenomena as afrofuturist texts. Take, for example, the case of Black spirituals, which Lavender argues are a key example of an afrofuturist “freedom technology”: the network of black consciousness. As Lavender puts it, “Enslavement, forced migration, oppression, and, ultimately, commodification define the history of African people in the New World, making black subjectivity inhuman if not mechanical or alien [a point made in his first book]. But afrofuturism reclaims raced space and time” (36). Enslaved persons’ survival relied on hope and subsistence practices, including the coded use of language and communication. Among these subsistence practices was the encoding of messages about how to get free in spirituals: “Singing together, to alleviate the backbreaking drudgery of [slave labor] ... provided an emotional escape from slavery’s material and social conditions, transporting slaves to a timeless place each workday” (38). This network of Black consciousness circulates further in the consciousnesses of Black folks in the eras of Old and New Jim Crow, for whom telling these stories gives them their own meanings and connections with earlier generations—speculative meanings that, like the speculations of sf, are never really about the imagined past or future, but always about the present.

Alongside unconventional texts such as the (history of) Black spirituals and Black resistance movements, Lavender is also careful to draw on the early canon of African American literature, drawing out the latent afrofuturism of the most widely taught and studied texts, whether Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* (1789) or Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood*, as well as on more obscure moments in the literary canon, such as the life and words of abolitionist and almanac-writer Benjamin Banneker. Each of the three chapters in part one concludes with a survey of literary texts that tie together Lavender's investment as a literary scholar with his larger project to recover a prehistory of afrofuturism in the varied cultural practices of Black Americans. The focus turns more fully to literature in the final three chapters of the book.

Section two of *Afrofuturism Rising* further lays the groundwork for the “literary prehistory” of the contemporary Afrofuturist movement by drawing clear connections between African American literature generally and the afrofuturist practices that have sustained Black life in the Americas. Of course, some of this work has already begun: think, for example, of the many essays on Octavia Butler that have appeared in non-sf literary studies journals, as Black sf authors have become increasingly central to African American literary

studies and pedagogy today. Lavender, however, brings together a novel set of texts that do not (especially in the case of Hurston and Wright) appear to be science-fictional in any obvious sense and clearly argues an against-the-grain reading of African American literary history (and literature itself) that reimagines the relationships among mimesis, speculation, futurity, and the political life of texts that extend beyond themselves (something Seo-Young Chu was asking us to take seriously more than ten years ago).

Section two's focus on literature does to some extent seem imbalanced compared to the first part's stunning display of interconnections among literary and non-literary texts. Given just how diverse and well-documented the Black resistance movements of the twentieth century are, Lavender has wisely chosen not to bite off more than any one book can chew—and he acknowledges as much in the introduction. Instead he sets a precedent by studying afrofuturism as a way of reading Black history and literature. He demonstrates his reading practice first as a cultural historian making meaning for Black life in periods when African American literary production was limited as a field of written texts by slavery and Jim Crow. Black creators instead produced other kinds of texts that literary scholars have turned to in recent decades, whether those were written in music or blood or abolitionist dreaming. And second, he demonstrates that the very creation of “African American literature” as a concept in the twentieth century, after Kenneth W. Warren's 2011 postmortem *What Was African American Literature?*, was always in the process of creating Black meaning, negotiating raced space and time, and those deeply embedded in afrofuturist practices. After all, as a speculation on what it means to be Black in an America of double consciousnesses and machine-/alien-like objectifications of the racialized other, how can African American literature not be deeply speculative? With this new book, Lavender shows us a path forward in our efforts to better understand the increasingly obvious but always already science-fictional world we inhabit.—Sean Guynes, Michigan State University.

Romancing Queer Theology and Reproductive Diversity. Regina Yung Lee and Una McCormack, eds. *Biology and Manners: Essays on the Worlds and Works of Lois McMaster Bujold*. Liverpool UP, 2020. 308 pp. \$105.47 hc.

Known for her humor, plot twists, and well-developed, engagingly imperfect characters, award-winning sf and fantasy writer Lois McMaster Bujold has been a fan favorite for thirty-five years, earning seven Hugos, three Nebulas, and the 2020 SFWA Grand Master's Award. Most of her work is set in three different universes: the VORKOSIGAN sf saga (1986-2018), the CHALION fantasy series (2001-2005), and the SHARING KNIFE romance/fantasy series (2006-2019). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, she has also gained considerable critical attention for the quality and complexity of her work. Critical essay collections include Janet Brennan Croft's anthology, *Lois McMaster Bujold: Essays on a Modern Master of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (2013) and Edward James's *Lois McMaster Bujold* (2015). Now building on earlier scholarship and in response to *Biology and Manners: The Worlds of*