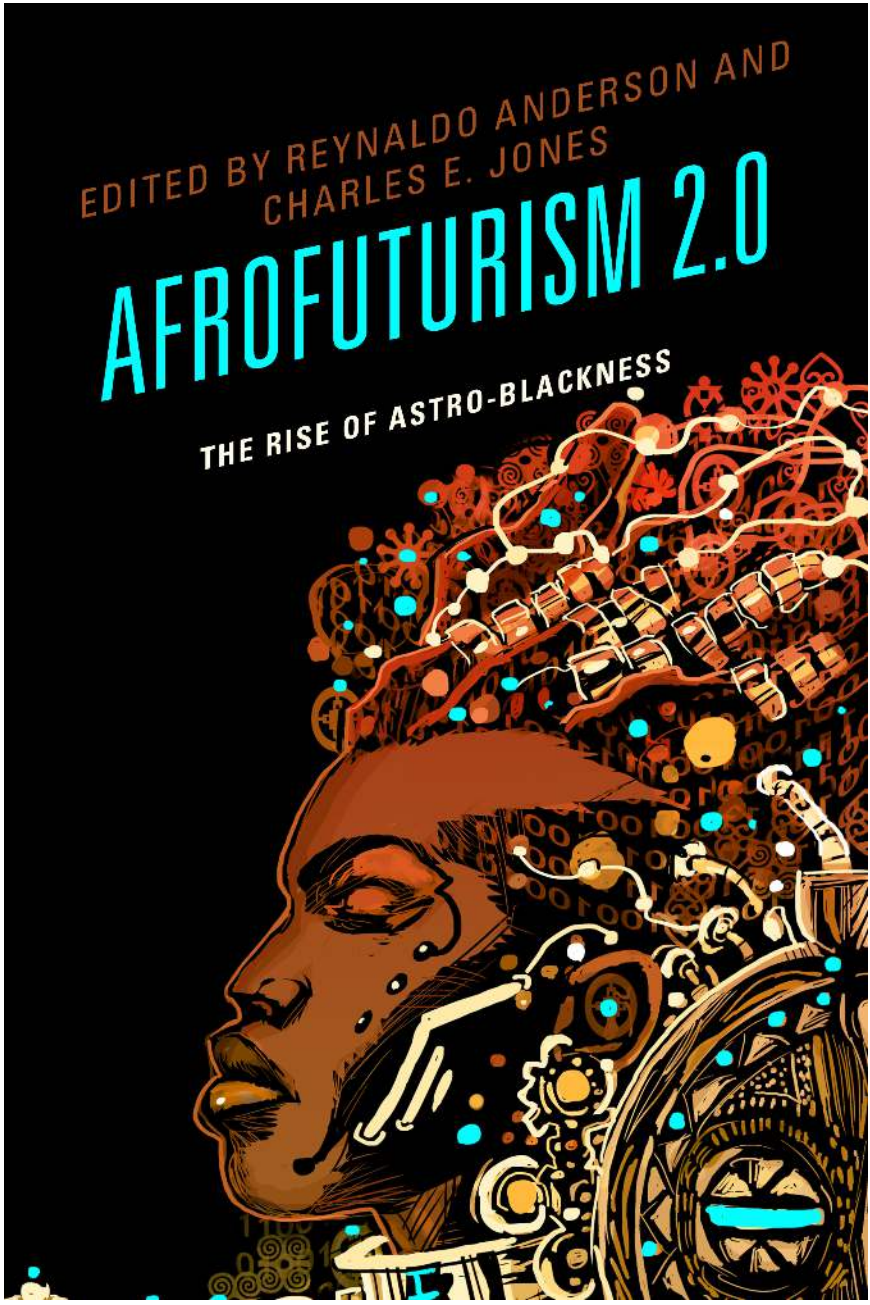
EDITED BY REYNALDO ANDERSON AND CHARLES E. JONES
AFROFUTURISM 2.0
THE RISE OF ASTRO-BLACKNESS

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Edited by Reynaldo Anderson and
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Introduction

The Rise of Astro-Blackness

Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones

Since the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, following 9/11 and the crash of the 90s digital boom, the World Wide Web has transitioned significantly. From a 1.0 static read only search for content web-based driven usage, in the middle of its first decade it began to evolve into a social media driven environment characterized by entities such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google, and Wikipedia (Berners-Lee, Hendler, and Lassila 2001). Correspondingly, the 1.0 era of the web was delineated as a race and gender neutral zone with the utopian potential to transform society. Alondra Nelson noted: "race and gender distinctions would be eliminated with technology was perhaps the founding fiction of the digital age." However, scholars like Alondra Nelson (2002), Alex Weheliye (2002), Kali Tal (1996), Anna Everett (2002), Ron Eglash (2002), and others pointed out the inequities inherent in what was then referred to as the digital divide, with regard to the conventional narrative that race was a liability in the new century.

The purpose of this book is to identify the applicability of contemporary expressions of Afrofuturism to the field of Africana Studies, to connect these phenomena to other fields of academic inquiry, and to expand it to include what we refer to as Astro-Blackness. Astro-Blackness is an Afrofuturistic concept in which a person's black state of consciousness, released from the confining and crippling slave or colonial mentality, becomes aware of the multitude and varied possibilities and probabilities within the universe (Rollins 2015, 1). More precisely, Astro-Blackness represents the emergence of a black identity framework within emerging global technocultural assemblages, migration, human reproduction, algorithms, digital networks, soft-

ware platforms, bio-technical augmentation and are constitutive of racialized identities that are increasingly materialized vis-à-vis contemporary technological advances or "technogenesis, the idea that humans and technics have co-evolved together" (Hayles 2012). Furthermore, this notion of Astro-Blackness suggests a shift from the modern era or nation-state bound analog notion of blackness transitioning through a digitized era toward and in tension with post-digital perspectives as a global response to the planetary and near planetary challenges facing black life in the early twenty-first century. What is presently called Afrofuturism was originally a techno-cultural perspective accompanying engagement in a form of cultural production, originating in practices of black urban dwellers in North America after World War II and popular examples emerged in the works of Jazz musician Sun Ra and artists of the Black Arts Movement like Ishmael Reed or Amiri Baraka (Anderson and Jennings 2014).

Although the practices that form the black artistic matrix and practice of what we call Afrofuturism can be traced back over 100 years; its current trajectory can be connected to literary engagement between writers Greg Tate and Mark Sinker in 1992 surrounding the relationship between science fiction and Black music. The recently popularized term "Afrofuturism" was coined in the early 1990s by writers like Mark Dery in an interview, with Samuel Delaney, Greg Tate and Tricia Rose and defines it as "Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth-century techno-culture—and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future—might, for want of a better term, be called Afrofuturism" (Dery 1994, 180). In eighties and nineties England, the Black Audio Film Collective with members like John Akomfrah, and in Germany, organizations like AFROTAK also represented early impulses of late twentieth century Afrofuturism. However, their early articulation of the phenomenon was limited largely to music, art, the digital divide, the public sphere and speculative literature. Kali Tal articulated the notion of a race-less cyberspace vis-a-vis an Afrodiasporic culture analyis of W. E. B. Du Bois's notion of "Double Consciousness" as a sophisticated cyber culture critique on the tension between identity, multiplicity and postmodernity (1996). Alondra Nelson noted: "Afrofuturism can be broadly defined as 'African American voices with other stories to tell about culture, technology and things to come.'" (Nelson 2002, 9). More recently, Kodwo Eshun asserts: "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" (2007).

An important distinction between concepts such as futurism and Afrofuturism is that the former began as an avant-garde movement among European intellectuals and artists, and during and after WWII in the ideas and work of Isaac Asimov, Claude Shannon, Philip K. Dick, Bertrand de Jouvenel, The Rand Corporation and others; leading to a current situation where "The powerful employ futurists and draw power from the futures they endorse" (Eshun 2007, 289), whereas the latter, Afrofuturism, has its contemporary beginnings in the North American Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s among various literary figures, modern jazz musicians, R&B and pioneering hip hop performers. Recently, cultural critics like Martine Syms (2014) have asserted in "The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto" that Afrofuturism focuses too much on unexamined tropes, references to Egyptology, figures in popular culture, and needs to develop a new focus on black humanity and a critique on "true, vernacular reality." This is not a new argument as scholars like Ron Eglash (2002) previously made the case that Afrofuturists were ignoring the scientific sphere. Furthermore, critics like Tegan Bristow have asserted that "Afrofuturism has nothing to do with Africa, and everything to do with cyber-culture in the West". This assertion is misplaced due to the fact that 1) Africa and its diaspora are connected via cyber-culture and have exchanged ideas, art, politics and more recently remittances since the nineteenth century; and 2) the African diaspora has been institutionally designated the sixth zone of the African Union and similar to early developments of Pan Africanism starting in the African Diaspora, Afrofuturism is now a Pan African project. Moreover, this concern may reflect more of a Post-Cold War/ Post-Apartheid existential crisis of some White South Africans and some of their former "clients" living in the midst of a predominantly Black African society than the "Africanity" of an emerging global Afrofuturism. Therefore, contemporary twenty-first century Afrofuturism, or what is now called Afrofuturism 2.0, a term initially discussed at the Alien Bodies conference at Emory University in 2013, is moving in the direction of a more applied, theoretical, critical, and transdisciplinary approach in regards to the future of African peoples.

AFROFUTURISM 2.0

A goal of this volume is to build upon the previous definition and identify the twenty-first century contemporary expressions of Afrofuturism emerging in the areas of metaphysics, speculative philosophy, religion, visual studies, performance, art, and philosophy of science or technology that are described as "2.0," in response to the emergence of social media and other technological advances since the middle of the last decade. Whereas Afrofuturism was primarily concerned with twentieth century techno-culture, the digital divide,

technology, music and literature in the West; Afrofuturism 2.0 is the early twenty-first century technogenesis of Black identity reflecting counter histories, hacking and or appropriating the influence of network software, database logic, cultural analytics, deep remixabililty, neurosciences, enhancement and augmentation, gender fluidity, posthuman possibility, the speculative sphere, with transdisciplinary applications and has grown into an important Diasporic techno-cultural "Pan-African" movement (Samatar 2015). Moreover, within this Pan-African Afrofuturist movement there will be regional differences such as, and not limited to, Caribbean Futurism, African Futurism and Black futurism. Contemporary Afrofuturism 2.0 is now characterized by five dimensions, to include: metaphysics; aesthetics; theoretical and applied science; social sciences; and programmatic spaces. The first Afrofuturist dimension of metaphysics includes and engages ontology or the meaning of existence, relations between the ontological and epistemological or the truth-functional aspects of knowledge, cosmogony or origin of the universe, cosmology or structure of the universe, an example of this are naturalistic Afro-Diaspora traditions, Rational Panpsychism (or Animism) and indigenous African spiritual practices such as Okuyi or Dogon cosmology in West Africa and or Ifa in Nigeria to name a few; and the works of W. E. B. Du Bois, John Mbiti, Kamau Brathwaite, Kwasi Wiredu, Yvonne P. Chireau, Dwight Hopkins, and Albert Raboteau represent some of the scholars within this dimension. The second Afrofuturist dimension of aesthetics includes anthropomorphic art, music, literature, and performance; examples in this sphere include the performers or artists like Sylvia Wynter, Sanford Biggers, Sun Ra, Henry Dumas, John Akomfrah, Afrika Bambatta, Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson, Jimi Hendrix, Janelle Monae and others. The third dimension of Afrofuturism is in the areas of theoretical and applied science; for example, archaeology, math, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy; and applied areas such as computer science, architecture, engineering, medicine, and agriculture"; the creations of architect Kiluanji Kia Henda, the work of ethno-astronomer Jarita Holbrook or physicist James Gates and his work with West African Adinkra Symbols, and Ron Eglash and his work in ethno-mathematics and African fractals is instructive in this area. A fourth dimension of Afrofuturism is in the social science disciplines to include: sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, history, and are represented by scholars such as Kwame Nkrumah, Molefe Asante, James Stewart, Dorothy Roberts, C.T. Keto, Marimba Ani, Anna Everett, Alex Weheliye, Kali Tal and others. A fifth and final dimension of Afrofuturism is in the programmatic arena such as exhibitions, community organizations, online forums, and specialized salons or labs; the community work of Philadelphia Afrofuturist Affair founder Rasheedah Phillips along with the recently organized Afrofutures_UK (2015) salon organized at Mad Labs in Manchester, England, the Afrofuture festival (2015) organized by WORM in

Rotterdam, Netherlands, and the Afrofuturist series (2015) organized by The Goethe Institute in Accra, Ghana, Johannesburg, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya are especially noteworthy in this area.

SCHOLARSHIP

There have been several books or journals dedicated to the topic of Afrofuturism; however, most of the contributions have been outside of the Africana Studies discipline. First, one of the most prominent books on the topic was written by Kodwo Eshun in 1998, and the most prominent among journals on Afrofuturism (self-titled *Afrofuturism*) was published by *Social Text* and edited by Alondra Nelson in 2002. Eshun's book, *More Brilliant Than the Sun: Adventures In Sonic Fiction*, developed in the late 90s, was the first book-length treatment on the topic of Afrofuturism. However, its focus on music and visual culture excluded other technocultural philosophical dimensions of Afrofuturism.

Alondra Nelson's special issue on Afrofuturism that was published in the journal *Social Text* began to expand on previous work done by Eshun and others. However, its primary focus was in the technocultural aspects of Afrofuturism, in light of issues and concepts such as the digital divide, late twentieth century online black activism, and speculative fiction, sound, music, or visual art. However, when Alex Weheliye authored the book, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (2005), it was awarded The Modern Language Association's William Sanders Scarborough Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Study of Black American Literature or Culture. This work became among the first published book length treatments of work done on Afrofuturist-related work in an Africana Studies department. Finally, Marlene Barr's *Afrofuture Females: Black Writers Chart Science Fiction's Newest New-Wave Trajectory* (2008), Sandra Jackson and Julie Moody- Freeman's *The Black Imagination: Science Fiction, Futurism and The Speculative* (2011), and more recently Ytasha Womack's popular representation of the concept in her book *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture* (2013) and Rasheedah Phillip's book *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory and Practice Vol. 1* (2015) have continued to introduce the concept to the broader public.

SYMPOSIA

The last several years have seen an explosion of interest in the techno-culture sphere and Afrofuturism within the Africana Studies field. In the United States, one of the first important meetings, the eBlack Studies conference, emerged out the initiative sponsored by the National Council for Black Stud-

ies with support from the Ford Foundation. The workshop was hosted in July 24–27, 2008, by the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Other black studies departments hosted or co-hosted conferences, such as: the AfroGEEKS conference (2005) at the University of California Santa Barbara; "Double-Consciousness and the Digital Individual: Reflections on Black Thought 2.0" (2012) at Duke University; "Alien Bodies: Race, Space, and Sex in the African Diaspora Logo" (2013) at Emory University; Duke University's Race in Space conference (2014); the Black Studies in the Digital Age seminar at Northwestern University; "Afrofuturism in Black Theology" (2014) at Vanderbilt University; and the AstroBlackness conferences at Loyola-Marymount University (2014–15).

These are just a few of the symposiums or conferences the Africana Studies field has organized recently to study the growing Afrofuturism movement. However, in the interest of brevity, it is important to note and articulate previous Africana formations around the concept of Afrofuturism.

AFRICANA STUDIES AND TECHNOLOGY

During the discipline's formative stage (1968–1972), minimal attention was devoted to the relationship between scientific and technological issues and Africana Studies. By and large, black studies practically made only a passing reference to the role of science and technology in the scholarly investigation of people of African descent. However, in 1970, a year before Sun Ra's historic lecture series "The Black Man in The Cosmos" at the University of California Berkley, Nathan Hare, chair of the Black Studies department at San Francisco State University introduced a "Black Science" course that would contrast Ra's metaphysical approach and introduce science in relation to the Black studies curriculum.

For instance, in a discussion of the nation's first comprehensive black studies curriculum, Nathan Hare, the founding chair of the Department of Black Studies at San Francisco State University, sole mention of the topic was a black science course identified as an example of the pragmatic phase of the curriculum which consisted of courses producing socio-economic skills" (Hare 1970). The three credit hours course "Black Science" introduced students to "scientific development stressing the contributions of black scientists. Emphasis on the application of fundamental concepts and methods of science to the environment of black Americans" (Hare 1970).

The subsequent, albeit, limited scholarship on the discipline's scientific and technological dimension has tended to focus on curricular (Stewart 1976; Little, Leonard, and Crosby 1980; King 1992; Stewart 2004), pedagogical (Hendrix, Bracy, and Davis 1985; Herron 1984; Stewart 1985; 2003), re-

search (Hendrix, Bracy, Davis, and Herron 1984; Stewart 2004; Conyers and McKnight 2005), and community empowerment (Anderson 1974; Stewart 1976; Johnson 1980; Jenkins and Om-Ra Seti 1997; Alkalimat 2001; Anderson and Stewart 2007, 277–303) issues.

James Stewart, the long-time black studies scholar and arguably the discipline's leading authority on the integration of science and technology in Africana Studies, has produced an impressive body of work (1976; 1985; 1988; 2003; 2004; Anderson and Stewart 2007, 277–303) spanning over thirty years (1976–2007) which proves useful in elucidating the aforementioned extant literature.

In his initial 1976 essay appearing in *Black Books Bulletin*, Stewart identified several critical future developments in black studies among which were scientific and technological concerns. Stewart's prescient essay addressed several of the salient themes which would become the focus of the subsequent scholarship on the integration of scientific and technological issues into the discipline of black studies. He contended that "the integration of instructive and research applications using modern technology is critical to the amelioration of adverse material conditions facing Black people" (1976, 24). His contention raised critical instructional, research, and liberational implications for the discipline that undergirded its future attention to scientific and technological concerns.

The discipline's attention to the importance of the relationship between black studies and scientific and technological issues underscored in Stewart's provocative essay was evident in the early effort of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) to develop a standardized curriculum for the discipline. In 1980, the organization's curriculum committee under the leadership of William Little included science and technology among the eight subfields of its recommended curriculum model (Little, Leonard, and Crosby 1980).

Specifically, the committee's contention was that the science and technological development subfield "examines and analyzes the development of mathematics, metallurgy and mineralogy, architecture, agronomy, etc. This area also examines the relationship of science and the application of technology in various African societies (e.g.) medicine, agriculture, architecture, education, and nutrition" (1980, 16). The curricular focus was further echoed by William H. King, the second president of NCBS. King proposed a transdisciplinary approach to explore several facets of science and technology from an Afrocentric perspective wherein the world view, normative assumptions, and frames of reference grow out of the experiences and folk wisdom of black people (1992, 25). King proclaimed that "Black Studies can play a most important role in examining the 'values and expectations' that guide science" (1992, 30).

In 2004, Stewart revisited the curricular inclusion of science and technology in Africana Studies when he proposed "a strategy to integrate the study

of science and technology into Black/Africana studies and instruction" (Stewart 2004, 277). Stewart introduced a framework for developing relevant instructional and research activities," which consists of a "synthesis of Black/Africana Studies and Science, Technology and Society (STS) perspectives" (Stewart 2004, 277).

In this landmark essay, Stewart offered several "examples of curricular strategies designed to familiarize students with the interface between black/Africana studies and STS" (2004, 294). Examples of the curricular treatments included a comparison of ancient and/or pre-industrial African and "modern" western scientific/technological approaches; impacts of technological innovations on the lives of African Americans; medical research, healthcare policy, and quality of life of African Americans; and environmental degradation/enhancement and the quality of life of African Americans (Stewart 2004, 297–302).

Notwithstanding the efforts of NCBS and the exhortation of King (1992) and Stewart (1976; 2004), the discipline has failed to make significant inroads in incorporating scientific and technological perspectives in the curriculum of black studies academic units. Black science courses still remain a rarity in the discipline and more importantly minimal attention has been devoted to the systematic integration of science and technology in the educational orientations of black studies programs. Fortunately, the discipline has made considerable more pedagogical progress with respect to the application of scientific and technological innovations.

Furthermore, King highlighted the pedagogical applications of technological innovations, such as the computer, as a promising alternative mode of instruction in the discipline. Stewart insightfully observed that the mode of instruction "would emphasize to students that modern technological developments and concerns of black people were interwoven" (Stewart 1975, 24). He proposed that black studies scholars collaborate with those with technical expertise to address the myriad problems plaguing the black community. Finally, Stewart insightfully observed: "An expected early development will be the use of modern technology to bring Black Studies to the black community at large" (Stewart 1975, 24). He insightfully observed that the mode of instruction "would emphasize to students that modern technological developments and concerns of Black people were interwoven" (Stewart 1975, 24). Stewart's computer software package was entitled *Liberation 2000? The Black Experience in America* (Stewart 1985).

As principal investigator of a grant funded by the United States Department of Education that was designed to improve the quality of science and technology instruction for secondary urban minority students, Stewart introduces the concept of "Science, Technology and Society (STS) to enhance the instructional quality of science education" (Stewart 1988). Stewart continues his explorations of pedagogical technological application in the essay "Will

the Revolution Be Digitized?: Using Digitized Resources in Undergraduate Africana Studies Courses"—in which he identifies web-based resources and Internet-based documents for use in Africana Studies coursework (Stewart 2003).

In his seminal essay which addresses both scientific and technological curriculum and application in Africana Studies, Stewart "proposes a strategy to integrate the study of science and technology into Black/Africana studies and instruction" (Stewart 2004, 277). He maintains: "There can be little doubt that the serious scrutiny of science and technology is a legitimate and logical extension of the quest by Black/Africana Studies scholar/activists to fashion a body of knowledge that can provide a foundation for developing a viable liberation strategy" (Stewart 2004, 277).

His landmark essay, *A Synthesis of Black/Africana Studies and Sciences, Technology and Society (STS) Perspectives,* describes his proposed framework for developing relevant instructional and research activities (Stewart 2004, 277). Finally Stewart's most recent contribution to this topic is the inclusion of a chapter devoted to science and technology in *Introduction to African American Studies: Transdisciplinary Approaches and Implications* (Anderson and Stewart 2007, 277–303). A chapter entitled "Science, Technology, and the Future of African Americans" examines a host of critical scientific and technological issues impacting the material conditions of African Americans including integrating science and technology studies in Africana Studies, the "Digital Divide," future studies, the scientific and technological oppression of people of African descent, and liberational uses of science and technology (Anderson and Stewart 2007, 277–303).

Many of the essays of this volume grew out the relationships formed at Astroblackness conferences and personal relationships developed within Africana Studies and what the visual artist John Jennings refers to as the Black Speculative Art Movement. Furthermore, the writers were interested in continuing the debate about the transition of Afrofuturism into other dimensions of interest or research and approach their themes from various theoretical or analytical perspectives.

Tiffany Barber explores Kenyan-born artist Wangechi Mutu's *Non je ne regrett rien* (2007) in the frame of Octavia Butler's part-science fiction, part-neo-slave narrative *Kindred* (1979), raising the question: what about black female subjectivity requires a futurist context? What are the agential possibilities for black female bodies historically represented as quintessentially other, abject, and alien? This chapter uses Dana's dismemberment in *Kindred* and Afrofuturist theorizations on blackness, technology, and female humanity to illustrate how Mutu's above mentioned collage enacts a strategy for deconstructing and reconstructing how difference becomes inscribed on black female bodies. As such, this chapter also examines how Mutu's technique of exquisite corpse—or subjecting the human body to grotesque juxta-

positions and distortions—operates as transgressive disfigurement, dismantling normative constructions of black female subjectivity and freedom and literally recrafting black female bodies and new futures.

In chapter 2, Nettrice Gaskins discusses Afrofuturism as Web 3.0: "Vernacular Cartography and Augmented Space." Furthermore, the chapter critiques the use of how geometric charts or maps, virtual and real-world geographic locations of avatars, or objects such as mobile smartphones reflect movement and migration, and how black/African artists share and exchange cultural data. These contemporary forms do not exhaust the possibilities of augmented space at the interaction of art, media, and vernacular cartography. Moreover, the chapter asks whether the traditional or ancient African forms become irrelevant and "invisible," or if artists end up creating new experiences in which the spatial and information layers are equally important. The chapter also explores the relationship between cultural data and information and how this might function differently in today's digital culture. Throughout the chapter, the term augmented (space or reality) is re-conceptualized as a concept, or a cultural and aesthetic practice rather than as new technology.

Ricardo Guthrie examines the confluence among Afrofuturism, the environment, and cyborg manifestations of twenty-first century cinema. In this chapter, two films offer compelling opportunities for utilizing Afrofuturist analytics to re-center the racial urban imaginary: In *DETROPIA*, filmmakers Ewing and Grady explore the devolution of Detroit from a thriving 1.8 million-person metropolis founded on a unionized auto industry and a thriving black professional class, to today's de-industrialized city of 700,000. *DETROPIA*'s dystopic present anticipates tomorrow's urban crises, while illuminating black change agents and environmentalists who envision a new city beyond existing racial paradigms. In *I-Robot*, the character Dell Spooner (Will Smith) represents a type of Afro-Pessimist whose cynicism gradually reflects a turn towards Afrofuturism's merger of black cultural ethos and commitment to struggle. Correspondingly, this chapter examines racialized urban geographies and develops Afrofuturist analysis to explain conflicted racial imaginaries in dystopic Detroit and in a seemingly utopian Chicago of 2035.

In chapter 4, tobias c. van Veen takes up Paul Gilroy's call to develop an adequate and conceptual language for Afrofuturism by undertaking a "speculative exegesis" of Mark Sinker's early meditations on black Atlantic arts and music in The Wire. By focusing on what Public Enemy calls "Armageddon been in effect," and by reading their mediatised performances as articulating Sinker's concept of Alien Nation, van Veen explicates how both concepts address the temporal rupture of the Middle Passage and its "obliteration of a normalized past." Germane to Africology and Africanist Studies, van Veen argues that both Afrofuturism and Afrocentrism are differentiated, as well as constitutively entwined, by how they utilise historical revisionism—

or what Kodwo Eshun calls their "chronopolitics"—to address the "void of origin." Emphasising how Afrofuturism focuses on open-ended temporalities rather than foreclosed pasts, van Veen turns to the transgressive music and poetry of Sun Ra, Jimi Hendrix, John Coltrane, and Gil Scott-Heron to develop a typology of Afrofuturist becomings, arguing for the ontological and political force of radical black performance in overcoming "slavery's dehumanization program."

In chapter 5, Grace Gipson explores the relationship between female android character Cindi Mayweather (aka Janelle Monáe) and her encounter with a musical market world filled with severe social stratification. Since 2007, Monáe has reenergized the Afrofuturism movement with her epic vocals, immaculate clothing style, and magical lyrics. Gipson asserts, much like her Afrofuturistic predecessors Sun Ra and George Clinton, Monáe presents a persona that can be likened to a polyvalent afrofuturistic aesthetic that embodies the desires of black feminism mixed with a futuristic sonic groove. This chapter shows how Monae strategically mixes space with racial and sexual politics, black feminism, historical narratives, and class conflicts all in a "radical visionary Afrofuturistic" perspective.

Ken McLeod explores the impact of hip hop icon Tupac Shakur in relation to technology, arguing that hip hop often refutes notions of "real time." Focusing on Tupac and drawing on concepts from Auslander, Baudrillard, Eshun, Hayles, and Weheliye, among others, this chapter analyzes the place of time-travel and immortality in Afrofuturist music. Furthermore, McLeod asserts that, rather than signaling a loss of human agency, post-human, cyborg, and/or holographic performances reinforce a collective human consciousness and therefore underline Afrofuturist ideals surrounding utopian migration and freedom.

In chapter 7, Andrew Rollins explores how Afrofuturism intersects with the historical mission of the black church in America. Although intellectuals, artists, and scholars in a broad range of fields have already generated creative or scholarly production on Afrofuturism, the black church has been silent on the subject. Rollins argues the black church is at a crossroads in its development in American society and must adapt to the challenges of the current age to remain relevant. Rollins asserts for the black church to serve the "present age" it must successfully transition, and to fulfill its calling, it must incorporate an Afrofuturist view as a guide for praxis in contemporary postmodern society.

Lonny Avi Brooks critiques his personal experience as a minority forecaster conducting ethnographies of new media and futurist think tanks in Silicon Valley from 1998 to 2011. Based on field research, Brooks developed a set of Foresight Frames. First, examining how future texts become normalized sets of expectations. Brooks collected sets of future visions produced at these elite sites in the form of future scenarios, visual trend maps,

and interviews of forecasters. Second, these contemporary future visions project racial, segregated, and elite future landscapes by reinforcing notions of racial segregation and discrimination. Therefore, these Foresight processes avoid issues of latent racism that pervade the history of Futures studies, its assumptions, and future scenarios.

In chapter 9, David DeIuliis and Jeff Lohr propose communicology as a framework for understanding Afrofuturism as speculative discourse. Communicology's method of explicating "human consciousness and behavioral embodiment as discourse within global culture" allows for the study of Afrofuturism as not only "the speculative fiction of the African diaspora," but also the diasporic communication of the experience of blackness. The chapter initially frames the intellectual origins of communicology as a way to engage Afrofuturist discourse. Second, it reviews the recent literature on Afrofuturism as a critical method and liberating hermeneutic that, with communicology as a theoretical and methodological framework, can rewrite the narrative of human experience through mainstream academic discourse.

In chapter 10, Esther Jones utilizes an Africana Womanist approach to examine how black women's science fiction contributes to medical humanities discourse, particularly as it relates to the practice of empathy in medicine. Jones argues that black women's science fiction enables us to analyze the shifts that may need to take place in order to transform the current uneven medical paradigm to establish a culture of health parity. Moreover, Jones argues that science fiction writings by Octavia Butler, Nalo Hopkinson, and Nnedi Okorafor enable people to examine how human beings may be able to communicate more ethically and empathetically across differences.

Finally, in chapter 11, scholar Quiana Whitted conducts an interview with prominent Nigerian-American author Nnedi Okorafor. Okorafor's approach to speculative fiction draws upon elements of fantasy, magic realism, hard science fiction, and dystopian horror. Okorafor values the notion of Afrofuturism as a way of being for the female protagonists of her novels. Okorafor is the first Nigerian American to win the World Fantasy Award for her critically acclaimed novel, *Who Fears Death* (2010). She also received the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa for the young adult novel, *Zahrah the Windseeker* (2005) and the Carl Brandon Society Parallax Award for best speculative fiction by a person of color for *The Shadow Speaker* (2007). In this interview, the writer and professor talks about the role of Afrofuturism in her work, including the cultural fusion of technology and magic.