



## **Frozen Journey: Science Fiction, Blacks, Race, and the Limits of Speculative Practice**

By **John Gordon Russell**

**Abstract:** This paper examines pre-Afrofuturistic representations of blacks in science fiction, who for much of the genre's history have been presented through the distorted prism of racial stereotypes. I argue that despite characterizations of the genre as progressively liberal, its engagement with issues of race and racism has largely been, like the larger society of which it is part, characterized by inconsistent periods of stasis and momentum, that are propelled or regressed by the preoccupations and racial sensibilities of individual authors, which in turn are informed by the zeitgeist of the times in which they write. When the genre has dealt with race and racism, it has often preferred to do so in the form of allegory and metaphor in which alien and robotic others substitute for real-world others. Moreover, despite evoking what many critics, writers and fans characterize as a lofty "sense-of-wonder" that promises to open the reader's mind to vast, uncharted imaginative ideoscapes, when it comes to race, the genre has traditionally been remarkably grounded, rearticulating rather than subverting tired tropes, its depiction of blacks and other people of color mired in predictable clichés, not sublime, paradigm shattering, visionary splendor. In the end, the treatment of race in science fiction has largely articulated an abstract, intellectual antiracism that does not necessarily apply to an authentic racial tolerance toward actual racial or ethnic groups, displaying an inability to write beyond the very intolerance it ostensibly critiques.

**Keywords:** science fiction, race, xenoface, blacks, Philip K. Dick, intellectual antiracism

Place there is none; we go backward and forward, and there is no place.

-St. Augustine

It's hilarious that in SFF [science fiction and fantasy] we're fighting over modern politics vs. 1950s politics. This has never been the literature of the future.

- N. K. Jemisin (Twitter, 5 Apr. 2015)

### **Before Afrofuturism: Science Fiction in Black and White**

Explorations of race in science fiction plot a trajectory not unlike the recursively knotty,

Laingian subjectivities that relentlessly coil, moebius-like, through many of the fictions of



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

Philip K. Dick, such as “Frozen Journey.”<sup>1</sup> This story’s cryonically suspended protagonist is doomed to roam interstellar space while endlessly reliving fragile, unreliable memories of his life over and over again in a defective computer-projected simulation. This scenario provides an apt metaphor of science fiction’s engagement with race, particularly its representation of blacks. For while genre writers and fans have often touted the genre as evoking a “sense of wonder” that promises readers it will explore vast, uncharted, transcendent, and awe-inspiring xenoscapes and ideoscapes (Knight 1967, Panshin and Panshin 1989)—to go where no one has gone before—and to invite a “sudden opening of a closed door in the reader’s mind” (Nicholls and Robu 2012), when it has come to the issue of race, it has tended to mire itself in all too familiar ground, rearticulating and recirculating rather than subverting tired racial tropes. The door it opens has led sadly—but perhaps not unexpectedly, considering the state of race in the United States—into an imagination-bereft cul de sac, sometimes despite the best intentions of its largely ostensibly progressive, intellectually liberal authors. The title of this essay suggests this contradictory confluence of stasis and momentum, progress and retreat that, I argue, has and continues to define the genre’s conflicted engagement with race and racism. Its much-touted sense of wonder,<sup>2</sup> for many black readers, has not infrequently given rise to a depressing sense of *déjà vu*, the genre proving itself more iterative than innovative in its representations of race, even when its practitioners attempt to stretch its boundaries.

Eric Lief Davin (2005) has argued that science fiction’s treatment of race has been remarkably progressive, a haven of liberalism and antiracism. However, in many ways representations of blacks in science fiction belie its self-professed image of forward-thinking, visionary speculation. Moreover, while the genre has adopted a provisionally liberal attitude toward race, its treatment of the subject has largely been characterized by what I call “intellectual antiracism,” an approach to racism that conceives of it as a thought experiment, an intellectual exercise that, when presented as allegory, allows it to be dealt with more comfortably and with less resistance than when it is presented in more direct terms.

Representations of race have been a part of science fiction since its inception. As Chude-Sokei notes, racial anxieties “were shaped in American popular culture within that space between the formal birth of science fiction—Victorian or otherwise—and modernism,” anxieties that were themselves “associated with slavery, colonialism, and industrialism” (104). Traditionally, the black presence in science fiction has been confined primarily to cautionary, often exploitative tales of racial Armageddon and besieged white supremacy in which blacks were presented in roles of primitive, often comic subservience and menacing sub-humanity. Indeed, colonialist lost-race fantasies in the tradition of H. Rider Haggard and Edgar Rice Burroughs and race war scenarios dominate much of the genre’s early output, with such proto-SF works as Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Coming Race*



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

(1871) and King Wallace's *The Next War* (1892) portending where the genre was headed.<sup>3</sup>

Still, not all portrayals of blacks in SF were derogatory. Davin lists a number of proto-SF and genre works in which blacks are presented in non-stereotyped roles, although the bar he sets is low. He includes *The History of a Voyage to the Moon*, by "Chrysostom Trueman" (Howard and Geister 1864), whose "black philosopher" Rodolph, a "speechifying," star-gazing former black slave, is depicted as a moderately intelligent dialect-spouting black outlier whose "coloured brethren" are presented as equally blundering but scientifically ignorant Zip Coonish "niggers and mulattoes" unfamiliar with "'stronomy" and "what dat science derlucidnates" (Howard and Geister 64). More successful is Hermann Lang's *The Air Battle* (1859) whose depiction of a future dominated by technologically advanced Africans may have served as inspiration over a century later for fellow British author Michael Moorcock's *The Land Leviathan* (1974), which is set in an alternate, technologically advanced South Africa that never experienced apartheid and depicts a West that has been reduced to barbarism as a result of perpetual global wars.

Although pulp magazines of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s also reproduced the anti-black biases of their time, they occasionally presented sympathetic and heroic black characters. However, for the most part, they were still depicted as slaves, albeit often in revolt. They were rarely shown as the equals or superiors of whites and even then, were shown as bent on revenge against whites for past

racial injustices. By the mid-1940s and early 1950s, however, science fiction had begun to present blacks in roles other than subservient and barbaric extras. Leigh Brackett ("The Vanishing Venusians," 1945), Arthur C. Clarke (*Childhood's End*, 1953), Theodore Sturgeon (*More Than Human*, 1953), Ray Bradbury ("Way in the Middle of the Air," 1950 and "The Other Foot," 1951), Ward Moore (*Bring the Jubilee*, 1953), and Philip K. Dick ("The Father-Thing," 1954; *Solar Lottery*, 1955; and *Eye in the Sky*, 1957) presented sympathetic if not entirely three-dimensional black characters.

Beyond these exceptions, black characters did not begin to appear in literary SF with any regularity until the 1960s with the rise of the civil rights and black power movements in the United States and national liberation movements in Africa. Even then, they appeared primarily as bogeymen saddled with the same stereotypes found in mainstream fiction, where white fears of a coming black revolution and the demonization of its leaders were relentlessly reiterated in such works as Edwin Corley's *Siege* (1969), Alan Seymour's *The Coming Self-Destruction of the United States of America* (1969), Fletcher Knebel's *Trespass* (1969), D. Keith Mano's *Horn* (1970), and Don Pendleton's *Civil War II* (1971). As these titles suggest, the turbulent 1960s and 1970s saw a resurgence of race war narratives, as non-genre and genre writers alike gave expression to white anxieties about the direction of race relations and shifting power relations in America, Europe, and the postcolonial world.



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

The results were typically problematic. Some, like Robert Heinlein in *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), whose *Sixth Column* (1949) had earlier recycled "yellow peril" tropes in its depiction of a "Pan-Asian" conquest of the United States; British author Christopher Priest (*Fugue for a Darkening Island*, 1972); and Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (*Lucifer's Hammer*, 1977), fell back on familiar tropes of post-apocalyptic atavistic black barbarism. A. M. Lightner's *Day of the Drones* (1969), set in a post-holocaust future where blacks have established supremacy over whites, is a kinder and gentler *Farnham's Freehold*. Edmund Cooper's *The Last Continent* (1969), is yet another post-apocalypse tale of black ascendancy and white regression, although, as Charles Saunders points out, the fact that "despite 2000 years of successfully reshaping the environment of Mars, the blacks still could not match what whites had achieved thousands of years earlier on earth, is offensive" (164). John Jake's *Black in Time* (1970) is full of hip, jive-talking militant black temponauts out to alter the past. Robert Silverberg's "Black is Beautiful" (1971) describes a racially polarized future in which black nationalism is triumphant but inevitably fatal to whites who dare to cross the racial divide. These works may have inverted hierarchies, but racial and cultural stereotypes remained as entrenched as ever.

Others, like Ursula Le Guin (*The Left Hand of Darkness*, 1969), Robert Silverberg (*Shadrach in the Furnace*, 1976), and Spider Robinson (*Telempath*, 1976), introduced nominally if otherwise culturally nondescript black protagonists. More ambitious writers such as

British author John Brunner (*Stand on Zanzibar*, 1968; *The Jagged Orbit*, 1969; *Shockwave Rider*, 1975, and *The Wrong End of Time*, 1971) and Norman Spinrad (*Bug Jack Barron*, 1969), offered direct critiques of racism and race relations, while nonetheless reproducing phallogentric, heteronormative tropes of buckish black male militancy, with nary a black woman in sight.

There were, however, some notable departures. Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* introduces the reader to both a black protagonist, Jan Rodricks,<sup>4</sup> the last human left to witness humanity's higher evolution, and the Overlords, the majestic, technologically superior, ebony-skinned, demon-like aliens that midwife the transition. Writes Clarke of Rodricks's post-first-contact twenty-first century:

A century before, his color would have been a tremendous, perhaps an overwhelming handicap. Today, it meant nothing. The inevitable reaction [to the "ebony" colored Overlords] that had given early twenty-first century Negroes a slight sense of superiority had already passed away. The convenient word "nigger" was no longer taboo in polite society, but was used without embarrassment by everyone. It had no more emotional content than such labels as republican or methodist, conservative or liberal. (p. 83)

Obviously, the twenty-first century Clarke envisioned is not ours. While subtle, the passage is, like the Overlords' presence itself,



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

diabolically subversive. Indeed, although the passage is sometimes cited to criticize Clarke's naïveté about twentieth century racism<sup>5</sup> and his faulty prediction of the ultimate fate of a certain "troublesome" epithet, to borrow Randall Kennedy's term, what critics fail to point out is its provocative suggestion, albeit oblique, that it is Earth's encounter with technologically advanced black-skinned aliens (Clarke describes them as possessing an "ebon-majesty" (p. 61) that prompts this paradigm shift in racial attitudes, since Clarke seems to imply that the Overlords' unparalleled superiority initially stokes black pride by dramatically subverting Biblical and Manichean associations of blackness with inferiority.<sup>6</sup>

Some readers have found the passage puzzling. Candelaria confesses he does not know what to make of Clarke's allusion to black superiority: "In the utopia produced by the Overlords' intervention, 'colour' is no longer a 'handicap.' This seems good, but some of the ancillary description that Clarke adds is somewhat troubling. For example, why should 'twenty-first century Negroes' have 'a slight sense of superiority'? It seems to be another manifestation of African insolence, similar to the South African 'inversion'" (p. 49), inversion here referencing a brief passage in the novel in which Clarke alludes to a black-governed South Africa that oppresses its white minority.

I would argue, however, that African insolence is not the issue here, for why would Clarke specifically evoke blacks - insolent or not - and their dissipating feelings of superiority in the

context of an alien first contact? Yes, Rodricks is black, but why evoke his race in a discussion of the Overlords to begin with? Moreover, it is unlikely Clarke is suggesting that the mere arrival of the Overlords is responsible for this shift of consciousness, since the book establishes that this took place in the *twentieth* century, well before the Overlords, who have concealed their demonic appearance, actually presented themselves to humanity in all their "ebon majesty." Clarke's dating of the dawning of this sense of superiority to the twenty-first century suggests it emerged after this revelation. Moreover, why would Clarke evoke their presence in the context of a discussion about the disappearance of an epithet historically associated only with dark-skinned people unless it related in some way to the Overlords' own skin color? Indeed, it is not insignificant given the history of the west's encounter with dark-skinned others—others frequently dehumanized as "black devils"—that Clarke has chosen to embody that otherness quite literally in the saturnine appearance of the Overlords, and in doing so has added an entirely novel nuance to the "race memory" they arouse.

It would appear that Clarke enjoyed tweaking those memories and the racial hierarchies upon which they are based, even if only for fleeting satiric intent and even when those hierarchies, as in the novel, include those of an oppressive, antiwhite black-governed South Africa. As Candelaria points out, Clarke would employ racial inversion again some ten years later in his short story "Reunion" (1963), in which he plays directly with the idea not only



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

of an advanced black-skinned civilization but one that is the ancestor of the human race, a racial inversion of the albocentric xenogenesis postulated in Erich von Däniken's *Chariot of the Gods* (1968) as well as, most recently, in Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2015), whose Romanesque, alabaster-skinned extraterrestrial Engineers spawn humanity. In "Reunion," humanity receives a message from aliens aboard an approaching spacecraft who had colonized the earth millions of years earlier but abandoned it after it had been ravaged by a "strange and repulsive disease" that "split [the colony] into two separate groups—almost two separate species—suspicious and jealous of each other" (pp. 74-75). In their message, however, the returning aliens inform their still earthbound descendants that they can now cure the disease and that they can "rejoin them without shame or embarrassment," reassuring the afflicted that "If any of you are still white, we can cure you" (p. 75).<sup>6</sup>

Other works of note that subvert conventional SF racial tropes include such alternate histories as Moorcock's aforementioned *The Land Leviathan* (1974) and Terry Bisson's *Fire on the Mountain* (1988), in which blacks live more as less as masters of their own fate. Mack Reynolds's "El Hassan" or Black Man's Burden trilogy (*Border, Breed nor Birth*, 1962; *Black Sheep Astray*, 1973; and *The Best Ye Breed*, 1978), while not entirely convincing in its depiction of middle-class African Americans and an Islamic Africa, does evoke something of the spirit of W. E. B. Du Bois' elitist Talented Tenth exhortations and the aspirations of 1960s-style African American Pan Africanism.

*Borderline* (a.k.a. as *You Shall Know Them*, 1952—filmed, abysmally, in 1970 as *Skullduggery*), by Vercors (the pen name of French writer Jean Marcel Bruller) remains one of the finest meditations on race and scientific racism the genre has produced. Thomas M. Disch's *Camp Concentration* (1968) and *334* (1974) deal thoughtfully with racial politics and class antagonisms. Harry Harrison's "American Dead" (1970) and Spider Robinson's *Night of Power* (1985) return to the perennial theme of American race war, the former a tale of racial vengeance, the latter offering a fairly nuanced meditation on the conundrum of American racism, black nationalism, and the role whites can play as allied agents of emancipatory praxis.

Of particular interest to this discussion are the works of Philip K. Dick, which are consistently populated with sympathetic and sometimes, quite literally, stereotype-defying black characters such as *Eye in the Sky's* Bill Laws (1957), a young nuclear engineer-cum-tour guide who, as the result of a particle accelerator mishap that leaves him trapped in the subjective reality of a white racist, desperately struggles against being turned into a shucking and jiving black caricature. Other black characters from Dick's oeuvre include a spaceship captain (*Solar Lottery*, 1955), the dark-skinned Martian Bleekmen (*Martian Time-Slip*, 1964), a U.S. presidential candidate (*Crack in Space*, 1966), and the brilliant renaissance man turned religious cult leader Anarch Peak (*Counter-Clock World*, 1967). Unlike Heinlein and others who wrote disapprovingly of racial rebellion in the 1960s,





### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

Dick saw the prospect of black revolution as holding the potential of human liberation, not white subjugation. In *The Ganymede Takeover* (1967), Dick's collaboration with Ray Nelson, aliens invade an Earth divided by racial antagonisms, but their plans for total domination are thwarted by a charismatic, telepathic black nationalist. The inversion of racial hierarchies is a familiar theme in Dick, who had previously explored it in "Faith of Our Fathers" (1966) and "The Turning Wheel" (1954), in which Asians and other nonwhites are repositioned at the apex of a new racial hierarchy and, more famously, in *The Man in The High Castle* (1962), in which a victorious post-WWII Japan occupies the American Pacific coast.<sup>7</sup>

To point out these limitations in science fiction's own imaginative vision, however, is to risk being branded politically correct. Responding to the criticism in a gay community newspaper that two of his works - *The Book of Skulls* (1971) and *Dying Inside* (1972) - stereotyped gays and blacks, respectively, Robert Silverberg (1997), in an essay originally written in in 1981, launched into a defense of the right of authors to exercise their imagination in the pursuit of "realism."

The remarks on my writing, though generally complimentary, annoy me where I am accused of relying on "cartoon figures" as when [in *Dying Inside*] I have a gang of jive-talking black basketball players beat a [Jewish] man unconscious, or where I portray a gay character as

"purely vicious and evil." With your help I now realize that in the real world no blacks ever commit violence and all homosexuals are people of the most saintly character, and I will not portray them otherwise in future work lest I deviate into stereotype again. I thank you for this valuable corrective sermon: one of my goals as a writer is to portray character with honesty, and I would not want to distort anything by departing from approved modes of behavior . . . (p. 354)

Silverberg concluded,

We [writers] reserve the right—at least, I do—to call 'em as we see 'em. Stories are still about conflicts; people in conflict are imperfect people; some of the guys with flaws are going to be gay. If members of minorities don't care for such realism, let them clean up their acts. After all, nobody writes stories about macho Zen monks who lie and cheat and rape and loot. (I think.) (p. 354)

Silverberg's contention that "more than most other forms of category fiction...s-f is read by people who are emotionally or physically disadvantaged in some way, and those people, in our field, tend to be highly articulate" (p. 353) reflects a time when writers invoked the genre's cliquish, ego-boosting rhetoric as they strove to compensate for and overcome its "nerdy" reputation and to secure for it a patina of respectability in their bid to climb out of what they often characterized—ironically given the genre's history of racial



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

exclusivity—as a “literary ghetto.”<sup>8</sup> More importantly, however, Silverberg’s rebuttal forces an interrogation of the *fictional* realism being limned: Whose “reality” is being represented? By whom? For whom? In what manner? The world is indeed full of “imperfect people,” even Buddhist monks who engage in the anti-social activities Silverberg describes,<sup>9</sup> though American writers at the time were not wont to write about them, preferring instead to invest in default mode stereotypes of Oriental alterity.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the world is also full of highly articulate blacks and emotionally stable gays, few of whom, however, had graced the pages of science fiction by 1981.<sup>11</sup> Given the putative imaginative prowess of science fiction writers to limn painstakingly elaborate, exotic xenoscapes and alien alterities, one wonders why it has proven so difficult for them to apply these same skills to their characterizations of people of color. Borrowing narrative beats from Silverberg’s original tale, imagine that—instead of writing *Dying Inside* from the point of view of a telepathic Jew who uses his ability to ghostwrite term papers and his vicious attack by a his jive-talking anti-Semitic black client—Silverberg had chosen to write about a similarly gifted black who uses his ability to ghostwrite newspaper advertisements for, say, a dyslexic Jewish advertising executive who later, following a dispute, enlists the help of a gang of racist, Yiddish-speaking diamond merchant friends to pummel the poor *schwarze*. Although, taken element by element, the above scenario is rife with stereotypes, such individuals do exist: some blacks are employed as ghostwriters, there are

anti-black Yiddish-speaking diamond merchants, and dyslexia knows no racio-ethnic boundaries. Yet were a black writer (or perhaps even a white one) to employ them, he or she would no doubt cause offense, and the defense that this is “reality, too” would ring equally hollow. But more to the point, most readers would not expect such a reality in the first place.

In *Up the Line* (1969), Silverberg introduces us to a “really black” (p. 2) time traveler—Sambo “Sam” Sambo (a name so nice, it appears, they named him thrice)—who, in the “black is beautiful” future from which he originally hails, decides to accentuate his black physical features through genetic editing. Silverberg’s intent is satirical—an “if-this-goes-on” riff that takes the proposition of black pride to its extrapolative extreme. But does it? Here, too, one is left to marvel at the paucity of authorial imagination: if genetic manipulation is so trendy, so commonplace, if the beauty of blackness has inspired blacks to artificially enhance their pigmentation and physiognomy, what of whites? Might not they also opt for such augmentation as they reappraise eurocentric standards of beauty or—more problematically—seek to embody and live out their stereotyped fantasies of blackness, much as whites in blackface did in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continue to do in the early twenty-first? Indeed, might not the advent of such a technology, merely a throwaway premise in the novel, have profound consequences on the concept of “race” itself, creating a new “transracial” minority (“doležals”?)<sup>12</sup> who, convinced that





### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

they have been born in the wrong-raced bodies, decide to rectify nature's mistake? As in much science fiction, Silverberg's extrapolated future reinscribes rather than subverts contemporary racial and gender boundaries: blacks will opt to become blacker; whites, presumably, will opt to remain white or to enhance their whiteness. Silverberg, who once expounded at length—and egregiously—on the “ineluctable masculinity” of the prose of James Tiptree's Jr., the pen name of Alice B. Sheldon (Silverberg 1975, p. x), still has a lot to learn about stereotypes, the expectations they ineluctably set, and the malleability of radicalized desire. My intent is not to pillory Silverberg, but to point out that on the whole the genre discourse of race has traditionally been unimaginative, complicitly tweaking stereotypes rather than dismantling them.

While some writers have shown themselves unable or unwilling to present blacks in a way that challenges racist assumptions, other writers have elected to understate race or ignore it entirely. In doing so they appear to reject the fiction of race, offering their readers progressive futures in which it is irrelevant (Govan, pp. 43-48). Although well-meaning, such attempts overlook the fact that the absence of explicit textual racial markers does not guarantee a “colorblind” reading of the text, since most readers will assume that unmarked characters are white by default. For example, it is often pointed out that many readers of Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* assume its protagonist, Johnny Rico, is white until he is revealed to be Filipino toward the novel's end.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, even when characters

are explicitly marked as non-white or are racio-ethnically ambiguous, they may still be read as white, a fact that became evident in the vitriolic online discussions about the race of the character Rue in Suzanne Collin's *Hunger Games* (2008), who despite being described by the author as having “dark eyes and satiny brown skin” (p. 120), was famously read by many readers as white, some of whom vehemently objected to the casting of a black actor in the role in the movie adaptation.<sup>14</sup>

### **Xenoface and Intellectual Antiracism**

Racist thinking in science fiction need not be overt; it often adopts the guise of an Alien Other upon whom is projected the characteristics of maligned or tragically sympathetic real world Others. Science fiction frequently employs substitution and displacement to deal with race—devices that, as I will discuss later, are often the editorially preferred approach for dealing with the subject. In *Starship Troopers* (1959), Heinlein projects white racial anxieties and racist (speciesist) thinking onto extraterrestrial belligerents - safe targets, since there are no “real” aliens to take offense - who may thus be slaughtered with impunity, a strategy that continues today in cinematic science fiction where monolithic computer-generated hive-minded alien and other artificial alterities are exterminated with genocidal expedience by (mostly) white heroes, a trend that remains entrenched in such films in *Aliens* (1986), *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), *The Avengers* (2012), *Ender's Game* (2013), and *The Edge of Forever* (2014). Other films, such as *Star Wars: The*



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

*Phantom Menace* (1999) and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009), have been criticized for their palimpsestic reinscription of racial stereotypes upon their digitally generated alien and cybernetic characters. On the other hand, when not describing the doom of white western civilization or the subjugation of humanity, the depiction of race relations in SF fared little better than that depicted in *Star Trek*, for, although people of color are present, they are presented as having been fully and willingly assimilated into a euro-american future in which they constitute, except for the most rabid segregationist, a safely homogenous, unthreatening presence.<sup>15</sup>

Until the emergence of black SF authors<sup>16</sup>, the treatment of race and racism in SF had proven both conflicted and paradoxical, with white writers, editors and presumably fans reluctant to deal explicitly with the issue or to accept black characters in contexts that do not involve racism. Octavia Butler has stated that a white SF editor once advised her to avoid using black characters unless the story specifically dealt with racism because their presence would “change the character of the stories” and that writers should use aliens to “get rid of this messiness [of racism] and all those people we don’t want to deal with” (qtd. in Beal, pp. 18). What I call xenoface<sup>17</sup>—the use of fictional alien/others as surrogates for real-world others—has provided one means of discussing race without the “messiness” of having to confront head-on real world racism. Although SF’s use of robots and aliens as allegorical/metaphoric props is often taken as emblematic of the genre’s liberalism, I would argue that such use

represents nothing more than an abstract, liberal, intellectual antiracism that does not necessarily create an authentic racial tolerance – attitudinal or advocational – toward actual racial or ethnic groups, but that does contribute to an inability to see beyond the very intolerance it ostensibly critiques. For example, SF writer and critic Sam Lundwall has noted that, by treating race through allegorical tales of androids, SF writers and readers are “most inclined to take the side of the android against his tormentors” (168). Here virulent racism is intellectually countered and replaced by a virtual liberalism or allegory-induced agape that nonetheless may retain vestiges of racial disregard. A good example of this is found in Steven Spielberg’s *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (2001), in whose pallid, postdiluvian future, robots are hunted down and executed like fugitive slaves and face death with calm dignity—except for a black robot (voiced by comedian Chris Rock) whose destruction is inexplicably but tellingly played for laughs.

In visual SF, in particular, such xenoface performances permit the viewer’s conditional acceptance of blacks—but not as blacks—in scenarios in which their presence is considered out of place or makes viewers uncomfortable by reminding them of social realities they would rather forget, deny or place in abeyance as they engage these imaginative narratives. For example, some white viewers allow blacks to inhabit their imaginary universes only when their blackness is obscured behind layers of prosthetic silicon or as long as they remain a token presence in



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

privileged, predominantly white past, present or future ethnoscapings, since physically identifiable, self-identified black characters may prove unsettling reminders of race that spoil the erstwhile humanist illusion of a postracial future. The problem can be seen in running debates among fans in Internet forums over whether *Star Trek's* Worf and Tuvok are “black” or Klingon and Vulcan, respectively. The mere casting of blacks in these roles reveals the fact that the rest of *Star Trek's* ethnoscape is predominately “white,” and often—by their own admission—reminds them uncomfortably of the messy reality of race and racism in the mundane world by pulling them out of the idealized white-by-default fictional universe in which these dramas are set. In fact, white audiences may find aliens portrayed by black actors in xenoface more easily acceptable—after all, as aliens they cease being “black”—than black actors cast as humans or in alien roles that do not require prosthetic makeovers.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, in gauging the presence of identifiable blacks in SF films and television shows, as well as assessing the constraints placed on the types of environments and scenarios in which they are presented, a Bechdel test-inspired measure would prove useful. Such a measure might include: 1) the future or outer space has identifiably—and self-identifying—black people in it, 2) they talk and interact with each other, 3) their racial features are not obscured behind prosthetics or motion capture computer graphics, and 4) they are depicted as coming from a technologically advanced alien culture

or a future society whose members are multicultural or predominantly nonwhite.

In discussing the use of racial allegory in SF, it is important to distinguish between works that consciously employ racial allegory as social critique and those that employ it as a means to reinscribe and reify racist tropes, though the two are by no means mutually exclusive. In the western imaginary, machines in particular have functioned as racial allegory, substituting for non-whites or serving as a medium for their representation in the guise of exotic automata (Chude-Sokei, 2012). From the genre's inception, machines have functioned as embodiments of colonial and modernist anxiety, whether as symbols of oppressed servitude or implacable menace (Rieder, 2008). Indeed, both are aspects of Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* (1920), which gave us the term “robot” as embodied in the organic form of the rebellious android. As Lundwall observes, “The android functions as sf's contribution to the race debate,” noting androids have consistently functioned as signifiers of nonwhite alterity:

The robots pose no problem, because they just obey, and the extraterrestrials are so different from us that some kind of understanding must be found in the end. But the androids - that's another thing. Just like Negroes, Indians, Mexicans, and what-have-you, they must be kept down at all costs, never a moment being permitted to regard themselves as equals to the White Man. Because if they did, they might get it into their heads to demand equal rights,



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and that would mean the end of the White Man's supremacy. (p. 167)

A good example of the projection of racial anxieties upon automata and the reinscription of the black stereotypes they articulate is on clear display in the original, un-self-bowdlerized 1973 version of Dean R. Koontz's *Demon Seed* (1973). The novel's malevolent artificial intelligence, Proteus, rapes Susan, the novel's pale, blonde protagonist, forcing her to give birth to a "purple-black" human-machine hybrid endowed with elephantine, "grotesquely exaggerated" genitalia (p. 175).<sup>19</sup> The novel's racial allegory is made explicit toward its climax in which Susan confronts the monstrosity she has been forced to bear.

Watching as it climbed, backlit as it was by the corridor lamps, she thought a bit of more recent mythology of which this scene might be an analogue. Dark as he was, the child might be a Negro male, stalking the defenseless white heroine, intent on assaulting her with his superhuman equipment.

She laughed.

Blacks had not really lusted after white women and they had not been gifted with more than average genitalia. But the myth had been a very strong one on both a conscious and subconscious level - and had been held dear as little as two decades ago.

How foolish those people had been. The black man was not after their daughters. The machine was!

Engaged in delineating their petty differences from race to race and philosophy to philosophy, man had ignored the much larger threat which had grown behind them, the machine. The machine rapes. Unless it is carefully controlled, the machine molests and it destroys. (p. 176)

Interestingly, like Makode A J Linde, the controversial Swedish artist who in 2012 created a grotesque blackface cake purportedly to raise awareness about the horrors of female genital mutilation, Koontz, tries, as it were, to have his cake and eat it too, mobilizing the very "myths"—monstrously endowed, sexually rapacious black man-beasts—he ostensibly reviles in order to alert his readers to a more clear and present threat: monstrously endowed, sexually rapacious (black) machines. The scene toward the end of the novel in which its heroine attempts to flee Proteus's tumescent progeny evokes Elsie Stoneman's desperate flight from the libidinous freed slave Gus in *Birth of a Nation* (1915), as well the masturbatory tropes of contemporary "interracial pornography." Like Gus and all freed black slaves, once liberated, Proteus and its progeny seek to sate their thirst for white female flesh—and like all uppity blacks, they must literally be whipped back into submission for their transgression. Unlike poor Elsie, who tragically leaps to her death to avoid violation, Susan fights back, though it



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

seems more than coincidental that the weapon she employs to resist her cybernetic assailant is a “coiled . . . seasoned leather” whip (p. 177) she happens to find in an attic.

In the above passage, Koontz shrugs off these racist tropes as laughably “foolish,” only to exploit them anyway, perhaps because, as the blurb on the Bantam paperback declares, the novel is about “profane and inhuman love,” and what better way to invoke its horrors than by conjuring up images of incestuous and miscegenous rape and bestiality. Not satisfied with the myth of black priapism, Koontz also invokes the “unholy carnality” (p. 174) of the Greek myth of Pasiphae and the Minotaur, grafting upon it images of white female wantonness and bestial black male sexuality. Conversely, allegorical explorations of racial otherness in science fiction also provide its consumers with imaginary beings whose latent humanity they may more easily apprehend than that of their real world counterparts: audiences may find it easier to sympathize with an amorphous maternal Horta protecting its eggs from thoughtless Terran miners than with an actual black mother striving to protect her children from trigger-happy police or to empathize with cyan-skinned felinoids resisting human exploiters of their ecological paradise than with actual indigenes whose natural resources are exploited to manufacture the very high-tech equipment that produces the digital simulacra with whom these audiences indulge their equally manufactured emotions. Lest I be accused of overstating the case, it is worth recalling again that the casting of a black as Rue in the movie *Hunger Games* was greeted with such disdain that one fan of

the book tweeted, “Call me racist but when I found our Rue was black her death wasn’t as sad” (qtd. in Dodai). In these reconstituted fictions, only white, alien and robotic lives matter.

### **Reinscriptions, Recriminations, and Subversions**

Until the late 1970s, few genre works featuring black characters had been written by black SF writers.<sup>20</sup> The paucity of black writers from within the genre meant that its depictions of black lives, by default, fell to their white colleagues as well as to non-genre black writers whose works have not been regarded as science fiction and which have only recently been acknowledged as speculative. In the case of the former, the results have proven problematic. Michael Resnick’s introduction to *Future Earths: Under African Skies* (1993), an anthology of SF short stories by white authors set in Africa, is a case in point. For Resnick—who has set many of his own works in Africa and whose *Paradise* (1989) and *Kirinyaga* (1998) take place on planets modeled on post-independence Kenya—Africa “provides thoroughly documented examples of some of the most fascinating people and societies any writer, searching for the new and the different and the alien, could hope to find” (pp. 12-13). Resnick begins his introduction with a series of questions that asks readers to identify SF stories from a list of scenarios that include modern slavery, crucifixion, genocide, and genital mutilation, only to reveal that these practices are not science fiction but part of contemporary African history.<sup>21</sup> Resnick, of



### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

course, is politic enough not to say so explicitly, but the African continent, to judge by the examples cited, is more savage, cruel, backward, bizarre and sadistic than any imagined extraterrestrial world. The problem does not end there, however: Resnick's list of recommended works for further reading on Africa and Africa-inspired SF fails to mention a single work by a black author. Not only is esteemed Kenyan historian Ali Mazrui's *The Africans* (1987) passed up for white journalist David Lamb's identically titled tome, but Saunders' "Imaro" series does not even make the list of genre works, nor do the white authors Mack Reynolds's North Africa-based El Hassan series, Alan Dean Foster's *Into the Out Of* (1986) nor Chad Oliver's "Far from Earth" (1970) and many other Africa-themed tales. Resnick notes that from 1988-1991, of eighty-two SF short stories nominated for the Hugo Award, only eight were set in Africa or had African themes: "With all the universe to play with, almost 10% of the best science fiction was about things African" (p. 14). Given the colonialist tone of the Introduction (if not the actual stories themselves) and the genre's depiction of blacks in general, such neglect may not have been a bad thing after all.

One might think that nearly a decade and a half later, xenoface and the genre's view of Africa as a metaphor of savage, exotic alterity would have changed. Yet the same device is utilized by white South African film director Neill Blomkamp in his film *District 9* (2009), whose bling-hording alien "prawns" serve not only as a metaphor of similarly stereotyped blacks under apartheid, but—more significantly

—of black racism and xenophobia in a black-governed, post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the film's depiction of the aliens is far more sympathetic than that of Nigerians, who are portrayed as snarling, thuggish exploiters of the aliens, in the end substituting perdurable stereotypes of African androphagy and bizarre sexual licentiousness with that of xenophagy and interspecies prostitution. This is a dance we have seen before—not the Platonic waltz of severed halves but the repetitive palsy of those unsuccessfully attempting to confront their racial picadilloes, a staggering reel in which one step forward is followed by two (or three) steps back. Ironically, to explore SF's fitful, spasmodic journey through themes of race and the black experience, and the contribution of black writers to the genre, one has to leave it.<sup>23</sup> As John Pfeiffer (1975) notes, "A main current in black American literature was speculative. Both [African American literature and SF], in measures small or great, reported facts and endorsed assumptions and behaviors disruptive of the status quo - radical change in the imaginative mode and radical change in the social order" (p. 35). Not hampered by SF conventions, non-genre black writers have produced serious speculations that directly deal with race and racism sans the all too often palliative architecture of racial allegory. Since the early 2000s, a number of works have examined the contributions of black writers to science fiction and speculative literature in general (Thomas 2000, 2004, Lavender, 2011, 2014). In fact, traditionally, most black speculative fiction has been produced outside of the genre, where it has primarily been





### **Frozen Journey (continued)**

labeled and consumed as African American literature. As early as the 1850s, black nationalist and abolitionist Martin R. Delany's *Blake; or the Huts of America* (1859-1862) presented an alternate vision of America that, along with black educator Edward A. Johnson's *Light Ahead for the Negro* and white author T. Shirby Hodge's *White Man's Burden: A Satirical Forecast* (1915) (1904), was one of a handful of early visionary works to depict a black utopia. Other black authors who have written speculatively on race from outside the genre include Sutton E. Griggs (*Imperium in Imperio: A Study of the Negro Race Problem*, 1899), W.E.B. Du Bois ("The Comet," 1920), George S. Schuyler (*Black No More*, 1931 and *Black Empire*, 1936-1938), William Melvin Kelly (*A Different Drummer*, 1959), Ronald Fair (*Many Thousand Gone: An American Fable*,

1965), Sam Greenlee (*The Spook Who Sat by the Door*, 1969), Douglas Turner Ward (*Day of Absence*, 1970), John A. Williams (*The Man Who Cried I Am*, 1967, *Sons of Darkness*, *Sons of Light*, 1969, *Captain Blackman*, 1972), Ishmael Reed (*Flight to Canada*, 1976), Percival Everett (*Zulus*, 1990), Darius James (*Negrophobia*, 1990), Derrick Bell ("The Space Traders," 1992), and Saab Lofton (*A.D.*, 1995). These excursions, if and when more generally recognized, have the potential to break the ice and thaw SF's static representation of blacks, to impel it forward and away from allegorical xenoface displacement toward more fluid representation of blacks that more directly examines race, racism, and race relations within narratives, sometimes speculative, sometimes phantasmagorical, but largely unimagined within the genre itself.

### **Notes**

1. I have chosen the title "Frozen Journey" (a.k.a. "I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon," 1980) not only because it aptly describes the paradox inherent in science fiction's representation of race and blackness, but also in tribute to Dick, whose work (both SF and mainstream) consistently featured black characters that, for the most part, defied—if not always completely or successfully—contemporary stereotypes.
2. Popularized by Damon Knight (1956), who attributed the phrase to SF critic and historian Sam Moskowitz, "sense of wonder" is commonly invoked by critics, fans and writers to distinguish the genre

from what is variously termed mundane, mimetic, or mainstream fiction. The phrase was particularly popular during the 1970s when literary science fiction was beginning to gain mainstream and academic recognition. It was employed to foster a positive image of the genre that until then had been dismissed as puerile, paraliterary escapism. Not all accepted the genre's inflated view of itself; critic Darko Suvin dismissing the term as a "superannuated slogan of much sf criticism due for a deserved retirement" (Suvin 1979, p. 83). For a discussion of the term, see Knight

**Frozen Journey (continued)**

- (1967 [1956]), Clute and Nicholls (1993), and Hartwell (1996).
3. Given the genre's traditional fondness for the subject, it is not surprising that the only entry on race in the edition of John Clute and Peter Nicholl's *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* is "Racial Conflict," which refers the reader to its entry on "Politics." Moreover, while the updated March 2015 online version of the encyclopedia does contain the entry "Race in SF," it is confined mainly to a discussion of works on the theme by white SF writers and black non-genre writers and, with the exception of a brief mention of Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), does not discuss the contributions of other black/nonwhite SF writers. This is a revealing lapse given the rise in the number of blacks writing science fiction over the last two decades and the fact that the encyclopedia contains three sections ("Women in SF," "Portrayals of Women in SF," and "Woman SF Writers") that treat both representations of women and their contributions to the genre.
  4. Strictly speaking, Rodricks is biracial and transcultural, the offspring of a blond Scot "who had lived most of his life in Haiti" and a "coal black" mother born in Scotland (Clarke, p. 83), although the narrator classifies him as "Negro," so apparently the "one-drop rule" still applies in the novel's twenty-first century. Intriguingly, as early as 1959, the character had attracted the interest of actor and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte, who had previously starred in the SF melodrama *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* (1959), itself loosely based on creole writer M. P. Shiel's apocalyptic *The Purple Cloud*. Belafonte had expressed interest in starring as Rodricks in a planned film version of the book (Linwood, p. 31). Blacklisted screenwriter/director Abraham Polonsky, with whom Belafonte had worked on *Odds Against Tomorrow* (1959), had optioned the book, but nothing came of the project. The manuscript of Clarke's classic was one of a number of personal items Belafonte put up for auction at Sotheby's in 2008 (Adler).
  5. See General Rylee, "Flawed 1950s Anti-Racism: *Childhood's End*" and Candelaria, "The Overlord's Burden," who argues racial inversions in *Childhood's End* and "Reunion" do not subvert the expectations of white readers as fulfill them (pp. 48-49) – the black South African treatment of whites, and Rodricks's willful attempts to journey to the Overlord's homeworld, serving to exemplify "African insolence" (p. 49).
  6. Clarke's story has served as the basis for at least two YouTube videos, both undermining its inversion of racial hierarchy. In one, a South African video, the alien messenger reveals himself to be a foulmouthed, patois-spouting, ganja-smoking Rasta—portrayed by a white actor in blackface (Bendego DE, "Reunion"). In the other, Clarke's story is inexplicably narrated over a collage of buoyant white breasts (Mondo Boloko, "Arthur C Clarke's Reunion").
  7. For a discussion of the treatment of race and blacks in Dick's fiction, see Jakaitis,

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- 1995, and Russell, 2008. While American critics have largely ignored the influence of race on Dick and his work, Japanese critics have not. In his afterword to the Japanese translation of Paul Williams's *Only Apparently Real: The World of Philip K. Dick* (1986), Ogawa Takashi discusses Dick in the context of New Left liberalism, with a particular focus on the American Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s. See Ohba, 1991, and Ogawa, 1991.
8. The term, used by writers and fans to distinguish the genre from mimetic or mainstream fiction, was frequently evoked by New-Wave writers such as Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Barry Malzberg, Robert Silverberg, and Alfred Bester. The ghetto analogy was employed in ways that limn both the Jewish and African American experience of social segregation, although the comparison with blacks could often be quite explicit. For example, Spinrad (1990) describes science fiction writers who have been accepted by the mainstream as "token niggers" (p. 9); William Tenn (Philip Klass) compares the academic appropriation of science fiction to its earlier appropriation of jazz (Tenn 1972). See also Gunn, 2006, for a discussion of the analogy. The analogy was quite commonly drawn at science fiction conventions such as the New York-based Lunacon and Infinitycon conventions, which I attended as a fan in the early- and mid-1970s, including the 1975 Lunacon, at which Alfred Bester gave an address entitled "Science Fiction as Ghetto."
  9. See Scherer 2011 and *BBC News* 2011. Also see Gelineau, 2017, on Myanmar, where Buddhist extremists are engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing against its Muslim-minority Rohingya population.
  10. Russell, 1998.
  11. The essay originally appeared in the November 1981 issue of *Amazing Stories*. In fact, criticism of the depiction of gay characters in SF, to which Silverberg was responding, was not new and had been debated within fandom for at least a decade before the essay's publication. I recall a heated exchange that occurred during a Q&A session following a panel on sex in SF at a science fiction convention I attended in New York in the early 1970s, in which a few attendees, to the hissing disapproval of others, criticized the genre's lack of gay characters and stated their objection to the fact that when they did appear, they were, like Barron Vladimir Harkonnen in Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965), almost invariably depicted as villains.
  12. The term references Rachel Doležal, the European-descended former head of the Spokane, Washington chapter of the NAACP, who self-identifies as black. The term "transracial" in this particular context has been used since at least the early 1990s (see, for example, Raymond 1994), well before it was employed by the media to describe Doležal, although, like the subjectivity to which it refers, it remains controversial and has been harshly criticized by trans exclusionary radical feminists and trans activists who regard it as a slight to their respective communities,

**Frozen Journey (continued)**

as well as by the families of transracial adoptees, some of whom object to the use of the term in the context of racial identification and view it as an appropriation. Most recently, the publication of Rebecca Tuvel's "In Defense of Transracialism," in the feminist philosophy journal *Hypatia* (Tuvel 2017) was sharply criticized for equating "transracialism" with "transgenderism." Controversy aside, use of the term in mass media and social media in their discussion of Dolezal and by those who self-identify across racial lines suggests the consciousness to which I refer in my critique of Silverberg is no longer a speculative matter.

13. The problem is not limited to casual readers but also may include the genre's academic gatekeepers. An anonymous reviewer of an earlier version of this manuscript submitted to an American academic journal in 1998 commented that "Genly Ai [the Terran protagonist of Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969)] is I think not mentioned as a Black character in [the novel]" (reviewer comment, 20 July 1998). In fact, he is, and explicitly so. In the novel, Ai describes himself as follows: "I . . . was blacker and taller than most [Gethenians], but not beyond the range of normal variation. My beard had been permanently depilated before I left Ollul (at the time we didn't yet know about the 'pelted' tribes of Pweunter, who are not only bearded but hairy all over, like White Terrans. I have a flat nose; Gethenian noses are prominent and

narrow, with constricted passages, well adapted to breathing subfreezing air" (Le Guin 56). In fairness, however, the reviewer was aware that many of the Loonies in Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (1966) are black, though the reviewer could not recall them ever being depicted in illustrations as such for the book. In addition to *The Left Hand of Darkness*, albescence is on display on the covers of such works as Octavia Butler's *Dawn* (1997) and Larbalestier's *Liar* (2009), as well in such films as *Hunger Games* (2008), *Wanted* (2008), and the 2004 television adaptation of Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), which transforms many of its black and dark-skinned characters into whites. For a discussion of albescence in literary and cinematic SF, see James and Russell, 2013.

14. Collins has described the character as "African American" (Valby 2011). See Dodai and Holmes, 2012, for internet reaction to the change.
15. See Bernardi; Pounds, particularly his Conclusion; Kilgore, 2014; and Russell, 2011.
16. Until the 1970s, the number of *known* black professional sf writers was quite small, its ranks represented by four writers: Samuel R. Delany, Charles R. Saunders, Steven Barnes, and Octavia Butler (although, in fact, Delany's race was largely unknown early in his career). Indeed, Saunders would write of Delany in 1977, "It would be interesting to learn how many science fiction readers know that Delany is black. It would also be interesting to know

**Frozen Journey (continued)**

the extent to which Delany is known in the black community”

17. (Saunders 1980, p. 163). Also see Russell, 2017, p. 101. Diasporic professional black genre writers would not emerge on the scene until the 1990s. For a discussion of xenoface, see Russell, 2013.
18. “White” aliens remain the default mode for much science fiction. While *Star Trek* has featured hundreds of alien cultures that, naturally, given the casting conventions of its times, resemble “white” humanoids, it has depicted only a few “black” humanoids (mostly background extras). In its over 50-year run from live-action and animated television shows to movie series, *Star Trek* has featured a “black” alien culture only once (*Star Trek: The New Generation’s* “Code of Honor”). Indeed, in all its voyages, despite having encountered alien civilizations modeled on ancient Greece, Rome, Nazi Germany, 1930s gangland America, and even transplanted Native American cultures, the *Enterprise* has never encountered a technologically superior black alien culture, African gods, or transplanted African civilizations, past, present, or future. See Russell, 2011, pp. 81-90.
19. The passage cited is from the original 1973 edition. In 1997, a substantially rewritten version of the book was published, from which many of original’s racist and misogynistic tropes were excised.
20. As previously noted, until the 90s, there were only about four known major black writers in the genre. Since then, the number has expanded to include numerous new writers (Walter Mosley, Nalo Hopkinson, Tananarive Due, Andrea Haiston, Nnedi Okorafor, and Nisi Shawl being among the best-known), many of whom are women.
21. Critical readers can also play a permutation of this game: What science fiction story depicts a society in which one group of people is deemed superior by virtue of their skin color? In what science fiction story do Geronimo, Ota Benga, an Ainu, and an Inuit find themselves placed on exhibit at the 1904 St Louis World’s Fair? Indeed, Dery, *pace* Resnick, suggests the black experience itself reads like a science fiction narrative in which blacks “in a very real sense, are the descendants of alien abductees; they inhabit a sci-fi nightmare in which unseen but no less impassable force fields of intolerance frustrate their movements; official histories undo what has been done; and technology is too often brought to bear on black bodies (branding, forced sterilization, the Tuskegee experiment, and tasers come readily to mind)” (Dery, p. 180).
22. An analysis of *District 9* is beyond the scope of this paper; however, while the film functions as a metaphor of post-apartheid South African society, its image of blacks (Nigerians and black South Africans) and alien “prawns” reinscribes insidious stereotypes of black alterity endemic to both American and South African societies, which is not surprising given that they share a history of forced, legally sanctioned racial separation. For a discussion of the film’s treatment of race



**Frozen Journey (continued)**

and blackness, see Russell, 2013, pp. 204-211.

23. In fact, the majority of the fiction reprinted in Sherre Thomas's pioneering anthologies

of African American speculative fiction is written by non-genre writers (Thomas, 2000 and 2004). Also see Pfeiffer, 1975.





**Frozen Journey (continued)**

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**Frozen Journey (continued)**

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