

# ABHM

AMERICA'S BLACK HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

## ABHM Book Club Discussion Guide

### *Afrofuturism* by National Museum of African American History & Culture

#### How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](https://www.abhm.org/) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of *Afrofuturism* by NMAAHC (2021). Please feel free to print a copy and keep it with your book as you lend to friends and others who are interested. Do not expect to get through all of the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about this book.

1. Trivia: Afrofuturism is merely Black Science Fiction. True or False?  
Discussion: Kevin Young says in the Foreword, "Afrofuturism is as much about righting the record, expanding possibility, and founding a future in the face of injustice." Clearly it is much more than Black Science Fiction. Had you heard the word Afrofuturism prior to reading the book? If so, what was your understanding of it? How is it/can it be defined?
2. Trivia: What was the inspiration for this book?
  - a) Parliament Funkadelic's Mothership
  - b) George Clinton's "Atomic Dog"
  - c) Lt. Uhuru from Star TrekDiscussion: The idea for this book came from the Mothership (of Parliament Funkadelic) as it was collected for the National Museum of African American History and Culture. In Chapter One, the idea that going to space would deliver Black people into worlds free of white supremacy, racism, and discrimination is a theme that echoes across music, literature, and visual arts. What do you think about this idea? Does it speak to you?
3. Trivia: Dr. King encouraged Nichelle Nichols to stay in her role in *Star Trek*. True or False?  
Discussion: We have all heard the phrase, "Representation Matters," but most may not know the story about Nichelle Nichols being encouraged to stay in her *Star Trek* role by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and then embarking on a campaign to help NASA recruit diverse employees. Was this something you were aware of? Why is this story important to understand and share?
4. Trivia: What historic African symbol helped inspire the Afrofuturist avatar?  
Discussion: "The sankofa symbol has morphed into an Afrofuturist avatar - one that prompts societal questions: what do we leave behind, and what do we bring forward?" (53). How does this symbol relate to the work of Afrofuturists? To museums such as ABHM and NMAAHC?

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5. Trivia: Who was the first Black superhero to star in their own comic book series?  
Discussion: Luke Cage was the first Black superhero with his own comic book series, and in 2016 was adapted into a show on Netflix. Mike Colter, who starred in the show, appears in black hoodie which is full of bullet holes, and said it “was both a tribute to Trayvon Martin and an attempt to dispel the notion that a Black man in such attire is a likely criminal” (77). Is Luke Cage’s hoodie with bullet holes an appropriate representation of a Black superhero?
6. Trivia: Which writer says N.K. Jemison says “There’s a reason the alt-right’s chosen battlegrounds aren’t just politics but also books and films and games...Imagination is a deadly threat to systemic bigotry, and no one knows that better than bigots.” (p.90)
  - a) bell hooks
  - b) Roxanne Gay
  - c) Octavia Butler
  - d) N.K. JemisonDiscussion: Do you agree with N.K. Jemison that creative explosion is the response to suppression? If so, what does that mean for our future?
7. Trivia: who designed all of Black panther’s costumes and won an Oscar for their work? (Answer: Ruth Carter)
8. Trivia: Who coined the term Afrofuturism? (Answer: Mark Deary)
  - a. **\*\*bonus\*\***: What was the title of the essay that term came from?  
(Answer: Black to the future)
9. Discussion: This book is full of remarkable artwork and visual images. Is there a particular one that spoke to you? If so, why do you think that is?
10. Discussion: Have you heard a lot of the music mentioned throughout the book? How has it impacted you? Hyfin curated playlist:  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3n1M6EmMD7imec6DDHtgan?si=765153df82414244>
11. Discussion: Where else in your life do you see the influence of Afrofuturism?