

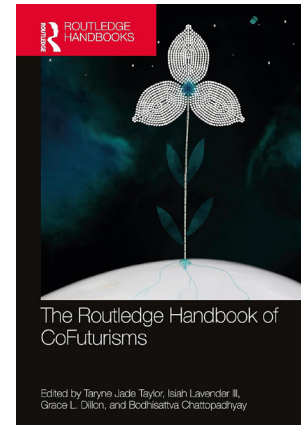
***The Routledge Handbook of CoFuturisms*, edited by
Taryne Jade Taylor, Isiah Lavender III, Grace L. Dillon and
Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay**



Jerome Winter

Taryne Jade Taylor, Isiah Lavender III, Grace L. Dillon, and Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of CoFuturisms*. Routledge, 2023. Hardback. 716 pg. \$280.00. EBook \$ 53.09. ISBN 9780367330613. EBook ISBN 9780429317828.

Consisting of approximately seven hundred pages, compiled by four editors, including roughly sixty contributing scholars and articles, and a bewildering array of theoretical perspectives, discursive territories, and primary texts, this new, indispensable handbook is a dauntingly monumental scholarly undertaking and a capacious reference resource for students, scholars, and general readers invested in pushing the boundaries of what gets included in discussions of the global sf genre. The structure of the handbook ambitiously spans the world in its geographical reach, with four major parts, each consisting of approximately fifteen articles, devoted respectively to Indigenous futurisms, Latinx futurisms, Asian, Middle Eastern and Asian, and African and African-American futurisms. For scholarly genre criticism that regularly bemoans the lack of global perspectives in even the most theoretical endeavors, this handbook, then, is a sorely needed corrective and a propitious sign, if one was needed, that the sf genre is indeed at a transformative stage of transition.



The editor Taryn Jade Taylor's brief "Introduction" to the volume deftly lays out the holistic focus of the handbook in clear but expansive terms that the numerous and disparate individual articles then amply support and articulate. The titular argument is that the idea of plural, fluid, and multiple "co-futurisms," as opposed to solely alternative or critical futurisms, challenges the ritual straitjacketing of global identity and its troubling consignment of vast swaths of the globe to the so-called "margins" or "periphery." Whether viewed as resistant or hegemonic, such a monolithic representation of divergent global voices in stark and singular categories defined by the so-called metropolitan, imperial "center" or "core" has plagued the development of compelling cosmopolitan perspectives for centuries. Co-futurism, on the contrary, implies the envisioning of a collective global future and conceives a broadening sense of inclusiveness pluralistically and in a multitude of ways not exclusively dictated by the global North or perceived restrictively as an obverse image of the Western imagination.

One discursive area of overlap that many essays have in common, then, is how works involved with what is broadly labelled the emergent literature and media of co-futurism recover from “the apocalypse” (2) of colonialism situated in the actual historical past and not necessarily the counterfactual imagined future. And one consequence of a broad-tent conception of co-futurism is what happens when readings, as those advanced by Lysa Rivera, use a particular under-explored lens, such as that of “Chicanafuturism,” to interrogate the technocultural representation of marginalized people in texts not traditionally viewed as science-fictionally oriented, such as Ana Castillo’s *So Far from God* (1993) and Cherrie Moraga’s *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (1995). Another consequence of conceiving such cultural productions as co-futurism is the coupling of diverse localized communities together under common, strategically allied banners, such as those proposed by Kristina Andrea Baudemann’s article on Darcie Little Badger’s (Lipan Apache) “Ku Ko Né Ä” story series, which shows how these sf stories present the importance of sustainable ancestral homelands for a shared notion of indigenous futurisms.

Aside from its wide-ranging global reach and broadly construed understanding of under-represented speculative literature and media, co-futurism also speaks to the problem of internal colonization and the long-term project of de-colonizing not only the pervasive and ongoing neo-colonial systems of material, social, and military inequities and injustices but also contemporary postcolonial cultural, psychological, and literary outlooks and attitudes as well. The Somali-American Sofia Samatar, for instance, draws on the foundational work of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon to analyze Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Ousmane Sembène’s *Xala* (1973) for their vivid postcolonial visions of nightmarish abjection and transgressive waste. And far from valorizing disruptive otherness as inherently technologically progressive or utopian, the handbook also draws repeated attention to the way the discrepant visions of the future offered by the de-colonized global cultures are not necessarily salutary or sustainable, such as Shadya Radhi’s contribution that contrasts the corrosively oil-driven and reactionary world of what Sophia Al-Maria calls “Gulf Futurism,” which decisively contrasts with the counter-hegemonic viewpoints of what Sulaiman Majali calls “Arabfuturisms.”

Similarly, Virginia L. Conn and Gabriele de Seta mine centuries-long discourses of “sinofuturism,” including contemporary Chinese science fiction by the likes of Liu Cixin, Xia Jia, Hao Jingfang, and Chen Qiufan, to argue that such literature and media both replicates and undermines pervasive techno-Orientalist anxieties and promises. Likewise, Catherine S. Ramírez’s discussion of Alex Rivera’s short film *Why Cyberaceros?* (1997), Alejandro Morales’s novel *The Rag Doll Plague* (1991), and Guadalupe Maravilla’s performance *Walk on Water* (2019), explores the fantasies and nightmares of foreign labor that shape the global imaginary, especially as it pertains to Latinx migrants in the United States, and the impact such intensely charged discourses have on the vulnerable and displaced plight of undocumented transnational migrants and refugees denied citizenship protections and that countries both disavow and depend on.

Hence, although all the essays uniformly underscore the urgent need for collaborative and collective visions of better global tomorrows, most essays also wrestle, additionally, with the

complicated idea that reclaiming marginality and championing inclusive futures paradoxically hazards reinforcing neocolonial hierarchies between global core and periphery rooted in the very same narratives of development, modernization, and socio-economic advancement or sectarian nationalism. One innovative strategy out of this ideological cul-de-sac that many essays take, then, is to trace the cultural work that texts perform when they eschew progressive or future-driven narratives and imagine timelines that return to the worldviews of the past conceived a nonlinear pluriverse of reborn possibilities. Joy Sanchez Taylor, for instance, invokes an influential concept from one of the editors, namely, Grace Dillon's "biskaabiiyang"—an Anishinaabemowin term that connotes the ritual healing of a cultural homecoming or return to self—to analyze Carlos Hernandez's *The Assimilated Cuban Guide to Quantum Santeria* (2016), and its hybrid mixture of both particle physics and Afro-Caribbean religion, for its dismantling of the Eurowestern addiction to investing in disruptive futures that are increasingly insecure and precarious.

Given the length constraints of this short review, the discussion above is only a fragmentary snapshot that has skimmed the surface of the mountainous research contained in this volume. I apologize for such omissions, but I know I for one gratefully look forward to regularly consulting the diverse riches of this handbook for years to come. As such a reference source, this handbook will be a necessity for academic libraries that wish to carry cutting-edge sf scholarships in the future.

Jerome Winter, PhD, is a full-time continuing lecturer at the University of California, Riverside. His first book, *Science Fiction, New Space Opera, and Neoliberal Globalism*, was published by the University of Wales Press as part of their New Dimensions in Science Fiction series. His second book, *Citizen Science Fiction*, was published in 2021. His upcoming book is on the depictions of the global imaginary in the sf oeuvre of Ian McDonald. His scholarship has appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, *Extrapolation*, *Journal of Fantastic and the Arts*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Foundation*, *SFRA Review*, and *Science Fiction Studies*.