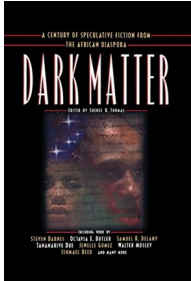




# Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora  
Edited By Sheree R. Thomas

*Discussed June 2002*

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your favorite story/article? Why?
2. Was there a story in this collection that you *really* disliked? Why?
3. Consider the following stories:
  - *Can You Wear My Eyes* (Kalamu ya Salaam)
  - *Like Daughter* (Tananarive Due)
  - *Aye, and Gomorrah...* (Samuel R. Delany)
  - *Ganger (Ball Lightning)* (Nalo Hopkinson)
  - *The Evening and the Morning and the Night* (Octavia Butler)

Do these stories say anything that couldn't be said in any generic (non-black) man/woman F&SF scenario? What do they contribute to "A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora"?

4. Compare *The Comet* (W.E.B. DuBois, 1920) with *The Poison Belt* (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1913) or other, similar SF stories. What does the DuBois story contribute to the "disaster survival" genre? How does he use the "disaster survival" motif to "say something" (make a point)?
5. Were you affected by the excerpt from *Black No More* (George S. Schuyler, 1931)? How? Do you think this story could/would be written now? How does the Schuyler novel compare with a similar story as portrayed in the film *Watermelon Man* (starring Godfrey Cambridge, 1970)?
6. What do you feel about Jewelle Gomez's version of vampirism in *Chicago 1927*?
7. Consider the following stories:
  - *The Evening and the Morning and the Night* (Octavia Butler)
  - *The Comet* (W.E.B. DuBois)

- *Chicago 1927* (Jewelle Gomez)
- *Black No More* (George S. Schuyler)

What different interpretations of the concept "family" do the authors present in these stories?

8. How did the use of dialect affect your enjoyment of the stories *The Goophered Grapevine* (Charles W. Chesnutt, 1881) and *Greedy Choke Puppy* (Nalo Hopkinson, 2000)? Did it have any effect on your ability to read these stories?
9. Does *Gimmile's Songs* (and, by extension, the *Imaro* novels of Charles R. Saunders, which take place in the same setting) contribute anything to the swords-and-sorcery genre?
10. Compare *Separation Anxiety* (Evie Shockley) with Keith Hartman's novels, *The Gumshoe*, *The Witch*, and *the Virtual Corpse* and *Gumshoe Gorilla*. How are their portrayals of the near-future American society similar/different? Can you think of any reasons for the similarities/differences between these portrayals?
11. What do you think Derrick Bell was attempting to "say" in *The Space Traders* (1992)? Did his use of footnotes affect your reading of this science-fiction story?
12. Only two stories contain GLBT themes or references: *Chicago 1927* (Jewelle Gomez) and *Gimmile's Songs* (Charles R. Saunders). What is your opinion of the way the authors depicted GLBT characters? Did you notice the lack of GLBT references in the bios for both Jewelle Gomez and Samuel R. Delany? What's your opinion on this? Does GLBT/F&SF represent another aspect of "Dark Matter"?