Call for Proposals

80ᵗʰ Annual College Language Association Convention

April 1 - 4, 2020
Hilton Memphis
939 Ridge Lake Boulevard
Memphis, TN 38120

Throughout the history of the African diaspora, Black peoples have used literature, language, and popular culture to liberate Black communities from sources of cultural and political oppression. But, as Mark Dery points out in his 1994 essay, "Black to the Future," "The notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?" (180). Furthermore, he questions, "[I]sn't the unreal estate of the future already owned by the technocrats, futurologists, streamliners, and set designers—[traditionally white men]—who have engineered our collective fantasies?" (180). To interrogate these very issues and the ways in which the domains of literature, language, and popular culture have since become psychosocial spaces for envisioning Black futures in ways that would otherwise have been stamped out by enslavement, discrimination, segregation, and more, the College Language Association (CLA) invites papers, panels, roundtables, and workshops for its 80th Annual Convention on the theme of *Afrofuturism: Diasporic Visions*. Hosted by the University of Memphis in Memphis, TN, from April 1-4, 2020, the Convention asks participants to consider how literature and languages confront oppression headfirst (in its different forms), liberating its people while also envisioning alternative futures for African-descended peoples in narratives designed or imagined by Black thinkers. How do literature and languages resist commodification and present their own images of Blackness to the world? How do Black thinkers resist oppression in order to claim our own histories, our own stories, and our own futures? Potential topics might include:

- Speculative Fiction and Black Science Fiction
- Pauline Hopkins
- Sun Ra
- George Schuyler
- Octavia Butler
- Samuel Delaney
- Tananarive Due
- Black Digital Technologies as Facilitator for Claiming Black Histories
- *Hidden Figures, Black Panther, Get Out,* and *Us*
- AfroTech and Black Counter-Futures or Counter-Narratives

Proposals are Due September 15, 2019
[Submit Proposal]()