

“I don’t read science fiction . . . I just read serious writers like Proust and Joyce and Kafka. When science fiction has something serious to say, I’ll read it.”

—Nicholas Brady, from Philip K. Dick, *Radio Free Albe-muth* (1976)

In late 2009, just as we were putting together the call for papers for this special issue, the online science fiction community was deeply engaged in a favorite pastime: arguing with itself about the nature of science fiction. The spur this time was several notorious statements by Margaret Atwood who, once again, was insisting on dissociating her own works—*The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Oryx and Crake*, and *The Year of the Flood*—from the genre, despite similarities in plot and theme. Defining science fiction variously as “rockets and chemicals,” “talking squids in outer space,”¹ and “aliens and spaceships and the other usual things,” she merely reiterated disclaimers she had been making for years—as long, in fact, as she has been writing science fiction.² She had already drawn pointed retorts at various times from such science fiction writers as Robert J. Sawyer, Stephen Baxter, Jeff VanderMeer, Vonda McIntyre, and Ursula K. Le Guin—the last of whom memorably noted that Atwood was refusing the science fiction label because “[s]he doesn’t want the literary bigots to shove her into the literary ghetto.”³ The 2009 version of the debate reached its apex in a proposed “International Science Fiction Reshelving Day,” slotted for Atwood’s seventieth birthday on November 18, on which fans of the science fiction and fantasy genres proposed moving canonical

classics such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* out of the "Literature" sections of bookstores into "Science Fiction and Fantasy" as an "act of protest" against the implication that "the misshelved genre books are good enough to have escaped the genre sections of the bookstore."⁴

The debate is familiar to anyone who follows genre fiction, and at base it always comes back to the question of what constitutes art. No category ever achieves consensus, as is evident in the very term for science fiction and fantasy favored by its writers, artists, and critics: *speculative fiction* or SF. The abbreviation in fact captures an important lack of specificity about what constitutes the genre at all, though many critics nevertheless begin with the hopeless task of defining it, frequently by either accepting or rejecting Darko Suvin's science-fiction-friendly, fantasy-phobic definition of SF as the literature of cognitive estrangement.⁵ The image that graces the cover of this issue—Frank R. Paul's illustration for the E. E. "Doc" Smith story "The Skylark of Space," from an August 1928 issue of *Amazing Stories*—illustrates well the plasticity that confounds a science-fiction-focused approach to SF. When we strip away the familiar trappings of twentieth-century domesticity and the veneer of technoscientific plausibility afforded by whatever futuristic marvel glows in the man's hand, we find that this very science-fictional image is merely the latest iteration of a fantasy of flying as old as Perseus's winged shoes. The initials "SF" beg the naming question—science fiction; speculative fiction—as though embracing the intractable slipperiness of generic boundaries themselves—calling to mind Paul Kincaid's essential observation that "the more comprehensively a definition seeks to encompass science fiction, the more unsatisfactory it seems to those of us who know the genre."⁶ Gary K. Wolfe, in a brief glossary of science fiction terminology that includes definitions of such problematic terms as *academic*, *cognitive estrangement*, and *ghetto*, suggests that SF is "almost universally favored" by fans and critics precisely *because* its two letters don't really stand for anything.⁷ What could be more fitting for this genre?

The flip side of this generic slipperiness, of course, is the equally multitudinous amalgam called "mainstream" or "literary" fiction, standing opposite SF with all the obvious clarity of a hated enemy. If SF operates according to the stale conventions of genre and the capricious whims of the marketplace, the argument goes, mainstream liter-

ary fiction has at least the potential to transcend such petty considerations on its way to the heights of capital-A Art. “I utterly spurn and reject so-called ‘science fiction,’” writes Vladimir Nabokov at the start of his own “amateur performance” in the genre, the late short story “Lance”:

I have looked into it, and found it as boring as the mystery-story magazines—the same sort of dismally pedestrian writing with oodles of dialogue and loads of commutational humor. The clichés are, of course, disguised; essentially, they are the same throughout all cheap reading matter, whether it spans the universe or the living room. They are like those “assorted” cookies that differ from one another only in shape and shade, whereby their shrewd makers ensnare the salivating consumer in a mad Pavlovian world where, at no extra cost, variations in simple visual values influence and gradually replace flavor, which thus goes the way of talent and truth.⁸

Equally familiar to fans as Nabokov’s aesthetic snobbery is the exasperation of Octavia Butler’s high-school writing teacher: “Can’t you write anything normal?”⁹

Many writers and critics continue to distinguish SF from “genuine” literature with all the confidence of Justice Potter Stewart when he sliced another guilty pleasure out from the body of legitimate art: “I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it.”¹⁰ Yet the inevitable dissolution of the boundaries is equally persistent. So-called “slipstream” works of fiction have always straddled the line between SF and the mainstream; Judith Merrill popularized the term “New Wave” in the 1960s to describe the growing interest in experimentation, literary style, and social critique in SF that made it increasingly difficult to distinguish from postmodern fiction generally. It is hard to imagine a classification that could reliably distinguish among the works of “SF” writers Samuel R. Delany and Thomas Disch on one hand and those of “literary” writers William S. Burroughs and Thomas Pynchon on the other. Indeed, Jonathan Lethem—a slipstream writer who won the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1999 and a MacArthur “genius” grant in 2005, after beginning his novelistic career with Philip K. Dick pastiches—wrote in the *Village Voice* in 1998 of “the squandered promise of science fiction,” imagining an

alternate history in which Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* was awarded the Nebula in 1973, thereby paving the way for a world in which SF blended indistinguishably with the American literary canon: Delany, Dick, Le Guin, and Butler as well-known and well-studied as Don DeLillo, Donald Barthelme, Burroughs, and Pynchon. Instead, that year the award went to Arthur C. Clarke for *Rendezvous with Rama*, and SF slipped, he contended, from the "brink of respectability" back to the wrong side of the "genre-ghetto."¹¹ Despite the persistence of this anxiety over ghettoization, however, critical attention to SF has grown steadily since the 1970s, and American literature syllabi routinely feature those very writers, as well as such contemporary figures as Richard Powers, William Gibson, and Nalo Hopkinson. Conversely, SF-centered classes have become permanent fixtures in many English department course offerings, with Atwood's novels, disclaimers notwithstanding, as regular inclusions.

Critical attention to the genre is slowly catching up to such bold declarations as that of the legendary editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, John W. Campbell Jr., who called mainstream literature a "special subgroup of the field of science fiction," since "science fiction deals with all places in the Universe, and all times in Eternity, so the literature of here-and-now is, truly, a subset of science fiction."¹² Carl Freedman echoes this provocative claim in his 2000 book *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* when he notes:

[T]here is probably no text that is a perfect and pure embodiment of science fiction (no text, that is to say, in which science fiction is the *only* generic tendency operative) but also no text in which the science-fiction tendency is altogether absent. Indeed, it might be argued that this tendency is the precondition for the constitution of fictionality—and even of representation—*itself*. . . . It is, then, in this very special sense that the apparently wild assertions that all fiction is science fiction and even that the latter is a wider term than the former may be justified: cognition and estrangement, which together constitute the generic tendency of science fiction, are not only actually present in all fiction, but are structurally crucial to the possibility of fiction and even of representation in the first place.¹³

Or perhaps it might be argued that SF is the mainstream literature of a future that is only just emerging. "We now live science fiction," Marshall McLuhan declared in 1964.¹⁴ "Everything is becoming sci-

ence fiction,” J. G. Ballard proclaimed in 1971: “From the margins of an almost invisible literature has sprung the intact reality of the 20th century.”¹⁵ We might think, too, of a favorite slogan of Kim Stanley Robinson’s: “Science fiction turns out to be the realism of our time.”¹⁶

The temporality of SF is often misleading. Although the genre often takes the future as its setting, alternative histories and the distant past are equally characteristic (especially when we assume the more inclusive definition of SF that encompasses fantasy and myth). The futurity of SF inheres not in its setting but in its insistent imagining of alternatives. If, as the Russian formalists suggested, art characteristically defamiliarizes the world, SF conspicuously takes such estrangement as its central charge: world making, after all, necessarily implies a form of world breaking—or at least introspection. The genre, moreover, registers the obsession with history—with, that is, the telling of the past—that characterizes the moment of its establishment as a permanent fixture in U.S. popular culture following the Second World War; in fact, the very struggle over the name (science fiction or speculative fiction or SF or . . .) registers that legacy. While the genre has precedents arguably extending back to the Book of Genesis or the Epic of Gilgamesh, the editor Hugo Gernsback coined the term *science fiction* in 1926 to refer specifically to works that imaginatively engaged developments in science and technology, both actual and hypothetical.¹⁷ But the genre proliferated most dramatically in the postwar United States against a backdrop in which scientific and technological innovations accelerated by wartime demands presented new utopian possibilities and destructive potential.

Those developments dovetailed with equally dramatic geopolitical transformations also accelerated by the war; the political scientist Harold Isaacs described a world in which “some 70 new states carved out of the old empires since 1945 [are] made up of nonwhite peoples newly out from under the political, economic and psychological domination of white rulers” with people “stumbling blindly around trying to discern the new images, the new shapes and perspectives these changes have brought, to adjust to the painful rearrangement of identities and relationships which the new circumstances compel.”¹⁸ Those very images fueled SF, which came into its own in a world in which geopolitics and scientific and technological innovation were radically unsettling the very concept of the human being; the genre emerged in direct engagement with those questions, registering the promises

and possibilities as well as the dangers of these transformations. The “science” of “science fiction” refers not only, as it did for Gernsback, to the practices of science, but also to science as an epistemology: to the mutual effect of science as a mode of perceiving and cognizing and the social structures, relations, and hierarchies in which scientific innovation was conceptualized.

Our call for papers focused on the literariness of the genre and what it might contribute to an understanding of the body of work named by the title of this journal, *American Literature*:

How, for example, might a focus on science fiction, fantasy, and/or myth change our understanding of literary history? Of literary engagements with scientific and technological innovations as well as with the most pressing political concerns of the moment? How might we use these literary forms to understand genre as a historical repository? The role of mythology in modern culture? What social and geopolitical conditions might produce a genre or mode—or perhaps a critical category—that newly classifies certain literary conventions as genres? What themes or questions surface when we read more canonical works through the lens of science fiction, fantasy, or myth?

But in this respect our plans were somewhat thwarted, as the submissions we received for this special issue generally worked in a more epistemological mode. The submissions were interested less in the relation of speculative fictions to literary historical practice than in the social challenges of its cognitive dimensions and in the insights that emerge from SF’s world making and world breaking.

The essays that follow explore the potent capacity of imagination that Mark Bould has memorably called “the dreadful credibility of absurd things,” in which “what sets fantasy apart from much mimetic art is a frankly self-referential consciousness (an embedded, textual self-consciousness, whatever the consciousness of the particular author or reader) of the impossibility of ‘real life,’ or Real life. It is, paradoxically, the very *fantasy* of fantasy as a mode that, at least potentially, gives it space for a hard-headed critical consciousness of capitalist subjectivity.”¹⁹ The twinned powers of marginality and cognitive estrangement have become veritable definitions of SF, as in Gilles Deleuze’s observation in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) that a “book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detec-

tive novel, in part a kind of science fiction. . . . We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms the one into the other.”²⁰ Or Clarke’s more succinct claim that science fiction is “the only genuine consciousness-expanding drug.”²¹ Or, finally, as Bruce Sterling once quipped, “If poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, science fiction writers are its court jesters.”²² It is, of course, the court jester who sees furthest and truest, and who speaks when no one else dares.

Even Vonnegut, frustrated throughout his career by his early pigeonholing as a science fiction writer, allowed himself this sense of SF triumphalism from time to time. “I love you sons of bitches,” one of his characters tells a convention full of SF authors:

“You’re all I read any more. You’re the only ones who’ll talk all about the *really* terrific changes going on, the only ones crazy enough to know that life is a space voyage, and not a short one, either, but one that’ll last for billions of years. You’re the only ones with guts enough to *really* care about the future, who *really* notice what machines do to us, what wars do to us, what cities do to us, what big, simple ideas do to us, what tremendous misunderstandings, mistakes, accidents, catastrophes do to us. You’re the only ones zany enough to agonize over time and distance without limit, over mysteries that will never die, over the fact that we are right now determining whether the space voyage for the next billion years or so is going to be Heaven or Hell.”²³

We should remember, after all, that the failed science-fiction-writing alter ego Vonnegut invented for himself, Kilgore Trout, had such wonderful ideas—“if only he could write!”²⁴

For Delany (who *can*), the dogged question of whether SF is “as good” as literature makes a category error at the most fundamental level. SF is a mode of cognizing as well as a style of storytelling. Consistently redirecting questions away from the literariness of the genre, Delany muses that presumptive answers to the question “Do you think science fiction should be taken seriously as literature?” completely ignore the possibility that SF might be taken seriously as *more* than literature—as a foundational discourse.²⁵ Here then we find one answer to the by-now-decades-old question “Why SF?” In the overlapping and intertwined discourses of science fiction, fan-

tasy, and myth—in the transformative alternative realities generated by both cognitive and noncognitive estrangement—we find a voluminous, ever-growing cultural archive of terms, tropes, and thought experiments that have become intimately and immediately familiar across the globe, even to people who do not think of themselves as fans. SF literature in the form of paperbacks and comic books may still be “for nerds”—but in the realms of blockbuster cinema, popular video games, and children’s entertainment, SF is more or less the hegemonic cultural form. And it is through the terms of SF, incubated in books and spread through film, television, games, and the Internet, that our culture thinks futurity, thinks alterity, thinks difference itself. The chimerical speculations of SF, more than any other discourse, structure our collective imagination of what is possible. In this sense we might say that our most theoretical and anticipatory speculations are always “inside” SF, whether this relationship is acknowledged or not. Whatever happens, be it landing on the moon, destroying the climate of the planet, or electing the first African American president, SF seems always to have gotten there first—and often best.

In this sense SF holds within itself the restless curiosity and relentless drive toward futurity that has characterized theory ever since Karl Marx dedicated his project to “the *ruthless criticism* of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be.”²⁶ Thus has Freedman suggested that SF and critical theory are “each . . . version[s] of the other.”²⁷ Or, as Ray Bradbury puts it: “That’s all science fiction was ever about. Hating the way things are, wanting to make things different.”²⁸ Or Le Guin, writing of the Stalinists’ designation of Zamyatin as an “internal émigré”: “This smear-word is a precise and noble description of the finest writers of SF, in all countries.”²⁹ The equivalent term in the United States, she notes, would be “un-Americanism”—transmogrifying the title of this journal, for this special issue, to something like *Un-American Non-Literature*. There could be worse things!

From among the many excellent submissions we received, we selected the seven essays that follow for the range of their engagements with the epistemological dimensions of SF. Beginning with Mark Chia-Yon Jerng’s “A World of Difference: Samuel R. Delany’s *Dhalgren* and the Protocols of Racial Reading,” which explores how the world-making dimensions of the genre illustrate the social deter-

minants of perceptions, the essays stage the particular imaginative engagements with the elements of world making—from the most fundamental constituents of communication to the most dramatic geopolitical transformations—that characterize the genre.

Against SF critics who, until recently, have subsumed race-based analyses under the general sign of “difference” and critics of race who have frequently privileged literary realism as the most effective mode of engaging questions of race and racism, Jerng argues that SF offers an important critical perspective on the tenacity of race as a classification or explanatory tool. In its foregrounding of critical reading practices as the cornerstone of world making, SF offers insight into the ways “‘race’ emerges as an effect of how different worlds organize objects.” Jerng underscores the specificity of racialized preperceptions against the tendency of the more generic alterity earlier critics have seen as a central concern of the genre. While he summons Delany as both literary example and companion theorist (consistent with Delany’s insistence on the flexibility of the genre), his reading highlights the particularity of the critical perspective enabled by SF’s emphasis on the connection between detailed reading practices and world making.

The proto-SF that forms the basis for Nathaniel Williams’s “*Frank Reade, Jr., in Cuba: Dime-Novel Technology, U.S. Imperialism, and the ‘American Jules Verne’*” and Aaron Bady’s “*Tarzan’s White Flights: Terrorism and Fantasy before and after the Airplane*” shows how technological innovation produces new imaginative engagements with the world and, in so doing, generates a political slipperiness as well as classificatory indeterminacy. What might begin in the service of a particular politics invariably exposes the constitutive elements of that politics, showing at once the formation of an ideology and its inescapable instability. The genre form itself, Williams argues, complicates any ready-to-hand politics. The Edisonades he considers emerged out of the new possibilities for transportation and exploration to which new technologies gave rise, but new conceptualizations also accompanied those changes. Williams chronicles the metamorphosis from the Frank Reade narratives, which were classic empowerment fantasies, into the (proto-SF) Frank Reade Jr. tales, which could only imperfectly be incorporated into the ideology of expansionism.

Similarly, Bady uses the protean Tarzan story—from Edgar Rice Burroughs’s novels to their cinematic incarnations—to show how

science interacts with fantasy. He uses the term *airmindedness* to describe how the technology and practice of air travel found expression in a collective imaginary and shows how the different manifestations of Tarzan register a changing understanding—in particular, a racialization—of airmindedness. Like Williams, he uses popular culture to track both a shift in the formative terms of an ideology and the means by which that shift occurs.

If Williams and Bady are concerned with the insight cultural forms can offer into political imaginings, David M. Higgins is interested in how SF can explicitly theorize an alternative political ethos. Writing “Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction” in response to recent critics who have labeled SF a “critical literature of empire . . . engaged with imperial dream-work,” Higgins focuses on the genre’s unique “geological sensitivity to seismic shifts in the cultural landscape of imperial imaginings.” Drawing on Le Guin’s Hainish novels, he explores the possibilities offered by the “productive utopian uncertainties” of the genre for articulating a strong cosmopolitan ethics and politics.

The politics Ramzi Fawaz explores in “‘Where No X-Man Has Gone Before!’: Mutant Superheroes and the Cultural Politics of Popular Fantasy in Postwar America,” by contrast, is bottom-up, as he demonstrates how comic books responded to the demands of a changing demographic. While the original superheroes of the Depression Era were characteristically exempla of patriotism, the 1960s witnessed a shift to superheroes who embodied readers’ increasingly conscious struggles to imagine “how one becomes a legible subject capable of performing citizenship in the first place.” Fawaz’s interest in how the changing superhero generates new affective bonds that correspond to emerging “cosmopolitan networks of kinship and affiliation” nicely complements Higgins’s exploration of cosmopolitan ethics.

For Robert Reid-Pharr, such affective fashionings mandate a conscious engagement with the exclusions of history. Like Jerng, Reid-Pharr, in “Death and Desire in Samuel R. Delany’s *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*,” summons Delany as a theorist of history to illustrate the ethical imperative of reclaiming “the dirt of a dirty past.” He follows anthropologist Mary Douglas in understanding classification as a cleansing process, but the past flashes up, as Walter Benjamin so famously put it, at moments of danger. Reading Delany’s novel as a narrative deeply contextualized by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, he shows how the loss of a deep connection to history links gay men at the end

of the twentieth century to enslaved populations of earlier moments. With that loss, Delany “marks,” in the manner of his protagonist, how “humanity” is established along temporal and spatial coordinates that are readily manipulated.

The issue ends with Everett Hamner’s insistence on the revolutionary dimensions of the genome revolution in “The Predisposed Agency of Genomic Fiction.” Richard Powers is, as Delany is for Jerng and Reid-Pharr, a companion theorist as much as an object of study, as Hamner chronicles the narrative transformations attending both genomics and the fiction that engages it. Hamner follows Powers in asserting what Hamner calls the “mediatory potential” of literature, arguing for the possibility that fiction can not only register but also help resolve central dilemmas that emerge from the practices and discoveries of genomics. For both Powers and Hamner, changing the story really just may begin the process of changing the world.

In a world whose basic coordinates are under constant flux from eruptions of ecological crisis to the emergence of genomic science, from the global realignments of religious fundamentalism to the changing parameters of liberation theology, from the ongoing unfoldings of antiracist activism worldwide to the struggle for LGBTQ rights, the estrangements of SF in all its forms, flavors, and subgenres become for us a funhouse mirror on the present, a faded map of the future, a barely glimpsed vision of alterity, and the prepped and ready launchpad for theory today.

Here then are seven estrangements; seven émigrés; seven ruthless criticisms of all that exists; seven ways to make things different.

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Notes

- 1 Eleanor Case and Maggie McDonald, “Life after Man,” *New Scientist*, 3 May 2003; quoted in David Langford, “Bits and Pieces,” *Ansible* 107 (August 2003), www.ansible.co.uk/sfx/sfx107.html.
- 2 Joyce Hor-Chung Lau, “From Margaret Atwood, A Dose of Reality,” *New York Times*, 8 April 2009, www.nytimes.com/2009/04/09/arts/09iht-atwood.html.
- 3 Vonda McIntyre ironically embraced Atwood’s derisive label through the creation of a new subsection of her official fan site, still available on the Web at www.talkingsquidsinouterspace.com; Ursula K. Le Guin,

- “*The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood,” *Guardian*, 29 August 2009, www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/aug/29/margaret-atwood-year-of-flood.
- 4 Additional details can be found at the International Science Fiction Reshelving Day official Web site, www.isfrd.org. ISFRD was ultimately canceled a few weeks before the 18th for a variety of reasons, including a reconsideration of its premises on the part of the organizer, stern criticism from some elements of online fandom, complaints from booksellers, and the discovery that the stunt would not annoy Atwood in the way the organizer had originally hoped; on her Twitter account, the author had called the idea hilarious.
 - 5 The most commonly cited definition reads: “SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979], 7–8). Suvin’s famously restrictive definition—which, it must be noted, he has significantly loosened in his more recent writing—excludes not only fantasy, folklore, and myth but also the majority of what is published as science fiction as well. Ironically, Atwood uses the term *speculative fiction* to distinguish her work from science fiction, but her usage differs from what has become the more common one, which includes science fiction.
 - 6 Paul Kincaid, “On the Origins of Genre,” in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. James Gunn and Matthew Candelaria (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 43.
 - 7 Gary K. Wolfe, “Coming to Terms,” in *Speculations on Speculation*, ed. Gunn and Candelaria, 21.
 - 8 “Lance,” in *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov* (New York: Vintage International, 2002), 633. Although the words belong to a narrator—not necessarily an author—Nabokov expressed much the same attitude in a 1968 BBC interview: “I loathe science fiction with its gals and goons, suspense and suspensories. . . . I don’t think I mock popular trash more often than do other authors who believe with me that a good laugh is the best pesticide” (“The Strong Opinions of Vladimir Nabokov—as Imparted to Nicholas Garnham,” *Listener* [London], 10 October 1968, 463–64; quoted in Roy Arthur Swanson, “Nabokov’s *Ada* as Science Fiction,” *Science Fiction Studies* 2 [March 1975]: 76).
 - 9 Octavia Butler, “Positive Obsession” (essay), in *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 131.
 - 10 Justice Potter Stewart, concurring opinion in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964). He was, of course, speaking of pornography.
 - 11 Jonathan Lethem, “Close Encounters: The Squandered Promise of Science Fiction,” *Village Voice*, 2 June 1998, 145–46.

- 12 John W. Campbell Jr., introduction to *Analog I* (New York: Doubleday: 1963).
- 13 Carl Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2000), 21–22.
- 14 Marshall McLuhan, “Notes on Burroughs,” in *William S. Burroughs at the Front: Critical Reception, 1959–1989* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1991), 73.
- 15 J. G. Ballard, “Fictions of Every Kind,” in *A User’s Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), 205.
- 16 Alison Flood, “Kim Stanley Robinson: Science Fiction’s Realist,” *Guardian Online*, 11 November 2009, www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/nov/10/kim-stanley-robinson-science-fiction-realist. Robinson commonly uses variations on this line in interviews.
- 17 See Gary Westfahl, *Mechanics of Wonder: The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction* (Liverpool, Eng.: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1999); and Westfahl, *Hugo Gernsback and the Century of Science Fiction* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007).
- 18 Harold R. Isaacs, “Color in World Affairs,” *Foreign Affairs* 47 (January 1969): 235–50, 235.
- 19 Mark Bould, “The Dreadful Credibility of Absurd Things: A Tendency in Fantasy Theory,” *Historical Materialism* 10, no. 4 (2002): 83–84.
- 20 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (1968; reprint, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994), xx–xxi.
- 21 Arthur C. Clarke, “Of Sand and Stars,” in *The Sentinel* (1983; reprint, New York: Berkeley, 1986), 3.
- 22 Bruce Sterling, preface to William Gibson, *Burning Chrome* (New York: Eos Books, 2003), xi.
- 23 Kurt Vonnegut, *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965; reprint, New York: Delta Books, 1998), 18.
- 24 Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969; reprint, New York: Delta Books, 1999), 140.
- 25 Samuel R. Delany, “Some Presumptuous Approaches to Science Fiction,” in *Speculations on Speculation*, ed. Gunn and Candelaria, 289–99.
- 26 Karl Marx, “Letters from the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher: Marx to Ruge, Kreuznach, September 1843,” www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09.htm.
- 27 Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*, xv.
- 28 Ray Bradbury, “No News, or What Killed the Dog?” *Quicker than the Eye* (New York: Avon Books, 1996), 163.
- 29 Ursula K. Le Guin, “Surveying the Battlefield,” *Science Fiction Studies* 2 (fall 1973): 88–90, www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/2/marx2forum.htm.