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Symposium on Science Fiction and Globalization

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Symposium on Science Fiction and Globalization

African SF in a Postcolonial Age. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) argues that imperialism and colonialism have outlived their usefulness to capitalism's global spread. Slavoj Žižek's "Multiculturalism, or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism" (1998) describes a process of "auto-colonisation," in which the relationship between metropolitan colonizer and peripheral colonized has given way to one in which multinational capital, having separated itself from its nation of origin, now treats that nation as just one more territory to exploit. Mark Poster's *Information Please: Culture and Politics in the Age of Digital Machines* (2006) even suggests that the "new" globalization inaugurated by transnational capital and digital technologies is best understood by turning from postcolonial theory to consider "emergent forms of domination" (27). In *Red Planets* (2009), I argued that, since at least Jules Verne, sf has been profoundly (if not always wisely) engaged with the processes of globalization and thus has the capacity to address the same questions. Sf from the third and fourth worlds, from indigenous peoples, from the global South—sf from the receiving end—perhaps has even more to tell us.

African sf—typically produced by a precarious middle class negotiating between the cultures of colonizer and colonized in anti- or post-colonial situations that further muddy such distinctions—seems particularly instructive. Mohammed Dib wrote *Who Remembers the Sea* (1962; trans. 1985), one of the first African sf novels, in the midst of Algeria's anti-colonial struggle. It depicts an unreal city, subject to strange powers and upheavals that the narrator—representative of those living through but not active in the revolution—cannot fathom. Although Dib had read no sf before writing his novel, his afterword notes its "fortuitous" similarities to sf: in the best of that genre, "just as in the transparent and sibylline language of dreams," one finds "the obsessions, the desires, the terrors, the most active ancient and modern myths, and the most profound aspirations of the human soul surfacing and showing themselves to us more readily than we do in that literature called 'realistic'" (122). Whether or not this accurately describes First-World sf, Dib's emphasis on the hypnagogic and the mythic (old and new) now reads like a manifesto for much of the African sf that has followed. The sf novels of Congolese Sony Labou Tansi (*Life and a Half* [1977]), Senegalese Ousmane Sembene (*The Last of the Empire* [1981]), Ghanaian Kojo Laing (*Woman of the Aeroplanes* [1988], *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars* [1992], *Big Bishop Roko and the Altar Gangsters* [2006]), Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (*Wizard of the Crow* [2006]), and Nigerian Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani (*I Do Not Come to You By Chance* [2009]), as well as Cameroonian Jean-Pierre Bekolo's film *Les Saignantes* (2005) depict the monstrous governance of often phantasmagoric postcolonies not unlike the Uganda and South Africa analyzed in Mahmood Mandani's *Citizen and Subject* (1998) or the Cameroon in Achille Mbembe's necropolitical *On the Postcolony* (2001). In such novels and films, precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial currents

flow across complex landscapes of independence and in-dependence. And (if Hardt, Negri, Žižek, and Poster are right) they—alongside such Arab-Spring-anticipating works as Egyptian Ahmed Khaled Towfik's *Utopia* (2009) and American Muslim G. Willow Wilson's *Cairo* (2009)—tell us a lot about the globalized (that is, the already monetized, appropriated, and accumulated) future we can expect to inhabit in the auto-colonies.—**Mark Bould, University of the West of England**

History 1, 2, 3. In “The Climate of History: Four Theses” (*Critical Inquiry* [35.2, Winter 2009]: 197-222), Dipesh Chakrabarty offers an interpretive framework for apprehending the material and ideological conditions of a fully globalized world. History, he writes, has traditionally been imagined as a progressivist Grand Narrative called the “history of civilization”—or, even more grandiosely, “the history of the human race”—in which the everyday lives of actual humans fall away in favor of oblique social forces that reveal themselves to us as destiny (201-203). (For sf studies, of course, the natural reference here is the view-from-nowhere of Asimovian psychohistory.) Intervening against this Eurocentric faux-universalism, contemporary postcolonial theory has insisted instead on counter-histories that are characterized by multiplicity and difference; in this theoretical revision, globality collapses back into locality, and human beings consequently re-emerge as persons—especially the disenfranchised and the dispossessed, those who have continually been made to suffer in the name of “progress.”

The first dialectic, then, is the familiar one between center and periphery—between a metropole that imagines itself as the pinnacle of human achievement, and the disparate localities that have been denied inclusion in this totality. But Chakrabarty complicates this picture with the addition of a third history that exists alongside the first two: geologic time, *species* time. This is the moment of the Anthropocene, when the human race discovers itself to be an even more hyperbolic universal than the partisans of the Grand Narrative could have ever dreamed: an immense worldwide “geological agent,” whose collective actions are reshaping the coordinates of the natural world (208-209). In an era of cascading, ever-escalating environmental crises, “species time” reveals itself to us as a radical destabilization of the usual stakes of human history—indeed, as a kind of a sublime terror.

As Ursula Heise has noted in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (2008), since the 1960s and 1970s questions of the global have crystallized around a particular series of science-fictional visual images that, while familiar and perhaps unremarkable today, were revelatory and even shattering in their moment: Soviet and especially NASA images of the Earth as viewed from space, chief among them the “Earthrise” photograph obtained by Apollo 8 in 1968 and the “Blue Marble” photograph taken by Apollo 17 in 1972. In these images of the global totality, we find all three of Chakrabarty's histories at work at once. “Blue Marble” and “Earthrise” signify the culmination of the progressivist narrative of human civilization (History 1)—but their shared photographic focus on the African

continent simultaneously reminds us of the radical *particularity* of that history, its costs and exclusions (History 2), while the sublime vision of the whole globe inevitably points us towards the radical fragility of our ecosystem and the destructive environmental consequences of global capitalism (History 3). From Octavia E. Butler's *PARABLES* novels (1993-1998) to Kim Stanley Robinson's *MARS* trilogy (1992-1995) to James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) to Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) to Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Wind-Up Girl* (2009) to Wanuri Kahiu's *Pumzi* (2009) to Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* (2010), and on and on, the Blue Marble photographs perform in miniature the cognitive work of sf in a time of globalization: to register, interrogate, and reconcile these three very different histories, to uncover lurking behind the false triumphalism of History 1 other sorts of histories, and other kinds of globes. (Sincere thanks to Ian Baucom for his contributions to these thoughts.)—**Gerry Canavan, Marquette University**

Welcome to the Vegas Pyongyang. Recently I visited Las Vegas for the first time. During my brief stay, I explored the Strip and its famously themed spaces. An afternoon drifting through the arcades and tourist traps of Vegas's Resort Corridor became a kaleidoscopic collage of hyper-stylized impressions of locales around the world—from Polynesia to Rome's Trevi district. While each "locale" was conspicuously inauthentic, what remained uncannily authentic were the symptoms of globalization Vegas induced in me. To wander the Strip was to experience Vegas as a city-sized work of science fiction through which many elusive aspects of globalization became kinesthetically intelligible and intimately first-person. Finding "Mandalay Beach" yards from a decapitated statue of Lenin guarding "Red Square," I felt the teleportal effects of "collapsing distance." Watching species native to the Indo-Pacific swim inside an extravagant "Shark Reef Aquarium" remote from natural water sources, I grew a new sense—a glass-and-concrete sense—of Earth's finite resources. Roaming vast indoor acreage busy with voices speaking foreign languages, navigating clock-deprived malls reminiscent of shops in an international airport, I lost track of local time while somehow amassing a surplus of stray time-zones that jammed my circadian rhythm. Artificial jetlag descended upon me.

The next day, departing McCarran International (itself an extension of the Strip), I fell asleep during takeoff and dreamed of a spectral addition to Vegas's cityscape: a replica of the 105-story Ryugyong. Located in the capital of what is arguably the world's last communist state, Pyongyang's "Hotel of Doom" (additional epithets: "Death Star," "Ghostscraper") is strikingly evocative of an alien rocketship. In my dream, Ryugyong's silhouette was eerily at home among the Stratosphere, "Camelot," Luxor Pyramid, "Eiffel Tower," and other landmarks anthologized in the skyline's eclectic jumble of icons. At the hotel's entrance stood female traffic "greeters" chiming "Welcome to the Vegas Pyongyang!" while directing visitors with flawlessly choreographed precision. Inside: everywhere an ambiance of simulated luxury and dissonant facades. Portraits glorifying "Dear Leader" adorned the walls of Starbucks. Billboards advertised the hotel's signature spectacle: "Arirang Mass Gymnastics!" Lurid

murals depicted meadows of Kimilsungia and Kimjongilia strewn with corpses of “Defeated US Imperialists!” alongside the flowers’ namesakes picnicking on sashimi and Hennessy Cognac atop Baekdu-san. Giftshops sold gilt-framed night-satellite images of Korea: radiant North; lightless South. Restaurants had names like “Juche” and “38”—the latter featuring hidden washroom “stalls” whose doors, when decrypted, opened secret stairwells. Dimly lit steps cascaded from landing to landing before turning into subterranean mazes infiltrating borderline darkness. Tunnels of increasing brightness eventually led to “Underground Economy,” an immense and richly appointed casino indistinguishable from most such Vegas haunts. But “Underground Economy” was a front for another kind of black market. Here, one could send to North Korea supplies guaranteed to reach those truly in need. Here, one could receive messages from long-lost relatives. Here, one could trade uncensored photographs and first-hand accounts documenting North Korean reality.

Awaking, I realized my dream resonated with nonfictional accounts of North Korea that I’ve encountered in my research. DPRK propaganda posters bear an ironic resemblance to Thomas Kinkade’s commercialized oeuvre. Similarly, Pyongyang—a showcase city made of special effects and simulacra (e.g., lavish neon-lit fountains; theaters furnished with Romanesque pillars; a monumental model of Paris’s Arc de Triomphe)—bears an ironic resemblance to the Vegas strip. How to analyze such ironies? I used to think of North Korea as the opposite of globalization. Did this opposition still make sense?

For now, instead of answering, I would rather perambulate. The following line of thought has no particular destination. Yesterday it occurred to me that my afternoon in Vegas was in some ways a hyperbolization of afternoons I’ve spent drifting through immigrant neighborhoods in Queens, New York. Often associated with the word “authentic” (especially regarding cuisine), Queens has been characterized, unhyperbolically, as the planet’s most ethnically diverse location and a vivid microcosm of the globe. Is it meaningful to compare Queens and Vegas as representations of the globalizing world? Is it possible to replicate the authenticity of a place like Queens in a place like Las Vegas? Will the enclaves of Queens ever include a DPRK-town? How will Earth-after-globalization look, smell, taste, sound, feel?—**Seo-Young Chu, Queens College**

Global Indigenous Science Fiction. Contemporary Indigenous writers are experimenting with sf genres more than ever before, while readers are beginning to recognize earlier Indigenous sf as a well-established movement that has been overlooked for years. Many Indigenous cultures do not classify discourse genres, making “storytelling” the singular means of passing all knowledge from generation to generation. Indigenous science is communicated through storytelling. Because mainstream critical theory categorizes genres, Indigenous stories about science de facto are sf stories.

Gerald Vizenor, for example, embraced sf in his debut novel, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978), which masters stock sf topoi: post-apocalypse, dystopia, alternate reality, and (post)colonialism. One could argue that Vizenor invented “slipstream” literature in his 1978 story “Custer on the Slipstream,”

but critics give a mainstreamer credit for coining the term in 1989. Vizenor is categorized as a Native writer, however, not an sf writer. Reviews that note sf elements in *Bearheart*, *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991), and *Hotline Healers* (1997) marvel that a “Native writer” uses sf elements, instead of explicating the relevance of sf to Native experience.

That trend may be waning, but it persists. Helen Haig-Brown (Tsilhqot’in)’s *Cave* (2009) embodies “alternate world” and “contact” sf themes while renewing an ancestral Tsilhqot’in story, and has been called the first sf film to be shot in an Indigenous language. Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet)’s novel *The Fast Red Road* (2000) exposes Napi science of “Native time slots” and “syndicated time loops” as ancient anticipations of cutting-edge quantum mechanics. Still, critics tend to talk about such contributions as “Native” or “Indigenous” first, and as sf coincidentally. The association makes sense given that sf themes of contact, the othering of “the alien,” post-apocalyptic loss, dystopia, and identity politics are the *sine quibus non* of global Indigenous experience. For example, Jeff Barnaby (Mi’gmaq)’s short *File Under Miscellaneous* (2010) can be categorized as “dystopian cyberpunk set in a near future alternate reality,” but the film is *about* the revitalization of Indigenous language and *teaches* that pre-contact Indigenous writing systems were erased as part of colonial agendas to eradicate Native sovereignty, history, and identity.

Indigenous sf authors often write “fiction” that allegorizes the facts of historical trauma in an effort to promote social justice. Their storytelling represents “decolonizing methodologies,” “Indigenous self-determination,” and “survivance.” Survivance rejects the notion that Indigenous peoples ought to remain content that they survived colonization; self-determination compels Indigenous peoples to define their own identities and to regain lost sovereignties; decolonizing methodologies reflect the participation of scholarly activists in this enterprise.

Simon Ortíz (Acoma Pueblo) and Jeanette Armstrong (Okanagon) recognize that Indigenous issues are global issues also affecting peoples of Africa, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, and elsewhere that exist alongside the Hollywood celluloid representation of “Natives” in the Americas. George Manuel (Shuswap) presciently called for a global Indigeniety movement in *The Fourth World* (1974). Manuel was alert to the interdependence between Euro-Western science, which often is driven by violent and toxic technologies, and Indigenous science, which has advocated sustainability for millennia. So how does Indigenous sf represent technology in the context of twenty-first century post-postmodernity and (post)colonial theory? It embraces Native Slipstream, re-centers contact narratives, advocates survivance within Native Apocalypse, teaches Indigenous scientific literacies, and advances “Skin thinking,” a concept attributed to Joy Harjo (Muskogee Creek) and popularized by Robert Warrior (Osage), who characterizes “thinking in skin” as a return to Indigenous languages. We will see worldwide Indigenous sf told in original languages, as Helen Haig-Brown’s *Cave* has set precedent for.

Emerging Indigenous sf will declare itself sf rather than acquiescing to categorization as “Native literature.” It will promote survivance and create an

event horizon drawing all peoples into a shared spacetime where we understand, as Robert Sullivan (Ngā Puhī) teaches, to sing *waiaita* to the spheres. *Wāsseagoshka anāng*.—**Grace L. Dillon, Portland State University**

A Science Fiction of Finance Capital? Though the popularity of the term “globalization” is recent, the thing itself is not. Its origins lie in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, when the unspeakably violent primitive accumulation of capital on every continent (save Australia and, of course, Antarctica) enabled the “takeoff” of generalized commodity production in the European metropolis; and, as Marx stressed again and again, the global market has always been the ultimate driving force in the development of capitalism. Indeed, the past half-millennium or so of human history—the capitalist era—might be neatly described as the period in which the global becomes a meaningful concept in any sense beyond that of mere physical geography.

Accordingly, globalization has helped to shape virtually every human activity for about 500 years. Yet it might be argued that few, if any, forms of cultural production have been more profoundly shaped by globalization than sf. It is no accident that *Frankenstein* (1818)—still the majority (and I think correct) choice as the founding text of the genre—should foreground the area around the North Pole as one of its settings, thus visually suggesting an image of our world as—precisely—a single globe in a way that few earlier novels had done. But this image is really hammered home in the work of Poe, Verne, Wells, and (even more) their successors, as so much sf moves into outer space and thus explicitly insists on seeing the earth as a globe in the most literal way: often, indeed, as one globe among several (or many) others. It might seem, then, that sf as a literary form should be especially well-equipped to engage the various mutations and metamorphoses of capitalist society as the latter becomes more thoroughly globalized; and this hypothesis is indeed verified, I believe, by the history of the best sf from Asimov and Heinlein, through Dick, Le Guin, and Delany, to Robinson and Gibson and beyond—to pick just a few names among many.

But it is in precisely this context that sf now faces perhaps its greatest challenge. For the current moment of globalization can be best described as that of finance capital run amok; and finance (as opposed to industrial) capital is notoriously resistant to representation in literary or any other expression (save perhaps in the most avant-garde of mathematical formulae). Novelists at least since Dreiser—or maybe even since Balzac—have occasionally wondered whether there could be a fiction of finance. I don’t know the answer, but I would look for such a thing among the sf being produced right now; and the question strikes me as the most interesting that can be asked about current sf.—**Carl Freedman, Louisiana State University**

Global SF Videogames. As sf story-telling cultures interrogate the role of late capitalism in the creation of global connections, one medium seems to be crucially absent from most discussions—videogames. There is a certain irony in this lacuna since, as a form, games are specifically a product of the world circumscribed in global science fictions. Gaming houses tend to license and outsource products and services more actively than the film industry; games beat

cinema and television in terms of the scope of international distribution; and the gaming scene—particularly its independent and small- and mid-size representatives—is far more egalitarian in its attentiveness to non-Anglophone titles than other media. Furthermore, the industry's experimentation with new economic models and forms of promotion/distribution (online sales, digital-rights management platforms, low prices on the core product and incremental payments for additional downloadable content, etc.) seems to reflect many late capitalist practices perfectly. Last but not least, the attendant phenomena of the industry such as developing-world sweatshops with players accumulating virtual items or experience points for those in richer countries or the global flows of illegally copied games are in themselves both causes and results of the internationalization and globalization of the medium.

Thematically, sf videogames have long reflected the global flows of information and capital and their intimate enmeshing with political and social structures. While few titles foreground globalism as a phenomenon, games such as *Deus Ex* (2000), *Project Snowblind* (2005), *Crysis* (2008), and *Syndicate* (2012) are set in the globalized world of corporate technologies and/or driven by conflicts characteristic of global economies. Such preoccupations also manifest in games superficially more space-oriented. For instance, the *Mass Effect* franchise or the massive-multiplayer game *EVE Online* strongly rely—narratively and in their gameplay—on the interconnectedness of portrayed worlds and can be easily interpreted as critiques of more Earth-bound global mindsets and practices.

The international perspective is also evident in the very structure of the medium. The modular, level-based construction of many games, particularly first- and third-person shooters, invites sudden shifts of geographical setting and suggests global regimes of power and corporate interconnectivity—for instance, *Deus Ex* moves the player's character from New York to Hong Kong and Paris to Vandenberg Air Force Base and Area 51. Simultaneously, those attempting analyses of sf videogames should be attuned to the fact that the medium conveys its portrayals of the global order in ways different from sf literature or film—less in the usually formulaic narrative background and more in the visual domain and the structure of tasks envisioned for the players.—**Paweł Frelik, Marie Curie-Sklodowska University**

Filling in the Blank Spaces. If much of science fiction has its origins in the discourse and literature arising from the colonial enterprise, as suggested by John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008), then it follows that the genre has long had global implications. Indeed, the global circulation of ideas and texts in the sf written in Brazil and other countries of Latin America since the nineteenth century, it seems to me, is both a continuation of the development of the genre outside the Anglo-American context and a dawning awareness of the trend among Anglo-American authors and critics.

What interests me is the transformation of the iconography of hegemonic science fiction as writers from other cultures incorporate it into their own

stories. Thus, the sf genre becomes a type of proverbial toolbox that can be used by writers of all cultures. Some of the best-known representatives of this trend, perhaps because they write in English, are Nalo Hopkinson, Amitov Ghosh, and Karen Tei Yamashita, to cite only a few, but I think the practice extends to writers all over the globe, as they use the genre in order to portray technology and its impact on their culture and society or to imagine a different political past or future. The language barrier is a considerable hurdle in many cases. Contests for translation undertaken by the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts and the SF and Fantasy Translation Awards are admirable steps towards increasing the readership of global sf, but in most cases we must still depend on critics and academics to familiarize us with these new additions to the genre.

One of the dangers of the new global awareness is the temptation to write about other cultures without knowing them well. Let us recall that in the first chapter of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), the narrator/protagonist mentions that in his youth he often gazed at maps of exotic locales, the apparent "blank" spaces of the cultural unknown. As Edward Said and others in postcolonial studies have observed, Western authors often fill in the "blank spaces" of a lesser-known culture with stereotypes and preconceived ideas. The ideal would be to have "global science fiction" speak for itself. In the meantime, we can forge ahead to continue the dialogue between cultural centers and peripheries, grateful for writers, academics, and critics who continue to explore connections and exchanges between the sf genre and its culturally diverse manifestations around the globe.—**Libby Ginway, University of Florida**

From Global North to Global South. Globalization and science fiction are reflected—and refracted—in the globalization of science fiction. Much of my work on early Latin American sf has examined the great degree to which science fiction is and has long been a global genre, read and written around the world, forming a planet-spanning continuity—or, to use Damien Broderick's terminology, a "megatext web" made up of "collective intertextualit[ies]" ("Megatext," *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Online. 18 Aug. 2012). Yet I am constantly tripping over ways in which sf is *not* global or at least not so global as I had unconsciously slipped into assuming it was.

The term that keeps resurfacing is access. Positivist fantasies imagine science and technology—with science fiction hot on their heels—stretching out to cover the globe in a continuous grid: exponential growth in telegraph lines and homes with telephone/tv/pc/www, etc. The Internet lulls us into a sense of universal interconnectedness, universal access. Certainly reading and research options continue to be revolutionized by email, social media, webzines, digitized archives and bibliographies, and more. But the reality remains that access to sf is uneven, for all of us—access to works themselves, to readership via publication and distribution of one's work and via translation, to local communities of sf, and to the global collective intertext.

In science fiction, currents of influence have tended to flow from Northern to Southern hemispheres (for this Latin Americanist's "North" and "South," fill in the [inter]cardinal points or other terms of your choice: Anglophone/Non-

Anglophone, Center/Periphery, First/Developing World, producers/consumers of science and technology...); and writers, fans, and critics in the periphery have needed to establish their own voices in the face of such hegemony. While the North-to-South current endures, intra-Southern connections have also been increasing for some time. What is most lacking is a stronger current running South-to-North. Colonial and imperialist terminologies of “discovery” and “acculturation” have largely given way to less unidirectional concepts such as “encounter” and “transculturation”; still, the conversation remains overly one-sided—or at least one side does not always hear or understand what the other is saying.

What is changing most slowly in the globalization of science fiction is access across language barriers. One of the next challenges for the genre is to further translation efforts all round, and to further globalize ourselves. We have begun to meet this challenge with globally focused conference themes, special issues and anthologies, the Jamie Bishop Memorial Award for scholarship on sf/f in languages other than English, the SF and Fantasy Translation Awards for fiction, and expanded coverage of non-Anglophone sf in reference works, to name but a few. But who am I to talk? I need to find time to learn Hindi ... or maybe Romanian....—**Rachel Haywood Ferreira, Iowa State University**

Global SF as Cosmopolitan Mutant. My book *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* was published at the very end of 2011 in the UK, and the very beginning of 2012 in North America. The moment it was published, it became hopelessly out of date. And that is a wonderful thing indeed.

In early 2005, I first made the mental connection between science-fictional otherness and postcolonial Other-ness, and started work on my PhD soon after. At the time, there wasn't very much academic work on sf and postcolonialism, or very much postcolonial science fiction explicitly identified as such; Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan's *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Visions of the Future* (2004) had just recently been published. It felt as if I was in a new analytical space (which is of course very exciting to a PhD student and aspiring academic), and in a way, I was.

On the other hand, I really wasn't. Not in the least.

As John Rieder has pointed out in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008), “science fiction exposes something that colonialism imposes” (15). Science fiction has *always* been, in some way, about colonialism, about the imposition of power, about the encounter with the other.

And, of course, I have spent the past several years gazing in wonderment at the richness, variety and deep and foundational generic hybridity of the science fiction being published and filmed. Nalo Hopkinson, Nnedi Okorafor, Lauren Beukes, Minister Faust, Saladin Ahmed, Lavie Tidhar, Aliette de Bodard, Kaaron Warren, Vandana Singh, Neil Blomkamp ... I could continue with the names for an entire page, but that's not my purpose here. My point is that the vast majority of these writers and filmmakers have come to prominence in the field in the last ten years—many in the last five. It wasn't *me* who was entering this new space: it was *them*.

Science fiction itself is changing. It is in the process—and it is always a process—of becoming postcolonial, and of becoming cosmopolitan. The genre itself is shifting, changing, breaking, and re-forming. It is not diluted and it is not compromised. Perhaps it is mutant. It is gloriously *new*.

Of course, science fiction has always loved to imagine the results of evolution. Science fiction loves a metamorphosis. Perhaps this is its own.—**Jessica Langer, Humber College**

The Emergence of Globalization in Early SF. Globalization began to appear as a subject in American science fiction in the late nineteenth century, in the period when the US was joining European powers in the imperial competition for territorial possessions, notably in the taking of Cuba and the Philippines. In Frank Stockton's *The Great War Syndicate* (1889), war between the US and Britain is presented as an aberration wherein the technological inventiveness of one country offsets the traditional naval might of the other. The ending of hostilities produces a syndicate between the two countries where "all the nations of the world" willingly submit to a Pax Anglo-Americana. This harmonious resolution between old and new empires was something of an exception in the speculative fiction of the period, which tended more often to stress American hegemony not only over the Earth but near space too. In the anonymous *Man Abroad* (1886), the US has conquered the Earth and stands at the center of a worldwide trade network. After tortuous negotiations with Jupiter, Venus, and Mars, which all have their imperial eyes set on each other, the planets agree to a peaceful coexistence based on rules laid down in the US legal system. Most of the novel consists of discussions between the President and his advisers over the desirability of private funding of imperial ventures and the ethics of the principle "to the victor the spoils." American know-how underpinned Garrett P. Serviss's rejoinder to Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898), *Edison's Conquest of Mars* (1898), where the necessary preconditions of a military expedition are fulfilled by Edison's discovery of the Martians' energy source, a better flying machine, and a new weapon named the "disintegrator." Although the mission to Mars is supported by the worldwide Congress of Nations, there is no opposition when the US takes the lead.

The official closing of the frontier in 1890 necessitated the re-imagining of imperial goals. These might be located within the Earth, as happens in William R. Bradshaw's *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (1892), where the intrepid narrator becomes commander-in-chief of the "inner" army and admiral of their fleet. Or the grand narrative of American exploration and discovery could be extended into space, as happens in John Jacob Astor's *A Journey in Other Worlds* (1894), where science, technology, and enterprise come together in a voyage into space explicitly continuing the voyage of Columbus. In this way, internal and interplanetary space becomes rendered as ripe for imperial picking. These early novels anticipate subsequent treatments of space exploration as extensions of America's Manifest Destiny. As early as the 1890s, terrestrial expansion and the appropriation of space had become imagined and even authorized by US military-technological supremacy.—**David Seed, University of Liverpool**

Towards an Alternative Globalization. Globalization is not easy to define; it means many things. With the ubiquity of the Internet, even in poorer parts of the world, we come ever closer to Marshall McLuhan's vision of a "global village." Ideally, this should lead to a new cosmopolitanism: an ability to move among different cultures and ways of life, in a manner free both of the old colonialist condescension and exoticism, and of the subsumption of differences into a single, homogeneous "melting pot." But actually existing globalization is far from this ideal.

It is rather a matter of what Marx called the "real subsumption" of all relations of production and consumption, and of all forms of life, under capital. All aspects of peoples' lives, all over the world, are increasingly subject to the vagaries of financial speculation, which extracts "value" from them at every turn. And more and more of what used to be "common," or freely available, is appropriated by large corporations as "intellectual property." These movements are worldwide; they cross all boundaries. Particular states and governments are unable to restrict them but can only work to facilitate them. Not only are these processes and forces global in scope, they also have global consequences: environmental destruction and climate change. There is no place on the Earth that is exempt from these transformations. Globalization is overwhelming and bewildering. Its forces shatter our composure with their relentless "future shock."

And yet, the conditions of capitalist globalization insinuate themselves so completely into our everyday existence, that we find ourselves taking them for granted. As Slavoj Žižek, Fredric Jameson, and Mark Fisher have all suggested, we find it easier to imagine the end of the world altogether than we do to imagine the end of capitalism. And this is why science fiction is urgently necessary. We live in a world that is, itself, so cognitively and affectively estranging, so science-fictional and hyperreal, that traditional (realist or "mimetic") fiction is not capable of representing it. In order to grasp our own positions in the world, as well as to grasp all the nonhuman entities whose fates are inextricably linked with our own, we need practices of what Jameson calls "cognitive mapping," as well as what Jonathan Flatley calls "affective mapping."

Science fiction is uniquely able to provide this. Sf narratives can track the processes of globalization, all the way to their most dreadful and apocalyptic consequences. And sf can also provide counter-narratives, visions of an alternative globalization, precisely at the time when such imagining has become so difficult for us.—**Steve Shaviro, Wayne State University**