**DIVIDED WORLDS: THE POLITICAL**

**INTERVENTIONS OF SCIENCE FICTION**

**Andrew Hammond (University of Brighton) and**

**David Seed (University of Liverpool)**

Although not always recognised as such at the time, science fiction became a vital medium for political commentary during the Cold War. The picture varies considerably from country to country and can also differ from one period to the next within a single national culture. Yet evidence of the genre’s increased importance is found both in the famous centres of activity across Western Europe and North America and in national literatures whose output remains understudied in Western scholarship. For example, by the 1980s Japan had opened up the field to different media and was producing some 400 SF publications annually, new SF novels in Eastern Europe sold out within days of publication and the most impressive SF magazine was said to be the Argentinian *El Péndulo* (for Sam J. Lundwall, ‘undoubtedly the best science fiction magazine in content, presentation and layout ever published anywhere’).[[1]](#footnote-1) As another example, the author likely to have been most popular in many countries was not H.G. Wells, Isaac Asimov or Arthur C. Clarke but the Polish writer and physician, Stanisław Lem. The surge in interest even occurred in nations where indigenous work was relatively scarce. For example, in Mexico, a country that supposedly ‘sidestep[ped] the genre in a particularly drastic way’, SF texts were appearing in significant numbers as early as the 1950s.[[2]](#footnote-2) Alongside short stories by Juan José Arreola, Antonio Castro Leal and Carlos Fuentes were Spanish dime novels and translated classics from the United States, Soviet Russia, Britain and France, either imported or issued by local presses, which were also producing translations for export. On newsstands, North American SF comics and pulp magazines competed with indigenous publications – *Enigmas*, *Ciencia y Fantasía*, *Los Cuentos Fantásticos* – that combined original work by Mexican writers and translated material from elsewhere. Although its major phase would occur later, Mexican SF of the decade typified the Latin American ‘golden age’ as well as the genre’s rapid spread around the world. It is perhaps no surprise that the Mexican resident Alfredo Cardona Peña, in the poem ‘Recreo sobre la ciencia ficción’ (A Recess about SF, 1967), would soon be referring to it as the mythology of the times.[[3]](#footnote-3)

One of the features that linked SF production around the world was an informed and detailed engagement with contemporary scientific progress. This was partly the result of generic conventions established in the late nineteenth century, when the on-going industrialisation of Western Europe sparked urgent debates about the processes and effects of modernity. Central to such debates were H.G. Wells’s ‘scientific romances’ which, grounded in current research, analysed the potential of actual or hypothetical technologies and assessed their impact on society, initiating the widespread speculation on the degenerative or progressive capabilities of industrial-technological civilisation that took place in the first half of the twentieth century.[[4]](#footnote-4) The speculation was made even more urgent, however, by the nature of technological innovation during the early Cold War. Although many countries can trace a tradition of science fiction going back a century or beyond, its full establishment is usually located in the 1950s and 1960s, when the launch of Sputnik, the start of the space race, the growth of nuclear testing and the increasing sophistication of metropolitan society and mass communication underlined the genre’s relevance to ever-greater numbers of readers. This is not to say that the kind of sensationalism with which the genre had long been associated was on the decline. Alongside the informed prognoses of ‘hard SF’ were lurid tales of space travel in which improbable technologies and unlikely aliens were brought in for dramatic effect, privileging spectacle over speculation and drawing inspiration from the US strip cartoons, B-movies and formulaic thrillers which gained a global audience from the 1930s. Further complicating any definition of Cold War SF is its frequent absorption of other fictional forms (fantasy, horror, adventure, spy fiction) and its bifurcation into a range of sub-genres (invasion fiction, future-war narratives, alternative histories, cyberpunk, etc.). Nevertheless, the multiple strands tend to coalesce around a single set of concerns: as critics describe it, this is a literary form ‘that seems conscious of the ideological dominance of science’ and that reflects the ‘fears and hopes generated by the creative as well as the destructive potentials of advanced technology’.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The science fiction of the period also exhibited the transnational patterns of influence, exchange and production that had marked the genre since its inception.[[6]](#footnote-6) Although the texts often bore the imprint of local settings and cultures, the dissemination of work in translation meant that a shared set of tropes – space travel, time machines, robotics, computers – appeared in national literatures from the United States and Canada to Argentina, Australia, Nigeria, Hungary, Denmark, China, India and beyond. The translated work included standards by Camille Flammarion, Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe and present-day Anglo-American fiction by Philip K. Dick, Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov, the last three managing to filter into the Soviet Union and to shape its own version of ‘hard SF’ (*nauchnaia fantastika*). Most obviously, Wells was continuing to gain a global reputation. Despite his loss of faith in social prophecy and meaningful historical sequence in *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (1945), he continued to influence eastern and western SF, even receiving direct tributes in the Mexican author Diego Cañedo’s *Palamás, Echevete y yo* (Palamás, Echevete and I, 1945) and the Egyptian writer Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *Rihla ilā al-ghad* (Voyage to Tomorrow, 1957), as well as in the Australian writer David J. Lake’s *The Man Who Loved Morlocks* (1981).[[7]](#footnote-7) A similar impact was achieved by George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), which by the end of the Cold War had sold some 15 million copies in over 20 languages. Although the science element in the novel is slight, the imagined technologies of national security (atomic weapons, two-way telescreens, electronic bugs) gave later writers a symbolic framework for socio-political prediction, justifying David Caute’s claim that the novel ‘exercised a greater impact on the culture of the Cold War than any work of history, political science or reportage’.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Yet Anglo-American material was not the only work to circulate. Despite enjoying less of the global market share, popular Soviet-Russian authors such as Arkady and Boris Strugatsky helped to inspire the SF boom in Latin America and China, while Tor Åge Bringsvaerd (Norway), Sakyô Komatsu (Japan), Hugo Correa (Chile) and Jorge Luis Borges (Argentina) gained international audiences, the last cited as an influence by authors as diverse as William Gibson (US-Canada), Stanisłav Lem (Poland) and Luis Britto García (Venezuela). Despite the many institutional obstacles to communication during the Cold War, there was a certain amount of traffic in SF from the eastern bloc to Western Europe and North America. In 1962, Isaac Asimov introduced two collections of Soviet SF stories where he examined the working of their ‘sociological phase’ and initiated a critical dialogue over first meeting other intelligent beings between short stories by Ivan Efremov and Murray Leinster.[[9]](#footnote-9) Asimov hedged his comments, unlike Darko Suvin’s collection from ‘socialist countries’, *Other Worlds, Other Seas* (1970), where he proposed the utopian subject as central to Soviet SF. In the same decade, Franz Rottensteiner’s *View from Another Shore* (1973) continued the promotion of non-Anglophone SF by European writers, including writers from the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania, though by 1999 he had come to pronounce American dominance of the field.[[10]](#footnote-10) Nevertheless, such collections assisted in the formation of more cosmopolitan readerships, a process that was taking place worldwide. In many countries, the circulation of material was encouraged by the expansion of literacy and the consequent boost to the magazine and paperback market which, as in the Mexican case, required a steady supply of new and popular writing. At the same time, circulation was assisted by an evolving culture of fanzines, associations, specialist presses and international conventions, as well as by mainstream novelists turning their hand to the genre. Works by Adolfo Bioy Casares, Yukio Mishima, Doris Lessing, Mircea Eliade, Salman Rushdie and Satyajit Ray, amongst many others, began to close the gap between literary and popular fiction and to offset the genre’s reputation for sub-literary hackwork.

The fact that science fiction had an international dimension did not mean that authors were unaffected by the global divisions of the period. Much of the writing remained national in orientation and reflected the nation’s ideological alignment in the blocist politics of the Cold War. In the West, the genre’s common grounding in extraterrestrial otherness and interplanetary strife offered ready symbols for the perceived requirements of national security. Anxieties about security partly explain the prevalence of invasion narratives in the USA and Britain, which were frequently read as anti-communist allegories, whether the invading entities were pods, slugs or extraterrestrials. These invasions triggered Manichean conflicts with a threatening other, where the outcomes frequently involved a loss of affect, automatism and acquiescence to higher forces. Such processes could be politically implicit, as in Robert A. Heinlein’s *The Puppet Masters* (1951), where parasites attach themselves to victims’ backs and take them over, or politically explicit, as in Isabel Moore’s *The Day the Communists Took Over America* (1961) and in any number of propagandistic critiques of Sino-Soviet militaries, trade unionists and democratic socialists in SF texts throughout the ‘free world’.[[11]](#footnote-11) In the eastern bloc, the ideological binarism was reversed for the purposes of safeguarding the revolution against capitalist sabotage: for example, Wang Xiaoda’s ‘Shenmi de Bo’ (The Mysterious Wave, 1979) and Valentin Ivanov’s *Énergiia podvlastna nam* (The Energy Is under Our Dominion, 1949-50) see Western plotters foiled by Chinese and Soviet security services respectively. Bizarrely, one of Lem’s best known novels, *Solaris* (1961), was first published by the Ministry of National Defence for use by the military, although it presented an ironic view of astronauts studying a remote planet while simultaneously being studied by the planet itself.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The tighter state control of literary activity in the eastern bloc meant that even speculation on the future had a carefully prescribed ideological format. Although utopian fantasy had been outlawed by Stalin, concerned that idealistic accounts of the future ‘might raise popular expectation and imply criticism of present conditions’, the thaw of the late 1950s and 1960s led to work that ‘spoke the language of forward-looking utopia’, much of it inspired by Ivan Efremov’s trailblazing *Tumannost’ Andromedy* (Andromeda, 1957).[[13]](#footnote-13) At the same time, communist regimes were keen to popularise science among young readers and viewed science fiction as a way of supplementing school and university curricula and advancing the ‘Scientific-Technological Revolution’.[[14]](#footnote-14) The ‘hard SF’ that resulted – František Bĕhounek’s *Robinsoni vesmíru* (The Space Family Robinson, 1958), Günther Krupkat’s *Die Unsichtbaren* (The Invisible Ones, 1956), Vadim Okhotnikov’s *Na grani vozmožhnogo* (Frontiers of the Possible, 1947) – saw characterisation replaced by scientific exposition and adventure focused on the invention and application of new technologies. While socialist internationalism was common in the literature, there was also a concern for national interests, producing in Hungary what John Fekete has termed a ‘national-chauvinist SF’ (or a ‘utilitarian mixture of Jules Verne and patriotism’).[[15]](#footnote-15) Another example is Chinese *kepu wenxue* (‘literature for the popularisation of science’) which attempted ‘to broaden the horizons of young Chinese readers and to encourage their appreciation of scientific knowledge’.[[16]](#footnote-16) The work was typified by Chi Shuchang’s *Gediao Bizi de Daxiang* (Elephants with Their Trunks Removed, 1958), a tale of genetically enhanced pigs that appears to forecast advances in food production during Mao’s ‘Great Leap Forward’ but could equally be read as a satire on state megalomania.

While acknowledging writers’ frequent complicity with official ideologies, the following chapter will focus on material that took an oppositional line. This was never a dominant strand in science fiction and, as the genre’s fraught history under totalitarianism illustrates, was often absent for long periods in a number of countries. Just as Chinese SF was prohibited during the Cultural Revolution, so Soviet and Romanian SF was curtailed during the heightened oppression of the 1970s and Latin American SF suffered under the right-wing authoritarianism of the 1970s and 1980s. Even during periods of liberalisation, any inclusion of political commentary ran the risk of official opprobrium, a phenomenon that recurred in parts of the ‘free world’. For example, the kind of heavy-handed response to the Strugatskys’ satires on Soviet bureaucracy in the late 1960s was repeated in the treatment of Magdalena Mouján Otaño in Spain, Peter Dreyer in South Africa and M. Barnard Eldershaw in Australia.[[17]](#footnote-17) Nevertheless, writers often managed to evade the censor and to publish damning indictments of government policy. Assisting the genre internationally was the metonymic potential of a conceptual, abstract and often elusive literary medium that was open to multiple and subversive readings. At the same time, Marc Angenot’s point that science fiction ‘occupies the space outside the literary enclosure […] as a forbidden, taboo, and perhaps degraded product’ was not entirely unwelcome to writers, who were allotted marginal status in literary culture and were therefore less regulated than mainstream colleagues.[[18]](#footnote-18) Amongst the remarkable instances of SF’s dissident tendencies are the coded attacks on the Castro regime in Agustín de Rojas’s *Una leyenda del futuro* (A Legend of the Future, 1985) and on the Ulbricht administration in Johanna and Günther Braun’s *Der Irrtum des großen Zauberers* (The Great Wizard’s Mistake, 1972). Although SF novels had to be vetted in East Germany by the Ministry of Culture, this did not necessarily paralyse a genre which ‘underwent a journey from propagandistic tool to subversive medium between the 1950s and the 1980s’.[[19]](#footnote-19) In Czechoslovakia, after the repressions following the Prague Spring, the novelist Eva Hauser turned to SF because, as she later explained, ‘this genre allowed us not only to speak more openly about our society, but also to extrapolate, to model, to exaggerate, to construct alternative societies with characteristics which interested us’.[[20]](#footnote-20) In the United States, similarly, SF gave authors freedom to engage with a range of political issues; for example, in *They Shall Have Stars* (1956), James Blish engages in an extended satire of Senator Joseph McCarthy which would have been impossible in a mainstream novel, illustrating Judith Merril’s point that in McCarthy-era America ‘science fiction became […] virtually the only vehicle of political dissent’.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Taking oppositional SF as the most informative commentary on the Cold War, this chapter will address its treatment of science’s ignominious role in political, military, economic and cultural arrangements, revealing concerns and approaches that appeared in each of the geopolitical blocs.[[22]](#footnote-22) The most obvious target of criticism was the advance in the range and yield of military technologies, typically those of nuclear weapons. After the invention of fission and fusion devices at the Manhattan Project, the atomic strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945), the Soviet testing of a nuclear device (1949), the first US testing of a thermonuclear bomb (1952) and the creation of intercontinental ballistic missiles (1957) indicated the steady rise of a more dangerous world order. With a single thermonuclear bomb having a thousand times the yield of the bombs dropped on Japan, the superpowers achieved a fragile balance of power which, if upset, risked global cataclysm. The threat of ‘mutually assured destruction’, in Donald Brennan’s phrase, was an inevitable choice of subject not only for SF in the nuclear powers but also for all literary genres throughout the world.[[23]](#footnote-23) Brian Stableford’s point that ‘[n]o culture lacks illustrations of disaster’ and that ‘[a]ll human life, everywhere, is haunted by the possibility of catastrophe’ was never so true as a period in which national populations were equally susceptible to mass annihilation.[[24]](#footnote-24)

In science fiction, treatment of the topic assumed remarkably similar formats wherever it occurred. Typifying some of the sub-genres of nuclear writing, Maggie Gee’s *The Burning Book* (1983) details the anxieties of living under the shadow of the bomb, Álvaro Menén Desleal’s ‘Una cuerda de nylon y oro’ (A Cord Made of Nylon and Gold, 1965) describes the moment of mass destruction and Gudrun Pausewang’s *Die Wolke* (Fall-Out, 1987) addresses the horrors of radiation poisoning. The iniquities of nuclear planners, another common narrative focus, is illustrated by the Palestinian expatriate Mordecai Roshwald’s *Level 7* (1959), which explores the dangerously insulating effects of pushbutton warfare through the perspective of an operator in an underground nuclear bunker, who only emerges to witness the consequences of his action after a nuclear exchange has brought widespread destruction. As examples of the most common sub-genre of all, Kathleen Lindsay’s *The Grim Tomorrow* (1953), Premendra Mitra’s *Manu Dwadosh* (The Twelfth Manu, 1964), Colin Gibson’s *The Pepper Leaf* (1971), Robert Merle’s *Malevil* (1972) and Hillel F. Damron, *Milchemet Ha’minim* (Sex War One, 1982) deal with the trials endured by survivors of a nuclear strike. Even in the eastern bloc, where literary discussions of nuclearism were largely taboo, a number of post-holocaust narratives were published after the 1950s, including work by Kir Bulychev, Ales Adamovich, Vladimír Straka, Alta Vášová, Marek Baraniecki and Wang Lixiong.[[25]](#footnote-25) In these tortured tales of a depleted future, novelists captured the outrage that so many felt towards ‘a few men who had monopolized the most subtle and diabolical forces of destruction’ (Alberto Vanasco) and created ‘“an uncertain world where a holocaust is always present as a possibility”’ (Sakyô Komatsu).[[26]](#footnote-26)

An early pioneer of women’s rights, Judith Merril attempted a re-gendering of SF narratives in her 1950 novel *Shadow on the Hearth*, whose title indicates the nuclear threat generally but specifically evokes the famous shadow imprints which followed the Hiroshima bombing. Drawing on contemporary discussions of nuclear strikes, Merril sets her novel in a suburban New York household and dramatizes the gradual impact of a detonation in that city, not through spectacular images of destruction, but through the more insidious effects of fallout. For the protagonist, Gladys Mitchell, the bombing produces an absence – the rest of the family – and then a series of assaults from males intent on theft or sexual gratification. In the course of the novel, Gladys from necessity shifts away from the stereotyped role of housewife to a self-taught scientist. As an active member of the New York SF group, the Futurians, Merril had already protested the risk of nuclear tests in stories like ‘That Only a Mother’ (1948), where a baby is born without limbs, probably from radiation transmitted from the father. Merril challenges the pieties of contemporary writings for women, where fulfilment is promised through pregnancy or through the tranquillity of a suburban home. As social order breaks down in *Shadow on the Hearth*, Gladys’s home loses its security and the whole area becomes an empty shell when she takes her children to the local hospital through deserted streets. If the home figures as the nation in miniature, the novel challenges the ethos of domestic security described in Elaine Tyler May’s critical study *Homeward Bound* (1988) by dramatizing a loss of national security, which ironically undermines governmental claims to the contrary. Despite its domestic setting, *Shadow on the Hearth* is a politically engaged novel reflecting an oppositional stance from its author which ultimately led her to emigrate to Canada in 1968 in protest against the Vietnam War. A similar motive underpinned Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Word for World is Forest* (1972), which draws on her background in anthropology to challenge an ‘ethic of exploitation’.[[27]](#footnote-27) Set on a planet known by the colonisers as ‘New Tahiti’, the action explores the commercial dimension to military occupation and satirises the racism of the colonisers in a transparent analogue for Vietnam. Le Guin gives one narrative voice to a native of the occupied planet and by so doing pluralises the cultural perspectives in contrast to the usual hostile dualities of the Cold War.

Just as science was intensifying conventional warfare and threatening nuclear apocalypse so it was assisting the advance of more sophisticated methods of political control. For many populations across the world, the experience of the Cold War was predominantly one of coercion and hardship at the hands of authoritarian regimes, now assisted by advanced technologies of mass propaganda, surveillance, detention and murder. By detailing the evils of totalitarian rule, science fiction contributed to the marked decline in literary utopianism during the period, when idealistic blueprints for political change were increasingly viewed as disguised attacks on human liberty. In Western SF, the dangers of science allied to political power featured in dystopian novels by C.K. Stead (New Zealand), A. Bertram Chandler (Australia), Angela Carter (Britain), Michel Jeury (France), Ward Ruyslinck (Belgium), Sam J. Lundwall (Sweden) and Herbert W. Franke (Austria).[[28]](#footnote-28) As part of their dystopian portrait of relations between the individual and the state, authors showed how false memory may be implanted in subjects (Philip K. Dick), films may be used to carry out behavioural therapy (Anthony Burgess) and medical intervention may reveal the lack of any area of the self exempt from manipulation (William Burroughs). In the communist bloc, writers countered the official positivity towards industrial-technological development with similar parables of unlimited power, a trend illustrated by Jiří Marek’s *Blažený vĕk* (Blessed Ages, 1967), Janusz A. Zajdel’s *Limes inferior* (The Lower Limit, 1982) and Vladimir Voinovich’s *Moskva 2042* (Moscow, 2042, 1987). Even post-apocalyptic narratives, which typically focused on moral and social regression in the wake of a nuclear disaster, charted the emergence of new political elites with ambitions for the technology that had caused the disaster in the first place. Robert Conquest’s *A World of Difference* (1955), set in the twenty-first century, is less concerned with a nuclear war that occurred in the 1980s than with the tyranny that emerges afterwards, denouncing a World Federal Government that considers enforcing civilian loyalty through ‘psycho-compellers’, ‘“psychosemantic control exercises”’ and ‘psycho-techniques capable of altering whole personalities’.[[29]](#footnote-29) So great was the fear of scientific authoritarianism that writers were soon imagining a form of technology that could control humanity without a need for human supervision. The account of populations regulated by omnipotent machinery found in Čestmír Vejdĕlek’s *Návrat z ráje* (Return from Paradise, 1961), Hoshi Shinichi’s *Koe No Ami* (The Voice Net, 1970) and Antonio Montero Abt’s *Acá del tiempo* (This Side of Time, 1968) go some way to matching Richard Pape’s vision of a ‘kingdom of technology all on its own, cut off from the real world’.[[30]](#footnote-30)

An example of how closely dystopian fiction could mirror historical reality is Eduardo Goligorsky’s ‘En el último reducto’ (The Last Refuge, 1967), a story written during the spread of right-wing authoritarianism in Argentina. At this time, US security forces were planning a coordinated campaign against radical movements in South America, preparing the way for the clampdown on civil and political rights that took place during Operation Condor in the 1970s. As part of the campaign, the so-called ‘Dirty War’ in Argentina involved US support for the military junta of Jorge Rafael Videla, responsible for the death and ‘disappearance’ of over 20,000 people. Although published a decade earlier, Goligorsky’s story not only foresees the brutality of an oppressive, isolationist Argentina but also hints at the destructiveness of US involvement. Guillermo Maidana is an ordinary worker in Buenos Aires whose only distinction is an illicit album of photographs which, collected some generations earlier, reveals the high standards of life that science has produced in the world outside, now a space-age superstate governed by a World Council. When the album is found by Guillermo’s son and shown to classmates at school, the principal informs the Department of Internal Security, forcing Guillermo into hiding. The account of his flight from San Nicolás to the abandoned docks at Puerto Madero reveals the scale of the country’s destitution, the once-thriving capital now reduced to muddy streets, broken fences and tattered propaganda posters (‘*We are not afraid to be alone!*’, ‘*Let us close our borders to materialist illusion*’).[[31]](#footnote-31) The contrast to the hypermodern civilisation beyond is confirmed when the protagonist stumbles upon a World Council spaceship that has broken down near the docks. As described in italicised passages dispersed through the narrative, the sight of this ‘*shining capsule*’, with its ‘*strange magic*’ and suggestion of ‘*far-off galaxies*’, seems to raise Guillermo to a level of religious awe.[[32]](#footnote-32) Yet there is no salvation to be had. Aware of the hostility of the Argentinian regime, the crew ignores his calls for asylum and concentrates on repairing the ship, finally taking off and leaving the persecuted man to his fate. The wonders of applied science, in short, are not utilised for the benefit of humanity but for the self-preservation of political blocs. Indeed, at the moment of take-off, the propulsion tubes send down a column of fire and reduce Guillermo to ‘*blackened dust and ashes*’, an act that draws a stark parallel between foreign action and domestic oppression.[[33]](#footnote-33) The lack of any national or international solution to human suffering was a common feature of Latin American SF, reappearing in Hugo Correa’s *Los altísimos* (The Superior Ones, 1959), Raúl Weil’s ‘Vuelo en la noche’ (Flight at Night, 1968), Angélica Gorodischer’s *Kalpa imperial* (Kalpa Imperial, 1983) and Chico Buarque’s *Fazenda modelo* (Model Farm, 1974), the last a critique of capitalist authoritarianism styled on Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945).[[34]](#footnote-34)

The overt oppression conducted by many Cold War regimes existed alongside the more subtle forms of control developing in the consumerist West. From the 1950s, much of the world was shifting from industrial capitalism to an economic system based on what Kim Humphery terms ‘a culturally manufactured desire for and preoccupation with the getting and having of consumer goods and experiences’.[[35]](#footnote-35) The satisfaction of material need was viewed as an essential way of warding off public dissent in both free-market and command economies, the two sides fearing that a ‘commodity gap’ was as perilous to national security as a ‘missile gap’. In the eastern bloc, the prohibition on private enterprise and limitation of consumer choice sparked increasing calls for liberalisation, even contributing to the upheavals of 1989 that foreshadowed the end of the Cold War.[[36]](#footnote-36) Yet the connection between consumer choice and human liberty was not made by all. For many left-wing commentators, the exploitation of desires and identities in consumer society, where technologies were increasingly geared to marketing, media manipulation and mass entertainment, constituted an overt form of social engineering. The pacification that resulted was most effectively captured in postmodernist fiction, with its dystopian accounts of ‘a relatively comfortable, half welfare and half garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomized’.[[37]](#footnote-37) It was this postmodern scepticism towards mass society that informed such Anglo-American SF novels as Frederik Pohl and Cyril M. Kornbluth’s *The Space Merchants* (1952), Philip K. Dick’s *The Penultimate Truth* (1964), Rex Gordon’s *Utopia Minus X* (1966), D.G. Compton’s *Synthajoy* (1968) and William Gibson’s *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). The fantastical nature of an image-saturated society, with its intractable confusion of fact and fiction, was further explored by writers associated with the New Wave, a countercultural strand of SF that emerged in Britain and the States in the 1960s and that examined the psychological impact of technological developments in the West, following J.G. Ballard’s assertion that ‘it is *inner* space, not outer, that needs to be explored’.[[38]](#footnote-38) Despite opposition from adherents of ‘hard SF’, the New Wave adhered to the primary aims of classic sci-fi: to pursue a ‘quest for the human in the image/technology-dominated society’ and to ‘see what is left of the “human” after technology has changed human life so radically’.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The thematic overlap between socio-political matters and economic arrangements was not only apparent in Anglo-American science fiction. That attacks on consumer capitalism could appear in other western literatures is illustrated by the work of Yasutaka Tsutsui, a central figure in Japanese New Wave writing.[[40]](#footnote-40) In Tsutsui’s ‘Ore ni Kansuru Uwasa’ (Rumours about Me, 1972), an unremarkable office worker, Tsutomu Morishita, is shocked to discover that his recent attempts to date a co-worker are reported on the evening news. Despite taking the report to be ‘“a realistic hallucination”’, Morishita’s activities over the coming days are subject to rolling coverage, his life being reduced to a public spectacle constructed by an omniscient media.[[41]](#footnote-41) The permanent surveillance not only leads to a loss of privacy but also causes alterations in the behaviour of people around him, who improve their conduct in order to avoid ‘becom[ing] the butt of media vitriol’.[[42]](#footnote-42) Fortunately, a solution is at hand. Realising that artificial news stories are only convincing if the audience is unaware of the corporations creating them, Morishita makes public criticisms of media intrusion, forcing its withdrawal and allowing life to return to normal. The treatment of consumer society was more pessimistic in Lino Aldani’s ‘Buonanotte, Sofia’ (Good Night, Sophie, 1963), an Italian satire on hyperreality that predates much of the New Wave in Britain and the States. Set in an authoritarian society two centuries in the future, the story describes a population that is so addicted to mass-produced films of sex, fame and power that no other material goods are needed to satisfy it. Viewed as a consummate technology, Oneirofilm creates an illusion of genuine participation through three-dimensionality and induced sensory stimulation, substituting viewers’ identities with ‘the personality, the mannerisms, the voice, the impulses suggested by the film’ and thereby transforming projected fantasies into physical reality.[[43]](#footnote-43) In creating social stability through a single simulacrum, the state has not altered the system of consumer capitalism that prevailed during the Cold War but perfected it, allowing companies to make vast profits from supplying the films to ‘an army of hallucinated people’.[[44]](#footnote-44) Aldani’s post-human vision recurred in writings from across Europe, as well as from Latin America and Asia. Juan José Arreola (Mexico), André Carneiro (Brazil), Avel-lí Artís-Gener (Catalonia), J.M.G. Le Clézio (France) and Taku Mayumura (Japan) all questioned the utopian premise of consumer capitalism – that the ‘good life’ is achievable through material accumulation – and revealed a significant current of Cold War dissent in ‘free world’ science fiction.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Despite the power of much postmodernist SF, there were forms of Cold War oppression that were far more ruthless than the Western media. In the newly independent nations of the Global South, the long history of colonial rule was making way for the more indirect, though no less harmful, domination of the United States and Soviet Union, which battled for control of the regions being vacated by Western European empires. For examining this charged arena of international relations, science fiction proved an ideal medium. A strong connection had always existed between the European development of the genre and the expansion of imperialism, a techno-military enterprise facilitated by advances in weaponry, transportation, communication and food production and propped up by pseudo-scientific discourses of racial and ethnic hierarchy.[[46]](#footnote-46) As John Rieder has argued, the fascination with outer space increased at exactly the moment when opportunities for opening up new lands for exploitation were vanishing, encouraging narratives of space travel which were little different in style and ideology to colonial adventures tales.[[47]](#footnote-47) The interrelations between science fiction and imperial practice persisted during and after the major period of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. On the one hand, western writers imaginatively recreated the imperial age through continued fantasies of territorial exploration and conquest (as Patrick Parrinder points out, twentieth-century texts were still ‘full of galactic imperialism, of colonies in space, and of meetings with (and massacres of) intelligent and interestingly-gendered extraterrestrials’).[[48]](#footnote-48) On the other hand, imperial nostalgia was expressed via self-pitying accounts of Western decline in an age of decolonisation and Tricontinentalism. Amongst the most disturbing were openly racist narratives which, set in recognisable locations on Earth, imagined previously subordinate populations threatening white societies through insurgency or mass migration.[[49]](#footnote-49) Equally expressive of writers’ anxieties were portraits of an Earth subordinate to other planetary civilisations and accounts of nations undergoing cataclysmic destruction or superpower invasion, including dystopian narratives of US conquest that expressed no end of resentment at ‘free world’ leadership.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Yet a genre so concerned with conflict, conquest and control could also be adapted to challenge imperial discourse. As critics have pointed out, the assumption that this is a ‘quintessential First World genre’, one ‘as Western as Coca-Cola, big cars, and computers’, was opposed by postcolonial authors who, while drawing on western models, transformed them through a ‘thematic questioning of the normativity of Western logic and Western […] literature’.[[51]](#footnote-51) The most obvious resistance came in the critical treatment of foreign invasion, a feature apparent in Mohammed Dib’s *Qui se souvient de la mer* (Who Remembers the Sea, 1962), Witi Ihimaera’s *The Matriarch* (1986), Boman Desai’s *The Memory of Elephants* (1988) and Chang Hsi-Kuo’s ‘Cheng’ (The City Trilogy, 1983-91). Writers also offered scathing commentaries on neo-imperialism (in Gerardo Cornejo’s *Al norte del milenio* (North of the Millennium, 1989)), on the history of slavery (in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred* (1979)) and on the tribulations of indigeneity (in Sam Watson’s *The Kadaitcha Sung* (1990) and Gerald Vizenor’s *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978)).[[52]](#footnote-52) Many of the texts examined the ways in which technology had aggravated disparities in power between coloniser and colonised, debating whether science could be humanised in the postcolonial context or whether it should be rejected altogether. A powerful argument for the latter is made in Buchi Emecheta’s *The Rape of Shavi* (1983).[[53]](#footnote-53) Located in the southern Sahara, Shavi is a peaceable kingdom of twenty thousand people that is determined to respect its neighbouring communities, a principle derived from once having experienced slavery. The peace of the kingdom is disrupted, however, by the crash-landing of British plane in flight from a nuclear war supposedly taking place in the north. The Shavians, though initially fearful of the ‘“mysterious bird of fire”’, accept the British group with hospitality, this being ‘the only way they knew for one human to behave towards another’.[[54]](#footnote-54) Yet the sudden appearance of western technology causes restlessness amongst the young men. The king’s son, Asogba, is tired of the traditional life of the kingdom and, realising that ‘anything is possible to the man […] who flies like a bird in the sky’, starts to dream of making the Shavians ‘as great as these white people’, even of duplicating ‘England’s Empire’.[[55]](#footnote-55) An opportunity arises from some diamond-like stones scattered around the desert. When the British repair the plane and return to Europe (where nuclear war has been averted), they discover that the stones are useful in industry and establish a company to import them. With the resulting revenue, Asogba purchases weapons, raids the neighbouring villages and enslaves their people, an action that soon draws reprisals and leads to the obliteration of Shavi.[[56]](#footnote-56) In this sense, the ‘rape’ of the novel’s title not only refers to the assault on a Shavian woman conducted by one of the British characters but also comments on the moral and physical destructiveness of Western technology. The plane that heralds the destruction may not be the spaceship of imperial SF, but still recalls the classic trope, dramatizing Nalo Hopkinson’s point that conquest is ‘not a thrilling adventure story’ for readers in the Global South: ‘it’s non-fiction, and we are on the wrong side of the strange looking ship that appears out of nowhere’.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Although postcolonial science fiction was committed to consciousness-raising and collective protest, there was some pessimism that the work could effect political or cultural change. José Miguel Sánchez Gómez’s complaint that Latin American material ‘has as little chance to influence the first world capitals of SF as the down-home game of dominos has of becoming an Olympic sport’ captures something of the critical and popular neglect of writings from the Global South that persists even today.[[58]](#footnote-58) Interestingly, it also reflects the aesthetic doubts that many writers were having in the western and eastern blocs. Whenever SF writers turned their attention to the censorship, regulation and enforced ideological and aesthetic loyalties of the Cold War, they expressed little hope for the future of creative activity. In ‘The Prevention of Literature’ (1946), Orwell’s comment that ‘the atmosphere of totalitarianism is deadly to any kind of prose writer’ was no less despairing than his portrait of literary culture in capitalist democracies, where writers were increasingly subject to corporate control.[[59]](#footnote-59) With the power of ‘the press lords, the film magnates, and the bureaucrats’, he wrote, it was easy to foresee a future in which ‘[b]ooks would be planned in their broad lines by bureaucrats, and would pass through so many hands that when finished they would be no more an individual product than a Ford car at the end of the assembly line’.[[60]](#footnote-60) In parallel with the attempted governmental control of the historical record, the standardisation of literary production in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which novels are ‘composed entirely by mechanical means’, was repeated in the descriptions of ‘trivial entertainment piece[s], capable of neither harm nor good’ and literature that is ‘pathetically naïve and amateurish […], manufactured by zombies for zombies’, found in so much SF of the period.[[61]](#footnote-61)

While Orwell’s text undoubtedly influenced later meditations on the decline of art, so too did Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). The latter’s critique of the moral depravities of materialism recurred in such western SF texts as Aldani’s ‘Good Night, Sophie’ and in the propagandistic digs at ‘free world’ economics found in Soviet SF. In the Strugatskys’ *Khischnye veschi veka* (The Final Circle of Paradise, 1965), a Soviet agent goes undercover in an affluent coastal resort in an unnamed European country entirely given over to consumerism. While the resort has ‘fifteen thousand passenger cars, five thousand helis, a thousand taxis (with and without chauffeurs), nine hundred automatic garbage collectors, four hundred permanent bars, cafés, and snack bars, […] sixty thousand TV sets, fifty movie theatres, eight amusements parks’ and other technological aids to pleasure, it has no noticeable cultural life.[[62]](#footnote-62) Apart from underfunded theatres and unattended poetry recitals, the only sign of interest is shown by the Honorable Society of Art Patrons, although the sole aim of this organisation is to ‘“buy up stolen paintings, statues, manuscripts, unpublished literary works, patents, and destroy them”’.[[63]](#footnote-63) The cultural destruction found in consumerist dystopias was even more apparent in post-apocalyptic narratives, which dramatized most fully Arthur C. Clarke’s forecast of ‘the virtual end of creative art’.[[64]](#footnote-64) In the post-nuclear world of Angela Carter’s *Heroes and Villains* (1969), for example, the last remnants of ‘civilisation’ retreat to heavily fortified enclaves and attempt to protect what is left of human knowledge from encroaching barbarism. As the young Marianne finds, however, the former world is inaccessible through the preserved books, which are full of ‘innumerable incomprehensive words she could only define through their use in […] other books, for these words had ceased to describe facts and now stood only for ideas or memories’.[[65]](#footnote-65) When Marianne tires of her enclave and joins one of the surrounding forest tribes, she travels even further beyond the realms of knowledge. Her experience at the seashore, for example, exposes the extreme vulnerability of the spoken and written word:

Purse sponge, slime sponge, breadcrumb sponge, blood red sponge; tube sea squirt, rough sea squirt, gooseberry sea squirt, start sea squirt (or golden star). Rag worms, lug worms, tube worms. The soft corals and sea anemones, known as dead men’s fingers, snake locks, wartlet or gem anemone, the globehorn, the daisy anemone, cup coral, sea firs, sea oaks. […] Losing their names, these things underwent a process of uncreation and reverted to chaos, existing only to themselves in an unstructured world where they were not formally acknowledged, becoming an ever-widening margin of undifferentiated and nameless matter […].[[66]](#footnote-66)

While Carter’s fears for the literary future stemmed from the prospect of nuclear conflict, other authors were more anxious about state tyranny. As with Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Jack Vance’s *The Languages of Pao* (1958), Samuel Delany’s *Babel-17* (1966) and Anthony Burgess’s *1985* (1978) link the erosion of creative potential to governmental intervention in language, while Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) sees the English language infiltrated by a debased Russian vocabulary, the result of Soviet cultural colonisation.[[67]](#footnote-67) If linguistic degeneration was not caused one superpower, Burgess suggested, then it was likely to be caused by the other.

The profound pessimism expressed by Cold War SF was partly a response to the increasing globalisation of political, military, economic and cultural arrangements between 1945 and 1989. The genre’s innate ability to conceive and describe single world systems was ideally suited to a period of history defined by total war and total weapons, by mass society and mass media and by an apparently endless superpower struggle for planetary control. Yet science fiction was far less able to suggest solutions to the crises it located. Texts that attempted to resist official orthodoxies certainly existed in the period and were often those which best illustrated the genre’s refusal to ‘prostrate itself before the great superseded idols of Technology and Progress’.[[68]](#footnote-68) The oppositionalism of postcolonial SF was matched in such novels as Doris Lessing’s *Shikasta* (1979), Chingiz Aitmatov’s *I Dol’she Veka Dlitsia Den* (The Day Last More than a Hundred Years, 1980) and Stanisław Lem’s *Fiasko* (Fiasco, 1986) that lamented the all-encompassing nature of the conflict and urged radical change, even imagining alternatives to the geopolitical order (in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* (1974) and Samuel Delany’s *Triton* (1976)). As Patrick Major has argued, this search for ‘third way’ solutions to the global predicament could be said to mark ‘an internal debate within the genre […] which often transcended the Iron Curtain’.[[69]](#footnote-69) Yet this was always a minor current in science fiction. In so much of the output in the period, writers presented their dystopian forecasts not as fleeting deviations from the usual course of history but as perpetual features of national and global experience, their protagonists finding military and political reminders of the superpower stand-off however far in time and space they travelled away from it. Ironically, it was this sense of the Cold War as a permanent condition that best evoked an industrial-technological world in terminal crisis.

1. Quoted in Yolanda Molina-Gavilán, et al., ‘Chronology of Latin American Science Fiction, 1775-2005’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 34: 3 (2007), p. 385. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado, ‘Ending the World with Words: Bernardo Fernández (BEF) and the Institutionalization of Science Fiction in Mexico’, in M. Elizabeth Ginway and J. Andrew Brown, eds, *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 113. Ross Larson was still arguing in the 1970s that ‘[t]here is no established tradition of […] science fiction in Mexico’ (Larson, *Fantasy and Imagination in the Mexican Narrative* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1977), p. 60). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Cardona Peña, ‘Recreo sobre la ciencia ficción’, *Cuadernos Americanos*, 150: 1 (1967), pp. 189-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. One novelist describes the typical science fiction writer as ‘a compulsive guesser, an addict of possibilities’ (Edmund Cooper, *The Uncertain Midnight*, new edn (1958; London: Coronet Books, 1971), p. 6). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Nicholas Ruddick, *Ultimate Island: On the Nature of British Science Fiction* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 2; Paul K. Alkon, *Science Fiction before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The early history of science fiction unfolded across vast geographical distances: as examples, Johannes Kepler’s *Somnium* (The Dream, 1634), Eliza Haywood’s *The Adventures of Eovaai* (1736), Mary Griffith’s *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1836), Francisco Miralles’s *Desde Júpiter* (From Jupiter, 1878), Jagadananda Roy’s ‘Shukra Bhraman’ (Travels to Venus, 1892), Shunrō Oshikawa’s *Kaitō Bōken Kitan* (Submarine Warship, 1900) and Mary Ann Moore-Bentley’s *A Woman of Mars* (1901) indicate its gradual spread across Europe, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Darrell Lockhart’s edited *Latin American Science Fiction Writers: An A-to-Z Guide* (2004) and Bhargav Rani’s ‘Science Fiction in the Arab World: Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *Voyage to Tomorrow*’ (2015).For further details of Wells’s reception, see Patrick Parrinder and John S. Partington’s edited *The Reception of H.G. Wells in Europe* (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Caute, *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010), p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Asimov, ‘More Science Fiction from the Soviet Union’, in Asimov, *Asimov on Science Fiction* (St Albans and London: Granada, 1983), p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Rottensteiner, ‘Introduction’ to Rottensteiner, *View from Another Shore: European Science Fiction*, new edn(1973; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. viii. As the Cold War drew to its close, a number of Western writers drew on the eastern bloc for their subjects. The Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood began *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) during a stay in West Berlin (hence its use of a wall to brand dissidents), although has always resisted an anti-communist reading of the work, insisting that it engages with totalitarianism generally. It was a measure of the opening up of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev that only one year after the Chernobyl explosion of 1986 Frederik Pohl’s *Chernobyl* (1987) explored the lives of the local workers, quietly playing on the apocalyptic resonance of the place-name (‘wormwood’ in Ukrainian). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For example, see Storm Jameson’s *The Moment of Truth* (1949), Evelyn Waugh’s *Love among the Ruins* (1953), John Griffiths’s *The Survivors* (1965), Henrik Stangerup’s *Manden der ville vaere skyldig* (The Man Who Wanted To Be Guilty, 1973) and Sven Delblanc’s *Moria Land* (The Land of Moria, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Throughout the 1970s, Lem’s work appeared in English translations, culminating in his collection *Microworlds* (1985) where he attacks SF – especially US SF – for its recycling of stereotypes and oblivion to its aesthetic foundations. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, ‘Marxist Theory and Science Fiction’, in Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 114; Elana Gomel, ‘Science Fiction in Russia: From Utopia to New Age’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 26: 3 (1999), p. 436. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, ‘Science Fiction and the Thaw’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 31: 3 (2004), p. 342. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Fekete, ‘Science Fiction in Hungary’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 16: 2 (1989), p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Qian Jiang, ‘Translation and the Development of Science Fiction in Twentieth-Century China’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 40: 1 (2013), p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Mouján Otaño’s ‘Gu ta gutarrak (nosotros y los nuestros)’ (Gu Ta Gutarrak (We and Our Own), 1968) was suppressed by the Franco regime for imputedly supporting Basque separatism, Dreyer’s *A Beast in View* (1969) was banned in South Africa for critiquing apartheid and Eldershaw’s *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (1947) was cut by Commonwealth censors in order to obscure its socialist message, the novel only appearing in full as *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* in 1983. Examples of oppositional works by the Strugatskys are *Ulitka na sklone* (The Snail on the Slope, 1966-8) and *Skazka o troike* (Tale of the Troika, 1968). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Quoted in Patrick Parrinder, *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Patrick Major, ‘Unusual Censor Readings: East German Science Fiction and the GDR Ministry of Culture’, in Tobias Hochscherf, Christoph Laucht and Andrew Plowman, eds, *Divided, but Not Disconnected: German Experiences of the Cold War* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Hauser, ‘Science Fiction in the Czech Republic and the Former Czechoslovakia: The Pleasures and Disappointments of the New Cosmopolitanism’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 21: 2 (1994), p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Quoted in Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2005), p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The chapter will not dwell on writers’ treatment of issues – genetic engineering, chemical contamination, energy depletion, ecological disaster, overpopulation – which could have occurred had history taken a different path after 1945, although they were often shown to have Cold War causes or implications. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. As the British novelist C.P. Snow remarked, the development of mass weapons ensured that future conflict would be ‘a piece of science fiction’ (Snow, *The New Men* (London: Macmillan, 1954), p. 18). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Stableford, ‘Man-Made Catastrophes’, in Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, eds, *The End of the World* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See Bulychev’s *Posledniaia* *voĭna* (The Last War, 1970), Adamovich’s *Poslednyaya pastoral* (The Last Pastoral, 1987), Straka’s *Druhá potopa svĕta* (The Second World Deluge, 1964), Vášová’s *Po* (After, 1979), Baraniecki’s *Głowa Kasandry* (Cassandra’s Head, 1985) and Wang Lixiong’s *Huáng Huò* (China Tidal Wave, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Vanasco, ‘Post-Boomboom’, in Andrea L. Bell and Yolanda Molina-Gavilán, eds, *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain*, trans. by multiple translators(Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), p. 122; Sakyô Komatsu, ‘Take Your Choice’, in John L. Apostolou and Martin H. Greenberg, eds, *The Best Japanese Science Fiction Stories*, trans. by multiple translators(New York: Dembner Books, 1989), p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Le Guin, ‘Introduction to *The Word for World Is Forest*’, in Le Guin, *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, new edn (1979; London: The Women’s Press, 1989), p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See Stead’s *Smith’s Dream* (1971), Chandler’s *The Bitter Pill* (1974), Carter’s *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), Jeury’s *Le temps incertain* (Chronolysis, 1980), Ruyslinck’s *Het reservaat* (The Reservation, 1964), Lundwall’s *Fängelsestaden* (The Prison City, 1978) and Franke’s *Ypsilon Minus* (Ypsilon Minus, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Conquest, *A World of Difference* (London and Melbourne: Ward, Lock and Co., 1955), pp. 117, 82, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Pape, *And So Ends the World*, new edn (1961; London: Panther, 1963), p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Goligorsky, ‘The Last Refuge’, in Bell and Molina-Gavilán, eds, *Cosmos Latinos*, p. 112 (italics in original). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., pp. 133, 111, 111 (italics in original). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid., p. 115 (italics in original). For one critic, the story ‘obliquely criticizes the United States and other nations which use the “Communist Threat” as an excuse to support tyrannical right-wing regimes’ (Roberto de Sousa Causo, ‘Encountering International Science Fiction through a Latin American Lens’, in James Gunn, Marleen S. Barr and Matthew Candelaria, eds, *Reading Science Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 149). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The global influence of Orwell’s writing is also illustrated by Bala Abdullahi Funtua’s adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Nigeria in the mid-1970s and by Mallane Libakeng Maile’s adaptation of *Animal Farm* in Lesotho in the 1950s, published as *Pitso ea liphoofolo tsa hae* (The Meeting of the Domestic Animals, 1956). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Humphery, *Excess: Anti-Consumerism in the West* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2010), p. xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See Paul Betts, ‘The Politics of Plenty: Consumerism in Communist Societies’, in Stephen A. Smith, ed., *The History of Communism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 425. Patrick Major and Rana Mitter suggest that ‘the Cold War was won not so much at the negotiating table as in the shopping basket’ (Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, ‘East Is East and West Is West? Towards a Comparative Socio-Cultural History of the Cold War’, in Mitter and Major, eds, *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 13). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Irvine Howe, ‘Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction’, in Patricia Waugh, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Quoted in David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 22 (italics in original). For examples of New Wave writing on consumer society, see J.G. Ballard’s ‘The Subliminal Man’ (1963), John Brunner’s *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968), Michael Moorcock’s *The Final Programme* (1968), Pamela Zoline’s ‘The Heat Death of the Universe’ (1967) and Pat Cadigan’s *Synners* (1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Gloria Pastorino, ‘The Death of the Author and the Power of Addiction in *Naked Lunch* and *Blade Runner*’, in Karen Sayer and John Moore, eds, *Science Fiction, Critical Frontiers* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 103, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See Takayuki Tatsumi, ‘Generations and Controversies: An Overview of Japanese Science Fiction, 1957-1997’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 27: 1 (2000), p. 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Tsutsui, ‘Rumours about Me’, in Tsutsui, *Salmonella Men on Planet Porno and Other Stories*, trans. by Andrew Driver (1979; Richmond: Alma Books, 2008), p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid., p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Aldani, ‘Good Night, Sophie’, in Franz Rottensteiner, ed., *View from Another Shore: European Science Fiction*, new edn(1973; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Arreola’s ‘Baby H.P.’ (Baby H.P., 1952), Carneiro’s ‘Transplante do cérebro’ (Brain Transplant, 1978), Artís-Gener’s *L’enquesta del Canal 4* (The Survey of Channel 4, 1973), Le Clézio’s *Les Géants* (The Giants, 1973) and Mayumura’s *Expo ’87* (Expo ’87, 1968). Braulio Tavares’s ‘O espelho relâmpago no oco do ciclone’ (The Mirror-Lightening in the Eye of the Cyclone, 1989) deploys the motif of alien invasion to explore how, in an age of globalisation, an imported consumer culture can obliterate the traditional life of a nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay draws parallels between the idealised model of empire found in imperial discourse and the imagined city-state found in utopian writings: see Csicsery-Ronay, ‘Science Fiction and Empire’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 30: 2 (2003), pp. 237-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. ‘Having no place on Earth left for the radical exoticism of unexplored territory’, Rieder explains, ‘the writers invent places elsewhere’ (Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), p. 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Parrinder, ‘Science Fiction: Metaphor, Myth or Prophecy?’, in Sayer and Moore, eds, *Science Fiction*, pp. 33-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For examples, see J.C. Watson’s *Shadow over the Rand* (1955), Jean Raspail’s *Le Camp des Saints* (The Camp of the Saints, 1973), Christopher Priest’s *Fugue for a Darkening Island* (1972), Andrew MacDonald’s *The Turner Diaries* (1978), Lloyd Burton’s *The Yellow Mountains* (1978), John Hooker’s *The Bush Soldiers* (1984) and Robert A. Heinlein’s *Starship Troopers* (1959). At its worst, Gerry Canavan argues, Western science fiction can act as ‘empire’s propaganda arm, its R&D lab, prototyping the weapons of the future and accommodating us to tomorrow’s genocides today’ (Canavan, ‘Decolonizing the Future’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 39: 3 (2012), pp. 494-5). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. In some Western countries, writers viewed the global dominance of US SF as a form of cultural imperialism: see Roger Bozzetto, ‘Science Fiction in France: The Comeback’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 26: 3 (1999), p. 434; and Jessica Langer, *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. M. Elizabeth Ginway, ‘A Working Model for Analyzing Third World Science Fiction: The Case of Brazil’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 32: 3 (2005), p. 467; Uppinder Mehan, ‘The Domestication of Technology in Indian Science Fiction Short Stories’, *Foundation*, 74 (1998), p. 54; Suparno Banerjee, ‘*The Calcutta Chromosome*: A Novel of Silence, Slippage and Subversion’, in Ericka Hoagland and Reema Sarwal, eds, *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postcolonial Literature and Film* (Jefferson and London: McFarland & Co., 2010), p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. On occasion, anti-imperialism could be found in science fiction of the western and eastern blocs: for example, see Norma Hemming’s ‘Debt of Lassor’ (1958), Naomi Mitchison’s *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962), Arkady and Boris Strugatsky’s *Trudno byt’ bogom* (Hard to be a God, 1964), Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Word for World is Forest* (1972) and Michael Cope’s *Spiral of Fire* (1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For other discussions of technology in postcolonial SF, see Levy Menezes’s ‘Floralis’ (Floralis, 1965), Hugo Correa’s ‘Cuando Pilato se opuso’ (When Pilate Said No, 1971), Jayant Narlikar’s *Vaman Parat Na Aala* (The Return of Vaman, 1986) and David G. Maillu’s *The Equatorial Assignment* (1980) and *Operation DXT* (1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Emecheta, *The Rape of Shavi* (London and Ibuza: Ogwugwu Afor, 1983), pp. 9, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid., pp. 163, 149, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid., p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Hopkinson, ‘Introduction’, in Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan, eds, *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Quoted in Emily A. Maguire, ‘Islands in the Slipstream: Diasporic Allegories in Cuban Science Fiction since the Special Period’, in Ginway and Brown, eds, *Latin American Science Fiction*, pp. 21-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Orwell, ‘The Prevention of Literature’, in Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell Volume IV: In Front of Your Nose 1945-1950*, ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, new edn (1968; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid., pp. 87, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 42; Yasutaka Tsutsui, ‘Standing Woman’, in Apostolou and Greenberg, eds, *Best Japanese Science Fiction*, p. 130; Edmund Cooper, *The Tenth Planet*, new edn (1973; London: Coronet Books, 1976), p. 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Strugatskis, *The Final Circle of Paradise*, trans. by Leonid Renen (1965; New York: Daw Books, 1976), p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid., p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Clarke, *Childhood’s End*, new edn (1954; London: Pan Books, 2001), p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Carter, *Heroes and Villains*, new edn (1969; London: Penguin, 2011), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid., pp. 148-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Extending the contemplation of linguistic deficiency, Svend Åge Madsen’s *Tugt og utugt i mellemtiden* (Vice and Virtue in the Middle Time, 1976), Margarida Aritzeta’s *Grafèmia* (Graphemia, 1982) and Braulio Tavares’s ‘Os Ishtarianos estão entre nós (The Ishtarians Are Among Us, 1989) offer metafictional reflections on the declining ability of art to capture the horrors of the age. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Nicholas Ruddick, *British Science Fiction: A Chronology, 1478-1990* (New York and Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Patrick Major, ‘Future Perfect? Communist Science Fiction in the Cold War’, in Mitter and Major, eds, *Across the Blocs*, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)