# A Whole New World AC (WORLD-BUILDING AC)

## Part 1: Break the Cycle

#### [Giroux 1] CORPORATE EDUCATION IS TAKING OVER – schools use disimagination to stifle critical thought.

Giroux 1: Giroux, Henry A. [Chaired Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest at McMaster University] “When Schools Become Dead Zones of the Imagination: a critical pedagogy manifesto.” *Policy Futures in Education*, Volume 12, Number 4, 2014. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.4.491 CH

Neo-liberalism is a disimagination machine that remakes social identity by turning civic subjects into consuming and marketable subjects. As a public pedagogy, it works aggressively in multiple sites – extending from the new screen culture and mainstream media to the schools – to produce desires, needs and values as a form of second nature, internalized as a habit and common sense. As Doreen Massey (2013) points out: ‘It is an internalisation of “the system” that can potentially corrode our ability to imagine that things could be otherwise’. This is cultural politics with a vengeance, and necessitates a new understanding of culture as an educational force and pedagogy as central to any viable notion of politics. What I am suggesting is that the educative nature of politics calls for new modes of social responsibility, civic engagement and collective struggle. It also calls for the translation of political outrage into civic and moral courage. As Martin Luther King, Jr. (1967) insisted: ‘We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for victims of our nation and for those it calls enemy, for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers’. We can update King’s speech to encompass the marginalized, voiceless and victims of our nation who are now represented by the low-income and poor minority youth, who inhabit both the public schools and, increasingly, the prisons. These are the throwaway youth of an authoritarian America who have zero jobs, hopes and futures. They are the excess populations of the new punishing state who disturbingly remind the corporate and financial elite of the need for social provisions, the viability of the public good and those principles of economic life in need of substantial rethinking

He adds: Giroux, Henry A. [Chaired Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest at McMaster University] “When Schools Become Dead Zones of the Imagination: a critical pedagogy manifesto.” *Policy Futures in Education*, Volume 12, Number 4, 2014. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.4.491 CH

Corporate sovereignty has replaced political sovereignty, and the state has become largely an adjunct of banking institutions and financial service industries. Addicted to ‘the political demobilization of the citizenry’ (Wolin, 2008, p. ix), the corporate elite is waging a political backlash against all institutions that serve democracy and foster a culture of questioning, dialogue and dissent. The apostles of neo-liberalism are concerned primarily with turning public schools over to casino capitalism in order to transform them into places where all but the privileged children of the 1% can be disciplined and cleansed of any critical impulses. Instead of learning to become independent thinkers, they acquire the debilitating habits of what might be called a moral and political deficit disorder, which renders them passive and obedient in the face of a society based on massive inequalities in power, wealth and income. The current powerful corporate-based unreform movement is wedded to developing modes of governance, ideologies and pedagogies dedicated to constraining and stunting any possibility for developing among students those critical, creative and collaborative forms of thought and action necessary for participating in a substantive democracy. At the core of the new reforms is a commitment to a pedagogy of stupidity and repression that is geared towards memorization, conformity, passivity and high-stakes testing. Rather than create autonomous, critical and civically engaged students, the un-reformers kill the imagination while depoliticizing all vestiges of teaching and learning. The only language they know is the discourse of profit and the disciplinary language of command. John Taylor Gatto (2002) points to some elements of this pedagogy of repression in his claim that schools teach confusion by ignoring historical and relational contexts. Every topic is taught in isolation and communicated by way of sterile pieces of information that have no shared meanings or context. A pedagogy of repression defines students largely by their shortcomings rather than by their strengths, and in doing so convinces them that the only people who know anything are the experts – increasingly drawn from the ranks of the elite and current business leaders, who embody the new models of leadership under the current regime of neo-liberalism. Great historical leaders who exhibited heightened social consciousness, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Mahatma Gandhi, are relegated to the dustbin of history. Students are taught only to care about themselves and to view any consideration for others as a liability, if not a pathology. Ethical concerns under these circumstances are represented as hindrances to be overcome. Narcissism, along with an unchecked notion of individualism, is the new normal. Under a pedagogy of repression, students are conditioned to unlearn any respect for democracy, justice and what it might mean to connect learning to social change. They are told that they have no rights and that rights are limited only to those who have power. This is a pedagogy that kills the spirit, promotes conformity and is more suited to an authoritarian society than a democracy. What is alarming about the new education un-reformers is not only how their policies have failed, but the degree to which such policies are now embraced by liberals and conservatives in both the Democratic and Republican Parties, despite their evident failure.[7] The Broader, Bolder Approach to Education study provides a list of such failures which is instructive.

#### [ROJ] The Role of the Judge is to Resist Corporatist Education, which means rejecting the use of educational spaces that reproduce the squo instead of critiquing it. Controls the link to policy impacts – we can’t care about extinction unless we first resist its political foundations.

#### [Giroux 2] AND resistance requires having tools to imagine a departure from the squo.

Giroux 2: Giroux, Henry A. [Chaired Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest at McMaster University] “When Schools Become Dead Zones of the Imagination: a critical pedagogy manifesto.” *Policy Futures in Education*, Volume 12, Number 4, 2014. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.4.491 CH

Critical pedagogy becomes dangerous in the current historical moment because it emphasizes critical reflection, bridging the gap between learning and everyday life, understanding the connection between power and difficult knowledge, and extending democratic rights and identities by using the resources of history. Rather than viewing teaching as a technical practice, pedagogy in the broadest critical sense is premised on the assumption that learning is not about memorizing dead knowledge and skills associated with learning for the test, but engaging in a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice. The fundamental challenge facing educators within the current age of neo-liberalism, militarism and religious fundamentalism is to provide the conditions for students to address how knowledge is related to the power of both self-definition and social agency. In part, this suggests providing students with the skills, ideas, values and authority necessary for them to nourish a substantive democracy, recognize anti-democratic forms of power, and fight deeply rooted injustices in a society and world founded on systemic economic, racial and gendered inequalities. Any viable notion of critical pedagogy must be understood as central to politics itself and, rather than disconnect public education from larger social, economic and political issues, it must be connected to such forces as part of a wider crisis of both education and democracy. At the very least, education must be viewed as part of an emancipatory project that rejects the privatization and corporatization of public schools, and the tax and finance forces that support iniquitous school systems. For pedagogy to matter, it must support a culture and the relations of power that provide teachers with a sense of autonomy and control over the conditions of their labor. Teachers must be viewed as public intellectuals and a valuable social resource, and the conditions of their labor and autonomy must be protected. In this instance, the fight to preserve labor unions must be viewed as central to preserving the rights and working conditions necessary for public school teachers to teach with dignity under conditions that respect rather than degrade them. Critical pedagogy must reject teaching being subordinated to the dictates of standardization, ‘measurement mania’ and high-stakes testing. The latter are part of a pedagogy of repression and conformity, and have nothing to do with an education for empowerment. Central to the call for a critical pedagogy and the formative and institutional culture that makes it possible is the need to reconfigure government spending and to call for less spending on death and war, and more funding for education and the social programs that make it possible as a foundation for a democratic society. Schools are about more than measurable utility, the logic of instrumentality, abject testing and mind-numbing training. In fact, the latter have little to do with critical education and pedagogy, and must be rejected as part of an austerity and neo-liberal project that is deeply antiintellectual, authoritarian and anti-democratic. As a moral and political project, pedagogy is crucial for creating the agents necessary to live in, govern and struggle for a radical democracy. Moreover, it is important to recognize not only how education and pedagogy are connected to and implicated in the production of specific agents and a particular view of the present and future, but also how knowledge, values and desires, and social relations are always implicated in power. Power and ideology permeate all aspects of education and become a valuable resource when critically engaged around issues that problematize the relationship between authority and freedom, ethics and knowledge, and language and experience, reading texts differently, and exploring the dynamics of cultural power. Critical pedagogy addresses power as a relationship in which conditions are produced that allow students to engage in a culture of questioning, to raise and address urgent, disturbing questions about the society in which they live, and to define in part the questions that can be asked and the disciplinary borders that can be crossed. Education as a democratic project is utopian in its goal of expanding and deepening the ideological and material conditions that make a democracy possible. Teachers need to be able to work together, collaborate, work with the community and engage in research that informs their teaching. In this instance, critical pedagogy refuses the atomizing structure of teaching that informs traditional and market-driven notions of pedagogy. Moreover, critical pedagogy should provide students with the knowledge, modes of literacy, skills, critique, social responsibility and civic courage needed to enable them to be engaged critical citizens who are willing to fight for a sustainable and just society.

#### [ROB] Thus, the Role of the Ballot is to Promote Critical Imagination, which means giving students the space to create responses to oppression. We don’t have to *achieve* those solutions; we just need the *ability* to do so – precludes post-fiat impacts, since we can’t solve problems without these skills.

## Part 2: Stop Privatizing

#### [Jones 1] IT’S A NEW FRONTIER – companies are racing to enclose outer space for maximum profit.

**Jones 1:** Jones, Craig Henry. [Writer at Society and Space] “Enclosing the Cosmos: Privatising Outer Space and Voices of Resistance” *Society and Space,* 2021. https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/enclosing-the-cosmos-privatising-outer-space-and-voices-of-resistance JP

**Along with increasing interest from private actors**, **discussions surrounding the enclosure of Outer Space – and asteroid mining more specifically – has seen growing coverage in recent years, several countries having passed legislation to begin legalis**ing **and encourag**ing **extraterrestrial extractivism** [5]. Manoeuvres to enclose the extraterrestrial common and begin mining operations necessitate the establishment of a rights regime to ensure any disputes over access and ownership can be resolved. **This opens a regulatory ‘frontier’ through which** issues of **land** tenure and **ownership can be thrashed out, taking on significance through its ability to greatly influence influxes of capital into these operations and mineralogical deposits (Bridge, 2004).** Through the regulatory enclosure of Outer Space, a regime of exclusion can be implemented whereby (il)legitimate forms of use and abuse can be differentiated and associated boundaries inscribed through physical and discursive means (Li, 2014: Steinberg, 2018). Private NSE actors have sought to influence these legislative processes through lobbying, advertising materials, press conferences, business forums, and public and private talks. This has culminated in a process of enclosure wherein similar justifications to past enclosures are mobilised and reanimated. **Once more, ‘production’ and the ability to ‘work’ a resource are becoming the m**odus **o**perandi **through which ownership over the common is** being **exerted (Wood, 2017), finding explicit articulation in the US SPACE Act 2015. The mobilisation and perpetuation of this discourse is coupled with the perversion of the common heritage principle. To refrain from extracting minerals thr**oughout **Outer Space is to (supposedly) ‘waste’ their potential and deprive future generations of the benefits this industry purports to provide (Steinberg, 2018).**

#### [Jones 2] AND PROFIT OVER PEOPLE IS DISIMAGINATIVE – if space only matters when companies can make money from it, no other uses of space are possible.

**Jones 2:** Jones, Craig Henry. [Writer at Society and Space] “Enclosing the Cosmos: Privatising Outer Space and Voices of Resistance” *Society and Space,* 2021. https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/enclosing-the-cosmos-privatising-outer-space-and-voices-of-resistance JP

However, despite the enthusiasm of asteroid mining advocates, the proposed extractive industry is not unproblematic. Whilst the narratives surrounding asteroid mining frame this industry’s future as something certain – discussed in advertising material, websites, and NSE circles in the affirmative – there are still many unanswered questions. Aside from issues of technological and fiscal viability, uncertainty remains surrounding ownership, land rights, and whose future this industry speaks of, for, and mobilises. Due to **such uncertainties, actors with vested interests are seek**ing **to enclose the Global Common of Outer Space, ‘opening’ the ‘final frontier’ to what some commentators** are **refer**ring **to as a modern Gold Rush (Cofield, 2016: Elvis and Milligan, 2019: Pandya, 2019).** This pursual of enclosure relies – broadly speaking – on the same underlying principle(s) as the enclosure of commons historically and lobbying efforts have resulted in these arguments appearing in legislation in several countries [3]. **These manoeuvres to privatise Outer Space rely not only on** the **enclosure of physical and legislative places but also** seek to enclose **imaginative spaces through the process(es) of disimagination**. Broadly conceived**,** disimagination is **a process that curtails our ability to think critically and imagine new futures through cultural apparatuses and public pedagogies designed to erase the multiplicity of historical realities that deviate from the hegemonic ‘norm’ (Didi-Huberman, 2008: Giroux, 2014).** Whilst this concept has been used in Didi-Huberman’s discussion of the destruction of concentration camp materials and Giroux’s work on critical pedagogy and civic rights, the process of disimagination is operating within and upon discourses of Outer Space, as I discuss later in this piece. These attempts at disimagination are not going unchallenged, however, with Ethnofuturist works disrupting the oftentimes de facto futures of Outer Space and asteroid mining. Ethnofuturism critically responds to the disimagination process as it combines the Ethno- (the archaic, indigenous, or cultural histories of peoples) and -futurism (deemed the cosmopolitan, urban, and technological) (Hennoste, 2012). Consequently, Ethnofuturism can be construed as a process by and through which histories that deviate from the hegemonic ‘norm’ are reinvigorated and mobilised to (re)produce alternative discourses of futurity. ‘Ethnofuturism’ here is used as an umbrella term that contains within it futurisms from a variety of groups and people. Examples of such futurisms include, but are not limited to: Afrofuturism, Aotearoa futurism, Cambrofuturism, and Sinofuturism. **The following discusses enclosure, disimagination, and Ethnofuturism to problematise these futures of asteroid mining**: **highlight**ing **how popular NSE discourses draw** up**on a Eurocentric rendition of a ‘Grand Historical Narrative’. Through this, we may begin to challenge the totalising concept of ‘humanity’ [4] oft-invoked by asteroid mining advocates and turn a more critical lens to these purported futures and the discourses (re)created to justify them.‍**

#### [Giroux 3] AND THAT WRECKS CRITICAL IMAGINATION – privatization insists on LIMITING new solutions and ACCEPTING the squo.

Giroux 3: Giroux, Henry A. [Chaired Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest at McMaster University] *Youth in a Suspect Society: Democracy or Disposability?* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9780230100565 CH

Neoliberalism also connects power and knowledge to the technologies, strategies, tactics, and pedagogical practices key to the management and ordering of populations and to controlling consent. Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality is crucial for understanding not only how modes of thought, rationality, and persuasion are linked to technologies of governing but also how any understanding of government must consider the ways power works to create “the conditions of consensus or the prerequisites of acceptance.”26 As Thomas Lemke has pointed out, neoliberal modes of governmentality are important for developing the connection “between technologies of the self and technologies of domination, the constitution of the subject and the formation of the state.”27 As a powerful mode of public pedagogy, neoliberal ideology is located, produced, and disseminated from many institutional and cultural sites, ranging from the shrill noise of largely conservative talk radio to the halls of academia and the screen culture of popular media.28 Mobilizing modes of official knowledge, mass-mediated desires, and strategies of power, these sites provide an indispensable political service in coupling “technologies of the self and [neoliberal] political rationalities”29 as part of a broader effort to transform politics, restructure power relations, and produce an array of narratives and disciplinary measures. 30 As neoliberalism extends into all aspects of daily life, the boundaries of the cultural, economic, and political become porous and leak into each other, sharing the task, though in different ways, of producing identities, goods, knowledge, modes of communication, affective investments, and many other aspects of social life and the social order.31 Fundamental to the construction of the neoliberal subject is the acceptance of this official set of orthodoxies: the public sphere, if not the very notion of the social, is a pathology; consumerism is the most important obligation of citizenship; freedom is an utterly privatized affair that legitimates the primacy of property rights over public priorities; the social state is bad; all public difficulties are individually determined; and all social problems, now individualized, can be redressed by private solutions. The undermining of social solidarities and collective structures along with the collapsing of public issues into private concerns is one of the most damning elements of neoliberal rationality. Zygmunt Bauman elucidates this issue in the following comment: “In our ‘society of individuals’ all the messes into which one can get are assumed to be self-made and all the hot water into which one can fall is proclaimed to have been boiled by the hapless failures [of those] who have fallen into it. For the good and the bad that fill one’s life a person has only himself or herself to thank or to blame. And the way the ‘whole-life-story’ is told raises this assumption to the rank of an axiom.”32 Once again, any notion of collective goals designed to deepen and expand the meaning of freedom and democracy as part of the vocabulary of the public good is derided as taxing-and-spending big government liberalism or simply dismissed as socialism—an argument that the Republican Party uses constantly to rebuff every element of the stimulus plans proposed by the Obama administration. More specifically, “[c]ollective goals such as redistribution, public health, and the wider public good have no place in this landscape of individual preferences.”33 Instead, neoliberal theory and practice give rise to the replacement of the social state with a market/punishing state in which political rights are strictly limited; economic rights are deregulated and privatized; and social rights are replaced by the call to individual preference schemes and self-reliance. Within the impoverished vocabulary of privatization, individualism, and excessive materialism that promises to maximize choice and to minimize taxation, the new citizen-consumer bids a hasty retreat from those public spheres that view critique as a democratic value, collective responsibility as fundamental to the nurturing of democracy, and the deepening and expanding of collective protections as a legitimate function of the state. Defined largely by “the exaggerated and quite irrational belief in the ability of markets to solve all problems,”34 the public domain is emptied of the democratic ideals, discourses, and identities needed to address important considerations such as universal health care, ecologically responsible mass transit, affordable housing with ethical lending practices, subsidized care for the young and elderly, and government efforts to reduce carbon emissions and invest in new forms of energy. As safety nets and social services are being hollowed out and communities crumble and give way to individualized, one-man archipelagos, it is increasingly difficult to develop social movements that can act in concert to effect policies to meet the basic needs of citizens and to maintain the social investments needed to provide life-sustaining services. In order to foreground the connection between the emergence of a neoliberal Gilded Age and what I call the “politics of disposability”—a politics in which matters of life, death, and survival become central— currently on display in U.S. policies at home and abroad,35 I want to draw attention to yet another set of narratives operating in public life, different from the ones generally used to indict the authoritarian tendencies of the former Bush regime (for instance, the network of CIA-sponsored secret prisons, the undemocratic workings of an imperial presidency, the extralegal operations of power, the emergence of a security state in which every citizen is viewed as a potential terrorist, and the attitude that war is the only viable index of public policy, shared values, and political legitimacy). While the importance of recognizing and understanding such dangerous trends cannot be underestimated, there are other, less visible registers of democratic decline, consigned to the margins of the dominant media, that also signal the pervasive, predatory mode of politics, rationality, and domination that now characterizes everyday life in America and that needs to be addressed under the more progressive Obama administration.

## Thus, I affirm:

#### [Jemisin] Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust. I critique private space appropriation through imaginative world-building, a method that uses fantasy to reorient ourselves away from the status quo and reconsider the political.

Jemisin: Jemisin, N. K. [Bestselling sci-fi and fantasy writer] “Elements of Worldbuilding.” Masterclass.com, 2022. https://www.masterclass.com/classes/n-k-jemisin-teaches-fantasy-and-science-fiction-writing/chapters/elements-of-worldbuilding# CH

[MUSIC PLAYING] NARRATOR: You've already stepped away from our world a little bit, so don't be hesitant about really striding away. Get into world building and have fun with it. Go forth and create something new. If you're writing science fiction and fantasy, world building is kind of essential. It's one of the pieces that make science fiction and fantasy different from other genre fiction. So it's-- in a lot of cases, you're going to be writing things that are set on Earth, which we call the first world, but sometimes you're going to be writing things at one removed from Earth, i.e. secondary world material. And you want your world to feel real. You want it to feel lived in. And then if it does feel real and lived in, then people are going to be able to pay attention to characters and plot, which hopefully is what you really want them to pay attention to, and the world will sort of fade into the background. [MUSIC PLAYING] If you're building a new world, you are able to sort of go into topics and materials that can be a little uncomfortable for readers to engage with when they're set in the real world. We have personal feelings attached to all of the politics of our world, and politics is anything having to do with people. So even if you don't think that you're talking about the politics, if you've got a story that has people in it, you are talking about politics. So if you're trying to tell a story about just an ordinary kid going to school every day, you're going to evoke emotions attached to that because people who have gone to school are going to remember their own school incidents. They're going to remember what it was like to walk to school. They're going to have flashbacks of the time they got beat up by some bully on the way to school. If you're writing a story set in the real world, you may want to use those brush strokes of emotion and deliberately evoke something that your audience is trying to kind of meet you halfway on. But if you're writing something set in another world and you want people to engage just with the ideas or just with the characters in that setting, then you take them away from the real world on purpose. You're doing that as a means of detaching your reader from their own personal experiences to some degree. Now, because you're telling a story about people and because stories about people always evoke some sort of emotion, you're still going to get a little bit of that in there, but not as much. And in a way, it's sort of an imagination cleanser, and that way you can draw people into ideas or allegories for the real world that take them away from their own personal experiences as much. [MUSIC PLAYING] You need to know all the minutia, and as the artist, that means that you have to understand the day to day. How does a person get up every day? How do they put their clothes on? How do they brush their teeth? How do they go to the bathroom?

## Part 3: New World

#### [Sanchez 1] IT’S UP TO US – world-building lets writers challenge existing structures by restoring agency to marginalized groups.

**Sanchez 1:** Sanchez, Julie R. [B.A., University of Pennsylvania] “Liminality, Marginality, Futurity: Case Studies in Contemporary Science Fiction.” University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons, Spring 2014. https://tinyurl.com/yc2n75cv JP/CH

**This is the power of world-building. In imaginative literature such as science fiction, authors have the unique opportunity to build new** worlds. These worlds are, by definition, fantastical departures from the worlds in which the authors and readers find themselves. However, the departure is not total. These fi**ctional worlds do n**o**t exist in isolation, in the cold, dead vacuum of space. They** a**re**, rather, **satellites orbiting our own world. They derive from their authors’ imaginations, and their authors are part of this** concrete world. Therefore, when authors sit down to write a novel, to build a new world, they work with a template, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Every brick in every building and every relationship in every culture is a choice, mediated by the bricks and relationships in the nonfictional world. The author must decide whether to keep elements constant, or to change them. These choices are rarely neutral. World-building **means building a world to fit a story**, yes, but it also means building a world **in relation to** a series of **historical, political, and** legacies. This thesis is an investigation of these forces. My research question is as follows: How can fictive world-building be understood in relation to the real world? A few corollary questions include: What relation do social structures in science fiction bear to existing societies? What does this mean for minority groups, who necessarily find themselves on the periphery of their social structure? Essentially, I am interested in world-building as a cultural process. I believe the relationship is reciprocal: science fiction worlds both draw from and react to reality, and these fictional worlds may in turn influence culture. I explore these questions in a variety of dissimilar science fiction venues: critically acclaimed science fiction, popular romantic science fiction, works written by science fiction fans, and small selections of my own work. **Throughout these case studies, I argue that sci**ence **fi**ction **worlds are liminal spaces, constructed through** a series of **meaningful social inversions. By placing marginalized groups at the center of fictional worlds** and narratives**, these works have the potential to challenge the dominant social** order. Drawing from poststructuralist and queer theory, I assert that world-building is a form of discourse and can serve a powerful function in the project of world-making.

**She adds:** Sanchez, Julie R. [B.A., University of Pennsylvania] “Liminality, Marginality, Futurity: Case Studies in Contemporary Science Fiction.” University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons, Spring 2014. https://tinyurl.com/yc2n75cv JP/CH

The traditional media establishment exercises (symbolic) power over society. Established and entrenched, the Big Six publishers or film studios have a specific claim to truth. Furthermore, they have the ability to impose a certain structure of reality. The symbolic power of media should be a given. Fictional worlds create and recreate our so-called objective reality; they are both structured and structuring. Furthermore, fictional worlds define what is possible in the real world. Their narratives define possible narratives for consumers’ lives. Intentionally or unintentionally, books, movies, and television impose limits on cognition. They play a powerful part in defining doxa. Regardless of genre, they show what is possible and what is not, and these limitations bleed from fiction into nonfiction. This is particularly dangerous in that the reality represented by media does not match objective reality. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBT people are severely underrepresented. Numerous nonprofit groups conduct research on these disparities, including GLAAD’s Studio Responsibility Index. According to their findings for 2012, of 101 films released by major studios, only 14 contained LGB characters and none contained transgender characters (GLAAD 2013:6). Essentially, media consistently, systematically under represents non-male, non-white, non-heterosexual people and renders minority groups invisible, or nearly so. This does real, personal damage. As Tumblr user relax-ovision writes, “We stretch our existence over stories,” and when stories systematically exclude and erase, this harms those who find their existence denied (relax-o-vision 2013). This perpetuates frames of sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia; for these underrepresented groups, the absence of representation often results in internalized forms of these prejudices. Fanfiction, I suggest, serves as a way of reversing this discourse and of stretching the doxa imposed by traditional media. In fanfiction, ordinary people have the ability to rewrite what is possible. In rewriting source material with better narratives that defy harmful stereotypes, by giving women and POC more substantial roles, and by writing queer relationships, fanfiction authors redefine their doxa. They create fictional worlds with new possibilities and, in so doing, resist the symbolic power of traditional media. In a 2009 video short about convergence culture, presented in true convergence culture fashion, Henry Jenkins speaks to this transformative power: A world governed by principles of participatory culture has the potential to be much more diverse than a world controlled by a small number of media producers. As average people develop an ability to tell their stories, we’re seeing different perspectives emerge. We’re seeing different groups gain representation. We’re seeing groups challenge the dominant media images that have been constructed for their lives. [Jenkins 2009] Where Turner would conclude that this small rebellion against established media is a reparative act, post-structuralism offers the possibility of something more revolutionary. Fanfiction demonstrates the agency of individuals, as well as the polyvalent nature of discourse. Fanfiction is a way of reversing discourse, of claiming or reclaiming media, of creating a more equitable mediascape. Fiction is itself an act of power by groups that might traditionally be considered powerless. Far from repairing social solidarity, a poststructuralist account presents fanfiction as an act of resistance, defiance, and power. Fandom is by no means a utopian idyll. Saathi1013 points out that fandom often replicates dominant cultural narratives. A recent blog post on Lady Geek Girl and Friends observed that, while fanfiction has certainly increased visibility for gay men, it hasn’t done the same for queer women. Only 3.5% of fanfiction on AO3 is femslash, or fiction that depicts romantic relationships between women (porluciernagas 2014). Fandom is not immune to sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia. The power—though also the danger—of fandom is that fans can carve out their own spaces. Fans search out corners of fandom that share their interests and stay away from those that don’t. The danger is self-isolation and reification, but of all the dangers discussed here, this one is minor.

#### [Berlatsky] In fact, world-building challenges the squo by calling out its racism, as Jemisin, a scifi writer, shows.

Berlatsky: Berlatsky, Noah. [Author of *Wonder Woman: Bondage and Feminism*; contributing writer for the *Atlantic*] “NK Jemisin: the fantasy writer upending the ‘racist and sexist status quo.’” *The Guardian*, July 27, 2015. theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/27/nk-jemisin-interview-fantasy-science-fiction-writing-racism-sexism CH

Stereotypical fantasy series like, say, *The Lord of the Rings*, usually present a virtuous status quo threatened by a dark and eventually defeated outsider. But Jemisin’s stories almost always involve a flawed order, and the efforts (also flawed) to overthrow it. That’s certainly the case in *The Fifth Season*, where one character uses his magic to literally tear the earth apart rather than face enslavement again. “The goal is survival,” Jemisin writes in the novel, “and sometimes survival requires change.” “As a black woman,” Jemisin tells me, “I have no particular interest in maintaining the status quo. Why would I? The status quo is harmful, the status quo is significantly racist and sexist and a whole bunch of other things that I think need to change. With epic fantasy there is a tendency for it to be quintessentially conservative, in that its job is to restore what is perceived to be out of whack.” She adds: “I think our society right now is enduring change in a painful and bloody way that is not necessarily a war.” She points to the incident at the McKinney pool in Texas, where police officers manhandled and arrested black teens at a white swimming pool. The white woman who started the incident by yelling racist slurs was quickly identified on Twitter, and lost her job as a teacher. There’s danger in using Twitter to shame people, Jemisin said, “especially for women. You end up with threats and harassment and so forth.” But in a racist society, she believes, there are few other avenues for holding the woman accountable for traumatising and threatening the lives of black youth. “I see a revolution in that,” Jemisin added. “I see unorthodox change and I see it being effective. And that gives me additional material to possibly write with.” Jemisin’s work itself is part of a slow but definite change in sci-fi and fantasy. She first got involved in fandom and writing through online forums. “I remember a few times going into bastions of the genre and just fleeing in horror,” she said. “For a while you would go into the Asimov forum and see people openly speculating about the humanity of black people, or women.” Things are better in some ways, as Jemisin’s own successes demonstrate. But the progress has generated resistance. Earlier this year, a number of writers and sci-fi industry insiders began to organise and protest against the fact that nominees for the Hugo awards have become substantially less white and less male. The disgruntled have formed groups, calling themselves the Sad Puppies and the Rabid Puppies, and have reached out to Gamergate, the similarly reactionary movement protesting feminist criticism of video games.

#### [Womack] AND excluded groups use world-building methods like Afrofuturism to challenge harmful space policies.

**Womack:** Womack, Ytasha L. [Author, filmmaker, dancer, independent scholar, and champion of humanity and the imagination] *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013. https://tinyurl.com/33nh4963 JP/CH

**If a new society were created beyond Earth’s stratosphere, who would populate it? Would those nations with space programs be the only ones with access to travel to the new world?** Is access dependent on the ability to pay for a space flight? With the prospects of commercial endeavors, who has jurisdiction in a dispute? If the colonization of new lands on Earth were any indication, colonization beyond Earth could spur a host of issues. **I presented in spring 2012, the same time that several private companies, including Virgin Galactic, announced their space tourism ticket sales to the public and a few days shy of the first commercial space flight to the International Space Center.** Later, Darity, who is also a sci-fi fan, created the first Race and Space conference to begin in fall 2013 and asked me to join him in launching it. Our initial work in launching the conference came at the same time that former astronaut Mae Jemison, the first black woman to go into space, announced that she’d won a federal grant for the 100 Year Starship project, which is devoted to spurring the necessary technological and social innovations to travel to distant stars. We asked her to be our guest speaker. **From creating self-sustaining energy sources to traveling as “DNA slush,” the Starship project would leave no stone unturned in the path beyond our solar system. The scientific advancements likely would change new inventions for Earth as well. But the psychological impact of space travel was just as important as the requisite tech** savvy. “It’d be unfortunate if the crew didn’t make it because they couldn’t get along with each other,” Jemison said.1 **Analyzing race as a technology morphed into both an imaginative playground for writing for me but also a** very **practical tool for real-world space-colonization issues that readers connected with. Just as the actions in the present dictate the future, imagining the future can change the present.**

#### [McCordick] THIS IS A HELL OF A LOT MORE USEFUL THAN READING LUDICROUS EXTINCTION SCENARIOS – that’s just more disimagination.

McCordick: McCordick, Jack. [B.A., Yale University] “The Corrosion of High School Debate—And How It Mirrors American Politics.” *America: The Jesuit Review*, October 30, 2017. https://tinyurl.com/2se49tep CH

The world of high school debate is often portrayed as a refuge of the budding brainiac, an incubator of the 21st century’s next generation of leaders. To some extent it is that. But the more revealing truth is that the debating community for years has been afflicted with an ideological and practical struggle over the nature of debate. And that struggle does not exist in a vacuum of cafeterias and lecture halls. It has powerful implications for the current state of U.S. politics and for the pursuit of social justice. Looking back, it seems as if the course of my high school debating career mirrored a deeper erosion in the quality of debate in our wider society. Thanks to a media landscape poisoned by partisan loyalties, the dissemination of “fake news” and the ideological echo chambers created by social media, the country is in the throes of a deep crisis. We don’t know who we are anymore. When I asked myself whether my extracurricular was a force against this decline, or an accessory to it, far too often I settled on the latter. The conventions of high school debate were enabling, at times even creating, our divisive culture. To understand how high school debate went awry, you would have to go all the way back to its origins. The first debate format practiced widely in high schools, beginning in the 1970s, was called Policy Debate. The format, which is still around today, consists of two teams of two debaters each. The affirmative team proposes a policy “plan” based on a resolution—for example, “The United States federal government should significantly reform its criminal justice system.” The negative team responds to that plan. Unlike more recent formats, where the topics change month-to-month, policy topics run for an entire year and require extraordinary dedication to research and preparation. As Policy Debate grew in popularity, the more Machiavellian debaters attempted to gain an edge by overwhelming their opponents with as many arguments and as much supporting evidence as possible. This was because if a team “dropped” an argument by its opponent—if it did not respond to the other side’s claim—that argument was conceded as “true,” no matter how inane it was. Chief among the strategies exploiting this rule was “spreading” (a combination of “speed” and “reading”), where debaters would rattle off arguments at a blistering pace. Their speeches often exceeded 300 words per minute. (A conversational pace is about 60 per minute.) Debaters started formulating outlandish arguments. The more apocalyptic the outcome the better, with little care for the argument’s probability or real-world application. “A new retirement program will trigger a nuclear war.” “Prison overcrowding would cause the destruction of the ozone layer.” High school debate had come to this. If you were to peek into a room in the middle of a policy round, you would likely be treated to a flurry of limbs and spittle, as a teenager expelled arguments from his mouth with such speed and force that he would sometimes appear to lose control of his fine motor functions. When an executive of Phillips Petroleum, then the primary sponsor of the National Forensics League, observed a debate at the 1979 national championship, he found it utterly incomprehensible. The executive aired his concerns to the league’s executive council, resulting in an entirely new debate category called the Lincoln-Douglas debate. This format, with its express reference to the famous debates over slavery between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, was designed to promote debates about values and prioritize rhetorical persuasion. In contrast to Policy Debate’s wonkish topics, L.D. featured more timeless resolutions. “It is morally permissible to kill one innocent person to save the lives of more innocent people.” Or “When in conflict, idealism ought to be valued above pragmatism.” The new format earned the disdain of Policy Debate’s more snobbish competitors, who joked that its initials stood for “learning disabled.” But for students disillusioned with P.D.’s descent into nonsensical, mile-a-minute argumentation, it was a godsend. At least for a while. Soon L.D. suffered the same fate as its precursor. The speed of argumentation increased, as did the amount of evidence required to be competitive at the national level. As with Policy Debate, the arguments became increasingly unmoored from reality. Some debaters even began refusing to debate the resolutions altogether, formulating elaborate theoretical and critical arguments that were, at best, tenuously linked to the topic they had been given. As L.D. descended further and further into absurdity, Ted Turner, the billionaire founder of CNN, came along and attempted to turn the ship again. Like the Philips executive several decades earlier, he pushed the National Forensic League in 2002 to establish a new debate format that would be plainspoken and jargon-free. The resulting format, which immediately drew comparisons to CNN’s “Crossfire,” was called Public Forum. Its title was an expression of Mr. Turner’s hope that any reasonably informed member of the public could walk into a Public Forum round and be able to pick a winner. A decade and a half after its inception, P.F. is still by far the most intelligible category in debate. However, in recent years its speed has increased markedly, as have the mountains of evidence. The emphasis on logic and critical thinking has waned. High school debate today is basically an intellectual game, not an exercise in truth-seeking. It has been turned into something that can easily be scored. This eliminates the complexity and intricacy of real discourse about real issues. If debate is a game, then the execution of a “spread” is like a well-timed blitz in football. Convincing a judge that your opponents’ arguments would cause human extinction is equivalent to a successful Hail Mary pass. Dozens of summer debate camps have cropped up across the country, offering students the opportunity to go “from novice to nationals,” as one brochure put it. Companies now offer bundles of prepackaged evidence, or “briefs,” to debaters willing to pay to get the upper hand. Instead of producing free, rigorous thinkers committed to the pursuit of truth, debate clubs now promote a very specific technical mastery of skills that do not easily translate to the demands of real life. The problems plaguing high school debate are mirrored in our public sphere. Political discourse is often little more than a game. Its goal is to score political points with witty rejoinders and scathing takedowns. The purpose of “adult debate,” as with debate for 16-year-olds, is to bludgeon your opponent into submission instead of engaging in open-minded dialogue. Over time I began to realize that high school debate was my firsthand education in the perversion and abuse of language. I learned how language could be used to conceal, to muddle. This was not limited to the debate community. The writer (and former debate wunderkind) Ben Lerner once wrote, “Americans are always getting ‘spread’ in their daily lives.” Think of the rapid-fire medical warnings at the end of prescription drug commercials. Consider the various types of fine print we are exposed to every day from financial institutions and healthcare companies, not to mention Apple’s “Terms and Conditions.” I remember that even when high school debates slowed down enough to seem comprehensible, the avalanche of evidence (much of it of dubious value) and specialized jargon often confused more than it revealed. It became like the kind of language currently poisoning our public sphere. I learned immensely important skills from my four years of debate. I have met many brilliant, incredibly well-read students from across the country from schools dedicated to treating debate the right way. But these are exceptions, not the rule. The norms that currently guide debate elevate form over content, and victory over truth. Debate programs are perfectly situated to produce students who want to seek the truth, who will resist the decay of quality public speech. As currently practiced, however, the clearest evidence of a high school debate career is often just a collection of plastic trophies, slowly gathering dust.

#### [Blee] Further, IT’S JUST RACIAL PARANOIA – catastrophic representations fetishize violence and incentivize racialized thinking.

Blee: Blee, Kathleen M. [Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh] “Racist Activism and Apocalyptic/Millennial Thinking.” *Engendering the Millennium: Special Issue of the Journal of Millennial Studies*, Summer 1999.

http://www.mille.org/publications/summer99/blee.PDF CH

Individuals like themselves, they insist, must "research to find out the truth about issues suppressed by the media, what you don't learn in school." Or as a Nazi from Georgia put it, you must "teach [your children] the truth about things you won't read about in history books or see in the news." Apocalyptic, millennial, and conspiratorial thought reflects a sense of personal and group powerlessness, victimization and imminent peril that resonates with the experiences of many women. Part of what makes such thinking so compelling to individuals is how it taps into a sense of both personal and political vulnerability. Most individuals in this society experience threatening situations, but white supremacist organizations teach people to understand their personal situations in generalized, racialized terms. Thus confrontations with members of other races or religions become understood as specific incidents that confirm the existence of a larger racial/religious struggle in which each individual -- consciously or not -- is involved. This process of moving from specific incidents to general principles is seen in the words of an Aryan separatist who commented that she "could have race mixed when I was younger and lots of black men wanted to date me but after seeing what happened to my girlfriends I knew that it was wrong to date outside of my race." For some adherents to organized racism, the process of generalizing from individual experience to race relations is much more complex. Most racists come to understand negative experiences with members of minority groups in general, racialized terms. But some become more deeply involved with conspiratorial logic and learn to see nearly all personal experiences through a racial, conspiratorial lens. One example of such all-encompassing conspiratorial belief is the conclusion that race, religion and ethnicity can only be known through actions. People who are "on your side" therefore are necessarily white, Aryan or Christian -- regardless of their appearance. Conversely, those who wrong you must be non-white, non-Aryan or Jewish. Such a logic is evident in a number of interviews where respondents sought to distinguish someone's true racial identity from their superficial racial markings. When a Southern neo-Nazi described her best friend, an African American man, for instance, she explained that, as a confidante, he was "really white."

#### [Chernus] PSYCHIC NUMBING – reading extinction scenarios on both sides on literally every topic DESENSITIZES US TO ACTUAL VIOLENCE and PREVENTS IMAGINATIVE SOLUTIONS.

Chernus: Chernus, Ira. [Professor of Religious Studies, University of Colorado at Boulder] “America's psychic numbing: Why we're so obsessed with ‘apocalypse.’” Salon.com, February 26, 2014. salon.com/2014/02/26/americas\_apocalypse\_obsession\_partner/ CH

Why does American culture use the A-word so promiscuously? Perhaps we've been living so long under a cloud of doom that every danger now readily takes on the same lethal hue. Psychiatrist Robert Lifton predicted such a state years ago when he suggested that the nuclear age had put us all in the grips of what he called “psychic numbing” or “death in life.” We can no longer assume that we'll die Vonnegut’s plain old death and be remembered as part of an endless chain of life. Lifton's research showed that the link between death and life had become, as he put it, a "broken connection." As a result, he speculated, our minds stop trying to find the vitalizing images necessary for any healthy life. Every effort to form new mental images only conjures up more fear that the chain of life itself is coming to a dead end. Ultimately, we are left with nothing but "apathy, withdrawal, depression, despair." If that's the deepest psychic lens through which we see the world, however unconsciously, it's easy to understand why anything and everything can look like more evidence that The End is at hand. No wonder we have a generation of American youth and young adults who take a world filled with apocalyptic images for granted. Think of it as, in some grim way, a testament to human resiliency. They are learning how to live with the only reality they've ever known (and with all the irony we’re capable of, others are learning how to sell them cultural products based on that reality). Naturally, they assume it's the only reality possible. It's no surprise that "The Walking Dead," a zombie apocalypse series, is their favorite TV show, since it reveals (and revels in?) what one TV critic called the "secret life of the post-apocalyptic American teenager." Perhaps the only thing that should genuinely surprise us is how many of those young people still manage to break through psychic numbing in search of some way to make a difference in the world. Yet even in the political process for change, apocalypses are everywhere. Regardless of the issue, the message is typically some version of "Stop this catastrophe now or we're doomed!" (An example: Stop the Keystone XL pipeline or it’s “game over”!) A better future is often implied between the lines, but seldom gets much attention because it’s ever harder to imagine such a future, no less believe in it. No matter how righteous the cause, however, such a single-minded focus on danger and doom subtly reinforces the message of our era of apocalypses everywhere: abandon all hope, ye who live here and now.