

Left Science Fiction

**Selected and Annotated, If Not Always Exactly Recommended, [novels, stories,
and plays]**

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These lists of recommended reading and viewing take a deliberately broad view of what constitutes left SF. Not all of the authors and directors listed below would call themselves leftists, and some works are not so much leftist as of interest to leftists. None are completely unproblematic and some are not very good at all.

Reading

- Edward Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975). Eco-saboteurs take on colluding business and government. Sequel: *Hayduke Lives!* (1990). See also *Good Times* (1980).
- Abe Kobo, *Inter Ice Age 4* (1959). The most overtly science-fictional of Abe's absurdist explorations of contemporary alienation. See also *Woman in the Dunes* (1962), *The Face of Another* (1964), *The Ruined Map* (1967), *The Box Man* (1973), *The Ark Sakura* (1984), *Beyond the Curve* (1991), *The Kangaroo Notebook* (1991).
- Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts Longer than a Hundred Years* (1980). Surprisingly uncensored mediation of Central Asian tradition, Soviet modernity and the possibilities presented by an alien world.
- Brian Aldiss, *HARM* (2007). A British muslim author, imprisoned and tortured for making a joke, hallucinates another — very resonant — world.
- Benjamin Appel, *The Funhouse* (1959). Satire on commodity-hedonism and nuclear anxiety.
- Eleanor Arnason, *A Woman Of The Iron People* (1991). Post-revolutionary humans and humanoid aliens face the problems of interspecies communication and colonial encounters. See also *To the Resurrection Station* (1986), *Ring of Swords* (1993), *Ordinary People* (2005).
- Brian Attebery and Ursula K. Le Guin, eds, *The Norton Book of Science Fiction* (1994). Notoriously 'unrepresentative' anthology of North American literary and feminist SF from 1960 to 1990.
- Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). Fundamentalist dystopia reduces women to their reproductive function. See also *The Blind Assassin* (2000), *Oryx and Crake* (2003).
- Wilhelmina Baird, *Crashcourse* (1993). Self-reflexive post-feminist cyberpunk. Sequels: *Clipjoint* (1994), *Psykosis* (1995).
- J.G. Ballard, *Crash* (1973). Everything you need to know about sex, technology, and commodity fetishism. See also *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970).
- Iain M. Banks, *Consider Phlebas* (1987). Vivid space opera set in a (possibly) utopian, post-scarcity future. Sequels: *The Player of Games* (1988), *The Use of Weapons* (1990), *Excession* (1996), *Inversions* (1998), *Look to Windward* (2000), *Matter* (2008).
- Max Barry, *Jennifer Government* (2003). Knockabout shenanigans in the consolidated world market.
- John Barth, *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966). The Cold War as allegorical campus novel.
- John Calvin Batchelor, *The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica* (1983). A berserker on a ship of fools amid the fleet of the damned and the wretched of the earth.
- Robert Bateman, *When the Whites Went* (1963). A plague eradicates all non-black people.
- Barry Beckham, *Runner Mack* (1972). Fabular account of an attempted black revolution.
- Andrea L. Bell and Yolanda Moline Gavilan, eds, *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain* (2003). Technoscientific empire experienced from the other side.

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* (1888). Extremely popular, not-exactly socialist utopia that prompted the eruption of late-nineteenth century utopias. Sequel: *Equality* (1897)

Margaret Bennett, *The Long Way Back* (1954). Representatives of post-holocaust Africa visit primitive Britain.

J.D Beresford, *Revolution: A Story of the Near Future in England* (1921). Curiously muted account of a British socialist revolution. See also Goslings (1913), 'What Dreams May Come...' (1941), *A Common Enemy* (1942), *The Riddle of the Tower* (1944).

Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel* (1940). Exploring the psychosexual power of the image in the age of mechanical reproduction. See also *Asleep in the Sun* (1973).

Terry Bisson, *Fire on the Mountain* (1988). John Brown and Harriet Tubman's successful raid on Harper's Ferry leads to a global socialist utopia.

Michael Bumlein, *The Movement of Mountains* (1987). A doctor recognises the humanity of a lab-made slave species and joins them in revolution. See also *The Brains of Rats* (1990).

Alexander Bogdanov, *The Red Star* (1908, 1913). The first Bolshevik utopia, featuring Martian technocracy and free love.

Leigh Brackett, *The Long Tomorrow* (1995). Civil Rights-era post-apocalyptic critique of religious intolerance and instrumentalist rationality.

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Dyspeptic, nostalgic satire on commodity culture.

Gerd Brantenberg, *Egalia's Daughters* (1977). In the land of the wim, masculist menwim raise consciousness among housebound, burn their pehoes and organise gender revolution.

Max Brooks, *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* (2006). The Multitude as apocalyptic globalised zombie horde.

Rosel George Brown, *Sibyl Sue Blue* (1968). Interstellar adventure featuring a sexy, kick-ass ... middle-aged single mother, Sequel: *The Waters of Centaurus* (1970).

John Brunner, *The Sheep Look Up* (1972). An overpopulated world drowning in its own pollution. See also *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968), *The Jagged Orbit* (1969), *Total Eclipse* (1974), *The Shockwave Rider* (1975).

Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog* (1925). Satire on NEP-era USSR. See also 'Diaboliad' (1925).

Edward Bulwer Lytton, *The Coming Race* (1871). Hysterical vision of the rising proletariat.

Katherine Burdekin, *Swastika Night* (1937). Dystopia set 500 years after Hitler's victory. See also *The Rebel Passion* (1929), *The End of this Day's Business* (1990).

Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979). African-American woman pulled backwards in time to the antebellum plantation on which her ancestors slaved. See also *Patternmaster* (1976), *Dawn* (1987), *The Parable of the Sower* (1993) and their sequels.

Eugene Byrne, *ThiGMOO* (1999). Virtual constructs of fictional characters develop (class-)consciousness and start a revolution. See also *Back in the USSA* (1997), co-written with Kim Newman.

Pat Cadigan, *Synners* (1989). Brings a richer sense of human and social complexity to cyberpunk, mapping the relationships between street subcultures and corporate systems. See also *Fools* (1992).

Karen Cadora, *Stardust Bound* (1994). Against the wishes of the post-apocalyptic state, women rebuild the science of astronomy.

Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston* (1975). West Coast ecological utopia. Sequel: *Ecotopia Emerging* (1981).

V.F. Calverton, *The Man Inside: Being the Record of the Strange Adventures of Allen Steele among the Xulus* (1936). Anti-fascists, anti-Stalinist, prematurely Althusserian genius experiments on animals and humans to prepare the way for the post-socialist posthumanity.

Karel Capek, *War with the Newst* (1936). Hilarious, bitter fantasia, dripping with irony, about colonial/proletarian development and insurrection.

Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). Delirious, profane encounters in a US transformed by race and gender wars. See also *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), *Nights at the Circus* (1984).

Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World* (1668). Royalist, visionary-reactionary — but feminist — utopia.

Philip George Chadwick, *The Death Guard* (1939). Apocalyptic anti-war story featuring a species of artificially created brute warriors.

Suzy McKee Charnas, *Walk to the End of the World* (1974). Post-apocalyptic women rebel in the cracks of institutionalised misogyny and gender essentialism. Sequels: *Motherlines* (1978), *The Furies* (1994), *The Conqueror's Child* (1999).

Flynn Connolly, *The Rising of the Moon* (1993). In the twenty-first century, a group of feminists lead a revolution against Catholic tyranny.

Edwin Corley, *Siege* (1969). Black revolutionaries seize Manhattan.

Gyorgy Dalos, *1985* (1983). Post-war Hungarian history reworked as Orwell sequel.

Dennis Danvers, *The Fourth World* (2000). Cyberpunk meets Zapatismo and finds another world is possible. See also *The Watch* (2002).

Camilla Decarnin, Eric Garber and Lyn Paleo, eds, *Worlds Apart: An Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1986). Queer anthology.

Allan de Graeff, ed., *Human and Other Beings* (1963). Collection of mid-century anti-racist US magazine SF (1949–61).

Samuel Delany, *Stars in My Pockets Like Grains of Sand* (1984). Sprawling space opera. planetary romance/neo-slave narrative, set in a radically decentered Galactic civilisation modelled on Derrida's notion of *differance*. See also *Babel-17* (1966), *The Einstein Intersection* (1967), *Nova* (1968), *Dhalgren* (1975), *Triton: An Ambiguous Heterotopia* (1976).

Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985). Deadpan black comedy about the society of the spectacle.

Philip K. Dick, *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). Atypical yet quintessential Dick novel about commodification and its destruction of communities and individuals. See also *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), *Martian Time-Slip* (1962), *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), *Ubik* (1969) and five-volume collected short stories.

Thomas Disch, *334* (1972). Everyday life in a twenty-first century not much better, not much worse than our own. See also *The Genocides* (1965), *Camp Concentration* (1968), *Getting into Death* (1973), *On Wings of Song* (1979). Disch edited the ecological anthology *The Ruins of Earth* (1973) and *The New Improved Sun: An Anthology of Utopian Science Fiction* (1975).

Esme Doddridge, *The New Gulliver or, The Adventures of Lemuel Gulliver Jr in Capovolta* (1979). Gulliver's descendant in a feminist utopia.

Ignatius Donnelly, *Caesar's Column* (1890). Inequality and oppression escalate into war. See also *Doctor Huguet* (1891), *The Golden Bottle* (1892).

Candas Jane Dorsey, *Learning About Machine Sex and Other Stories* (1988). Title story ridicules cyberpunk's inherent phallocentrism.

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dark Princess: A Romance* (1928). Messianic Hegelian world-historical African-American joins the Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown, and Black's global revolution.

L. Timmel Duchamp, *Alanya to Alanya* (2005). Aliens and feminists intervene to save the Earth. Sequels: *Renegade* (2006), *Tsunami* (2007), *Blood in the Fruit* (2008), *Stretto* (2008). See also *Love's Body*, *Dancing in Time* (2004), *The Red Rose Rages* (Bleeding) (2005).

Gordon Eklund, *All Times Possible* (1974). Hopeful, despairing alternative history of an American workers' state.

M. Barnard Eldershaw (Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw), *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (1947; censored text restored, 1983). Naturalistic account of Australian life, from the 1920s until an alternative ending of World War II, written by a future socialist utopian.

Suzette Haden Elgin, *Native Tongue* (1984). Reduced to childlike wards of their menfolk, women develop a secret language to express their perception of, and change, the world. Sequels: *The Judas Rose* (1987), *Earthsong* (1993).

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952). Classic afrofuturist account of phantasmagoric, apocalyptic modernity and futures yet unborn.

Roger Elwood and Virginia Kidd, eds, *Saving Worlds* (1973). Ecological SF anthology.

David Ely, *A Journal of the Flood Year* (1992). The forced proletarianisation of a diligent bureaucrat.

Carol Emshwiller, *Carmen Dog* (1988). Animals transform into human women, and vice versa, challenging masculinist reason and rationality. See also *The Mount* (2002).

Zoe Fairbairns, *Benefits* (1979). Follows the ebb and flow of feminist resistance as the backlash state introduces increasingly draconian 'benevolent' measures.

Russell B. Farr and Nick Evans, eds, *The Workers' Paradise* (2008). Stories about the future of work, collected in protest against Australian anti-worker legislation. Dedicated to 144 union activists murdered worldwide in 2006.

Claude Farrere, *Useless Hands* (1920). Worker's resistance to exploitation and mechanisation ends in a defeat which (unintentionally) indicts capitalist brutality.

Minister Faust, *The Coyote Kings of the Space-Age Bachelor Pad* (2004). African-Canadian satire about life in the margins. See also *From the Notebooks of Dr Brain* (2007).

Eric Flint, *1812: The Rivers of War* (2005). Alternate history, resulting in the foundation of the Native American Confederacy of Arkansas by long-time left activist and Socialist Workers Party member — an unlikely blend of Modes-of-Production Trotskyism with militarist SF. Sequel: *1824: The Arkansas War* (2006). See also *1632* (2000; numerous ongoing sequels).

Caroline Forbes, ed., *The Needle on Full: Lesbian Feminist Science Fiction* (1985). Lesbian-feminist SF anthology.

Katherine V. Forrest, *Daughters of the Coral Dawn* (1984). Blithely audacious comedy of interstellar colonisation and lesbian separatism. Sequels: *Daughters of an Amber Noon* (2002), *Daughters of an Emerald Dusk* (2005).

Karen Joy Fowler, *Sarah Canary* (1991). In the American West, a mysterious woman, who might be an alien, finds unlikely companions.

Anatole France, *The White Stone* (1905). *Conte philosophique* excoriating the barbarism of colonialism and envisioning a collectivist future. See also *Penguin Island* (1908), *The Revolt of the Angels* (1914).

Sally Miller Gearheart, *The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women* (1980). Lesbian-feminist utopia set after Nature has restricted men to the cities.

Amitav Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996). Postcolonial SF about the limits of western science.

William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition* (2003). Non-SF SF novel mapping the commodity-image. Sequel: *Spook Country* (2007). See also *Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero* (1986), *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988), *Virtual Light* (1993), *Idoru* (1996), *All Tomorrow's Parties* (1999).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1914). Separatist utopia by leading American feminist and socialist. Sequel: *With Her in Our Land* (1916). See also 'Moving the Mountain' (1911).

Molly Gloss, *The Dazzle of the Day* (1997). From the community of an interstellar vessel emerges a commitment to low-impact colonisation. See also *Wild Life* (2000).

Lisa Goldstein, *The Dream Years* (1985). Time-slip romance featuring Paris in the Surrealist 1920s and May 1968, with the future of revolutionary consciousness in the balance.

Jen Green and Sarah Le Fanu, eds, *Despatches from the Frontier of the Female Mind* (1985). Feminist SF anthology.

Sam Greenlee, *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (1969). The CIA's first black field agent trains street gangs to form a revolutionary army.

George Griffith, *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893). Airborne anarchist terrorists create a world government. See also *Olga Romanoff* (1894).

Nicola Griffith, *Slow River* (1995). A wealthy, young lesbian's forced proletarianisation in a dark near-future. See also *Ammonite* (1993). Griffith co-edited the queer anthology *Bending the Landscape: Science Fiction* (1998).

Sutton E. Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899). The rise and betrayal of revolutionary black secessionism.

Emil Habibi, *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist: A Palestinian who Became a Citizen of Israel* (1974). Candide-like protagonist recounts his fantastical life during the establishment of modern Israel.

Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (1974). Disorientated, alienated soldiers, suffering from time-dilation, return to a rapidly changing Earth. Sequels: *Forever Peace* (1997), *Forever Free* (1999).

Patrick Hamilton, *Impromptu in Moribundia* (1939). Satire on middle-class world-views and capital's fantasy that it, not labour, produces wealth.

Nick Harkaway, *The Gone-Away World* (2008). Black comic phantasmagoria on military-corporate Empire.

Jacqueline Harpman, *I Who Have Never Known Men* (1995). Ambiguous feminist fable about 40 women, abducted and imprisoned underground for a decade, who emerge into an empty world.

Harry Harrison, *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966). Classic vision of an overpopulated future.

M. John Harrison, *Signs of Life* (1996). Machismo meets free-marketeering on biotech's cutting edge. See also *Light* (2002), *Nova Swing* (2006).

Milo Hastings, *City of Endless Night* (1920). Confused, ambivalent anti-socialist dystopia, acutely prescient of Nazism.

Robert A. Heinlein, *For Us, The Living: A Comedy of Customs* (2004). Following the failure of Upton Sinclair's EPIC campaign, on which he volunteered, Heinlein wrote this long-unpublished anti-racist, anti-clerical, nudist utopian novel, advocating a Social Credit system with which to moderate capitalism. Sadly, he became an increasingly right-wing libertarian, wavering in the anti-racism and already problematic feminism of this first novel.

Zenna Henderson, *Ingathering: The Complete People Stories* (1995). Humanoid aliens with psychic powers struggle to fit into our world.

John Hersey, *My Petition for More Space* (1974). Dark comic fable of overpopulation. See also *The Child Buyer* (1960), *White Lotus* (1965).

Theodor Hertzka, *Freeland* (1890). Socialistically inclined utopian fantasy in which capitalism, stripped of exploitation and competition, forms the basis of an ideal society.

Chester Himes, *Plan B* (1983). Anguished Himes ends his hyperreal Harlem crime cycle with black revolution.

Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker* (1980). Linguistically inventive novel in which, 2000 years after the nuclear holocaust, gunpowder is reinvented.

T. Shirby Hodge (Roger Sherman Tracy), *The White Man's Burden: A Satirical Forecast* (1915). Disentitled visitor to future African anarchist utopia learns of the triumph of people of color, and witnesses the destruction of a white American invasion.

Cecilia Holland, *Floating Worlds* (1976). Ambiguously feminist, anti-colonialist space opera.

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (1901–03). A technologically advanced, ancient African civilisation is poised to retake the world.

Nalo Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber* (2000). Interplanetary colonisation, told in the voices of the colonised. Hopkinson co-edited *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Visions of the Future* (2004).

William Dean Howells, *A Traveler from Altruria* (1892–93). Visitor from a truly socialist, christian land exposes the contradictions between capitalism and democracy. Sequels: *Letters of an Altrurian Traveller* (1893–94), *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907).

W.H. Hudson, *The Crystal Age* (1887). Semi-matriarchal ecological-pastoral utopia.

Julian Huxley, 'The Tissue-Culture King' (1926). Anti-colonial adventure about cloning, telepathy and commodity fetishism.

Blyden Jackson, *Operation Burning Candle* (1973). Black revolutionaries plan a symbolically resonant outrage to shatter dominant ideology.

K.W. Jeter, *Noir* (1998). In a future of indentured posthumous labour and *extreme* penalties for copyright infringement, a corporation might have perfected capitalism.

Michel Jeury, *Chronolysis* (1973). Disorientated agent of an anarcho-socialist near-future finds himself at the centre of a conflict with multinational corporations trying to alter history so as to take over the future.

Gwynth Jones, *White Queen* (1991). Ironic-green-socialist-feminsit-postcolonial revision of the alien invasion narrative. Sequels: *North Wind* (1994), *Phoenix Cafe* (1997), See also *Escape Plan* (1986), *Kairos* (1988), *Bold as Love* (2001; four sequels), *Life* (2004).

Anthony Joseph, *The African Origins of UFOs* (2007). Afropsychedelic SF noir.

William Melvin Kelley, *A Different Drummer* (1959). The black population desert a southern state.

John Kendall, *Unborn Tomorrow* (1933). Young couple flee 1995's 'unnatural' global socialist utopia.

Damon Knight, *Hell's Pavement* (1955). Madcap satire on 1950s US.

Cyril Kornbluth, *His Share of Glory* (1997). Satirises militarist/consumerist 1950s US. See also *The Syndic* (1953), *Not This August* (1995) and collaborations listed under Judith Merril and Frederik Pohl.

Nancy Kress, *Beggars in Spain* (1993). Ostensibly about genetically engineered superhumans, but demonstrating the ways in which capital already makes sus posthuman. Sequels: *Beggars and Choosers* (1994), *Beggars Ride* (1996).

- Larissa Lai, *Salt Fish Girl* (2002). Magic realist SF exploring the marginalisation of labour, immigrants and women.
- Mary E. Bradley Lane, *Mizora: A Prophecy* (1880–81). High-tech, hollow earth, female utopia.
- Herrmann Lang, *The Air Battle: A Vision of the Future* (1859). Technologically advanced African state fights to end the enslavement of whites. Not exactly anti-racist, it champions msicegenation.
- Justine Larbalestier, ed., *Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (2006). Feminist SF anthology.
- Alice LAurence, ed., *Cassandra Rising* (1978). Feminist SF anthology.
- J.M.G. Le Clezio, *The Giants* (1973). Poetic, mildly experimental jeremiad against modernity, rationalisation, consumerism and Americanisation.
- Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: Ambiguous Utopia* (1974). Anarchism in a world of scarcity is compared to capitalism in a world of artificial scarcity as a scientist attempts to understand sequence, simultaneity and determinism. See also *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), *The Word for World is Forest* (1972), *Always Coming Home* (1985).
- Doris Lessing, *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974). An outsider watches the collapse of civilization from her window. See also *The Four-Gated City* (1969), *The Fifth Child* (1988). *Re: Colonised Planet 5*, *Shikasta* (1979; four sequels).
- Roy Lewis, *The Extraordinary Reign of King Ludd: An Historical Tease* (1990). A Century after the victorious 1848 revolution, global Darwinian-Mathussian Luddite guild socialism is at risk.
- Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (1935). Always timely, if oddly comical, account of America's turn to fascism.
- A.M. Lightner, *The Day of the Drones* (1969). African expedition discovers the remnants of white civilisation.
- Anna Livia, *Bulldozer Rising* (1988). A group of older women plot survival in a future predicated on youthfulness.
- Alun Llewellyn, *The Strange Invaders* (1933). A post-apocalyptic, USSR-derived feudal theocracy is challenged by the migration of giant lizards.
- Jack London, *The Iron Heel* (1907). Bloody revolution against a capitalist oligarchy. See also 'A Curious Fragment' (1908), 'Goliath' (1908), 'The Dream of Debs' (1909), 'The Red One' (1918).
- Simon Louvish, *Resurrections From the Dustbin of History: A Political FANTasy* (1992). Fifty years after Luxemburg and Liebknecht founded the Socialist German State, Hitler's grandson is a heartbeat away from the US presidency.
- Ian McDonald, *Sacrifice of Fools* (1996). Aliens settle in Belfast in the midst of future Troubles. See also *Desolation Road* (1988), *Necroville* (1994), *Chaga* (1995), *Kirinya* (1988), *Tendeleo's Story* (2000), *River of Gods* (2004), *Brasyl* (2007).
- Maureen F. McHugh, *China Mountain Zhang* (1992). Everyday life in a not-too-distant future dominated by Communist China.
- Vonda McIntyre, *Dreamsnake* (1978). Post-apolyptic feminist SF about sexuality, gender and healing, as well as power and its abuses.
- Ken MacLeod, *The Execution Channel* (2007). The war on terror rolls on into a grim (alternative) future. See also *The Star Fraction* (1995; four sequels).
- Barry Malzberg, *Galaxies* (1975). Bitter commentary on writing for US SF markets, presented as notes towards an unfinished novel See also *Screen* (1968), *The Falling Astronauts* (1971), *Reve-*

- lations* (1972), *Beyond Apollo* (1972), *Overlay* (1972), *Herovit's World* (1973), *Scop* (1976), *Cross of Fire* (1982), *The Remaking of Sigmund Freud* (1985).
- Andrew Marvell, *Minimum Man* (1938). Overthrowing a fascist state depends upon the cooperation of posthuman midgets (another ambivalently self-conscious proletariat).
- Lisa Mason, *Summer of Love* (1994). A time-traveller returns to 1967 San Francisco to preserve the future, only to learn that history is contingent and potential.
- Vladimir Mayakovsky, *The Bedbug* (1929). Satirical play in which a Soviet bureaucrat is kept in a zoo.
- Shepherd Mead, *The Big Ball of Wax* (1954). Near-future anti-corporate satire.
- Farah Mendlesohn, ed., *Glorifying Terrorism* (2006). Collection published in contravention of the UK's draconian, Kafka-esque 2006 Terrorism Act.
- Judith Merrill, *Homecoming and Other Stories* (2005). Short fiction developing traditional SF materials from a broadly feminist, Trotskyist-inflected angle. See also *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950) and her collaboration with Cyril M. Kornbluth: *Outpost Mars* (1952), *Gunner Cade* (1952). Merrill edited *Year's Best SF* anthologies (1956–68) and *England Swings SF* (1968), which played a key role in the New Wave.
- China Mieville, *Iron Council* (2004). Revolution comes to New Crobuzon, ending with a remarkable image of revolutionary potential. Follows *Perdido Street Station* (2000) and *The Scar* (2002).
- Warren Miller, *The Siege of Harlem* (1964). A veteran recounts the Harlem secession to his grandchildren.
- Misha, *Red Spider White Web* (1990). Grim cyberpunk about art and commodification.
- Adrian Mitchell, *The Bodyguard* (1970). In totalitarian Britain, an elite bodyguard recounts his life, unaware of the revolution going on around him.
- J. Leslie Mitchell, *Gay Hunter* (1934). Flung into a post-apocalyptic pastoral Britain, the eponymous heroine fights the re-emergence of 'civilisation' (i.e. the imposition of a class system by technocratic fascism).
- Naomi Mitchison, *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962). Delightful adventures in embracing otherness. See also *We Have Been Warned* (1935).
- Judith Moffett, *The Ragged World* (1991). Aliens force humans to save Earth from ecocatastrophe, regardless of the cost. Sequels: *Time, Like an Ever-Rolling Stream* (1992), *The Bird Shaman* (20008). See also *Pennterra* (1987).
- Michael Moorcock, *Behold the Man* (1969). Deliciously blasphemous time-travel story. See also *Breakfast in the Ruins* (1972), *The Final Programme* (1968; three sequels), *The Black Corridor* (1969), *The Warlord of the Air* (1971; two sequels). Moorcock was the driving editorial force behind the New Wave — see *New World: An Anthology* (1983).
- Alan Moore, *V for Vendetta* (1982–88). An anarchist takes on British totalitarianism. See also *Watchmen* (1986–87), *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999–).
- Robert Morales and Kyle Baker, *Truth: Red, White and Black* (2002). Reworked Captain America origin story in which the 'supersoldier' experiments were conducted on African-Americans.
- Julian Moreau, *The Black Commandos* (1967). Super-scientific black super-warriors, complete with flying saucers, crush white supremacism.
- William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (1890). Socialist utopia without distinctions between work, life and art.
- Grant Morrison, *The Invisibles* (1994–2000). The Invisible College oppose the Archons of the Outer Church, aliens who have enslaved humanity. See also *Zenith* (1987–92), *Animal Man* (1988–90),

St Swithin's Day (1989), *Doom Patrol* (1989–92), *Big Dave* (1993–94), *Flex Mentallo* (1996), *The Filth* (2002–03) and *We3* (2004).

Walter Mosley, *Blue Light* (1998). A cosmic light hits mid-1960s San Francisco, prompting a peculiar apocalyptic story about race, sex, identity, death, transformation and possibility. See also *Futureland: Nine Stories of an Imminent Future* (2011).

Pat Murphy, 'Rachel in Love' (1987). Intelligence-boostered chimpanzee flees the patriarchal technoscientific institution which created her. See also *The City, Not Long After* (1988).

Alice Nunn, *Illicit Passage* (1992). In a besieged, class-ridden space colony, women foment revolution unseen.

Barbara O'Brien, *Operators and Things* (1958). Satire on corporations, patriarchy and alienation, published as a schizophrenia's autobiography.

E. V. Odle, *The Clockwork Man* (1923). Comic encounter with a future of mechanism, dialectically conceived as hopeful and terrible.

Joseph O'Neill, *Land Under England* (1935). Anti-Nazi subterranean adventure about a totalitarian society of people reduced to mindless automata. See also *Day of Wrath* (1936).

Rebecca Ore, *Gaia's Toys* (1995). Underground eco-warriors genetically engineer Earth's survival. See also *Becoming Alien* (1988; two sequels), *The Illegal Rebirth of Billy the Kid* (1991), *Slow Funeral* (1994).

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). Renowned anti-Stalinist dystopia.

Jane Palmer, *The Planet Dweller* (1985). Menopausal single mother ditches tranquillisers for interstellar adventures.

Severna Park, *Hand of Prophecy* (1998). Lesbian-feminist post-colonial space opera.

Olivier Pauvert, *Noir* (2005). In near-future fascist France, a killer returns to life to solve a murder he has no memory of committing.

Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976). Drawn across time to a utopian future, impoverished, institutionalised Connie Ramos must fight in the present to ensure it emerges. See also *He, She, and It* (1991).

Doris Piserchia, *Star Ridge* (1974). Interstellar adventure proves far more enticing than marriage and motherhood.

Frederik Pohl, 'The Midas Plague' (1954) and 'The Tunnel Under the World' (1954). Among the very best 1950s SF satires. See also collaborations with Cyril M. Kornbluth: *The Space Merchants* (1953), *Search the Sky* (1954), *Gladiator-at-Law* (1955), *Wolfbane* (1957).

Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972). Monotheism, white supremacism and order vs jazz and liberation. See also *Flight to Canada* (1976).

Kit Reed, *Weird Women*, *Wired Women* (1998). Collects stories (1958–97) charting patriarchy's demands upon post-war (white, middle-class) American women.

Mack Reynolds, *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* (1973). Socialist Labor Party supporter Reynolds wrote prolifically for the often right-wing US SF magazines; here, inspired by Bellamy, he imagines a post-scarcity future en route to a utopia it knows is definitionally unattainable. Sequel: *Equality: In the Year 2000* (1977). See also *Black Man's Burden* (1972; two sequels), *Commune 2000 A.D.* (1974; two sequels), *Satellite City* (1975), *After Utopia* (1977), *Perchance to Dream* (1977), *Lagrange Five* (1979; two sequels).

Adam Roberts, *Salt* (2000). Conflict between totalitarian and anarchistic colonisers. See also *Stone* (2002), *Polystom* (2003), *The Snow* (2004), *Gradisil* (2006), *Slowly* (2008).

Alberta Robida, *The Twentieth Century* (1881). Postmodern capital, simulacral architecture and the thematisation of daily life are among the many anticipations in this unexpectedly (if problematically) feminist vision of the future Paris.

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars* (1992), *Green Mars* (1993), *Blue Mars* (1995). Monumental trilogy charting the tensions between red and green politics as Mars is terraformed into a utopian homeworld. See also *The Wild Shore* (1984; two sequels), *Antarctica* (1997), *The Years of Rice and Salt* (2002), *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004; two sequels). Robinson edited the ecological anthology, *Future Primitives: The New Ecotopias* (1994).

Spider Robinson, *Night of Power* (1985). Black Power revolutionaries take New York.

Mordecai Roshwald, *Level 7* (1959). Grim tale of 'surviving' a nuclear war. See also *A Small Armageddon* (1962).

Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (1975). Key work of feminist SF blends aesthetic and political radicalism. See also *We Who Are About To...* (1977), *The Two of Them* (1978), *On Strike against God* (1982), *(Extra)Ordinary People* (1984).

Eric Frank Russell, *The Great Explosion* (1962). Gandhian passive resistance thwarts terrestrial imperialism.

Geoff Ryman, *Air or Have not Have* (2004). The information age arrives like a flood in a small Asian village. See also *The Unconquered Country* (1986), *The Child Garden; or, A Low Comedy* (1989), *Lust* (2000).

James Sallis, ed., *The War Book* (1969). Anti-war SF anthology.

Sarban, *The Sound of His Horn* (1952). 500 years after Hitler's victory, a timeslipped POW finds a world of baroque Nazi sentiment and dehumanisation.

Pamela Sargent, *The Shore of Women* (1986). In a gender-separatist post-apocalypse, an exiled woman from a high-tech city and a subsistence tribesman fall in love. Sargent edited three groundbreaking collections of SF with female protagonists by women, *Women of Wonder* (1975), *More Women of Wonder* (1976) and *The New Women of Wonder* (1978); collated and expanded as *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years* (1996) and *Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years* (1996).

Rob Sauer, ed., *Voyages: Scenarios for a Ship Called Earth* (1971). Ecological SF anthology.

George Saunders, *Civilwarland in Bad Decline* (1996). Stories set in a minimum-wage, simulacral US. See also *Pastoralia* (2000), *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* (2005), *In Persuasion Nation* (2006).

Josephine Saxton, *The Travails of Jane Saint and Other Stories* (1986). Resisting reprogramming of her revolutionary tendencies, Jane adventures in other realities. Sequel: *Jane Saint and the Backlash* (1989). See also *The Power of Time* (1985), *Queen of the States* (1986).

George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931). African-Americans' adoption of a perfect whitening treatment destroys white supremacy. See also *Black Empire* (1936–38).

Jody Scott, *I, Vampire* (1984). Feminist satire on contemporary capitalism. See also *Passing for Human* (1977).

Melissa Scott, *Trouble and Her Friends* (1994). Queer cyberpunk. See also *Shadow Man* (1995), *Night Sky Mind* (1996), *Dreaming Metal* (1997), *The Shapes of Their Hearts* (1998), *The Jazz* (2000).

Alan Seymour, *The Coming Self-Destruction of the USA* (1969). Agonised depiction of an African-American revolution.

Eluki Bes Shahar, *Hellflower* (1991). Postfeminist cyberpunkish space opera. Sequels: *Darktraders* (1992), *Archangel Blues* (1993).

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). Among many other things, a vision of a rising, rebellious proletariat. See also *The Last Man* (1826).

Lucius Shephard, *Life During Wartime* (1987). *Heart of Darkness* replayed in near-future US-occupied Latin America.

Lewis Shiner, *Deserted Cities of the Heart* (1988). Magic-realist SF about US imperialism. See also *Frontera* (1984), *Slam* (1990), *Glimpses* (1993). Shiner edited the anti-war anthology, *When the Music's Over* (1991).

John Shirley, *Eclipse* (1985). After World War III, a ragtag, tech-savvy resistance fights a neo-fascist regime and its corporate sponsors. Sequels: *Eclipse Penumbra* (1988), *Eclipse Corona* (1990).

Robert Silverberg, *Dying Inside* (1972). Contemporary alienation explored through a man with slowly-fading mind-reading powers. See also *Thorns* (1967), *A Time of Changes* (1971), *The Stochastic Man* (1975).

Clifford Simak, *Ring Around the Sun* (1953). Mutant humans destroy capitalism so as to end the Cold War. See also *City* (1952).

Upton Sinclair, *The Millennium: A Comedy of the Year 2000* (1914). Global catastrophe leaves a dozen of the world's wealthiest to recapitulate in the microcosm the shifts from slavery to feudalism to capitalism to socialism. See also *Prince Hagen* (1903; play version, 1921), *The Industrial Republic: A Study of the America of Ten Years Hence* (1907), *Roman Holiday* (1931), *I, Governor of California, and How I Ended Poverty* (1933), *We, People of America, and How We Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future* (1933), *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked* (1934–35).

Eduard Skobolev, *Catastrophe* (1983). Manic, talkative postcolonial adventure about the intertwined madness of imperialism and nuclear war.

Joan Slonczewski, *A Door into Ocean* (1986). Feminist separatist utopia of sorts, in which indigenous non-violence struggles to understand and heal colonial invasion. Sequels: *Daughter of Elysium* (1993), *Brain Plague* (2000). See also *The Forms on Foxfield* (1980), *The Children Star* (1998).

Cordwainer Smith, *The Rediscovery of Man* (1988). In the far future, animals engineered into sentience revolt against human enslavers. See also *Norstrilia* (1975).

Kent Smith, *Future X* (1990). A time-travelling descendant of Malcom X must prevent his ancestor's assassination and his own dystopian future.

Edmund Snell, *Kontrol* (1928). A decent chap overcomes technocratic quasi-facism.

Norman Spinrad, *The Iron Dream* (1972). In 1919, Adult Hitler emigrated to the US to become a pulp SF author; this is the novel he wrote in the weeks before his death from syphilis. See also *Bug Jack Barron* (1969), *Other Americas* (1988), *Russian Spring* (1991).

Olaf Stapledon, *Star Maker* (1937). Breathtaking, unrelenting cosmic epic about embracing otherness to form community. See also *Last and First Men* (1930), *Odd John: A Story Between Jest and Earnest* (1935), *Sirius: A Fantasy of Love and Discord* (1944).

Neal Stephenson, *Quicksilver* (2003). The rise of mercantilism told from an information-age perspective posits capital as the first global information technology. Sequels: *The Confusion* (2004), *The System of the World* (2004). See also *Cryptonomicon* (1999).

Boris and Arkady Strugatsky, *The Second Invasion from Mars* (1968). This time the Martians win by economic means; no-one much seems to notice or care. See also *Hard to be a God* (1964),

- Monday Begins on Saturday* (1965), *The Ugly Swans* (1966–67), *Noon: 22nd Century* (1967), *Tale of a Troika* (1968), *Roadside Picnic* (1972).
- Theodore Sturgeon, *Venus Plus X* (1960). A post-gender utopia — full of yearning and all the hang-ups of 1950s magazine SF. See also *More than Human* (1953), ‘The World Well Lost’ (1953); his short fiction is collected in *The Ultimate Egoist* (1994) and multiple subsequent volumes.
- Tricia Sullivan, *Maul* (2004). Post-feminist riot grrl shopping ‘n’ fighting spree, with a second-wave twist.
- Lucy Sussex, *My Lady Tongue and Other Tales* (1990). Lesbian, postcolonial SF and fantasy.
- Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Satire on the excesses of reason and unreason.
- Sheri S. Tepper, *The Gate to Women’s Country* (1988). Post-apocalyptic separatist utopia featuring a secret feminist project for the survival of humanity and the world. See also *Grass* (1989; two sequels), *Beauty* (1991), *Gibbon’s Decline and Fall* (1996), *The Fresco* (2000), *The Visitor* (2002), *The Companions* (2003), *The Margarets* (2007).
- Sheree R. Thomas, ed., *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Science Fiction from the African Diaspora* (2000). Mostly African-American SF. See also *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* (2004).
- James Tiptree, Jr, *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever: The Great Years of James Tiptree, Jr* (1990). Collects Alice Sheldon’s best stories about gender, identity, sex and death, including ‘The Women Men Don’t See’ (1973) and ‘Houston, Houston, Do You Read?’ (1976).
- Sue Thomas, *Correspondence* (1991). A disaffected woman slowly transforms herself into a machine, which begins to flourish.
- Alexei Tolstoy, *Aelita* (1922). Two Soviet visitors to Mars back a worker’s revolt. See also *Engineer Garin and His Death Ray* (1927).
- Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889). Anti-clerical, republican if ultimately ambivalent time-travel narrative about the transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism.
- Thomas F. Tweed, *Rinehard* (1933). Brain-damaged — or divinely inspired — president overthrows the constitution and US institutions so as to alleviate the Depression.
- Jules Verne, *Paris in the Twentieth Century* (written 1863; 1994). ‘Lost’ dystopian comic romance unlocks the ambivalence towards modernity and mechanisation of Verne’s more famous works. See also *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas* (1870; transl. William Butcher), *The Begum’s Millions* (1879; transl. Stanford L. Luce).
- Elisabeth Vonarburg, *In the Mothers’ Land* (1992). A post-apocalyptic matriarchy is rocked by archaeological discoveries. See also *The Silent City* (1981), *Reluctant Voyagers* (1994), *Dreams of the Sea* (1996), *A Game of Perfection* (1997), *Slow Engines of Time and Other Stories* (1999).
- Kurt Vonnegut, Jr, *Player Piano* (1952). Dystopian satire on cybernetic automation.
- Rex Warner, *The Aerodrome* (1941). Comic jeremiad against the fascistic forces of modernity and the security state. See also *The Wild Goose Chase* (1936).
- Ian Watson, *Slow Birds* (1985). Collection of ironic stories, several of them directed against Cold War escalations.
- E.L. White, *Lukundoo, and Other Stories* (1927). Title story is an (ambiguously) anti-colonialist colonial fantasy.
- Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (1999). In an alternate America, race relations are articulated through the science and art of elevator construction and maintenance.
- Kate Wilhelm, *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* (1976). Feminist post-apocalyptic tale of cloning and posthuman becoming.

John A. Williams, *The Man Who Cried I Am* (1967). A novel of African-American insurgency. See also *Sons of Darkness*, *Sons of Light* (1968), *Captain Blackman* (1972), *Jacob's Ladder* (1987).

Raymond Williams, *The Volunteers* (1978). Near-future thriller, prescient of the Thatcher-Blair state, about resistance and revolution.

Tess Williams, *Sea as Mirror* (2000). Interspecies communication offers a key to surviving ecological and nuclear disasters.

Connie Willis, 'All My Darling Daughters' (1985). Grim tale of an abused girl in an orbital boarding school, where the boys rape aliens. See also *Doomsday Book* (1992).

Monique Wittig, *The Guerilleres* (1969). Incantatory account of women's armed resistance to patriarchy and men.

Bernard Wolfe, *Limbo* (1952). Dystopian satire digging deep into cybernetics and psychoanalysis, by Trotsky's one-time bodyguard. See also 'The Bisquit Position' (1972).

Jack Womack, *Random Acts of Senseless Violence* (1993). The best of the six-book *Dryco* series (1987–2000) tells the story of a young woman's descent into poverty and abandonment of middle-class standards unsuited to her new life. See also *Let's Put the Future Behind Us* (1996).

Ivan Yefremov, *Andromeda* (1957). Soviet adventures in a future socialist galaxy.

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (1924). Prematurely anti-Stalinist dystopian satire on mechanism and order written by 1921.

Pamela Zoline, 'The Heat Death of the Universe' (1967). Central to New Wave and feminist SF, it brings together the drudgery of a housewife's daily life and the entropic universe.

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Mark Bould
Left Science Fiction
Selected and Annotated, If Not Always Exactly Recommended, [novels, stories, and plays]
2016

Red Planets
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