

Essay 1

Global Science Fiction | Spring 2018
Prof. Wythoff

Write a 5-page essay (double-spaced, 12pt font, roughly 1500 words) on one of the topics below, or a topic of your choosing. If you're choosing your own essay topic, please see me or write me to discuss your plans.

Hard copy due in class, Thursday March 1.

- In class, we discussed the historical novel as a work of fiction set in a historical period, in which verified historical events serve as the backdrop for imagined characters. For Carl Freedman, writing in *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*, both science fiction and the historical novel “denaturalize the present by showing it to be neither arbitrary nor inevitable but the conjunctural result of complex, knowable” processes (Freedman 56). Considering this thesis, that both genres reveal to the reader his or her relationship to the historical past as well as their own place in the present, how could **either** Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* or Lavie Tidhar’s *Central Station* be considered as a historical novel?
- Select a few passages from Samuel R. Delany’s *Trouble on Triton* and demonstrate how, word by word, sentence by sentence, Delany constructs an imagined world through the play of language. You could focus on his use of nested phrases (like this), his use of neology and novum, or other stylistic decisions.
- Demonstrate how science fiction has evolved across the twentieth century using one story we have read from each of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (or late 40s: three stories total). You can focus on the use of different forms of fiction we have discussed: allegory, parable, fable, extrapolation, prediction, etc. You can analyze the different kinds of relationships authors set up between their real world, and the imagined world of the text. The choice is yours.