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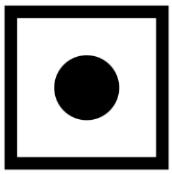

THE ALTERNATE REALITIES OF LIFE SCIENCES AND SCIENCE FICTION

As a mode that evolved around our fears over technological development, science / fiction, understood in a broad sense of fictionalizing scientific narratives, has more recently turned towards biology as the science of the future. In parallel, life sciences have established their presence within the field of humanities, as both strive to tackle the burning political issues. Climate change, mass extinctions, biotechnological fallouts – these aspects of the Anthropocene feature in contemporary fiction, reflecting the global anxieties, but their trajectory could be traced back to modernist works (and further back). The sixth volume of *Pulse,* entitled "Alternate Realities of Life Sciences and Science Fiction," brings together a number of texts exploring how possible realities alternate to the biopolitical ordering, are both constructed and deconstructed at the intersection of life sciences and science / fiction in different ways, in the modernist and contemporary periods. The texts are interventions across a range of perspectives: from continental philosophy, cultural studies, to eco-criticism, animal studies, and medical humanities.

In "Environmental Consciousness in D. H. Lawrence's Novels," Matea Mlakić unfolds a particular subversion of rationalism in the fiction of D. H. Lawrence, arguing that the author envisages a utopian 'future primitive' society as an alternative to the modern industrialized world, for which he is to be regarded as one of the earliest 'green writers'. In the contribution "The Manx Cat in *A Room of One's Own*" Monika Bregović focuses on the manx cat as a zoo-metaphor and individual subject in Virginia Woolf's feminist essay. While the manx cat plays a key role in the allegory on the position of women in a patriarchal society, it is also depicted as a subject in its own right, occupying an equally inferior position, which is however challenged on the basis of Darwin's theory of evolution. Marijeta Bradić in her essay "Towards a Poetics of Weird Biology: Strange Lives of Nonhuman Organisms in Literature" unpacks the concept of 'weird biology' by drawing on the examples of so-called 'weird fiction'

that abound in non-human environments. The fictions of Jeff VanderMeer, Thomas Ligotti, and China Miéville construct alternate realities by exploring the unusual aspects of the human world and producing a sense of 'the weird.' In "Synthesizing Super Soldiers: Military Medicine in Fiction and Reality," Simon Harold Walker focuses on the medicalisation of the human body for military purposes in *Doctor Who*, *Firefly*, and *Captain America*. These popular examples of science fiction reflect the historical examples of medical experimentation, training, and at times physical and psychological trauma. In the contribution "The Hegelian 'Quantum': A Meta/physical Exploration," Prasenjit Biswas explores how Hegelian notion of 'the quantum' laid out in his seminal work *Science of Logic* can be seen to anticipate the more recent concepts of quantum theory, while alluding to James Joyce's work as a fictionalization of such model of reality.

The book reviews fruitfully intersect with the discussions raised in the articles. Susan Haris focuses on Ian Campbell's postcolonial engagement with Arabic science fiction (*Arabic Science Fiction*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), while Rachel Hill introduces us to the science fictional world-building of contemporary American novelist P. Djèlí Clark in his work *The Haunting of Tram Car 015* (Tor.com, 2019). Eni Buljubašić casts a fresh look into Ursula K. Heise's *Imagining Extinction* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), reasserting its importance in the field of ecocriticism, while Fran Cettl explores Joe Dispenza's theoretical and practical 'scientific-mystical' model of reality in *Becoming Supernatural: How Common People are Doing the Uncommon* (Hay House, 2017).

As editors, we hope you will enjoy the diverse and engaging topics of the current issue of *Pulse*.