

**SCIENCE  
FICTION  
QUOTATIONS**



# **SCIENCE FICTION QUOTATIONS**

From the Inner Mind to the Outer Limits

edited by **Gary Westfahl**

With a foreword by **Arthur C. Clarke**

Yale University Press / New Haven and London

Copyright © 2005 by Yale University.

All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publishers.

Designed by Mary Valencia

Set in Minion type by Tseng Information Systems, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America by Vail-Ballou Press

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Science fiction quotations : from the inner mind to the outer limits / edited by

Gary Westfahl ; with a foreword by Arthur C. Clarke.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-300-10800-1 (paperback : alk. paper)

1. Science fiction—Quotations, maxims, etc. I. Westfahl, Gary.

PN6084.S34S35 2005

808.83'876—dc22

2005003195

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# CONTENTS

Foreword by Arthur C. Clarke ix  
Acknowledgments xiii  
Introduction xv

## A

Actions 1  
Aliens 3  
Alien Worlds 9  
Ambition and Hope 13  
Animals 15  
Apocalypse 18  
The Arts 24  
Astronauts and Space Travelers 27

## B

Beauty 30  
Belief 31  
The Body 34  
Books 36  
Buildings and Architecture 38  
Business and Economics 40

## C

Change 44  
Children and Young People 47  
Choice 50  
Cities 52  
Civilization and Barbarism 54  
Class System 58  
Clothing and Nudity 60  
Communication and Speech 61  
Communities 64  
Computers 66

Cosmology and Eschatology 69  
Courage and Cowardice 73  
Cultures and Anthropology 75

## D

Darkness and Light 78  
Death 80  
Destiny 90  
Dimensions 91  
Dreams and Sleep 95

## E

Earth 100  
Education 103  
Emotions 107  
Evil 110  
Evolution 113  
Exploration and Adventure 116

## F

Fear and Horror 121  
Flying 124  
Folly and Stupidity 125  
Food and Drink 127  
Freedom 130  
Friendship 132  
The Future 134

## Contents

### G

- God 139
- Gods and Demons 143
- Governments 145

### H

- Happiness and Sadness 150
- Heroes and Superheroes 154
- History 157
- Humanity 163
- Humor and Laughter 178

### I

- Imagination and Ideas 180
- Immortality 182
- Impossibility 185
- Individualism and Identity 186
- Intelligence 189

### J

- Justice 193

### K

- Kindness 196
- Knowledge and Information 198

### L

- Language 204
- Laws and Crimes 208
- The Laws of Science Fiction 211
- Life 215
- Logic 221
- Loneliness and Solitude 223
- Love and Romance 226

### M

- Machines and Technology 230
- Madness and Sanity 234

- Marriage 238
- Mathematics 240
- Media 241
- Medicine and Disease 243
- Memory 245
- Money 247
- Monsters 248
- Morality 252
- Mothers and Fathers 254
- Music 256

### N

- Nature 258

### O

- Old Age 261
- Overpopulation 263

### P

- Pain and Suffering 265
- Paradoxes 267
- Paranoia 268
- Perception and Vision 270
- Plants 274
- Politics 276
- Power 279
- Problems 283
- Progress 285
- Psychic Powers 291
- Psychology 292

### Q

- Questions and Answers 297

### R

- Race Relations 300
- Reality 302
- Religion 306

Revolution and Rebellion 311  
Roads and Automobiles 313  
Robots, Androids, and Cyborgs 315

**S**

Science 320  
Science Fiction 323  
Scientists 332  
The Sea 335  
Secrets and Mysteries 337  
Sex 338  
Space 340  
Spaceships 345  
Space Travel 347  
Stars 355  
Stories and Writers 358  
Surrealism 361  
Survival 364

**T**

Thinking 367  
Time 370

Time Travel 375  
Travel 378  
Truth 380

**U**

The Universe 385  
The Unknown 392  
Utopia 393

**V**

Violence 397

**W**

War and Peace 400  
Wealth and Possessions 405  
Weapons 408  
Wisdom 409  
Women and Men 412  
Work 417

Index of Authors 421  
Index of Titles 437



## FOREWORD

### Arthur C. Clarke

Let me open with a quotation from that most prolific source, Anonymous: “If you have to ask what science fiction is, you’ll never know.”

In spite of this, attempts to define science fiction will continue as long as people write Ph.D. theses. Meanwhile, I am content to accept Damon Knight’s magisterial: “Science Fiction is what I point to and say ‘*That’s* science fiction.’”

Much blood has also been spilled on the carpet in attempts to distinguish between science fiction and fantasy. Somewhere in the literary landscape, science fiction merges into fantasy, but the frontier between the two is as fuzzy as the boundary of fractal images like the famous Mandelbrot Set. I have therefore suggested an operational definition: science fiction is something that could happen—but usually you wouldn’t want it to. Fantasy is something that couldn’t happen—though often you wish it would.

The writer of science fiction is faced with a problem which the writers of so-called mainstream fiction—devoted to a tiny subsection of the real universe—don’t have to worry about. They seldom need to spend pages setting the scene: sometimes one sentence will do the trick. When you read “It was a foggy evening in Baker Street,” you’re there in a millisecond. The science fiction writer, constructing a totally alien environment, may need several volumes to do the job: the classic example is Frank Herbert’s masterwork *Dune* and its sequels.

Notwithstanding this slight handicap, many of the finest works of science fiction are short stories. I can still recall the impact of Stanley Weinbaum’s “A Martian Odyssey” when the July 1934 *Wonder Stories* arrived. When I close my eyes, I can still see that characteristic Frank R. Paul cover: never before or since did I read a story—and then go straight back to the beginning and read it right through again . . .

So perhaps the short story is to science fiction what the sonnet is to the epic poem. The challenge is to create perfection in as small a space as possible—something I have often dabbled in, with varying degrees of success. This enrichment process is carried to a new level when works of science fic-

## Foreword

tion are littered with witty remarks, “gems” that offer profound (or hilarious) insights into a wide range of topics and subjects covering God, the Universe and everything else.

*Science Fiction Quotations* offers a fascinating collection of such quotations, culled from a large number of literary, media and entertainment sources and neatly categorised. It is a massive undertaking that would have daunted but the most indefatigable of researchers—and one for which generations of science fiction writers and enthusiasts would be extremely grateful.

Browsing through the manuscript brought back a kaleidoscope of memories from my own lifelong association with the *genre* in its various manifestations—pulp magazines, books, television series, films and, most recently, interactive games and Web sites. It has once again confirmed something I have always felt: mine will be the last generation that was able to read all the noteworthy works of science fiction.

I am naturally delighted to see that editor Gary Westfahl has included several of my own quotations—including some that I had long forgotten! And here is my less known Clarke’s Sixty-fourth Law that he might have added to the relevant section: “Reading software manuals without the hardware is as frustrating as reading sex manuals without the software.”

Of course, a single volume like this can only skim the surface of the vast reservoir of quotable quotes found in different realms of science fiction. It is only a matter of time—probably just a few years—before smart computer programs can be tasked to scan everything that has ever been printed in search of quotes. The next edition of this dictionary might well be a collaboration between carbon and silicon based compilers . . .

For every quote in this impressive dictionary, there must be a few more that science fiction enthusiasts wish had also been included. On a cursory glance through the manuscript, I didn’t spot that piece of sage advice from Sam Goldwyn that no writer should ever forget: “If you gotta message, use Western Union.”

Indeed, the primary function of any story is to entertain—not to instruct or to preach. Promoting a particular scientific concept or technology or a utopian worldview should be the secondary aim of a science fiction story. In fact, we can apply this to discern good science fiction. Some years ago, I suggested that the acid test of any story comes when you reread it, preferably after a lapse of some years. If it’s good, the second reading is as enjoyable as the first. If it’s great, the second reading is more enjoyable. And if it’s a

masterpiece, *it will improve with every reading*. Needless to say, there are very few masterpieces in or out of science fiction.

Fortunately, there is no further need to defend science fiction against the illiterates who, until recently, were prone to attack it. However, many long-time enthusiasts such as myself still have automatic defence mechanisms; it is hard to ignore the instincts of a lifetime. I can still remember the days when I used to hide the covers of my 1930 *Wonder* and *Amazing Stories*.

By mapping out possible futures, as well as a good many improbable ones, the science fiction writer does a great service to the community. He encourages in his readers flexibility of mind, readiness to accept and even welcome change—in one word, adaptability. Perhaps no attribute is more important in this age. The dinosaurs disappeared because they could not adapt to their changing environment. We shall disappear if we cannot adapt to an environment that now contains spaceships, computers—and thermonuclear weapons.

Nothing could be more ridiculous, therefore, than the accusation sometimes made against science fiction that it is escapist. That charge can indeed be made against much fantasy—*so what?* There are times (the last century has provided a more than ample supply) when some form of escape is essential, and any art form that supplies it is not to be despised. And as C. S. Lewis (creator of both superb science fiction and fantasy) once remarked to me: “Who are the people most opposed to escapism? *Jailors!*”

C. P. Snow ended his famous essay “Science and Government” by stressing the vital importance of “the gift of foresight.” He pointed out that men often have wisdom without possessing foresight. Science fiction has done much to redress the balance. Even if its writers do not always possess wisdom, the best ones have certainly possessed foresight.

And that is an even greater gift from the gods.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must first thank Fred Shapiro, who recruited me to edit this volume and who regularly provided advice and feedback throughout the long process of researching and preparing the manuscript. He is the reason why this book exists, and I could not have completed the project without his assistance.

To find and verify science fiction quotations, I primarily relied upon the J. Lloyd Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature housed in the Tomás Rivera Library of the University of California, Riverside. Everyone working there deserves thanks for help and support, including Melissa Conway, Darien Davies, and Sheryl Davis, but Sara Stilley merits special mention for her many diligent efforts to provide the books and magazines that I requested. For texts not in the Eaton Collection, I turned to the library's indefatigable Interlibrary Loan Department, and I thank its staff members—Maria Mendoza, Janet Moores, Kimberly Noon, and Deborah Snow—for their fine efforts.

Although I endeavored to resolve all questions raised by this project through my own research, I sometimes sought information and guidance from colleagues. An incomplete list of those who helped in some way includes Mike Ashley, Jerry Bails, Gregory Benford, Richard Bleiler, Cuyler Brooks, John Clute, William C. Contento, Arthur B. Evans, Martin Feldman, Fiona Kelleghan, David Langford, Arthur Lortie, Sharlyn Orbaugh, John S. Partington, David Pringle, Steve Rowe, David N. Samuelson, Andy Sawyer, and Darrell Schweitzer. While preparing the manuscript, I benefited from the support and assistance of several people at Yale University Press, including database analyst John C. Colucci, acquisitions editor Mary Jane Peluso, and assistant editor Lauren Shapiro.

I also appreciated the supportive work environment provided by Roger Hayes and other staff members of the UCR Learning Center, as well as David Werner and other faculty members of the University of LaVerne's Educational Programs in Corrections. My final words of heartfelt thanks go to my children, Allison and Jeremy, and my wife, Lynne, who suffered through many hours of neglect while I devoted myself to this project. No quotation in this volume can fully convey how much I have appreciated their love and support during this time and throughout my career.



# INTRODUCTION

I have devoted much of my life to science fiction, first as an enthusiastic reader and more recently as a scholar and commentator. When Fred Shapiro contacted me to say that he was editing a book of quotations for Yale University Press and would like me to edit an accompanying volume of science fiction quotations, I felt well prepared for the task. Still, I could not have anticipated just how humbling, enlightening, and exhilarating the experience of preparing this book would be.

My first priority was to establish a working definition of a “science fiction quotation.” The immediate answer—a quotation from a work of science fiction—raised potentially contentious questions: When did science fiction originate? How does one define a work of science fiction? A book representing an entire field of literature should also represent the shared attitudes of its readers and writers, so I followed the consensus opinion that science fiction originated in the nineteenth century and blossomed as a genre in the twentieth century, excluding by fiat works published before 1800, such as Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (which are, in any event, represented in other books of quotations). I also resolved to accept as science fiction any work that at least some readers and scholars had previously accepted as such. I would seek quotations primarily from novels, short stories, films, and television programs, with limited attention to plays, radio dramas, and comic books.

I originally intended to include numerous quotations from science fiction’s sister genre, fantasy, which has so often shared its writers, readers, and publishing venues; this seemed especially appropriate since there were no plans for a companion volume of fantasy quotations. As it happens, many of these quotations were removed during final editing because they pertained to topics of little relevance to science fiction, such as magic and witches, but a sizable number were retained; in light of their contributions to the volume, I trust that their presence will not unduly upset dedicated science fiction readers.

Clearly, this volume could not consist entirely of quotations *from* science fiction works, since there was definitely a place for quotations *about* science fiction, to be drawn primarily from editorials, articles, and critical studies.

## Introduction

It further seemed fitting to include quotations from science fiction *writers*, even if these quotations appeared in works other than their science fiction stories. One way to epitomize the contents of this volume, then, would be as a compilation of quotations from the science fiction community, taken from works which members of that community have written or embraced, with an emphasis (of course) on science fiction itself.

Having characterized the project in that fashion, I was driven to a critical decision regarding its organization. The original design was to organize quotations by author, placing all quotations from one author in one section; such an organization would implicitly present science fiction as a collection of isolated individual voices, each offering its own brand of wisdom. But science fiction, as many have noted, is better described as an ongoing conversation: writers and commentators constantly toss out ideas that other writers and commentators respond to, in turn inspiring additional responses. It did not seem right, for example, to place Arthur C. Clarke's First Law in one section and Isaac Asimov's Corollary to that law in another section. By bringing together statements from different authors under topical headings, the book could better embody and convey the atmosphere of dialogue and discussion that is one of the genre's distinctive strengths.

An additional goal of this volume was to provide accurate, verified versions of its quotations. Over the years, many quotations have been passed from source to source, sometimes accumulating errors along the way; for instance, an inaccurate version of Harlan Ellison's 1968 statement about Robert A. Heinlein's dilating door has appeared in several critical studies, and no one has troubled to seek out Ellison's article to see what words he actually chose. Here, I resolved to locate and reproduce definitive texts for all quotations. Since some texts have appeared in variant forms, occasionally igniting scholarly debates about which version should be regarded as definitive—debates I could not delve into—I developed and followed these guidelines. For novels, I privileged first book publication, ignoring earlier serializations (except in cases when several years elapsed between serialization and book publication); for some older novels, I trusted scholarly editions from university presses; for foreign works, I relied on either first American translations or, when these were suspect, other recommended translations; and for recent novels from British, Canadian, or Australian writers (since university scholars cannot indefinitely overburden their interlibrary loan departments), I accepted first American editions as definitive. For short stories, I privileged the first published versions, usually in magazines; in a few cases when magazines were

not available, I accepted the story's second publication as definitive. For films and television programs, except in rare instances when shooting scripts were available, I watched videocassettes to obtain accurate transcriptions. As with all human endeavors, the final volume will still include errors, but I have worked strenuously to ensure that these are as few as humanly possible.

In theory, the process of assembling a book of science fiction quotations is straightforward enough: the editor would read through or watch every single work of science fiction, every single work about science fiction, and every single work by science fiction authors, recording every single worthwhile quotation and eventually selecting only the best ones. As a practical matter, however, one editor, or a dozen editors, could not possibly fulfill this agenda in a finite period of time because of the vast dimensions of the field, so my survey of relevant materials was necessarily more selective. I relied on memories of earlier reading to seek out and record certain quotations, and I looked for quotations in compilations published as books or available online. These references proved a mixed blessing: books yielded some valuable quotations but generally seemed to endlessly recycle the same small number of noteworthy quotations from a handful of science fiction writers. Online sources were more variegated in their quotations, but quotations were sometimes misattributed or riddled with errors. Most frustrating was their common policy of failing to provide sources for quotations, which meant that I had to pore through the author's complete works to locate definitive texts for desired quotations. Several quotations are not in this volume because, despite considerable labors, I could not determine their original published source.

Having exhausted secondary resources, I shifted to detailed examinations of primary texts. I scanned every page of major novels, as well as numerous anthologies of stories, jotting down quotations as I noticed them. I regularly visited the J. Lloyd Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature at the University of California, Riverside, asking to examine books and magazines to locate or verify quotations. While striving to be methodical in covering significant works, I also incorporated elements of serendipity: while visiting a local library, I might examine a book on the shelf next to the book I was looking for, or while reading a story in a magazine, I might look at other stories in the same issue. One quotation came to me when a student worker at the Eaton Collection accidentally handed me a magazine that I had not requested; before returning it, I took a few minutes to scan through its contents and happened upon a gem.

I might have continued this process for years and years, reading texts and

## Introduction

finding interesting quotations; but when my deadline was approaching and I already had far more quotations than I could possibly use, I necessarily stopped researching and started preparing the manuscript, haunted by the knowledge that there remained innumerable authors and works that I should have examined. Now I faced a new set of challenges. Having initially established hundreds of possible topical headings, I needed to eliminate or combine categories to achieve a reasonable number of cohesive chapters; then, I had to remove some seventy thousand words of quotations from the manuscript to achieve the desired length. Some quotations were not particularly strong and I felt no remorse in deleting them; other deletions were more painful and problematic. Quotations were eliminated for several reasons: some made points that other quotations on the subject seemed to make more eloquently or concisely; some were powerful in their original contexts but had less impact as stand-alone statements; some were very long and not amenable to editing; and some came from authors who were already well represented in a given category. Certainly, if I am ever asked to compile a second volume of science fiction quotations or a revised and expanded edition of this volume, there will be no shortage of worthwhile materials to draw upon.

Before anyone examines the quotations in this volume, I should issue two warnings. First, readers should bear in mind that, to paraphrase Clarke, the opinions expressed in these quotations are not necessarily those of their authors. There is no reason to believe that William Shakespeare disliked lawyers—in fact, he was probably quite fond of them—but he wrote words of a different nature to be spoken by a clearly unsympathetic character, leading many people to say, infelicitously, “It’s like Shakespeare said—let’s kill all the lawyers.” Similarly, some quotations in this volume represent the views of characters or narrative voices that manifestly are not the views of the author who created them. A particular problem is that, in an effort to allow room for as many quotations as possible, some quotations are given without introductory language along the lines of “She had come to believe that” or “He often suspected that,” so the statement as presented here may project an air of conclusiveness that its author did not intend.

Second, though such judgments may be inevitable, the presence or absence of a given author in this volume, or the number of quotations from an author, should not be taken as a measure of the author’s talents—for two reasons. As already noted, my survey of science fiction was incomplete, and I know I have neglected any number of meritorious authors and texts. In addition, certain

authors may be more likely to generate stimulating quotations for reasons unrelated to their talents. One author may prefer to pause periodically and ponder the broader significance of the story or may allow characters to drift into extended conversations that have little to do with the story—resulting in a rambling, sloppily written story that happens to yield several memorable quotations. Another author may be intent solely upon telling the story as effectively as possible, with every word dedicated to that goal—resulting in a tightly focused, eloquent story that happens to include no statements capable of standing on their own as quotations. While working on this project, I was sometimes surprised to find myself jotting down numerous quotations from writers I do not particularly admire and relatively few quotations from other writers who are among my favorites; I learned through experience that there is not necessarily a correlation between quotability and literary value.

A few words about the format of this volume: within a given category, quotations are usually arranged in chronological order, though I violate this a few times to juxtapose closely related quotations. If there are several quotations from one year, they are arranged alphabetically by authors' last names; on rare occasions when there are quotations from two or three works by the same author published in the same year, they are arranged alphabetically by title. Titles in quotation marks are short stories and italicized titles are books, unless otherwise noted parenthetically; the phrase "episode of" signals a television series unless noted otherwise. For the most part, quotations are reproduced exactly as they originally appeared, including original spellings, though I silently correct typographical errors and, when editing out portions of sentences, sometimes adjust the punctuation or capitalization. Unbracketed ellipses are the author's; bracketed ellipses are mine. All quotations are attributed to officially credited authors, even in cases when evidence suggests an uncredited coauthor; for authors who have published under different names, the best-known name is regularly employed. When novels have appeared under different titles in different countries, I use the titles of the American editions.

If someone wishes to track down and read quotations in their original contexts, the novels, films, and television programs should not be difficult to locate, but short stories may prove more elusive. Two online resources—the Locus Index to Science Fiction (<http://www.locusmag.com/index/>) and the Internet Speculative Fiction DataBase (<http://www.isfdb.org/>)—should provide information on most, if not all, of the stories.

Most topic headings are self-explanatory, with two exceptions. In "The

## Introduction

Laws of Science Fiction,” I gather together some rules and general principles articulated by science fiction authors, such as Asimov’s Three Laws of Robotics, Clarke’s Three Laws, *Star Trek*’s Prime Directive, and Theodore Sturgeon’s Law. And under the imperfect heading “Surrealism,” I celebrate science fiction’s noted ability to generate, due to its innovative subject matter, statements that are delightfully absurd or incongruous; a few such statements are in other sections, but most ended up in this category.

I said at the beginning that I found working on this project to be humbling, enlightening, and exhilarating. Humbling—because I have become more aware than ever of just how vast the field of science fiction is, of just how many books, stories, films, and television programs people should be familiar with before daring to call themselves experts in the field. I will approach all future research with a new and sobering awareness of how little I or any other person really knows about this genre.

Enlightening—first, because this project forced me to reread many of the field’s classic works and to read for the first time other texts that I should have read long ago. More broadly, compiling these quotations brought a new understanding of science fiction’s characteristic attitudes and concerns. As I anticipated, I found many intriguing quotations about subjects like “Aliens,” “Space,” and “Time Travel”; I did not anticipate that “History” would become one of the book’s largest and most stimulating sections—at times, science fiction writers seem as fascinated by the past as they are by the future. There were many quotations about “Science” but an equal number about “Religion,” reinforcing the view of some scholars that this is, surprisingly, one of the genre’s central preoccupations. One might imagine that science fiction writers and readers would be unanimous in strongly supporting the space program; yet I discovered many statements that pondered humanity’s conquest of space in a more jaundiced, even critical, fashion. In these and innumerable other ways, the quotations here indicate that the more our knowledge of science fiction expands, the less confidence we can have in stereotypical preconceptions about the genre.

Exhilarating—because this project has convinced me, more than ever before, that my youthful impulse to focus my attention and energies on science fiction was a wise decision. Science fiction works are well worth reading and watching. Because of the field’s uniquely broad range of interests and perspectives, even the awkward words of untalented writers in pulp magazines can command attention, and the more skillful authors of recent decades may

achieve rhetorical heights that they could not have attained in other genres. Perhaps there is something in the very nature of science fiction that inspires a special sort of eloquence no other form of literature can achieve. However, rather than developing such an argument at length, I will stop talking now, and allow science fiction to speak for itself.



**SCIENCE  
FICTION  
QUOTATIONS**



# A

## ACTIONS

There are times in life when the most comfortable thing is to do nothing at all. Things happen to you and you just let them happen.

— James Hilton, *Lost Horizon* (1933)

Always act on instinct, Burke. It puts the sparkle in existence.

— Gordon R. Dickson, “The Monkey Wrench” (1951)

Such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere.

— J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954)

“He knows his leaders are not corrupted by intellectual paralysis.”

“What’s that mean?” Syd asked dryly.

“It means they act first and think second.”

— Philip K. Dick, *The World Jones Made* (1956)

Once human beings realize something can be done, they’re not satisfied until they’ve done it.

— Frank Herbert, “Cease Fire” (1958)

What I do I do because I like to do.

— Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962)

Confucius once said that a bear could not fart at the North Pole without causing a big wind in Chicago.

By this he meant that all events, therefore, all men, are interconnected in an unbreakable web. What one man does, no matter how seemingly insignificant, vibrates through the strands and affects every man.

— Philip José Farmer, “Riders of the Purple Wage” (1967)

## Actions

Every intelligent creature was curious—and curiosity prompted it to act when something incomprehensible took place.

— Stanislaw Lem, “The Hunt” (1968), translated by Michael Kandel (1977)

Orr had a tendency to assume that people knew what they were doing, perhaps because he generally assumed that he did not.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971)

If the human race ever stops acting on the basis of what it thinks it knows, paralyzed by the fear that its knowledge may be wrong, then Homo sapiens will be making its application for membership in the dinosaur club.

— Hank Davis, “To Plant a Seed” (1972)

Each deed you do, each act, binds you to itself and to its consequences, and makes you act again and yet again.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore* (1972)

Do nothing because it is righteous or praiseworthy or noble to do so; do nothing because it seems good to do so; do only that which you must do and which you cannot do in any other way.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore* (1972)

He had felt not that he was doing all the things he did, but that they were doing him. He had been in other people’s hands. His own will had not acted.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* (1974)

Do, or do not. There is no try.

— Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan, *The Empire Strikes Back* (film, 1980)

All of us are either doers or voyeurs, isn’t that right?

— Jack Dann, “Going Under” (1981)

There are no mistakes. The events we bring upon ourselves, no matter how unpleasant, are necessary in order to learn what we need to learn; whatever steps we take, they’re necessary to reach the places we’ve chosen to go.

— Richard Bach, *The Bridge across Forever* (1984)

Second thoughts can generally be amended with judicious action; injudicious actions can seldom be recovered with second thoughts.

— C. J. Cherryh, *Cyteen* (1988)

Honor is only a label they use for what they want you to do, Chernon. They want you to stay, so they call staying honorable.

— Sheri S. Tepper, *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988)

Tenar sighed. There was nothing she could do, but there was always the next thing to be done.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea* (1990)

She saw Culhane's conviction, shared by Lord Director Brill and even by such as Lady Mary, that what they did was right because they did it. She knew that look well.

— Nancy Kress, "And Wild for to Hold" (1991)

It was a world of acts, and words had no more influence on acts than the sound of a waterfall has on the flow of the stream.

— Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars* (1992)

"Jesus," said Chevette Washington, like somebody talking in their sleep, "what are you *doing*?"

He didn't know, but hadn't he just gone and done it?

— William Gibson, *Virtual Light* (1993)

Of all the forces in the universe, the hardest to overcome is the force of habit. Gravity is easy-peasy by comparison.

— Terry Pratchett, *Johnny and the Dead* (1993)

## ALIENS

No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their affairs they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and

## Aliens

fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet, across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.

— H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of their appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedge-like lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement, due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth—above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes—culminated in an effect akin to nausea. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of their tedious movements unspeakably terrible. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread.

— H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

[On Martians:] “It’s a pity they make themselves so unapproachable,” he said. “It would be curious to learn how they live on another planet; we might learn a thing or two.”

— H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

I think we’re property.

I should say we belong to something.

That once upon a time, this earth was No-man’s Land, that other worlds explored and colonized here, and fought among themselves for possession, but that now it’s owned by something.

That something owns this earth—all others warned off.

— Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned* (1919)

“I’ve always wanted to see a Martian,” said Michael, stiltedly. “Where are they, Dad? You promised.”

“There they are,” said Dad, and he shifted Michael on his shoulder and pointed straight down.

The Martians were there, all right. It sent a thrill chasing through Timothy.

The Martians were there—in the canal—reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mom and Dad.

The Martians stared back up at them for a long, long silent time from the rippling water . . .

—Ray Bradbury, “The Million-Year Picnic” (1946)

The great pods were leaving a fierce and inhospitable planet. [. . .] Did this incredible alien life form “think” this or “know” it? Probably not, I thought, or anything our minds could conceive. But it had sensed it; it could tell with certainty that this planet, this little race, would never receive them, and would never yield. And Becky and I, in refusing to surrender, but instead fighting their invasion to the end, giving up any hope of escape in order to destroy even a few of them, had provided the final and conclusive demonstration of that unchangeable fact. And so now, to *survive*—their one purpose and function—the great pods lifted and rose, climbing up through the faint mist, and out toward the space they had come from.

—Jack Finney, *The Body Snatchers* (1955)

The human race had long ago overcome its childhood terror of the merely alien in appearance. That was a fear which could no longer survive after the first contact with friendly extraterrestrial races.

—Arthur C. Clarke, *The City and the Stars* (1956)

Perhaps they have been living there inside the Sun since the Universe was born, and have climbed to peaks of wisdom which we shall never scale. [. . .] One day they may discover us, by whatever strange senses they possess, as we circle round their mighty, ancient home, proud of our knowledge and thinking ourselves lords of creation. They may not like what they find, for to them we should be no more than maggots, crawling upon worlds too cold to cleanse themselves from the corruption of organic life.

—Arthur C. Clarke, “Out of the Sun” (1958)

## Aliens

Once upon a time there was a Martian named Valentine Michael Smith.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961)

Where there are no men, there cannot be motives accessible to men.

— Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris* (1961), translated by Joanna Kilmartin and Steve Cox (1970)

He recalled an earlier hope he had had of [the aliens]: that they might be superior beings, beings of wisdom and enlightened power, coming from a better society where higher moral codes directed the activities of its citizens. He had thought that only to such a civilization would the divine gift of traveling through interplanetary space be granted. But perhaps the opposite held true: perhaps such a great objective could be gained only by species ruthless enough to disregard more humane ends.

— Brian W. Aldiss, “The Saliva Tree” (1965)

[Dr. McCoy on tribbles:] The nearest thing I can figure out is that they’re born pregnant. It seems to be a great timesaver . . .

— David Gerrold, “The Trouble with Tribbles,” episode of *Star Trek* (1967)

I was ambassador to a planetful of things that would tell me with a straight face that two and two are orange.

— Terry Carr, “The Dance of the Changer and the Three” (1968)

Eerie, Joe thought. A chitinous multilegged quasarachnid and a large bivalve with pseudopodia arguing about Goethe’s *Faust*.

— Philip K. Dick, *Galactic Pot-Healer* (1969)

Life got awfully boring with only humans to talk to.

— Larry Niven, *Ringworld* (1970)

Entering the dock Redleaf has a vision: the aliens will look exactly like his wife and their mouth bent into the accusatory *o* they will say to him, “what the hell are you doing in here looking like that? you barely have any right to the universe let alone our quarters, you clean yourself up right this moment or we’ll throw you out and take away your oxygen mask!”

— Barry N. Malzberg, “Conquest” (1971)

“For Christ’s sake, Ruth, they’re *aliens!*”

“I’m used to it,” she says absently.

—James Tiptree, Jr., “The Women Men Don’t See” (1973)

I found the head Rock and I stood there in that valley, all surrounded by Rocks going *slurp!* and *squish!* and sucking up bug food. This was not the best part of my life I’m telling you about.

—Harlan Ellison, “I’m Looking for Kadak” (1974)

He strolled out of the alley, trying not to look like an alien who had just buried his spaceship under the forsythia bushes.

—Ted Reynolds, “Boarder Incident” (1977)

Somewhere in the cosmos, he said, along with all the planets inhabited by humanoids, reptiloids, fishoids, walking treeoids and superintelligent shades of the color blue, there was also a planet entirely given over to ballpoint life forms. And it was to this planet that unattended ballpoints would make their way, slipping away quietly through wormholes in space to a world where they knew they could enjoy a uniquely ballpointoid life-style, responding to highly ballpoint-oriented stimuli, and generally leading the ballpoint equivalent of the good life.

—Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (1979)

Why is any object we don’t understand always called a “thing”?

—Harold Livingston, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (film, 1979)

“The *aliens*,” Dominguez said, frowning at Paul, “are still a mystery to us. We exchange facts, descriptions, recipes for tools, but the important questions do not lend themselves to our clumsy mathematical codes. Do they know of love? Do they appreciate beauty? Do they believe in God, hey?”

“Do they want to eat us?” Paul threw in.

—Michael Swanwick, “Ginungagap” (1980)

There was a fear of the non-human intelligence of the Birleles, even a fear of their strange shadowed beauty. Not everyone was attracted by the alien. Many were frightened and repelled by it.

—Sydney J. Van Scyoc, “Bluewater Dreams” (1981)

## Aliens

Why does he have to come here, with his birdcalls and his politeness? Why can't they all go someplace else besides here? There must be lots of other places they can go, out of all them bright stars up there behind the clouds.

— Nancy Kress, “Out of All Them Bright Stars” (1985)

For a moment, she saw Nikanj as she had once seen Jdahya — as a totally alien being, grotesque, repellant beyond mere ugliness with its night crawler body tentacles, its snake head tentacles, and its tendency to keep both moving, signaling attention and emotion. [. . .] She stared at it for a moment longer, wondering how she had lost her horror of such a being.

Then she lay down, perversely eager for what it could give her.

— Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn* (1987)

All aliens are just personifications of our neuroses, physical manifestations of what we fear or desire.

— Alexander Jablov, “The Place of No Shadows” (1990)

THE BORG: Strength is irrelevant. Resistance is futile. We wish to improve ourselves. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt to service ours.

— Michael Piller, “The Best of Both Worlds” Part 1, episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1990)

Suddenly, without warning, the Other reaches out and seizes Carvalho's right hand in his own.

And shakes it.

Which in reaction sets Earthman and Other, still enthusiastically shaking one another's hand, to turning lazy, laughing cartwheels among the stars.

— James Stevens-Arce, “Oscar Carvalho, *Spacial*” (1990)

The figures the telescope was producing were all that was left of an exploding star twenty million years ago. A billion small rubbery things on two planets who had been getting on with life in a quiet sort of way had been totally destroyed, but they were certainly helping Adrian get his Ph.D. and, who knows, they might have thought it all worthwhile if anyone had asked them.

— Terry Pratchett, *Johnny and the Dead* (1993)

Do not attempt to judge an extraterrestrial race or its artifacts on the basis of human experience.

— Christopher Anvil, “A Question of Identity” (1995)

There are beings in the universe billions of years older than either of our races. Once, long ago, they walked among the stars like giants, vast, timeless. Taught the younger races, explored beyond the rim, created great empires, but to all things, there is an end. Solely, over a million years, First Ones went away. Some passed beyond the stars never to return. Some simply disappeared.

— J. Michael Straczynski, “In the Shadow of Z’ha’dum,” episode of *Babylon 5* (1995)

The thing about aliens is, they’re alien.

— Gregory Benford, “A Hunger for the Infinite” (1999)

## **ALIEN WORLDS**

I was transplanted to a dark planet where the first germs of creation were struggling together. From a clay that was still soft rose gigantic palm trees, poisonous euphorbias and acanthus twined about cactus—the arid forms of rocks stuck out like skeletons from this sketch of creation, and hideous reptiles squirmed, enlarged, or grew round in the midst of an inextricable web of wild vegetation. The pale light of the stars alone illuminated the bluish distances of this strange horizon; and yet, as the creations were formed, a more luminous star gathered from them the germs of light.

— Gérard de Nerval, *Aurelia* (1854), translated by Richard Aldington (1932)

[On the Moon:] He sighed and looked about him. “This is no world for men,” he said. “And yet in a way—it appeals.”

— H. G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* (1901)

I perceived the moon no longer as a planet from which I most earnestly desired the means of escape, but as a possible refuge for human destitution. [. . .] “We must annex this moon,” I said. “There must be no shilly-shally. This is part of the White Man’s Burthen.”

— H. G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* (1901)

## Alien Worlds

I opened my eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness.

— Edgar Rice Burroughs, *A Princess of Mars* (1917)

You and I have drifted to the worlds that reel about the red Arcturus, and dwell in the bodies of the insect-philosophers that crawl proudly over the fourth moon of Jupiter.

— H. P. Lovecraft, “Beyond the Wall of Sleep” (1919)

Other memories encroached, cold, fear-etched memories that reached for him like taloned, withered claws.

Memories of alien lands acrawl with loathesomeness and venom. Strange planets that were strange not because they were alien, but because of the abysmal terror in the very souls of them. Memories of shambling things that triumphed over pitiful peoples whose only crime was they could not fight back.

— Clifford D. Simak, “Shadow of Life” (1943)

There they go, off to Mars, just for the ride, thinking that they will find a planet like a seer’s crystal, in which to read a miraculous future. What they’ll find, instead, is the somewhat shopworn image of themselves. Mars is a mirror, not a crystal.

— Ray Bradbury, “A Few Notes on *The Martian Chronicles*” (1950)

[First words said on the Moon:] By the grace of God, and the name of the United States of America, I take possession of this planet on behalf of, and for the benefit of, all mankind.

— Robert A. Heinlein, Rip von Ronkel, and James O’Hanlon,  
*Destination Moon* (film, 1950)

I knew what it was like to walk on alien soil.

— Leigh Brackett, “The Woman from Altair” (1951)

Alien worlds have alien rules, you either learn quickly or not at all.

— Michael Shaara, “The Holes” (1954)

It was a fresh young world, Hubert thought sadly; a virgin world, waiting innocently for the first immigrants to despoil it; waiting, like a young and

tender girl, to be picked up on the stellar street and sold into galactic prostitution.

—Robert F. Young, “Report on the Sexual Behavior on Arcturus X” (1954)

The Lord sure makes some beautiful worlds.

—Cyril Hume, *Forbidden Planet* (film, 1956)

Every world was a miracle, if your eyes were good enough.

—Chad Oliver, “North Wind” (1956)

They were a vast historical panorama [of Mars], clockwise around the room. A group of skin-clad savages squatting around a fire. Hunters with bows and spears, carrying the carcass of an animal slightly like a pig. Nomads riding long-legged, graceful mounts like hornless deer. Peasants sowing and reaping; mud-walled hut villages, and cities; processions of priests and warriors; battles with swords and bows, and with cannon and muskets; galleys, and ships with sails, and ships without visible means of propulsion, and aircraft. Changing costumes and weapons and machines and styles of architecture. A richly fertile landscape, gradually merging into barren deserts and bushlands—the time of the great planet-wide drought. The Canal Builders—men with machines recognizable as steam-shovels and derricks, digging and quarrying and driving across the empty plains with aquaducts [*sic*]. More cities—seaports on the shrinking oceans; dwindling, half-deserted cities; an abandoned city, with four tiny humanoid figures and a thing like a combat-car in the middle of a brush-grown plaza, they and their vehicle dwarfed by the huge lifeless buildings around them. [. . .]

“Wonderful!” von Ohlmhorst was saying. “The entire history of this race.”

—H. Beam Piper, “Omnilingual” (1957)

Poor old Dim kept looking up at the stars and planets and the Luna with his rot wide open like a kid who’d never viddied any such thing before, and he said:

“What’s on them, I wonder. What would be up there on things like that?”

I nudged him hard, saying: “Come, gloopy bastard as thou art. Think thou not on them. There’ll be life like down here most likely, with some getting knifed and others doing the knifing.”

—Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962)

## Alien Worlds

He was at home on those alien worlds, without time, those worlds where flowers copulate and the stars do battle in the heavens, falling at last to the ground, bleeding, like so many split and shattered chalices, and the seas part to reveal stairways leading down, and arms emerge from caverns, waving torches that flame like liquid faces.

— Roger Zelazny, “He Who Shapes” (1965)

He awoke—and wanted Mars. The valleys, he thought, what would it be like to trudge among them? Great and greater yet; the dream grew as he became fully conscious, the dream and the yearning.

— Philip K. Dick, “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale” (1966)

The grass is always greener under an alien star.

— John DeCles, “Cruelty” (1970)

Blossoms opened, flamboyance on firethorn trees, steel-flowers rising blue from the brok and rainplant that cloaked all hills, shy whiteness of kiss-me-never down in the dales. Flitteries darted among them on iridescent wings; a crownbuck shook his horns and bugled.

— Poul Anderson, “The Queen of Air and Darkness” (1971)

*Carry me back to Titan.*

*That’s where I want to be.*

*I want to repose*

*On the methane snows*

*At the edge of a frozen sea.*

— Eleanor Arnason, “The Warlord of Saturn’s Moons” (1974)

Don’t you understand, this is the first time I’ve actually stood on the surface of another planet . . . a whole alien world . . . ! Pity it’s such a dump though.

— Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (1979)

We have labored to produce a planet which, taken as a whole, would obey the Three Laws of Robotics. It does nothing to harm human beings, either by commission or omission. It does what we want it to do, as long as we do not ask it to harm human beings. And it protects itself, except at times and in places where it must serve us or save us even at the price of harm to itself.

— Isaac Asimov, *The Robots of Dawn* (1983)

We all want different things from Mars.

— Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars* (1992)

**AMBITION AND HOPE**

Mark his perfect self-contentment, and hence learn this lesson, that to be self-contented is to be vile and ignorant, and that to aspire is better than to be blindly and impotently happy.

— Edwin A. Abbott, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884)

Have you never wanted to do anything that was dangerous? Where should we be if nobody tried to find out what lies beyond? Have you never wanted to look beyond the clouds and the stars, or to know what causes the trees to bud? And what changes the darkness into light? But if you talk like that, people call you crazy. Well, if I could discover just one of these things, what eternity is, for example, I wouldn't care if they did think I was crazy.

— Garrett Fort and Francis Edward Faragoh, *Frankenstein* (film, 1931)

The humans have a curious force they call ambition. It drives them, and, through them, it drives us. This force which keeps them active, we lack. Perhaps, in time, we machines will acquire it.

— John Wyndham, "The Lost Machine" (1932)

It was better to live with disappointment and frustration than to live without hope.

— Robert A. Heinlein, "Waldo" (1942)

There is a special sadness in achievement, in the knowledge that a long-desired goal has been attained at last, and that life must now be shaped toward new ends.

— Arthur C. Clarke, *The City and the Stars* (1956)

He never gave up his search for the Door into Summer.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *The Door into Summer* (1956)

Hope clouds observation.

— Frank Herbert, *Dune* (1965)

## Ambition and Hope

After a time, you may find that having is not so pleasing a thing, after all, as wanting. It is not logical, but it is often true.

— Theodore Sturgeon, “Amok Time,” episode of *Star Trek* (1967)

Why can I never set my heart on a possible thing?

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969)

How strange human nature is: confronted with a ladder, man feels compelled to climb to the very top. It’s cold and drafty up there—bad for the health—and a fall can be fatal. The rungs are slippery. It’s a funny thing: you’re aware of the dangers, and you’re practically ready to drop from exhaustion, yet you keep fighting your way up. Regardless of the situation, you keep climbing; contrary to advice, you keep climbing; despite the resistance of your enemies, you keep climbing; against your better instincts, your common sense, your premonitions, you climb, climb, climb. If you don’t keep climbing, you fall to the bottom. That’s for sure. But if you do keep climbing, you fall anyway.

— Arkady Strugatsky and Boris Strugatsky, *Prisoners of Power* (1969), translated by Helen Saltz Jacobson (1977)

All her life she had made her own mistakes and her own successes, both usually by trying what others said she could not do.

— Vonda N. McIntyre, “Aztecs” (1977)

Hope is a punishable offense. The verdict is always death; one more death of the heart.

— Tanith Lee, “Medra” (1984)

Your dream is a good one. [. . .] The desire that is the very root of life itself: To grow until all the space you can see is part of you, under your control. It’s the desire for greatness.

— Orson Scott Card, *Speaker for the Dead* (1986)

There is that within a man that drives him ever onwards, just as the power of the seasons drives the roots of flowers into the hard earth; and so he decided, against his better judgment, to open his eyes and find out what was going to happen to him next.

— Tom Holt, *Ye Gods!* (1992)

“He has been positively growing tusks trying to create a breed of human insect which will continue to live on this accursed planet.”

“Everyone needs a goal.”

— Steve Aylett, *Atom* (2000)

## ANIMALS

Listen to them [wolves]—the children of the night. What music they make!

— Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)

I sometimes think, Mary, that it is a mistake to have a dog for a nurse.

— J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (play, 1904)

Lions, and tigers, and bears! Oh, my!

— Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allan Woolf,  
*The Wizard of Oz* (film, 1939)

The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

— George Orwell, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (1945)

[Referring to the birds:] Nat listened to the tearing sound of splintering wood, and wondered how many million years of memory were stored in those little brains, behind the stabbing beaks, the piercing eyes, now giving them this instinct to destroy mankind with all the deft precision of machines.

— Daphne du Maurier, “The Birds” (1952)

I have spent too much of my life opening doors for cats—I once calculated that, since the dawn of civilization, nine hundred and seventy-eight man-centuries have been used up that way.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *The Door into Summer* (1956)

The wild black scavengers of the skies laid their eggs in season and lovingly fed their young. They soared high over prairies and mountains and plains, searching for the fulfillment of that share of life’s destiny which was theirs according to the plan of Nature. Their philosophers demonstrated by unaided

## Animals

reason alone that the Supreme *Cathartes aura regnans* had created the world especially for buzzards. They worshipped him with hearty appetites for many centuries.

— Walter M. Miller, Jr., *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959)

A man who has *been* an animal has infinitely more knowledge of that animal than a man who has merely dissected one.

— Jack Sharkey, “Arcturus Times Three” (1961)

The reptiles had taken over the city. Once again they were the dominant form of life.

Looking up at the ancient impassive faces, Kerans could understand the curious fear they roused, rekindling archaic memories of the terrifying jungles of the Paleocene, when the reptiles had gone down before the emergent mammals, and sense the implacable hatred one zoological class feels towards another that usurps it.

— J. G. Ballard, *The Drowned World* (1962)

Stupefaction overrode all other emotion when I saw this creature on the lookout, lying in wait for the game. For it was an ape, a large-sized gorilla. It was in vain that I told myself I was losing my reason: I could entertain not the slightest doubt as to his species. But an encounter with a gorilla on the planet Soror was not the essential outlandishness of the situation. This for me lay in the fact that the ape was correctly dressed, like a man of our world, and above all that he wore his clothes in such an easy manner.

— Pierre Boulle, *Planet of the Apes* (1963), translated by Xan Fielding (1963)

Rabbits (says Mr. Lockley) are like human beings in many ways. One of these is certainly their staunch ability to withstand disaster and to let the stream of their life carry them along, past reaches of terror and loss. They have a certain quality which it would not be accurate to describe as callousness or indifference. It is, rather, a blessedly circumscribed imagination and an intuitive feeling that Life is Now.

— Richard Adams, *Watership Down* (1972)

When you’ve seen one pterodactyl you’ve seen them all.

— Edward Wellen, “Down By the Old Maelstrom” (1972)

You become what you live.

She lived shark.

— Edward Bryant, “Shark” (1973)

Never try to outstubborn a cat.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *Time Enough for Love* (1973)

The literature of the emperor penguin is as forbidding, as inaccessible, as the frozen heart of Antarctica itself. Its beauties may be unearthly, but they are not for us.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Author of the Acacia Seeds and Other Extracts from the *Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics*” (1974)

She had always known that all lives are in common, rejoicing in her kinship to the fish in the tanks of her laboratories, seeking the experience of existences outside the human boundary.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* (1974)

Who would have thought the bees would have been the first alien force to invade America?

— Stirling Silliphant, *The Swarm* (film, 1978)

It was none the less a perfectly ordinary horse, such as convergent evolution has produced in many of the places that life is to be found. They have always understood a great deal more than they let on. It is difficult to be sat on all day, every day, by some other creature, without forming an opinion about them.

— Douglas Adams, *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* (1987)

Animals never spend time dividing experience into little bits and speculating about all the bits they've missed. The whole panoply of the universe has been neatly expressed to them as things to (a) mate with, (b) eat, (c) run away from, and (d) rocks.

— Terry Pratchett, *Equal Rites* (1987)

[On dolphins:] Never trust a species that grins all the time. It's up to something.

— Terry Pratchett, *Pyramids* (1989)

## Animals

The gorillas are not yet sufficiently advanced in evolutionary terms to have discovered the benefits of passports, currency-declaration forms, and official bribery, and therefore tend to wander backward and forward across the border as and when their beastly, primitive whim takes them.

— Douglas Adams, *Last Chance to See* (1990)

ERIC: You liked dinosaurs back then.

DR GRANT: Well, back then they hadn't tried to eat me yet.

— Peter Buchman, Alexander Payne, and Jim Taylor, *Jurassic Park III* (film, 2001)

Animals do neither good nor evil. They do as they must do. We may call what they do harmful or useful, but good and evil belong to us, who chose to choose what we do. [. . .] The animals need only be and do. We're yoked, and they're free. So to be with an animal is to know a little freedom.

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Other Wind* (2001)

Humans, eh? Think they're lords of creation. Not like us cats. We *know* we are. Ever see a cat feed a human? Case proven.

— Terry Pratchett, *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* (2001)

It's hard to be an ornithologist and walk through a wood when all around you the world is shouting: "Bugger off, this is my bush! Aargh, the nest thief! Have sex with me, I can make my chest big and red!"

— Terry Pratchett, *Monstrous Regiment* (2003)

## APOCALYPSE

The more I think of a people calmly developing, in regions excluded from our sight and deemed uninhabitable by our sages, powers surpassing our most disciplined modes of force, and virtues to which our life, social and political, becomes antagonistic in proportion as our civilisation advances—the more devoutly I pray that ages may yet elapse before there emerge into sunlight our inevitable destroyers.

— Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race* (1871)

The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over.

—H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine: An Invention* (1895)

How small the vastest of human catastrophes may seem, at a distance of a few million miles.

—H. G. Wells, “The Star” (1897)

I felt the first inkling of a thing that presently grew quite clear in my mind, that oppressed me for many days, a sense of dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel. With us it would be as with them, to lurk and watch, to run and hide; the fear and empire of man had passed away.

—H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

By millions of years, time winged onward through eternity, to the end—the end, of which, in the old-earth days, I had thought remotely, and in hazily speculative fashion. And now, it was approaching in a manner of which none had ever dreamed.

—William Hope Hodgson, *The House on the Borderland* (1908)

The world was held in a savage gloom—cold and intolerable. Outside, all was quiet—quiet! From the dark room behind me, came the occasional, soft thud of falling matter—fragments of rotting stone. So time passed, and night grasped the world, wrapping it in wrappings of impenetrable blackness.

—William Hope Hodgson, *The House on the Borderland* (1908)

Every time we mention the world, we must remember it is going to end.

—Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie, *When Worlds Collide* (1932)

It is a new intoxication—annihilation. It multiplies every emotion.

—Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie, *When Worlds Collide* (1932)

## Apocalypse

“This storm you talk of . . .”

“It will be such a one, my son, as the world has not seen before. There will be no safety by arms, no help from authority, no answer in science. It will rage till every flower of culture is trampled, and all human things are leveled in a vast chaos.”

— James Hilton, *Lost Horizon* (1933)

This is written in the elder days as the Earth rides close to the rim of eternity, edging nearer to the dying Sun, into which her two inner companions of the solar system have already plunged to a fiery death. The Twilight of the Gods is history; and our planet drifts on and on into that oblivion from which nothing escapes, to which time itself may be dedicated in the final cosmic reckoning.

— Clifford D. Simak, “The Creator” (1935)

Even if this is the end of humankind, we dare not take away the chances some other life-form might have to succeed where we failed. If we retaliate, there will not be a dog, a deer, an ape, a bird or fish or lizard to carry the evolutionary torch. In the name of justice, if we must condemn and destroy ourselves, let us not condemn all life along with us! We are heavy enough with sins. If we must destroy, let us stop with destroying ourselves!

— Theodore Sturgeon, “Thunder and Roses” (1947)

“Look,” whispered Chuck, and George lifted his eyes to heaven. (There is always a last time for everything.)

Overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out.

— Arthur C. Clarke, “The Nine Billion Names of God” (1952)

They are so confident that they will run on forever. But they won’t run on. They don’t know that this is all one huge big blazing meteor that makes a pretty fire in space, but that some day it’ll have to *hit*.

— Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1954)

The intense heat is turning Metaluna into a radio-active sun. The temperature must be thousands of degrees by now. A lifeless planet. And still, its existence is useful to someone. As a sun, its heat is, I hope, warming the surface of some other world, giving light and warmth to those who may need it.

— Franklin Coen and Edward G. O’Callaghan, *This Island Earth* (film, 1955)

The world had gone darker and grimmer and heavier in this moment while history turned around me in the silence and the night. A new world lay ahead. All I could be sure of was that it would be a harsh world, full of sweat and bloodshed and uncertainty. But a real world, breathing and alive.

—C. L. Moore, *Doomsday Morning* (1957)

The Planet drifts to random insect doom.

—William S. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch* (1959)

So he left the lagoon and entered the jungle again, within a few days was completely lost, following the lagoons southward through the increasing rain and heat, attacked by alligators and giant bats, a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun.

—J. G. Ballard, *The Drowned World* (1962)

I, uh, don't think it's quite fair to condemn a whole program because of a single slip-up, sir.

—Stanley Kubrick, Terry Southern, and Peter George, *Dr. Strangelove, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (film, 1963)

A terrible cold world of ice and death had replaced the living world we had always known. Outside there was only the deadly cold, the frozen vacuum of an ice age, life reduced to mineral crystals. [. . .] I drove at great speed, as if escaping, pretending we could escape. Although I knew there was no escape from the ice, from the ever-diminishing remnant of time that encapsuled us.

—Anna Kavan, *Ice* (1967)

She thinks of the Heat Death of the Universe. A logarithmic of those late summer days, endless as the Irish serpent twisting through jewelled manuscripts forever, tail in mouth, the heat pressing, bloating, doing violence. The Los Angeles sky becomes so filled and bleached with detritus that it loses all colour and silvers like a mirror, reflecting back the fricasseeing earth. Everything becomes warmer and warmer, each particle of matter becoming more agitated, more excited until the bonds shatter, the glues fail, the deodorants lose their seals. She imagines the whole of New York City melting like a Dali into a great chocolate mass, a great soup, the Great Soup of New York.

—Pamela Zoline, "The Heat Death of the Universe" (1967)

## Apocalypse

Silence. It flashed from the woodwork and the walls; it smote him with an awful, total power, as if generated by a vast mill. It rose from the floor, up out of the tattered gray wall-to-wall carpeting. It unleashed itself from the broken and semi-broken appliances in the kitchen, the dead machines which hadn't worked in all the time Isidore had lived here. From the useless pole lamp in the living room it oozed out, meshing with the empty and wordless descent of itself from the fly-specked ceiling. It managed in fact to emerge from every object within his range of vision, as if it—the silence—meant to supplant all things tangible. Hence it assailed not only his ears but his eyes; as he stood by the inert TV set he experienced the silence as visible and, in its own way, alive. Alive! He had often felt its austere approach before; when it came it burst in without subtlety, evidently unable to wait. The silence of the world could not rein back its greed. Not any longer. Not when it had virtually won.

— Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

Various Horsemen are abroad, doing their various Apocalyptic things.

— George Alec Effinger, “Wednesday, November 15, 1967” (1971)

The line between inner and outer landscapes is breaking down. Earthquakes can result from seismic upheavals within the human mind. The whole random universe of the industrial age is breaking down into cryptic fragments.

— William S. Burroughs, preface to *Love and Napalm: Export U.S.A.*  
by J. G. Ballard (1972)

In his mind Vaughan saw the whole world dying in a simultaneous automobile disaster, millions of vehicles hurled together in a terminal congress of spurting loins and engine coolant.

— J. G. Ballard, *Crash* (1973)

The past seems like a long horror story of grinding toil, men and women teeming like rodents—and, of course, the final self-inflicted end as the world went up in flames, roasting the men and women in it like the corpses of animals over one of their own spits.

— Hilary Bailey, “The Ramparts” (1974)

Let me tell you about the end of the world. It happened fifty years ago. Maybe a hundred. And since then it's been lovely. I mean it. Nobody tries to bother you. You can relax. You know what? I *like* the end of the world.

—Thomas M. Disch, 334 (1974)

The day came. The wrath descended. Sin, guilt, and retribution? The manic psychoses of those entities we referred to as states, institutions, systems—the powers, the thrones, the dominations—the things which perpetually merge with men and emerge from them? Our darkness, externalized and visible? However you look upon these matters, the critical point was reached. The wrath descended.

—Philip K. Dick and Roger Zelazny, *Deus Irae* (1976)

The catastrophe story, whoever may tell it, represents a constructive and positive act by the imagination rather than a negative one, an attempt to confront the terrifying void of a patently meaningless universe by challenging it at its own game. [. . .] Each one of these fantasies represents an arraignment of the finite, an attempt to dismantle the formal structure of time and space which the universe wraps around us at the moment we first achieve consciousness.

—J. G. Ballard, “Cataclysms and Dooms” (1977)

Nothing like a little cosmic cataclysm to take my mind off jammed sinuses.

—Edward Bryant, “Particle Theory” (1977)

I can see we're in for a fabulous evening's apocalypse.

—Douglas Adams, “Fit the Fifth,” episode of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (radio series, 1978)

Apocalypse is the eye of a needle, through which we pass into a different world.

—George Zebrowski, *Macrolife* (1979)

*Kids!* Bringing about Armageddon can be dangerous. Do not attempt it in your own home.

—Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch* (1990)

## Apocalypse

Some people dote on contemplating disasters.

— William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, *The Difference Engine* (1991)

Chaos is found in greatest abundance wherever order is being sought. It always defeats order, because it is better organized.

— Terry Pratchett, *Interesting Times* (1995)

Night is falling. The gods have left us for those who please them better. Our time in the world is passed, and we are as wasted as the wind against the mountains. Shadows are falling, the gods have left us.

— Jim Grimsley, “Free in Asveroth” (1998)

If you look at the whole life of the planet, we—you know, Man—has only been around for a few blinks of an eye. So if the infection wipes us all out, that is a return to normality.

— Alex Garland, *28 Days Later* (film, 2002)

## THE ARTS

This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

— H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine: An Invention* (1895)

Once there was a race, quite unlike the human race—quite. I have no way of describing to you what they looked like or how they lived, but they had one characteristic you can understand: they were creative. The creating and enjoying of works of art was their occupation and their reason for being.

— Robert A. Heinlein, “The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag” (1942)

I chose the world’s great literature, and painting, and sculpture, and music—those mediums which best portray man lifting to the stars.

— Mark Clifton, “What Have I Done?” (1952)

The moment when one first meets a great work of art has an impact that can never again be recaptured.

— Arthur C. Clarke, “Jupiter Five” (1953)

I think great art should play a part in the ordinary man's life, don't you?  
It can make his existence so much richer and more meaningful.

— Philip K. Dick, *Eye in the Sky* (1957)

Around the time of the Terran Caesar Augustus, a Martian artist had been composing a work of art. It could have been called a poem, a musical opus, or a philosophical treatise; it was a series of emotions arranged in tragic, logical necessity. Since it could be experienced by a human only in the sense in which a man blind from birth might have a sunset explained to him, it does not matter which category it be assigned.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961)

One does have to learn to look at art. But it's up to the artist to use language that can be understood. Most of these jokers don't *want* to use language you and I can learn; they would rather sneer because we "fail" to see what they are driving at. If anything. Obscurity is the refuge of incompetence.

— Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961)

Life is short, he thought. Art, or something not life, is long, stretching out endless, like [a] concrete worm. Flat, white, unsmoothed by any passage over or across it.

— Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)

There is in all things a pattern that is part of our universe. It has symmetry, elegance, and grace—those qualities you find always in that which the true artist captures. You can find it in the turning of the seasons, in the way sand trails along a ridge, in the branch clusters of the creosote bush or the pattern of its leaves. We try to copy these patterns in our lives and our society, seeking the rhythms, the dances, the forms that comfort. Yet, it is possible to see peril in the finding of ultimate perfection. It is clear that the ultimate pattern contains its own fixity. In such perfection, all things move toward death.

— Frank Herbert, *Dune* (1965)

Science explains the world, but only Art can reconcile us to it.

— Stanislaw Lem, "King Globares and the Sages" (1965), translated by Michael Kandel (1977)