

PUNCTUATION IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Ostensibly, late 20th century science fiction does not favor apocalypse. Writing about “the emergent new school of Eighties SF,”¹ Bruce Sterling suggests that its distinguishing mark is “boredom with the Apocalypse” (Gibson 12) and that William Gibson (and implicitly other writers) waste no time bemoaning the end of the world. The same perception can be found in many critical appraisals. Veronica Hollinger sees both cyberpunk and, more generally, what she calls antihumanist SF² as ironically detached from their subject matter, the approach that “precludes nostalgia or sentimentality.” For her, this detachment “usually discourages any recourse to the logic of the apocalypse,” which has ceased to be “a favored narrative move” (Hollinger 213). One of the explanations provided by Hollinger for this phenomenon is “the increased commitment of antihumanist SF to the exploration of changes that will occur – to the self, to society, and to social relations – in time.” In other words, these fictions are “more engaged with historical processes than attracted by the jumpcuts of apocalyptic scenarios that evade such investment in historical change” (Hollinger 213). Given SF’s past rich in atomic holocaust,² eco-catastrophe, and alien invasion stories, this shift of interest may be ascribed not just to a change in sensibility or thematic focus within science fiction itself, but to one in a larger cultural field. In fact, Frederic Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* begins with the exactly same diagnosis:

[t]he last few years have been marked by an inverted millenarianism, in which premonitions of the future, catastrophic or redemptive, have been replaced by senses of the end of this or that (the end of ideology, art, of social class; the “crisis” of Leninism, social democracy, or the welfare state, etc., etc.): taken together, all of these perhaps constitute what is increasingly called postmodernism. (Jameson 1)

Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that open channels of exchange of ideas, motifs, and elements between science fiction and postmodern literature and culture have been one of the reasons behind the apparent abrogation of apocalyptic thinking in the late 20th century SF. On this view the

Komentarz: Spaces between words are **ALWAYS SINGLE**. There is **ABSOLUTELY NO SITUATION IN WHICH MORE THAN ONE SPACEBAR HIT IS NEEDED**.

Komentarz: There is **NO** space **BEFORE punctuation** and **ONE** space (single spacebar hit) **AFTER punctuation**.

Komentarz: Punctuation always goes **INSIDE** quotation marks

Komentarz: MLA references are placed in parentheses

Komentarz: Discursive footnotes/endnotes are inserted immediately after the word with **NO** space

Komentarz: Since the reference is part of the sentence, punctuation goes **AFTER** it.

Komentarz: Dashes are longer and spaced on both sides – they function e.g. as more pronounced commas.

Komentarz: Footnote/endnote is anchored **AFTER** all punctuation.

Komentarz: Titles of books/journals/collections are **italicized**

Komentarz: If any element of the quotation has been changed, the changed element is placed in **brackets**.

Komentarz: In blocked quotations, the reference in parentheses goes **AFTER** punctuation.

Komentarz: Centuries are written using **Arabic**, NOT Roman numbers.

¹ By “antihumanist SF” Hollinger understands those SF projects which, while problematizing the oppositions between the natural and the artificial, the human and the machine, sustain them in such a way that the human subject is no longer securely ensconced in its privileged place at the center of narratives. By that token, the Golden Age science fiction of the 1950s can be called “humanist” while cyberpunk and nanotechnological narratives remain “antihumanist.”

² In *Nuclear Holocausts: Atomic War in Fiction, 1895-1984* Paul Briens provides an annotated bibliography of over 800 texts related to the subject.

resolution of many writers not to end their narratives either with a bang or a whimper is a part of a larger phenomenon.

Pondering nanotechnology and its capacity for self-replication, Marie Laveau, one of the protagonists of "Crescent City Rhapsody," perceives this dynamics, uncannily echoing the musings of the protagonist of Sterling's "Taklamakan":

[o]nce that [self-replication] happened, all bets were off. The floodgates would be loosed. Control over matter, on a very discreet scale, would be possible. But it seemed just as likely that molecules that could create others like themselves might engender a chain reaction until all available matter was used up, and the Earth and all living creatures were reduced to simple lifeless forms of matter. It was a terrifying vision. (Goonan 6)

As the trilogy's plot develops, terror never seems to leave it for good. In one of this most influential essays in Sterling's story, Mark Asster so comments on the story's significance: "Sterling's mastery shines through supremely in "Taklamakan," which is probably one of the best science fiction stories not only of the 1990s but of the late 20th century" (Asster 56).

Komentarz: Titles of short stories/articles/chapters are written in quotation marks.

Komentarz: Colon and semicolon are the only marks that go **OUTSIDE** quotation marks.

Komentarz: Single quotation marks are used **only within other quotation marks**, e.g. title of the story inside the quotation.

Komentarz: There is **no apostrophe before „s”** in decades. NOTE: this is U.S. usage and may differ in other varieties of English.

In the course of complex events which, because of the unbounded character of the locale, shift between different time and reality frames, Verity becomes the new Queen of the City and eventually frees Cincinnati and its populace from "decades of servitude [. . .], during which they had constantly re-created a living tapestry of novels, plays, music" (Goonan 20). Before this happens, she has to confront the terrors of possessive nanotechnology, terrors which not only imprisons humans but also turn their lives into alien imitations, simulacra of other people's lives.

Komentarz: **ANY** removed part of the quotation is replaced with brackets with three periods separated by spaces.

The sequels to *Neuromancer* – *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* – imply that the merger of Wintermute and Neuromancer has resulted not only in the emergence of a new super-intelligent entity, but also in the Matrix' acquisition of consciousness. One of the characters describes this state of being as follows: "Once, there was nothing there, nothing moving on its own, just data and people shuffling it around. Then something happened, and it [...] It knew itself" (*Count* 223); another mentions "assumptions of omniscience, omnipotence, and incomprehensibility on the part of the matrix itself" (*Mona* 129).

Komentarz: **Hyphens** are shorter and unspaced – they are used in compound words only.

Komentarz: If **ellipsis** is used, three periods are not separated and not bracketed.