[2001]: 13–25). Perhaps they, too, are apparent to the informed reader. I believe otherwise.

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Reply:

I am a bit surprised by David Ketterer's letter, as it was far from my intention to prescribe what kind of science fiction should be written or read. When I talk of purely imaginative explorations of our societies, I do not mean that imaginative writing is bad in itself. The problem is that this kind of writing thinks—along with some critics—that it is "pure" and that it does not reflect or is not conditioned by the daily experience of the author. Hence, its reading and interpretation supposedly need not be tainted by a social, political dimension. I do not see myself as an arbiter of taste, nor do I believe it is the work of the critic to be one. I merely find myself most interested in literature that moves readers to think and engage with what goes on in the world. That was the point I was trying to get across: I think we are what we write and we write what we are. Ketterer also seems to have missed the point of the Correspondents Abroad section: we were invited to write on what ways our cultural, biographical circumstances and geographies informed our reading of and our approach to science fiction. The point was, for once, to listen to how "aliens"—a condition I experienced for a long time, when I lived in the United States—approach a literary genre that is profoundly Anglo-American and that for years has been traditionally thought of as (bad) literature for boys. It seems to me that it is scholars like Ketterer who risk prescribing the right way to look at science fiction by trying to shut down a different approach. The universe is vast enough to contain us both. After all, isn't Ketterer among those who prefer an alien contact–alien story? Don't we all benefit from finding out, listening to, and understanding what the "other"—aliens, enemies, men, women, and "oppressed races and classes"—says? What puzzles me is that Ketterer seems to already know "what our experience of a real extraterrestrial would or *should* be" (emphasis mine).

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