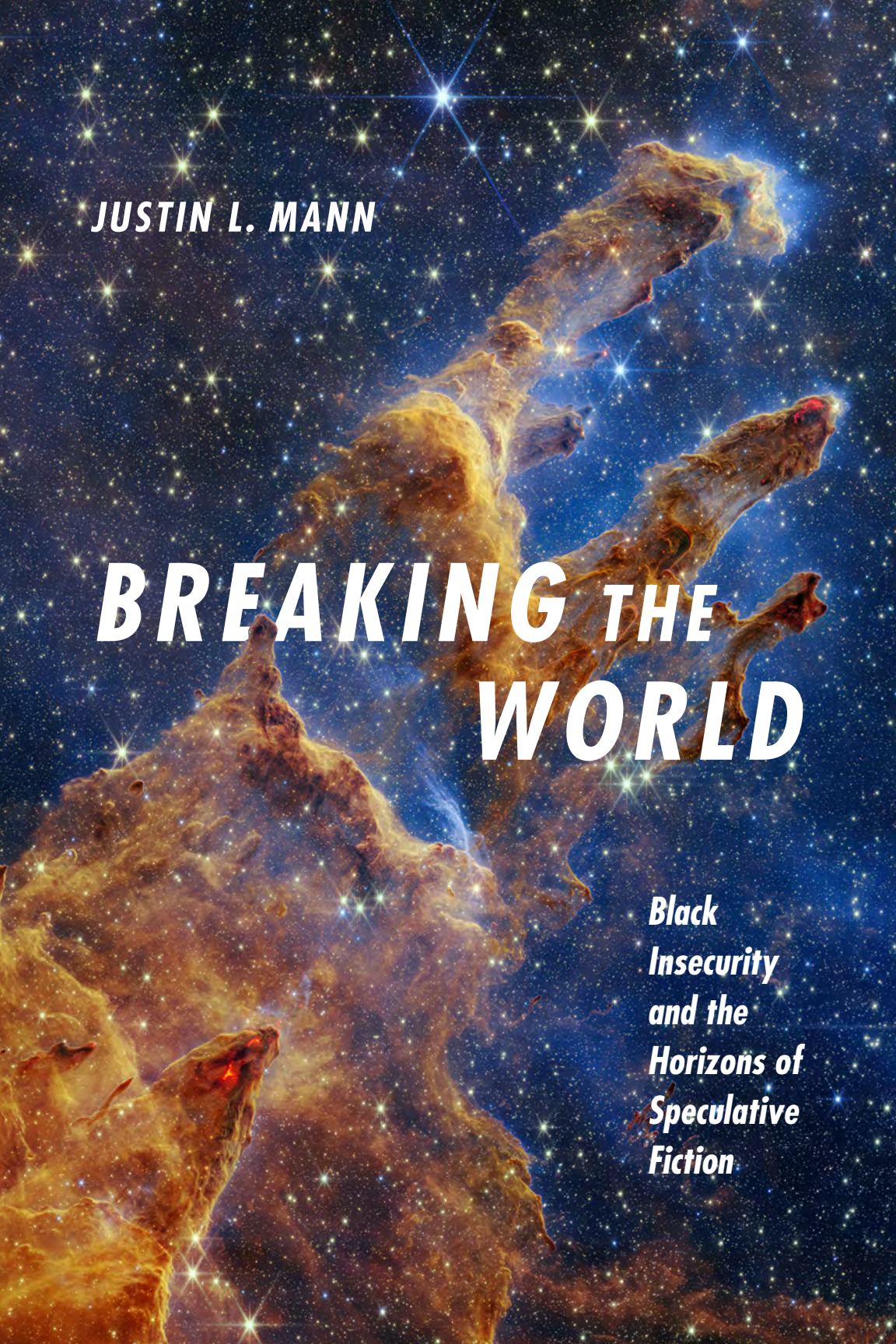
JUSTIN L. MANN
BREAKING THE WORLD
Black Insecurity and the Horizons of Speculative Fiction

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BLACK FEMINISM ON THE EDGE

A series edited by Jennifer C. Nash and Samantha Pinto

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JUSTIN L. MANN

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For my grandmother
Sadie Gattuso,
who taught me the power of stories

So here we are in the car
Leaving traces of us down the boulevard
I wanna fall through the stars
Getting lost in the dark is my favorite part
Let's count the ways we could make this last forever
—JANELLE MONÁE, "Pynk"

Contents

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I like my comics with a strong emphasis on teams. Give me the X-Men or Titans over Iron Man or Wonder Woman any day. I suppose the same

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This book is for my grandmother Sadie Gattuso. Sadie didn't have much formal education, but she taught me to "look for the union label," and that books are friends. I was a lonely kid, but I had a lot of books and so I had a lot of friends. My grandmother would have been dismayed at the world that securitization has made. Although I hesitate to attribute any of the current regime, with its attacks on the poor, on people of color, on trans and queer people, on women, on anyone who doesn't conform to the normative standards of the lowest common denominator, to a singular source, I think it will be hard to read this work, most of which was written before the second DJT administration, without situating it in some teleology bending toward him. My only response is this: We have to hold two truths in our minds at once. That this world is a product of those steps is indisputable. And also, as the axiom goes, another world is possible. It is a terrible thing, the world we've made, but I know that Sadie would have sought refuge and inspiration in other worlds, in the worlds of storytelling. And, drawing on that inspiration, she would have fought like hell to make this world better. She once told me, after reading my undergraduate thesis, that she understood what I was trying to say. I think if she read this book, she'd understand it too.

INTRODUCTION

Getting Lost in the Dark

This is a book about Black feminist musings about state power, a thinking that happens through speculative projects and imaginaries. It is about the strangeness of fiction and the strangeness of the world securitization has made at the turn of the twenty-first century. Since the 1980s, during which time the American state employed the process of *securitization* to reorganize society, the economy, and culture,[1] Black people have navigated a dangerous contradiction. In the domestic sphere, the mounting wars on crime and drugs refashioned Black threat as the pinnacle antagonist to late-century domestic tranquility. At the same time, security services—chief among them the military, police, and prison, some of few remaining institutions to receive public funds—offered themselves as vital employment opportunities for Black people (and other people of color) looking to make good on American promises. This contradiction structures the sense and sensibility of *Black insecurity*, and underlays contemporary notions of security as the most pressing concern for daily life.[2] To bring this evanescent structure into view, I look to what might seem to be a strange source: Black speculative fiction (Black SF). It is precisely the strange sense of disorientation and illogic that makes speculative fiction such an apt genre for understanding Black insecurity. Speculative fiction—including science fiction, fantasy, horror, graphic fiction, and other narrative modes—captures the contradiction of Black insecurity and cracks it open.

Victor LaValle and Dietrich Smith's comic book miniseries *Destroyer* (2017) exemplifies worldbreaking. *Destroyer* tells the story of Dr. Josephine Baker,[3] a Black woman descended from Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein and a nanotechnology scientist who worked for the government agency the Lab (a DARPA proxy[4]), and her twelve-year-old son Akai, who has been murdered by

the Chicago Police Department (CPD) after a white woman reports "a man walking with a rifle in front of her house."[5] Distraught, Josephine uses her knowledge of nanotechnology and the mystical arts passed down by Frankenstein to bring Akai back to life. As beautiful as it is devastating, *Destroyer* makes explicit the unspoken connections that produce Black insecurity in its attention to Josephine. As a scientist—one who formerly worked for a major (para)state lab and who is currently employed by the University of Montana—Josephine's unique abilities and family history have made her special, and they are the reason for her incorporation into the state's processes of securitization.[6] But Josephine is a Black woman, a grieving Black mother whose son has been murdered by an anti-Black police force, one famous for its myriad abuses of its Black population, including, notably, the 2014 murder and subsequent coverup of Laquan McDonald and the department's Homan Square detention facility.[7] Her grief and rage have fueled her thirst for revenge while they have simultaneously powered her innovation in her field.

An important series of panels crystallizes both the relation between securitization and Black insecurity and how Black SF invests in worldbreaking. In issue 2, two white male agents, codenamed Byron and Shelley, have arrived to bring Josephine back to the Lab. When they locate her in her basement laboratory, they open fire. Baker is saved by the bulletproof shroud she has designed as an innovation on Kevlar. "Last I checked," she tells them, scientists at MIT and Rice University had "yet to move beyond the concept phase (of bulletproof fabric). Mine, on the other hand, is reusable."[8] As Agent Shelley reloads and fires again, Baker speaks to a coalescing cloud of nanites. "That's it. Keep going. I know you can do it," she says, as the nebula concentrates around Shelley's handgun. "I knew you could do it!" Baker exclaims as the cloud disintegrates first the handgun and then the bullet it had fired. Drawn in beautiful detail over a series of four panels, the lead bullet transforms from its recognizable shape into a poof of metal molecules, then transitions to a panel of Baker smiling in proud celebration that Akai has "dismantled the gun and the bullet!" and resolves into Akai's human form. Here, the narrative deploys destruction—the disintegration of the bullet and gun—to move toward a different, and ostensibly safer world.

As I have described elsewhere, I find these images of disintegration to be compelling in the context of ongoing movements for Black lives, especially as they exist in dialogue with efforts to increase forms of surveillance and securitization that rely on the criminalization of Black people.[9] Moreover, these pages speak to the narrative and ethical investment in *breaking* as a pathway toward a different order. Dr. Baker's presence as a proud mother

FIGURE 1.1. Akai Baker coalesces from a cloud of nanite robots after disintegrating bullets and the gun that might have killed him and his mother. Victor LaValle, Dietrich Smith, and Joana Lafuente, *Victor LaValle's Destroyer* (Chicago: BOOM! Studios, 2018).

who derives pleasure from her reanimated son's ability to dismantle and disarm the very technologies responsible for his untimely death captures the spirit of Black insecurity and worldbreaking. The comic reimagines the vectors of power that subject Black people, often Black youth, to the violence of the gun. Here, it is Akai's nanites, those infinitesimal robots making up his body, that destroy the bullet, figuratively and figurally inverting the deadly vectors of police violence. But what is most compelling about this small

scene is not what Akai does to the bullet, but what that represents in terms of his, and Dr. Baker's, restraint. For if it is true that Akai can disintegrate the bullet, it must also be true that he could eviscerate Agents Byron and Shelley where they stand. This form of restraint will carry Akai through the remainder of the comic. Even as his mother descends into a self-destructive rage, Akai fights to defend himself and his mother from those antagonistic forces seeking their undoing. The panels depicting the bullet's disintegration thus conjure the worldbreaking desires of Black SF, desires pegged to the affective and ideological dimensions of Black insecurity. Indeed, the bullet prefigures the reveal of Akai in his fully reanimated form. It bears repeating that at the level of the narrative, Akai rematerializes through an inversion of the same form of violence that previously resulted in his death. As the page turns, the reader sees Akai, in his full embodied, albeit hybrid human-robot, form, coalescing from the cloud of nanites. "Mom?" he asks, "Can I do it again?"

Akai's pleasure in destruction, his joy in dismantling the bullet and the gun, is essential for understanding how Black SF conjures and deploys worldbreaking elements—narrative, aesthetic, and ethical—to critique the world of securitization. For it is through the tearing apart of violent technologies, especially those racist technologies of securitization, that Akai and his mother both derive pleasure and reaffirm the sense of the familiar that draws them together. From the anti-Black forces of state and federal policing represented by the Lab and CPD, to the technological infrastructures of research and development that support novel security technologies created in the Lab, to the depictions of carceral and security feminism and antiracism that manifest in the Lab's director and in Josephine's Black ex-husband, [10] *Destroyer* summons the various nodes arrayed across the network of securitizing processes in order to reveal how they enfold Black people broadly and Black women and children in particular. Like other works in this study, *Destroyer* first establishes securitization as a form of worldmaking and then articulates a contravening investment in the dismantling of that world through worldbreaking.

I am likely not the first to deploy *worldbreaking* as a contrapuntal narrative and stylistic form to *worldmaking*. Yet theorizing it robustly here will be important for understanding the special relation between security and speculation this book articulates. While both worldbuilding and worldmaking have had a long history in the fields of Black, critical ethnic, feminist, and queer studies, which celebrate the ways that historically excluded and oppressed people make sense of and imagine their lives and worlds "otherwise," throughout this book I show that the state is also an inventively powerful

worldmaker.[11] Indeed, the worlds that Black people, women, queer and trans people flee are not natural, but rather are carefully imagined and *engineered*. While *securitization*, like *speculation*, is a term that may index the temporality of finance capitalism's investment in the future, I mean it here exclusively as it captures the ongoing advancement of security infrastructures, technologies, and the attachments they produce to the feeling of safety. In the context of securitization—the most powerful and salient worldmaking process at play in contemporary times—world*breaking* specifically indexes the narrative, aesthetic, and ethical practices that Black SF mobilizes to demand, and at times glimpse, and make potential different realities. Worldbreaking takes up questions of identity, embodied capacity, pleasure, and danger, to expose ways out of the contradiction of Black insecurity. It is also a reading practice, one through which I examine texts written and produced by people from a variety of backgrounds to understand how Blackness rests in relation to the speculative progress of securitization. The ethical premise and dimension of this project bears stating explicitly from the outset: It didn't have to be this way. As I show throughout, Black SF employs worldbreaking as strategy for engaging the world at large, one that relies on fracture and fragmentation as a mode of critiquing the known world and, more important, a practice for engaging the radical possibility of the future.[12] It also relies on reading in a specific way, on looking for traces of the wholeness of the world in its broken shards.

In what follows, I detail this book's central configurations—Black insecurity and worldbreaking—and situate those terms in the historical milieu of the post–Cold War and the war on terror. In the first section, "Black Insecurity," I unfold a theory of Black insecurity. Here, I show that Black feminism is an important archive for theorizing insecurity, despite critical security studies' tendency to overlook it. I use *Black insecurity* to refer to both the paradox I named at the outset and as a guide for how to understand the relationship between Blackness and the network of ideas, affects, and structures that feed the notion of security. To reiterate, Black insecurity indexes the paradoxical fact that while Black people represent the premier threat to security at home, they are also deployed to do the work of American empire abroad. Black feminist theory has always been concerned with securitization, especially in its assessment of surveillance, neoimperial war, incarceration, and other forms of state violence and control that implicate the racialized gender of Black people.[13]

In the second section of the introduction, "From Worldmaking to Worldbreaking," I map worldbreaking's methodological implications. This section

describes a reading praxis that calls into question both the narrative and aesthetic elements that cohere in speculative fiction. Mobilizing Black feminist literary theory and narrative theory, this section explores the strange, nebulousness of speculation. Drawing explicitly on conceptions of worldmaking regnant in Black feminist and queer of color theorizations of the relation between the subject and power, I use the language of *worldbreaking* to diagram how Black SF figures destruction in relation to the dangers of an anti-Black world. Specifically, I examine the stylistic and descriptive conventions of speculative fiction, which, when they appear in relation to the processes of securitization, render visible certain realities of the world at large. These conventions include how strange and supernatural elements interface with the environment, imaginaries of technological manipulation and mastery, the ability to transgress notional mind-body separation, the presence of other-than-human beings, and, ultimately, the superhuman qualities of Black speculative figures like Akai and Dr. Baker. Worldbreaking makes diffuse and inarticulable forms of power recognizable and legible by expressing the desire to tear power apart. I juxtapose speculative fictions against policy ideas and public thinking on securitization to show that more often than not, reality is just as strange as fiction.

The final section, "These Troubled Times," grounds this story about Blackness and securitization in the historical context of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, from the early moments of this regime in the renewed Cold War of the 1980s through the Obama administration's global phase of the war on terror (2008–16). Here, I call upon key developments in the recent history of America's security program, from the end of the Cold War engineered by the Reagan administration to the "new world order" of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and ultimately to the war on terror (WOT) waged by George W. Bush and Barack Obama. These three moments, the late Cold War, the new world order, and the WOT, imagine and announce different relations between the United States and the world but feature important continuities that arise from the takeover of the security administration and military by neoconservative thinkers and practitioners. Moreover, the wars on crimes and drugs, both of which began before the Reagan administration, ramped up under his presidency and continue into the present. These aptly named domestic wars have had devastating effects on US immigration and police policy. In short, I show that the "troubling times" of the last fifty years were troubled most by the deliberate investment in securitization as the preeminent form of relief. As the works in this study show, securitization was and remains the fever, not the cure, to the world's ills.

Black Insecurity

Insecurity is a defining mode of daily life and a key feature and practice of statecraft in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Yet it remains mostly undertheorized. In this book, I define *insecurity* as the racialized production of economic, political, social, and psychic unsafety. It occurs through the management of risk, a zero-sum calculus by which one portion of a population is forced to suffer so another can thrive. Through a series of frameworks, including those of liberalism and democracy, insecurity suggests that choice, and not the engineering of risk, is the only relevant rubric for understanding life. Those victimized by structural forces such as the state or market are consequently blamed for their inability to work within those ideological, affective, and politico-economic dimensions. I append *Black* to *insecurity* throughout this book to mark the specific forms unsafety takes when embodied by Black people, and to trace its unique shape as a contradiction. Insecurity is always racialized, but Black insecurity is a specific condition of life, one dominated by the twinned impulses of threat management and disposability.

This book examines five regimes of securitization—missile defense, peacekeeping, biosecurity, covert warfare, and climate security—to render its codes visible, cracking them open so that they may be rewritten. Each of these regimes sublimates its reliance on race in general and Blackness in particular, often presenting a broadcast sense of the racial subject it seeks to protect. For example, under the regime of missile defense during the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative, the Blackened welfare state served as an antagonistic foil to the heroic enterprise of securing the nation, and indeed the hemisphere, from the (fictional) Soviet war machine. In later years, efforts to ensure peace, insulate the body, carry out remote war, and stabilize the changing climate all relied on various forms of surveillance that emerged from practices of racialized surveillance.

In the introduction to the collection *Insecurity* (2022), Richard Grusin relates insecurity to three other concepts: precarity, securitization, and resilience. Insecurity, for example, is "more capacious" than precarity, and includes other forms of vulnerability, including "affective, ecological, and geopolitical concerns." Grusin goes on to describe the differences between insecurity and securitization, the latter of which, he explains, "refers to the burgeoning structure of state and nonstate surveillance in the United States and globally after 9/11."[14] Grusin's introduction and the book's ensuing chapters are an important reparative to insecurity's undertheorization.

In covering the various sites of insecurity, the collection allows readers to apprehend the condition of life under interlocking governmental and biopolitical regimes. Yet *Insecurity* does not contain a sustained engagement with Blackness, racialized gender, or Black feminist theory. Thus, a reader of this edited collection might assume that Black studies generally, and Black feminist studies in particular, is silent on the question of insecurity. This could not be further from the truth.

Although Black feminism occasionally uses different language, as an intellectual project and a theory of "Black aliveness," Black feminism has featured a critique of insecurity and a theoretical intervention into worldmaking throughout its long history.[15] Black feminisms' key analytics, including intersectionality, "double jeopardy," precarity, and vulnerability each offer a theory of insecurity.[16] The field's focus on embodiment as an important site of knowledge production allows contemporary critics to connect state policy to power. And Black feminisms' critiques of the governmental and biopolitical forces that critical security studies sights as the epicenter of power can allow us to better understand securitization as a racialized and racializing project, and insecurity as a Black structure of feeling. In both its foundations and contemporary form, Black feminism stands as the preeminent intellectual tradition through which to theorize insecurity.

Patricia J. Williams's *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (1991) represents an important origin for my thinking around the processes of securitization and their relation to Black insecurity. Williams's famous description of the transformations of New York City in the late 1980s is a paradigmatic narration of the process of securitization.[17] Excluded from the then-iconic clothing store United Colors of Benetton on the premise of threat, which she understands as an anti-Black exclusion, Williams lays bare the operating logics and scripts governing the securitizing environment. Her presence as a threat is, in fact, central to how she understands and experiences this encounter. Here, and throughout *Alchemy*, Williams projects the regime of securitization—again, my term—through the prisms of rights and property, surmising that rights discourse is both the enclosure through which security manifests and also the portal for reimagining and making life livable for those deemed threatening.[18]

Williams is not alone in the intellectual work of centering insecurity as a Black feminist analytic. Other Black feminists, such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, and Katherine McKittrick, critique race, gender, and power by situating insecurity as a distinct structure of feeling affecting Black life. For example, Gilmore's oft-cited definition of racism in "Race and Globalization" (2002), incisively describes the state as the perpetrator of

violence rather than as the bulwark against it. Gilmore also offers a compelling account of the historical development of the late twentieth century and of the affective allure of securitization, writing, "The political will for *militarism* remained intact, but the will for *equity* (another way to think about welfare), however weak it had been, yielded to pressure for privatizing or eliminating public—or social—goods and services."[19] The connections Gilmore draws between militarism, welfare, and equity evoke, without naming outright, the conditions of insecurity (what she terms *inequality*) that structure Black life in the United States. Here and throughout, Gilmore exposes how the conditions of the contemporary political economy—what we now term *neoliberalism*—unequally distribute risk across racialized populations. As I will describe later, this account of the "changing same" of Black life over the latter half of the twentieth century is pivotal to how we might understand the post–civil rights order.[20]

Throughout *Breaking the World*, the conjunction of Blackness and insecurity is uniquely unraveled through the interplay between the recognizable occurrences of the real-world forms securitization takes and the strange and estranging narratives and stylistics of speculative fiction. In *Destroyer*, for example, Akai's fusion of three high-profile police murders of Black men in 2014—Laquan McDonald, Akai Gurley, and Tamir Rice—manifests what Christina Sharpe calls "aspiration."[21] The narrative and the comic as a whole serve as twinned defibrillators, inviting readers to invest in the "imagin(ative)" process for "keeping and putting breath in the Black body."[22] Aspiration is but one way we might understand the strange, poignant conjure at play in LaValle's Akai Baker. Importantly, his state of unlife—he is a hybrid of living, dead, and inorganic matter, though eventually, Josephine informs him, the nanites will replace his tissue so that he becomes something other than human at the cellular level—is not, necessarily an indication of already-deadness. Rather, Akai's existence exposes a sense of Black insecurity that aligns with what Jennifer C. Nash describes as Black feminist *risk*. In contradistinction to theories of Blackness that situate Black people as already dead, Nash posits that the aesthetic practice of Black feminist writing underscores that Black people, especially Black women and femmes, "*have* something to lose."[23] We might also understand the darker side of Black feminist ethics as in relation to such desires to "safeguard" Black women's "bodies" and "humanity." That is, if securitization is actually a force of abandonment and harm masquerading as safety and protection, one that exposes Black people, often especially women, to violence, it also produces countermanding desires for destruction and retribution.

Destroyer's focus on Dr. Josephine Baker, and its intimate view into her psychic and emotional worlds, demands a readerly reckoning with her worldbreaking desires. On a splash page, Baker sits enthroned, an echo of Abraham Lincoln in his D.C. memorial. Above her, written in the stars, is an illustration of the evolutionary process depicting human development from chimpanzee to robot, with the human phase depicted as Akai. On the steps of the memorial, the phrase "Race Traitor" is scrawled in red graffiti. Baker describes her own position as creator. "You are the start of what will dominate as humanity declines. Some will blame you for our end. And for creating you, they'll label me mankind's enemy, too. 'The Destroyer.' And I will welcome the title. If it kept you safe, I would destroy them all." Here, Baker is describing the way of the world to Akai. She posits that he will be feared for his "newness," for the threat he poses to the definition of humanity. The conversation resounds with familiarity: a Black mother warns her Black son about how the world will interpret him, about the threat he poses as a matter of existence. But it also demonstrates the limits of the real, the way that life in the here and now for Black mothers and fathers of Black children is a state of constant danger. Dr. Baker does not admonish her son, but she also does not allow him to be aloof from the threat he poses. She does what, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in 2020, who famously called out to his mother with his dying breath, so many do. She fights to keep him alive, a form of "magical thinking," in poet Elizabeth Alexander's reckoning.[24] Here, again, the paradox of Black insecurity. How can a mother keep a child safe—*alive*—when the world construes them as the pinnacle of threat? In a world of choices, I find Dr. Baker's both cathartic and surprisingly realistic. Given the choice, wouldn't we bring them all back?

From Worldmaking to Worldbreaking

Breaking the World is, at heart, a book about worlds: Dangerous worlds and strange ones. Worlds where aliens are real and worlds where zombies walk the earth. Worlds of superhumans acting bravely and worlds of ordinary humans doing inhuman things. Worlds where the world itself is an illusion, or virtual space, or a place that might rear up and fight back. It is also a book about the worlds we inhabit, "real" worlds that differ greatly based on where and when one is born, the conditions of life that ensue after life's first breath, and the looming threat of death in the face of an uncaring and murderous imperial state that ironically heralds security as its raison d'être.[25] Indeed, the descriptor "the world" is the most important term of this project, for it

marks the axis around which the two sets of related terms—*securitization* and *Black insecurity* and *worldmaking* and *worldbreaking*—revolve. *Breaking the World* thus tracks the narrative and ethical procedures that make and break the worlds we inhabit, be they real or imaginary.

To mark out these procedures, it is imperative to categorize how speculation and speculative fictions apprehend, orient toward, and modify the idea of "world." For a key aspect subtending both speculation and speculative fiction is their *worldliness*. If speculative fiction is a (meta)genre built around the practice of speculation, and if speculation is an articulation of expectations about a set of future conditions that cohere into a "world," then it is true by association that speculative fiction is a *genre of expectation*, one for which the world bears the weight of *either* realizing those expectations and arriving, or else of dissipating them and receding. From this perspective, then, the relationship between *world*building and *world*making as they appear in speculative fiction are also essential ways of thinking and knowing about the world(s) in which we live. So, too, is worldbreaking. As such, speculative fiction is a vital pathway to the unmaking of those regimes, one that unsettles both discursive and affective satisfaction of security's worldmaking regime.

Speculation is arguably threaded through Black literature, not merely those works characterized as genre fiction by the literary market. By focusing explicitly on works of genre fiction to highlight how generic conventions play with the relationship between reader, text, and world, I show that worldbreaking reaches beyond the pages of genre fiction, toward the horizons of Black critical theory and creative expression and ultimately to an examination of Black life. In her assessment of the potentialities of the twinned meanings of speculation—the generic horizon of fiction and the temporal mode of predatory capital—Aimee Bahng describes how speculation's investment in *possibility* captures disruptive and recreative power: "For it is precisely in the exile's relation to time—the point at which one is pushed out of what could be called straight time, settler time, or the profitable time of compound interest—that one can glimpse the horizon of the not yet, where not yet manifests itself not as a decree of foreclosure but as an embrace of the unknown."[26] Bahng's assessment of financial time maps on to my own treatment of securitization, and, consequently, this book uses speculation as a way of assessing the following: the *genre* of securitization and the vitally important and insistent way that Black people use the horizontality of speculative fiction as a way to break that world.

Breaking the World achieves this by locating power in the valences of storytelling and narrative that emanate from genre fiction, particularly scope

and scale. If speculation is truly a desire to apprehend a coming world, it follows that there is immense potential in adjusting, modifying, and estranging the possibilities of that coming world in order to glimpse possible new and alternate realities on the horizon.[27] The sheer volume of these texts, which might unfold over multiple novels, after multiple decades of publication history, and comprising narrative *universes*, poses distinct interpretive challenges, especially when we consider this fact alongside the related understanding that the creative process for works of this magnitude necessarily involved white and other non-Black cocreators. In addition to their scale, the stories in these texts are serpentine. They are narrated out of sequence or, again, over years- and decades-long sequences. The stories begin in one book and end in another.

In their scope and scale, these works are nebulous, and thus the nebula will be a useful metaphor for extrapolating the reading method of worldbreaking I employ here.[28] In the world of astronomy, nebulae are clouds of celestial dust and gas. Nebulae either form as a star coheres into existence or else remain when a star has exploded. As formal structures, nebulae become legible to human conception through a series of reductive associations—the Crab Nebula, the Pillars of Creation, the Carina (Keel) Nebula—these names rearrange the masses of dust and gas into recognizable objects and animals. To make them understandable, astronomers reframe them, reducing them to smaller, more recognizable units. This associative and reductive process will be helpful as a way into understanding the method I employ throughout *Breaking the World* to make the similarly large literary worlds more understandable. I often touch down on small or isolable textual moments to allow them to speak to broader concerns of the project's whole. This toggling between maximal and distinct narrative moments is an important distinction from how speculative fiction is traditionally understood. My engagement with *Destroyer* limns some of the story's important elements—the relationship to Victor Frankenstein and the conflict with his Creature, for example—to highlight those features that are most relevant to a discussion of Blackness and securitization: how the text positions Blackness, where and when the state emerges, and so on. And although the Creature's presence characterizes both the Lab and its director as part of a network of mad science and science policy, Josephine and Akai's story as people whose Blackness marks them as a particular kind of threat is ultimately more important to my analysis.

There is a second aspect to the nebula that is relevant to my analytic method in *Breaking the World*. They are sometimes described metaphorically

through the language of birth and death. Nebulae are worlds of conflux where celestial matter coalesces into stars and planets. Such nebulae are called star nurseries, places where the immense gravity of the collective mass of space dust and gas "collapses" into a star. Alternatively, a star at the end of its chain reaction might explode, emitting the matter of a nebula as a kind of death rattle. Although each nebula emerges from a unique set of astrophysical circumstances, the language we use to describe these phenomena entails both the processes of novel and languishing worlds. In this, nebulae and nebulousness characterize the intimacy of worldmaking and worldbreaking. In indexing two different, indeed opposite, material processes, the nebula coincidentally erases some of the tensions that construe them as point-counterpoint astrophysical phenomena. Connected to the life cycles of stars, ages that are so far outside the human sense of aliveness that they are almost incomprehensible, they nevertheless offer an associative glimpse toward the posthistorical sense of time and place that is so important to speculation. In *Destroyer*, Dr. Baker posits that her son will leave his humanity behind, becoming something else, a theme and narrative event that is repeated in many if not all the texts I examine here. Joining him as a disembodied consciousness, she ensures something that no other mother can: she will be with her son for all time. In the expanse of space, life and death take on new and different meanings, existing on a scope and scale far outside the individualistic sense that often infuse them in our own mortal context. Life and death in Black SF similarly shift to this meter, reaching beyond the personal to form a greater chain of (Black) being.

This relationship usefully informs how *Breaking the World* undertakes its engagement with the narrative and ethical dimensions of worldmaking and worldbreaking. While the terms may, at first glance, register as antonyms, they are more appropriately *apposite*: intimately related in their juxtaposition. Worldbreaking is not the opponent process of worldmaking. It is not even worldmaking's dark mirror. It is rather a term I use to index and describe how speculation chips away at the coherence of the arbitrary worldliness of securitization. In his definition of worldmaking in performance, José E. Muñoz describes worldmaking performances as "oppositional ideologies that function as critiques of oppressive regimes of 'truth' that subjugate minoritarian people."[29] Here, Muñoz articulates a theory of worldmaking infused with an "oppositional" cultural politics. If worldmaking is a critique of oppressive regimes, one achieved through play and reiteration, worldbreaking extends that critique through narrative and stylistic destruction.[30] Thus, the texts in this study often posit destruction as a form of creation, a

FIGURE 1.2. *Pillars of Creation*, a "star nursery" image taken by the James Webb Space Telescope, 2022. NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI; Joseph DePasquale (STScI), Anton M. Koekemoer (STScI), Alyssa Pagan (STScI).

narrative investment in changing the world or else as incitement toward a changed world. Much like celestial nebulae, where star birth and death are linked in a galactic cycle, worldbreaking and worldmaking exist in a dance of creation and destruction. They are like bell hooks's oppositional gaze in their capacity to "change reality."[31] Here the time and space of worldbreaking and securitization align. Both examine the future anterior, what *will have happened*, though to different ends.[32] For while securitization's investment in the future anterior is a means to prevent a "dangerous" or unwanted eventuality from coming to fruition, worldbreaking views the horizontal promise with an investment in its unknowability. By this, I mean that worldbreaking resists the allure of reifying the possibility of a coming future to allow for the radical possibility of that future to emerge, whereas securitization is deeply invested in wrenching present action out of future anterior possibility.

These Troubled Times

On the evening of September 11, 1990, George H. W. Bush addressed a Joint Congressional session to announce that the US military and its international partners would protect Kuwait from the invading Iraqi military. President Bush outlined Coalition Forces' four primary objectives in the military incursion into the Persian Gulf. The first two of these, the retreat of Iraqi forces across the border and the reassertion of Kuwaiti sovereignty, had immediate and recognizable metrics. The latter two—the "security and stability of the region" and the "protect(ion) of U.S. citizens abroad"—had more nebulous terminal points. Indeed, Bush himself acknowledged that these goals endorsed American presence in the region, and that various economic forces mandated American and, thus, international occupation in perpetuity. Bush outlined a fifth goal—a *new world order*—that would justify interventionist policy abroad and that would inevitably rely on increased reactionary cuts in government expenditures at home. This new world order Bush presaged would be an era, "in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony," which relied on abiding commitment to the tenets of securitization at home and abroad. Despite the rhetorical suggestions that the new world order had become, with the defeat of the Soviet Union and the quelling of the Iraqi invasion, a geopolitical status quo, a solid arrangement of international tethers that linked nation to nation in an iron-clad string of attachments and associations, the new world order was rather a set of expectations about the world, a speculative process that mobilized securitization and securities (in the financial sense) to rearrange the

disorder that was the late twentieth-century political scheme. In historian Penny Von Eschen's terms, the new world order was the "process by which U.S. unilateralism muscled aside more popular visions of multilateral cooperation and disarmament."[33] For if it was true that these geopolitical machinations had ushered in a new era of prosperity and harmonious living, as Bush reckoned, it was also true that these statuses were achieved at the end of a sword. This to say nothing of the domestic "order" that increased police power, criminalization, and state-sponsored abandonment and death.[34] So if from one view the new world order was meant to herald a unipolar world, it was also the era in which war proliferated, both as a metaphor for militant domestic drug and crime policy and as a geopolitical strategy of managing the fallout from the collapse of the Soviet Union. If the new world order constituted, in short, the zenith of liberal governmentality, it was also the cover for the mass incarceration and death of Black people, immigrants, queer and trans people, and poor people, who all *served* the aim of the order responsible for their misery in one way or another.

In her discussion of the new world order in *Pedagogies of Crossing*, M. Jacqui Alexander describes these contradictions as a pattern of internal-external oppositions:

> The fact of the (American) state's own instability is evident . . . in this gesture of re-creation, where it needs to develop economic capacity to undertake a project it is simply unable to do on its own. But it cannot position itself at the helm of the new world order and appear vulnerable at the same time. Thus, instability is made to originate from the outside, not from within. It is no coincidence, then, that the moment of identifying the global enemy of instability on the outside is the same moment for the unveiling of the vulnerability of the U.S. state on the inside.

Alexander importantly describes how this inside-outside logic produced the new world order as a gendered order, contrasting the disparate incorporation of racialized women in the ordering project of securitization in this period. Whereas white women—both in the military and at home—were enfolded into the new world order through the possessive constructions of sentimentality for the troops, Black women (and, we might add, women of color broadly construed) served the opponent function of "threat from within."[35] Moreover, the construction of an external threat, which in the context of Bush's speech was centralized in the Middle East, but which also spread throughout the "Third" and "developing" world, represented an important

and galvanic optical illusion. This illusion first presented such places as antithetical to the prosperity of the domestic sphere and simultaneously masked the forces of dispossession, depreciation, and segregation that made certain parts of the United States more like out-there than in-here.

Bush's insistence on a unipolar world owes much to his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, and to Reagan-era changes in securitization. As I describe in chapter 1, Reagan rejected the realism of his predecessors in favor of a speculative foreign policy built, at least in part, on the assertions of a group of scientists, engineers, and speculative fiction writers. These assertions produced the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), among other novel forms of securitization. The SDI was a massive defense spending program that worked toward the defunding of the welfare state Alexander describes in her analysis of the new world order. Again, these maneuvers relied on a canny rhetorical trick. Through their foreign policies, Reagan and Bush resignified "America" as an eternal horizon that could be protected through securitization while simultaneously transforming the definition of who and what counts as an American.[36] This rhetorical shift was not merely symbolic. It allowed security to proliferate as a discourse predicated on the defunding of the welfare state in favor of the warfare state. Alexander's inside-outside formulation is thus not simply a failed logic but, rather, an engineered project of reorientation, one through which the state and its leaders conflate "American" with other forms of identification including whiteness, heterosexuality, and middle-class status. This last observation is not necessarily new, and is, indeed, at the heart of what Alexander argues in her critique of the new world order. Yet the way speculation and securitization figure into this matrix warrants deep inquiry.

Breaking the World examines this matrix in its first two chapters. In chapter 1, "Assuring Survival," I analyze the decisive shift away from the Cold War logic and posture of mutual assured destruction through an engagement with the works of Octavia E. Butler, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, and the Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy (CACNSP). In short, this shift categorized *missile defense* as a defining form of securitization in the 1980s. Butler's 1987 novel *Dawn* takes the premise of assured survival, which the CACNSP put forward through a set of white papers published in the early years of the Reagan administration, to its strange and devasting conclusions. In *Dawn*, a nuclear war has ravaged the planet, wiping out nearly all human life and most plant and animal life as well. A species of gene-trading space aliens, called the Oankali, arrive just in time to rescue enough humans that the species might be saved. The novel follows Lilith Iyapo, a Black woman anthropologist, as she discovers the costs of such a deal—a genetic trade

with the Oankali that will change the biological and epistemological notion of the human forever. *Dawn*, and Butler's critique of assuring survival, emerged in a literary milieu in which science fiction authors engaged the perceived *promise* of assured survival. As such, I read Butler alongside two other sources, the CACNSP's white papers, some of which are collected in the mass market paperback *Mutual Assured Survival* (1984) and Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's comic *Watchmen* (1986–87). I show that whereas the authors of *Mutual Assured Survival*, Moore and Gibbons, and Reagan himself, engaged in a sense of survival that meant preserving the state and structures that produced and reinforced whiteness and heterosexuality, *Dawn* offers a different sense of the term, one rooted in evolution.

From this interrogation of the question of survival in chapter 1, I progress to an encounter with the process of peacekeeping in the 1990s, in the second chapter, "How's Your Security?" Although Bush's announcement of the new world order arrived in a triumphal moment, it was not met with universal fanfare. Critical and cultural interrogation of securitization in this period reflected the anxiogenic forces that accompanied the end of the Cold War. The various transformations that arrived at the end of the twentieth century, including globalization, the IT revolution, and the collapse of Soviet Communism, framed the *order*liness of the new world order as anything but. Thus, the 1990s might best be characterized as a period of tumult, one in which the ascendant "unipolar" power—the United States—faced a fulminating world defined by conflict. It is perhaps not surprising that "peace" would become an imperative of securitization in this period. The interplay between speculation and securitization produced peacekeeping as the necessary work of the state. Yet the work of waging peace often ironically required the work of war. As scholars have shown, the demographic shifts that turned the military into a "multicultural" institution displaced the wages of peacekeeping onto poor populations of color sent abroad to suborn other poor populations of color.[37] In this milieu, in a moment of "postblackness,"[38] where the promissory notes of civil rights seemed to have defaulted, I turn to two novels that take up the confusion of the unipolar world, both written by white men. Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992) and Joe Haldeman's *Forever Peace* (1997) employ similar narrative strategies in their cross-racial fantasies. Both novels are speculative thrillers with Black protagonists, both feature multinational conspiracies keyed into research and development projects, and both exaggerate the fragmentations of the post–Cold War geopolitical order. Taken together, *Snow Crash* and *Forever Peace* articulate a disjunction between Blackness and peace, revealing that these two features

were entangled. Both texts take up the qualities of identification, and specifically interracial identification, in their critiques of peacekeeping. Thus, this chapter is also concerned with how narrative produces and undermines ideas about identification in the moment of multiculturalism, a racial ideology that itself undermined the radical projects of race-consciousness defining earlier periods.[39]

Of course, the promise of the peaceful and unipolar twenty-first century ended abruptly on September 11, 2001. Securitization in the ensuing two decades would be dominated by a host of new developments, transformations, and elaborations, some of which emerged out of the long-standing practices of the wars on crime and drugs, and others that became uniquely possible with the apotheosis of the networked communications. The mobilization for a new war, the WOT, one for which there was apparent (and vengeful) fervor, enfolded everyday life in a mesh of security policies and technologies that remain nearly inescapable.[40] Under this triune regime, the wars on crime, drugs, and terror fused together to remake the sense, space, and time of securitization. Here again, Blackness played a key role, marking out the limits of incorporability. While it is true that some of the most important security officers in this time were Black people, their prominence is, in many ways, the exception that proves the rule. Thus, the incorporation of figures such as Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Susan Rice, Eric Holder, and Barack Obama into the logic and praxis of securitization enabled ongoing forms of conquest, occupation, deprivation, abuse, and outright murder that characterized the period. As Erica R. Edwards describes, such figures (exemplified by C. Rice) highlight the changing face of Blackness in the new world order. In Edwards's view, C. Rice, and the rest by extension, capture the sense of "Black imperial agency," the affective and psychic dimensions of "Black service on behalf of empire-building in the era of the high war on terror."[41]

The second half of this book is devoted to exploring these changing conditions from the enduring peace of the unipolar world to the endless wars that shambled out of the rubble of the 9/11 attacks. The first two decades of the twentieth century represent a confounding sense of the changing same. The WOT exacerbated many antagonisms that had characterized the new world order. The advancement of neoimperial interests in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somali, and throughout the world extended the strategies of peacekeeping that characterized the earlier moment. And while there were subtle but material differences between the Bush and Obama eras of the WOT—the favoring of traditional or remote troops, the insistence on the temporal and spatial scale of the war, and so on—the conditions of securitization

grew ever more intricate. While it is true that the post-9/11 period was, in many ways, dominated by military campaigns in West Asia and North Africa, at home, the sense of securitization, and the manifestation of a novel vulnerability rendered by the attack on the World Trade Center coalesced through the sense of pathogenic transgressions.

I track these changes in chapter 3, "Hazardous Bodies." From the fabricated "evidence" of biological and chemical agents the Bush administration used to begin their campaign in Iraq (delivered, it must be said, by Secretary of State Powell), to the dissemination of anthrax through the US mail, to the threats of disease ingress from foreign nations, biological insecurity (bioinsecurity) was a characteristic feature of the early 2000s. These fears were often racialized and, especially in the context of the 2014–16 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, had a distinctly anti-Black contour. The possibility of disease ingress underscored securitization's inherent failures. The impossibility of fully securing the body against pathogens—an impossibility that became even more apparent following the 2019 SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic, which fundamentally transformed life the world over—exposed the temporal desires of the WOT, what historian Melani McAlister has described as the "war without end."[42] To examine this exposure, I look to Colson Whitehead's 2011 zombie novel *Zone One*. *Zone One* transgresses many of the conventions of the zombie novel, but the most important for my purposes is its revision and confusion of the temporal horizons of survival fiction. As the story sets the end as its parameter—it is told over a long weekend—it also lapses into a distorted narrative time. This temporal distortion enables a meditation on the meaning-making of securitization. As I show, this strategy contrasts with other apocalyptic imaginaries that figure the perpetuity of the liberal nation-state. Comparing *Zone One* to Max Brooks's *World War Z* (2006), I show that the latter reproduces the temporal logic of securitization in the WOT in its form—it is an "oral history" conducted by a UN researcher tasked with compiling an intergovernmental report about survival—and in its proposals for resolving the zombie crisis. I use this text because of Brooks's prominence as a "disaster thinker," one whom security officials have hired to consult in the development of disaster preparedness. As with the CACNSP, Brooks's incorporation into the security armature, when read in tandem with the logics inscribed in *World War Z*, exposes the relationship between securitization, states, and bodies. Unlike *World War Z*, *Zone One* plays with race and genre to refute those notions and ultimately disintegrates the cohering force of biosecurity in the era of the WOT.

From this early phase of the WOT, I move forward to the changes wrought to the WOT under the Obama administration in chapter 4, "Secret Wars." As the languor of interminability set in, the administrative shifts in military policy bespoke a different sense of securitization.[43] Rather than the "shock and awe" of the early phase of the invasion of Iraq, or the counterinsurgency program that featured prominently in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the Obama administration favored covert operations. The prominence of the drone program produced targeted assassination as a measure of increased security. And though drones were not employed, the 2012 assassination of Osama bin Laden infused the conduct of the "late" WOT with a sense that special operations, surveillance, and peremptory targeted strikes were a laudable shift from boots on the ground. It is perhaps not coincidental that in the same period, a cultural shift in mass culture catapulted superheroes from niche, pulp entertainment to the lucrative Hollywood mainstays. Comic book publishing's cinematic universes, the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and the DC Extended Universe, feature a strange similarity. Both position Black superspies at the center of their expansive, nebulous narratives. In the MCU, Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) heads the Strategic Homeland Intervention Enforcement and Logistics Division (S.H.I.E.L.D.), an international NGO responsible for securing the world from superhuman threats. I examine Fury's role in the MCU's expanding racial project through his and others appearance in 2014's *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. In the early "phases" of the MCU, *Winter Soldier* stands out as a moment in which the franchise played with genre and, in so doing, expanded its conceptions of race and racialization. In hitching the expansion of the MCU's horizon of telling stories about Black characters to the evil organization HYDRA, the film ironically imagines the end of a security regime. Fury's mistrust of the project and Captain America's insistence on antisurveillance together produce S.H.I.E.L.D.'s downfall.

If Nick Fury fuses embodiments of manifold Black sensibilities, including the antiestablishment rogue from blaxploitation's past as well as the fast-talking mastermind of the conspiracy film, then DC's Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) represents a different side of the incorporation of Blackness into the security establishment. Waller is characterized as a ruthless administrator who will stop at nothing to achieve her goals of securitization. And yet her position as the head of the secret organization, the Advanced Research Group Uniting Superhumans (A.R.G.U.S.), like Fury's, begs questions about how a person with her history might have become the most

powerful woman in the world. This chapter ends by probing at the conditions that might enable a figure like Fury or Waller to ascend to a position of power that outstrips imaginaries of executive control.

In the final chapter, "Racial Tectonics," I consider the relationship between Black materiality and climate catastrophe. Whereas the war without end offered one sense of the perpetuity of the American nation state, the contemporary climate crisis countered with dark portents about the catastrophic fate of anthropogenic climate change. Often, the insistence on a coherent frame for forestalling climate change overlooks or minimizes the ways environmental degradation has already fundamentally altered the lifeworld of many. They also often fail to connect movements for climate justice to movements for racial justice. In this chapter, I connect these two senses of justice and worldly realignment, looking to N. K. Jemisin's *The Fifth Season* (2015), the first novel in her *Broken Earth* trilogy. *The Fifth Season* captures the twinned processes of imperial expansion and climate catastrophe, exposing the temporal logics that underlie the effort to stop climate change in its tracks. It begins, provocatively, at the end, with a world that has been destroyed by a queer Black man, a person who has reached the limit of his tolerance of the myriad abuses he faces as one of the most powerful superhumans in the world. Beginning at the end as it does, the novel opens up to a consideration of its Black woman protagonist's life, the quest for her stolen child, and her own arrival at the desire for retribution and salvation. In this, the novel invites us to reframe what might be "interesting" about a languorous world. Reconsidering Black insecurity as a cosmological enterprise, I touch down on how these artists capture the transcendence of racial identity through the juxtaposition of different epistemologies of Blackness. Here again, I situate Black insecurity as a possible node for cohering a sense of Black identity, a way into understanding the radically different lifeworlds Black people navigate, and a path to realizing Black liberation.

There is a final premise of this work. If what I propose here is true, then it must also be true that it didn't have to be this way. That the world is made through the complex machinations of state and parastate institutions, including those of global capital, imperial expansion, and incarceration, which desire nothing more than to secure their futures in the present through dire speculation, is a fact of history. But the work of Black speculation is to make a different world. In this, *Breaking the World* argues that speculation is the necessary pathway for unmaking the darker desires of a worldmaking state, one organized around the sinister principles of anti-Blackness. This work follows that unmaking.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 According to Eli Jelly-Schapiro, securitization entails "the seizure or fabrication of non-capitalized space, and the transmutation of non-colonized entities and geographies into a concern of the security state." Inderpal Grewal further argues that securitization is a strategy of "management" through the production of fear. Both contend that securitization is responsible for the production, rather than abatement, of insecurity. See Jelly-Schapiro, *Security and Terror*, 4; Grewal, *Saving the Security State*, 5.

2 On the affective dimensions of securitization, see, e.g., Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*; Amar, *Security Archipelago*; Browne, *Dark Matters*; Masco, *Theater of Operations*; Massumi, "Future Birth of the Affective Fact"; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

3 Baker's name is a reference to Josephine Baker, a complicated figure in the history of Black performing arts. As Anne Cheng describes, "One has only to invoke her name . . . and all that she stands for—the racist and sexist history of objectification and of desire that makes up the phenomenon of European Primitivism, or conversely, the idealization of black female agency—immediately materializes." See Cheng, *Second Skin*, 2–3.

4 The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is the Defense Department's research and development bureau. They are responsible for engineering various "breakthrough technologies and capabilities for national security," according to the official .mil website Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, "About DARPA."

5 Akai is a conglomeration of three Black males, two of whom were children murdered by police in 2014: Laquan McDonald (age 17), who was murdered by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke; Tamir Rice (age 12), who was murdered by Cleveland police officer Timothy Loehmann; and Akai Gurley (age 28), who was murdered by New York police officer Peter Liang.

6 On the instrumentalization of Black women to the security apparatus, see Edwards, *Other Side of Terror*; Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*; Melamed, *Represent and*

Destroy; Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*. There is long-standing resistance in Black feminist theory to the notion that becoming an accomplice is a route to salvation. See Lorde, *Sister Outsider*.

7 On Laquan McDonald, see "Laquan McDonald," Say Their Names. On the Homan Square Detention Facility, see Ackerman, "Homan Square Revealed."

8 LaValle et al., *Victor LaValle's Destroyer*.

9 Mann, "Figuring Black Lives."

10 On carceral feminism, see Bernstein, "Sexual Politics of the 'New Abolitionism.'" Inderpal Grewal describes the security feminist through the powerful figure of the security mom: "The security mom figure is not just a mother who sacrifices her children to the security state, nor is she a subject of the state by sole virtue of her reproductive labor. Rather she sees the security of the home, state, and nation as coconstitutive, requiring the actions and vigilance of private individuals who are members of the heteronormative (and, we should add, homonormative), American family." See Grewal, *Saving the Security State*, 125.

11 On worldmaking, see Fawaz, *New Mutants*; Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking*. *Worldbuilding* is a term of art in speculative fiction studies that refers to the features of a text, including setting and history, that make a different world feel specific and alive. On imagining "otherwise," I borrow from Kandice Chuh, whose work *Imagine Otherwise* represents an important and oft-repeated theorization of the horizontality of racial worldmaking. See Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise*. See also Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Nyongó, *Afro-Fabulations*. On the state as worldmaker, see Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire*. Yogita Goyal describes slavery as a "world-making, world-breaking institution" that "must be understaood beyond the language of reform or amendment," in an effort to describe and nuance the frames of slavery's afterlives. See Goyal, *Runaway Genres*, 65.

12 It is worth spending a moment at this point distinguishing Black SF from the somewhat more popular term *Afrofuturism*. Introduced in an interview Mark Dery conducted with Tricia Rose, Samuel Delany, and Greg Tate, Afrofuturism has been employed by scholars, critics, and artists as an aesthetic practice that fuses various modes of African and African American cultural production with fantastic and science-fictional elements. This is the defining characteristic of Afrofuturism: that it emphasizes the hybridity of a particular form and genre of artistic expression. While some of the texts I discuss in *Breaking the World* contain elements of Afrofuturism, others do not. Moreover, there has been some discussion of the nationalist leanings of Afrofuturism, giving rise to distinctions including Nnedi Okorafor's "Africanfuturism." While most of the texts in this study were written in the United States, they often reach beyond the nation-state. I instead employ the term *Black SF* to highlight the global dimensions of Blackness even as American Blackness seems to be one pole around which those dimensions orbit. See Brown, *Black Utopias*, 15–20; carrington, *Speculative Blackness*.

13 On surveillance and policing, see Alexander, *Trayvon Generation*; Browne, *Dark Matters*; Sharpe, *In the Wake*; Williams, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*. On neoimperial war, see Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*; Edwards, *Other Side of Terror*;

Young, "Black Ops." On mass incarceration, see Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*; Fleetwood, *Marking Time*; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*.

14 Grusin, *Insecurity*, x.

15 See Quashie, *Black Aliveness*.

16 On intersectionality, see Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection." On double jeopardy, see Beal, "Double Jeopardy."

17 Williams, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*, 44.

18 Williams, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*, 164–65.

19 Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 121.

20 Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 121.

21 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 109.

22 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 105.

23 C. Nash, "Writing Black Beauty," 105.

24 Alexander, *Trayvon Generation*, 73.

25 See Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*. See also Dillon and Neal, *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*.

26 Bahng, *Migrant Futures*, 7. See also Vint, *Biopolitical Futures*.

27 See carrington, *Speculative Blackness*, 15–22.

28 Astrophysical metaphors are important analytic tools for Black feminist theories. See Simone Browne's discussion of "dark matter," Evelynn Hammonds's use of the "black (w)hole," Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's use of the "void," Katherine McKittrick's theory of "deep space," Petal Samuel's "black gravity," and Michelle Wright's theories of "black time." Browne, *Dark Matters*; Hammonds, "Black (W)holes"; Jackson, "Theorizing in a Void"; McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*; Wright, *Physics of Blackness*.

29 Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 195.

30 Gil'Adí, *Doom Patterns*.

31 hooks, *Black Looks*, 116.

32 See Aimee Bahng on the "colonization of the future." Bahng, *Migrant Futures*, 11.

33 Von Eschen, *Paradoxes of Nostalgia*, 7.

34 Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes this transition in detail in "Race and Globalization"; see Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 107–31. See also Hinton, *From the War on Poverty*.

35 Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 114.

36 On neoliberalization and the transformations to American democracy, see, e.g., Brown, *Undoing the Demos*; Duggan, *Twilight of Equality?*

37 McAlister, *Epic Encounters*.

38 Crawford, *Black Post-Blackness*.

39 Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*; Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*.

40 On the long history of the WOT, see Edwards, *Other Side of Terror*; Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*; Lubin, *Never-Ending War on Terror*; McAlister, "Cultural History of the War."

41 Edwards, *Other Side of Terror*, 142.

42 McAlister, "Cultural History of the War."

43 See Edwards, *Other Side of Terror*.