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SUBMISSIONS

The *SFRAReview* editors encourage submissions, including essays, review essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. Please send submissions or queries to *both* coeditors. If you would like to review nonfiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor and/or email sfra_review@yahoo.com.

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PILGRIM CANDIDATES WANTED

The Pilgrim committee has begun work on selecting the next Pilgrim candidate, and nominees are welcomed, from simply "suggested names" to "names with impassioned arguments for your nominee." Please e-mail any suggestions to all the committee members:

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Interests: Bibliography; Pilgrim winner

In the Location Index **Andrew Gordon** and **Elizabeth Ginway** were accidentally misplaced; they both reside in Florida.

News

REVIEW POSSIBILITIES

The editors of the electronic journal *Culture Machine* (<http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk>) are currently seeking reviews for the following books which might be of interest to SFRA members:

Adamson, G. D. *Philosophy in the Age of Science and Capital.*

Barry, A. *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society.*

Douglas, T. *Hacker Culture.*

Kember, S. *Cyberfeminism and Artificial Life.*

Lin, C. *Copying Machines: Taking Notes for the Automaton.*

Mackenzie, A. *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed.*

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

A NOTE FROM THE NEW Co-EDITOR

Christine Mains

It's a time of transition for the *Review*. For one thing, I'm taking over from Barb Lucas as co-editor. My name is Christine Mains, and I'm a Ph.D. student at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. I attended my first SFRA conference this summer, in New Lanark Mills, only a short bus trip away from my childhood home in Wishaw. The conference was a wonderful experience, and I found myself eager to become more involved in SFRA. . . which apparently is not difficult to do, if you're the kind of person who likes to do things.

As co-editor, I'm responsible for collecting news announcements and Calls for Papers of interest to SFRA members. I'd also like to see some new features added and some old features revived: it's been a while since we ran a column for "Theory and Beyond" or the "Approaching" series, and we'd like to see more submissions for those features. We'd also like to begin running a column on "International SF"; if you're interested in contributing to such a column, we'd love to hear from you. And we're open to hearing other ideas for the *Review*, so if you've got a suggestion, please contact either me or Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard.

SFRA BUSINESS

NEW OFFICERS

The results of the 2002 SFRA elections are in and things seem to have gone much more smoothly than the latest travesty in Florida.

Beginning on January 1, 2003 the new officers of the SFRA will be:

President *Peter Brigg*

Vice President *Janice Bogstad*

Secretary *Warren Rochelle*

Treasurer *Dave Mead*

Past President *Michael Levy*

A few notes on the election: more than ninety votes were cast, approximately 1/3 of the membership, which is a nice turnout. Peter Brigg is the first Canadian president of the SFRA. Exactly 2/5 of the in-coming board live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Exactly 4/5 of those elected either have or are about to chair an annual SFRA meeting (a hint to those interested in gaining power in the organization). I would like to thank all those who took part in the election for being willing to do so.

SFRA BUSINESS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Levy

It's September as I write this and school is back in session. My two years as President of the SFRA are almost finished and I'm about to turn over the reins to our newly elected leader Peter Brigg. The new SFRA Board will combine veterans, Peter and Dave Mead, with newcomers, Jan Bogstad and Warren Rochelle. *The SFRA Review* and our website will also feature a combination of veteran and new editors. These are all folks I know and respect so I'm sure things will go well. Actually my term as President has been a relative quiet one, unlike the four years before that when I was Treasurer and we seemed to be dealing with fiscal emergencies, fires, floods, and even stranger things on an almost monthly basis. Our last two conferences, in Schenectady, NY and New Lanark, Scotland, have both

gone well and I'm looking forward to upcoming conferences in Guelph, Ontario, Chicago IL, and after that, who knows? Maybe Las Vegas, maybe Texas, maybe even Poland, which I personally think would be an incredibly neat thing to do if we can work out the costs and logistics.

The SFRA does face a number of challenges, however. Our membership has fallen from a high of around 310 in the mid-1990's to something just over 270. Needless to say this was the main impetus behind Peter Brigg's recently established Plus One campaign. We are not unique in having a problem with decreased membership though. The IAFA has lost even more members over the past few years than we have. For this reason and others I have tried to advocate increased cooperation between the two groups. The first concrete example of this organizational cooperation is in the works even as I write. Both the SFRA and the IAFA have agreed to be sponsors of a new website that Hal Hall is developing at Texas A&M, a sister site to his fabulous Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database, which will solicit bibliographies on various genre-related subjects and make them available on the web. We are also exploring, albeit tentatively, such things as joint publication and, conceivably, although there may be insurmountable problems with the idea, joint memberships.

I would like to suggest to the incoming officers of the SFRA and to the membership at large that we need to work on a couple of other problems as well. One area in which this organization has always lagged behind the IAFA is in its encouragement of student members. We've improved this over the past four years by offering an award with a cash prize and free membership for the best student paper delivered at each conference and I'm happy to note that the number of papers submitted for this competition has increased each year. This June, for the first time I believe, we provided support money to help several graduate students and junior faculty make the trip to New Lanark. If the funding is available, I'd like to see this continue. We made an attempt at the Schenectady conference to start up a graduate student organization similar to the one that has been such a success for IAFA. The attempt failed, but perhaps we need to try again. I am concerned by the increasing age of our membership. Like science-fiction fandom where this has become a serious problem, we need to find new blood or our organization will continue to dwindle in numbers.

I would also like to recommend that the incoming Board take a long, hard look at the *SFRA Review*. In recent years our editors have been mostly graduate students and junior faculty. The large majority of these people have done fine jobs, including the current crew, but it is the nature of such people that their time is extremely limited. We've tried to improve this situation by bringing in two book review editors to decrease the load on the main editors, but making deadlines has continued to be a serious problem. Here's a question. Do we really need six issues of the review per year? With the near-universal use of e-mail and Peter Sands' timely announcements of breaking news on the SFRA's website, might we not be better off going to a quarterly schedule? A decrease to four issues of the *Review* a year would make the job of the editors much less stressful and we could undoubtedly afford to cut membership fees by a small but significant amount as well. Please think about this and send your input to either the Board or the editors of the *Review*.

I will continue to serve on the SFRA board for another two years as Past President. Officially my duties in that position are simply to oversee the elections, but I plan as well to serve as an advocate for the above mentioned proposals. I have also, fool that I am, agreed to serve the IAFA as its Vice President, beginning on the same day my term as President of the SFRA comes to an end. I've enjoyed

MacPhee, G. *The Architecture of the Visible: Technology and Urban Visual Culture*.

Pepperell, R. & Punt, M. *The Postdigital Membrane: Imagination, Technology and Desire*.

Culture Machine is an interactive, refereed journal of cultural studies and cultural theory. Authors should follow the procedures outlined in the 'Submissions' section when preparing their book reviews and review articles, which should normally be no more than 4,000 words in length.

If you are interested in reviewing one or more of the titles listed above, please contact Joanna Zylinska, Reviews Editor, at j.zylinska@virgin.net, enclosing a one-page CV in the main body of your message.

2002 MYTHOPOEIC FANTASY AWARDS

The winners of this year's awards were announced at the banquet during Mythcon XXXIII, held in Boulder, Colorado, July 26-29th. For more information about the Mythopoeic Society, the annual conference, and the awards, see their website (<http://www.mythsoc.org>).

Adult Literature: Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Curse of Chalion* (Morrow/Avon); Other finalists: Neil Gaiman, *American Gods* (William Morrow); Sarah A. Hoyt, *Ill Met by Moonlight* (Ace); Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Other Wind* (Harcourt Brace); Tim Powers, *Declare* (William Morrow).

Children's Literature: Peter Dickinson, *The Ropemaker* (Delacorte); Other finalists: Diane Duane, *The Wizard's Dilemma* (Magic Carpet/Harcourt); Eva Ibbotson, *Island of the Aunts* (Puffin); Gail Carson Levine, *The Two Princesses of Bamarre* (HarperCollins).

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies: Verlyn Flieger and Carl F. Hostetter, eds., *Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on the History*

of *Middle-earth* (Greenwood); Other finalists: George Clark and Daniel Timmons, eds., *J.R.R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances* (Greenwood); Candice Fredrick and Sam McBride, **Women Among the Inklings: Gender, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams** (Greenwood); Don W. King, **C.S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of His Poetic Impulse** (Kent State University Press).

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies: G. Ronald Murphy, *The Owl, the Raven & the Dove: The Religious Meaning of the Grimms' Magic Fairy Tales* (Oxford University Press); Other finalists: Graham Anderson, *Fairytales in the Ancient World* (Routledge); Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale* (Princeton); Christine Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art 1840-1920* (Manchester University Press).

GIBSON COLLECTION AT UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The University of Calgary is now one of the strongest resources for science fiction research after receiving a gift of 30-40,000 volumes from local collector William Gibson (not the Canadian author). This collection includes volumes from the nineteenth century to the present, and includes a nearly complete run of *Astounding/Analog*. Full information on the collection won't be available for some time; the library staff is only in the earliest stages of unpacking. However, it's already clear that the collection includes a lot of pulp magazines from the 1920s through the 1950s, as well as a large number of monographs on early 20th century science fiction. Depending on funding needed to clean, preserve, and maintain the collection, it could be ready for scholarly use within a year, although the fragile condition of the volumes

meeting many of you at various SFRA conferences over the past few years and I hope to see you again at future meetings of both organizations.

SFRA BUSINESS

SFRA: BUSINESS MEETING

Submitted by: Wendy Bousfield

New Lanark, Scotland

July 1, 2002

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the May 27th, 2001, meeting in Schenectady, NY, were distributed to members attending the Business meeting. Minutes were approved with the following two emendations.
 - A. The Officers' Report of editors of the *SFRA Review* (IV. #6) stated: "Overseas scholars are encouraged to write short articles for the *Review* about the state of science fiction or SF scholarship in their country." No such articles have yet been published.
 - B. The Old Business (V.# 2: a) stated that Joan Slonczewski would be at SFRA 2002 expressed the hope that Ian Banks would also attend. Neither Slonczewski nor Banks attended the New Lanark conference.
- III. **Announcements**
 - A. Support money for scholars. *Extrapolation* and *Science Fiction Studies* provided money to support scholars. Carol Stevens gave \$200 to the scholars support fund.
 - B. Although *Science Fiction Studies* and *Extrapolation* have increased subscription rates, SFRA is able to include these journals in SFRA membership benefits without raising dues.
 - C. SFRA gave \$500 to support *Femspec*.
 - D. The SFRA website (<http://www.sfra.org>) has a new look. We thank Peter Sands for the terrific job he has done as webmaster. Several people thought, however, that readability would be improved with greater contrast.
- IV. **Officers' Reports**
 - A. Former President—Alan Elms: Alan announced the following slate of candidates for the SFRA Executive Board:
 President: Peter Brigg, Douglas Barbour
 Vice President: Bruce Rockwood, Janice Bogstad
 Secretary: Margaret McBride, Warren G. Rochelle
 Treasurer: David Mead, Joseph Milicia
 Nominations from the floor (there were none) are acceptable. Write in nominations are also permitted, but the latter need the signatures of five SFRA members. Ballots will be sent out after the candidates' statements appear in the *SFRA Review*.
 - B. President—Michael Levy: No report.
 - C. Vice President—Peter Brigg. Peter described his recruitment efforts. In March, Peter sent out more than fifty letters soliciting teachers of SF to join SFRA. Peter went through the last two years of science fiction journals, sending over fifty letters to contributors. He will continue this practice as each journal comes out. Peter will announce his "Plus One Campaign" via the SFRA listserv and a subsequent mailing. SFRA membership will be doubled if each member recruits one person. Peter will approach several journals asking that they place ads for SFRA in exchange for advertising space in the *SFRA Review*.
 Peter discussed ways of identifying scholars with an interest in SF. Leslie Kay Swigart has offered to identify the present locations of the writers of

SF theses and dissertations. Peter would like the SFRA website to list theses being written on SF topics. Persons supervising M.A. and Ph.D. theses should inform webmaster Peter Sands. Peter Brigg welcomes other ideas for recruiting members, especially youthful ones.

SFRA conference. Though the Vice President is supposed to oversee conferences, neither Farah Mendlesohn nor Andrew Butler required supervision or assistance. Peter will revise the book on how to run a conference, adding a timeline.

D. Secretary—Wendy Bousfield: Attached.

E. Treasurer—David Mead: SFRA is in good financial shape with a savings balance of \$25,514.50 and a checking account balance of \$18,920.98. SFRA received substantial invoices from the journals it supports. SFRA has engaged in several economies: i.e., a conference call rather than face to face meeting of the Executive Board, duplicating rather than printing the *SFRA Review*, etc.. SFRA has, therefore, been able to give travel scholarships to attend the annual conference and money to support *Femspec*.

F. *SFRA Review* Editors—Rochelle Rodrigo Blanchard, Barbara Lucas (*in absentia*). We are looking for replacements for both editors. Editors receive a small honorarium and may request up to \$500 annually to hire student assistants. Editing the *SFRA Review* would be an impressive addition to a young scholar's vita.

The *SFRA Review's* lateness continues to be a concern. Sending issues bulk mail in the U.S. adds one to two weeks to arrival time.

The *Directory* appears in August or September, so as to include any late-subscribing members. Because of privacy concerns, SFRA cannot put its membership directory on its website.

The SFRA membership would like to thank Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard for her great work as *SFRA Review* editor.

G. Webmaster—Peter Sands (*in absentia*): Peter's next job is redoing the front page, then bringing other pages into unity with the front page. Peter Brigg recommended that people who want content represented on the SFRA webpage put it on their own websites. Peter Sands can link to it, but not take responsibility for maintenance. SFRA owns the copyright to any material published in the *Review* and, thus, can post it to the SFRA website.

V. Old Business

A. 2003 Conference—Guelph. Peter Halasz is helping with guests and will take care of the book room. Douglas Barbour and Chris Mains are also helping with the conference. Peter Brigg will do a mailing in September. Dorm accommodations are available, as well as nearby motels. Peter will look into shuttle transportation from the Toronto Airport. The conference packet will include a city map and smoking information. Peter may arrange a trip to the Royal Ontario Museum, which has Oriental/Egyptian antiquities, live scorpions, and dinosaur bones.

B. *Extrapolation* has moved to the University of Texas Brownsville, which will provide financial support. Javier Martinez is editor. Mack Hassler is executive editor.

C. Change in policy on announcing award winners. This is the first year that SFRA has announced winners of awards in advance. Strict time limits for speeches of award winners and those who introduce them should be agreed upon in advance. Award speeches are routinely published in the *SFRA Review*.

means that none of the items will circulate.

HUGO AWARD WINNERS

The 2002 Hugo Awards were presented September 1, 2002, at the World Science Fiction Convention in San Jose, CA.

Best Novel: *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman

Best Novella: "Fast Times at Fairmont High" by Vernor Vinge

Best Novellette: "Hell Is the Absence of God" by Ted Chiang

Best Short Story: "The Dog Said Bow-Wow" by Michael Swanwick

Best Dramatic Presentation: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

Best Professional Editor: Ellen Datlow

Best Artist: Michael Whelan

Best SemiProzine: *Locus*, and *Locus Online* for **Best Website**

Best Fanzine: *Ansible*

The following additional awards were presented during the ceremonies:

Jo Walton won the **John W. Campbell Award** for Best New Writer of 2000/2001. **Seiun Awards** were presented:

Peter Murphy's *There and Back Again* as **Best Translated Novel**; Ted Chiang's "Story of Your Life" and Greg Egan's "Reasons to be Cheerful" in a tie for **Best Translated Short Story**. R.A. Lafferty received the **Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award**.

The **Big Heart Award**, recognizing fan contributions, went to Pat Sims.

First Fandom Awards were presented to Sir Arthur C. Clarke (Hall of Fame), Martha Beck (Posthumous Hall of Fame) and Robert A. Madle (Sam Moskowitz Archive award).

A detailed breakdown of the voting can be found at the convention committee's website (<http://www.conjose.org>) or by writing to info@conjose.org. A long list of all of the awards presented

at San Jose can be found at *Locus Online*.

WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION 61

The next World Science Fiction Convention will be Torcon 3, to be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, from August 28 to September 1, 2003. Guests include George R. R. Martin, Spider Robinson, and artist Frank Kelly Freas. For information about registration, hotels, and much more, check out their website (<http://www.torcon3.on.ca/index.html>). Torcon 3 will also host Convention, the convention of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, which administers the Aurora Awards for the best in Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy.

2005 WORLDCON SITE ANNOUNCED

An unopposed bid from Glasgow, Scotland, has been awarded the 2005 Worldcon, which will be called Interaction and will run August 4-8, 2005, at the Scottish Exhibition and Convention Centre. Guests of honor include Christopher Priest, Robert Sheckley, Jane Yolen, Greg Pickersgill, and Lars Olov Strandberg.

HALL OF FAME

The following four works were admitted to the Hall of Fame: Geoff Ryman's novel *'Was...'* (1992); comic book *Alpha Flight #106*; Joanna Russ's novel *The Female Man* (1975); Samuel R. Delany's novel *Dhalgren* (1975). Geoff Ryman is the Guest of Honor at SFRA 2003 in Guelph, Ontario, Canada in June 2003.

WORLD FANTASY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The World Fantasy Awards for 2001 will be announced at the World Fantasy Convention awards banquet to be held in Minneapolis,

VI. New Business

A. We are looking for a volunteer to design a new SFRA logo to replace the one that Alex Eisenstein designed ten years ago.

B. Location of 2004 Conference. SFRA has received three offers to host SFRA 2004 from SFRA members in Boston, Texas, and Chicago. The Board has rejected as impractical Solomon Davidoff's suggestion that we combine SFRA with Worldcon on Labor Day in Boston. Hall Hall has offered to host the conference at Texas A & M in College Station. The advantages would be Hall's prestige as a scholar, plus his institution's strong science fiction collection. The Board (including one Texan), however, had reservations about the area's remoteness and the heat at that time of year. Finally, Beverly Friend and Betty Hull have offered to host SFRA 2004 in Chicago, which has the advantage of being centrally located and easy to fly to. The Board and SFRA members at the Business meeting favored the Chicago location.

Members expressed the view that conferences should schedule free times as well as papers and planned activities. However, since schools generally are willing to provide time off and funding only to scholars who present papers, conferences should not limit the number of papers given.

C. Future SFRA's—including a proposal from Poland. We have three offers to host SFRA 2005. First, Beverly Friend and Betty Hull have tentatively offered to host SFRA in Chicago two years in succession (2004 and 2005). Second, David Mead and Peter Lowentroun have offered to organize the conference in Las Vegas. Advantages are cheap airfare and the fact that casino hotels, especially those not centrally located, compete for conferences. Third, Pavel Frelik has offered to host the conference in Lublin, Poland. For Americans, flying to Warsaw costs only slightly more than flying to London. If, in the next two years, Poland joins the EU, travel costs will be further reduced. The hope was also expressed that Hal Hall would consider making another bid for 2005. Pavel Frelik also volunteered to delay his bid until 2006.

D. Award Committees for next year—finding volunteers. The Clareson Committee (Wendy Bousfield, Donald M. Hassler, and Carolyn Wendell) does not need volunteers this year. However, SFRA members wishing to serve on the following should contact SFRA President, Michael Levy:

1. Pilgrim Committee. Members divide up science fiction journals, each reading articles for the year. We would like some senior people to volunteer for this committee.
2. Graduate student essay committee. We would like encourage junior members to serve as referees.
3. Mary K. Bray. An award endowed by William Andrews, a colleague of the late Mary Kay Bray, for the writer of the best article published in the *SFRA Review*.
4. Best Graduate Student Paper presented at annual conference.

E. Exploring joint ventures with IAFA. SFRA is considering joint publishing ventures and joint memberships. At the next IAFA Board meeting, Michael Levy will propose offering a double membership package including discounts on the journals offered by both organizations.

VII. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. We thank Michael Levy for his leadership as SFRA President and Farah Mendlesohn

and Andrew M. Butler for organizing a successful conference!

Action items:

1. Leslie Kay Swigart has offered to identify the present locations of the writers of SF theses and dissertations. She will send them to Peter Brigg for recruitment purposes.
2. Persons supervising M.A. and Ph.D. theses should inform webmaster Peter Sands so that this information may be posted to the SFRA web page.
3. Persons with ideas for recruiting SFRA members, or offers of help with the recruitment effort, should contact Peter Brigg.
4. Peter will revise the book on how to run a conference, adding a timeline.
5. Persons volunteering to design a new SFRA logo should contact President Michael Levy.
6. SFRA members wishing to serve on a SFRA award committee should contact SFRA President, Michael Levy.
7. Michael Levy will propose SFRA/IAFA joint memberships at the next IAFA Board meeting.

SFRA BUSINESS
SECRETARY'S REPORT
Wendy Bousfield

As outgoing Secretary, I will describe duties and priorities in detail, for the benefit of my successor. I'll list routine duties carried out since my last report (Schenectady, 2001), as well as two projects aimed at increasing SFRA's membership and visibility.

The Secretary serves as SFRA's recorder. Since my last Secretary's report (Schenectady 2001), I took minutes for two Executive Board meetings: the February (2002) conference call and the Schenectady dinner meeting (May 2001). I prepared two sets of minutes for each meeting. The first, for Board members, was a detailed record of topics discussed, with "Action Items" (duties particular Board individuals agreed to carry out). The second was a brief summary of highlights of the discussion for the *SFRA Review*. I also wrote minutes of the SFRA Business Meeting (Schenectady 2001), to which all attending SFRA members were invited, for the *SFRA Review*.

The SFRA Secretary's other major duty is sending out membership renewal notices. I sent out 2002 renewal notices in December 2001 and a second notice to non-responders in April 2002. Both mailings included information on the annual conference in New Lanark. In these mailings, the Secretary cooperates closely with the SFRA Treasurer, who maintains the membership database. Whenever I request mailing labels, Treasurer David Mead responds with alacrity. David and I have worked together to track down SFRA members who have moved, correct the membership database accordingly, and resend returned letters to current addresses.

My final activity as Secretary will be sending out ballots and candidates' statements for the upcoming election of the SFRA Board. The Secretary mails ballots to SFRA members thirty days after the call for nominations is published in the *SFRA Review*.

The SFRA Board has sought ways to counteract the slump in membership. The future SFRA Secretary may wish to cooperate with the Vice President in identifying organizations whose membership might potentially overlap with SFRA's so as to exchange membership directories with them. In early spring 2001, a Syracuse University Library's work-study student collated the SFRA membership directory with the IAFA directory, identifying persons who were members

Minnesota on November 3, 2002. The five judges are Peter Atkins, Meg Davis, Michelle Sagara West, Jason Van Hollander, and F. Paul Wilson.

Best Novel: *From the Dust Returned* by Ray Bradbury (Morrow); *The Curse of Chalion* by Lois McMaster Bujold (Eos); *The Wooden Sea* by Jonathan Carroll (Tor); *The Onion Girl* by Charles de Lint (Tor); *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman (Morrow); *The Other Wind* by Ursula K. Le Guin (Harcourt); *Brown Harvest* by Jay Russell (Four Walls Eight Windows).

Best Novella: "Karuna, Inc." by Paul Di Filippo (*Strange Trades*, Golden Gryphon); "Cleopatra Brimstone" by Elizabeth Hand (*Redshift*, Al Sarrantonio, ed., Roc); "Struwwelpeter" by Glen Hirshberg (*Sci Fiction*, 11/28/01); "The Finder" by Ursula K. Le Guin (*Tales from Earthsea*, Harcourt); "Eternity and Afterward" by Lucius Shepard (*F&SF*, 3/01); "The Bird Catcher" by S.P. Somtow (*The Museum of Horrors*, Dennis Etchison, ed., Leisure).

Best Short Fiction: "His Own Back Yard" by James P. Blaylock (*Sci Fiction*, 7/11/01); "Queen for a Day" by Albert E. Cowdrey (*F&SF*, 10-11/01); "The Honeyed Knot" by Jeffrey Ford (*F&SF*, 5/01); "Something to Hitch Meat To" by Nalo Hopkinson (*Skin Folk*, Warner Aspect); "Legerdemain" by Jack O'Connell (*F&SF*, 10-11/01).

Best Anthology: *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror: Fourteenth Annual Collection* by Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, eds. (St. Martin's); *The Museum of Horrors* by Dennis Etchison, ed. (Leisure); *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror: Volume Twelve* by Stephen Jones, ed. (Robinson; Carroll & Graf); *The Mammoth Book of Vampire Stories Written by Women* by Stephen Jones, ed. (Robinson; Carroll & Graf); *Stigmata* by Jerad Walters, ed. (Cocytus Press).

Best Collection: *The Essential Ellison: A 50-Year Retrospective: Revised and Expanded* by Harlan Ellison;

Terry Dowling with Richard Delap & Gil Lamont, eds. (Morpheus); *Talking in the Dark* by Dennis Etchison (Stealth Press); *Skin Folk* by Nalo Hopkinson (Warner Aspect); *Stranger Things Happen* by Kelly Link (Small Beer Press); *Dark Universe: Stories 1951 - 2001*, William F. Nolan (Stealth Press).

Best Artist: Donato Giancola, Allen Koszowski, John Jude Palencar, Douglas Walters, Gahan Wilson.

Special Award Professional: Randy Broecker for **Fantasy of the 20th Century: An Illustrated History**, (Collectors Press); Ellen Datlow for editing; Jo Fletcher for editing the *Fantasy Masterworks* series (Gollancz); Stephen Jones for editing; Douglas E. Winter for *Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic*, (HarperCollins).

Special Award Non-Professional: Peter Crowther, for PS Publishing; Michael Waltz et al., for Sidecar Preservation Society; Paula Guran, for Horror Garage; Raymond Russell & Rosalie Parker, for Tartarus Press; Jerad Walters, for Cocytus Press.

OBITUARIES

Marion K. "Doc" Smith, a professor at Brigham Young University who helped mentor BYU's science fiction community, died September 3 following a protracted fight with cancer. His students included future authors M. Shayne Bell and Dave Wolverton. He helped found both the Science Fiction and Fantasy symposium *Life, the Universe and Everything* and *Leading Edge* magazine.

Robert L. Forward, author of *Dragon's Egg*, *Rocheworld*, and *Saturn Rukh*, died on September 21 at his home from brain cancer. In addition to a thirty-one year career at the Hughes Aircraft Company Corporate Research Laboratory, Forward published several science fiction novels and numerous science fiction stories, as well as more than 150 papers and articles on science fact.

Lloyd Biggle, Jr. died on September 12 following a long battle with leukemia and cancer. Biggle, who held a Ph.D. from the University

of IAFSA only. I sent the results to Vice President Peter Brigg, who mailed them recruitment letters.

In another attempt to increase SFRA visibility, I recommended the SFRA website to CORC. The OCLC Cooperative Online Resource Catalog service is a metadata creation system for bibliographic records. Participating libraries catalog websites recommended by their subject bibliographers. These records are then made accessible through that library's public catalog. Sarah Theimer, a catalog librarian at the Syracuse University Library, created a record, which may be found in the SU Library's SUMMIT catalog:

Science Fiction Research Association

Author: Science Fiction Research Association.

Title: Science Fiction Research Association [electronic resource]

Published: [s.l.] : Science Fiction Research Association, [199u]

Subjects: Science Fiction Research Association.

Science fiction

Fantasy fiction.

Other title: SFRA.org

Notes: Title from homepage on April 16, 2002.

Summary: The SFRA is the oldest professional organization for the study of science fiction and fantasy literature and film. Founded in 1970, the SFRA was organized to improve classroom teaching; to encourage and assist scholarship; and to evaluate and publicize new books and magazines dealing with fantastic literature and film, teaching methods and materials, and allied media performances. Among the membership are people from many countries — students, teachers, professors, librarians, futurologists,

System Requirements: Available via the Internet.

Location: available via Internet

Call Number: PN3448.S45 [Internet]

Linked Resources: Electronic Resource.

Because Sarah has created the relevant metadata for CORC, other libraries can easily link to the SFRA webpage from their own online public access catalogs. Accordingly, SFRA members might recommend to the librarians at their home institutions that their library catalog include a link to the SFRA website.

I hope that this rather detailed report will provide a roadmap for the next Secretary. I'm sure that my successor will find serving on the Executive Board as stimulating and rewarding as I have!

SFRA BUSINESS

SFRA AWARD SPEECHES 2002

Presented at the SFRA Convention in New Lanark

PILGRIM

ENCOMIUM ASHLEY

By Elizabeth Davidson; Delivered by Adam Frisch

Good evening, members of the Science Fiction Research Association, and guests. The time has now arrived in our evening's festivities to present our association's highest honor, the Pilgrim Award, established in 1970 "to honor lifetime contributions to SF and fantasy scholarship" (Encyc.SF, + SFRA memb. dir.). The award's name comes from the title of a book by J. O. Bailey, *Pilgrims through Space and Time*. This award, as lifetime implies, recognizes a body of

work done over many years, “rather than for a specific book or essay” (Encyc.SF), though the committee has actively looked to see an example or more of such extensive work included in that lifetime contribution. Our first thirty years’ list has included such Pilgrims as Bailey, I. F. Clarke, Peter Nicholls, and John Clute, who is one of the members of this year’s committee. The other two members of our committee are myself, Adam Frisch, and the chair of our committee, Elizabeth Davidson, who could not be with us at the convention this year.

For the first time ever this year, the SFRA decided not to keep the committee’s choice secret until tonight but to announce the winner early in the new year as one of the convention’s enticements for your attendance. Therefore, instead of saving his name until the last word of the last sentence of this introduction, I name him to you, locate him in “space and time,” praise stages of work in his lifetime contributions, and then turn you over to him for this high point in our evening.

In this year’s field of very worthy candidates, Mike Ashley, your time has come. You have been a semi-finalist for the last couple of years, so we have become very familiar with that part of your life and scholarly soundness represented by your publication record—that part of your life that is an open book to scrutiny such as ours—your “outward and visible symbol” of inward and precise work habits—of what you have had to contribute to our well-being as scholars sharing similar interests, and of its promise of contributions of equal soundness yet to come. While not as precise to lay out as an accountant’s balance sheet, your record as a contributor to the scholarship of science fiction and fantasy is also traceable for permanent value added as surely as if we could put it into numbers.

Therefore, fellow members of SFRA, to locate Mike for you in “space and time” is to identify him as a lifelong resident of Chatham, Kent, UK. He served the public as a Local Government Officer for Kent County Council, mainly in their finance department, retiring after more than 30 years of continuous employment there. Concurrently he pursued his private interest in literary, biographic, and bibliographic research—and still does so, having retired to now undivided endeavor in this field—continuing to use his marvelous eye for accuracy of detail—and to make these works, too, a kind of public service, especially to a public like SFRA. One of his friends has said of him that “his standard of scholarship is . . . very high. He’s a painstaking bibliographer and ferreter-out of facts, and someone whose research is always very reliable” (Pringle).

Mike Ashley is recognized in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* and in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* for his work as an anthology editor and as a writer of and contributor to reference books. When these sources are next updated, biographer too will be added. His 4-volume *The History of the Science Fiction Magazines (1974-78)* is not only an anthology of sample stories from magazines such as Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing*. Volume One, for instance, includes an engaging preface and a 38-page historical overview of the history of magazine publication, emphasizing the ten year period from which the ten stories are drawn—one per year. When the SFRA listserv of April 2002 was concerning itself with serious and humorous definitions of our field, one of Mike’s comments from his 1974 work seemed so very apt. Fantasy and science fiction published together from the beginning in these magazines led Mike to write a statement that might be emblematic of our fields: “With [Abraham] Merritt and [Edgar Rice] Burroughs in one corner, and Gernsback in the other, science fiction would appear to be a hermaphrodite of two highly estranged parents” (18). Mike’s *Who’s Who in Horror and Fantasy Fiction (1977)* is also considered a seminal work from this decade. In the 1980’s Mike receives especial praise for his work with Marshall



of Michigan, where he also taught, was the founder of the Science Fiction Oral History Association. Biggle began writing science fiction in 1955. He was also the founding treasurer of the SFWA. Biggle’s family is asking that contributions be made to either The Leukemia Society of White Plains, NY or Arbor Hospice of Ann Arbor, MI. **Ivor A. Rogers**, who was one of the founding members of SFRA, and served as its first Treasurer, died September 25 at the age of 72.

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY AWARDS

The European Science Fiction Society announced its annual awards at Eurocon 2002, held in Chotebor, Czech Republic. **Best Author:** Valerio Evangelisti (Italy); **Best Translator:** Paulina Braiter-Ziemkiewicz (Poland); **Best Promoter:** Yurii Ilkov (Bulgaria); **Best Journal:** Fantazia (Slovakia); **Best Publisher:** Leonardo – Jiri Pilch (Czech Republic); **Best Artist:** J.P. Krasny (Czech Republic); **Best Fanzine:** Terra Fantastica (Bulgaria); **Encouragement Awards** were given to Alexander Karapanchev (Bulgaria), Vitali Kaplan (Russia), Alexandra Pavelkova (Slovakia) and Miroslav Zamboch (Czech Republic).

SF ON RADIO

Faster Than Light, a new science fiction anthology series hosted by Robert J. Sawyer, began airing on CBC Radio on September 22 at 10:05 EST. The pilot episode featured a dramatization of Tom Godwin’s “The Cold Equations,” the first part of an original serial, “Captain’s Away,” written by Joe Mahoney, an interview with author Nalo Hopkinson, poetry by Carolyn Clink and a commentary by Robert J. Sawyer. Non-Canadians can listen to the broadcast at www.cbc.ca/audio.html. Unfortunately CBC Radio’s website does not give information on when to expect further installments.

AURORA AWARDS

The Aurora Awards for Canadian science fiction were announced on August 9 at Conversion/Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Best Long-Form Work in English: *In the Company of Others* by Julie E. Czerneda (DAW); **Best Long-Form Work in French:** *Les Transfigurés du Centaure* by Jean-Louis Trudel (Médiaspaul); **Best Short-Form Work in English:** "Left Foot on a Blind Man" by Julie E. Czerneda (*Silicon Dreams*, DAW); **Best Short-Form Work in French:** "Souvenirs de lumière" by Daniel Sernine (*Solaris 138*).

NEW AWARDS FOR NEW ZEALAND SF

The inaugural annual Sir Julius Vogel Awards were presented to recognize excellence in science fiction, fantasy and horror by New Zealanders during the New Zealand National Convention in Wellington New Zealand.

Best Novel: *First Hunter* by Dale Elvy; **Best Short Story:** "The Good Earth" by Peter Friend; **Dramatic Presentation—Long Form:** *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*; **Best New Talent:** Dale Elvy; **Best Fan Writing:** Alan Robson; **Best Fanzine:** *Phoenixine*; **Best Fan Art:** Nick Kim; **Services to Fandom:** Norman Cates & the SFFANZ Discussion Group; **Services to SF &F:** Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh, Phillipa Boyens.

ROAD TO SCIENCE FICTION REPRINTED

The first three volumes of James Gunn's important six-volume anthology series have been reprinted as trade paperbacks by Scarecrow Press, 800-462-6420. The text was revised and reset, with a new story in #1 (From Gilgamesh to Wells) and two substitutions in #2 (From Wells to Heinlein). #3 covers From Heinlein to Here. Allowing for inflation, the prices (\$29.50, \$32.50 twice) are roughly 2-3 times the Mentor mass market originals. Volume 4 will be

Tymm on Science Fiction, Fantasy and Weird Fiction Magazines (1985). Peter Nichols calls it his "masterwork" (55) and Thomas Clareson's introductory chapter states that Mike Ashley has "done one of the most thorough historical surveys, especially of British magazines in his various introductions" (xxii). In the 1990's not only is Mike Ashley a writer of many of the entries in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, but in the 1997 *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* he is given title page credit as a contributing editor, with the Preface further elaborating on the extensive nature of those contributions: having written over 200,000 words and also of having proofread the entirety of this massive and worthwhile project. Finally, in 2001, after over twenty years in the making, Mike's biography, a 395 page study of the life of fantasy writer Algernon Blackwood, was published. Its title in the UK is *The Starlight Man: The Biography of Algernon Blackwood* and in the US *Algernon Blackwood: An Extraordinary Life*. It is noted in a couple of early reviews as "scrupulous but unstuffy" (Booklist) and as a "groundbreaking study" that is "a treasure trove for classic horror fans" (Publishers Weekly). These are examples of the fine workmanship which qualify Mike Ashley as Pilgrim of 2002.

Anthologies, reference books, and biographies all require a judicious mixture of the discipline to work well alone and of the collegiality to work well with others. Comments already cited about being reliable, painstaking, and ferret-like in his search for information attest to his discipline. Further comments in praise of Mike also support that "he is friendly, congenial, easy to discuss things with" (Clute) and "works very well in collaboration with others" (Pringle). Therefore not only does he demand excellence in his own performance but by encouraging it in his cooperative ventures with others, he creates a climate friendly to helping others also to achieve excellence, a praiseworthy trait underlying the list of Mike's lifetime achievements.

Therefore, on the basis of your 30+ years of excellent and distinguished contributions to the study of science fiction and fantasy, including one or more extensive scholarly books all your own, with past excellent work in "bibliographical, editing, and reference book work" in rational and relatively harmonious cooperation with others, working to provide a means by which we lovers of science fiction and fantasy can enlighten ourselves and pass knowledge on to others, Mike Ashley, please come to the podium and accept your well-earned Pilgrim.

PILGRIM

"BUT I'VE ONLY JUST STARTED..."

Mike Ashley's Acceptance Speech

When I first learned I was to be honoured with this award – a Lifetime achievement – I thought, "Good Lord; but I've only just started"! I suppose that's what happens when, for over thirty years of my life, I worked in local government and it's only since I retired, just over three years ago, that I feel I've really started.

But when I think about it, there has been a lot crammed into those thirty-plus years and, as this is a "lifetime" achievement, I thought it might be interesting to look back over those years and pick out a few of the interesting, amusing, salutary and just plain odd things that have happened.

To go back to the very beginning – just in case you wonder why on earth I got into this research – the previous speaker talked about the effort and agony of painstaking research to ensure accuracy and completeness. I drive myself nuts over this – and suspect I drive a lot of other people nuts too. I'm sure I was born with this because I'm obsessive when it comes to filling in gaps of information – apparently I'm a "completer finisher" in task terms. When I was very young,

my father gave me a copy of *Whitaker's Almanack*. At that time I was interested in things like lists of the planets with all the moons and satellites and stars and so forth. As I looked through it I'd see gaps and even though I was only about seven or eight, I couldn't understand why there was a gap in what was a major reference work. And the more I looked, even at that age, I'd find lists of things like longest rivers and then find another list of longest rivers in another book and they were different. I mean, how can one list have the Amazon as the longest river and another have the Nile and yet another have the Mississippi-Missouri? Those things drove me nuts. And I'm afraid that is what has fueled my quest for completeness ever since.

How that passion for filling in gaps developed into science-fiction research was due to my father. He read a lot of science fiction, but he never bought any books. He borrowed everything from the library. So the books went back, not to be seen again, but he'd tell me about the stories he'd read. But he couldn't remember who wrote them, or what they were called. He'd just tell me the plot. So, of course, that had me thinking, well, where do I find these things? Once again the urge to fill in the gaps took over.

Unfortunately, not long after I started to get into this, we moved from where we used to live (Southall, in Middlesex, which had an excellent library) to Sittingbourne, in Kent. At that time Sittingbourne Library had achieved a certain notoriety because the local librarian decided to ban all Enid Blyton books. This was the first stirrings of political correctness. Blyton was a very well known children's writer and was one of the best-selling authors in the world. Nevertheless her works were no longer considered suitable in Sittingbourne and the librarian refused to stock them.. So, you can imagine that if he was that way inclined about Enid Blyton, you sure weren't going to find too much science fiction in Sittingbourne, apart from the translations of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells's collected stories. It took me years to track down those stories that my father used to tell me. But that's what really got me into it, and it just sort of snowballed after that.

Moving on a few years, once I started to have articles published in magazines, I did a series of profiles of individual authors for *Science Fiction Monthly*. In almost all cases I wrote to the authors when I was doing the research, including Keith Roberts and Mike Moorcock, to check facts with them. I also did an article on Harlan Ellison. Because I had an abundance of articles about him, and interviews and so on, of all of the writers, he was the one I didn't write to in advance. Well you can guess what happened. The editor of *Science Fiction Monthly* had been hoping to interview Harlan, as he had been planning on coming over to England. In the end he didn't, but the editor sent him a copy of the (as yet unpublished) article, unbeknown to me. So I suddenly get a 12-page letter, where Harlan itemized something like sixty points, highlighting all the errors, including most of the "facts" that I had extracted from interviews with him.

Now I suppose I should've just accepted that but, in my youthful stupidity, I responded to Harlan, telling him that, "most of these facts, you said." You can guess what happened next. I got another letter from Harlan, starting "Don't pick with me, buddy."

You know, I respect Harlan a lot for that. Apart from demonstrating that I really should check these things with writers, he highlighted very strongly for me, not to trust secondary facts. He made it clear about many things in those interviews which had been transcribed wrong, or which had been attributed to him but weren't by him and so on. It was a very important point in learning what to trust and what not to trust. Unfortunately it fed this mania that I have for



released in spring 2003.

#5 (The British Way) and #6 (Around the World) were published in 1998 by White Wolf (www.white-wolf.com) as \$14.99 trade paperbacks, 35 stories each (contents at www.locusmag.com/index). You may have many of these stories in collections or other anthologies, but the informed commentary is an essential adjunct. If you don't personally buy them, ask your library to acquire them. —Neil Barron

Proposal for Consideration CENTER FOR THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

This information has been adapted from a proposal circulated in August 2002 by Hal Hall.

The bibliographic control of science fiction and fantasy has a long and storied history, from its beginnings in the 1930s to the online tools of today. The works range from superb productions that serve as best practice standards to quick-and-dirty listings. Virtually all of them add a bit to the coverage of the field.

The last decade of the twentieth century ushered in changes in the bibliographic world, as publishing outlets for such works disappeared or became highly selective. Borgo Press, a key outlet and standard setter, closed its doors, and other publishers recognized the impact of the WorldWideWeb on the viability of printed bibliographic tools in the genre. Presses like Scarecrow, Greenwood, and McFarland became highly selective, or withdrew entirely. One press cited the WorldWideWeb as an insurmountable obstacle. Specialty presses and publish-on-demand presses offer an outlet but at the cost of low volume and marginal marketing. They also suffer from their own version of poor bibliographic control.

Journals such as *Extrapolation*, *Science Fiction Studies* and *Foundation* are occasional outlets for shorter bibli-

ographies. However, their primary mission is the presentation of scholarship, not bibliographies. Other outlets include some of the professional science fiction magazines and some E-zines. Even the well-known presses like Greenwood or McFarland share the problem of low distribution volume and lack of scholarly access. This is compounded by the increasing demands faced by libraries, with resulting reallocation of acquisition funds to electronic resources, and away from purchasing specialized and genre materials.

These factors combine to leave a void in bibliographic publishing, and, perhaps, in the creation of scholarly bibliographies. It is this void that the Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction is proposed to fill.

Purpose

The Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction would provide an online repository for bibliographic works on science fiction and fantasy. Bibliographies included in the Center would be created and formatted following an established set of content and style guidelines. The bibliographic content could include single author bibliographies, thematic bibliographies, indexes to magazines, and other bibliographic works.

Sponsorship and Management

To meet the various needs of the field, and to ensure quality content, the Web Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction is proposed as a joint venture, sponsored by the Science Fiction Research Association, *Extrapolation* magazine, and the Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection, Cushing Library, Texas A&M University. The International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts is also seriously considering co-sponsorship. The Editorial Board of *Extrapolation* is proposed as the initial review board of submissions, following their established reviewing mechanisms.

double-checking things. If you can blame – or credit – anyone for that, thank Harlan Ellison. And, I've never stopped it since.

But, and it's a big but, you would think that if you're going to double check facts, then check them with the author themselves and you'll get them right. Right? Wrong!

When I was compiling my *Who's Who in Horror and Fantasy Fiction*, I tried to send all draft entries to the writers, so that they could check them. I sent one, for instance, to Robert Aickman. Aickman was a superb writer of strange stories, as he preferred to call them. Aickman wrote back saying, "you've included my date of birth. I don't want my date of birth in this." Well his date of birth was in no end of reference books. It wasn't particularly a secret. But, not only did he not want his date of birth in, he told me, "if you are going to include my date of birth, then I want you to put in this date." Well I wasn't going to falsify facts so I didn't put any date of birth in. And the number of people who commented on that omission afterwards!

I also wrote to Wilfrid McNelly. Probably not too many people will know that name because he wrote most of his stuff under pen names. And this was the problem, because he wrote back to me and his letter said, "I may be a bit vague ..." and he proceeded to list a whole load of titles, mostly under pen names like Peter Saxon, Desmond Reid, W. A. Ballinger, and so on. These were all used predominantly in the sixties. And I, like an idiot, accepted all of this. So, when the book was published, I got a letter from Howard Baker, who was a publisher at the time, saying "What the hell are you doing, attributing all of this stuff that I wrote, to McNelly?" And I discovered that McNelly was always doing this. He could never remember what he wrote. Such are the perils of trying to check facts first hand with the writer!

These and other similar things kept happening to me. There's an entry in my *Who's Who in Horror and Fantasy Fiction* on Talbot Mundy. When I was researching him, I was in contact with an excellent researcher at the time, Bill Lofts. He's dead now unfortunately. But Bill was a great ferreter after information. One day he wrote to me saying: "by the way, did you know that Talbot Mundy's real name was William Lancaster Gribbon?" Bill's data was usually reliable, and he was definite about this, so I put the information in the *Who's Who*. So then I get another letter when it was published from Peter Berresford Ellis saying, "Who told you this?" Ellis was writing a biography of Mundy, which was at that time not yet published, and he had discovered Mundy's real name but I had stolen his thunder. He was furious about it. It turns out he had given the information in confidence to a bookdealer friend who had then let it out to Bill Lofts! Thankfully I am still good friends with Peter Berresford Ellis, but it's another example of the problems that can arise in research.

Let me turn to a couple of examples of sheer good luck that can sometimes happen. Most research, especially tracing authors, is usually a hard slog. But I have had occasional moments of luck. Some of you may know the notorious Badger Books that were published in Britain back in the fifties and sixties. Their long-running series of supernatural stories and science fiction, were predominantly written by two writers: Lionel Fanthorpe and John S. Glasby. Now Glasby is not that well known. All of his stuff appeared under pen names like A.J. Merak and Ray Cosmic. My research here was another example of being driven by the desire to fill in gaps and identify the real authors behind these pen names for a booklet called *The Fantasy Reader's Guide to the John Spencer Fantasy Publications*. At the time (the mid-seventies), little was known about John S. Glasby. Fortunately the publisher, John Spencer, was still around and one of the directors was able to give me an old address for Glasby, from the early sixties. He was no longer

there but, on the spur of the moment, I decided to try the local library in his area. So, I phoned them up and asked, "Do you know, does John S. Glasby use your library?" And the answer came, "Oh, hang on, he's here!" He was just checking out of the library. And I got this very shocked voice suddenly, wondering how on earth I'd managed to track a writer down to his local library.

The other bizarre thing that happened like that was again in connection with my *Who's Who*, back in the early seventies. I was trying to trace Hugh B. Cave. Cave is still alive, of course, in his nineties now and very active. I had an old, incomplete address for him in Jamaica, from a 1963 author's *Who's Who*, but I was pretty certain it was out of date because someone, I can't now remember who, had told me that they thought Cave was living in New Orleans or somewhere in the southern states. It was all a bit uncertain, but I thought I'd chance it and so sent a letter addressed simply to "Hugh B. Cave, Blue Mountains, Jamaica." And within two weeks I got a letter back from Hugh Cave in Florida! Well, not only was I amazed that the postal authorities had actually delivered this letter, but I thought it showed just how well known Hugh Cave was in Jamaica. I was really impressed with that.

One of the things I have learned is the need to recognize the responsibility you have when undertaking research. Particularly, when researching people who have died and you're contacting their relatives, and the respect that you need to have for the individual's memory. It's easy to forget that. You get wrapped up in the research and forget that the person you're contacting, the son or daughter or grandchildren, hold the person you're researching in very high regard. And they may get suspicious when someone from out of the blue starts asking questions, wondering, "What's he after?" It's even possible that they have no idea that their father or grandfather had written science fiction. So you suddenly open up this can of worms.

One example typifies this perfectly, and it concerns the old pulp writer Homer Eon Flint. Isn't that a great name, and its one highly regarded by the devotees of the earliest days of pulp science fiction. But poor Homer Eon Flint died in mysterious circumstances in the early 1920s. His body was found in a canyon underneath a car, which he had allegedly hijacked. The actual circumstances of his death were never resolved, but this aura of suspicion hung over it, that he had possibly been involved in holding up a car and perhaps in a bank robbery.

Thanks to the help of Forry Ackerman, I found Homer Eon Flint's daughter, Betty. She had only been about two years old, I think, when her father had died, and though she didn't really know him, she'd inherited a lot of stories from her mother. And she held the memory of her father in tremendous respect, and was suspicious of anybody coming along who might possibly muckrake. So, when I innocently write to her, wanting to find out more information about her father, particularly the circumstances about his death, you can imagine the sort of response I got. Very guarded. Very cautious. I think she thought I might be writing for something like the *National Inquirer*. I had to tread very carefully on the research and a lot of letters went to and fro between myself and Betty until, eventually, she came to understand what I was trying to do. In the end it all went fine. Recently I was pleased when her daughter, who is also a writer, wrote an article about her grandfather, and said some very complimentary things about how I had handled the research. But it was a salutary lesson to respect the family and the memories of the people you're researching.

That leads me on to the Ashley curse. I suppose it comes with the territory, in that if you're researching old writers, you have to recognize they might die now and again. But unfortunately they seem to choose to do that just when I contact them. This first struck me when I wrote to Edmond Hamilton in

Should a need for a separate board develop, the sponsoring organizations would jointly name such a board.

Format

Bibliographic work would be submitted in accordance with an established set of guidelines. The guidelines will be developed drawing on the best practice examples in the science fiction bibliography field and the principles of good bibliographic control. The format, instructions, and examples will appear on the web site. Submissions for the Web Center will be accepted only in electronic format, with Microsoft Word or FrontPage as the preferred formats. Potential contributors should inquire about the use of other computer programs. The Cushing Library will edit the submissions to the final format for web presentation.

Rights and Permissions

A key reason for The Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction is the provision of wide, reliable distribution of the bibliographic work. Presentation of the work on the Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction site would constitute "publication", refereed and accepted by a qualified editorial board. This aspect of the Center offers the editorial expertise to evaluate submissions for accuracy and completeness, with subsequent increased value to the field, and to support the scholarly review process under which faculty members operate.

Works would remain on the site indefinitely, with the following provisions: The compiler may use the work in any way they choose without permission. The compiler owns the copyright to the work, for any use outside the web center. The compiler may update or modify the content of the work published on the Center web pages at any time, by submission to the site director. Previous versions, clearly identified by version number or date, will reside in the site's electronic archive.

One paper copy of each bibliography and version will be maintained as a permanent printed archive in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection, Cushing Library, Texas A&M University.

Sponsors

The Center for the Bibliographic Control of Science Fiction will be hosted by the Cushing Library. If the Cushing Library requests relief of hosting duties, the other sponsors will jointly determine a new host site, or make such decisions as are necessary at the time.

Content

The following items are proposed as initial offerings for the Center and serve as an example of possible content:

Benefiel, Candace R. *The Man Who Sold the Future: A Research Guide to The Fiction of Robert A. Heinlein* (Existing, http://library.tamu.edu/cushing/collectn/lit/science/sci-fi/man_who_sold_the_future.htm)

Cummins, Elizabeth. *Judith Merril: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography*. (Proposed)

Hall, Hal W. *The Work of Chad Oliver: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide*. (Existing, needs update)

Hall, Hal W. *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database*. (Existing, <http://library.tamu.edu/cushing/collectn/lit/science/sci-fi/SFFRD/default.asp>)

Page, Bill. *Horny Toads and Ugly Chickens: A Bibliography on Texas in Speculative Fiction*. (Existing, <http://library.tamu.edu/cushing/collectn/lit/science/sci-fi/texfan.htm>)

CFPs

WHO: The Science Fiction Research Association 34th Confer-

January 1977. He died on the first of February 1977. I didn't know this just at that time, but when I did learn about it, and I checked the date on my letter, I thought that he could have received it on the day he died. It worried me a little bit. So, I didn't instantly write to Leigh Brackett, his wife, but left it for about a year. She died about a week later, probably about the same time she got my letter.

I've lost count of the number of times this has happened. And a lot of people have said, "just don't write to me, please." It's even happened on e-mail. There's a curse there somewhere. But there was one really weird example. I started to be neurotic about this because there was a period when I was writing to people just as they died. When I was researching the life of Algernon Blackwood, I needed to contact Sir Basil Blackwell. He was a well known publisher in Oxford in the 1920s and 1930s and was now well into his nineties. Becoming paranoid, I thought, "I won't write to Sir Basil; I'll write to his son, Richard, who was only in his sixties." A few days later, I got a phone call from Richard Blackwell's mother. Richard Blackwell had just died. Now, make of that what you wish, but that really put a shiver through me there. So beware!

Thankfully, the curse didn't extend to all writers. Some seem immune. I've already mentioned Hugh Cave. A couple of years ago I had a quite remarkable afternoon. Within the space of about an hour I had four e-mails. One from Hugh Cave, one from Nelson Bond, one from Jack Williamson, and one from L. Sprague de Camp, who was still alive then. All are in their nineties and all with careers not far off seventy years. That's some two hundred and eighty years worth, roughly, of experience that I was tapping in to. Not all in one e-mail, of course, but it makes you feel quite humble. I was having a phone call with Nelson Bond only a few weeks ago, and there I was talking to someone who remembers the twenties very clearly, and can talk to you about James Branch Cabell, and you think, "Lord!" It's a weird feeling, and what a privilege.

Okay. There are still a few more memories. In particular, I wanted to mention how much I adore American research libraries. They're so good, compared to British libraries. Things have improved of late, but as a rule British libraries – especially the British Library – lag way behind their American counterparts in their helpfulness. Here's just one example. About twenty years ago, when I was conducting my research into Algernon Blackwood's books, I was trying to get hold of a copy of one of Blackwood's rare children's books, *Sambo and Snitch*. I've got a copy since, but I couldn't find one at the time. The British Library had a copy but I couldn't even access it, let alone copy it. The Library of Congress in the States had a copy, so I wrote to them. And, the response I got was above and beyond the call of duty. The librarian there phoned me up on a Sunday (I'd only written the letter on the Monday or Tuesday). He knew I was after this information urgently, so he had taken the book out, he had photocopied the entire book and had sent the copy express delivery to me. That's what I call service!

Now I must confess a really embarrassing event. I use the internet a lot these days. It helps research incredibly. But the problem with the internet is that it's a bit anonymous. You don't always know where the people you receive e-mails from are situated. One of the most embarrassing things that happened to me was when I was doing a children's book called *Incredible Monsters*. Some weeks before the book was confirmed, but when I was pretty sure I was going to get the contract, I received an e-mail from a chap called John, who was a librarian in Woodbridge in Suffolk. He had some queries on pseudonyms. We knocked a few e-mails back and forth, and he said, "If I can be any help to you, do let me know." I said, "Well, I think I'll be doing this book on incredible monsters. I may well come to you for information." Since it was a children's book, I

wanted to do really odd things, like, I wanted to know what size shoes polar bears might wear. Which animals had the biggest feet, and so on. So, I commented about this to John and left it at that.

A week or two later I got the contract for the book. I knew I'd need an expert to double-check the facts and I thought about a zoo as back up. I had written an earlier book, *Incredible Facts*, and got on quite well with the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. So I e-mailed them, suggesting the kind of help I was after, and even giving a sample question, like "what size shoes would polar bears wear?" They kindly agreed to help if I donated something to the zoo (money, that is, not an animal). The director said that they were going to pass my e-mail on to someone in the mammal house, and I should hear from them in the near future, but they didn't give a name.

A day or two later, I got an e-mail back from John. I confess, I had forgotten about John at the time. So when he said, "Yes, you're right. It's very difficult to find that information about the size of animal's feet," I assumed this was a person from the mammal house at Lincoln Park Zoo. So I started to send e-mails back to this chap, asking volumes of information: double-checking things about the most poisonous snakes, the strength of gorillas, the age of clams, all the usual stuff. But I wasn't getting anywhere on the size of polar bears' shoes. At one point I e-mailed John and said, "Why don't you just go and measure a polar bear's feet?" And I got back this e-mail saying, "We don't get many polar bears in Suffolk!"

Oh dear. It suddenly dawned on me what had happened. A day or two later I got my first e-mail from the contact person at the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Moving hurriedly on, I don't know how many of you in the course of your research have ever interviewed a parrot. This was a rather strange experience. As you know, parrots live for a long time. When I was researching Blackwood's life, I went to the home of Blackwood's doctor. Or at least the son of his doctor. The son was still alive and had wonderful memories about his father, who was a fascinating person in his own right. Now, the parrot that the doctor had had back in the thirties was still alive. He was there, in his cage, in that house. So I went over to it, and just sort of asked, "Well, how was Blackwood then?" And this parrot just looked at me with its baleful eye. But just imagine how weird it would have been if this parrot had suddenly responded in Blackwood's voice. Supposing it had been a mynah bird or something. There's obviously untapped research potential there.

Okay, now here's one of the strangest experiences I've ever had. You'll just have to take my word for this one. I don't know how many of you know of the author C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne. He is best known for his Captain Kettle stories, but in our world he's best remembered for his Atlantis book, *The Lost Continent*. For many years Cutcliffe Hyne lived in a house in Kettlewell in Yorkshire. His daughter – he only had the one daughter – lived there for virtually the entirety of her life, over ninety years. She died about two years ago. She hadn't any children and the estate was left to her two godsons. I'd been in touch with one of the godsons when I reprinted one of Hyne's stories. When the daughter died, the godson contacted me and asked whether I'd be able to help him. Cutcliffe Hyne had kept all his papers and books, a tremendous archive, and the godson wondered if I would help him go through and catalog everything, giving some idea of its value, not in monetary terms, but in research terms. Needless to say I was delighted to do so.

The house in Kettlewell wasn't big but was a bit rambling. It looked as if Hyne had bought the adjoining cottages and linked them together. So if you think of a long row of what had once been terraced cottages, that still had all

ence; Speculating
Histories: Remembering Yesterday,
Experiencing Today, Predicting Tomorrow

WHEN: June 26 - 29, 2003

WHERE: University of Guelph,
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

WHAT: We invite very early submissions of paper topics and précis for the Guelph conference for a very specific reason. We can compete for a significant government grant if most of the papers are in place early. This can improve our guest and amenities lists and may even lessen the conference fees slightly. I append the formal appeal for papers for a conference that seeks to mark the state of our art and scholarship.

The focus of SFRA 2003 is on the intersections between history and speculative fiction. Speculating on the themes and events of history past, present, and future, and on theories about that history, is what authors of science fiction and fantasy do when they write in the genre; speculating on the continuing evolution of the genre and its impact on society is the task of scholars who study and teach it. Writing, reading, studying, and teaching speculative fiction provides a way of looking at where we've been, where we are, and where we're going. The Guest of Honor is Geoff Ryman, author of *The Warrior Who Carried Life*, *The Child Garden*, *Was*, *253*, and *Lust*. Other guests include Candas Jane Dorsey, Phyllis Gotlieb, Nalo Hopkinson, Robert J. Sawyer, Karl Schroeder, and Peter Watts, as well as plenary speaker Farah Mendlesohn on Children's SF. We are expecting Special Guest Cliff Gates to demonstrate Fakespace. In the planning stages is an excursion to the Royal Ontario Museum, which is also convenient to The Merrill Collection, BAKKA Books, the Gardner Ceramic Museum, and the Bata Shoe Museum as well as to shopping and dining. Given the theme of SFRA 2003, topics may include

(but are certainly not limited to) *Cosmologies and Eschatologies and Everything In-Between*; (D) *Evolution in SF*; *Origins of the Genre*; *Forebears of SF*: Shelley, Wells, Verne, et al.; *Frankenstein's Monster: Ancestors and Descendants*; *the Golden Age of SF*; *Space Opera and American History*; *Pioneers in Space*; *SF and War*; *Films Look at SF: the Fifties and Beyond*; *Generation Starships*; *Historical Fantasy/Fantastical History*; *What If?: Alternate Histories*; *Tales of Many Cities: Steampunk, Cyberpunk, and Urban Fantasy*; *Futures Near and Far*; *Time Travel*; *The Decline and Fall of Galactic Empires*; *Intersecting Genres: Science Fantasy*; *Changing Paradigms of Race and Gender*; *the History of SF Scholarship*; *Theories of History/History of Theories*; *The SFRA, Past, Present, and Future*. Papers on any of the guest writers are also most welcome, as are papers on any other aspect of science fiction. Proposals to read a paper (maximum 20 minute reading time) or to organize a panel should be received by October 8, 2002.

CONTACT: Electronic submissions are both welcome and encouraged; please copy-n-paste the submission into the email rather than send it as an attachment. Send a brief paragraph, including title of the paper and contact information for the presenter,

to: cemains@shaw.ca Christine Mains Department of English University of Calgary Calgary, AB Canada T2N 1N4 doug.barbour@ualberta.ca Douglas Barbour Department of English University of Alberta Edmonton, AB Canada T6G 0B9

DEADLINE: By now, SFRA members will have seen the Call for Papers for SFRA2003: *Speculating Histories*, either circulating on the listserv or posted on the website. You'll have noticed the very early proposal deadline date of October 8, 2002, set in order to have as

their individual front doors, but where you now enter through a main front door, and into something of a catacomb of passages which weave their way along this terrace. The library was at one end and the kitchen, where the telephone was, was at the other. To reach it you had to pass through Hyne's main dining hall, which had no electric lighting, but instead had all his trophies on the wall – he had been a big-game hunter and explorer, amongst other things. Anyway, the two brothers left me there to work through the books and papers. It was already late in the day and I wanted to phone my wife, Sue, to let her know that I had arrived safely. I went into the kitchen, which was getting dark by then. While I was talking over the phone, I started to hear this tapping noise. It sounded just like this, “tap, tap, tap”, like wood on stone. It would pause for a while and then start again, “tap, tap, tap.” You know how irritating it becomes when you're trying to talk and something just keeps going on in the background. What the hell was it? It was also one of those confounded noises that when you stop to listen to it properly, you don't hear it. But you notice it when you're trying to do something else.

In the end, I finished the phone call and made my way back to the library through the now near-dark trophy room, with its shadowy lion's heads and antelope heads on the walls. I eventually get back to the study, and I'm sitting there, working through the papers and, again, “tap, tap, tap.” Where was it coming from?

Eventually I went to bed that night. They told me the next day, that in fact the bed I was sleeping in was the bed that Cutcliffe Hyne had died in! I'm glad I hadn't know that earlier. And the other bizarre thing was, as I approached that room, I had to step across another corridor. There was another room at the end of the corridor, which had been the daughter's room, and which had a mirror in it just at that angle that as I stepped across into the bedroom I caught my reflection out of the side of my eye. All of this built up the atmosphere, strange and spooky. I wasn't spooked to begin with, but I was starting to spook myself.

The next day the housekeeper came along to see how I was doing. I mentioned this tapping noise to her and she said, “Oh, you've heard it, too.” Now, this housekeeper had worked for Cutcliffe Hyne's daughter since the fifties, right up until she died, so over forty years. She said that all the time she had been in that house, she had never heard that sound, until the day after the daughter died. And then she started to hear it.

And I still had another night to spend in this place.

Late that night I was emptying out a huge cupboard and other shelves that contained all Hyne's papers. One thing I should have said earlier was that Cutcliffe Hyne's daughter had been very possessive about all these books and papers. She had never let anyone touch them without her say so. I was probably the first person to go through the papers without her permission. I had reached the point when I had taken everything out and catalogued it, and was starting to put everything back. Now and then as I was working, I could here this “tap, tap, tap” but never saw anything. I was getting that spooked about it that at one point I actually said out loud, referring to the books, “It's OK, I'm looking after them. They'll be OK.”

I never heard the sound again. So, there you go. Just trust me on that. That's what happened. Weird.

Now for my last memory. I've taken up enough of your time. During my research into Algernon Blackwood, I met some amazing people. One of the problems when you're researching a biography, one of my problems anyway, is that when you meet so many fascinating people who are long forgotten, you want to write their biographies as well. I spent a lot of time interviewing people

and getting fascinated in their lives; not just the fact that they knew Blackwood. I went to interview Lady Vansittart. She was an absolutely wonderful lady. Long dead now, unfortunately. This was back in the early eighties. Her husband Lord Vansittart had been a senior diplomat in the foreign office back in the thirties. They had met Hitler at the 1936 Olympic Games. I mean, just to talk to somebody about that was fascinating enough.

When I went to see her she lived in Hyde Park Villas, in London, in a wonderful mansion-like apartment. I arrived there on an evening when it had been raining in torrents. I was soaking wet. She had a butler. He let me in, eyeing my up and down and I stood there, trying to have a bit of decorum but at the same time dripping everywhere. He simply said, "This way sir," and set off along the corridor. I stepped into the hallway, not realizing how highly polished the floor was, or that the carpet on it was a single runner, with nothing underneath it. I went flying. I ended up flat on the floor with my papers and bag all around me. The butler had already disappeared around a corner. So I hastily try to get up and restore my decorum when the butler comes back around the corner and looks down at me. "In your own time, Sir," he said in true Jeeves fashion, without a change in expression at all.

He took me into a large room, full of tapestries, an incredible room. Lady Vansittart came in. She was about ninety then; very frail, and looked all her years. The butler helped her to sit down. In those circumstances you don't always know just how to start the interview, once the initial pleasantries are over. So I asked if she could remember when she first met Algernon Blackwood, and what came to mind? The effect was extraordinary. Her mind went back to when she first met Blackwood in Hungary in about 1920. She started to tell me about how she met him at an Embassy Ball, and how he invited her out onto the balcony to look at the stars and so on. And, as she told me, the years fell away from her face. The wrinkles disappeared and she suddenly looked like someone of about twenty or thirty rather than ninety. It was an astonishing transformation. And I remember thinking that if Blackwood could have that affect on someone after seventy years, what an absolutely magical person he must have been. It's those moments in research that make it all worthwhile. Because you thrive on those memories. They are just astonishing.

So, to have all of those memories and experiences and now get this award, this is the icing on the cake. This is absolutely marvelous. Thank you all very much.

PIONEER

INTRODUCTION TO THE PIONEER AWARD

Philip Snyder

Along with my colleagues on the Award Committee, Shelley Rodrigo-Blanchard and Javier Martinez, it is my pleasure to announce the winner of the Pioneer Award for 2002.

This year's award goes to Judith Berman, for her article "Science Fiction Without the Future," which appeared in the May 2001 issue of the *New York Review of Science Fiction*.

It is always exciting to read the scholarship eligible for this award, but difficult to select just one winner. As always, critics and scholars of science fiction this year produced an array of excellent essays, remarkable for the range of their concerns, the depth of their insight, and a quality of thought, argument, and expression which does honor to the field. Even to narrow the candidates to a

many submissions as possible included in a grant application.

By the time this issue of the *Review* arrives in your mailboxes, this early date will have passed. Some of you who missed the deadline may be wondering whether it's too late to submit a proposal for the conference. Rest assured that proposals to present a paper or organize a panel session will continue to be accepted up until March 31, 2003. So if you haven't yet set fingers to keyboard, there's still time.

For more information about guests and suggested topics, see the website at www.sfra.org, or contact Conference Director Peter Brigg at pbrigg@uoguelph.ca. Send your proposals by email to Doug Barbour at doug.barbour@ualberta.ca or Christine Mains at cemains@shaw.ca. We're looking forward to seeing you in Guelph in June 2003.

WHO: Speculative Black Women: Magic, Fantasy, and the Supernatural FEMSPEC an "interdisciplinary feminist journal dedicated to critical and creative works in the realms of SF, fantasy, magical realism, myth, folklore and other supernatural genres" is now accepting submissions for a special issue on Black women's speculative fiction. WHAT: In this special issue we will offer a range of critical approaches to black women's speculative fiction, film, other art forms, and black feminist theory. We envision the special issue exploring a variety of writers, filmmakers, and other artists. We also expect that critical essays will either take on a black feminist/womanist analysis or provide a strong gender critique. Possible topics may engage, although are not limited to: Matriarchies and Patriarchies of the Future; Black feminist (re)visions of the world; black witches; obeah women, root workers, and conjure women; gender dynamics; representations of black womanhood; rethinking (her)story through fantasy;

and black women in Caribbean, African-American, or African folklore. Possible essays might question: what it means for black women to create speculative visions of the world; how do speculative creations draw on black women's actual positions in the "real" world as women who experience varying degrees of sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia; how do current black women speculate, (re)write, (re)visit, and (re)envision history in ways that connect them to black women's legacies of struggle; why now—when black women have always emphasized speculation in their creative works—why is there now a surge of interest in their works; and why, as we move forward into the twenty-first century, is there a surge in fantastic representations of black womanhood? Contributions focusing on the works of Octavia Butler, Tananarive Due, Nalo Hopkinson, Sandra Jackson-Opoku, Tina McElroy-Ansa, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Phyllis Alesia Perry, Jewelle Gomez, Julie Dash, and Kasi Lemmons are particularly welcome. We also solicit original fiction, poetry and artwork concerning the subject of this special issue. Deadline: July 30, 2003

CONTACT: We are seeking critical articles, reviews, artwork, poetry and fiction. Critical articles should be 15 pages (MLA format), and short fiction should be no more than 15 pages. Book reviews should follow the FEMSPEC guidelines, which are available at <http://www.csuohio.edu/femspec>. For further information or queries, please contact the special issue guest editors: Yolanda Hood yhood@unca.edu and Gwendolyn D. Pough pough002@umn.edu. Submissions marked "Speculative Black Women: Magic, Fantasy, and the Supernatural"—should be sent to: FEMSPEC Caddo Gap Press 3145 Geary Boulevard PMB 275 San Francisco, CA

dozen or so finalists proved to be a challenge, thanks to the rich variety of topics, approaches, and purposes that this body of work displayed.

When we came at last to make our final choice, Shelley offered the committee a timely reminder that the very title of this award—the Pioneer—suggests a quality of special vigor, of the capacity to make a clear and forceful impact on the field. And so we were especially pleased to recall the excited discussions that Judith's essay sparked when it came out, the buzz it generated among so many of us just last year at this very convention, and the strong responses and replies it continued to provoke in several venues within our field.

For her essay's quality, its grace, its significance, and its brave pioneering, then, we take pleasure in honoring Judith Berman with this year's Pioneer Award.

Judith Berman's acceptance speech printed in September 2002, NYRSF

CLARESON

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLARESON AWARD

Carolyn Wendell

This year's winner of the Clareson Service Award is known by just about anyone who has ever had anything to do with SFRA, ICFA, or the science fiction sections of MLA or who has been interested in vampires. I'm sure you all immediately know who I'm talking about, so, yes, this year's winner is Joan Gordon.

Just as a reminder, the Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service is presented for "outstanding service activities—promotion of SF teaching and study, editing, reviewing editorial writing, publishing, organizing meetings, mentoring and leadership in SF/fantasy organizations such as SFRA, World SF, etc. and so forth. Scholarly achievements (books, essays) will be considered as secondary for the purposes of selection."

And, for those of you new to SFRA, the award is named for Thomas D. Clareson, the first president of SFRA (1970-1976), chair of the first seminar on Science Fiction at the Modern Language Association (1958) and the founding editor of *Extrapolation* (1959-1990). Tom Clareson devoted himself to Science Fiction throughout his career, guiding its development as a field of study through his own scholarly and service activities and by serving as mentor to countless younger scholars.

Former Clareson Award winners are Frederik Pohl (1996), James Gunn (1997), Elizabeth Anne Hull (1998), David G. Hartwell (1999), Arthur O. Lewis (2000), and Mack Hassler (2001).

Each of the previous winners is well known in our field. So is Joan Gordon, for her many and varied connections with science fiction. She's published a lot and while this award considers scholarship as secondary, I'd like to put a word in for Joan's titles, which serve SF by stopping the reader in his/her tracks. Who can resist titles like "Yin and Yang Duke It Out"? or *Blood Read* (R-E-A-D) or "Autobiographical Science Fiction and Moebius Strips" or "Two SF Diaries at the Intersection of Subjunctive Hopes and Declarative Despair"? I wonder how many non-SF people have been lured into reading commentary on SF by the riddles and wit of Joan's titles. I remember hearing her present a paper on Eleanor Arnason—while I no longer remember the title (although I'm sure it was clever), I was struck by her structure for the paper—comparing the encounter with the alien as foreign lands perceived by different kinds of tourists. She has a talent for the striking and clarifying metaphor.

Joan has been involved with the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts almost since its inception, attending, presenting papers and doing what she does so well—putting people at ease. She says she has no official role but is informally charged with aiding and abetting any guests, making sure they're attended to—she calls this being a “kitten with a whip.” One can usually keep in touch with Joan's association with ICFA by looking at Charlie Brown's snapshots of the event in *Locus*, which often make it seem as though she was everywhere.

Joan also played a major role in convincing the Modern Language Association to offer science fiction sessions.

For SFRA, she's served on various committees and held the office of secretary and of president. One of my most vivid memories of Joan is of her in one of her “Joan dresses,” floating about the deck of the Queen Mary in her first formal duty as SFRA's President, with a glass of wine in one hand and usually shaking a newcomer's hand with the other—at one point I heard her murmur, “Oh, this is fun!”

And that is the quality that brought Joan the award she is receiving tonight—her ever-present energy and her smashing success at welcoming people to the academic world of SF—as Carol Stevens put it, “even when she's not officially an officer, she runs around making certain that people have what they need, mentors new people, and makes certain that newcomers to the conference feel welcome.” And Wendy Bousfield added that Joan is a “great role model,” an “impressive representative,” a walking advertisement for SFRA.”

Joan says it was her father's love of Clarke and Asimov that introduced her to SF when she was about 12 (of course—the golden age of science fiction!). She continued reading it until she wound up at the University of Iowa and met Larry Martin and Joe Haldeman and found out about both “the scholarship and fandom” of SF. Her first triumph was interviewing Gene Wolfe at SFRA in Cedar Falls (Waterloo, 1978), Iowa and holding her own, no small feat with one of the quickest minds in Science Fiction.

Since that time, she's helped a lot of people into the world of academic SF—including her own children. Joan's daughter Maddy has joined her mother in partnership presenting papers for ICFA. And Joan tells me she recently returned from a trip to Japan, where her son Mordecai is spending the year—at his request, she took him Wells, Verne and Herbert's *Dune*—to read on the Tokyo trains.

Her latest effort is the new book edited with Veronica Hollinger, *Edging into the Future—Science Fiction and Contemporary Cultural Transformation*. I'm sure this, too, will introduce non-SF and new SF people to science fiction. This award is for your efforts thus far. Thank you, Joan.

CLARESON

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR THE CLARESON AWARD

Joan Gordon

Those of you who know me, know that I could not write my speech until I had determined what to wear. I ruled out a ball gown as excessive and difficult to pack. Here, I feel I have balanced the peculiar with the scholarly, and the sexy with the decorous. This is exactly how I find science fiction, and my life in science fiction: peculiar scholarly pursuits that are both stimulating (sexy) and intellectual (decorous).

When Mike called to tell me I had won the Clareson Award, I was astonished. For one thing, it put me in an august company of famous, well-

94118 Please submit four copies on which your name, address, and contact points do not appear so that the submission may be read blind. All submissions should conform to MLA standards, as found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fifth Edition (1999)*. MLA guidelines can also be found on-line at: www.mla.org.

Your submission should be accompanied by a separate covering title page that includes author's name, title, genre, address, phone, FAX and email. Any submission that does not come in with sufficient copies will not be sent through the review process at our expense.

WHO: A Commonwealth of Science Fiction; An Event Organized By The Science Fiction Foundation

WHEN: Thursday 5 to Sunday 8 August 2004

WHERE: Liverpool Foresight Centre, Liverpool, UK

WHAT: Guests of Honour: Damien Broderick, Jon Courtenay Grimwood and Nalo Hopkinson. Preliminary Call for Papers: By the end of the twentieth century, sf had come to be dominated by American books and magazines produced by writers in the Gernsbackian- Campbellian tradition. Equally television, films and comics have been dominated by agendas and conventions established in Hollywood and New York. Cousin to this is an alternative tradition or history of sf from the United Kingdom – with a similar and yet different set of concerns and tropes. And beyond that, sometimes joining in, sometimes operating independently, is a whole Commonwealth of Science Fiction. Building on the success of the 2001: A Celebration of British Science Fiction event we wish to bring scholars, critics,

researchers, academics, librarians and readers together to consider that Commonwealth and the common weal: the Empire writing back, centres and margins, national histories of sf, national identity

and science fiction, dialects and idiolects, hybrid identities, post-imperial melancholy, international and local markets, the 'Special Relationship', the Pacific Rim vs the North Atlantic, and discoveries and rediscoveries, evaluations and re-evaluations of science fiction in any media, written or visual, from Commonwealth countries. As at 2001: A Celebration of British Science Fiction we hope to combine papers with panels, discussions and author readings. The Commonwealth currently consists of: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Australian Antarctic Territory,

Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cayman Islands, Channel Islands, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Dominica, Falkland Islands, Falkland Islands Dependencies, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guyana, India, Isle of Man, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Montserrat, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Norfolk Island, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Ross Dependency, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, St Helena, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tokelau, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

CONTACT: Send abstracts or expressions of interest to: Andrew M Butler, D28, Dept of Arts and Media, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, High Wycombe, HP11 2JZ, UK or email andrew.butler@bcuc.ac.uk. Latest information:

established, long-time workers in the fields of sf scholarship: i.e., old farts. That seemed impossible. Surely, it was only a moment ago that I was in graduate school and attended my first SFRA conference, where I interviewed a cantankerous but charming Gene Wolfe, was urged by a bare-chested Eric Rabkin to sign two book contracts for Starmont, and bonded with such obscure would-be writers as Stan Robinson. But, wait, that was 1978 in Waterloo, Iowa, 24 years ago! I **am** an old fart.

An old, **faithful** fart. After that first SFRA, I attended one in 1983, scraping pennies to come from Montana to Midland, Michigan, to give my first paper on vampires (what a peculiar and sexy scholarly specialty that turned out to be). Then, once I escaped the temporary job in Montana, settled on Long Island, and got a full-time job near a major airport, I began an unbroken run in 1987 and haven't missed a conference since. Though, with two kids in private liberal arts colleges, this one was touch and go (thank you, *Science Fiction Studies* and Nassau Community College, for funding). So, yes, I am an old fart.

I came up with another reason, after my initial astonishment, for being chosen for the Claeson Award. I believe I'm the first Claeson Award winner to have been raised by the organization. SFRA was founded by Tom Claeson to "encourage and assist scholarship," among other reasons, and I am living proof that it has succeeded in this aim. From that peculiar yet scholarly, seemingly sexy but actually quite decorous beginning in Waterloo, I was convinced that I could specialize in science fiction, a peculiar field, as a legitimate (decorous) and rewarding (sexy) scholarly pursuit, though it took the University of Iowa a bit more persuasion to agree. I was the first Ph.D. from Iowa to write an sf dissertation, thanks to Brooks Landon, Joe Haldeman, and the late Larry Martin. I graduated, having published a *Starmont Reader's Guide to Joe Haldeman*, thanks to my first SFRA conference, and I continued to publish, another *Starmont Reader's Guide to Gene Wolfe*, and in *Extrapolation*, *Science Fiction Studies*, *The SFRA Review*, *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and elsewhere, thanks to SFRA. The friends I've made in SFRA are also the wonderful scholars who contributed to my two co-edited books, *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*, and *Edging Into the Future: Science Fiction and Contemporary Cultural Transformation* (though I did meet Veronica Hollinger, my co-editor, at ICFA). When I teach science fiction, my source material includes SFRA anthologies and the *SFRA Review* "Approaching..." articles. For these two reasons—because I've been here a long time and because SFRA raised me to be the peculiar scholar I am today—I began to accept why SFRA would bestow this honor.

The harder realization has been to accept that I have become an established scholar myself, that I now may lead and mentor, may follow somehow in Tom Claeson's footsteps, to raise another generation in the SFRA. It's always difficult to take oneself seriously, especially as a woman and especially in a scholarly field still trivialized in some quarters. But, because SFRA offered me all those opportunities I've already mentioned, because it took me seriously enough to let me serve as secretary and president of SFRA, I find it easier to take myself seriously. In fact, the most important lesson I can give to new scholars is the one I learned from SFRA: sf is an intellectually important field, and to study it and to connect it to other intellectually important work is a project worth taking seriously. You deserve to be taken seriously and to take yourselves seriously. Now, through the *Review* and through the Graduate Student Award, through our yearly conferences and list-serve, through teaching and email, I find ways to grow new scholars as I was once raised. Now I can lead and mentor, and come to feel even more that I might deserve this award. Thank you.

BEST STUDENT PAPER ANNOUNCED

Sha La Bare, "Outline for a Mode Manifesto: Science Fiction, Transhumanism, and Technoscience;" and **Eric Drown**, "Riding the Cosmic Express in the Age of Mass Production: Independent Inventors as Pulp Heroes in American SF 1926-1939."

NEWARD

MARY KAY BRAY AWARD

The Mary Kay Bray Award was endowed in the memory of this long-time member of the SFRA by her friend and former colleague William Andrews. It is designed to honor the best extended piece of writing to appear each year in the SFRA Review. The winner receives a \$100 prize and a certificate at the annual

MARY KAY BRAY

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR THE MARY KAY BRAY AWARD

Karen Hellekson

I was pleased and surprised to win the first Mary Kay Bray award, which celebrates the workhorse publication of the SFRA, the SFRA Review. As a former editor of the SFRA Review and an acquaintance of the award's benefactor, William Andrews, I am particularly touched by the honor. I extend particular thanks to Joan Gordon, who asked me to write about posthumanism for the Theory and beyond column. I hope the award will serve to draw more attention to the wonderful work that appears regularly in the Review. Thanks very much to the SFRA Board and the award committee!

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND WRITER JOHN GREGORY BETANCOURT

Michael Levy

John Gregory Betancourt is a throwback to the early days of science fiction, when professionals (such as Donald Wollheim, Lester del Rey, and many more) worked at every aspect of the field — writing, editing, and publishing alike. Betancourt has written more than 20 books and 100 short stories (including several best-selling Star Trek novels and the upcoming "Dawn of Amber" trilogy — a prequel to Roger Zelazny's "Amber" series — for ibooks, inc.). He worked on science fiction magazines Amazing Stories and Weird Tales before joining Byron Preiss Visual Publications, where he became Senior Editor in charge of science fiction until 1985, when he left to write and package book properties. He launched Wildside Press in 1989 which, after the usual ups-and-downs of distributor bankruptcies, has gone on in recent years to become one of the fastest-growing small publishing companies in the field, with a 300% revenue growth every year between 1999 and 2001. Another banner year is expected for 2002. Wildside Press releases a mixture of reprints in a variety of genres (though the emphasis is primarily science fiction, fantasy, and mystery) as well as selected new titles. Wildside Press currently has more than 700 books in print.

ML: How did you get started with Wildside Press?

JGB: I wanted the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society to commemorate author

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<http://homepages.enterprise.net/ambutler/acof/index.html>

WHO: "Science Fiction & Everyday Life"

WHAT: Everyday life in the modern world has become increasingly science fictional: No longer are cloning, cyberspace, nanomachines, and prostheses simply the stuff of imagination. Rather, they have become increasingly integrated into the daily life of the subject under late capitalism. To further understand this phenomenon, we invite submissions for the next themed issue of Reconstruction, "Science Fiction & Everyday Life." Reconstruction <<http://www.reconstruction.ws>> is a culture studies journal dedicated to fostering an intellectual community composed of scholars and their audience, granting them all the opportunity and ability to share thoughts and opinions on the most important and influential work in contemporary interdisciplinary studies. Submissions are encouraged from a variety of perspectives, including, but not limited to: geography, cultural studies, folklore, architecture, history, sociology, psychology, communications, music, political science, semiotics, theology, art history, queer theory, literature, criminology, urban planning, gender studies, etc. Both theoretical and empirical approaches are welcomed. In matters of citation, it is assumed that the proper MLA format will be followed. Other citation formats are acceptable in respect to the disciplinary concerns of the author.

DEADLINE: Submissions should be received no later than May 19, 2003 for consideration. "Science Fiction & Everyday Life" will be published July 21, 2003.

CONTACT: All submissions and submission queries should be written care

ofsubmissions@reconstruction.ws. Large files, such as Flash movies or essays with many large pictures, should be sent on a zip disk or CD-R to: Submissions Reconstruction 104 East Hall Bowling Green State University Bowling Green, OH 43402 Please visit us at <<http://www.reconstruction.ws>> Davin Heckman & Matthew Wolf-Meyer, Editors
<http://www.reconstruction.ws>

WHO: History and Science-Fiction/
Science-Fiction and History

WHAT: H.G. Wells wrote both 'The Time Machine' and *An Outline of History*: history and science-fiction - the study of the past and the dreams of the future - are closely interlinked. Both involve a fascination with the effects of time; both are interested in the causes of change; both raise questions about what it means to be human. And, arguably, both works of SF and works of history tell us as much about the times in which they were written as the periods they depict. We extend this call for papers to all those writers, historians, cultural studies, film studies and literary critics who are interested in pursuing the theme of history and science-fiction, or science-fiction and history. In both cases, our definitions are comfortably broad: 'history' can cover any period, both academic and popular authors, and indeed non-written forms of media. Science-fiction in books, on television, as movies, or radio shows - all is welcome, and the boundaries defining SF are (in the first instance) up to you. Papers can focus on particular texts or case studies, or range more broadly across a theme. We are interested in papers that address: the direct influence of historical theory (Spengler, Toynbee, Hegel, Marx, whoever) on SF; why 'cyclical' theories of history no longer excite SF writers; the dif-

Fritz Leiber's appearance at their annual convention in 1989 with a collection of his essays. The convention committee told me a book couldn't be done in time, and wouldn't take my word that it could be (despite my having 7 years of experience). So I published it myself and had it out two weeks early, in time for the World Fantasy Convention. Wildside Press was meant as a one-shot deal, but I found I enjoyed it so much, I kept going. At first, I released signed limited editions at affordable prices (about half of what other publishers were charging at the time). We published books by Anne McCaffrey, Greg Bear (our first World Fantasy Award nominee!), Mike Resnick, L. Sprague de Camp, Tanith Lee—authors whose fans would support limited edition hardcovers. The SF buyer at Barnes & Noble liked what I was doing and suggested I try trade paperbacks, but unfortunately the distributor he recommended went bankrupt, costing me just over \$35,000—quite a lot of money to lose on a hobby. This happened right after I had quit my day job at Byron Preiss Visual Publications. Instead of folding up shop and slinking off into the night, like most other small presses would have done in similar circumstances, I took a few years off from publishing, wrote everything I could get a contract for (Hercules, Star Trek, short stories), and I used that money to pay off the bills. It was exhausting and left me burnt out, but it was worth it. Authors remember publishers who go to heroic lengths to pay them royalties!

ML: Am I right in assuming that Wildside is basically operated as a Print on Demand publisher? (If not, feel free to tell me I'm wrong and explain the actual facts).

JGB: We have published about 90 books via traditional printing and more than 600 using print on demand—which is actually just a fancier form of the short-run printing. The real differences are in quantity (I can now print a single book instead of hundreds at a time) and distribution—Print on Demand goes out through Ingram, Baker & Taylor, and NACSCORP. As the older Wildside Press books go out of print in their first editions, I roll them into the Print on Demand system. . . and nobody can tell the difference.

ML: (Assuming I'm right about POD) How has Print on Demand technology changed small press publishing?

JGB: It's enabled publishers to move forward on a lot of books with smaller markets. I've always liked to do books which I personally find fun—one example is an anthology I published called *Swashbuckling Editor Stories*, about heroic science fiction, fantasy, and horror editors. I printed 500 copies of the first edition, and it sells perhaps 20-30 copies per year. Instead of tying up working capital for 20 years on 500 copies of a book like this one, where I actually need only a few dozen a year, Print on Demand makes more sense. And I could spend the extra money on publishing 10 other books.

ML: Looking over your website, it looks to me like a large percentage of what you publish can be placed in one of four categories: 1) Long out of copyright 19th and early 20th century fantasy classics; 2) reprints of solid midlist SF from the 1960's through the 1990's (many of which I remember reading in their original Ace or other publisher's editions); 3) minor works by Big Name Authors (Lee, Charnas, Bear, McCaffrey, Resnick, Silverberg); 4) short story collections (and a few novels) by relatively little known and less commercial, but extremely talented writers like Jeff VanderMeer, Bruce Holland Rogers, Leslie Watt, Bradley Denton, David Smeds, Amy Sterling Casil, Adam-Troy Castro. How do you choose what kind of books you're going to publish?

JGB: I think it's important to have specific goals when publishing books, beyond simply making money. I have reprinted a number of titles with my only goal being to break even on them, simply because I feel they ought to be in

available to modern readers. To that end, I created an imprint called Wildside Fantasy Classics—I think it’s a disgrace that truly important authors like Algernon Blackwood, F. Marion Crawford, Lord Dunsany, Lafcadio Hearn, William Hope Hodgson, William Morris, and so many more are out of print. I have recently begun doing the same with in the mystery field, too, with Wildside Mystery Classics—reprinting Sax Rohmer, Earl Derr Biggers, Maurice LeBlanc, John Kendrick Bangs, and others. Another goal is, yes, rescuing midlist authors from the 1960s-1980s. These are the books I read when I was growing up. I liked them then, and they’re still good now. Unfortunately, many have an audience which is limited enough that Print on Demand meets their annual sales needs better than traditional publishing. Lloyd Biggle, Jr., E.C. Tubb, and William F. Temple and good examples—they all deserve to be available to today’s readers. Print on Demand is really the only cost-effective way to keep their books in print, where the average title sells a hundred or so copies per year. We have also had our share of surprises—some older authors are still capable of selling thousands of books. A real demand still exists, particularly those who have achieved cult greatness. Lafferty and Avram Davidson are good examples. Wildside’s third goal is to publish good books that ordinary publishers wouldn’t touch. For a while, nobody wanted short story collections except the small press. My wife used to call it “John’s Friends” publishing—well, I’m a science fiction writer, and I used to go to conventions to pal around with my peers. We’re all talented. If I can bring new readers to their works (and make money for all involved) why not do it?

ML: Jeff VanderMeer has gained a reputation as one of the very best small press short story writers. Tell me something about publishing *City of Saints and Madmen* last year?

JGB: I’ve divided up the Wildside Press list into various imprints to help manage what’s going on. VanderMeer’s book is out under our Cosmos Books imprint—which is actually a joint venture with Sean Wallace (who is publishing the limited hardcover edition through his Prime Press). Sean picks the titles for Cosmos, with an emphasis on edgier work and British science fiction. I had only read a couple of Jeff’s stories before *CITY*, but reading so much of it in one place blew me away. He is incredibly talented. His book has taken off for us, and I think he has a great future ahead of him.

ML: Lloyd Biggle Jr. was a moderately successful midlist SF writer back in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Now, after a decade-long absence from the field, at the age of 79, he’s back with a new novel. Tell us about how that came to be.

JGB: Biggle never really went away—like many writers, he simply shifted genres. He’s been writing well received mysteries for more than a decade now, as his health allows, including some terrific Sherlock Holmes books and stories. And every once in a while he publishes a new story in *ANALOG*. When I began reprinting his early novels, it rekindled his interest in science fiction. He remembered *THE CHRONOCIDE MISSION* in his files, dug it out, and finished it. It’s a very good book, and I think it will help him find new readers.

ML: You yourself have published very little that I’m aware of since the early 1990’s, why did you stop writing (assuming you did)? Did the publishing end simply take over that part of your life?

JGB: I’ve actually published at least one novel (and sometimes two) most years for the last decade. Unfortunately, like many midlist authors, I found my original work less in demand than my talent for writing fiction in other people’s universe. As a result, I’ve written *Star Trek*, several pseudonymous YA series novels, *Superman*, *Batman* and *Spider-Man*, a trilogy of *Hercules* novels (based on myth instead of the TV show, but *Hercules* became a commodity thanks to Kevin Sorbo, so the fact that they’re originals is beside the point; they’re *Hercules* and hence media

ferences between historical, archaeological, and anthropological conceptions of time, change and causation, and how they are played out in SF arenas; whether SF modes of emplotment, imagery or conceptualisation have influenced historians and history; why the middle ages belong to Fantasy whilst the early modern period has recently been plundered by SF (eg Peter Hamilton, Ken MacLeod); whether historical ‘accuracy’ matters in any way in relation to SF; the differences between SF that ‘replays’ historical events (eg *Babylon 5*) and SF that rewrites them (eg *The Difference Engine*); science-fictional ‘theories’ of history (eg Asimov’s psychohistory) and SF’s emplotment of future histories (eg Iain M. Banks’ *Culture* novels); the mechanics and purpose of alternate histories, whether as background context (Jon Courtenay Grimwood) or plot engine (Kim Stanley Robinson); the differences between near future (eg David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*) and far future (eg Walter Miller’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*) histories; whether there are differences between American and British SF attitudes towards history and change, whether these are bound up with their respective national pasts, and how these relate to non-AngloAmerican SF/history. Above all else, what are the politics of SF’s relationship to history - its theories of social organization, its concepts of ‘progress’, its understanding of change and causation?

DEADLINE: If you are interested in contributing to the planned volume, please submit a c. 300 word proposal to either of the editors, at the addresses below:

CONTACT: John H. Arnold is a medieval historian at Birkbeck College, University of London, and author of *History: A Very Short Introduction* (2000) and *Inquisition and Power* (2001), as well as essays on hor-

ror movies and science fiction. Email j.arnold@bbk.ac.uk. Snailmail to School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Birkbeck College, Malet St, London WC1E 7HX, United Kingdom. Karen Sayer is a modern historian at Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, and author of *Women of the Fields* (1995), *Country Cottages: A Cultural History* (2000) and co-editor of *Science Fiction, Critical Frontiers* (2000). Email k_sayer@TASC.AC.UK, snailmail to Department of History, Trinity and All Saints College, University of Leeds, Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth, Leeds

WHAT: A proposed edited collection of essays on History and Science-Fiction / Science-Fiction and History.

TOPICS: We are interested in papers that address: the direct influence of historical theory on SF; why 'cyclical' theories of history no longer excite SF writers; the differences between historical, archaeological, and anthropological conceptions of time, change and causation, and how they are played out in SF arenas; whether SF modes of emplotment, imagery or conceptualisation have influenced historians and history; why the middle ages belong to Fantasy whilst the early modern period has recently been plundered by SF; whether historical 'accuracy' matters in any way in relation to SF; the differences between SF that 'replays' historical events and SF that rewrites them; science-fictional 'theories' of history and SF's emplotment of future histories; the mechanics and purpose of alternate histories, whether as background context or plot engine; the differences between near future and far future histories; whether there are differences between American and British SF attitudes towards history and change, whether these are bound up with their respective national pasts, and how

fiction). And I've always written short stories for magazines and anthologies. I currently have a 6-book contract with ibooks, for the Dawn of Amber trilogy and then three of my own novels.

ML: What are Wildside Press's prospects for the future? How are you doing financially?

JGB: I'm fortunate in that Wildside Press has always (except during our distributor's bankruptcy) operated in the black. Over the last 3 years, I've tried to grow the company toward a mainstream presence in the field advertising heavily in genre publications like *Science Fiction Chronicle* and *Locus*, issuing catalogs, sending out review copies). That's why we've had a 300% revenue growth in the last two years. We're getting an incredible amount of support from everyone—authors, agents, booksellers, and even the chains. Barnes & Noble and Borders have both stocked some of our titles. Ironically, perhaps, I am going to take our most successful books out of Print on Demand and reprint them via traditional means in coming months, simply because the unit prices are so much lower with traditional printing. We have books that are selling 1500 copies/year in trade paperback. Printing via traditional means will cut the unit costs in half. I've watched much bigger players (Warner's iPublish and the venture-capital-funded vanity houses especially) come into Print on Demand and throw around a lot of money and promises. They are now limping off the playing field, defeated. They just don't get it. Print on Demand isn't like regular publishing. It's niche publishing. You have to build up your presence in one specific niche until you own it, and you can't do that with traditional spending habits. You have to target your audience. Wildside Press now has more than 100 titles in its Wildside Fantasy Classics line. Customers come to us looking for specific books (and if we don't have them out, they can request them on our web site). This is service which regular publishers simply cannot deliver. It's catering to a market which we understand.

ML: What are your thoughts on the future of small press publishing in fantasy and science fiction?

JGB: The consolidation of SF and fantasy lines has been a true disaster for writers and readers alike. Good books still get published. But just as many still go begging for a home. The small press is, thankfully, able to take up some of the slack . . . but not all of it. I tell many of our authors to try to sell their books to larger publishing companies first, then come to us if they can't. And, if they do sell them to big New York houses, to come back to us in 5 years, when their books are out of print. We'll still be interested. This is the sort of support which bottom-line-conscious publishing conglomerates cannot give. It's a win-win situation for writers.

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL STANTON

Lyra McMullen

I had the fortunate opportunity to meet Michael Stanton, author of a new Tolkien commentary, *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards, Exploring the Wonders and Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* (reviewed in *SFRA Review* #258) at a book talk at the Brownell Library in Essex Jct. Vermont on April 17 of this year, where he gave an interesting talk to a small but varied audience. After the talk, I made the suggestion of an interview to Mr. Stanton, which he accepted. This led to a series of email question and answers, a conversation lasting roughly a month and culminating in a face-to-face talk at Borders in Burlington, Vermont where we talked about SF, Tolkien, and teaching. As a result, the printed text that follows does not represent the sum total dialogue of any particular conversation, but the

edited pieces of several conversations we had from 4/20/2002 to 5/20/2002.

To give a little background about the author, Michael Stanton came to his book with a thirty-year career of teaching British literature at the University of Vermont behind him (he recently retired in May of 2001). Stanton began teaching Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* to college students in 1972 as part of a regular course in science fiction and fantasy literature. He has taught over fifty different science fiction and fantasy titles as part of this course including well-known figures in the field like Wells, Asimov, Orson Scott Card and Ursula Leguin, just to name a few.

Readers may wonder why I neglected to ask Mr. Stanton what he thought of the new *Fellowship of the Ring* movie. Truth is, I did, several times... And we did talk about it at length both in person and via email. I should add that whenever asked he would refer me to his new essay "Hobbits in Hollywood," completed after the Academy Awards ceremony this March where *FOTR* won Oscars in four of the more technical categories. The essay contains his opinions and interpretation of the *LOTR* movie series currently in the works, although he added the caveat that if he wrote it now he would be "harsher" in his criticism of the film than he was in March 2002. The new paperback edition of *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards* will contain a version of this essay, or so I have been told. I invite curious readers to pick up a copy of Michael Stanton's book when the new paperback edition hits bookstores in August 2002, coincidentally when the DVD release of the Peter Jackson movie is also scheduled to become available.

LM: You began work on this book while on leave from teaching in 1997. Why did you want to write this book about Tolkien's *LOTR*? And what (besides having time on your hands) made you finally sit down and write it?

MS: I wanted to write this book because I originally conceived it as simply a handbook or guide for students or other non-specialist readers of Tolkien. There are works like Foster's "Complete Guide" (which is encyclopedic in form, with alpha entries) but there seemed to be nothing that could guide a reader through the text. That perceived lack, plus having some time on my hands, made me start the book in spring 1997.

LM: When did you first get the inkling that this might be a publishable undertaking?

MS: In the fall of 1998, when I sent a letter to a literary agent asking if there was any interest in, or any possibility of success for, a book on Tolkien like I just described. It was when I contacted the agent, by the way, that I learned that a movie was in the works.

LM: You have talked a little about the difficulties you faced in bringing this book to fruition, dealing with the copyright, etc.... You said that you got to include fewer direct quotations that you would have liked. Is it really more difficult to write a book about a topic, a work, where there are still copyright issues to wrestle with than to tackle something like Shakespeare where all the words (of the original anyway) reside in public domain?

MS: Yes, I had to remove a lot of direct quotation, but that is not a universal concern: it is a concern of the Tolkien Estate which is very rigorous in protecting intellectual property. "Fair use" is a doctrine which copyright lawyers will tell you (as they have told me) is as murky a legal doctrine as there is. Most authors however do not give those who write about them as hard a time as I was given. But there are dreadful problems surrounding the use of the work of authors (to name but three) like J.D. Salinger, T.S. Elliot, and Willa Cather.

LM: Your book seems to be the obvious culmination of years spent loving and teaching Tolkien's books to others. It is also written on a scholarly level

these relate to non-AngloAmerican SF/history. Above all else, what are the politics of SF's relationship to history - its theories of social organization, its concepts of 'progress', its understanding of change and causation? **SUBMISSIONS:** If you are interested in contributing to the planned volume, please submit a 300 word proposal to either of the editors listed below.

CONTACT: John H. Arnold, Birkbeck College, University of London, j.arnold@bbk.ac.uk. Snailmail to School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Birkbeck College, Malet St, London WC1E 7HX, United Kingdom. Karen Sayer, Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, k_sayer@TASC.AC.UK. Snailmail to Department of History, Trinity and All Saints College, University of Leeds, Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth, Leeds.

WHAT: World-Building or World-Borrowing: The universe of media tie-in fiction

WHO: An M/C Reviews "Words" Special Feature Edited by Catriona Mills

TOPICS: Media tie-in fiction is the secret success story of modern publishing. Novels based on the Star Trek and Star Wars universes routinely top the New York Times best seller lists, but remain something of a covert pleasure. To many, they seem to occupy an uneasy position between genre fiction and pulp. But within the field there is a striking and vibrant diversity of style, form and content. Clearly, there is room for critical intervention into this phenomenon.

This special feature addresses novels and novelisations based on movies or television programmes. Possible topics include: the publishing and marketing systems behind media tie-in fiction; the novelisation of blockbuster films; discussions of specific tie-in universes; why some shows are more likely to

spawn tie-ins than others; why original novels are more important to fans than novelisations; the awkward ontological status of media tie-ins within fan culture; the contrast between media tie-ins and fan fiction.

SUBMISSIONS: Submissions should be 600-1000 words in length, and preferentially submitted through the M/C Reviews site. Anonymous submissions are discouraged.

CONTACT: For more information on this special feature, check out M/C Reviews at

www.reviews.media-culture.org.au/features.php or e-mail me at c.mills@mailbox.uq.edu.au

DEADLINE: This will be an on-going feature, with new articles posted as they arrive, beginning on Saturday 14th September 2002.

WHAT: Call for Book Proposals:

The Humanities and Technology
WHO: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., and the American Association for History and Computing (AAHC) are proud to announce the launching of a new book series, "The Humanities and Technology," edited by David J. Staley, Jeffrey G. Barlow, and Dennis A. Trinkle.

INFORMATION: The goal of this series is to explore how emerging technologies will transform the presentation, communication, and our understanding of history and the humanities. The recent development of digital technology--computers, the Internet, virtual reality--is transforming academia and altering how scholars research, present, and communicate their scholarship. These technologies are evolving at a rapid pace, posing challenges and presenting concepts never before encountered. This series will examine the many issues the new technology raises such as scholarship, methods, accuracy, and assessment and trace its impact on teaching, tenure, pedagogy, and other

that I do not think is often matched by the vast quantities of populist Tolkien literature, yet it is an accessible book to the general reader as well. It occurs to me that it would make a very good supplementary text for high school and/or college students studying Tolkien; did you intend it as such? Can you see it being used in this way?

MS: Yes, I would love to have my book used in classrooms; it grew out of my teaching experience, and I would like to think it could help someone else's learning or teaching experience. Unfortunately I am not in charge of marketing the book. Maybe the paperback will move into this area of usefulness.

LM: Have you written any other books or articles on Tolkien, Fantasy or SF literature? Can you cite any that readers might be interested in?

MS: Not books, but articles: "Teaching Tolkien" in a journal called *Exercise Exchange* back in 1973; an essay on Tolkien's use of proverbial language in *Proverbium* in 1996; essays or entries on Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury for the *St. James Reference Guide to American Literature* (Gale 1994), and on Ursula LeGuin for *The Gay and Lesbian Heritage* (Henry Holt, 1995), as well as several stories and articles on Stephen King in various collections of essays.

LM: Are there science fiction or fantasy books that you think should be taught to college students?

MS: I'd like to see more Arthurian material used; in sci fi I taught a title by Octavia Butler only once, and I would like to try more of her stuff. I'd like to teach the Phillip Pullman trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, which was completed too late for me to use it.

LM: Can you define what you mean when you say that you would like to see more Arthurian material used—Medieval material or modern? It seems to me that the term 'Arthurian' covers a lot of literary ground...

MS: It depends on the purpose... For teaching a course on sci-fi and fantasy literature some of the Nineteenth century authors like Malory, Tennyson, (etc...) would be useful.

LM: What other works of literature move you, or do you find important, and if you can explain briefly -why? Tolkien aside, where do your own reading interests range?

MS: That's a big one, considering that I have been reading (at least) several books a week for almost sixty years. What "moves me" involves an emotional response, what I consider important involves an intellectual response. May be where these coincide or overlap is where I think great literature lives. The novels of Dickens, the poetry of John Keats or Alfred Tennyson, The Brontes, books by people like Malcolm Lowry, John Fowles, are all in my pantheon... Right now I am reading *Paul Scott*, *The Division of the Spoils*,...Clyde Rice, *A Heaven in the Eye*, James O'Neill, *At Swim, Two Boys*. Ian McEwan, *Atonement*, John Grisham *The Summons*, and I am about to read two sci fi books, *The Avram Davidson Treasury*, and *Futureland* by Walter Moseley. Several other books are waiting for me.

LM: I have to admit my one (minor) disappointment with your book was its scant discussion of myth and its relationship to what Tolkien was doing with his book, perhaps because this is my own area of interest/study. You excused yourself from that one by saying that others before you have taken up that approach. Who were you thinking of?

MS: Two books maybe worth looking at are Ruth Noel's *The Mythology of Middle Earth* and Timothy O'Neill's *The Individuated Hobbit* which is essentially a Jungian view. The work of Verlyn Fleiger is also worth your attention. None of this except maybe Fleiger is in that area of myth that abuts religion.

LM: One of my discoveries in *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards* was your mention of how "peasant knowledge" or common folklore plays an important role in

LOTR. As a reader, I never really gave a lot of consideration to the use of “athellas” or “kingsfoil” in the book as anything other than colorful trivia - “window dressing” on the stage set. You spent (I think) more time on this in your commentary than it gets in Tolkien’s novel. You felt this small piece made an important point. What is Tolkien trying to say to us in the modern world by giving credence to peasant or folk beliefs? *LOTR* certainly predates our modern interest in folk medicine.

MS: I suppose anyone interested in the medieval world as Tolkien was would be interested in its medical practices. There wasn’t much of anything except folk medicine in Europe until probably the 17th century or so. There is some validity in folk medical practices—they knew that certain things worked without knowing why. For instance, people who had headaches were told to chew willow bark. Willow bark, we now know, contains the active ingredients in Aspirin—salicylic acid. But bigger than that, what Tolkien seems to suggest is that scoffing at popular wisdom is a symptom of the malaise that besets Middle-earth in the late days of the Third Age. Depopulation leads to isolation of population groups, that in turn leads to distrust among these groups and/or lack of information and misinformation, and loss of knowledge generally.

A second way to talk about what Tolkien does is in reconstituting worn-down folk sayings: some of this is playful, some may be serious etymological speculation. I am thinking of Part I, Chapter 11 where the traditional nonsense “Fe Fi Fo Fum” returns to “Fear Fire Foe” or even earlier where Tolkien supplies us with the “original” version of the nursery rhyme of how the dish ran away with the spoon etc.

LM: I was thinking about your reply and the thought occurred to me that in Tolkien’s day this type of peasant folklore, -was disparaged... and now it is an accepted field of study.

MS: Folk medicine, yes. In his (Tolkien’s) day everything had to be scientific and technologically up-to-date to be adequately appreciated. Particularly in academic circles -where Tolkien to a large degree was operating- it was almost a requirement.

LM: There is that interpretation of Tolkien that says it was in some respects a protest against industrialization, the bad parts of it anyway -with episodes like the scouring of the shire.

MS: You mean what leads up to the “scouring” (which is the cleaning up of the shire at the end of the book). Perhaps the most glaring example is what happens at Isengard.

LM: There are a lot of other small details in the *LOTR* that are worth noting. You discuss a few of these in your commentary, but by no means all of them. Your book would have been encyclopedia sized if it had touched upon everything. Was there anything that you would have like to talk about, to get the reader to notice, but didn’t get to mention because of length constraints?

MS: Of course a lot of this hangs on the fact that Tolkien doesn’t tell us all we want to know. Just to take one private example from my own curiosity: what was the white council? When and where did it meet? Who sat on it? What happened to make Galadriel’s designs go amiss (as she puts it) so that Gandalf could not head the council? It’s hard to imagine a combination of forces or powers that would make Galadriel’s designs go amiss. Did it meet more than once? (There may be information on this in Christopher Tolkien’s volumes of *History* but I am thinking of questions from one who has access to *LOTR* only).

Also, given the title of my book (which was supplied by St. Martin’s editors) I would like to have said more about wizards. There is an implicit but underdeveloped division of powers or “spheres of influence” among the three wizards that

matters. It will also explore the philosophical aspects of the new technology and how the digital revolution will influence thought, communication, and the future of scholarship in the humanities. The series will thus range from practical manuals, guides, and “how-to” books to standard historical monographs and theoretical treatises on the development, impact, and evolution of the new technology on history and the humanities disciplines.

SUGGESTED TOPICS: The topics for proposed books should be broad and wide-ranging, and should address academics, K-12 teachers, archivists, librarians, and/or the general public in the United States and internationally as well. Possible topics might include New forms of digital scholarship; Archiving and storing data, and the effects on research practices; Using databases and quantitative methods; Use of technology by practitioners of the humanities disciplines; Alternative models for scholarly publishing using technology; Computing, cyberspace and the digital culture; “Humanizing” computing; Conference symposia and other collected works; Reference works.

SUBMISSIONS: To submit a proposal, send a two-page description, a table of contents, and a sample chapter to one of the series editors:

CONTACT: David J. Staley, Department of History, Heidelberg College, 310 E. Market St., Tiffin, Ohio 44883, dstaley@heidelberg.edu; Jeffrey G. Barlow, Matsushita Chair of Asian Studies, Director, Matsushita Center for Electronic Learning, Faculty Director, Berglund Center for Internet Studies, Department of History, Pacific University, 2043 College Way, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116, barlowj@pacificu.edu; Dennis A. Trinkle, Director of 361° Initiatives, Associate Coordinator of Information Services and

Technology, and Tenzer
University Professor in Instructional Technology, DePauw University, 713 S. Locust Street, Greencastle, Indiana, 46135-1669, dtrinkle@depauw.edu.

WHAT: US Icons and Iconicity

WHO: AAAS Conference 2003

INFORMATION: US cultural icons fall into three main groups: a) fictional as well as historical characters (Daisy Duck to Harvey Milk); b) sites, monuments, natural elements (Ground Zero, Vietnam War Memorial, Buffalos); and c) logos, isotropes, and computer icons (pink triangle, dot-com, Windows, trash bin, etc.).

How do these icons come into being? Who controls their shaping? What aspects of an emotionally, socially and historically complex phenomenon do they cover? What aspects are left out? What denotations and connotations do they carry? What are cultural or political consequences of these icons? What is their relation to the mass media? How do they or their reception change historically? How are they challenged or toppled? Can we do without iconicity? How are these icons appropriated by those on the margins? Icons being symbols of the ruling ideas, what do they tell us about the relations between classes, ethnic groups and genders? And, above all, are they rather manifestations of hegemonic rule (Gramsci, Foucault, Laclau & Mouffe) or manifestations of a shared body of norms and values and therefore democratic elements (Durkheim, Parsons)?

Most social theories today would accept that icons constitute an attempt to focus and anchor the sliding of signification, to freeze the social indetermination into hegemonic forms, and to foster social cohesion by placing consensus over conflict. They are, in short, a cen-

we know of. What might Gandalf have been like when (as he told Faramir) he was known as “Olorin in my youth in the west that is forgotten”?

LM: The latter chapters in your book deal with major themes and concepts from *LOTR* on a topical rather than chronological/plotline basis. There are several chapters on the various races that inhabit ME, then you move on to other major concepts like, languages, evil, poetry and dreams. In your chapter on the elves, you state that Tolkien conceived of them as a “perfected” or “ideal” version of humanity. I always thought of Tolkien’s elves as sort of “living personifications of history”, the ‘shadows of regret before the younger race that cometh after’ to quote the Doom of Mandos in *The Silmarillion* (p.80), since they always seem to be around when the hobbits (who are latecomers into the history of ME) need a history lesson. They also cannot or will not give advice -a history book can guide, but it can never directly advise one on how to deal with a new situation. They also have very limited effectiveness (as history does; it cannot take action for its time has past) in the present day they comfort, they guide, they provide protection but they do not actively combat the evil; that’s left mostly to men and hobbits... What do you think of this perspective? Perhaps Tolkien’s elves are both things, and there is room for both viewpoints?

MS: The Elves are certain embodiments of history, since they have been around as eyewitnesses to most of it, and they are almost totally past-oriented (their rings are designed to preserve only) and saddest of all, they know that in spite of the preserving power of the rings that with the destruction of the One Ring, their time here (in Middle-earth) is ending. I don’t think the two perspectives you mention are incompatible. One is about the race of Elves as a concept; the other is about the function of Elves as characters in the story. And even though it is largely true that they do not actively combat evil, even that statement has to be qualified: Legolas does actively combat evil.

LM: What is it, in your opinion, in the *LOTR* that still appeals to a modern audience after all these years and why? What is the enduring quality?

MS: One suggestion I have for finding an answer to why Tolkien’s stories still appeal is to read W.H. Auden’s essay on *The Quest Hero*, which directly applies to *LOTR*. There is something universally appealing in the idea of a journey with obstacles and helps, which (says Auden) can be symbolic of how we see our own lives...

LM: Are there any parts of the book (*LOTR*) that have aged poorly? Are there parts of the book that your students don’t understand easily that an older audience might get, or do they find parts of it offensive to modern sensibilities? For example, I noticed that you took the time in your book to explain Tolkien’s rather limited treatment of women by placing the author back into context of his own history. As the time passes between the creation of *LOTR* and the present, -Is this something one has to do to give a modern collegiate audience a better appreciation for the work, an audience born since the civil rights and women’s’ rights movements? Did you find this an increasingly necessary thing to do in your classes as time went on? Did it play a role in why, or how you wrote your book? How do you mediate literary history and political correctness?

MS: I would not say that parts have aged poorly, but that superficial fashions have changed, and many of those fashions bear the label of political correctness. Tolkien has been criticized for fewness of women characters, and small roles for those he has.... I might say that the role of tobacco as a salve, aid to reflection, soothing agent, might be objected to today. The setting in a pre-modern world, a pre-technological or pre-mechanical world helps a lot to ward off charges of outdatedness...

To answer your specific points I did not find it increasingly necessary to explain Tolkien's seeming lacks to student audiences... These considerations did not play a role in why or how I wrote the book, although they had to be taken into account in the course of the text... you do have to understand any literary work in the context of its time. Not to be able to do so is to display historical ignorance.

LM: When I ask the previous question I also can't help but think of some of the editorial decisions that went into the writing of screenplay for Peter Jackson's movie to "update" the book. There is no mention, no hint, of the conjoined bloodlines of Aragorn and Elrond. I note that the appellation "half-elven" has disappeared from the movie version. I also very strongly doubt that we will hear in parts two and three of the movie trilogy from Faramir that one has to be more than just a "good man" to rule Gondor as a king. Are these adaptations necessary? Do you think this has to do with our modern American distaste for any mention of race or class?

MS: I would have to disagree that we have such a distaste. We talk about race all the time, and "class", although it is a complex term, is also part of our cultural subtexts. In terms of *LOTR* we have definite indicators of class, in Frodo's relation to Sam... And Americans don't seem to have any distaste for royalty... as witness our fascination with Princess Di, with Prince William, our interest in the royal family a few weeks ago when Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother died. Etc. A lot of Americans love that stuff.

LM: An interesting point, about "class"... Let me rephrase, Tolkien places a lot more emphasis on "birthright" or "bloodright" in his text than I think a modern American audience would find comfortable.

LM: You mention in your conclusion to your book that you feel there are few works of modern fantasy that come close to matching up with Tolkien on a literary level in a wide sea of imitators. Do you think there will ever be another fantasy book or series that equals or tops *LOTR* in its importance as a work of literature? Is there something about the genre of epic or heroic fantasy that is intrinsically limiting? -Because one is working with a form that is to some extent deliberately archaic -the quest format has been done and done and done, is it harder here than in other genres to come up with something fresh and original? It seems that with sci-fi the door is open to the infinite range of possibilities of the future, and those people who love hard SF and disparage traditional fantasy often argue this case.

MS: Coming up with something fresh and original does not depend on the genre involved, but on the artist working in the genre. Originality lies in treatment not in subject matter; a thesis that I think is demonstrated negatively by all the cheap imitations of Tolkien out there. The quest format has been done and done and will continue to be done, because it is a symbolic enactment of our lives (so argues W.H. Auden in his really fine essay on Tolkien). Another "quest" fiction which I should have mentioned... which is totally unlike Tolkien yet is excellent fantasy is Richard Adams's *Watership Down*. The achievement of that book does not depend on new subject matter but on Adams's ability to write beautiful prose and move one's feelings...

Much as I love sci-fi, I would disagree for the sake of argument that in it "the door is open to the infinite range of possibilities of the future": one of sci-fi's problems is that it's not imaginative enough: in the fifties when writers imagined more and more powerful computers all they could think of was bigger and bigger computers—a situation which has proven contrary to fact, as you must have noticed. Sci fi, however much it may pretend or claim to be about the future, is really about its own time—hence, for one small example, the dominance of Japan in the world economy in fiction written in the early/mid '80's, like

tral element in the manufacturing of consent. Through their employment, the underlying relationships of historical processes are hidden from our perception; instead, we build our understanding of the world on (mass mediated) appearances.

On the other hand, icons are perhaps best understood as over-determined, as having multiple cautions. They are, moreover, like any sign, readable in different ways, carrying endlessly different connotations, betraying in precisely their structure and structural omissions the intangibility of meaning. And, finally, they depend on being accepted by a large number of people and therefore have to win the consent also of the marginalized and the subordinated.

It may be particularly interesting to analyze cultural icons which are contested, ridiculed, appropriated, attacked, supplemented by counter-icons or simply still in the making. TOPICS: *americana*; AAA. Aids Ribbons. Al Capone. Albert Einstein. Apple. Barbie. Beach Boys. Betty Friedan. Billy Graham. Buffaloes. Cape Canaveral. Charles Lindbergh. Chevrolet. Chinatown. Cowboys. Donald Duck. Doris Day. dot com. El Vez. Ellis Island. EPCOT. FDR. 5th Avenue. Frederick Douglas. Frontier. Geronimo. Ground Zero. Harley Davidson. Harvey Milk. Hippies. Hollywood. James Dean. JFK. Joan Baez. John Wayne. Las Vegas. Lincoln Memorial. Lucky Luciano. Malcolm X. Martin Luther King. Melissa Ethridge. Moby Dick. Monument Valley. Muhammed Ali. NASA. Nashville. Neil Armstrong. Noam Chomsky. Playboy. Pocahontas. Rainbow Flag. Richard Nixon. Rocky. Rosa Parks. Route 66. Silicon Valley. Sitting Bull. Smith & Wesson. Statue of Liberty. Sunset Boulevard. Susan Sontag. Tupperware. Twin Towers. Unabomber. Vietnam Memorial. Wall Street. Westpoint. Windows.

Woodstock. Wounded Knee. Xena, the Warrior Princess. X-Files. Zabriskie Point.

SUBMISSIONS: Please send proposals for papers, including an abstract to: klaus.rieser@uni-graz.at Klaus Rieser; Department of American Studies; University of Graz; Attemsgasse 25/II; A-8010 Graz; Austria/EU

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS, 15 Nov 02

Anatol, Giselle Liza. *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*. Praeger, Apr 03

Bleiler, Richard, ed. *Supernatural Fiction Writers: Fantasy and Horror*. Scribner, Nov 02. 2 vols. V. 1, Ackroyd-Jordon; V. 2, Joyce to Zelazny. Rev. of E. Bleiler's 1982 ed.

Brigg, Peter. *The Span of Mainstream and Science Fiction: a Critical Study of a New Literary Genre*. McFarland, 2002

Fisher, Jude. *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Houghton Mifflin, Nov 02. Tie in to 2d film

Grayson, Sandra M. *Visions of the Third Millennium: Black Science Fiction Novels Write the Future*. Africa World Press, Oct 02

Hatterhaver, Daryl. *Shirley Jackson's American Gothic*. SUNY Press, Jan 03

Heilman, Elizabeth E., ed. *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*. Routledge, 2003

Killinger, John. *God, the Devil and Harry Potter: A Christian Minister's Defense of the Beloved Novels*. Thomas Dunne/St Martin's, Jan 03

Kubrick, Christine. *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures* Bulfinch Pr, Sep 02. Coffee table book by wife

Mucke, Dorothea E. von. *The Seduction of the Occult and the Rise of the Fantastic Tale*. Stanford UP, Apr 03

Gibson's *Neuromancer*—that was a time when it really looked like Japan was going to take over, and sci-fi reflected that concern in its vision of the future. The real future (now) turns out very differently.

About the Interviewer: Lyra McMullen holds a B.A. in Art History from Bard College in New York State. She recently received her Masters' degree in Museum Studies, Costume and Textiles with a Curatorial Emphasis from The Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC. In keeping with her interest in Art and Textiles, she is currently employed as a Gallery Assistant at Frog Hollow VT State Craft Center in Burlington VT.

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH JEFF VANDERMEER

Michael Levy

ML: This has been quite a year and a half for you, with a barrage of high-profile reviews, that *Locus Online* column listing you as one of the ten best short-story writers in the field, two different versions of your collection *City of Saints and Madmen* appearing, along with the big anthology you co-edited, *Leviathan III* and now your first full-length novel, *Veniss Underground*. Did you quit your day job or what?

JV: I can kind of date the beginning of my run of most recent successes to winning the World Fantasy Award in 2000 and also the incredible kindness of Michael Moorcock, who likes my work and has gone out of his way in the past couple of years to promote it. That, along with the initial publication of *City of Saints*, did a lot to bring me to the attention of new readers. I've tried to build on that by aggressively attending conventions, doing readings, and following up with bookstores. I believe very much in the old-fashioned idea of doing a lot of hard work in promotion after writing a novel or collection. I still keep my day job, as an editor at a software company in Tallahassee, Florida, but I discipline myself to write or edit outside projects every night and every weekend. Obviously, it's a lot of fun otherwise I wouldn't be able to keep up this pace.

ML: Although formally *Veniss Underground* is science fiction, it along with much of your work, seems to have been influenced by the surrealists and postmodernists. How do you see yourself positioned within the genre?

JV: I'm not really sure I fit into any particular group. In high school, I read mostly mainstream literature and then came to SF and Fantasy later. Ironically, I find myself reading more mainstream fiction these days than fantasy. But I like to read everything from John Irving to Borges to the mysteries of Peter Lovesey to Angela Carter to Italo Calvino to Cordwainer Smith to A.S. Byatt. I've brought my own world view to this mix of influences. Several writers who influenced me mentioned in interviews about the importance of establishing your own vision and letting the audience come to you. I've done this, because I think to cater to an audience is to condescend to an audience. So it's taken me longer to get where I am now, but it's more satisfying than if I'd tried to guess what readers would like.

ML: Prior to your recent sale of *City of Saints* and *Veniss Underground* to Pan MacMillan UK, most of your book-length work has appeared from the independent presses. Do the "indies" give you more freedom than you're likely to find in more commercial venues?

JV: It seems to me that the gap between indie and large publishers has closed in recent years—in part because of aggressive strategies on the part of the indie presses, and new technologies, and also maybe because of a decline in fiction readers, for a number of reasons. So I'm not convinced that an established indie is that much different from a large commercial publisher. But to answer your

question, there were definite benefits in working with an indie on the hardcover *City of Saints*, for example. The publisher, Prime, was delighted that I was willing to help coordinate the design with Garry Nurrish, the lead designer on that project, and to basically turn in a finished book to them. I meanwhile was delighted to be able to produce a totally idiosyncratic and exciting book-as-artifact that I knew would delight readers as well. I don't believe that I could have done that project through a commercial publisher. Of course, now that it's proven to be a success, my editor at Pan MacMillan, for example, is looking for ways to replicate even some of the more daring effects in that book for the UK edition. I'm of the firm belief that you're not doomed to turn off readers by pushing the edge, if you do so in ways that entertain and have a playful element to them.

ML: You've stated elsewhere that the themes you're most interested in exploring in *Veniss Underground* are the power of memory and obsession. Could you discuss this?

JV: All of my work at base is about love and death—sometimes serious, sometimes cloaked by humor—and *Veniss Underground* is no different. The far future setting allows me to use as-yet-undeveloped technology, such as the ability to view another person's memory, to examine what it means to be human. We're these incredibly complex organisms on the one hand; on the other hand, we can never get inside another person's head. In a sense, we're all blind to each other. *Veniss Underground*, in addition to the adventure and mystery elements, asks questions like, What does it mean to love somebody? What is unconditional love? Does it even exist? How does memory function? We have these highly selective "portraits" we paint in our heads of people, images from the past, that dictate how we treat them in the here-and-now. As our memories, in a sense, tend to become something separate from us—stored in emails and web sites as well as our own heads—these seem like questions worth exploring. And, of course, obsession feeds into this in that love and memory stoke obsession. In *Veniss Underground*, people are driven to the very edge of their emotions, their experience, and their ability to survive. It affects them in sometimes wonderful and sometimes terrible ways. It's also easy sometimes to forget that there are places in this world where such extremes exist on a daily basis. So I consider even the more savage parts of *Veniss Underground* to be relevant to our modern world.

ML: Genetic engineering is a major topic in the news and has been treated extensively by such SF writers as Greg Bear and Joan Slonczewski, how does your book add to the discussion?

JV: In my work, genetic engineering is seen as a tool that simultaneously creates good and bad effects. The creation of a non-human sentient species in the novel, one that may be better suited to cope with degraded environmental conditions, is an ambiguous act. On the one hand it seems to predict the extinction of human beings. On the other, it seems to assume that life will continue on Earth in some form. Excesses by certain genetic engineers in the novel create horrific situations because, as we have seen again and again, human nature is ambiguous. We split the atom and it creates a source of energy, but it also creates a weapon that can kill millions of people. Genetic engineering will, like any other technology, be exploited for political and social ends. It will be used for all sorts of purposes that we cannot even predict today. But unlike nuclear energy, for example, genetic engineering does in fact hold the promise of allowing us to re-make our environment in a favorable way. One of the underlying warnings in the setting of my novel—vast walled city-states with failing technologies, set amid even vaster deserts—is that we cannot continue our current way of life. If we do not change our thinking and our strategies, we should not expect the world to absorb our continued punishment of it.

Schacker, Jennifer. *National Dreams: the Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England*. U of PA Pr, Feb 03

Schneider, Steven Jay. *Fear Without Frontiers: Horror Cinema Across the Globe*. FAB Books, UK, 2002

Smith, Andrew & William Hughes, eds. *Empire and the Gothic: the Politics of Genre*. Palgrave, Feb 03

Weldes, Jutta. *To Seek Out New Worlds: Science Fiction and World Politics*. Paolgrave, Mar 03

Whited, Lana A. *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. U of Missouri Pr, Jan 03

ML: Now that *Veniss Underground* is in print, what comes next?

JV: Um, I was hoping to actually get some sleep and take a break for once, but no such luck. I'm making a few revisions to *City of Saints and Madmen* in anticipation of the Pan MacMillan release next October. And I am working on a novel called *Shriek: An Afterword* that is a weird family chronicle set in Ambergris, the imaginary city setting of *City of Saints*. It's my most autobiographical work, my most personal work, and it attempts to reconcile in my writing the tension between the fantasy tradition and the mainstream literary tradition. And, in September of next year Night Shade Books will release *The Thackery T. Lambshead Pocket Guide to Eccentric & Discredited Diseases*, a rather entertaining fiction antho in the guise of a disease guide that I co-edited, with work from Neil Gaiman, Alan Moore, China Mieville, and many others. In 2004, Golden Gryphon Press will release my short story collection *Secret Life*.

NONFICTION

THE LIBRARIAN'S GUIDE TO CYBORGS, ALIENS, AND SORCERERS

Neil Barron

Buker, Derek M. *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers' Advisory: The Librarian's Guide to Cyborgs, Aliens, and Sorcerers*. American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St, Chicago, IL 60611, July 2002. xv + 230 p. \$38, trade paper. 0-8389-0831-4. Orders to 866-746-7252.

Herald, Diana Tixier & Bonnie Kunzel. *Strictly Science Fiction: A Guide to Reading Interests*. Libraries Unlimited/Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road W, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007, June 2002. xxii + 297 p. \$55. 1-56308-893-2. Orders to 800-225-5800.

Buker was a youth services librarian in a western suburb of Baltimore, is now a webmaster for the Frederick county system, and is a long-time reader of SF. He provides an informal, folksy guide to SF and fantasy, mostly for the librarian who knows relatively little about or dislikes these genres, which he implies includes most librarians. "If you asked most librarians how much they know about science fiction and fantasy, the responses would range from 'as little as possible' to 'are you kidding me?'" He later remarks, "Most librarians feel these genres are silly simply because they don't spark their imagination" (one wonders what would, if they don't). Buker reminds librarians of the need for the "reference interview" to determine more precisely what is wanted. For a guidance (readers' advisory) type of question, he suggests "What was the last [SF/fantasy] book you read that you really liked?" with follow-up questions to determine whether the reader wants more books by the same author (such as a series book), with the same theme or setting (cyberpunk, Mars), with a male or female character, etc.

The guide consists of two halves of roughly 100 pages, each divided into thematic sections, such as aliens, androids/robots, computers, humor, space opera for SF (nothing for feminism or SF by/about women), or epics, quests, legends/myths, sword and sorcery for fantasy. Buker almost entirely limits his choices to novels, thus ignoring the rich historical tradition of short SF. Each section provides plot summaries for five books and a list of a dozen or two other recommended books, without years of publication.

Most public libraries lack historical depth in their collections because of their weeding policies (San Diego County's system routinely discards fiction that hasn't circulated in two years, excluding "classics"). Buker defines "classics" as "books before 1980 that have literary merit as well as continued popularity," and chapter 1 annotates a handful of books by Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Bradbury, Herbert, Niven, etc, with another portion listing recommended books not readily characterized by theme. Some of Wells is here, but nothing between him and a few of the golden age writers. He quotes Heinlein—"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future"—but doesn't take him seriously in his selection of recommended books. But perhaps it's too much to expect guides like this to provide historical balance. It is intended for librarians serving readers with no memory: the young. Librarians needing a less detailed treatment of these two genres should consider another volume in ALA's readers' advisory series, *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction* by Joyce Saricks, which covers 15 genres in 460 pages at the same price as Bucker (see my review in *SFRAR* 254-5).

The latest volume in the Genreflecting Advisory Series is *Strictly Science Fiction*, co-authored by the series editor, and published when Libraries Unlimited was bought by Greenwood Press (the imprint will continue). Herald has written similar guides to fantasy (*SFRAR* 243) and teenage fiction, as well as edited the 5th edition of *Genreflecting*, whose first edition was published in 1982. Kunzel is a young adult librarian and co-author of *First Contact: A Reader's Selection of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (2001).

Their guide is much more inclusive than Buker's, providing mostly descriptive annotations for about 900 books (compared to about 180), including collections and anthologies, and with better (if still thin) historical coverage. Like Buker, it assumes readers approach SF mostly by theme ("reading interests") and want more of the same, which may be true but isn't likely to lead anyone out of their comfort zone in search of something different or challenging.

The table of contents is notably uninformative, with catchall chapter titles like "action adventure," "the triumphs and travails of technology," "our strange world" and "us and them" (a real grabber), etc. The subject index lists most of the subgenres and doubles as an almost worthless keyword index. Because grouping books by theme is heavily subjective, there is extensive scattering: there are 76 page references for aliens, for example. I suspect the subject index was mechanically compiled by computer with little human intervention and predictably awful results. The first five entries begin with numbers, such as 22nd century, but there are six more entries under twenty-second century, none of them including the 22nd century page reference. Many headings are so vague I can't imagine anyone using them, e.g., captains, creatures, crew, research, scientist, worlds, etc. The character index is presumably for those who remember only that, but it's sloppily compiled—Captain Nemo is under captain. There are two entries, Ethan and Ethan (obstetrician), both for the same person, and one page number is simply a cross-reference to another.

The plot summaries rarely include any critical comment and often sound like publisher jacket copy, designed to sell the book or attract rather than inform the reader. Series junkies are catered to throughout—there are 13 entries for Bujold's Vorkosigan series, most under space opera but two cross-referenced to other pages. The Darkover series is listed by title rather than in reading order. Four icons are used to denote award winners (given in the annotation and listed in an appendix); classics (plus a four-page list in the introduction); whether filmed; and YA, which is used very selectively for most chapters but is curiously not used at all for the books described in the young adult chapter.

One chapter is devoted to "resources for librarians and readers," including journals, online resources, bibliographies, indexes, history, awards, etc. The selection is very uneven, and I wasn't reassured to see the annotation for the 4th edition of my *Anatomy of Wonder* incorrectly show 1994 instead of 1995 and, worse, include a description of the 1987 third edition.

In summary, Buker is better organized and much easier to use. Herald and Kunzel's scope is broader, it has many more annotations, but it's poorly organized and indexed, slackerly written and a poor value. Neither are recommended to SFRA members, and public librarians have better choices than these weak guides.

NONFICTION
THE FANTASTIC VAMPIRE
 Karon McGuire

Holte, James Craig, Ed. *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night, Selected Essays from the Eighteenth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002. 159 p. \$59.95. 0-313-30933-7.

In *The Fantastic Vampire* James Craig Holte has assembled another anthology of articles on vampires that unfortunately is not as effective as its recent predecessors, such as Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger's *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture* (1997) or Mary Pharr and Leonard G. Heldreth's *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature* (1999). The difficulty here goes beyond the unevenness of the articles, a consistent problem whenever papers from a conference are published.

The flaw in this anthology is the organization into themed sections that fail to unify the essays or advance the understanding of critical evaluations of vampires in the media. Holte needed to edit more aggressively to provide some connections between articles and some reasons for his groupings. The three-page introduction does little to explain the anthology's arrangement. Perhaps the references to the vampire as shapeshifter are meant to excuse the book's lack of structure. Actually, only the first section is unified by focusing on interpretations of *Dracula*. The other three divisions seem arbitrary and overly generalized: "Vampire in Film and Popular Culture," "Modern Vampire Fictions," "Contemporary Issues in the World of the Undead."

Of course Holte was faced with editing what had been presented at the 1997 International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. He was not selecting articles for specific contemporary issues in vampire studies. If he were, Raymond T. McNally's "Bram Stoker and Irish Gothic" would never have been included as a critical and scholarly evaluation of *Dracula*, although it might have provided light entertainment at the conference.

The section on modern fiction is painfully unbalanced, with three of the four articles dealing with Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's vampires and Ann Rice as the only other writer evaluated. So this section overlooks such modern vampires as Elaine Bergstrom's Austra family (*Shattered Glass*), Kim Newman's and Jeanne Kalogridis' Dracula family (*Anno Dracula* and *Covenant with the Vampire: The Diaries of the Family Dracul*, respectively), Kyle Marfin's reincarnation of Carmilla (*Carmilla*), Nancy Collins' Sonja Blue (*Sunglasses after Dark*), Brent Monahan's Vincent DeVilbiss (*The Book of Common Dread*) or Poppy Z. Brite's Molochai, Twig, and Zillah (*Lost Souls*). Holte would have been more accurate if he had simply grouped Yarbro and Rice together as vampire novelists instead of presenting them as disproportionate representatives of modern vampire writers.

The anthology's last section on contemporary issues fares no better as an organizational tool because the two articles have little in common other than vampires; additionally, the first article evaluates LeFanu's "Carmilla" and *Dracula*, hardly works with contemporary reference.

But even with the fundamental flaw in the editing, *The Fantastic Vampire* does include some valuable articles, especially Elizabeth Miller's "Shapeshifting *Dracula*: The Abridged Edition of 1901," and Scott Vander Ploeg's "Stoker's *Dracula*: A Neo-Gothic Experiment," (both of which supply close readings and expand understanding of Stoker's seminal text) as well as James Craig Holte's "Resurrection in Britain: Christopher Lee and Hammer *Draculas*." The three-page bibliography is sufficient for the slim volume, but with \$59.95 as the hefty price of admission, this anthology would be a better purchase for a library collection than for the individual vampire aficionado.

NONFICTION
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES
 Neil Barron

Henderson, C. J. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction Movies*. Checkmark Books/Facts on File, 132 W 31st Street, 17th floor, New York, NY 10001, August 2001, xii + 516 p. \$75. 0-8160-4043-5; \$24.95, trade paper, 0-8160-4567-4. Orders to 800-322-8755.

C. J. Henderson lives in Brooklyn and has contributed reviews and articles to quality fantastic film magazines like *Cinefantastique*, and more fannish publications like *Starlog*. His introduction alleges an originality and thoughtfulness for written SF that other genres lack, but recognizes that these intellectual virtues rarely make it to the screen (he quotes Sturgeon's tired truism to the effect that distinguished work is uncommon in every field). The dreary nature of most SF films is abundantly evident in almost all the 1,300+ films he describes and evaluates. The dreck appropriately gets one to three sentences, while the lengthiest entries occupy about two columns of this 8½ x 11 inch book.

The coverage is from 1897 to 2000. Each entry includes title, alternative titles (with cross-references elsewhere), production company, country, year of release, color or b&w, running time, and whether available as a videotape, laserdisc and/or DVD (availability information will date rapidly). Production and cast credits complete the header information. The type is reasonably large and the format easy to read. About 90 b&w production stills, many from Henderson's collection, are reproduced but add nothing to the text. The 16-page index redundantly includes titles, occasional production and cast names (the basis for selection isn't indicated), and themes.

The four-page listing of literary sources for the films starts with an error (claiming "close to 2,000" films in the guide) and is less complete than Michael Klossner's tabulation in my *Anatomy of Wonder* (4th ed. 1995). Four pages chronicle the Oscar nominations and awards received by SF films; only two actors have won, Fredric March in 1932's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Cliff Robertson in 1968's *Charly* (misspelled *Charley* in this section; misspellings/typos are too frequent). An undated interview with Frank Herbert is supplemented by a foreword by William Shatner. A unique five-page chart summarizes the language of *Quest for Fire* (1981), created by Anthony Burgess and Desmond Morris, which may appeal to linguists or anthropologists, but few others.

For the small percentage of films deserving more detailed discussion, Henderson is sensible, a bit fannish in tone, but not especially insightful. Other than currency, there's not much to be said in favor of this encyclopedia. Much better is *Science Fiction*, edited by Phil Hardy, a volume in the British Aurum Film Encyclopedia series (1984, rev. 1991). The American edition, titled *The Overlook Film Encyclopedia*, is out of print, but the Aurum trade paperback edition of the British 2d edition is still in print (£25 less 10%; see www.bookshop.co.uk to order). Arranged chronologically with a title index, the unsigned entries by experts for the approximately 1,500 films are much more detailed and erudite than Henderson, and the illustrations are better

and genuinely useful. The best narrative history of SF films remains John Brosnan's witty *The Primal Screen* (1991), regrettably out of print. Significantly, neither Hardy nor Brosnan are listed in Henderson's inadequate bibliography. A very lukewarm recommendation for public libraries, which could rely on the more detailed information at www.imdb.com or the less detailed entries in the handy, inexpensive annual paperback edited by Leonard Maltin. Scholars can skip.

NONFICTION

THE KING ARTHUR MYTH IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Bruce A. Beatie

Andrew E. Mathis, *The King Arthur Myth in Modern American Literature*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, inc., 2002. x, 158 pages, paper. ISBN 0-7864-1171-6, \$32.00

At \$32 for 143 pages of actual text, this book should offer truly substantial insights to be worth the cost. A paragraph in Mathis's "Conclusion" (139-143) suggests indeed a topic of substance (140):

No fewer than forty books on Arthurian themes were published in the United States in the year 2000 alone—a combination of new editions, of old favorites, critical studies, and the standard works of pulp fantasy fiction, the genre in which Arthuriana has had its most lasting hold. More than a dozen films and television shows based on the Arthurian legends appeared during the 1990s . . .

The irony is that his study doesn't touch a single one of the works he refers to here. He deals with "Mark Twain" (7-24), focusing obviously on *A Connecticut Yankee*, whose "influence . . . on later Arthurian works by American writers cannot be overestimated" (24). He then turns to Arthurian motifs in "Steinbeck's Early Novels" (25-42) and in the *noir* detective novels of "Raymond Chandler" (43-59). His chapter on "Writers in World War II" (60-77) deals mostly with Harold Foster's comic strip *Prince Valiant* and with the founder of the first American National Socialist (Nazi) party, William Dudley Pelley who, though a screenwriter in the 1920s, produced no fiction, Arthurian or otherwise; along the way he discusses Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*. The fifth chapter returns to "Steinbeck's Later Works" (78-105), looking mostly at *Sweet Thursday* and a number of nonfiction writings, and giving remarkably short shrift to Steinbeck's one explicitly Arthurian fiction, his retelling of Malory's *Morte Darthur* as *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*.

The book turns then to "John Gardner" (106-121) and to supposed Arthurian motifs in works that have few or no explicit references to Arthurian materials, including some interview comments on the Arthurian legend. The final chapter, "Donald Barthelme, *et al.*" (122-138) focuses mainly on Barthelme's *The King*, "among the most recent Arthurian works by a major American writer . . . [which] offers a unique counterpoint to Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee* . . ." (122) and which is indeed explicitly Arthurian in content. The chapter takes briefer looks at Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* and John Updike's *Brazil*, "an updating of the Tristan and Isolde romance" (135).

Mathis's comment about "major American writers" might suggest a reason for his failure to consider any of those works referred to in his conclusion—but Harold Foster, Raymond Chandler, and William Pelley hardly belong in that category. The true reason for his narrow focus, I suspect, lies in a phrase he uses repeatedly throughout this small monograph, and finally about Barthelme's *The King*: "the debasement of myth." Mathis is a man with a thesis, and his examples are carefully chosen to demonstrate the progressive deconstruction of the Arthurian myth from Twain to Barthelme. The evidence of the persistence of that myth in the countless "standard works of pulp fantasy fiction" simply doesn't fit his thesis.

A second irony is that his analyses show remarkably little knowledge of the sources of the Arthurian myth in the middle ages. He consistently argues that any narrative involving a quest has a symbolic Grail as its object, but medieval Arthurian romance is full of quests in which no Grail is involved. And when he comments, for example, that "We should note here [in Steinbeck's *Cup of Gold*] the similarity of the name [Ysobel] to the mythical Yseult . . . who is pursued by Tristan but remains unattainable" (27), he seems ignorant of the fact that the whole point of the medieval Tristan story lies in the consummation of the love between Tristan and Isolde.

I said that Dr. Mathis is a man with a thesis, and a little surfing of the web demonstrates that this book was indeed his doctoral dissertation at New York University (January 2000), a fact that he fails to mention in his "Acknowledgements," though he does thank his adviser, Dr. Josephine Hendin, for "invaluable advice" (vii). McFarland is a respectable publisher of scholarly books that has published some excellent monographs and reference books in Arthuriana. I wish that this little book were less narrowly focused and without an agenda.

NONFICTION

THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES IN SCIENCE FICTION

Robin Anne Reid

Larbalestier, Justine. *The Battle of the Sexes in Science Fiction*. The Wesleyan Early Classics of Science Fiction Series (General Editor: Arthur B. Evans). Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. 2002. Cloth: \$50.00; ISBN 0-8195-6526-1. Paper: \$19.95; ISBN 0-8195-6527-X. 295 pages.

Despite essays by sf writers and feminist academics, a prevalent myth in science fiction fandom and scholarship is that “women” were not present until the seventies. Justine Larbalestier’s excellent monograph shows the extent to which “science fiction’s engagement with feminism, sexual difference, and sex and sexuality was not a recent development” (xi). Distinguishing between “[s]cience fiction engaging with feminism” and “feminist science fiction,” Larbalestier analyzes sf stories as part of the ongoing conversations about changing relationships between men and women in America as reflected in American sf. Informed by semiotics and gender studies, the work refuses to privilege sf stories and novels and includes other texts produced by the science fiction community such as fanzines, fan letters to prozines, essays, and reviews. After attending conventions, doing archival research in sf collections in Canada, America, and Australia, and interviewing people in science fiction, as well as reading the scholarly criticism, Larbalestier sees her work as focusing on science fiction communities, not just texts. Her archival research proves that women were active in sf before the late sixties and early seventies (and that male editors were commenting with amazement on their participation); what changed was the discovery of feminism by women in science fiction. Not surprisingly, much of the feminist scholarship on sf focuses on work done in the seventies and later. Larbalestier’s work covers a much wider period of time. In seven chapters, each using the title of a James Tiptree Jr. story, Larbalestier analyzes stories, letters, and articles published from the twenties to the seventies, ending with a discussion of James Tiptree Jr. and the Tiptree Award, started in 1991, to recognize science fiction that expands the roles of men and women.

Chapter 1 analyzes stories, letters from fans, and editorials in professional sf magazines on the debate over “women” and “sex” and science fiction present from the beginning of American science fiction in Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing Stories* first published in 1926. Much of the rhetoric in these early texts incorporates “battle” or war imagery. Chapter 2 covers stories published between 1926 and 1973 which are explicitly about “the battle of the sexes” and which focus on role reversals in which “women” rule or plan to rule. These stories all end with the restoration of the “natural order” (men ruling). Chapter 3 covers other battle-of-the-sexes texts published between 1926 and 1973, which present different solutions than the stories discussed in Chapter Two. The different solutions include men realizing that they need to give women equality; an all-female society in which the return of men is not celebrated; and societies in which there is only one sex, hermaphroditic or androgynous. Chapter 4 focuses on major debates in the science fiction community. Analyzing fan letters published between the twenties and early fifties and articles published from 1955-1975 by sf writers, Larbalestier shows how the issues of women (characters) in sf and women writing sf have been controversial since the earlier years of American sf. Chapter 5, in contrast, covers “stories about women and science fiction that take for granted that women are part of science fiction” (144). By stories, Larbalestier does not mean only fictions but also histories and critical articles, including the beginnings of feminist science fiction, that focus on “women and science fiction, feminism and science fiction, and feminist science fiction” (144). Chapter 6 presents multiple stories about the paradigmatic figure and multiple genders of James Tiptree Jr.: stories constructed in published children’s stories by her mother, stories in various introductions to sf collections, stories in criticism and in fandom. Alice Sheldon/James Tiptree Jr./Racoon Sheldon is a major example of the performance of gender and gender differences in science fiction. Chapter 7 “Her Smoke Rose Up Forever: The James Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award” connects the stories of the origins and development of this award to the issues of “feminism and engagement with issues of sex and sexuality” in science fiction that have been taking place since the twenties (201). The Epilogue sums up Larbalestier’s arguments.

The book includes an excellent bibliography, index, glossary, and 20 illustrations, including reproductions of earlier fanzines, prozine covers, letters from fans, and editorials. Larbalestier does an excellent job of acknowledging the plural nature of feminisms and science fictions that make up multiple feminist science fiction. While gender is the main focus, Larbalestier does not fail to note the extent to which the gendered/sexed bodies in the stories are primarily white, middle class, and North American. She points out the exclusion of African American women in a common rhetorical mode (comparing white women’s oppression to black men’s oppression); notes the whiteness of the science fiction and the tendency of the battle-of-the-sexes texts to present gender differences between white characters only (in illustrations if not in stories). She also does an excellent

job of writing for multiple audiences, including readers who are not knowledgeable about sf or her theoretical approaches, defining specialized terminology (as much from sf fandom as from theory) both within the text and in the glossary. Larbalestier bridges the gap between two approaches in sf criticism: focusing solely on the books and ignoring the fans (and writers) and the recent and growing ethnographic scholarship (focusing on the fan communities). This book is a must-have for anyone interested in feminism and sf and for anyone interested in sf as a scholarly endeavor. Given Larbalestier's accessible (but never simplistic) style, I can also see assigning it in upper-level or graduate courses that focus on American studies, gender, feminism or masculinity, semiotics (stylistics), or literary theory.

NONFICTION
ONCE THERE WAS A MAGAZINE
 Bruce A. Beatie

Once There Was a Magazine. A Personal View of 'Unknown' and 'Unknown Worlds.' Compiled & annotated by Fred Smith. Illustrated by Sue Mason. Essex, UK: Becon Publications, 2002. ISBN 1-870824-45-8. ii + 108 pages. £7.00 plus £0.75 p&p. (as of 8-15-02, \$11.91 U.S.).

This little book is both a useful reference source and a delightful exercise in nostalgia. Its core, and the most fascinating part, is an "Issue by issue review of the magazine" (pages 5-48), Fred Smith's concise but insightful analysis of and commentary on the contents of each of the 39 issues of *Unknown* (retitled *Unknown Worlds* with the October 1941 issue); he summarizes the longer stories, and at least mentions even the editorials, covers and inside art, and other nonfiction contents, often with critical evaluations. These reviews are enjoyable in themselves, and they are made accessible for researchers by a variety of indices: Title (pages 51-57), Author (59-70), Artist (71-73), Letter Writers (75-77), and Books Reviewed (79—*Unknown* published few); each entry gives the month and date of the issues (original U. S. and British Reprint editions) in which the entry appeared. The remaining indices give the issue-by-issue contents, including page references and illustrators, of the U. S. (81-90) and British (91-98) editions, of both the U. S. and British editions of the 1948 *From Unknown Worlds* anthology, and of nine "Other Anthologies & Collections" (103-107) of stories from *Unknown*—four of these are successive revised and augmented (or abbreviated) editions of the same collection of stories by A. E. van Vogt and his wife, E. Mayne Hull.

Each of the entries in the indices is classified as Novel (40,000+ words), Novella (20/40,000), Novelette (10/20,000), Short Story (under 10,000), Poem, Article, or Editorial. Of the 274 items in the 39 issues of the U. S. edition, short stories preponderated (144), followed by novelettes (57) and novels (29); there were few novellas (15), articles (14) or poems (13). The Author index made it easy to discover which authors appeared most frequently. In order to rank the top authors by amount of space occupied in the magazine, I weighted a novel as 4, a novella as 3, a novelette as 2, and a short story or article as 1. The top fourteen authors appear in the following table:

| Author | Published items | Weighted items |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| De Camp, L. Sprague | 16 | 46 |
| Hubbard, L. Ron | 14 | 38 |
| Cartmill, Cleve | 11 | 21 |
| Sturgeon, Theodore | 15.5 | 20.5 |
| Kuttner, Henry | 9 | 17 |
| Rice, Jane | 10 | 16 |
| Leiber, Fritz, jr. | 8 | 13 |
| Boucher, Anthony | 9.5 | 12.5 |
| Jameson, Malcolm | 10 | 12 |
| Long, Frank Belknap | 10 | 10 |
| Wandrei, Howard | 7 | 10 |
| Bond, Nelson S. | 6 | 9 |
| Del Rey, Lester | 7.5 | 8.5 |
| Arthur, Robert | 6 | 7 |

Few of the names are surprising to anyone who grew up reading *Astounding* in the forties and fifties, though a similar analysis of the top fourteen for an equivalent number of issues of *Astounding* would probably have produced a different ranking—De Camp and Hubbard, for example, would probably move down in the rankings. Anthony Boucher rarely, and Robert Arthur probably never, appeared in *Astounding* or the more narrowly science-fiction pulps.

But Jane Rice? I've been reading science fiction and fantasy regularly since the late 1940s, and her name was the only unfamiliar one on the list above. The 3rd edition (1991) of *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Authors* has no entry for her, but a quick search on the internet showed that she published 17 stories and one poem between 1940 and 1995; the earliest ten all appeared in *Unknown* (1940-43). After a 15-year break she published three stories and one poem in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (1958-60). Another appeared in a 1966 Damon Knight anthology, and a last story was published in 1995 as a chapbook by Necronomicon Press. Six of her stories have been reprinted in anthologies: one, "The Idol of the Flies," no less than seven times, "The Refugee" five times. Here is a wrongly neglected fantasy author—and a woman author to boot.

Fred Smith's wonderful little book not only took me back to the pleasure I found during the late forties and early fifties, in amassing an almost-complete run of *Unknown* (mostly sold, alas! to pay toward my college education), but introduced me to an author I didn't remember at all, and informed me that *Unknown* not only was reprinted in the United Kingdom, but that the British edition continued long past the 1943 demise of its American source, until 1949. I recommend it highly.

FICTION

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND & INVASION OF THE SEA

Michael Levy

Verne, Jules. *The Mysterious Island*, translated by Sidney Kravitz, edited by Arthur B. Evans, introduction and critical material by William Butcher. Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2002. lii + 676 pages, 75 illustrations. \$40.00 hc, ISBN 0-8195-6475-3; \$17.95 pb, ISBN 0-8195-6559-8.

Verne, Jules. *Invasion of the Sea*, translated by Edward Baxter, edited and introduced by Arthur B. Evans. Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2002. xx + 258 pages, 44 illus. \$24.95 hc, ISBN 0-8195-6465-6.

These are the first two volumes to be published in the monumental Wesleyan Early Classics of Science Fiction Series. Arthur Evans, who edited both volumes, is also the general editor for the series so anyone interested in contributing to one of the most important recent scholarly endeavors in our field would do well to take notice of his method. Although both novels are by Jules Verne, they differ in several ways. *The Mysterious Island* (1874) was published when Verne was at the height of his popularity, just a year after *Around the World in Eighty Days* appeared, whereas *Invasion of the Sea* (1905) was written near the end of the author's life, when both his popularity and his sales were waning. *The Mysterious Island* has been widely available in English, although its various translations have invariably been both inaccurate and heavily truncated. *Invasion of the Sea*, on the other hand, has never before appeared in English. Finally, *The Mysterious Island* is a major novel, a genuine classic of the genre, whereas *Invasion of the Sea*, although not without interest, is clearly a minor work.

Most readers of this review are undoubtedly familiar with *The Mysterious Island*, if only from the well-done, but highly inaccurate 1961 film version of the tale (remember Roy Harryhausen's giant crab?). Set at the time of the American Civil War, it tells the story of five men who are swept across the South Pacific in a runaway balloon which eventually crashes on an unknown island. The most successful of several Robinsonades (that is tales in the manner of *Robinson Crusoe*) which Verne penned, it demonstrates the author's youthful optimism concerning the resilience of modern society. Starting virtually from scratch, the survivors, a fairly representative (albeit entirely male) cross section of America, essentially recreate civilization. A darker tone begins to make itself known in the latter part of the book, however, when a ship from the outside world arrives and violence breaks out. Then, of course, there's the matter of the aging Captain Nemo, who, in his submarine the Nautilus, haunts the island.

Like most of Verne's other novels, when it was originally published in English *The Mysterious Island* was severely cut. In part this may have been to reduce publication costs, but it may also have been that the book's English-language editors thought Verne's interest in scientific detail excessive, and it almost undoubtedly involved a dislike for Verne's politics. Jules Verne was an intensely political writer and his views on the world were not always in line with English and American perspectives on current events. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *The Mysterious Island* were both published in the

decade immediately following the American Civil War and comment extensively on the many issues raised by that conflict, including slavery. Much of that political commentary was cut when Verne was translated, and this may go a long way towards explaining why so many Americans tend to think of him as in some sense a children's writer. Kravitz, Evans, and Butcher, however, with their uncut translation and superb supporting critical materials, have largely redressed the editorial crimes perpetrated on at least this one among Verne's better novels.

Turning to *Invasion of the Sea*, it's worth noting that at least one reviewer has referred to this book as a lost novel, but this is inaccurate. Unlike the recently rediscovered *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, an early and inferior work of Verne's which was rejected by his publisher and never even saw print in French until the 1994, *Invasion* was actually published in 1905, soon after Verne's death, and simply suffered from relatively poor sales. Verne's best days as a writer were far behind him when he wrote the book. Few of the novels he wrote in the last decade of his life were particularly memorable and even fewer were given English translations.

This having been said, it must also be noted that *Invasion* is not without its points of interest. Throughout his career Verne was a masterful researcher who read widely in the various periodicals of his day. Many of his novels comment on contemporary political events and utilize the most up to date scientific theories. *Invasion of the Sea* concerns a successful attempt by French engineers to dig a canal from the Mediterranean south into the Algerian Sahara in order to create a vast inland sea. This seemingly crackpot plan, however, was seriously considered by the French government for a number of years in the late-nineteenth century and at one point even had the active support of Ferdinand de Lesseps, he of Suez Canal fame. In what might be seen as an essay in alternate history, Verne tells the story of what might have happened if the French government had been convinced to carry the plan to execution after all.

The novel is essentially a thriller which pits a heroic engineer named Hardigan, who wishes to build the canal, against an equally strong-willed Tuareg tribesman named Hadjar, who has sworn to stop him. The tale comes to something of a *deus ex machina* ending, complete with a delicious period illustration that might well portray the Red Sea closing over Pharaoh's troops, as a massive earthquake sends water rushing to fill the new inland sea and simultaneously wipes out the attacking Tuareg warriors. Verne generally showed considerable sympathy for underdogs and often demonstrated strong anti-imperialist tendencies, one of the reasons he was so often censored in English. Here, however, although he shows Hadjar as competent, he nonetheless portrays him primarily as a terrorist. In light of 9-11 and President Bush's own ongoing "War against Terror," the novel's clearly defined clash between the attitudes of the West and the Middle East seems particularly relevant. One wonders if much has been learned on either side of the cultural divide in the nearly one hundred years since *Invasion of the Sea* was first published.

The publication by Wesleyan University Press of these two novels should be seen as a herald of good things to come. A number of science fiction's finest scholars have been commissioned to work on further volumes in the series. I look forward to their appearance.

FICTION
THE KAFKA EFFEKT
 Matthew Wolf-Meyer

Wilson, D. Harlan. *The Kafka Effekt*. Fountain Hills, AZ: Eraserhead Press, 2001. 211 pgs., \$13.95, softcover. ISBN 0971357218.

Each of us has the potential to write a book like this, but most of us, upon considering our potential readers, realize that it might be best to keep these stories to ourselves. Which is not to say that the stories contained in this collection are intensely personal or embarrassing, but rather so mundane in their apparent incredibility that sharing isn't really necessary. Reading *The Kafka Effekt* reminds me of listening to friends describe acid trips or particularly drunken states: interesting, maybe, but it would have been a lot more interesting if it happened to *me*. I'm reminded of a friend who spent a summer keeping track of all his dreams, which he would recount regardless of their content: He refused to acknowledge that the "weirdness" of his subconscious was the same weirdness that we all share—it's just part of being human. And by recounting dreams, or *Far Side* cartoons, the simple retelling seems to eradicate any sense of immediacy, and what seemed so perfectly absurd asserts itself as dull and a simple by-product of the imagination's boredom. Hence *The Kafka Effekt* is an experiment in tedium.

To say that this collection is indicative of a lingering influence on Franz Kafka's part is a misnomer: These fictions have more to do with William Burroughs (in his more deliberately absurd moments [talking ass, anyone?]) than they ever will with Kafka. Kafka was a genius at providing interesting, yet simple, moral stories, with a strong sense of character (when they lacked proper character development), but these fictions are vapid and uninteresting. Wilson's have none of Kafka's moral sensibility, and lack any of Burroughs' humor, all for the sake, it seems, of being outlandish and weird. But he does seem to have perfected Burroughs' "pick it up on any page, at any time" approach: *The Kafka Effect* fills empty minutes of the day rather easily – which is not to say that it's worth reading as a salve to a day's boredom.

Interestingly enough, Eraserhead Press' website claims, as part of their submission policy, that "pretentiousness is what killed the french (sic) surrealist movement of the twenties. We don't want any pretentious writing." There is no better adjective than "pretentious" to describe Wilson's writing. While he may not be a pedant, Wilson is so trapped in his own petty imagination that passages like this are deemed significant: "After the bar tender returned from across the street, he climbed up onto the bar and took a power nap. During the nap he didn't have any dreams. This was not unusual. 'I was born without a unconscious,' he said, 'and I've never had a dream in my whole shit-stained life'" (186). That selection being nearly random, any given passage would have done just as well. These stories are claustrophobic (which might be how Wilson feels they relate to Kafka's work), but in this insularity, rather than exposing depths of the human psyche, these are simple effluvium exercises: Today I wonder what I read in those 211 pages...

As epigraph to "The Message," Wilson reprints a rejection letter (presumably the one earned by "The Message") from *Indigenous Fiction*, which I too will recount: "While curious, this tale didn't seem to accomplish anything in particular." The same could be said for Wilson's book as a whole. I began reading it sequentially, destined to read from cover to cover in the order that the author had laid out, but I found that consulting a new story whenever time permitted, and a story that seemed somewhat short/unoffensive, was a more appropriate way to approach things. As such, I may have missed some obtuse narrative line that flowed through the sections – but I doubt it.

I feel, as I write this review (and I've been cognizant of this since I began to think about writing this review) that I might be enacting one of those age-old reviewer's faux pas, giving some destined-to-greatness author a horrible review that everyone remembers, and remembers that it was the reviewer who was a fool, and not the author reviewed. But I don't think that is or ever will be the case. Wilson is an immature writer at this point, and while his prose shows promise, his lack of proper storytelling techniques ultimately undermines his efforts as an author of "serious" fiction (and I mean "serious" only in the sense of "well respected"). I'm sure we'll be seeing more of Wilson in the future, but hopefully it will be a more mature, and practiced, writer, conscious of who will be reading him and why.

FICTION
ARGONAUT
Warren Rochelle

Schmidt, Stanley. *Argonaut*. New York: Tor Books, 2002. 333 pages, hardcover, \$25.95. ISBN 0-312-87726-9. (Reviewed in uncorrected galley proofs.)

Stanley Schmidt's first novel in fifteen years, *Argonaut*, is a classic alien invasion tale, with its roots firmly in H.G. Wells and American science fiction's Golden Age. The overall plot is straightforward: humans encounter strange bugs, things get weird, humans suspicious, start investigating, try to warn government, aliens wants humans to stop, humans want aliens to stop and leave the Earth alone, humans and aliens knock heads, and the good guys win. Humanity is saved, as was often the case in Golden Age SF, by intrepid scientists, "people using their heads and their knowledge of science, to figure things out" (Hartwell, open letter to reviewers). Not that this kind of salvific science is limited to the Golden Age: the plot of the movie *Independence Day*, is very similar: a computer whiz and a crack pilot save the world.

Fleshing out that string of clauses in the last paragraph reveals more elements of the classic alien invasion tale. The invasion itself, the reconnaissance bugs, are discovered by the expected innocent bystander/outsideers. Lester Ordway is first, a retired electrical engineer, who is "stung between his eyes by a strange flying insect and overwhelmed by an intense flood of memories" (back cover). Pilar Ramierz, a medical technologist, is at the hospital when Lester is brought in, still holding to one of these strange bugs. She is bitten as well, and suffers the same, albeit milder flood of memories. She is "frightened but fascinated," and no one at the hospital will help her or even admit there is something fishy going on. She and Lester team

up—another classic invasion tale element—the brave few who know the truth. Eventually they seek out the help most seek in invasion tales: from a scientist, in this case, an elderly entomologist, Maybelle Terwilliger. This intrepid trio suspects they “have discovered the vanguard of a secret alien invasion, a pervasive reconnaissance that puts the legendary 100 eyes of Argus to shame” (back cover). Can they get the government to believe them? Or will it be too late and—*the aliens take over*—don’t forget that great Grade B flick, *Invaders from Mars*. Eventually yes, with all the confrontations and skirmishes one could want, including the alien’s turn from observation to experimentation with human reaction to extreme stress: insect plagues, disease, fires. Scientists gather, ponder, work, and in the end, the United States launches missile attacks, the good guys win.

Schmidt does, however, have some contemporary twists. It’s set in the near future, about thirty years or so from now, and the marvelous machine that is driving the tale is not the weaponry of either invader or invaded, but nanotechnology. There is only one alien and he isn’t *really* invading the Earth, not at first. Rather, Xiphar, the alien, is just curious and he is using nanoprobes, in the form of insects, to check us out. In other words, he is bugging the planet. But this single alien truly did not mean to harm us, and was not even aware we were fully intelligent and sentient—after all, *his* people, “the Patingar[,] are only the true intelligence, and the odds of it evolving somewhere are just too—” (Schmidt 268). And even though we destroy him, this alien leaves us a gift: a starship. The characters, such as Lester, Pilar, and Maybelle, America’s president, Hwang, are given more development than one might expect in a story in which technology is so important. And they are contemporary: two older people, a Puerto Rican woman, an Asian-American—the traditional Golden Age characters are not present.

What then, to do with this “good old fashioned science novel . . . a well-paced story,” as Tor’s Hartwell describes it? *Argonaut* could easily fit in to the section of a science fiction course that focuses on the invasion or first contact themes. Or it could easily fit in to part of a course that examines how technology is changing human society. Yet, I say this with reservations. The scientists who save the day talk entirely too much—to the point they almost become talking heads. The conversations in the government conference room, in which things get figured out, slow down a story that should move much faster. Xiphar, the alien himself, is given to long speeches, a bit too close to the sermonic, and his first appearance, which Schmidt does liken to the Great Oz, isn’t terrifying. It’s funny. That the other characters don’t see it that way make me think it wasn’t supposed to be, either. Yes, Stanley Schmidt “is certainly an important and influential figure in SF and his novel deserves a look” (Hartwell). But, it is somewhat ironic that my chief criticism of this novel is one that I think Schmidt might give to those who submit stories to *Analog*: show, don’t tell. The reader is told far too much.

FICTION
SCHILD’S LADDER
Jeff Prickman

Egan, Greg. *Schild’s Ladder*. New York: Harper Eos, 2002. 342 pages, \$25.95, hardcover ISBN 0-06-105093-8.

Nearly two thirds of the way through Greg Egan’s latest novel *Schild’s Ladder*, a character states, “I’m completely lost. What are you people talking about?” (200). Sorry to say, that was my reaction throughout this ambitious but ultimately disappointing book. The degree to which a reader is interested in seemingly endless dialogue about quantum and mathematical hypotheses will greatly determine whether one can even finish it. In fairness to Egan, he is writing about and from the vantage of post-humans, some of whom still choose “embodiment,” but many who exist for thousands of years in downloaded form, where “backed up” selves can travel through space at light speed, or be put on hold indefinitely until a replacement body is desired.

The novel credits “the advent of civilization” to the invention of an implanted cerebral device called the Qusp (Quantum Singleton Processor). All decisions now have only one computed outcome, subverting the quantum theoretical phenomenon of endless parallel consequences and selves stemming from any decision people make. The Qusp process “included superpositions of many alternatives, (but) only the final, definite state determined. . . actions” (23). Egan describes this state of being as “singleton” (introduced in his short story “Singleton” in the February 2002 *Interzone*).

I find that *Schild’s Ladder* falls into what I call Egan’s “Hundred Light Year Diary” Trap. In his classic tale of a future self letting a younger version know how his life will (or ought to) play out, a sudden infodump on how the diary works brings the plot to a screeching halt. When I used the story in class students said they liked the premise and characters but were put off by the sudden textbook explanation. The same pattern holds true in this novel.

The basic plot of a mysterious expansion of a section of vacuum in space that wipes out anything in its path, including entire inhabited solar systems, is easy to understand. Similarly, the set up, if not the terms, of the debate between two factions of scientists analyzing the border—the Yielders (who want to study it) and Preservationists (who want to destroy it to save their worlds)—is clear. Furthermore, the two main characters Tchicaya and Mariama, rivals and not-quite lovers since childhood, are compelling, although the best scenes describe their past and the secret that they share. Finally, Egan even includes an intriguing rebellious faction (the neatly named anachronauts) and a surprise discovery once the other side of the border is breached and explored. But far too much of the novel is taken up with lines such as, “I could trigger the formation of a novel layer population. But that would take time, and it would only stretch across a single vendek cell” (271). And unless readers are in the mood for dialogue like this throughout, many will not remain for the author’s final revelations.

While *Schild’s Ladder* is more readable than *Diaspora* (1998), perhaps Egan is once again too successful in presenting the “other” perspective of his future “human” researchers. I love his fantastic short stories—who can top the collection *Axiomatic* (1995) for outstanding cautionary tales on genetics, identity and brain implants?—and his more straightforward, but no less thought provoking, novels such as *Distress* (1997) and *Teranesia* (1999). If readable ideas that do not interfere with the story are what you are after, look to these Egan books instead, and don’t even think of trying to use *Schild’s Ladder* with college students.

FICTION
THE MOUNTAIN CAGE AND OTHER STORIES

Sandra J. Lindow

Sargent, Pamela. *The Mountain Cage and Other Stories*. Introduction by Barry N. Malzberg. Decatur, GA.: Meisha Merlin, April 2002, ISBN: 1-892065-61-4 hardcover \$30.00, SC ISBN: 1-892065-62-2, trade paperback \$16.00.

Highly respected author/editor Pamela Sargent’s new short story collection spans twenty-two years of a career that has been sensitive, imaginative and ground-breaking. Although historically Sargent may have received more attention for her work as an editor highlighting and preserving the work of women SF writers in her *Women of Wonder* series, her own writing deserves considerable critical attention as well. Sargent as writer creates worlds that are both elegantly detailed and painstakingly researched. The thirteen stories, including the sly Nebula Award-winning political satire “Danny Goes to Mars” (1992), examine a wide range of human themes using an approach similar to LeGuin’s thought experiments. Sargent’s excellent afterwords to each story provide worthwhile insight into her writing process.

For the most part, these are stories of setting and character; plot is less important. Sargent seems much more interested in what her characters are thinking than in what they are doing. The first novella, “The Sleeping Serpent” (1992), is splendidly researched and set in the khanate of Yeke Geren (upper New York State) in an alternate universe where Mongols took control of Europe in the thirteenth century and began to colonize the Americas in the seventeenth. Creating an effective coalition with the local native tribes, the Mongols go to war against the much hated “Inglistani’s,” sacking and looting Plymouth and Charlestown and driving the English from the land.

“The Mountain Cage” (1983) is a tale where Hitler and the holocaust are viewed through the eyes of sentient cats — Hrurr, Mewleen, and Ylawl. Tragically symbolic is Hrurr’s concern for the dogs living in the chalet who, in their slavish obedience to the Fuhrer, are losing their ability to understand the language of other animals:

...The two-legged ones may draw more creatures into their ways, separating us one from another, and then the world will be for us as it is for them. Where there were voices, there will be only silence. The world will end for us.

Although Sargent is never graphic or prurient, some of these stories live on the line where speculative fiction merges with horror. “Common Mind” (2000) is an unsettling story about group hypnosis and mind manipulation that I found especially frightening in the light of the 9-11 attacks. In “Collectors” (1996) a young American’s romantic dalliance in Europe becomes truly alien. In “Isles,” a gentle ghost story set in Venice, a believable late middle-aged American couple tour Italy in a last attempt to save their crumbling marriage. “The Summer’s Dust” (1981) is a future Hansel and Gretel fairy tale set in a world where immortality has almost been achieved. The few children left are conceived in petri dishes, born out of artificial wombs, and raised wearing life suits and electronic bracelets that protect them. Still, there is real evil in their world and, with enough dogged persistence, it is possible for a trio of young adventurers to meet Baba Yaga in the forest and suddenly become involved in something very dangerous indeed.

“Fears” (1984) is very scary not because of what happens plotwise but because it presents a near-future world where, due to the kind of sex selection now occurring in China, women have become so rare that it has become dangerous for a woman of child bearing age to live unmarried and on her own. Along with her 1986 post-holocaust dystopian novel *The Shore of Women*, “Fears” should become part of the feminist SF canon.

Sargent has received considerable critical attention for her vast, terraforming Venus trilogy. “Danny Goes to Mars” (1992) and “Hillary Orbits Venice” (1999) share with those novels an initial plot device, the invention of a fission/fusion engine, but are really more social criticism than they are space opera. “Hillary” has much in common with LeGuin’s “Sur” where, in the early twentieth century, a group of Argentinean women succeed in reaching the South Pole, through practical planning and solid team effort. Here an alternate universe Hillary Rodham is an astronaut/biochemist and the widow of the charming philandering, scientist Richard Feynman. In a ship aptly called the *Sacajawea*, Hillary and a crew of women astronauts are able to reach Venus and return without incident. Especially well realized is Sargent’s depiction of Hillary’s feminist concerns, the problems of balancing marriage, family and career. When Hillary actually sees Venus close up she thinks “that giving Venus’s topographic features female names was appropriate. The planet seemed as angry as women ought to be after centuries of male oppression that had often been as oppressive as the Venusian atmosphere. Venus could almost be seen as the planetary manifestation of a just female rage.” A companion piece, “Dream of Venice” (2000), takes place in the universe of her trilogy, and looks at the problems of love, artistic integrity, family values and fitting in at work on a planet in the vast process of being terraformed.

Although Sargent has been publishing since 1970, “The Novella Race” (1978) is the earliest story in this collection. It describes the pressures and triumphs in a nearly post-literary world where young writers are trained and groomed for the Olympics much the way young skaters and gymnasts are today. Although dated in that the young writers are limited to using typewriters rather than laptops, the story says much about the very real problems and frustrations of trying to make it as an author. Particularly poignant are those who have achieved some initial success but then suffer writer’s block. In the end, her main character wryly concedes “Let’s face it, I’m not fit for anything else. I only hope I can be a contender once more.”

“All Rights” (1992), a comedy about middle-age, mid-list publishing problems, can be seen as a companion piece to “The Novella Race.” When publishing houses from other universes suddenly begin offering very large alternate rights contracts to midlist writers, it seems too good to be true. Can alternate universes really be so different that publishers there are “sensitive caretakers of writing talent instead of stripminers and exploiters”? Sargent concludes that it is hard for writers to be fully appreciated in any continuum. “All the more reason, I suppose, for writing to be its own reward, since that is likely to be the only enduring reward most of us ever receive.” Despite her talent for humorous satire, Sargent is overall a serious thinker whose characters are often self-deprecating and unsure of their value in a world where stories themselves seem to be becoming endangered. Perhaps that’s why in her concluding “Too Many Memories” the persona suggests that we “work out with some Tolstoy and Balzac... Even better, keep a journal ... master the art of telling or writing a good story ... sit down and open a vein.”

FICTION
KILN PEOPLE
Bill Dynes

Brin, David. *Kiln People*. New York: Tor, 2002. Hardcover, 460 pages, \$25.95. ISBN 0-765-30355-8.

There is a natural affinity between science fiction and the *noir* whodunit, and David Brin’s *Kiln People* does an entertaining job of exploiting the points of contact between the two. The novel sets a detective story in a near-future when the human consciousness can be copied into a clay golem with a 24-hour life span. At the end of that day, the golem, or “ditto,” feels compelled to return to its original to download its experiences before its messy dissolution. Our hero, Albert Morris, is hot on the trail of Beta, who specializes in pirated celebrity clones, when he is pulled into a mystery that begins as a missing person, becomes a murder, and ultimately transforms into a complicated web of corporate greed and scientific megalomania. While less compelling than some of his other novels, Brin delivers an interesting and enjoyable tale, and his central narrative innovation, the me-for-a-day golems, is fascinating and original.

Larry Niven has written that “detective and science fiction ... have a lot in common,” especially “readers who like a challenge, a puzzle” (Niven, Afterword, *Flatlander*, New York: Del Rey, 1995. 355). The puzzles of this novel aren’t terribly

challenging, and the progress of Morris' case is largely predictable. The most interesting questions here aren't "who?" or even "why?" but "how?" Those questions do get answered along the way, and the climax of the novel is satisfyingly grand.

Niven also suggests that "much detective fiction is also sociological fiction ... as is much science fiction" (355), and in his speculations about a society transformed by the readily accessible technology of the golems Brin succeeds ... and falls a bit short. I was intrigued by the brief glimpses we get of the world created by this new technology, though I wasn't always convinced. Brin hints at the social upheavals that came about as dittoes flooded the world's labor markets, and the investigations of Morris and his copies do take us into some of the strange new worlds of vice and opportunity that have opened up. But for the most part the flavor of Brin's world is familiar, and given the radical world-building Brin has offered in novels such as his *Uplift War* series, I assume this familiarity is intentional.

Juxtaposed with this motif of radically multiplied consciousness is Brin's depiction of a sprawling and invasive internet, linked to countless spycams maintained by both professional and amateur voyeurs. Brin has speculated about the fears and the possibilities of this kind of ubiquitous observation in his non-fiction *Transparent Society*, and it is interesting to see some of these ideas explored here. Certainly the access to all-seeing cameras sharply transforms the necessary leg-work of the detective. Tailing a suspect now becomes something one can do from home, especially when one has a creative AI and some technically-savvy dittoes to help out. The real challenges begin when one wants to hide from the cameras.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the golems is their effect upon the narrative itself. In his acknowledgements, Brin admits that the different points of view demanded by his choice to use a narrator who divides himself into at least four separate parts over the course of the novel was challenging. Morris tells his story in first-person, as do several of the dittoes he creates. Different color dittoes have different attributes and abilities – send a cheap green to do the day's dirty work, invest a bit more for a gray to handle the more complicated jobs. Each golem begins its life with a full complement of memory from its creator — the archetype — but of course the events of the day leave their impression upon the ditto's consciousness. Brin has some fun with the subtle effects that this process has upon his characters' narration; language, like the individual stories themselves, begin identically then branch off to reflect the different experiences of each. Most intriguing is the green who finds himself becoming a "Frankie," a Frankenstein's creature beginning to develop his own sense of identity and self. It is disappointing that the limitations of the novel don't allow Brin to explore the implications of this multiplicity as fully as he might, although the dittoes and Morris himself do have occasion for some interesting speculations on the relationship between identity and experience. That the golems are all aware of the nature of their existence, including its short term, lends a certain poignancy to their speculations.

If Brin has chosen not to exploit all of the social and narrative ramifications of his human dittoes, he has concentrated instead on a well-paced, engaging, and often humorous experience. Albert Morris fits quite well into the tradition of SF detectives such as Asimov's Elijah Baily and Niven's Gil Hamilton, delivering an adventure that intrigues as it entertains.

FICTION
MindWorlds
Carolyn Wendell

Gotlieb, Phyllis. *MindWorlds*. New York: Tor, May 2002. 272 pages, hardcover, \$24.95. ISBN 0-312-87876-1.

Starting with the final volume, *MindWorlds*, of Phyllis Gotlieb's trilogy would be rather like joining a tour group for the last one-third: you'll surely enjoy the scenery, but you will probably be puzzled about what's going on. If this final novel is all you can find, read it for its language and vivid characters, but you'll be better off if you start with the first two, *Flesh and Gold* (Tor, 1998) and *Violent Stars* (Tor, 1999).

The three novels tell a galactic tale of widespread evil and the attempts of a variety of characters from a variety of worlds to defeat it. That allusions abound to the fall of Rome and the present day United States is no accident. In this trilogy, the villain is a greedy corporation, Zamos (probably a descendant of an earlier Mob) that has corrupted the entire galaxy, producing and selling every sin known to sentient beings. Zamos and its crimes are the motivating factors in each volume. In the first, *Flesh and Gold*, Zamos's activities of illegal gene-tampering and the selling of these creatures are detected and the arrests begin. In the second, *Violent Stars*, the trials have begun, but Zamos and its allies maneuver to delay and stop the trials by continuing their pattern of murder, kidnapping and cloning.

Along the way, we spend time with a bevy of unique characters, from various worlds (most of whom are members of the Galactic Federation), with various skills and appearances. We meet the honorable judge Skerow, a middle-aged female from Khagodis, whose natives are giant telepathic lizardlike creatures (a character in the first novel refers to Skerow as a “streamlined baby allosuarus”). It is Skerow’s perception and perseverance that start the trilogy. And we become acquainted with Ned Gattes, a professional “pug” (fighter—Zamos has created arenas all over the universe where people batter one another to death) recruited to be a GalFed agent to ferret out Zamos crime. Then there are the Lyrhhrt, jellylike creatures who prefer to live in the swamp environment of their planet, mate, think and communicate telepathically. When they are forced to leave their home, they encase themselves in metal bodies and are supremely talented at crafting metal. Among their creations is Spartakos, a magnificent gold humanoid robot, who becomes friend and protector of Ned Gattes.

The third volume, *MindWorlds*, concentrates on Ned Gattes on Fthel IV and his efforts to stop a plot that will rape the planet Khagodis, concocted and put into motion by a remnant of Zamos. Although the corrupt corporation has been dismantled and the trials continue (and will, on five different planets for years), the economic effects have left the people of the various worlds scrambling, trying to make a living, legally or illegally, in the vacuum left by Zamos. Hard up for money, Gattes agrees to appear to participate in a militaristic plot (or pseudo-plot: things get complicated) that will rape Khagodis of resources. His real mission, of course, is to end the scheme.

The third volume also includes a number of the powerfully telepathic Lyrhhrt, who up until this volume have been amazingly fair and honest beings who bear no ill will to anyone, even Zamos that enslaved their race for generations. Ironically, by the last volume, as Zamos is being destroyed, evil Lyrhhrt appear, supposedly driven mad by being alone.

A major subplot of *MindWorlds* focuses on Hasso, a highly intelligent and an eligible bachelor Khagodi—except that he has only one heart instead of the basic two other Khagodi have and he has a withered leg. It is painful when he falls in love with and rescues a lovely saurian girl who will never love him, even if he is fertile, a rarity among Khagodi.

The plot for this last novel of the trilogy is somewhat scrambled and it’s hard to sort out the threads and see a whole: too many characters appear and disappear without explanation (though, indeed, they are fascinating while they are with us). And there are other plot-bits and questions not even touched on in this review—for instance, Hasso seems to be in touch with an “overmind” that explains to him where the inhabitants of Khagodis came from (an ongoing mystery as there is no historical evidence of their evolving on the planet). But we want to know more about this psychic voice than we are told.

To solve these puzzles, *MindWorlds* probably needs to be much longer, but I’m not sure the joy of Gotlieb’s trilogy is plot. Her characters and their imaginative names and personalities come alive on the page and stay in the mind.

If you can, start with the audiotape of *Flesh and Gold*, (Hampton, NH: Chivers, 1998) as I did by accident, knowing nothing about the trilogy but recognizing Gotlieb’s name. It’s read by the actress Kate Harper, who does a superb job of narrating. I found the character and place names so intriguing, I got the book to see how Gotlieb had spelled them, and wound up listening to the tape and reading the book together. I didn’t want the story to end, and I still don’t because I will miss the characters.

FICTION
HEAVY PLANET
Arthur O. Lewis

Clement, Hal. *Heavy Planet, The Classic Mesklin Stories*. New York: TOR Books, 2002. 414 pages, Trade paperback, \$15.95 O-765-30368-X.

Hal Clement is a Grand Master of SF whose first science fiction story, “Proof,” appeared in *Astounding* while he was still a Harvard undergraduate. He has published both science fiction and science articles regularly ever since. He is perhaps the best and most consistent writer of hard science fiction in which the writer uses the facts of science to extrapolate a story and the reader tries to find ways in which the writer has abandoned scientific fact to further the plot (see “Whirligig Planet”). He has been a teacher all his life, and fiction has taught his readers much about science.

This volume includes most of the so-called Mesklin series: *Mission of Gravity* (first published, 1953), “Whirligig World” (1953), *Star Light* (1970), “Lecture Demonstration” (1973), and “Under” (2000, but written for this book). There is another Mesklin novel, *Close to Critical* (1958, not included here), that comes between the other two novels and includes some of the same human characters, but is not a direct sequel as the other works of fiction in this volume are. Prior to *Mission*

of *Gravity*, Clement had published numerous short stories and two novels, *Needle* (1950) and *Iceworld* (1953) both set on Earth and, like most of his novels adumbrated in earlier short stories and concerned with alien life forms.

The planet Mesklin (posited by Clement, on the basis of then known facts about the dark object in the binary star system Cygni 61) is massive, 16 times the size of Jupiter but not as massive, in an orbit of 1800 days. Its gravity at the equator is 3 times Earth's and at the poles 700 times; it rotates in less than 18 minutes and is thus flattened. The eccentric orbit keeps temperature at about 170C most of the year, with a very short period at about 50C. The ocean is methane, the atmosphere mostly hydrogen, ammonia is solid much of the time. All these things fit into a predictable pattern once the orbit and size of the planet are determined. Among its inhabitants are small, intelligent centipede-like creatures, crawlers, with several grasping pincers, who are not far advanced technologically but well suited to tasks needed by human explorers. They have a deathly fear of heights or of being underneath anything.

Mission of Gravity tells the story of the Mesklinite merchant marine Captain Barlennan who leads his men on sea, land, and ice in search of a downed rocket at the pole, where no Mesklinite has ever been. Along the way he is guided by information via a kind of two-way television, using both Mesklinite language and human with a few on each side who understand both. He learns quickly some of the "Flyers" technology needed and figures out some of his own. At the end of the book he holds back what the human explorers want to know until they promise to teach him more science and technology. A bargain is made albeit reluctantly on the part of a few humans. The book ends with Barlennan in his new ship, a hot air balloon.

This pattern is followed in the other works in this volume. In "Under" Barlennan and his crew in another balloon are running tests for the Flyers when an experimental explosion catches them in a flood in a cave. Constantly learning new techniques with some Flyer help, they escape and report valuable information to the Flyers. In "Lecture Demonstration," students at the newly established College of Mesklin that has resulted from the earlier agreement are involved in an accident that tests the learning capabilities of both students on the ground and instructors in orbit.

Star Light is a tale of an expedition to explore the even larger planet Dhrawn, where even the Mesklinites who are doing the actual leg work on the planet cannot live outside the great tank-like machines without protective gear, both built with human help. Communication between those on the ground and those six million miles above is delayed 62 seconds by distance. When disaster strikes, there is a tug of war between the humans and their clients about how much information should be shared. In both camps there are those who want complete openness and those who, out of distrust, want to hold back what they know.

The key element in Clement's work is his fascination with life forms that would develop in physical circumstances different from those on our own world. A few critics have said that his concern with these differences and their causes get in the way of plot and character development. It is true that some of his human characters are fairly standard, but one cannot read of the adventures of Barlennan, Dondragmer, Beetchermarif, and others caught first in unknown parts of their own world and then on the even more dangerous Dhrawn without knowing that a masterful writer of fiction is at work. As for plots, typically he holds back on many facts about his characters' actions and springs them at the end to create a twist that doubles the reader's enjoyment.

I first read *Mission of Gravity*, and many of Clement's other works when they were first published. Reading *Heavy Planet* reminds me of those days when each new work of science fiction provided a sense of wonder that is often missing nowadays, perhaps because we have become so used to reading science fiction that takes for granted things that Clement and his contemporaries first extrapolated. Anyone who hasn't read those old masters should try this volume; those who have read Clement in the past should read it for the sake of recovered joy.

FICTION
LUMEN
Lorie Sauble-Otto

Flammarion, Camille. *Lumen*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002. 188 pages, paper, \$17.95. ISBN 0-8195-6568-7.

Nineteenth century French astronomer Camille Flammarion's *Lumen* first appeared in print as a series of stories, probably in popular magazines, between the years 1866 and 1869. The first book form of *Lumen* was published in France

in 1872 as *Récits de l'infini* and then in translation in 1873 as *Stories of Infinity*. Flammarion (1842-1925) was the author of more than seventy works of diverse astronomical, scientific and philosophic interest, including novels. He is credited for playing a major role in the popularization of science as well as in the history of science fiction writing. *Lumen* was the first and seemingly most important of his endeavors in science fiction as well as appearing fairly early on in Flammarion's career.

With *Lumen*, Flammarion attempts to “dramatize”, according to the translator of this edition, two of his earlier and most popular works: *La pluralité des mondes habités* (1862) [The Plurality of Habitable Worlds] and *Dieu dans la nature* (1867) [God in Nature]. The novel is in dialogue form, reminiscent of Plato and clearly akin to the philosophical tales by Voltaire, in particular, *Micromégas*. This dialogue occurs between two friends who have been separated by death. Lumen, returns to earth in spirit form, to impart philosophical insight and scientific vision to his younger friend Quaerens. The novel is divided into five “conversations” covering diverse topics such as the afterlife, reincarnation, time travel and the speed of light. Flammarion also imagines in *Lumen* the existence and physical form of alien life, the first science fiction author to do so. Seemingly difficult to find available in French, this new modern translation from the original French to English by Brian Stableford is the first since that of 1873. For scholars of science fiction, the history of science fiction and those who are working to promote science fiction in the curriculum this book should be appealing. With the increasing attention to the specialized subject area of “Science and or in Literature” Flammarion's work will provide further impetus and documentation. Francophone scholars or students of science fiction will be especially interested in the resurfacing of this important text. Stableford's carefully and thoroughly annotated translation coupled with a detailed introduction make this a superior choice for course text consideration. Furthermore, for scholars working in Feminist Science Fiction, the Fourth Conversation between Lumen and Quaerens, which contains the most detailed of Flammarion's imaginings of alien life, includes the description of a race of aliens for whom the difference of sexual gender is absent and where “no form of marriage exists.”

Existing somewhere “between fiction and reality” as stated by Stableford, *Lumen* is at once a rather dry nineteenth century philosophical treatise and an incredibly innovative, groundbreaking work in the literary history of science fiction writing. Although previously a difficult text to approach, in French as well as in English, Stableford's informative translation is neatly reorganized and easily accessible to a variety of prospective readers with varied goals and interests. The twenty-first century reincarnation of this nineteenth century text mirrors the philosophy of Flammarion evident in his writing: existence is much more complicated and vast than the human spirit can ever begin to comprehend.

femspec

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“Many writers questioning gender might similarly be interested in the irrational, the unconscious, the primitive, the futuristic, and the mythic, and this might lead us to create and explore a different kind of aesthetic,” said Batya Weinbaum, editor of the journal.

The journal publishes two issues each year in addition to many special issues. The journal is produced by students and faculty of the Cleveland State University Department of English.

ISSUE 3.2:

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