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SFRA Review

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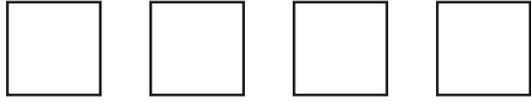
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SUBMISSIONS

The *SFRA Review* encourages submissions of reviews, review essays that cover several related texts, interviews, and feature articles. Submission guidelines are available at <http://www.sfra.org/> or by inquiry to the appropriate editor. All submitters must be current SFRA members. Contact the Editors for other submissions or for correspondence.



SFRA Review Business

EDITORS' MESSAGE

Out With the Old, In With the New

Karen Hellekson and Craig Jacobsen

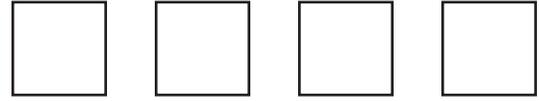
This is the last issue of our (second!) 3-year tenure as *SFRA Review* editors. We sought a second term because we saw a gap in our field's scholarly publication, a space between the peer-reviewed journals and the popular magazines, and we hoped that we could fill some of that gap by providing science fiction scholars with valuable content not available elsewhere. We put our heads together and thought about the things a busy 21st century science fiction scholar needed to keep up in a rapidly expanding field. We wanted to help people research and write about science fiction, to give them the tools to write for, and read from, those other publications.

The features we instituted, particularly the 101 articles, have proved popular with our readership, and helped us achieve our secondary, secret, selfish goal: getting people to write about things we wanted to read about. Any praise for the issues we produced is really owed to all of the writers who contributed to issues we looked forward to finding in our own mailboxes.

We're pleased that wider dissemination and attention are forthcoming for the pieces those writers have produced as we make full text available online, and the print *SFRA Review* becomes just one part of the Science Fiction Research Association's larger communication program.

This issue, we particularly credit Michael Klein for his help. He compiled the calls for papers, and he has also worked to put *SFRA Review* content—the 101s and other features—up on SFRA's website by obtaining permission from the authors, then prepping and posting the copy.

Finally, we want to thank the members of SFRA's Executive Committee, who unfailingly offered us their support, and allowed us the freedom to exercise our editorial vision. We turn over the editorship to Doug Davis and Jason Embry with the next issue (Winter 2011). We also welcome aboard new nonfiction editor Michael Klein and new fiction editor Jim Davis. Outgoing fiction editor Ed McKnight and nonfiction editor Ed Carmien, who have provided sterling service for years, are helping in the transition to the new editors, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to them. We expect the transition to be fully complete by the second issue of 2011, and we can't wait to see where *SFRA Review* goes next.



SFRA Business

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks and Congratulations

Lisa Yaszek

On the last day of each semester, I ask students to list three things they accomplished in class over the course of our time together. The goal of this exercise is twofold: to help students synthesize the various activities in which we've engaged over the course of the semester, and to point out further paths of inquiry they might pursue in the future. As we draw near the end of the current SFRA executive committee's term, it seems like this could be a useful exercise for us as well.

From my perspective as outgoing president, I would say that our biggest accomplishment over the past two years has been raising the visibility of the SFRA online. Much of this work has revolved around launching the new SFRA website. Thanks to Karen Hellekson for marshaling this project through its initial stages, to Len Hatfield for all his work on earlier versions of the website, and to Matthew Holtmeier for his work as director of the new site. As you all know, sfra.org is very much a work in progress, but members already enjoy new website features including the SFRA blog, archived syllabi, and basic membership renewal services. Given how far we've come in terms of website development since we initiated this project in 2008, I fully expect that by the end of 2012 we will enjoy other new features including a password-protected membership directory and an expanded roster of membership renewal services.

While supervising key changes to sfra.org, the outgoing EC has also had the pleasure of exploring how we might take advantage of the collaborative initiatives and social media associated with Web 2.0. Thanks to Jason Ellis for his tireless efforts as PR director to update our presence on Wikipedia and other open-source reference sites, to Jason, Stacie Hanes, and Patrick Sharp for managing the SFRA's Facebook page, and to outgoing vice president Ritch Calvin for supervising it all. I expect this work experience will serve Jason, Patrick, and Ritch well in their new roles as the 2011–2012 SFRA vice president, treasurer, and president, respectively.

Our second major accomplishment has been growing the SFRA both within the United States and abroad. In 2009 the EC instituted a new membership renewal timeline, resulting in the largest SFRA membership ever. Thanks to former secretary Shelley Rodrigo for her herculean efforts to put the new system in place, and thanks to outgoing secretary Patrick Sharp for fine-tuning it. I look forward to seeing what new modifications incoming secretary Susan George will make as we continue the process of moving our registration system online. The outgoing EC also worked to expand the SFRA membership base by forging formal alliances with the Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA) and the Association for the Study of Literature

and the Environment (ASLE). Thanks to Ed Carmien and Eric Otto for serving as our liaisons to these organizations. Our new affiliation with the SFWA enabled us to hold the first ever open-mike night at SFRA 2009, and our new affiliation with ASLE guarantees that those of us interested in the relations of science fiction and environmental studies will now have two guaranteed forums in which to present our research. But perhaps even more importantly, by facilitating the exchange of ideas between various factions of the SF community and between scholars working in different fields, Ed and Eric are helping us fulfill one of the SFRA's oldest mandates: to foster the serious study of SF across disciplinary lines.

We also worked to fulfill this mandate by developing a conference schedule that reflects our organization's dedication to both local and global SF scholarship. The SFRA has always tried to hold one conference abroad for every two hosted in the United States and to ensure that each U.S. conference is held in a different region so SF scholars without access to extensive travel funds can contribute their unique perspectives to the SFRA. We certainly saw this with SFRA 2009, hosted in Atlanta, GA, by Doug Davis and me and with SFRA 2010, hosted in Carefree, AZ, by Craig Jacobsen. And we look to be on schedule for the next four years as well! Pawel Frelik will host SFRA 2011 in Lublin, Poland; Steve Berman, Jaema Berman, and Debbie Randolph will host SFRA 2012 in Detroit, MI; Patrick Sharp, Sharon Sharp, and Kate Sullivan will host SFRA 2013 in Lost Angeles, CA; and Alfredo Suppia will host SFRA 2014 in Brazil. Thanks to all past and future conference organizers for helping the SFRA maintain its commitment to the serious study of SF not just across disciplinary lines, but across geographical ones as well.

As some of you may remember, when Adam, Ritch, Mack, Shelley (then Patrick) and I accepted our positions as EC officers, we vowed to be a transitional committee that would build upon the SFRA's past successes in ways that were appropriate to the intellectual, financial, and technological challenges of the new millennium. That vow guided all our activities over the past two years, but was perhaps particularly central to our third major accomplishment: reorganizing the longstanding "support a scholar" fund into a series of travel, research, and organizational grants. To date most of our grant applications have been organizational ones and we are proud to have provided monetary support for diverse initiatives including About SF and *FEMSPEC*. I hope that as we approach SFRA 2011 in Poland we will see more members applying for research and travel grants, so by all means go to sfra.org and download your application today! And while you are doing this, I hope you will join me in thanking Shelley Rodrigo for implementing the new grant system and Patrick Sharp for maintaining it.

Whew! As I look back over what I've typed here, I'm amazed and proud to see how many SFRA members have been involved in major SFRA activities over the past two years—and I realize that there are many more who should be thanked as well. In particular, I would like to thank immediate past presidents Dave Mead and Adam Frisch for their support and advice as well as outgoing treasurer Mack Hassler for his financial savvy and institutional memory. I'd also like to thank outgoing *SFRA Review* editors Karen Hellekson and Craig Jacobsen for their innovative work on the *Review* (my students adore

you from afar for creating the 101 series!) and outgoing section editors Ed Carmien and Ed McKnight for making sure we are all up to date on the latest in SF fiction and criticism. Thanks should also go to Jan Bogstad for her truly amazing run as managing editor and to Ritch Calvin for piloting our new media reviews section. Kudos also to Brett Cox, Betty Hull, Gary Wolfe, Marleen Barr, Chrissie Mains, Larissa Koroleva, Sherry Vint, De Witt Douglas Kilgore, David Hartwell, Doug Davis, Paul Kincaid, Andy Sawyer, Ritch Calvin, Patrick Sharp, Jason Ellis, Pawel Frelik, Jim Davis, David Mead, and Alfredo Suppia for serving on various SFRA award committees. The work performed by these committees is all too often invisible and so I hope that the 15 seconds of fame you get for being mentioned in this list makes up at least in small part for all you have done.

Finally, as promised in my message title, I'd like to take a few minutes to look forward to the future and call out those who will carry on the work of the SFRA. Congratulations to all our incoming organization officers, including Ritch Calvin, Jason Ellis, Patrick Sharp, and Susan George; I look forward to working with all of you in my forthcoming capacity as immediate past president. And congratulations as well to Libby Ginway, Jim Davis, Jim Thrall, and Pawel Frelik for making this a truly exciting election season—you may not be called to service as SFRA officers at this time, but you are on our collective radar now and I expect that we will see more of you in the future! Congratulations are also due to our new *SFRA Review* editors, including lead editors Doug Davis and Jason Embry as well as section editors Jim Davis and Michael Klein; I look forward to seeing where you take the *Review* next. And last but certainly not least, congratulations to Brian Attebery, Neal Easterbrook, Joan Gordon, Sharon Sharp, and Jim Thrall on your selection as members of the 2010–2011 SFRA award committees. I'm delighted to welcome seasoned and new members alike to these groups. I hope that all of you will have as much fun with your new positions as I've had being SFRA president. It has truly been my honor and pleasure to work with you all.

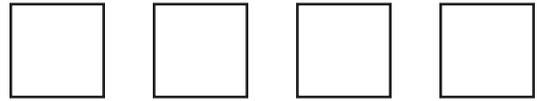
ANNOUNCEMENT

Recent SFRA 101s and Features Now Available on Website

Michael J. Klein

Feature articles, known as the 101s, published in recent *SFRA Reviews* are now available as individual blog entries on the SFRA website (<http://www.sfra.org>) thanks to the permission granted us by the authors. The 101s are essays introducing the audience to different subgenres or topics related to the broader genre of science fiction, including science studies, comic studies, postmodernism, fan studies, mundane SF, slipstream, new weird, scholarly research and writing, and SF audio. Together the articles form a kind of primer to the field, and provide context for understanding the work of our fellow scholars.

Election Results for SFRA Executive Council Positions 2011–2012



Feature: 101 Feminist SF 101

Adam Frisch

The following 2011–2012 SFRA Executive Committee Members have been elected:

President:	Ritch Calvin
Vice President:	Jason Ellis
Treasurer:	Patrick Sharp
Secretary:	Susan George

Current President Lisa Yaszek will move to occupy the Executive Committee's fifth position, that of Immediate Past President. Thanks to all of the candidates for office, outgoing members of the Executive Committee, and the many members of the Science Fiction Research Association who voted in this fall's election.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZER'S MESSAGE

SFRA 2011: Poland

Pawel Frelik

The Science Fiction Research Association's 2011 annual conference will be held from July 7th until the 10th, hosted by the School of Humanities of Maria-Curie Sklodowska University in Lublin, Poland. Our theme, "Dreams Not Only American: Science Fiction's Transatlantic Transactions" focuses our attention on the importance of the genre's ongoing international exchange. While participants are encouraged to submit paper and panel proposals that specifically address the theme, all aspects of science fiction studies are welcome on the program. The deadline for proposals is March 31, 2011.

The first SFRA conference on the Continent, only the second held outside of North America, is taking shape, including a dinner excursion to the Museum of Socialist Realist Art in Kozlowka, near Lublin. The conference website (<http://sfra2011.pl>) currently holds the call for papers, information on travel and accommodations, and useful links. Attendees will be able to register online, and the site's discussion forum is an excellent place to find like-minded scholars with whom to form panels and coordinate travel plans.

Poland is beautiful in July, rich in history, and possesses a strong science fiction tradition. Join us for a unique SFRA experience.

Ritch Calvin

What Is Feminist SF?

Presumably, in order to discuss the matter of "feminist science fiction," one would have to define both "feminist" and "science fiction." Daunting tasks, to be sure, and countless pages have already been expended on both. Nevertheless, in her history of feminism, Estelle Freedman defines feminism as a belief that "men and women are inherently of equal worth." Further, she acknowledges that gender "always intersects with other social hierarchies," including race, class, and sexuality (7). One of the goals of feminism, then, is to work toward a community, society, or world free from those intersecting oppressions, especially for women. Sarah Lefanu argues that feminist science fiction draws upon the literary traditions of the "female Gothic" and "feminist utopian writing" (3). Lefanu also contends that feminist science fiction (FSF) also draws from the "feminist, socialist, and radical politics" of the 1960s and 1970s (3). In the introduction to her 1974 collection, *Women of Wonder*, Pamela Sargent contends that science fiction and fantasy are the only genres that enable the author to envision women in new, different, or alternative surroundings and social structures (1x). Many critics, including Kingsley Amis in 1960, have noted that, although science fiction texts frequently speculate about technological innovation, they have not speculated about social innovation with the same frequency. Nevertheless, Lefanu suggests that feminism and science fiction are well suited because feminism "questions a given order in political terms, while science fiction questions it in imaginative terms" (100). Diane Cook defines FSF as SF that articulates an "awareness of [women's] place in a political system and their connectedness to other women" or "which has a primary and feminist focus on women's status" (134). Within such a working definition, FSF authors have explored patriarchal, matriarchal, and egalitarian social orders, constructed alternative governmental and organizational systems, reimagined gender roles (and the very idea of gender roles), posited varied means of reproduction (female, male, alien, and mechanical), illustrated varied sexualities (human, animal, alien, and mechanical), and considered the ramifications of both masculine science and feminist science (which sometimes incorporates radically different notions of science, including "magic"). As a consequence of the spectrum of topics and the large number of FSF authors now producing work, Veronica Hollinger has argued that the field of FSF has become so large and varied that FSF is "no longer well served by criticism that reads it as a unified undertaking" (229). In other words, there are more things in the FSF heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

Precursors/The Ground Work

Although the common wisdom has long been that FSF emerged full force in the 1960s, a growing body of work has examined the ways and the extent to which science fiction from the past has been, even if not always overtly, feminist. Arguably, if science fiction begins with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), then feminist SF begins there, as well (though some critics, including Gwyneth Jones, locates FSF's genesis with Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* [1666]). Susan Gubar calls *Frankenstein* the origin of "a humanist and feminist heritage" within the genre (qtd. in Cook 133). Although written well before the term "feminism" existed (1884), the novel *does* critique the male usurpation of (pro)creative power and the silencing of women. Similarly, Mary E. Bradley Lane, a Cincinnati housewife who published her novel anonymously, produced *Mizora* (1881), a utopian tale of a new matriarchal state that emphasizes woman's "subjective experience of public history in terms of relationships, interpretation, and fantasy.... Further, her acquisition of a language solely for women alludes to the possibility of a new symbolic order" (Pfaelzer xxxvi). Later, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a Muslim woman born in Bangladesh, produced "Sultana's Dream" (1905), a "feminist utopia" (Jahan 1) which posits a world in which gender roles are reversed: woman have taken over the public realm and men are confined to *pardah*. A few years later, Inez Haynes Gillmore produced *Angel Island* (1914), which Patrick Sharp suggests is a feminist novel that critiques the "scientific masculinity" of Darwin and others. In the lost race novel, the winged baby reflects the ideal of better men and women as suggested by feminists (Sharp). In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) she, like Hossain, reverses the traditional gender roles, and the mother—not the politician or warrior—transforms society. *Herland* offers a "world in which humane social values have been achieved by women in the interest of us all" (Lane xxiii).

Galactic Suburbia

Apart from the late eighteenth- and early twentieth-century novels that draw upon the Gothic and utopian traditions, women also began to work within the realm of science fiction, nearly from the beginning. By the 1930s, the practice of publishing SF in books had been supplanted by the emergence of the short story published in magazines. Frank, Stine and Ackerman argue that women writers were published relatively frequently in the very earliest magazines, but the practice was changed in 1930 when the focus shifted toward "men's adventure fiction" (ix). However, by the "end of the forties," women writers were returning to SF magazines, and the 1950s saw "an explosion of women writers" (x). Furthermore, in *Galactic Suburbia*, Lisa Yaszek notes that many women experienced the technologization of society "through the industrialization of the home" (8). Housewives became "domestic scientists" (98) and "efficiency experts" (12). As Lisa Yaszek notes, some "300 women began publishing in the SF community after World War II" (3), though she describes their work as "women's SF," and not necessarily feminist SF, though they were "progenitors" of FSF (195–209).

The Boom

If the "industrialization of the household" brought many women writers into the field, then Pamela Annas suggests that the failures of technology to solve social ills and produce a utopian society lead many, including women, to question the suppositions regarding the role and the possibilities of technology. Furthermore, the "personal is political" Zeitgeist within 1960's feminism (from C. Wright Mills through Carol Hanisch) prompted women to reexamine their social position and to imagine alternative possibilities. Joanna Russ suggests that writers of Galactic Suburbia tended to examine the effects of technology and patriarchy upon women in contemporary society while FSF writers tended to examine the effects of technology and patriarchy upon what women might be in the future (qtd. in Yaszek 200). While the "boom" in FSF of the 1970s drew upon a "history of ideas" from "women's sf since *Frankenstein*" (Cook 140), the "boom" was also in response to contemporary conditions, including the move toward "social sf" and the emergence of the second wave of feminism (Cook 140). Frank, Stine and Ackerman notes that feminism was just becoming a part of the popular discourse in the 1960s, but between 1969 and 1972, feminism "became the main subject of discourse within the world of science fiction" (xiii). While variation exists, many of the boom FSF texts tend to be grounded in a liberal, humanist perspective of the self and of society found in first and second wave feminism.

For example, a number of the FSF texts of the 1970s and 1980s utilize the utopia/dystopia form in order to either critique the extant social conditions or posit the conditions of possibility of another way to be. Among the utopian/dystopian novels are Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* (1969), Naomi Mitchison's *Solution Three* (1975), Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Shattered Chain* (1976), Sally Miller Gearheart's *The Wanderground* (1979), and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), among others. As Lane, Hossain, Gillmore, and Gilman did before them, these writers of FSF argue for a society in which subjects occupy a place within society, and they either illustrate the ways in which women have been excluded, or they reverse the old hierarchies.

Traditional gender roles are challenged in Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962), which undoubtedly relies on NASA's original plans to use women as astronauts. Pamela Zoline's "Heat Death of the Universe" (1967) equates the stifling confines of gender with the entropic winding down of the universe. Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* (1969) suggests that masculinity is destructive; the women of the new society create a new history and eschew all things masculine.

One aspect of gender roles has always been the role of reproduction. For example, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) posits a world in which person can fulfill the male or female role in reproduction. Consequently, discrimination based on gender is obsolete. Shulamith Firestone argues in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1969) that the reproductive function keeps women trapped in patriarchy; liberation lies in technological birth. In Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), all children have three genetic parents, and all children are gestated in mechanical wombs, and gender roles are subverted in her future world. Piercy, like Firestone, suggests that mechaniza-

tion is the key to equality. In Sherri S. Tepper's *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988), she argues that gender can be altered via a genetic engineering program in which male aggression is deselected.

Many of the boom writers of FSF argue that language is tied to constructions of the self and of gender. Wittig's *Les Guérillères* argues that language must be remade for a new society; in writing the novel Wittig creates a feminine form of the word for warrior and employs the nonexistent feminine plural form "elles" throughout. Similarly, in Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* (1984) the female linguists create a "woman's language" that can represent the reality of women's lives. In Piercy's nongendered society, they use the personal pronoun "per" (for "person"), regardless of the sex or gender of the individual. Infamously, Le Guin utilizes the masculine pronoun to refer to the neuter Gethenians in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, a strategy that she later suggests was flawed because of the ways in which it overdetermined the reader's response.

The Fallout

Since the boom of FSF in the 1970s, the field has grown exponentially, both in terms of the number of FSF writers, but more importantly, in terms of their ideological foundations, assumptions, and approaches to FSF. While boom FSF writers tended to explicitly foreground questions of sex, gender, and sexuality, many postboom writers of FSF do not. If the boom FSF writers assume a liberal, humanist self, then postboom FSF writers often assume a Haraway-ian, cyborg self. In other words, they are more likely to posit a world in which gender equality is a functional given, in which sexualities are fluid and multiple, in which all categories of identity (male/female/herm, woman/man/androgyn, hetero/homo/bi/di/omni, racial/ethnic/national, human/animal/machine) are fluid. The old boundaries will no longer hold. Certainly, signs of this can be seen in earlier FSF texts. For example, Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) radically undermines the notion of a unified self, and Samuel R. Delany's *Trouble on Triton* (1976) offers a multiplicity of genders and sexualities. For example, in Naomi Mitchison's *Solution Three* (1975), she posits a future Earth in which homosexuality has been engineered to be the norm, and gender roles are largely irrelevant. Mitchison, however, goes to great length to explain how this transformation took place. On the other hand, Mary Gentle suggests that some of the newer FSF writers, "felt able... to take 'a feminist background for granted, and [go] from there'" (Jones 487). As another example, in Melissa Scott's *Shadow Man* (1995), she posits a society that recognizes five sexes (linguistically and legally) and nine sexualities. Despite the multiplication of sexes, the premise still rests upon a liberal notion of the self. On the other hand, in Raphael Carter's "Congenital Agenesis of Gender Ideation" (1998), s/he examines and complicates the relationship among language, cognition, and gender identity.

Many FSF writers continue to critique the social constructions of identity, including sex, gender, class, race, and sexuality; they argue for societies in which individuals and groups are not marginalized or oppressed based on one or more aspect of their identity, and they challenge readers to question their own assumptions regarding identity. However, many postboom

writers challenge the very categories of identity, represent all boundaries of identity as fluid and permeable, or assume a society in which these issues have been resolved. Nevertheless, these strategies do not suggest that FSF has become obsolete; rather, it has "just been born" (Jones 487).

Below, I have listed a number of FSF texts in chronological order, including Anthologies (of stories), Fiction (stories and novels), and Internet resources. None of the lists is meant to be comprehensive but, rather, suggestive.

The Texts

Fiction Anthologies

- Sargent, Pamela. *Women of Wonder: Science Fiction Stories by Women about Women*. New York: Vintage, 1974.
- McIntyre, Vonda N., and Susan Janice Anderson. *Aurora: Beyond Equality*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1976.
- Sargent, Pamela. *More Women of Wonder: Science Fiction Novellas by Women about Women*. New York: Vintage, 1976.
- Kidd, Virginia. *Millennial Women: Tales for Tomorrow*. New York: Dell, 1978.
- Laurence, Alice. *Cassandra Rising*. New York: Doubleday, 1978.
- Sargent, Pamela. *The New Women of Wonder: Recent Science Fiction Stories by Women about Women*. New York: Vintage, 1978.
- Salmonson, Jessica Amanda. *Amazons!* New York: DAW, 1979.
- Salmonson, Jessica Amanda. *Amazons II*. New York: DAW, 1982.
- Schwartz, Susan M. *Hecate's Cauldron*. New York: DAW, 1982.
- Elliot, Jeffrey M. *Kindred Spirits: An Anthology of Gay and Lesbian Science Fiction Stories*. Boston: Alyson, 1984.
- Green, Jen and Sarah Lefanu. *Despatches from the Frontiers of the Female Mind*. London: Women's P, 1985.
- Williams, A. Susan. *The Lifted Veil: The Book of Fantastic Literature by Women, 1800-World War II*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 1992.
- Frank, Janrae, Jean Stine, and Forrest J Ackerman. *New Eyes: Science Fiction about the Extraordinary Women of Today and Tomorrow*. Stanford, CT: Longmeadow, 1994.
- Sargent, Pamela. *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995.
- Sargent, Pamela. *Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995.
- Sussex, Lucy and Judith Raphael Buckrich. *She's Fantastical: The First Anthology of Australian Women's Speculative Fiction, Magical Realism, and Fantasy*. Melbourne: Sybylla Feminist, 1995.
- Merrick, Helen and Tess Williams. *Women of Other Worlds: Excursions through Science Fiction and Feminism*. Nedlands: U of Western Australia P, 1999.
- Keeseey, Pam and Forrest J Ackerman. *SCI-FI Womanthology*. Rockville, MD: Sense of Wonder, 2000.
- Willis, Connie and Sheila Williams. *A Woman's Liberation: A Choice of Futures by and about Women*. New York: Warner, 2001.
- Larbalestier, Justine. *Daughters of the Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2006.

Fiction (novels and a few short stories)

- Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, Naomi Mitchison (1962)
“The Heat Death of the Universe,” Pamela Zoline (1967)
Picnic on Paradise, Joanna Russ (1968)
The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula K. Le Guin (1969)
Les Guérillères, Monique Wittig (1971)
“The Women Men Don’t See,” James Tiptree, Jr. (1973)
“The Girl Who Was Plugged In,” James Tiptree, Jr. (1973)
Walk to the End of the World, Suzy McKee Charnas (1974)
Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang, Kate Wilhelm (1974)
The Dispossessed, Ursula K. Le Guin (1974)
The Female Man, Joanna Russ (1975)
We Who Are about To..., Joanna Russ (1975)
Solution Three, Naomi Mitchison (1975)
The Shattered Chain, Marion Zimmer Bradley (1975)
Woman on the Edge of Time, Marge Piercy (1976)
The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You, Dorothy Bryant (1976)
The Euguelionne, Louky Bersianik (1976)
“Houston, Houston, Do You Read?” James Tiptree, Jr. (1976)
Trouble on Triton: An Ambiguous Heterotopia, Samuel R. Delany (1976)
Floating Worlds, Cecilia Holland (1976)
Egalia’s Daughters: A Satire of the Sexes, Gerd Brantenberg (1977)
The Passion of New Eve, Angela Carter (1977)
The Two of Them, Joanna Russ (1978)
Dreamsnake, Vonda McIntyre (1978)
The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women, Sally Miller Gearhart (1978)
Motherlines, Suzy McKee Charnas (1978)
Kindred, Octavia E. Butler (1979)
Benefits, Zoë Ann Fairbairns (1979)
Leviathan’s Deep, Jayge Carr (1979)
“Wives,” Lisa Tuttle (1979)
Titan, John Varley (1979)
Wizard, John Varley (1979)
The Snow Queen, Joan D. Vinge (1980)
Golden Witchbreed, Mary Gentle (1983)
Native Tongue, Suzette Haden Elgin (1984)
“Bloodchild,” Octavia E. Butler (1984)
Demon, John Varley (1980)
The Handmaid’s Tale, Margaret Atwood (1985)
“All My Darling Daughters,” Connie Willis (1985)
The Shore of Women, Pamela Sargent (1986)
A Door into Ocean, Joan Slonczewski (1986)
Dawn, Octavia E. Butler (1987)
Ancient Light, Mary Gentle (1987)
The Wingwomen of Hera, Sandi Hall (1987)
“Rachel in Love,” Pat Murphy (1987)
The Gate to Women’s Country, Sheri S. Tepper (1988)
Carmen Dog, Carol Emshwiller (1988)
The Wall around Eden, Joan Slonczewski (1989)
Patterns, Pat Cadigan (1989)
The Y Chromosome, Leona Gom (1990)
Synners, Pat Cadigan (1990)
The Others, Margaret Wander Bonanno (1990)
Modern Daughters and the Outlaw West, Melissa Kwasny (1990)
White Queen, Gwyneth Jones (1991)
A Woman of the Iron People, Eleanor Arnason (1991)
Sarah Canary, Karen Joy Fowler (1991)
China Mountain Zhang, Maureen McHugh (1992)
In the Mothers’ Land, Elisabeth Vonarburg (1992)
Illicit Passage, Alice Nunn (1992)
Parable of the Sower, Octavia E. Butler (1993)
Ammonite, Nicola Griffith (1993)
Ring of Swords, Eleanor Arnason (1993)
Virtual Girl, Amy Thomson (1993)
In the Garden of Dead Cars, Sybil Claiborne (1993)
The Furies, Suzy McKee Charnas (1994)
Trouble and Her Friends, Melissa Scott (1994)
Larque on the Wing, Nancy Springer (1994)
Little Sisters of the Apocalypse, Kit Reed (1994)
Queen City Jazz, Kathleen Ann Goonan (1994)
Shadow Man, Melissa Scott (1995)
Waking the Moon, Elizabeth Hand (1995)
The Memoirs of Elizabeth Frankenstein, Theodore Roszak (1995)
The Fortunate Fall, Raphael Carter (1996)
Godmother Night, Rachel Pollack (1996)
The Moons of Palmares, Zainab Amadahy (1997)
The Dazzle of Day, Molly Gloss (1997)
Black Wine, Candas Jane Dorsey (1997)
The Misconceiver, Lucy Ferriss (1997)
Brown Girl in the Ring, Nalo Hopkinson (1998)
Mission Child, Maureen McHugh (1998)
Halfway Human, Carolyn Ives Gilman (1998)
Tea from an Empty Cup, Pat Cadigan (1998)
“Congenital Agenesis of Gender Ideation,” Raphael Carter (1998)
Dark Water’s Embrace, Stephen Leigh (1998)
The Terrorists of Irustan, Louise Marley (1999)
Speaking Stones, Stephen Leigh (1999)
Wild Life, Molly Gloss (2000)
“What I Didn’t See,” Karen Joy Fowler (2002)
The Mount, Carol Emshwiller (2002)
Solitaire, Kelley Eskridge (2002)
Air, Geoff Ryman (2002)
The Salt Roads, Nalo Hopkinson (2003)
Life, Gwyneth Jones (2004)
With Her Body, Nicola Griffith (2004)
Thinner Than Thou, Kit Reed (2004)
Marq’ssan Cycle (Alanya to Alanya, Renegade, Tsunami, Blood in the Fruit, Stretto), L. Timmel Duchamp (2005–2007)
Mindscape, Andrea Hairston (2006)
Keeping It Real (Quantum Gravity Book One), Justina Robson (2006)
In War Times, Kathleen Ann Goonan (2007)
Dangerous Space, Kelley Eskridge (2007)
Daughters of the North (aka *The Carhullan Army*), Sarah Hall (2007)
Filter House, Nisi Shawl (2008)
The Woman Who Thought She Was a Planet, Vandana Singh (2008)
Distances, Vandana Singh (2008)
De Secretis Mulierum, L. Timmel Duchamp (2008)

Online Resources

- Feminist Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Utopia. <http://www.feministsf.org>
Feminist Science Fiction and Fantasy: An Incomplete List. <http://www.cynthiaward.com/feminist.html>
Feminist SF Carnival. <http://carnival.feministsf.net/>

Feminist SF: The Blog! <http://blogs.feministsf.net/>
 Feminist SF Wiki. http://wiki.feministsf.net/index.php?title=Main_Page.
 James Tiptree, Jr. Award <http://www.tiptree.org/>
 Lesbian Science Fiction. <http://lesbiansciencefiction.com/>
 SF and Feminism on the Web. <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~sparks/sfemlink.html>
 WisCon: The World's Leading Feminist Science Fiction Convention. <http://www.wiscon.info/>

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Feature

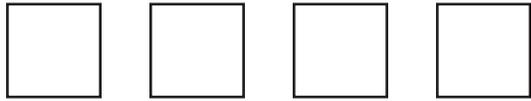
Research Trip to Georgia Tech's SF Collection

Jorge Martins Rosa

During a three-week period between March and April, I stayed in Atlanta for a research visit to Georgia Tech's Science Fiction Collection (formerly the Bud Foote Collection). This visit marked the early stage of a research project I am coordinating in Portugal, with the title *Fiction and the Roots of Cyberculture*, sponsored by FCT (Portugal's National Science Foundation).

Lisa Yaszek, at Georgia Tech, is one of the international consultants for the project (the other being Rob Latham, at University of California, Riverside). Besides taking care of all bureaucratic details—granting the access to the archives, introducing me to the staff, etc.—Lisa spared no efforts to make me feel welcome and pleasantly busy. Other than the time well spent at the archives (and believe me, a deserted campus during the spring break week is the perfect antidote for procrastination), I gave a public talk on Philip K. Dick (my PhD subject) and the trope of space colonization, spoke with Lisa's class about the still peripheral status of Portuguese science fiction, and even managed to talk about these and other subjects in WREK, the college radio station, which has a monthly show on the genre run by the graduate student Paul Clifton.

The research project aims at finding early evidence in the genre (i.e. pre-1970) of tropes and narrative situations that would later define cyberpunk, but also (and mostly those that) have evolved and disseminated into the rhetorical discourse of contemporary cyberculture. Apart from a few widely quoted titles, like Heinlein's "Waldo," C. L. Moore's "No Woman Born," or Bradbury's "The Veldt," that missing link is in need of a more systematic and comprehensive survey, which makes the gathering of the corpus a chore like finding needles in a haystack. UC Riverside's Eaton Collection (which may still be visited at a later phase of the project) might have been the obvious choice, but that would make too big a haystack. Georgia Tech's collection, with its smaller catalog (but growing with the continuing donations), turned out to be a wise choice for this early stage of the research: the most famous magazines are fairly well-represented, with a few rarities in between, and anthologies abound. Apart from all the support and warm reception from J. P. Tellote and the rest of the faculty of the literature, communication, and culture department, a special mention must go to Jody Thompson, head of the archives and records management, and to all her staff, also instrumental in finding my way around the stacks.



Nonfiction Reviews

The Business of Science Fiction

Bruce L. Rockwood

Mike Resnick and Barry N. Malzberg. *The Business of Science Fiction: Two Insiders Discuss Writing and Publishing*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010. Paper, vi + 269 pages, with index, \$35, ISBN 978-0-7864-4797-8.

Mike Resnick and Barry N. Malzberg are widely published and well-recognized writers and editors, and this book is a collection of their column “The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues” from the *SFWA Bulletin* over the past dozen or so years, twenty five selected from the forty seven already published in the bulletin as of the date of this volume. The dialogues are grouped into three Sections: I: Writing and Selling; II: The Business; and III: The Field. They do not appear to be presented in order of publication, and are not dated individually, though it is possible to interpolate the timing of any given column by reference to the authors they discuss, or the Worldcon or other event they riff off of in any given entry. Reading the essays is rather like being in attendance at a Worldcon panel with their informal give and take, and willingness to respond to and rebut each other’s views. That in itself makes for a valuable and entertaining read for fans and would-be SF writers, as well as those laboring in the field to make a living.

Because the essays were written over a number of years, they sometimes repeat the same salient points, including “read contracts carefully,” or when debating the pros and cons of various strategies to reach a wider audience, deal with new technologies and venues, and maximize earnings. In chapter 20 on “False Doctrines” they suggest that for years writers were misdirected in the model of short story writing emphasized at the Clarion Writing Workshops (Malzberg, 195), while pointing out that John Scalzi got his start with blogs and posted a novel online for free, which some would see as a “hideous mistake” but which led to his second novel being published: *Old Man’s War* (Resnick 196). Resnick points out the value of foreign sales to supplement the writer’s income, and returns to the theme of reading contracts carefully: “Can bad contracts wipe out your subsidiary earnings? Sure. They can wipe you out domestically too....But I’d also point out that when I say your foreign earnings will equal your domestic earnings, that’s a *minimum* for a journeyman writer.” (Resnick, at 127) Later they debate the proposed Google settlement, and point out that while the \$60 plus royalties initially proposed by Google “for every book...‘confiscated’” (Resnick, 251) may be more than some authors would get if their works were pirated on the Internet without the settlement, the flip side is that this may cost many authors the \$500 or more they would get from foreign publishers’ payments for each country that reprints the work, whether

Poland, Russia or Germany (253–54). Or is that only a loss for established writers, that most should not expect to get in any event? After all, points out Malzberg, at least Google is in principle recognizing that authors do have rights that they need to respect (254–55). They go back and forth on this point, leaving it to the reader to decide which advice to take and how to make use of it.

The lack of any bibliographical entries or evidence that older pieces in the series have been revised or updated for this edition detracts from its value as a reference. Discussion of specific topics, such as the value of “The Specialty Press” (for small runs and specific audiences, as well as simply to have fun), and the rise of generic fantasy and Sci-Fi cons such as Dragoncon as more useful venues than Worldcon (230–32), take for granted that the reader is familiar with these aspects of the trade, and might be enhanced if they included an essay addressed to the general reader or researcher unfamiliar with the science fiction world they themselves inhabit and understand so clearly and so well. The chapters focusing on the business side of the field, particularly on Agents (12), Money (13) and Professionalism (16) are valuable though short. The authors could have done a more systematic assessment of the “business” side of the industry today, but the primary lesson of their dialogues is that you have to be in this business as much for love as for the money.

Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick

Gabriel Mckee

Philip K. Dick. *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1980–1982* (Volume 6), ed. Don Herron. Nevada City, CA: Underwood Books (PO Box 1919, Nevada City, CA 95959), 2010. Hardcover, 288 pages, \$49.95, ISBN 978-1887424264z3988.

Seen any flying pigs lately? After a 15-year wait, the sixth and final volume of *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick* has finally been published. Originally scheduled to be released in 1995, the 1980–1982 volume, spanning the last 26 months of the author’s life, ran into a number of delays before collapsing into limbo after the dissolution of Underwood-Miller. (A note inserted in the published volume states that the dust jacket, but not the book, was printed a decade ago.) The original publisher’s successor, Underwood Books, has finally completed the project, and in so doing has completed what is destined to be a major source for Philip K. Dick scholars.

Those familiar with the previous volumes of Dick’s letters will know, more or less, what to expect of this one. Dick is still exploring and expounding upon his religious experiences of early 1974, and much of this volume consists of extended philosophical speculations. (Indeed, most of the book’s first hundred pages are a single series of letters sent to Patricia Warwick, author of *Mind in Motion: The Fiction of Philip K. Dick*, in January 1981). But philosophical exegesis is not all that was going on in Dick’s life and mind in this period, and this volume presents vital information about other aspects of his work as well. Dick’s final two novels—*The Divine Invasion* and *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*—were written during this

period, and several letters shed light on their composition. A pair of letters to Ursula K. Le Guin (137 and 150–151) show Dick reflecting on the often-problematic nature of his female characters, and even suggest that Angel Archer, the protagonist of *Transmigration* and undoubtedly Dick's most carefully thought-out female character, grew at least in part in response to Le Guin's criticisms. Two letters (to Russell Galen, 89–92, and to David Hartwell, 154–156) contain detailed plot outlines for novels that were never written. Elsewhere, we can glean information about Dick's knowledge of William S. Burroughs (145), Alfred North Whitehead (148), and Martin Luther (251). Other letters show Dick's thoughts on the publication of *VALIS* and his response to the novel's reviews, his shifting opinions on the film *Blade Runner*, and his brief love affair, a mere four months before his death, with a young woman known only as "Sandra." Needless to say, there is much to reward the PKD researcher in this volume.

That's not to say that the book is without its frustrations, however. It seems that the "selection" of these letters is serendipitous rather than conscious; it's not stated outright, but it certainly seems like they've printed every letter extant. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it does beg the question of why the letters are "selected" instead of "complete." There are also some conspicuous gaps: there are a mere 24 letters from 1980, spanning 28 pages, compared to 174, nearly 300 pages, in 1981 (25 of those letters in January alone). Did Dick really write no letters for 4 months in 1980, or did he simply not retain copies of those letters? If the editors know, they're not saying, and that means we may never know.

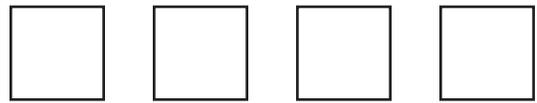
The volume could also be better-placed within the overall context of its author's biography. There is a brief timeline of Dick's life at the beginning of the book, but there is no internal timeline for the years 1980–1982. The general timeline is somewhat useful, but most of the information contained in it is likely already known to anyone serious enough about PKD to read his correspondence. Volumes 4 and 5 (1975–76 and 1977–79, respectively) each had such an internal timeline, which proved enormously helpful in drawing the connections between correspondence and biography.

Furthermore, aside from the timeline and a brief introduction, the letters are presented without much in the way of context. Some recipients are briefly identified by the editor's headers ("David Hartwell, editor, Timescape Books"), but far more are identified by name only. It's wise of the editor to avoid interjection, but it would be nice to have footnotes explaining, for instance, that the "Ben Adams" to whom the letter on 72 is addressed was a high school student and the editor of the *Yorba City High Times*, and that the "short-short story" Dick sent him was "The Alien Mind." And what were the contents of the letter Dick forwarded to the FBI on April 15, 1981, of which he writes "I have never received a letter like it... I hope I never get a letter like this again"? (145). The answer to questions like that might be lost to the ages, but that level of one-sidedness can be a source of frustration.

The greatest lack—in this volume and in the *Selected Letters* as a whole—is a comprehensive index. Given the extent to which Dick discussed his own works in the letters, the number of other writers to whom he refers, and the general breadth of content contained in these volumes, they desperately call for

an index to facilitate research within them. (The first volume published—volume 3, covering 1974—contained a brief index of PKD titles referred to, but no topical or name index.) The note laid into the final volume states that paperback versions of the entire series are in preparation, and Underwood would do well to consider including indices (and detailed timelines) in the reissue.

Given its specificity, this volume is not likely to have much use in the classroom. For courses covering the specific works discussed in this volume (*The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* in particular, but also *The Divine Invasion*, *VALIS*, and *Blade Runner*), individual letters could provide valuable insight. Of course, the volume's primary audience is PKD scholars. Given the ever-increasing critical attention Dick has received in the last decade or so, this volume and the series it completes are sure to be an invaluable resource for current and future researchers.



Fiction Reviews

Directive 51

Ed Carmien

John Barnes. *Directive 51*. New York: Ace, 2010. Cloth, 483 pages, \$25.95, ISBN 978-0-441-01822-2.

SF writers take pleasure in writing Armageddon. The art of destroying civilization offers full rein to the powers of speculation. If *this* happens, then *that* happens, and so on and so forth, until Max gets Really Angry, a dying father traipses a wintry interstate highway made dangerous by cannibals as he seeks a humane remnant of civilization for his son, we learn to do without petrochemicals, and so it goes.

In *Directive 51* Barnes posits an unlikely world-wide conspiracy that is as secret as it is implausibly skilled at creating multiple nanotech plagues that destroy the machinery and materials of modern life: plastics, petrochemicals, electronics. The Internet-based cultural "life form" at work, which reinforces and rewards the behavior that leads to this apocalypse is interesting, but by speculating it into fictional existence Barnes then posits not one iota of the plot comes to light until it has already been launched. The Unabomber was caught because his brother turned him in—but the thousands—tens of thousands—of siblings, spouses, children, roommates of this vast worldwide conspiracy sit on their hands?

Even the scale of the nano-tech attack seems wildly unlikely, as in addition to thousands of agents scurrying around the world releasing agents that attack this or that important building block of technological civilization, the moon itself has been seeded with some kind of nano-based Von Neumann ma-

chine that produces nuclear missiles which target radio emitters on Earth months after civilization all but collapses.

There are more of these maniacal destructive causes out there in *Directive 51*, but suffice to say that the essential point of the novel is the struggle of maintaining presidential succession during the crisis. The directive provides for a succession czar who has dictatorial powers; the plot provides for a President who loses his cool and steps down, a vice president who disappears, a crackpot dictator who must be replaced, and the inevitable absolute corruption of the czar as a consequence of his absolute power.

Barnes seems to soft-pedal the megadeath that would accompany a sudden grinding to a halt of the machinery of civilization. The film “The Day After Tomorrow” does much the same thing, ending as it does with “hey we’re OK” scenes of a few New Yorkers being pulled off the roofs of skyscrapers. Writers like S. M. “guilty pleasure” Stirling don’t play softball with this ineluctable fact of life—in his Embervers, once things Stop Working, billions worldwide die. Of hunger, or of the predations of those driven to survive by any means necessary.

That’s too bad, as the speculative picture therefore fails on too many fronts for the novel to really grip a reader. The bad guys are too good, proving to be wizards with technology no one else appears to be able to manipulate, and in addition there are no breaks in operational security...of a world-wide conspiracy that manufactures not only nanites but also nuclear weapons of massive size, not to mention moon-based devices intended to assure the Earth is forever after free of radio emitters. The consequences of civilization’s downfall are certainly not benign, but the reader is insulated from the full logical speculative consequence of what would be a huge drop in food production and distribution.

Considering the impact of a directive detailing the line of succession in the face of a catastrophe when such a catastrophe occurs is interesting and worthwhile, but *Directive 51* doesn’t make the grade. Too many head-scratchers, not enough hey-that’s-cool moments. Why? The mixture of SF and technothriller falls flat. While *Directive 51* may appeal to readers who thirst for the tropes of the technothriller, those who bring a SF sensibility to bear will find themselves doubting too many of Barnes’ speculative efforts to find satisfaction. The peanut-butter cup model of “you got peanut butter in my chocolate” and its mirror image can lead to a tasty treat—I always steal these confections from my kids’ Halloween treat bags first—but attention must be paid to the balance, or the alchemy goes awry, as it has gone awry here.

Omnitopia Dawn

Ed Carmien

Diane Duane. *Omnitopia Dawn*. New York: DAW, 2010. Cloth, 360 pages, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0756406233.

Diane Duane, known to fantasy readers for writing an ur–Harry Potter series in the 1980s, turns her hand to mundane SF in *Omnitopia Dawn*, a novel set in a 2015 world in which the

Big Business of the day is not just a MMORPG, but Omnitopia, a means by which gamers in all manner of online games can come together and visit each others’ virtual worlds. Dungeon crawlers from *World of Warcraft*–type worlds mingle with fans of a “microcosm”—a miniature, user-developed game world—devoted to the artistic production of a million monkees, intelligent bears that smell of Pullman go adventuring with avatars dressed in winter camo. Battle trolls bring battle and chaos to a previously violence-free neutral city after the (virtual) mayor is assassinated with a manticores.

Sounds like fun.

Super executive Dev Logan—a pastiche of Steve Jobs (jeans and mock turtlenecks) and Bill Gates (big focus on giving away some of his billions)—is managing a new software release in Omnitopia, and having the sorts of problems we’ve all been watching Jobs handle with 2010’s new iPhone.

Omnitopia competitor Infinite Worlds is led by Phil Sorenson. The baddie, he plots a takeover of Omnitopia utilizing a mercenary hacker conspiracy. By crashing Omnitopia’s servers during a major software upgrade, Sorenson hopes to gain a controlling interest in the company by buying the stock when the share price crashes. He has a History with Dev Logan, and intends to bring him sharply to heel.

This novel has a dozen familiar flavors: future gaming a la Stross’s *Halting State*, immersive gaming as per *Dream Park*, avatar combat to protect computer systems that tastes of *Snow Crash*, dueling technocrats reminiscent of *Iron Man 2*, friendly AI awakening akin to Heinlein’s Mike (or Michelle, if you prefer) office systems that handle documents *Minority Report* style, and so on.

In *Omnitopia Dawn* the “cast of thousands” is trimmed to a much more manageable “cast of just over a dozen.” In addition to the major conflicting figures and their minions, we have a shifty journalist, a cheerily married gamer dude who works double shifts at a UPS-esque delivery company, a few hacker leaders and one hapless hacker minion, and of course Dev’s spouse and child. This makes for a clearer read, certainly, than a book three times as long with essentially the same level of plot complexity, but with fewer red herrings to hide behind, the direction the plot takes is a bit obvious.

Is the speculation here cutting edge? No. Stross has a much stronger handle on technology itself—*Halting State*’s 2018 date and the events that cascade as a result of the technology he speculates about make much more sense. The Omnitopia software is simply impossible to imagine existing in 2015—maybe 2025, or a 2015 in an alternate universe where the microchip was invented as a consequence of World War II. And while Dev Logan can tell the glass wall in his residence-within-the-corporate-plaza (arcology-like) to become clear or glazed on command, his spouse’s request for an item from the store must be passed to the concierge must be passed using a *note*.

Even so, Duane’s veteran hand can be seen at work here. The narrative is compelling, if not spectacular, and as one nears page 300 the writing becomes particularly sharp and effective. Taken as a whole, although it isn’t sold as such, *Omnitopia Dawn* reads like a YA novel. In it one finds a utopian gaming—games that teach, gamers who form a really nice collective culture, an online society zealously guarded from predators and cheaters by noble do-gooders who wander the system. In the

fondest dreams of MMORPG players, devs do this—much as Dev himself does, in one incarnation taking the role of a lowly garbage man. Curiously, characters in omnitopia can die True Death, a not-very-utopian situation for today's gamers, accustomed to infinite rebirth from unfortunate game circumstances, to contemplate.

This is a fun read, if not a serious one. It clearly sets the stage for a sequel in the ongoing battle between Logan and Pederson. This is a great text for libraries who stock books for the YA audience to acquire, *Omnitopia Dawn* does not, generally speaking, offer much to college-level courses or those who indulge in scholarly SF work. That's not a bad thing. Can't all be hisfalutin' books with a Deep Message about Humanity. We need good romps, too, and in this one it is fun to imagine being an Omnitopia employee, armed with sword and shield and fighting on the virtual corporate battlements against endless waves of naughty hackers. Nothing like striking a blow for Good Corporate Practices from the safety of one's office, *Headcrash*-style.

The Passage: A Novel

Bruce A. Beatie

Justin Cronin. *The Passage: A Novel*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2010. Hardcover, x + 773 pages, \$27, ISBN 978-0-345-50496-8.

Justin Cronin, 48, has not been a prolific author. His first book, a novella titled *A Short History of the Long Ball* (Tulsa, OK: Council Oak Books, 1990, 91 pages), won the National Novella Award, but is a somewhat awkward story of the lives of childhood friends, one good and one bad. His first novel, *Mary and O'Neil* (Dial Press, 2001, 243 pages), won the Book-of-the-Month Club's First Fiction Award and the PEN/Hemingway Award; the lives of Mary Olson and O'Neil Burke, two young teachers, told through a series of self-contained stories, represent mainstream realistic fiction. Neither these nor his second novel, *The Summer Guest* (Dial Press, 2003, 369 pages), which chronicles the intersections, at a Maine fishing camp, of three generations of lives, show a trace of fantasy or science fiction. Mainstream reviewers were surprised, therefore, to discover that his third novel, *The Passage*, which made its debut in third place in the *New York Times* best-seller list on June 18, takes as its points of departure a fantasy genre (the vampire novel) and two science-fiction genres (the plague that escapes a laboratory and threatens the world, and the future dystopia). As I began this review (August 28), it had just dropped off the Best Seller list after eight weeks. Since *The Passage* is a new book that is still being read (my local library still has more than 200 holds on its copies), and since it is a complex story with a surprising and ambiguous ending, I will try to include only enough of its story line to arouse your interest in a fascinating novel without spoiling the suspense for those who have not yet read it.

The first point to be made is that, though its publisher is Ballantine, it has *not* been marketed as science fiction or fantasy. My local library puts it in the "New fiction" category, and it has been reviewed, mostly favorably and sometimes with astonishment, in mainstream publications. Ron Charles wrote

in the *Washington Post* (June 9) that it was "this summer's most wildly hyped novel." It was Amazon.com's "best book of the month" for June, and its Amazon Web page notes that it "was named one of the best books of the year by the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Entertainment Weekly*, among other publications." (One point does connect it, however, with the post-Tolkienian fantasy genre. Though all of Cronin's previous books are fairly short, according to his Wikipedia entry he plans—and has already sold—this *long* story as both a book and a film trilogy. It reports that *The Twelve* and *The City of Mirrors* are expected to appear as books in 2012 and 2014 respectively.)

The second point is that, though Cronin uses types of genre fiction as points of departure—or perhaps more properly, as a set of reader expectations that he will proceed to play with, the end result is a serious work of social science fiction, as well as a novel of character and of constantly building suspense. I will outline some elements of the story to show the ways in which Cronin uses genre expectations.

First, the "vampire" genre. According to my notes, the word itself only turns up on two of the novel's 766 pages. When the Special Forces chief, Mark Cole, arrives to take over Dr. Jason Lear's expedition to the Amazonian jungles of Bolivia, he greets Lear: "You the vampire guy?" Lear's response (in an e-mail to his Harvard colleague Paul Kiernan) is: "You know how I feel about that word, Paul—just try to get an NAS grant with 'vampire' anywhere in the paperwork" (20). And it appears in the headline of a single-sheet newspaper picked up by FBI agent Brad Wolgast, who has fled with the girl Amy to the mountains of Oregon: "Chicago Falls. 'Vampire' Virus reaches East Coast; Millions Dead." (231). The creatures in question are in fact humans who have been transformed by the "plague virus that has escaped the laboratory;" for the rest of the novel they are mostly called "virals" or "smokes," sometimes "jumps" or "dracs."

The back-story of this virus is told in the first 246 pages of the novel. It begins in the second chapter, with a series of e-mails from biologist Dr. Jonas Abbott Lear between the 6th and 21st of February; the year is not given, but is not long after 2014, after "The Mall of the Americas Massacre—three hundred... gunned down by Iranian jihadists" (33). Lear is on a military-paid expedition into the jungles of eastern Bolivia that, on the way, is taken over by the military. The expedition is seeking the source of a drug or virus discovered when some cancer patients were rescued from an earlier expedition into Bolivia—their cancers were cured by the virus, but then they died. Lear and others think that a vaccine can be produced from the virus that will produce long life as well as great strength. The site they are seeking is near a statue, centuries old, of a hominid with a "bent animal posture, the clawlike hands and the long teeth crowding the mouth" (22). In spite of a vicious attack by bats, Lear and a few press ahead to the site, and his last e-mail, sent at 11:10 P.M., is cryptic: "Now I know why the soldiers are here" (25).

The remainder of Part I (*The Worst Dream in the World* [1–208]) narrates a few days of Project NOAH, set up after Lear's return; on military orders, FBI agents have picked up eleven death-row convicts who agree to become experimental subjects. The first version of the vaccine has turned the subjects into vicious creatures like the Bolivian statue. After picking up and delivering a twelfth subject, agent Brad Wolgast and his

partner are ordered to bring a six-year-old girl from the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Memphis, a task that proves unexpectedly complicated. In the process of getting the girl to the hidden lab in Telluride, Colorado, Brad empathizes with her and, with unexpected help, escapes with her to a camp in the Oregon Cascades.

But we have been introduced to the girl in the first lines of the book: She is “The Girl from Nowhere—The One Who Walked In, the First and Last, who lived a thousand years...” (1). Her mother, an Iowa waitress, names her Amy Harper (after Harper Lee) Bellafonte. For the rest of the book she is known only as “Amy NLN” (no last name); her mother, after descending into prostitution and killing a young “client” who wanted her for a gang rape, has abandoned her at the Convent. And so, if we take these lines seriously, we know from the first that the story has, potentially, a very long narrative arc.

The apocalypse arrives near the end of Part I, when the original set of subjects (the Twelve) use unnoticed mental powers to escape from the Telluride lab: “It happened fast. Thirty-two minutes for the world to die, another to be born.” (192) A brief Part II (*The Year of Zero* [209–246]—so named both as the beginning of an era, and after Subject Zero, a member of Lear’s expedition who survived only to become a viral) follows Brad’s escape with Amy to Oregon; after a few months Brad is “taken up” (transformed by the virus) and Amy, following his instructions, heads south along the mountain chain. An even briefer Part III (*The Last City*, 2 A.V. [247–259]—presumably “After the Virus”) gives us a second hint at the length of the story’s arc: its first chapter has the long title “From the Journal of Ida Jaxon (‘The Book of Auntie’), Presented at the Third Global Conference on the North American Quarantine Period, Center for the Study of Human Cultures and Conflicts, University of New South Wales, Indo-Australian Republic, April 16–21, 1003 A.V.” (250) Ida narrates the evacuation of children (no adults) from Pennsylvania to southern California. When they arrive, she tells us, “The Watchers put us all in lines like they’d done before and took our names and gave us clean clothes and took us to the Sanctuary” (257). “We was there, together, on First Night, when the lights came on and the stars went out” (259).

The remaining 500-plus pages of the novel describe about a year in the post-apocalyptic world. The title page and first pages of Part IV set the scene: “IV. *All Eyes. First Colony, San Jacinto Mountains, California Republic, 92 A.V.*” (261–355). Its first page is a map: “Slide No. 1: Reconstruction of First Colony Site (33°74’ N, 116°71’ W). Presented at that Third Global Conference in 1003 A.V.” (263), it shows the site whose establishment was described by Ida Jaxon, but 90 years later. The next three pages (264–267) present First Colony’s Document of One Law, “enacted and ratified in the year of Our Waiting 17 A.V.” and signed by Devin Danforth Chou, Terrence Jaxon, Lucy Fisher Jaxon, Porter Curtis, Liam Molyneau, Sonia Patal Levine, Christian Boyes, and Willa Norris Darrell, for the First Families. Its paragraphs describe the nature and duties of “The Household,” “The Seven Trades,” “The Watch,” “The Sanctuary,” “Rights of Walkers, and “Law of Quarantine.”

In those pages we follow the arrival of Amy (the One Who Walked In, now apparently about sixteen), the fall of First Colony to the virals, the escape of a small group that coalesces around Amy, and their discovery of a wider world and of other

groups of survivors. Slowly we learn much, though not all, about the creation and nature of the virals and of the remaining humans’ struggles against them. In this narrative, told from a number of perspectives and not always chronologically, we find only hints of the 901 years that lie between the “Postscript. Roswell Road” (761–766) and the “global conference” of 1003 A.V. from which some parts of the narrative purportedly derive.

Whatever the generic conventions that Cronin builds on, *The Passage* is primarily a novel of suspense. As one reviewer pointed out, Cronin is perhaps too facile in ending chapters with cliffhanger phrases; but his focus is not so much on the narrative itself as on the characters and their interactions—how the core characters react (in Parts I–II) to a military project that is out of control, and in the remainder (parts III–XI) to the dystopia which that project has created. The characters are complex and vivid, and are changed significantly over the course of the story by the experiences they suffer. And in “Amy NLN” Cronin has created a character unusual if not unique in fiction, one about whom we can believe, by the end, that she is “The Girl from Nowhere—The One Who Walked In, the First and Last, who lived a thousand years...”

It may not be a coincidence that, depending on how one defines or counts them, there are twelve main characters set against the Twelve original virals, though Cronin makes no special point of this. Indeed, it is possible to see Amy, who arrives at First Colony unable to speak but, by the end, achieves unusual abilities to communicate, as the unmoved thirteenth, the center of changing relationships within the dozen core figures—parallel, perhaps, to Subject Zero, the incorporeal thirteenth outside of the original Twelve. If the analogy is valid, can we look back to Tolkien’s Nine Walkers set against the Nine Riders, or to the Apostles and their eternally significant Thirteenth? The book itself gives us few hints of such analogies (though the title of Cronin’s proposed sequel, *The Twelve*, is suggestive), but it is interesting that only a nun at the Convent, Sister Lacey Antoinette Kudoto, recognizes from the beginning Amy’s special qualities.

Those considerations lead back to a question the reader may well have asked from the beginning: what is the significance of the novel’s title? Only on page 711 do we finally learn that the title has a concrete and specific referent that is crucial to the plot, but by that time we have realized that the title phrase is a metaphor on several levels for the novel itself. The obvious metaphor is, as I quoted above, those “Thirty-two minutes for the world to die, another to be born.” It is the passage of First Colony, a static and convention-bound community, into dissolution and death. It is the implied passage of the fearsome world created by the escape of the Twelve, into a human world apparently reborn by 1003 A.V. Most important, it stands for the passage of the individual characters, even some of the minor figures, from one state of existence into another—especially the growth of the young people, including Amy, who escape from First Colony and end as responsible adults dealing with, to use a faded formula, a world they never made.

Dust

Bill Dynes

Joan Frances Turner. *Dust*. New York: Ace, 2010. Cloth, 384 pages, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-441-01928-1.

Joan Turner's first novel is an engrossing—in all senses of that word—reimagining of the zombie apocalypse. All of the familiar tropes are here: lumbering dead menace the living; violence and gore splatter virtually every page; fragile humanity is pushed to the brink of its existence. Yet Turner is not exploiting current hot publishing trends. The novel's protagonist is Jessie, one of the Undead (who apparently hate being called “zombies”). The first-person point of view robs the story of some of its tension, although Jessie's frank descriptions are as brutal and violent as any good monster yarn must be. Yet this approach allows Jessie to become a thoughtful and insightful narrator who is struggling to make sense of a world whose rules and patterns have come apart.

Ironically, those rules and patterns presuppose the presence of the Undead. Jessie's awakening after the auto accident that killed her did not come as a surprise to her. She recalls the Safety Education movies she watched at school which instructed students about protecting themselves from the zombie menace. Other evidence indicates that the presence of the Undead has become, in a manner of speaking, a way of life. Scientists are holed up in secret labs, searching for either a cure or a final solution, though without much success. Large territories have been declared officially out of bounds for the living; thrill-seeking trespassers and wayward travelers enter at their own risk. At the outset of the novel, Jessie has been dead for nine years, and she and her companions are content to be hunting game, sparring among themselves, and frightening off any stray people who wander into their turf. To those humans, or “hoos” as the Undead call them, Jessie and the others appear to be conventional zombies, with the familiar decaying flesh, shuffling stride, and incoherent moans and groans. Yet that decaying flesh is “bursting with life” as maggots and watch-beetles wriggle out. Despite their shuffling gait the Undead manage to capture deer, squirrels, and other wildlife for their meals; Jessie was a vegetarian before her death and is proud that she has not resorted to eating hoo-flesh. And while rotted lips and shattered larynxes do not permit speech, the Undead can communicate telepathically, although their emotions have been altered by their transition.

The action of the novel develops from a pair of surprising encounters, a birth and a death, that shake Jessie out of her comfortable routine. A newly Undead girl, Renee, needs Jessie's help to adjust to her new condition. Soon after, a female hoo wanders into the gang's territory, sick and deformed, then collapses mysteriously. With Renee's help, Jessie struggles to make sense of the woman's unusual death. She was clearly not one of the Undead, yet whatever killed her had been changing her appearance so that she had begun to look and act like them. The fact that Teresa, the leader of Jessie's gang, has recently been acting strangely herself...becoming stronger, fleshier, more *human*, complicates the mystery. Gradually, Jessie comes to realize that something is killing off the hoos while restoring life

to the Undead, and that Jessie herself may be infected. This is not a development Jessie anticipates with relish.

Turner evidently cares deeply for the traditional zombie story, and the novel nods to important touchstones such as Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* and especially George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. Interestingly, Turner pointedly avoids more recent developments in the genre, such as fast zombies and pathogenic infections offered by Zach Snyder's *Dead* remake and *28 Days Later*, its sequel and its imitators. By situating her novel within the older tradition, Turner succeeds in exploiting the slow buildup of menace typified by the image of gathering, shuffling horde. A significant departure from the tradition, however, is Turner's exploration of shifting notions of family and loyalty. By choosing one of the Undead as her narrator, Turner displaces the common motif of human survivors struggling between trust and fear onto the zombies themselves. Jessie recalls a family life that was abusive and divisive, a sharp contrast with the more satisfying existence she has found after her death. Her feelings of community are tested and strained, however, as the disease takes its toll among the living and the dead alike. As she finds herself increasingly unable to differentiate friend from fiend, the changes she herself is enduring serve to further isolate her.

Joan Turner's entertaining novel has a fine line to walk, but generally is successful in what it does. On the one hand, it is a fast-paced and engaging horror tale, grounded in the zombie imagery of Romero and his imitators. Jessie and her tribe may not be brain-devouring cannibals, but there is plenty of exuberant gore here for those who have embraced recent best-sellers such as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. On the other hand, Jessie's quest to discover the nature of the new threat to her and her kind, and to come to terms with its consequences, is handled with poignancy and grace, and the final movements of the story are unexpectedly affecting. Turner offers an interesting challenge those mash-ups of literary classics and classic monsters currently so popular. *Dust* is a fresh vision and a fun read.

Gateways

Ellen M. Rigsby

Elizabeth Ann Hull, editor. *Gateways: A Feast of Great New Science Fiction Honoring Grand Master Frederick Pohl*. New York: Tor, 2010. Hardcover, 416 pages, \$25.99, ISBN 978-0-7653-2662-1.

Gateways is a Festschrift in honor of Frederick Pohl, who needs no introduction. It comes as no surprise that people involved the field of science fiction would want to contribute to a Festschrift in his honor. But if one needed to review his contributions, Gene Wolf's appreciation in the book gives a short, delightful history of Pohl's time with science fiction on pages 258–259. Some of the best and most enduring writers of science fiction would contribute stories to the work. Beyond all the excellence, though, is the bigger meaning of Pohl's life's work of supporting science fiction. What makes Pohl such an interesting grand master is that he nurtured both writers of hard science fiction and writers of the New Wave, and wrote both

kinds of fiction himself. Brian W. Aldiss mentions that Pohl early on “was against the New Wave... Fred and I both had a word on the subject. Afterward, he told me he had changed his mind and would henceforward be pro–New Wave. It must have been something I said...” (319). The contributors to *Gateways* state that many people appreciate the help and comradeship they have gotten from Pohl, but *Gateways* also demonstrates that the common roots between hard science fiction and New Wave are greater than they might seem from the vantage point of this time.

Gateways takes its name from my favorite of Frederick Pohl’s novels, *Gateway*, the 1977 novel that was my own way into Pohl’s work. What I did not quite realize, until I read *Gateways*, was that *Gateway* and other novels by Pohl had also set fire to the minds of several of the most well-known science fiction writers. The list of those people who wanted to honor Frederick Pohl is deeply impressive on its own. But more impressive still than the names on the list of contributors, is the kind of heartfelt debts these writers and family members claim they owe to “Fred.”

All Festschrift honor their chosen individual, but the list of what the contributors thank Pohl for is unusually long and varied. He spent his early career in science fiction as an editor of various magazines, including *Astonishing Stories* and *Galaxy*. He gave early support to Frank M. Robinson and Robert Silverberg among others, bought Gene Wolf’s second story, and Larry Niven’s first four stories, and got his first novel in the door at Ballantine. David Brin calls himself a longtime fan. Isaac Asimov (whose widow contributed the section from Asimov’s autobiography on Pohl) writes that Pohl more than anyone else but John W. Campbell Jr. made his career possible. All eighteen stories use aspects of Pohl’s works for homage, though it must be said that they are in no way derivative. The ideas in the stories are in conversation with Pohl’s ideas, but every once in a while a turn of phrase, a name, or an idea references a beloved Pohl novel or short story.

To give a sense of the breadth of this project, I’ll look at two of the fiction pieces in the collection, the novellas by David Brin, “Shorestead” and by Cory Doctorow, “Chicken Little.” “Shorestead” describes a neighborhood in which people try to reclaim “land” off the coast of Shanghai that has been flooded. Desperately poor people develop ever-more complex stilt houses as they can afford to make improvements, hoping to reach the level at which the government will recognize their claims. The main character, Wer, attempts to make a living as a scavenger, while building up his claim. He finds an artifact that turns out to be an alien AI who wants the people of earth to tell his story and make more copies to pass on as he was passed on—a viral chain letter complaining about the futility of civilization. In return the AI will give earth the technology to replicate and send out more like artifacts with its message. It turns out that there are other such “artifacts” from competing civilizations offering competing messages and technologies to transmit their message. Several warring interests try to steal the artifact, and successfully kidnap Wer to try to get the technology for themselves. But in the end, Wer makes different plans for the artifacts. The notion of an alien artifact producing great wealth comes out of *Gateway*. Brin writes in his afterward, though, that he was playing with the Pohl theme of an

ordinary man who is caught up in great events. The Pohlisms found occasionally in the story delight the reader familiar with Pohl’s texts, making connections beyond what the authors of the stories claim.

The Doctorow novella “Chicken Little” is an homage to Pohl’s advertising experience depicted in (among others) Pohl’s novel *The Space Merchants*. In this story Leon, a recent college graduate, is hired by a company, “Ate,” that works for ultra-rich clients who have been medically stabilized in their advanced age to the point that they exist in vats, protected by networks of buildings. “Ate” is desperately trying to sell something, anything to the clients that they don’t already have but want. Leon thinks he is the perfect person for this position because he has spent his adolescence and early adulthood training himself into a highly disciplined way of being in the world to compensate for his tendency toward sloppiness. No persuasive appeals get through to him, so he thinks he might be able to get past similar blocks put up by the clients. The inner landscape of his characters always matters as much as the external plot in Pohl, and the interplay between the internal and the external in Doctorow’s story is a lovely homage, and a fascinating look at contemporary forms of persuasion.

Gateways has many attractions for critics. Specifically, it contains the beginnings of a study of the reception of either *Gateway* or *The Space Merchants* by people in the field. Many of the authors note that they reread one or the other of these books frequently, Brian W. Aldiss noting about *The Space Merchants*, “It helps us stay modest,” (309). The appreciators of Pohl talk about the effect these and other works had on them and on their work in addition to talking about the support that Pohl has given them throughout their science fiction writing careers. More generally, the appreciations are the beginnings of an oral history of the writing of science fiction for the seventy years Pohl has been involved. There are plenty of screeds on the Internet purporting to tell the “true” story of the win/defeat of either hard science fiction or the New Wave. The bits of oral history in *Gateways* begin to demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between the two through the support that Pohl gave to all good science fiction authors, regardless of the type of science fiction they write. They say politics makes strange bedfellows; Pohl must be the dating service.

The Stainless Steel Rat Returns

Ed Carmien

Harry Harrison. *The Stainless Steel Rat Returns*. New York: Tor, 2010. Hardcover, 304 pages, \$24.99, ISBN 978-0-7653-2441-2.

“Long may the Rat run roughshod over the forces of law, order, and the square world” reads a blurb on the cover, referring to the Rat’s circus romp of 1999. Slippery Jim diGriz, likely a fond memory for SF readers of a Certain Age, was at first just that—an authority-flouting wild card in a sparsely described space opera future era that reflected contemporary trends in governance and (in)competence by those in charge.

Today's Rat is in the employ of a thinly described intelligence or police service. He begins comfortably retired on Moolaplenty, living a Nick and Nora Charles-like existence, half-pickled in 300-year old bourbon chilled by "million-year old ice brought in from one of the outer planets." Then relatives arrive, complete with Hee-Haw dialect, a herd of porcuswine (porcupine + swine: it *is* the future, after all) and a tiny problem: the tramp space-freighter captain that brought them to their rich relative holds them hostage for the inflated bill.

Soon diGriz is broke—or half-broke, and in some undefined way provoked into arresting the knave of a ship captain, buying the hapless vessel containing his country relations, and heading into space to find his new dependents a planet that will appreciate them and their herd.

Nora Charles—err, that's Angelina—accompanies the Rat on this journey out of the dust bowl of Moolaplenty, but as the old saying goes, the fun is all in the journey, not the arrival. Their refurbished ship, dubbed *Porcuswine Express*, has been thoroughly sabotaged by the outgoing villain of a captain. Just as writers must dispose of cellphones from any modern TV equation to add drama to a situation, just so Harrison disposes of interplanetary communications, making the sabotage of the ship's interstellar drive an actual problem.

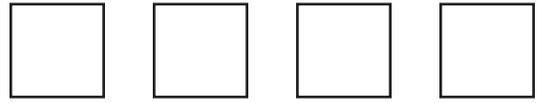
Several planets are visited as the ship struggles to bring its cargo of hicks and prickly pigs to a planet conveniently in need of agricultural immigrants. The Rat manages to fight the good fight against an evil theocracy and dumb, green, overly-fertile racists out to get the pinks. Luckily, heavy drinking is the norm, Angelica is a gun bunny, and the ship has a few competent officers who take care of mundane chores like running the ship and coming up with technical solutions when needed.

Recent installments of the Rat's adventures have been, by all reports, poorly proofed and even more than usually cardboard in their construction. Here, the cardboard remains—though the Rat's adventures have never taken place in anything other than a cardboard universe, this *is* Space Opera in the Old Sense—but at least the text is not riddled with obvious errors... though I did spot a few typos.

Terry Pratchett and Charles Stross seem to be doing a better job of satirizing present-day human foibles. Whether Pratchett's Discworld stories (now ambling through contemporary topics such as government bureaucracy) or Stross's Bob Howard tales, there are funnier reads to be had. These would be better choices for someone looking to discuss satire in contemporary fantastic literature in the classroom.

Tired prose aside, perhaps the Rat's latest adventure does not amuse as much as in days of yore because Harrison no longer skewers present-day attitudes. Neither zealots nor green racists seem to be a logical stand-in for anything recognizable today. Now the Rat works for The Man. Though his wealth vanishes at the beginning, he is rich again at the end, thanks to The Man. In fact, the only traditional Rat trick seems to be sticking The Man with the bill.

I guess that's the best anti-authority jab one can make... when one works for The Man.



Media Reviews

***I'm Here* [film]**

Ritch Calvin

I'm Here. Dir. Spike Jonze. Perf. Andrew Garfield, Sienna Guillory. Absolut, 2010.

The 2010 short film (29 minutes) *I'm Here* was written and directed by Spike Jonze (*Where the Wild Things Are*, *Adaptation*, *Being John Malkovich*, and *Jackass*) for the Absolut Vodka company. The film was originally available for viewing online (<http://www.imheremovie.com/>), though I would imagine that it will be available in a physical copy at some point. The film is set in a future Los Angeles where much of the menial work (road construction, shelving books in a library, car repair, waitressing) is performed by robots, who live alone in apartments, and, by law, are not allowed to drive (though, curiously, the city bus is driven by a robot). Jonze provides no background for any of this: it's not the point. We do not know how this robot revolution took place; we do not know who owns them or how their work is assigned or compensated; we do not know why the robots work 9–5 shifts and live in apartments. The point is also not verisimilitude: the "male" robots look like people who wear an old CPU or TV on their head, and the "female" robots look like mannequins with no noses. Indeed, a willful suspension of disbelief is required.

The plot centers upon two robots—a "male" robot named Sheldon and a "female" robot named Francesca (though she is unnamed in the film). Sheldon shelves books in a local library, rides the bus home, and sits in his nearly empty apartment as he plugs in to recharge his battery. He tries to reach out to other robots, but, trapped in their own routine and boredom, they ignore him. One day, as Sheldon is waiting for his bus ride home, he sees Francesca behind the wheel of a car, laughing uncontrollably. Sheldon is intrigued and more than a little bit smitten. Francesca is a free spirit: she loves art and music, and she dreams: "You just make them up." She pastes flyers that read, "I'm here," in public places. Francesca is also a bit "clumsy."

Sheldon and Francesca begin their courtship in much the usual way: they walk through the woods; they learn about each other's tastes; they go to a concert; and they have simulated robot-sex in bed. But Francesca has brought life to Sheldon and to his apartment. He has a spring in his step; he wears a faux Mohawk "hairdo" made of stickers; he attends parties. When Francesca's arm is damaged, Sheldon quickly gives up his own arm for her. When Francesca's leg is damaged, he quickly gives up his leg and pronounces himself "fit as a fiddle." When Francesca's torso is damaged, Sheldon gives up his own. In the final scene, Francesca is wheeled out of the emergency room with Sheldon's head in her lap. In the end, Sheldon, despite giving up

his body, or because he has given up his body, has arrived, has attained his own being. He's "here."

I'm Here is, of course, about two robots who fall in love, and about one robot who discovers both life and himself through self-sacrifice. However, certain connections can be drawn with Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. *I'm Here* is also about the ways in which performing meaningless chores and living isolated in empty cubicle de-humanizes Sheldon. In this film version, he's not transformed into a bug but into a robot. In this film, we do not hear Gregor's interior angst over his sudden transformation and alienation; rather, we see Sheldon's joy at his transformation and connection with another being. Like Roy Baty at the end of *Blade Runner*, Sheldon has experienced the love, the pain, and the loss that make him human.

I'm Here is predictable, mawkish, and certainly heteronormative: the possibilities for subversive relations abound, but Jonze does not make those choices. The film is not about an individual's transformation through love, but about a man's (or a male robot's) transformation through love for a woman (or female robot). In a welcome alteration to the traditional script, Jonze does choose, however, to have the male sacrifice himself, and specifically his body, for the female.

The lo-fi feel of the film is appealing; it would make an excellent contrast with the big-budget FX films and demonstrate an emphasis on storytelling and character development. The lo-fi soundtrack of the fake band The Lost Trees works well, too, with the song "There Are Many of Us" (by Aska Matsumiya) serving as leitmotif for the two lovers. The short run time also makes it more than suitable for use in the classroom. For any class examining the question of what constitutes or creates a human (and what de-humanizes us), *I'm Here* would fit right in.

Alice [TV miniseries]

Susan A. George

Alice. Writer/Director Nick Willing. Perf. Caterina Scorsone, Andrew Lee Potts, Kathy Bates, Philip Winchester, Tim Curry, Harry Dean Stanton, Matt Frewer, Colm Meaney. SyFy. Original air dates, December 6 and 7, 2009.

So far the twenty-first century has failed to live up to the prognostications made about it in the early to mid-twentieth century. Happily, the new millennium didn't usher in the end of the world, though we do not have commercial space flight, and Arthur C. Clarke's star child wasn't born, and although we are a step closer according to recent news reports, we still don't have our flying cars. Media developments in the first decade of the millennium have produced visually spectacular films like James Cameron's *Avatar*, films that make us think like *District 9* and *Children of Men*, and the not-so-spectacular *Twilight* franchise. The last ten years has seen the continued proliferation of adaptations, remakes, reimaginings, and reboots in recorded media especially science fiction, fantasy, and horror. From the BBC's new *Doctor Who* to J. J. Abrams's relaunching of the *Star Trek* franchise, media conglomerates are, apparently, turning to properties that have a built in and dedicated fan base.

The SyFy network, ever ready to cash in on the latest media trends such as "reality" shows with *Ghost Hunters* and *Ghost Hunters International*, has had its share of adaptations and remakes including the successful and critically acclaimed reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* and mini-series such as the *Earthsea Trilogy* and *Tin Man* that, according to the DVD cover, is a "science fiction update of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*." *Alice* is SyFy network's latest science fiction "adaptation" that pulls elements from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. Airing shortly before the release of Tim Burton's 2010 film version of *Alice in Wonderland*, the two part mini-series has little in common with the source texts except for the characters and their names, the device of a looking glass, and Alice's fall down the rabbit hole.

This *Alice* opens in a world much like ours, and the twenty-one year old Alice (Caterina Scorsone) is a martial arts instructor bringing her new boyfriend, Jack Chase (Philip Winchester), home to meet her mom. Things quickly change as Jack is abducted. Pursuing Jack's abductors, Alice falls through a large mirror and finds herself in a strange and decadent world where others refer to her as either an "oyster" or "the Alice of Legend." Wonderland is a postmodern creation juxtaposing a decaying urban landscape literally built on top of other crumbling urban landscapes and vistas of great natural beauty. The overall architecture and individual set designs evoke a dream world that is both familiar and surreal. Decadence and decay, however, are the major markers of the Queen of Heart's (Kathy Bates) kingdom. In Wonderland, emotions and meaningful relationships have been replaced with the rush of emotions drained and distilled from the "oysters," harvested from Alice's world, who are kept in a state of blissful forgetfulness as their desires are fulfilled in the Queen's casino.

Lying beneath all the postmodern pastiche of multiple texts and architectures is the story of Alice, a young woman abandoned by her father when she was ten. She has spent most of her life wondering why her seemingly loving father left them without a word. Since he left, she has been unable to maintain a lasting relationship with any man. As her mother comments, when a boyfriend gets too close, she backs away unable to trust and commit to a long-term relationship. However, as her adventures in Wonderland unfold, Alice, with the help of Hatter (Andrew Lee Potts) and the White Knight (Matt Frewer), is able to release Wonderland from the tyrannical reign of the Queen of Hearts, restore the balance between the two worlds, and find her father who didn't abandon them at all, but was a captive of the Queen. Although Alice's father never makes it home (he dies protecting her), the knowledge that he didn't abandon them and loved them is enough to affect a profound change in Alice. When she returns home she is able to admit her love for Hatter who has followed her to her world thus creating a happy ending for all concerned.

Alice is generally well acted and has a fine cast, one that fans of science fiction/fantasy/horror film and TV will surely recognize though many are underused, including Tim Curry as Dodo, Harry Dean Stanton as Caterpillar, and even Bates as the Queen. However, the mini-series seems to suffer from the very thing it tries to critique—a preoccupation with instant gratification and surfaces rather than depth. For instance, the

Queen's casino with its essence extraction floor is a nostalgic psychedelic construction reminiscent of an early Bond film or perhaps more accurately an Austin Powers film meant to be taken seriously. Too much screen time is spent on the slick sets and images and too little on what exactly happens to the oysters because of the process. In addition, other than knowing there is an underground resistance fighting against the Queen and that Jack Chase is a member and also the Queen's son, Jack Heart, the viewer learns little about the world and people of Wonderland. All that is clear is that the Queen has made her people into addicts that only think about their next "fix" of pilfered emotions—a poor substitute, replacement or simulacra of their own. So while it begins to critique postmodern culture's obsession with surfaces, instant gratification, and simulation, the message tends to get lost in the visuals and Alice's coming of age story.

In terms of usefulness in the classroom, three things come to mind. First, *Alice* could effectively be used to discuss adaptation, currently a hot topic in academia, authenticity of texts, and to look at how market demands are driving film and TV's current preoccupation with remakes. Second, it serves as a more recent example of postmodern aesthetics in media and could be used along side darker cinematic images, such as those in *Blade Runner*, to explore the effectiveness of these images and if, indeed, they have become so mainstream that they have lost their power. Finally, *Alice* could be used to open up a discussion and study of landscapes and cityscapes in science fiction and fantasy film and TV. Although *Alice* certainly has its flaws, and the connection to the source texts is so tenuous one might ask why bother to evoke them at all, it is an interesting and engaging romp in another sort of Wonderland.

Splice [film]

T. S. Miller

Splice. Dir. Vincenzo Natali. Perf. Adrien Brody and Sarah Polley. Warner Brothers, 2009.

Whenever a film like *Splice* is released, we must stop and consider the extent to which these movies really originate in an anxiety over, say, potentially disturbing advances in genetic engineering, and the extent to which such a cutting-edge technology serves as just another cool new way to produce cool new monsters. Not surprisingly, *Splice* is a mixture of both of these impulses, at once a prurient shocker of a horror flick and a thoughtful exploration of bioethics as figured principally in the human element in science. Our human elements are named Clive (Adrien Brody) and Elsa (Sarah Polley), the two halves of a geneticist power couple who decide to defy corporate orders and current laws to create an experimental human-animal hybrid using—unbeknownst to Clive—Elsa's own DNA. On one level, the premise is very familiar: when the experiment goes (inevitably) awry, we get yet another *Frankenstein*-story filtered through *Moreau* and Cronenberg and more. Even so, the unique situation of this artificial being, both part nonhuman and the literal descendant of one of its creators, foregrounds and extends the particular dimension of *Frankenstein* that involves, as Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove put it, "the tragedy of the unwanted

child" (187). A short time after the hybrid, "Dren," reaches sexual maturity, however, the second act takes a surprising turn away from the issues of bioethics and parenthood that anchor the film's first half. The new foci become sexuality and (I would argue) animality, and this indeed shocking shift towards the sexual may alienate some viewers. In fact, if we can say in hindsight that director Vincenzo Natali's debut, *Cube* (1997), was only a somewhat more sophisticated anticipation of gore fests like *Saw* (2004), we might be likewise tempted to declare the second half of *Splice* little more than a slightly smarter version of *Species* (1995), that extravaganza of soft-core alien porn. Nevertheless, despite a tendency toward melodrama ("I don't even know who you are anymore"), and a few tics of Hollywood horror that dilute the intelligence of the narrative action, *Splice*, as a kind of hybrid film itself, manages to construct a complex and challenging narrative out of its numerous pretexts. Above all, the film raises a number of important questions, even if its answers to these questions are not always satisfactory.

Over the course of the film, Natali manipulates his familiar monster movie tropes to examine several different discourses, not limited to questions of hybridity, monstrosity, and "science fiction's great theme," as Keith Hull has put it: namely, what it means to be human. I was struck by the extent to which the film concerns itself with the discourse of science, although I would have to confess that it doesn't seem any more disposed to simulate "real science" than the average B-movie. Natali at first appears to establish an antagonism between the dreary, profit-driven realities of contemporary corporate-sponsored science and the kind of more ambitious pure research our heroes would like to—and do—pursue. Yet the film's anticorporatism is not nearly so blatant as that in *Avatar*, and the multiple-boundary-crossing experiment that Elsa and Clive perform does ultimately result in extreme violence, complicating the good science/bad science binary. Beyond the film's complex treatment of science as process and business, various tensions between Elsa and Clive over Dren also introduce bizarrely cognitively estranged issues about childhood and child-rearing, though here Natali sometimes risks reinforcing stereotypical constructions of gender roles; I'm thinking especially of the scene in which Dren becomes ill and an exasperated Elsa appeals to a newfound epistemology of motherly intuition: "I just know." But one of the great strengths of the film lies in how these two concerns intersect: on multiple occasions, Clive accuses Elsa of no longer *being* a scientist because of certain of her actions, rather than simply ceasing to behave like one. If Elsa were to lose her claim to the title of "scientist" simply because she had taken up a new one, "mother," we would have to dismiss *Splice* as downright reactionary, but I sense that Natali is up to much more. For example, that any cautionary tale in *Splice* about the dangers of science cannot be extricated from the Oedipal family drama allows for the possibility that it is the scientists' human failings that defeat them, not the machinery of science itself.

And, yes, the narrative that takes over around the middle of the film relies on an at times heavy-handed Electra complex that Natali probably carries one step too far. At the same time, *Splice* is refreshing in that Dren is neither an inscrutable menacing Other like the Alien, nor a superficial "misunderstood monster," but something, well, *in-between* these two extremes, a genuine unpredictable hybrid. Accordingly, for me the most

dismaying aspect of the film is the way in which “the animal” seems to dominate the hybrid in the end, and for a particular negative construction of “the animal.” In *Splice*, hybrid sexuality seems restricted to animal instinct, and what “animal instinct” amounts to in this film is nothing but sexual violence, especially in the body of the male: Natali consistently portrays male hybrids as seeking only to dispatch rivals as quickly and brutally as possible, and then to mate with any nearby females as quickly and brutally as possible. Although the film initially offers us a conception of chimerical monstrosity as morally divided and divisive as Shelley’s hyper-literate monster, the conclusion reinscribes the hybrid as absolute, singularly threatening Other: we may be able to empathize with a misunderstood monster, like Frankenstein’s, who has merely murdered, but violent rape stands as perhaps the single remaining touchstone of absolute evil in modern cinema.

In the end, then, *Splice* is a rather less ambiguous and less rich work than Shelley’s Miltonic monster myth, but the two definitely deserve comparison. In fact, *Splice* seems overlaid with Miltonic overtones of its own, which further connect it with its obvious central intertext in the Frankenstein tradition in literature and film. The penultimate shot positions Dren as fallen angel among Elsa and Clive, compounding the various Miltonic triangulations that run through the film and through Shelley’s novel. (Who is God; who is Adam; who is Satan; who is creator/created?) Elsa herself makes a telling reference to Adam and Eve in a scientific presentation, and a temptation scene even prefaces the hybrid’s creation. Again, however, concomitant with the real subtlety of this Biblical allusion is the troubling possibility that the film upholds the misogynistic medieval tradition that “blames” women in the person of Eve for Adam’s fall. *Splice* is without doubt an imperfect film, and, while its weak box office may stall sequel plans, I expect it will figure prominently in a wide range of discussions about hybridity, the popular representation of modern science, animal studies, monstrosity studies at large, and, if nothing else, the innumerable SF afterlives of foundational texts like *Frankenstein* and *Moreau*.

Works Cited

- Aldiss, Brian W., and David Wingrove. “On the Origin of Species: Mary Shelley.” *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction*. New York: Atheneum, 1986. Rpt. in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*. Ed. James E. Gunn and Matthew Candelaria. Lanham: Scarecrow, 2005. 163–203. Print.
- Hull, Keith N. “What Is Human? Ursula Le Guin and Science Fiction’s Great Theme.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 32:1 (1986): 65–74. Print.

Star Trek: The Key Collection, Vols. 1–3 [graphic novel]

Dominick Grace

Star Trek: The Key Collection. Vols. 1–3. Miamisburg, OH: Checker, 2004–2005.

Children of the late 1960s or the 1970s may have fond memories of the Gold Key *Star Trek* comics. Gold Key was the first publisher to license *Star Trek* for adaptation to comic book form and published sixty issues, on a sporadic schedule, beginning in 1967 and running until 1979, at which time Marvel acquired the *Star Trek* rights. Checker Press has engaged in a multi-volume project to bring these comics back into print. Volumes 1–3 reprint the first twenty-four issues in sequence. The warm glow of nostalgia may prompt those who remember these comics from their childhood to buy the collections, but that warm glow will probably be quickly cooled by the dull reality of these mediocre comics, represented in an equally mediocre manner. These are merely scans of the original comics, preserving all their original warts and limitations such as misaligned and muddy color, with little in the way of editorial material to contextualize them. *Star Trek* fans may be moved by the collector’s completist mentality to pick these up, but as *Star Trek* stories, they leave much to be desired.

The Gold Key *Star Trek* comics are a good example of cheap, slipshod merchandising. The writing is so unimportant that even these editions do not as a rule credit the writers. Volume 2 (issues 8–16) is credited to Len Wein, co-creator (with Berni Wrightson) of *Swamp Thing* and a sufficiently well-known comics writer that he merits acknowledgment, but no writers are credited for volumes 1 or 3. Those responsible for the comics, especially early on, had little or no direct knowledge of the series or even, apparently, the series bible, given the inconsistencies between the program and the comic, ranging from the relatively trivial (reference to the teleporter rather than the transporter, or Spock occasionally appearing with normal ears—on the same page on which he also appears with his usual pointy ears, a testament to the carelessness of the art) to the quite significant (the first issue features Spock wiping out the population of a planet—sure, it’s a dangerous population, but still... Spock? Genocide?). Not until Wein’s run do the established characters begin to sound or act consistently in character, but even his stories are more like run-of-the-mill generic Sci-Fi actioners than true *Star Trek* stories. The series depends on hoary gimmicks and clichés, such as various transplanted genre stories—pirates in space (complete with a space ship that looks like a boat, B-movie pirate gear and pirate argot, and plot elements lifted directly from *Treasure Island*), mummies in space, a voodoo planet, Indians in space, etc.; and a predictable array of robots, aliens, and monsters run amok.

Each issue is self-contained, so these volumes offer the equivalent of a set of *Star Trek* short stories, so there is quite a range of SF tropes covered (AI, cyborgization, first contact, space monsters, uploaded identity, etc.), albeit usually superficially and without much thought given to the implications of the underlying ideas. The first issue is a particularly telling example. It features plant spores somehow able to get into space

from a planetary surface without the benefit of technology (how do they escape the planet? Via intelligent agency or chance? Who knows? Not the writer, certainly). These spores infect alien mammalian organisms and convert them to plant form. This is a given in the story, the sort of gimme one often accepts for the sake of the narrative in SF, but then, it seems to serve no real purpose, since we subsequently learn that the planet has a population of sentient plant creatures that also farm and harvest mammals as food (the tumbleweed-like “sheepdogs” are a nice touch), thereby (according to the terminology of the story) being “cannibal plants.” But if the vegetal creatures farm mammals for food, why also transform them into vegetation? The fact that these creatures are clearly sentient is also overlooked in the narrative; since these spores and their ability to transform fauna to flora endanger all mammalian life in the universe, the only solution to the threat represented by this planet is the aforementioned genocide, as Spock incinerates every living vegetable on the planet (one wonders about the fate of the poor mammals, presumably left to starve or eat each other after being spared a trip through a plant’s dietary tract, if they too are not in fact merely collateral damage in Spock’s scorched earth policy...). This is, in short, pretty poorly thought through SF, and the subsequent stories are not much better.

What benefit might such comics provide in the classroom? In a course on popular culture or dealing with different media or adaptation, they do provide instructive comparators to the original series. One might explore what constitutes the essential elements of *Star Trek* by contrasting these adaptations with the show (e.g., the standard Kirk love story featured in most episodes is almost entirely absent from the comics; character is far less important than action; etc.). Since the later Marvel or DC versions are more diligently consistent with the television show, the Gold Key comics might be more interesting for the purposes of comparison/contrast. One might explore these stories as examples of bad SF, to demonstrate to students how difficult it is to produce carefully constructed, thoughtful work in the genre, but negative examples can only be taken so far. One might try to use them to discuss SF in relation to comics as a medium, but these stories are so indifferently rendered, taking so few advantages of the strengths of the comics medium to enhance the narrative (indeed, in several stories, it is not even clear what is going on or how to read the panels) that their usefulness in this respect is limited, as well. I would recommend against investing in these books, certainly as likely teaching tools, unless one either has a love for *Star Trek* that transcends quality or has a high tolerance for mediocrity.

***The Trial* [graphic novel]**

Christopher Basnett

Franz Kafka. *The Trial: A Graphic Novel*. Adapt. and trans. David Z. Mairowitz. Illus. Chantal Montellier. New York: Sterling, 2008. Paperback, 119 + vii pages, \$14.95, ISBN: 978-1-4114-1591-1.

Although Franz Kafka’s writings have greatly influenced postmodern literature, he remains a little-read author in this

country. His stories seem bizarre and unapproachable to many, utilizing a disquieting absurdist humor noted for its dreamlike or nightmarish quality. Reminiscent of Jacob wrestling with the angel, *The Trial* is Kafka wrestling with the underlying existential feeling of injustice in the world.

Like most of Kafka’s works, the story begins abruptly. The main character, K., has been slandered and is arrested. His accuser and the actual nature of the charges are not revealed to him. He tries various approaches to protest his guilt, all to no avail. With each attempt, he is presented with grotesque examples of injustice and corruption that go unaddressed, while he is saddled with the task of proving his innocence.

One of the pivotal points of the story, often termed the Parable of the Law, is amazingly well done. We are given the distilled essence of the parable in five pages in the graphic adaptation, whereas it takes about ten pages of text in most translations. “A picture is worth a thousand words,” I know, but this is nicely done. Religious interpretations have been offered for this parable, but the reader can explore them elsewhere. The ending scenes of the story are as direct and abrupt (and to this reviewer, as unsatisfying, unfortunately) as the original. As Max Brod explains in the postscript to *The Trial*, “Franz regarded the novel as unfinished.” But, the task at hand is to review the graphic novel adaptation, not the original novel.

Mairowitz has done a better-than-average job of translating and adapting Kafka’s text. In a few instances, his translation lacks some of the power of other published versions, but he captures the essence of the story without the occasional rambling of the original. Some oft-quoted or “quotable” quotes were overlooked or at least incomplete. In *this* reviewer’s opinion, however, nothing fundamentally important to the story was omitted.

Montellier’s artistic rendition is visually stunning. It has a noir quality to it perfectly suited to the tale. The stark black-and-white images are often mesmerizing, but occasionally distracting as well, e.g., the skeletal creature that appears throughout to mock K., which has no equivalent in the original work. The repeated use of an adapted portrait of Kafka for K.’s face is reminiscent of Orwell’s Big Brother or Frida Kahlo’s paintings. An abundance of sexual imagery appears throughout, adding a Freudian interpretation that may not always be justified by the original text and some may find objectionable. Some of the earlier visuals seem to be influenced by the imagery of Orson Welles’s 1962 film version of the story.

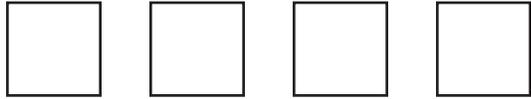
It can be argued that literature provides the reader the greatest flexibility in “watching” a story unfold in the mind’s eye. Radio theater also allows listeners to imagine the story for themselves, influenced only by the skill of the actors’ use of the human voice. In this view, the audience perception of a story may be greatly influenced by or limited to the imagination of the director in cinema or the artist in the graphic novel. I have read Kafka’s novel several times in different translations at various times in my life. In reviewing the graphic novel, I was both impressed by the concise but accurate retelling of the story and by the difference between the images in my mind’s eye and those presented here.

If the reader is unfamiliar with Kafka’s work, this graphic novel might provide an entertaining or interesting approach. Note: Don’t use it as a Cliff’s Notes to study by. It is an adapta-

tion, not an abridgement of the original. That being said, it is one of the best adaptations I have seen of classic literature to the graphic medium.

Work Cited

Kafka, Franz. *The Trial. Definitive Edition*. Trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: Modern Library, 1956.



Announcements

Calls for Papers

Compiled by Michael Klein

Call for Papers—Conference

Title: Pippi to Ripley: Conference on Heroines of Fantasy and Science Fiction

Conference Date: April 23, 2011

Conference Site: Ithaca College, Ithaca NY

Topic: An interdisciplinary conference examining images of girls and women appearing in comics, films, television, and video games as well as in folklore, Children's & YA fiction, and adult-directed texts. The last five years have seen a proliferation of images of lethal girls in a variety of media. This conference seeks to place this phenomenon in the context of the larger topic of heroines of folklore, fantasy, and science fiction. We are especially interested in the ways that these characters reflect and question dominant ideas of gender, class, and power. We wish to interrogate the extent to which such female figures exercise agency, or whether they merely appear to, within their fantasy and science fiction milieu.

Due Date: 300–500 word abstract by December 15, 2010

Contact: Katharine Kittredge (kkittredge AT ithaca.edu)

Call for Papers—Conference

Title: What Happens Next: The Mechanics of Serialization

Conference Date: March 25–26, 2011

Conference Site: University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Topic: This conference is intended to give graduate students from different fields of study the opportunity to present and exchange ideas on the concept and mechanics of serialization. The aim of this conference is to form ideas about how serialization can be conceptualized across disciplines as diverse as literary history, economics, narratology, television studies and cultural analysis. We invite proposals for twenty-minute research papers addressing any aspect of serialization; and collaborative panels of two to three papers.

Due Date: December 31, 2010

Contact: uvserialization AT gmail.com

URL: <http://www.hum.uva.nl/serialization/>

Call for Papers—Conference

Title: SCADCon Academic Track

Conference Date: May 12–15, 2011

Conference Site: Savannah College for Art and Design, Savannah, GA

Topic: The Institute for Comics Studies invites proposals for scholarly presentations, book talks, slide talks, roundtables, professional-focus panels, workshops, and other panels centered on visual storytelling, sequential art, and comics in any form (graphic novels, comic strips, comic books, manga, web comics, etc.), comics-centric works, or adaptations of comics materials, genres, or figures into other media. SCADCon is produced by the Savannah College for Art and Design, and is the only annual university-sponsored comic con in the country.

Due Date: January 1, 2011

Contact: comicsstudies AT gmail.com

URL: <http://www.hsu.edu/form.aspx?ekfrm=40054>

Call for Papers—Conference

Title: Tolkien Conference

Conference Date: April 8–10, 2011

Conference Site: University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Topic: Tolkien at the University of Vermont 2011, an annual academic conference devoted to the texts of J.R.R. Tolkien, will be held at the UVM campus in Burlington, Vermont. The conference organizers seek 20-minute papers on any topic related to Tolkien or his texts, but the following topic will be given priority consideration: nature and the environment in Middle-earth or related to Tolkien's life or works.

Due Date: One-page abstract by Saturday, January 15, 2011.

Please include Tolkien 2011 in the subject line.

Contact: Christopher T. Vaccaro (cvaccaro AT uvm.edu)

Call for Papers—Book

Title: *Sexing Science Fiction*

Topic: A scholarly treatment of the issue of sex in science fiction is currently under consideration for publication by McFarland Publishers as part of its Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy series (series editors Donald E. Palumbo and C. W. Sullivan III). This book aims to explore the myriad ways in which authors writing in the genre, regardless of format (e.g., print, film, television, etc.), envision the ways in which different beings express this most fundamental of behaviors. This collection, then, looks to note ways in which our culture's continually changing and evolving mores of sex and sexuality are reflected in, dissected by, and deconstructed through the genre of science fiction. The editors would like to see papers that challenge and affirm the ways in which sex and sexuality relate to the genre of science fiction itself. Both of these fashioned notions—sex and sexuality and the genre of science fiction—should be forefront in the work, as ways in which to interrogate specific texts, symbols, movements, writers, sub-genres, or other like areas.

Due Date: 500 word abstracts by December 1, 2010.

Contact: Sherry Ginn (DoctorGinn AT gmail.com)

Science Fiction Foundation Announces SF Criticism Masterclass for 2011

LONDON, 1 TO 3 JULY 2011

Class Leaders:
Paul McAuley
Claire Brialey
Mark Bould

The Science Fiction Foundation (SFF) will be holding the fifth annual Masterclass in SF criticism in 2010.

Paul McAuley is the author of eighteen novels, many of which have been nominated for the Campbell, BSFA and Clarke Awards, including the Arthur C. Clarke Award winning Pasquale's Angels. His most recent books such as *The Quiet War* and *Gardens of the Sun*.

Claire Brialey is coeditor of the Nova award winning, and Hugo nominated, *Banana Wings*, has been a Clarke judge, and contributed critical articles to *Foundation*, and *Vector* and a range of well known fanzines.

Mark Bould is the coeditor of *Science Fiction Film and Television* and author of *The Cinema of John Sayles: Lone Star* and *Film Noir: From Berlin to Sin City*. He has coedited *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, *Fifty Key Figures in Science Fiction*, and *Red Planets: Marxists and Science Fiction*, among other projects, including several issues of *Science Fiction Studies*.

Location: Middlesex University, London (the Hendon Campus; nearest underground, Hendon Central).

Cost: Delegate costs will be £185 per person, excluding accommodation.

Accommodation: students are asked to find their own accommodation, but help is Golders Green Hotel (<http://www.booking.com/hotel/gb/golders-green.en.html>) and the King Solomon Hotel (<http://www.booking.com/hotel/gb/kingsolomonhotel.html?label=gog235jc;sid=844b7dce72754779b9a03fef13bef296>), both in Golders Green, a short bus ride from the University.

Applicants should write to Farah Mendlesohn at [farah.sf AT gmail.com](mailto:farah.sf@gmail.com). Applicants will be asked to provide a CV and writing sample; these will be assessed by an Applications Committee consisting of Farah Mendlesohn, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. and Andy Sawyer.

Completed applications must be received by 28 February 2011.

The Science Fiction Foundation (Registered Charity No. 1041052) was founded in 1970 by the writer/social activist George Hay and others as a semi-autonomous association of writers, academics, critics and others with an active interest in science fiction, with Arthur C. Clarke and Ursula K. Le Guin as patrons. Our aim is to promote science fiction and bring together those who read, write, study, teach, research or archive science fiction in Britain and the rest of the world. We also want to support science fiction, at conventions, at conferences and at other events which bring those interested in science fiction together.

Our main activities include publication of the journal *Foundation: the international review of science fiction*, and supporting the research library *The Science Fiction Foundation Collection* at the University of Liverpool. We have recently run successful conferences such as *A Commonwealth of Science Fiction* and the 2002 SFRA Conference, and published critical works on Ken MacLeod, Terry Pratchett, and *Babylon 5*.

The four main objectives of the SFF are: to provide research facilities for anyone wishing to study science fiction; to investigate and promote the usefulness of science fiction in education; to disseminate information about science fiction; and to promote a discriminating understanding of the nature of science fiction.

Further information at: <http://www.sf-foundation.org/index.html>.

SFRA 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dreams Not Only American: Science Fiction's Transatlantic Transactions

**Lublin, Poland
July 7-10, 2011**

<http://sfra2011.pl>

Science fiction has become a truly global phenomenon, encompassing national and international exchanges and intersections (the status quo addressed by the Eaton Conference in February 2011). Despite its incredible variety, however, science fiction (SF) first emerged as a discrete literary practice in the United States and several European countries. Bearing in mind these origins and the fact that this is only the second SFRA conference to be held outside North America, it seems only natural that the organization's 2011 meeting should focus on all modes and aspects of SF transactions between Europe and America(s).

We invite paper and panel proposals that focus on all forms of science fiction and that address (but are not limited to) the following aspects:

- * Roots – the circumstances of independent emergence of SF in Europe and America
- * History and politics of Euro-American SF transactions
- * Identity discourses and constructions – does “science fiction” mean the same in the U.S., Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany or Russia?
- * Exchanges – how have European and American science fictions influenced and inspired each other?
- * Differences – are science fictions written in America and in Europe different thematically or formally? how?
- * National “schools” in Europe and America – their characteristics, peculiarities and exchanges; is Western European SF similar to that from Central and Eastern Europe? How is Canadian SF different from the texts produced in the U.S.?

Papers and panels on all other topics pertinent to the Science Fiction Research Association's scope of interests are also welcome.

The deadline for abstracts and proposals is March 31st. All abstracts and proposals will be considered on a rolling basis. Please note that all presenters must be SFRA members in good standing.

Contact: Pawel Frelik ([pawel.frelik AT gmail.com](mailto:pawel.frelik@gmail.com))

Science Fiction Research Association

www.sfra.org

The Science Fiction Research Association 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, readers, authors, booksellers, editors, publishers, archivists, and scholars in many disciplines. Academic affiliation is not a requirement for membership. Visit the SFRA Website at <http://www.sfra.org>. For a membership application, contact the SFRA Treasurer or see the Website.

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SFRA Standard Membership Benefits

SFRA Review

Four issues per year. This newsletter/journal surveys the field of science fiction scholarship, including extensive reviews of fiction and nonfiction books and media, review articles, and listings of new and forthcoming books. The *Review* also prints news about SFRA internal affairs, calls for papers, and updates on works in progress.

SFRA Annual Directory

One issue per year. Members' names, contact information, and areas of interest.

SFRA Listserv

Ongoing. The SFRA listserv allows members to discuss topics and news of interest to the SF community, and to query the collective knowledge of the membership. To join the listserv or obtain further information, visit the listserv information page: <http://wiz.cath.vt.edu/mailman/listinfo/sfra-l>

Extrapolation

Three issues per year. The oldest scholarly journal in the field, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, book reviews, letters, occasional special topic issues, and an annual index.

Science Fiction Studies

Three issues per year. This scholarly journal includes critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, review articles, reviews, notes, letters, international coverage, and an annual index.

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SFRA Optional Membership Benefits

(Discounted subscription rates for members)

Foundation

Three issues per year. British scholarly journal, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, reviews, and letters. Add to dues: \$33 seairmail; \$40 airmail.

The New York Review of Science Fiction

Twelve issues per year. Reviews and features. Add to dues: \$28 domestic; \$30 domestic institutional; \$34 Canada; \$40 UK and Europe; \$42 Pacific and Australia.

Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts

Four issues per year. Scholarly journal, with critical and bibliographical articles and reviews. Add to dues: \$40/1 year; \$100/3 years.

Femspec

Critical and creative works. Add to dues: \$40 domestic individual; \$96 domestic institutional; \$50 international individual; \$105 international institutional.

