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**Calls for Papers**
and Ivan Callus (from the University of Malta) review scholarship and survey the state of medicine in contemporary SF. In “Using Book History to Teach Science Fiction,” Ryan Speer, a professional librarian who works with Georgia Tech’s SF special collection, discusses ways to use historical books and magazines in the 21st century SF classroom. Forthcoming “Feature 101” articles in future issues of the Review will cover such topics as steampunk, SF video games, translating SF in the classroom, and teaching ecology through SF. Send us an email and let us know what you think of our expanded “Feature 101” offerings.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

There’s No Place Like Home

Ritch Calvin

AT THE END of her harrowing and mind-expanding travels through the land of Oz, Dorothy is told that she has held the secret to her return home all along; she need only tap together the heels of her ruby-red slippers and repeat the words: “There’s no place like home; there’s no place like home.” And though the trip to Lublin and back again was far from harrowing, it was mind-expanding. Nevertheless, it’s good to be home.

But one thing that scholars of SF should know better than anyone is that “home” is an ever-shifting concept. In the past, many operated under the assumption that “happy is the man who thinks his home the world.” Access to a global data system and access to (relatively) inexpensive and (relatively) easy global travels have collapsed our very notion of “home.” While remembering that many cultures and communities would reject such a “rootless” notion of citizenship and identity, for many of us in the SFRA, we understand—at some level—that the world is our home. And while having the annual SFRA conference in any particular physical location will have its downsides for certain members, the executive committee has been committed to the idea that science fiction is a global phenomenon, that the study of science fiction is a global phenomenon, and that the SFRA is a global organization. I, for one, look forward to future SFRA conferences, wherever they may be held.

The annual conference in Lublin, Poland was hosted by Pawel Frelik. In issue #293 of the SFRA Review, Lisa
Yaszek notes that Craig Jacobsen had set the standard for SFRA conferences impossibly high. While I agree that the standard set by Craig’s organization of the Carefree conference was high, I would contend that Pawel cleared that bar with ease. While the Lublin conference may have been somewhat smaller in terms of participants, it, nevertheless, made up for the drop in numbers in the quality of presentations and the intimacy of the setting. Even though the conference held two concurrent sessions, I still found myself having to make decisions about which panel to attend and which panel to skip. The two keynote speakers, John Rieder and Roger Luckhurst, offered provocative (in all the rights senses of the word) talks that, despite their differences, complemented one another quite nicely.

We were not limited to the confines of Marie Curie University—as nice as those confines were. The trips to the country to the castle, to the social realism museum, and to the museum in the old Jewish quarter of Lublin may not have been science fiction in some strict Suvinian sense, but they did remind us all of the interconnectivity of cultures and peoples, of the ways in which the present and future are informed and shaped by the past. The trip to the 18th century castle and the walk through the archives at Grodzka Gate, through the textual, pictorial, and aural collections, felt a bit like time traveling.

Congratulations and a great thanks to Pawel and his team in Lublin for a wonderful conference.

As you will see reflected in the minutes from the business meetings, we also had a lot of SFRA business to conduct. While I won’t reiterate here what you can read in the minutes, I would like to mention a couple of significant issues.

First, the future of the SFRA Review. Following a long discussion on the SFRA listserv, following consultation with other publishers, and following long debate within the executive committee, the EC made a suggestion to the SFRA members in attendance at the business meeting. The EC was trying to weigh the concerns of those who preferred to see the Review available in an electronic form and those who preferred to see it in print form. Printing and mailing the Review costs the organization a lot of money—approximately $8,000-$10,000 per year, and those costs will only be going up. We also see that many other books and journals are moving toward an electronic, or print + electronic format. Art Evans, editor of Science Fiction Studies, reported that SFS is moving to a very similar model and price structure, and the expectation is that the other SF-related journals will be doing the same. The suggestion from the EC, which was unanimously accepted by the membership, was to embrace the possibilities of electronic + print options. The Review will be made available to the membership in an electronic format (.pdf for the moment, anyway). Since the SFRA will then save printing and mailing costs, the cost of annual membership will be reduced, beginning with the calendar year 2012. Those who prefer to have a print copy will be able to select that option with membership. The print copy will be printed and mailed by a third-party, online print service. Selecting the electronic + print option with membership will cost slightly more; however, it should remain roughly the same as the annual membership costs under the old model.

Second, the future of the SFRA website. Several people at the business meeting pointed out that the current SFRA website (sfra.org) is not particularly user friendly. And as Peter Sands pointed out, the content of the site has not changed much since he was involved with it. So, the consensus from the business meeting is for the SFRA to locate a professional website designer who can revamp the website. A number of ideas for additional content were suggested, including an archive of all past SFRA conference materials.

Third, the future of the annual SFRA awards. I would like to personally and publicly thank all those who have served on the five SFRA awards committees. I know that the committee members deliberated long and hard over their selections, and I believe that all five of their selections were truly deserving of their awards. Thank you for a job well done. A special thanks to Gary Wolfe, Sherryl Vint, Paul Kincaid, Jason Ellis, and Dave Mead who have all completed their three-year terms on their respective committees. Below, you will find the complete list of the committees for the coming calendar year. Please do consider serving on one of these fine committees in the future.

When Dorothy returns from her trip to Oz, she tries to convince her friends and family that she really did travel to a strange and amazing place. Her conclusion, though, seems to be that it’s far too scary out there and that she’s never going to leave her home again. Well, I guess that depends on how you define “home.”

I hope to see you all in Detroit in 2012. Hosts Steve Berman and Deborah Randolph have already begun to put together an exciting list of guests. I hope that you will be able to join them. Check out the official SFRA
VICE PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Praise and Thanks

Jason W. Ellis

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS three things in this issue’s Vice President’s column: 1) Praise for Poland, 2) Praise for New Members, and 3) Praise for Encouraging Students to Join the SFRA. It is lucky for me that there is plenty of praise to go around.

First, I had a terrific time at our annual conference held in the historically significant and culturally rich Lublin, Poland. Paweł Frelik did an outstanding job orchestrating the internationally themed and crewed meeting. The meeting was a great success for a number of reasons: It was expertly organized; the meeting’s location was integrated into the schedule; and the heterogeneity of its attendees (present members and new members included) contributed in meaningful ways to the abundance of conversations. There were pluralities of voices and opinions that created a heady atmosphere that was both fun and productive.

The many voices at the conference came from returning as well as a number of new SFRA members. Conference attendees came from all over the globe: from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Iran, Israel, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This was my first non-North American SFRA conference. I now believe even more than I did before that maintaining our commitment to an international membership and holding meetings outside of North America is necessary to the development of a stronger and more significant SFRA. Geopolitical borders or our native languages cannot hold the organization back. We must continue forging alliances with others interested in the study and teaching of SF regardless of where they live, what they speak, or what they do professionally. Lublin demonstrated that the SFRA achieved some of these goals through the attendance of new and old members, and it also produced new affiliations between the SFRA and other professional organizations.

In addition to our international and professional efforts to grow the SFRA, we can also develop our connections to SF and fantasy fans. Initiated by SFRA Publicity Director R. Nicole Smith, the SFRA hosted a session at Dragon*Con, “the largest multi-media, popular culture convention focusing on science fiction and fantasy, gaming, comics, literature, art, music, and film in the universe.” Nicole, Lisa Yaszek, Doug Davis, Jason Embry, and myself sat for a session about the work of the SFRA, and we invited attendees to join the organization and to contribute to the conversation.

Finally, I would like to thank all SFRA members who take the time to invite colleagues and students to join the organization. According to the recent survey that many of you participated in, most new members of the SFRA learn about the organization by our conference call for papers. I seems that word of mouth and personal invitations, especially using modern tools of communication such as Twitter and Facebook, are underused to appeal to new members while these are among the best ways that we can raise awareness of the SFRA and also further develop our discourse through new perspectives and a plurality of voices. I believe that we can utilize these tools to invite our friends and colleagues, including our undergraduate and graduate students, to join the SFRA. Thank you for your past and future efforts to develop the SFRA by adding to the conversation and by inviting more people to join us in our important work.

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Conventions, Conferences, SFRA and You

R. Nicole Smith

DURING THE YEAR, many of us attend conferences and conventions that reflect our interests in science fiction and/or fantasy. These conferences not only present us with valuable opportunities to share our research ideas and interact with other SF and Fantasy scholars and enthusiasts; these events can also become significant vehicles for promoting and exemplifying the mission of SFRA. For example, this year the SFRA presented a panel at Dragon*Con tenitled “What does Science Fiction Mean: A Conversation with the Science Fiction Research Association.”

While this panel offered a SFRA presence at the conference, this presence contained a triplate value. The primary value is the large number of people who become reacquainted with or introduced to the SFRA. Dragon*Con is the largest science fiction/fantasy conference in the southeast. This established SF/Fantasy conference welcomes tens of thousands of attendees to
downtown Atlanta, every Labor Day weekend over a four-day period. In fact, this year was its 25th Anniversary. Secondly, the panel title and programming track positioned the organization as an authority on SF at this popular conference. SFRA participated on one of Dragon*Con’s thirty-seven programming tracks. These include “American Sci-Fi Classics,” “American Sci-Fi Media” and the track SFRA will participate on, “Sci-Fi & Fantasy Literature.” Lastly, as the panel was mostly comprised of SFRA members in Atlanta, it offered a relatively low-cost option for members to promote the organization and incurs no cost to SFRA. The participating members on this panel were Doug Davis, Jason Embry, Jason Ellis, and Lisa Yaszek (Thanks guys!).

This economical option for promoting the organization can be replicated throughout the membership. Is there a conference or convention you plan on attending this year or next year? Consider asking SFRA members local to the conference, or those who will also attend, to participate on a SFRA panel with you. Or, if you are participating on a panel, consider including your SFRA affiliation in your credentials. If you do, be sure to send me and the editors of the Review an email, post a picture on our SFRA Facebook page or post a picture on our Twitter feed—we’d love to hear about it! Cheers!

### AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION NEWS

**ASLE-SFRA Affiliation Update**

**Eric Otto**

THIS SUMMER’s Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) conference in Bloomington, Indiana and SFRA conference in Lublin, Poland featured the inaugural sessions of the new ASLE-SFRA affiliation. In the ASLE roundtable, titled “What’s this Science Fiction Doing in/to/for My Environmentalism?” Gerry Canavan, Keira Hambrick, and Naomi Smedbol explored key points of intersection between science fiction, ecological politics, and environmental rhetoric.

Canavan, a Ph.D. candidate in the Program in Literature at Duke University, discussed ecological futurity in traditional environmentalist discourse and science fiction. What links the two genres is an “imaginary relationship to the future,” with texts like Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth* performing the same re-imagining of the future that characterizes the politics of much science fiction.

**Hambrick**, a recent graduate of the Literature and Environment Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, discussed ecological apocalypticism across a variety of textual genres. Entering into the longstanding debate about the value of apocalyptic rhetoric for environmentalism, Hambrick argued that while such rhetoric in nonfictional environmental writing produces “eco-anxiety,” when featured in science fiction apocalypticism often allows readers to imagine new possibilities.

Finally, Smedbol, a Masters student in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, referenced Robert A. Heinlein and Spider Robinson’s *Variable Star* along with James Cameron’s *Avatar* to contest the self/environment, or self/home, dualism. For Smedbol and her co-author, Michelle O’Brien of Simon Fraser University, science fiction “compels readers to reevaluate the actuality of the borders defining home and self.”

The SFRA session, titled “Environmental Science Fiction Before 1962 (and some after),” featured Hayley Keight, Chris Pak, and Justyna Sierakowska. Keight, a graduate student at the University of Manchester, presented “‘Drinking up Green Matter’: Ray Bradbury the Proto-Environmentalist in *Fahrenheit 451*.” Central to her argument was that Bradbury’s 1953 book suggests an important difference between simply perceiving objects in nature and understanding the value of these objects for the larger ecosystem.

Pak, who studies science fiction as a Ph.D. student at the University of Liverpool, presented “Nature’s Other in European Science Fiction.” In his paper, Pak highlighted H.G. Wells’ *The Shape of Things to Come*, Olaf Stapledon’s *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, and Stanislaw Lem’s *Solaris* to demonstrate the ways in which these early works of science fiction anticipated more recent, and competing, environmentalist conceptions of nature—Gaian holism and “nature’s otherness.” Sierakowska read “The Generation Starship and Ecofeminist Transgression in Octavia Butler’s *Dawn* and Molly Gloss’ *The Dazzle of Day*.” A Ph.D. student in Literature at the University of Bialystok, Poland, Sierakowska discussed the generation starships of Butler’s and Gloss’s works as metaphors supporting the ecofeminist critique of dualistic conceptions of humans and nature.

The call for papers for the ASLE-sponsored panel at SFRA’s 2012 conference in Detroit, Michigan will be circulated early this fall. ASLE’s 2013 conference will take place at the University of North Texas. Expect the call for papers for the SFRA-sponsored panel at that event to be circulated in 2012.
Executive Committee Business

TREASURER’S REPORT
Patrick Sharp

THE ORGANIZATION is still on sound fiscal footing. We currently have $61,256.69 in the bank. We have made two of our annual payments to Science Fiction Studies and our first (and largest) payment to all of the other journals. The organization is doing well as far as membership is concerned. Here is the current membership breakdown:

- Individual US: 133
- Individual Canadian: 10
- Individual Overseas: 35
- Institutional: 28
- Student U.S.: 27
- Student Canada: 2
- Student Overseas: 19
- Joint U.S.: 23
- Joint Overseas: 2
- Emeritus U.S.: 7
- Emeritus Canadian: 1
- Pilgrim Winners: 28
- Total: 315

While healthy, we have slowly been losing money over the past couple of years (along with some of our journals). The cost of producing, printing, and mailing the SFRA Review is approximately $30 per paying member (though much of this cost was defrayed until recently by other sources). Renewals by paper also cost about $5 per paying member (mainly in photocopying and postage). With this in mind, we are moving toward using electronic renewal notifications more than in the past. Also, we are currently weighing options of how to publish the SFRA Review in a manner that is more cost effective (see President’s Message above and minutes below).

SECRETARY’S REPORT

SFRA Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes,
Lublin, Poland
July 9, 2011
Susan A. George

I. SFRA Review: Total response to Jason’s survey was 91. The rest of the survey breakdown is already posted on the website. Based on survey results, Ritch suggested that for now we keep the Review in pdf format issued quarterly and arrange for a print on demand option. We then discussed if we need to keep the managing editor position to take care of print on demand and archived materials. No final decision was made as it will be taken to the membership.

a. Will discuss with the membership at business meeting reasons why keeping the Review as online publication is advantageous and may be the only way to keep the Review going. Reasons include:
   i. Saves money that can be then applied to travel grants or reduced membership fees
   ii. Works much better for international members
   iii. Reduced cost of human labor and mailing that has been a significant expense for SFRA one it cannot shoulder without institutional support, support we have not been able to find to date

b. Should we make new publications available with membership? Yes, adding Science Fiction Film and Television. Membership will have choice of physical or electronic version. Pricing will be based on version selected.

c. Discussed publishing the Review 101 articles in book format through McFarland, perhaps as “best practices” in teaching SF. Ritch will take lead on this, the current Review editors, Doug and Jason will also work on the book as editors. Discussed adding 4th editor and Susan volunteered for the position. We will need to come up with a list of additional topics to fill the proposed volume.

d. How should the online Review be distributed? If it is disturbed via a listserv, then membership to the list must be mandatory. If only announced through listserv than listserv membership is not an issue. At this point it seems best to only announce through the listserv, but the EC will bring this issue to membership at
Lublin business meeting. The larger question remains however, should we make email addresses mandatory (as IAFA does) to reduce costs?

i. If we do, it not only helps with the *Review* issue, but will also cut back on mailing expenses for membership renewal which is also a huge organizational expense. The money we save through online correspondence can be redirected to other organizational purposes.

II. SFRA annual meetings: Patrick gave report on SFRA/Eaton conference in April of 2013. He has been working with Rob Latham at UC Riverside on the conference and things are moving along well. Now that the Eaton collection can only afford to do the conference every other year, there was also discussion about making the SFRA/Eaton a regular arrangement doing it every other year or every 4 years. It would mean, however, that the conference would be in April those years instead of summer which may effect attendance to the conference.

a. Related issues included Susan’s questions about continuing the every-third-year-international format considering the current economic situation and low attendance at the international conferences. Should we keep it as it is? Do it every 5 years? Or on ad hoc bases? EC unanimously voted for on ad hoc bases.

b. Briefly discussed having all future conference coordinators present a proposal to the EC to make sure there is adequate support and facilities for the conference. The EC would also like to see the conference websites standardized in some way and linked to or sponsored by the SFRA website.

III. Awards committees: EC brainstormed and discussed possible new members for all of the committees including those that self-nominated. Individuals will be approached and Ritch will announce committees after the conference.

a. Award designs? With all the other changes and issues the EC has had to deal with (i.e. format of the *Review*), we decide to keep the design of the awards as they are and discuss the designs at later date.

IV. Membership: discussed coordinating information exchange between Secretary and Treasurer regarding membership Treasurer, Patrick, suggested that he will regularly send updated list of members to Secretary, Susan.

a. Current membership back up, currently 307 members

b. Membership Directory online? Will bring to membership at business meeting as it is along the same lines as *Review* issue. If the directory went online, it would be protected in members only section

V. Formal Affiliations: ASLE liaison contacted Ritch and Jason and will create a Facebook page to link the two organizations

a. EC brainstormed other organizations to form affiliations with. Suggestions included Utopian Studies, Popular Culture Association, more? Will be discuss at business meeting.

VI. Review of Official Duties: Do we need to update/add information on the new positions that have been added including PR, media responsibilities, liaisons, etc. We decided it should be done. Also, briefly discussed who should have access but no final decision was made.

VII. Meeting was adjourned at 9:37PM.

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**SFRA GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Meeting Minutes from Lublin, Poland**

**July 10, 2011**

Jason Ellis

Meeting called to order at 9:00AM.

*Executive Committee members in attendance: Ritch Calvin (President), Jason W. Ellis (Vice President), Patrick Sharp (Treasurer), and Lisa Yaszek (Immediate Past President).*

*There were approximately 20 other members in attendance including: Andy Sawyer, Art Evans, Doug Davis, Pawel Frelik, Larisa Mikhaylova, Peter Sands, Steven Berman, Alfredo Suppia, Lúcio Reis, and Yufang Lin.*

I. Publications, Website, and Listserv

A. *SFRA Review*: $8-10K per year to print, copy, and mail four issues per year of the *SFRA Review*. The majority of this cost is not the printing, but the mailing of the *Review*. We currently do not have any institutional support to supplement these costs, and the current membership fee structure cannot accommodate the additional cost of the *SFRA Review* without the use of the organization’s savings.
• Patrick Sharp, SFRA Treasurer, reported that there are currently 267 paying SFRA members (this number excludes joint memberships and Pilgrims), which correlates with a cost of about $30/member to cover Review printing and mailing. As it stands, the SFRA would have to raise member dues to cover the additional costs of printing and mailing the Review.

• Ritch Calvin, SFRA President, proposed that we do two things to better accommodate members and avert a future financial crisis for the SFRA once our savings were depleted by 1) reducing dues by $10-15 rather than raising them by $15-20, and 2) provide the SFRA Review as an electronic PDF downloadable from sfra.org four times a year and also provide members an option to purchase a print and mailed version for a fee that covers the cost of that service.

• Art Evans, representing Science Fiction Studies, provided the EC and the members attending the business meeting a handout detailing the new electronic-only version of SFS. Due to the increase in postage prices, SFS was losing money on the current print format of SFS. The SFS Editors decided to move to an e-only version, which needs no distinction for domestic or international members. Partnering with JSTOR, SFS subscribers and SFRA members will receive a link to the current issue along with access to the past three years of SFS. There will be an additional cost for print SFS issues for those SFRA members who want that. Additionally, JSTOR provides three forms of access: current (the SFS model for distributing new issues), archive (a more extensive access to all back issues), and individual access (this would be good for independent scholars needing access to new research).

• Patrick Sharp added that for the SFRA and new SFS models of e-distribution, we will need to require email addresses of our members. This will not only increase the efficiency of contacting members with SFRA Review and SFS issues, but it will also save money and provide better communication between the Treasurer and Secretary with the membership for renewals. Currently, it costs $1300 or $5/member to print and mail renewal notices. Using email for the primary mode of member communication for renewals will save the organization $5/member.

• Lisa Yaszek, Immediate Past President, observed that this is not just a crisis, but it is also an opportunity for the SFRA. As more libraries replace books and print journals with e-books and e-journals, this positions the SFRA for the inevitable shifts in academic library holdings. Additionally, the SFRA moving to this model at this time will ultimately increase our visibility by connecting to people who rely on Internet based research or institutions that only provide e-research resources.

• Jason W. Ellis, Vice President, moved for a vote on 1) making the SFRA Review electronically available in PDF format by default, 2) providing a print option for an additional cost, and 3) reducing membership dues.

Issue passed unanimously.

B. Journals: Science Fiction Film and Television (SFF TV) added as a journal option for members.

C. Anthology: In the past, the SFRA has published an anthology of stories, but there are currently a number of good anthologies on the market. Instead, the EC decided that a collection of the 101 series of articles from the SFRA Review would be a better option, because it fills a niche for researchers in need of basic sources and teachers in need of surveys of specific topics. This anthology will draw in the 101 articles already published, and it will include additional articles obtained through a call for papers. The anthology would need four editors (Ritch Calvin, SFRA Review Editors Doug Davis and Jason Embry, and one additional editor). This anthology would be peer reviewed as well, which would elevate its standing in the field and provide additional cache for contributors on their CV. More information on the collection will be released on the SFRA listserv.

D. Listserv and Website: Beginning next year, SFRA membership and listserv membership will be coterminous.

• Pawel Frelik, SFRA 2011 Conference Organizer, raised an issue about problems with the official website sfra.org. He advocated for a redesigned interface that enables a simplified registration process and consistency for access. Peter Sands, who was the second website administrator for sfra.org, seconded Pawel’s concerns about the website, which he observed “hasn’t evolved much since then.” The EC resolved to develop a plan for improving the website by September 2011.

II. SFRA Annual Meetings

A. Lublin: Pawel Frelik reported that it should not cost the organization any more than the seed money that
he had already received. There were 53 registered participants from around the world. Keynote and award winners did not pay conference fees. There were two tracks of sessions, which gave attendees choices without too greatly restricting their participation. It was an intimate conference with very good conversations.

B. Detroit: Steve Berman announced that the official website for the conference was now live at: http://sfradetroit2012.com/. After Steve guided the business meeting attendees through the website, he reported that he needed proof of the organization’s non-profit status to begin a Paypal account. Patrick Sharp said that he would provide this information to Steve. Jason W. Ellis also told Steve that considering the importance of calls for papers to new membership to the SFRA that he and Nicole R. Smith, SFRA Publicity Director, would work with him to develop publicity for the conference. This publicity would also involve SFRA organizational liaisons who can elevate the interdisciplinarity of the forthcoming conference through outreach to members of affiliated organizations. Lisa Yaszek announced that the SFRA now has an official Twitter Director, Andrew Ferguson, who can also help with publicizing the organization on the popular social media platform, Twitter.

C. Los Angeles: Patrick Sharp reported that he is working with Rob Latham and the Eaton Conference organizers for holding a joint conference with Eaton in 2013. The SFRA and the Eaton Conference last did this in 1997 in Riverside, California. A joint conference will facilitate the sharing of expenses between the two organizations, and it would result in a larger festival of science fiction studies. Due to the conference theme of Media and SF, Patrick is looking into the hotel across the street from the normal Eaton hotel, the Mission Inn, because the nearby hotel has better AV capabilities, which will be an asset to the conference. Due to the conference being held cooperatively, it would need to have an earlier date than normal for the SFRA Conference. He is hoping that the Eaton Conference will take place on Wed, April 10, and the SFRA Conference would run from Thursday, April 11 to Sunday, April 14. However, he will try to accommodate early morning, East Coast travelers by arranging to hold the business meeting prior to Sunday. He and the Eaton organizers are attempting to invite a well-known science fiction celebrity such as William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, or Joss Whedon. He is also considering an outing like in Poland, but this is still in development due to Riverside’s distance from the major Los Angeles landmarks.

D. Rio 2015: Alfredo Suppia is developing a plan for Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo.

E. Wiscon 2014: Ritch Calvin reported that he is talking with the Wiscon organizers about a joint conference in 2014.

F. International Conferences: Ritch Calvin reported that the EC had decided to end the every three year international conference plan and instead shift to a more flexible plan for conferences based on volunteer directors making conference proposals to the organization. As part of this move, the organization should be more conscious of and aware of including international sites and international members in future conference planning.

- Larisa Mikhaylova announced that she would investigate the possibilities of sponsoring a future conference in Moscow.
- There was also discussion about the autonomy afforded to conference directors. Generally speaking, conferences need some kind of institutional support. Also, special guests do not have to join the SFRA, but as a result, they will not receive any of the member benefits other than attending the conference. Special guests should be encouraged to join in order for them to receive the full benefits of SFRA membership.

III. SFRA Award Committees

- Ritch Calvin made a call for award committee volunteers.

IV. Financial Matters

- Patrick Sharp reported that we now have 307 members, which is an increase over our membership count from last year. He also reported that he and Secretary Susan George believe that the responsibilities for the Treasurer and Secretary should be reorganized. Once they make a formal proposal for how those responsibilities should be changed, the bylaws will need to be changed to put those changes into effect. Patrick announced that the full budget would be in the next SFRA Review.
- Patrick reminded us that there are four important grants made available by the organization. The EC agreed that any savings made by changes to membership dues and electronic communications
should be allocated to support these grants. The grants are: 1) Support a Scholar, 2) Travel Grants, 3) Institutional Grants (About SF and Femspec received grants from the SFRA this year), and 4) Research Grants. It is important that members apply for these grants if there is a need.

V. Membership, Promotions, and Recruitment

- A PDF directory will be made available only for members through sfra.org. This will replace the printed directory.
- It was also discussed that email addresses and research interests should be required fields for renewals and new members.
- There was a call for additional formal affiliations and organizational liaisons. Suggested organizations include: SLSA, Utopian Studies, the Europeans Utopian Studies, SCMS, PCA, BSFA, and the MLA discussion group.
- Regarding the issue of old SFRA Review issues in the possession of former SFRA Review Managing Editor Janice Bogstad, Andy Sawyer suggested that we recycle the old issues after making sure that everything is archived. It was decided that the new managing editor of the SFRA Review, in addition to managing print-on-demand for members who desire a print copy of the Review, will also take the issues and offer them to institutions, especially those in Europe. A call for the next SFRA Review Managing Editor will be sent out to the listserv.
- Pawel Frelik raised the issue of the archiving of all organizational materials including those generated by conferences and conference organizers. The University of Kansas has an archive of SFRA material and the University of South Florida has made the majority of past SFRA issues available online. The sfra.org website contains all SFRA Review issues from 2003 to the present. Also, the official website has user editable areas for officers to share experience with subsequently elected officials. It was decided that a call would be put out to the listserv for old materials.
- Larisa Mikhaylova raised the last issue of the meeting with a suggestion that the SFRA should work towards the translation of its materials as well as other science fiction scholarship in order to broaden the exposure of our work in non-English speaking countries.
- The business meeting was adjourned at 10:24AM.

2010-2011 SFRA Awards

Awards Update

2011-2012 Award Committee Personnel

Ritch Calvin

AFTER CONSIDERING self-nominations, online discussions, and suggestions at the SFRA conference in Lublin, the SFRA announces the following committees for next year's awards and thanks their members for their willingness to serve in these important roles:

- Pilgrim Award (for life time contributions to SF/F studies): Marleen Barr (c); Brian Attebery; Roger Luckhurst.
- Pioneer Award (for outstanding SF studies essay of the year): De Witt Kilgore (c); Neil Easterbrook; Keren Omry.
- Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service: Andy Sawyer (c); Joan Gordon; Alan Elms.
- Mary Kay Bray Award (for the best essay, interview, or extended review in the past year's SFRA Review): Susan George (c); Sharon Sharp; Joan Haran.
- Student Essay Award (for best student paper presented at the previous year's SFRA conference): Alfredo Suppia (c); James Thrall, Sonja Fritzsche.

Remarks for the Pilgrim Award

by SFRA Members in Attendance at the Annual Awards Banquet

Gary Wolfe (chair), Marleen Barr, Brian Attebery

The following comments may also be viewed, as they were recorded live, via this link:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42HisZwKAqQ

For lifetime contributions to SF/F studies.

Ritch Calvin: Everyone has their dessert, now, so we will begin with the Pilgrim Award. Because the three members of the Pilgrim Committee—we do want to thank them even though they're not here—Gary Wolfe, Marleen Barr, and Brian Attebery. I know they deliberated a long time over this. Although, unfortunately, none of those people could be here today, so I'll just say a little bit about the award. It was created in 1970 by the SFRA to honor lifetime contributions to sf and fantasy scholarship. The award was named for J. O. Bailey's pioneering book, Pilgrims through Space
and Time, and he was awarded the first Pilgrim in 1970, so it is our longest-standing award. And if you look at the list of recipients in the back, it really is a who’s who of science fiction and science fiction scholarship.

So, at this point, we had asked you to think about Donna Haraway and what she has meant to you and to your scholarship, so if there is anyone who would like to say just a few comments about that, we have a portable mke here. Lisa [Yasezk] will come around and give you the opportunity to say those things, and Jason [Ellis] here will be recording them.

Doug Davis: Donna, your work has changed so many lives. There were two books in graduate school that got passed around by everyone: Primate Visions and Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The concept of “situated knowledges” has probably been the most important concept in my personal development, and I love how you weave science fiction throughout your work and treat it so seriously. You took science fiction of the cyborg and showed how it captures our greatest hopes and our greatest fears.

Joan Haran: Hi. I was provoked to return to reading science fiction when I did a masters in gender studies, actually by Shulamith Firestone. But it was Donna Haraway’s “Manifesto for Cyborgs” that made me feel legitimated in doing that research. Donna, I think, has probably brought lots of feminists into reading science fiction—and that might not have otherwise—because of the seriousness with which she treats it. You took science fiction of the cyborg and showed how it captures our greatest hopes and our greatest fears.

Patrick Sharp: Yeah, I had a similar experience to Doug in grad school. I was in my first year in my grad program taking the theories seminar and I struggled through the Russian formalists, I barely made it through the New Critics, and then I was reading Der- rida and going, “Really? Is this really what I’m gonna do with my career?” And then we read Simians, Cyborgs, and Women, and that really turned the corner for me in thinking that I could really have a profession in this. And it really helped me understand how to engage in science, how to engage science fiction, how to engage feminism, how to engage all these discours-
to see you get this acknowledgment.

Sonia Fritzsche: Hello. I was doing a class called, a freshman seminar called, Cyborgs, Amazons, and She-Monsters. And I put the “Cyborg Manifesto” in there as a way to challenge my students. I thought it would be the hardest thing that they read. And I have students sign up for presentations, and the football player hadn’t signed up, yet. He was the last one, and there was the “Cyborg Manifesto” and that was the only thing remaining. And he did the best presentation out of the whole semester. He got so excited about it, so I loved it.

Veronica Hollinger: A long time ago, you could not be a feminist and a post-modernist, and irony had no place in feminist work, and I want to thank you, Donna, because “The Cyborg Manifesto” helped keep me sane and helped change that. Thank you.

Karen Joy Fowler: I will just try to represent fiction writers here. My own story “What I Didn’t See” is a response to many, many things, but chief among them is Primate Visions, which I just thought was mind-blowing when I read it, and I think I understand maybe seventy percent of it, but I’ve got some years left to continue working on it. And although I am speaking to you from Lublin, Poland, I live in Santa Cruz, so I will hope to see you on Pacific Street when I get back.

Ritch Calvin: Thank you very much.

Pilgrim Award Acceptance Speech

SF: Science Fiction, Speculative Fabulation, String Figures, So Far

Donna Haraway

The following comments may also be viewed, as they were recorded by Donna Haraway, via this link: http://sfra.org/harawayaward

TO SAY I AM ASTOUNDED to receive the Pilgrim Award from the SFRA would be an understatement, as well as an acknowledgment of the Astounding heritage from science fiction and its people that makes me feel humbled and grateful. I look at the list of those who have received the Pilgrim Award before me, and I can’t believe I am in the company of my heroes of all available genders and genres. I do not deserve it, but I am mighty glad! I am sad not to be in Lublin with you, but family obligations made it impossible to come to Europe this July, and so I hope this projected audiovisual digital recording can convey some of the gratitude I feel to the Pilgrim committee and to the SF community.

First Contact: in honor of Naomi Mitchison’s Memoirs of a Spacewoman, where no contact forged by a communications specialist goes either unrewarded or unpunished.

For fun, here is a picture of a first contact on my stovetop; this homely encounter tells of my first experiences with SF. Note the meeting of time-obsessed, broody technology with sour tentacular terran fruit. Which can be considered more a sign of SF: the plump plastic hen, courtesy of the history of industrial chemistry, DuPont’s Purity Hall, and the story of clocks, or the magic of my modern lemon tree, courtesy of the International Citrus Genome Consortium and multi-floral vagaries ripened in developmental time?

SF writers and thinkers have shaped me since the middle of the 1970s, when already an adult, I read Joanna Russ’s Female Man, quickly followed by Samuel R. Delany’s already decade-old Babel 17. Ignorant of almost everything in this multi-form worlding practice, I came to SF late, guided by companions who already knew how to read and why it mattered. They tossed me into turbulent and generative rivers of SF, from which I have drawn continuously, if not always legibly. I have tried to add my own rills to the flows of SF. I think of my craft as multispecies story telling in the feminist mode. Equipped with a PhD in molecular, developmental, and evolutionary biology, I have earned a living as a humanities scholar in science studies and feminist
studies, with a kind of green card to reside under strict surveillance in biological and cultural anthropology. Art in the biological, ecological, and cyborg modes has only added to the SF mêlée that I call worlding. These knowledge-making and world-making fields inform a craft that for me is relentlessly replete with organic and inorganic critters and stories, in their thick material and narrative tissues. The tight coupling of writing and research—where both terms require the factual, fictional, and fabulated; where both terms are materialized in fiction and scholarship—seems to me to be built into SF’s techno-organic, polyglot, polymorphic wiring diagrams. My multispecies story telling is inflected through SF in all the fibers of the string figures that I try to pattern and to relay.

Brittle Stars

Taught by a stovetop hen and a developmentally challenged lemon, I am in the SF grip of what a former student of mine, Eva Hayward, calls “fingery eyes” or “tentacularity” and another former student, Katie King, calls “networked re-enactments” or “transknowledges.” “Fingery eyes” and “tentacularity” are Eva’s terms for sensual trans-ing, and interstitial jointings. Appreciating Hayward’s fingery eyes, Katie King writes, “Working out in a multiverse of articulating disciplines, interdisciplines, and multidisciplinarities, such transdisciplinary inspection actually enjoys the many flavors of details, offerings, passions, languages, things, even while also demonstrating that its own terms of validity are not entailed only within those elegant but divergent parsimonies of explanation. Instead, one index for the evaluation of transdisciplinary work is how well it learns and models how to be affected or moved, how well it opens up unexpected elements of one’s own embodiments in lively and re-sensitizing worlds.” I think this criterion applies to SF in all its forms and modes.

No surprise that Katie is one of those companions who taught me to read the voluptuous pleasures of SF in the first place.

Cat’s Cradle

Baila Goldenthal, Cat’s Cradle/String Theory, 2008, oil on canvas, 36” x 48”

The British social anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, who wrote The Gender of the Gift based on her ethnographic work in highland Papua New Guinea (Mt. Hagen), taught me that “It matters what ideas we use to think other ideas (with).” [Reproducing the Future (Manchester UP, 1992), p. 10.] Marilyn embodies for me the practice of feminist speculative fabulation in the scholarly mode. It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. Marilyn wrote about accepting the risk of relentless contingency; she thinks about anthropology as the knowledge practice that studies relations with relations, that puts relations at risk with other relations, from unexpected other worlds. In 1933 Alfred North Whitehead, the American mathematician and process philosopher who infuses my sense of worlding, wrote The Adventures of Ideas. SF is precisely full of such adventures. Isabelle Stengers, a chemist, scholar of Whitehead, and a seriously quirky Belgian feminist philosopher, gives me “speculative thinking” in spades. Isabelle insists we cannot denounce the world in the name of an ideal world. In the spirit of feminist communitarian anarchism and the idiom of Whitehead’s philosophy, she maintains that decisions must take place somehow in the presence of those who will bear their consequences. In this same virtual sibling set, Marleen Barr
morphed Heinlein’s speculative fiction into feminist fabulation for me. In relay and return, SF morphs in my writing and research into speculative fabulation and string figures. Relays, cat’s cradle, passing patterns back and forth, giving and receiving, patterning, holding the unasked-for pattern in one’s hands, responsibility, Octavia Butler’s Patternmaster series. My debts mount. Again and again, SF has given me the ideas, the stories, and the shapes with which I think ideas, shapes, and stories in feminist theory and science studies.

There is no way I can name all of my debts to SF’s critics and worlds, human and not, and so I will record only a few and hope for a credit extension for years yet to come. I will enter these debts in a short ledger of my teaching and publishing. I start with Marge Piercy’s Woman on the Edge of Time, a typescript of my curriculum vitae that was part of a file for consideration for promotion in the History of Science Department at Johns Hopkins in 1979-80, and a bottle of chalky white out. I had written an essay review of Woman on the Edge of Time for the activist publication, Women, a Journal of Liberation and duly recorded this little publication on the CV. “The past is the contested zone”—the past that is our thick, not-yet-fixed, present, where when what is yet-to-come is now at stake—is the meme that drew me into Piercy’s story, and I was proud of the review. A senior colleague in History of Science, a supporter of my promotion, came to me with a too-friendly smile and that betraying bottle of white-out, asking me to blot out this publication from the scholarly record, “for my own good.” He also wanted me to expunge “Signs of Dominance,” a long, research-dense essay about the semiotics and sociograms developed in mid-20th-century primate field studies of monkeys and apes. To my shame to this day, I obeyed; to my relief to this day, no one was fooled.

Piercy’s temporalities and my growing sense of the SF-structure of primate field work made me write two essays for the brave, new, hyper-footnoted, University of Chicago feminist theory publication, Signs, and to title the essays in recognition of Piercy’s priority and patterned relay to me. I could not forget—or disavow—Piercy’s research for Woman on the Edge of Time, which led her to psychiatrist José Delgado’s Rockland State Hospital experiments with remote-controlled telemetric implants, and my finding in my own archival research Delgado’s National Institutes of Mental Health-funded work applied to gibbon studies in the ape colony on Hall’s Island. The colonial and imperial roots & routes of SF are relentlessly real and inescapably fabulated. Later, living (non-optionally, in really real SF histories) with and as cyborgs, Piercy and I played cat’s cradle again, this time with my “Cyborg Manifesto” and then her He, She, and It. Cyborgs were never just about the interdigitations of humans and information machines; cyborgs were from the get-go the materialization of imploded (not hybridized) human beings-information machines-multispecies organisms. Cyborgs were always simultaneously relentlessly real and inescapably fabulated. Like all good SF, they redid what counts as—what is—real. The obligatory multispecies story-telling script was written in 1960 United States space research, when Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline coined the word “cyborg” in an article about their implanted rats and the advantages of self-regulating human-machine systems in outer space.

Because no one was fooled by a palimpsestic CV painted with see-through white out, for precisely the same reasons and in the same month in 1980 I was fired at Johns Hopkins and hired in the first tenured faculty position in feminist theory in the U.S., in the History of Consciousness program at the University of California at Santa Cruz. If ever there was one in the Academy, HistCon is a SF site imbued with the spirit
of Gregory Bateson (one of the early teachers in the program) and his kind of speculative adventures in thinking. In 1980 the program was usually pronounced HisCon. Thus provoked to give an inaugural lecture called HerScam, I shamelessly used Galileo’s conic sections to model 1) the tragic parabolic detumescence of HisCon’s fantasies of escape velocity from Terra through a disembodied, flighty thing called “theory” (or were those just my hyper-feminist paranoia?); 2) the brutal, perfectly circular, futile, targeting strategies of a late capitalist, faithfully Kantian cosmopolitics in a state of permanent global war; and 3) the hyperbolic, bodily saturated, limit-defined lusts of HerScam’s practice of feminist theory, aka the conic section I remain in love with. In this model-cylinder of the university ivory tower, we were left with the modest, historically pregnant, phenomena-saving ellipse, a shape with two foci that suggested co-promise. Somehow, a “t” found its way into the pronunciation of His(t)Con, and a deal was struck, even though my imputed story of causality here is highly suspect. What followed for me was a community of colleagues and students to die for, within which it was possible to write “The Cyborg Manifesto,” “Situated Knowledges,” “Teddy Bear Patriarchy,” Primate Visions, Simians, Cyborgs, and Women, Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan®_Meets_OncoMouse”. Feminism and Technoscience, The Companion Species Manifesto, When Species Meet, and now in progress, “Staying with the Trouble.”

SF writers/thinkers/makers are among the stem cells of each of these efforts at scholarly multispecies story telling, sometimes obviously, sometimes cryptically. Remaking worlds within the matrix of abduction, forced generations and regenerations, and monstrous embodiment, Octavia Butler’s Xenogenesis trilogy shaped my sense of field work in the history of scientific studies of free-ranging apes and monkeys. James Tiptree, Jr., was never very far away from my keyboards. Suzette Haden Elgin taught me and my students the power of Linguists. Feminist theory graduate seminars split vehemently in two between horse-crazy girls and psychoanalysts made of sterner theoretical stuff when we read Suzy McKee Charnas’s Motherlines. Ursula LeGuin’s now famous, then mimeographed and hand-circulated manuscript called “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” gave me the courage and the conceptual apparatus to cheer for woman the gatherer in her argument with man the hunter in credible accounts of hominid evolution. Delany’s Tales of Neveryon, especially the “Tale of Old Venn,” and Fred Jameson’s way of doing the cultural logic of late capitalism re-taught me semiotics after the trauma of researching “Signs of Dominance.” That gave me more license to read and teach John Varley’s story, “Press Enter ´n” and his ram-bunctious Gaean trilogy as key feminist theory texts in graduate seminars, vi an effort that, welded with Trinh T. Minh-ha’s inappropriate/d others in her Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism, resulted in an essay I titled “The Promises of Monsters: Reproductive Politics for Inappropriate/d Others.” I learned more than I can tell from pluripotent SF stem cells seeded in my already promiscuous cyborg/canine/ rodent/primate marrow: Sarah Lefanu, Pamela Sargent, Shulamith Firestone, Judith Merrill, Marleen Barr, Vivian Sobchack, Fran Bartkowsky, Eric Rabkin, Marilyn Hacker, Veronica Hollinger, Sherryl Vint, Teresa De Lauretis, Margaret Atwood, Monique Wittig, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Vonda McIntyre, Gwyneth Jones, Julie Czerneda, Joshua LaBare, and many more, earlier, later and ongoing—and always and again those who showed me and so many others how to live and die in the adventure in working, the adventure of thinking, called SF: Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. LeGuin, and Joanna Russ.

Last year, I wrote an essay called “Sowing Worlds: a Seed Bag for Terraforming with Earth Others” for Helen Merrick and Margaret Grebowicz’s Beyond the Cyborg. Merrick had incited me with her extraordinary book, The Secret Feminist Cabal: a Cultural History of Science Fiction Feminisms. LeGuin and Butler came back to me, this time bringing theriolinguists, ants, & acacia seeds and the U.S. teenage hyperempath Lauren Oya Olamina, named for the Yoruba Oya, mother of nine, the Orisha of the Niger River, with its nine tributaries. We will forever miss Butler’s last parable, the unfinished Parable of the Trickster. Hyperbolic, limit-defining death is more that HerScam. Sheri S. Tepper’s The Companions met my Klingon Warrior Princess agility dog companion Cayenne after I wrote When Species Meet (2008), but clearly Tepper’s hyper-competent enhanced canines time-traveled back to render even more capable than they already were, the mundane critters I work & play with. When Species Meet is replete with all sorts of plant, microbial, animal, and technological critters engaged in terran work/play to learn to engage with response-ability, as companions, cum panis, with bread, at table together, when who is on the menu remains permanently at stake. Biologists are key players in When Species Meet, especially those who teach us about ecological developmental evolu
tionary biology, popularly known as EcoEvoDevo, i.e., to co-making of species with and by each other in a turtles-all-the-way-down sort of relaying and co-constitutive intra-acting. We have come full circle back to Strathern’s commitment to the relentless contingency of relations. Partners do not precede the relating; the world is a verb, or at least a gerund; worlding is the dynamics of intra-action (Karen Barad’s word from *Meeting the Universe Halfway*) and intra-patience, the giving and receiving of patterning, all the way down, with consequences for who lives and who dies and how.

Companion species are engaged in the old art of terra-forming; they are the players in a mathematical SF equation that describes Terrapolis. Finished once and for all with Kantian globalizing cosmopolitics and grumpy human-exceptionalist Heideggerian worlding, Terrapolis is a mongrel word composted in a mycorrhizium of Greek and Latin rootlets and their symbionts. Terrapolis exists in the SF web of always-too-much connection, where response-ability must be cobbled together, not in the existentialist and bond-less, lonely, Man-making gap theorized by Heidegger and his followers. Terrapolis is rich in world, inoculated against post-humanism but rich in com-post, inoculated against human exceptionalism but rich in humus, ripe for multispecies storytelling. This Terrapolis is not the home world for the human as *homo*, that ever parabolic, re- and detumescing self-image of the same, but for the human that is transmogrified in etymological Indo-European sleight of tongue into guman, that worker of and in the soil. My SF critters are beings of the mud, not the sky. My linguist and ancient civilizations scholar friends tell me that this *guman* is adama/adam, composted from all available genders and genres and competent to make a home world for *Battlestar Galactica*, in struggle certainly but no longer in a state of permanent war. This Terrapolis has kin-making, cat’s-cradle, string-figure, SF relations with Isabelle Stengers’s kind of fleshy cosmopolitics and SF writers’ practices of worlding. This Terrapolis recognizes the tunneling *Makers of Dune* as planet-forming companion species.

An ordinary multiple integral equation fabulated for terran worlding, Terrapolis is a SF n-dimensional volume in earth’s naturecutures. This SF equation reminded me that I learned about n-dimensional niche space from my mathematician-theoretical ecologist PhD supervisor, G. Evelyn Hutchison, in the late 1960s when I was a graduate student in Yale’s Biology Department, a refugee in Hutchison’s lab from a “genetic programming” sort of molecular biology lab that had no truck, or so I thought, with terran organisms in all their muddy, hyper-linked substances and indeterminate but quite definite processes. Hutchison gave me the mathematics, the reading habits, and the courage for the lumpy, roiling, biogeochemical flows and hyper-volumes of Terra. How could I have forgotten?

So, consider below a fictional multiple integral equation that is a flawed trope and a serious joke in an effort to picture what an intersectional — or intra-actional — theory might look like in Terrapolis. Think

**Microbial symbionts:**
First, a fur mite on a koala bear fur shaft

And below, a protozoan with bacterial ectosymbionts
of this formalism as the mathematics of SF. SF is that potent material-semiotic sign for the riches of speculative fabulation, speculative feminism, science fiction, speculative fiction, science fact, science fantasy — and, I suggest, string figures. In looping threads and relays of patterning, this SF practice is a model for worlding. Therefore, SF must also mean “so far,” opening up what is yet-to-come in protean entangled times’ pasts, presents and futures.

\[ \Omega \]

\[
\int_{\text{Terra}} [X_1 \text{d}X_2 \text{d}X_3 \text{d}X_4 \ldots \text{d}X_n] = \int_{\text{Terra}} (X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, \ldots, X_n, t) \text{d}X_1 \text{d}X_2 \text{d}X_3 \text{d}X_4 \ldots \text{d}X_n \text{d}t = \text{Terrapolis}
\]

\( X_1 = \text{stuff/physis}, X_2 = \text{capacity}, X_3 = \text{sociality}, X_4 = \text{materiality}, X_n = \text{??} \)  
\( \alpha (\text{alpha}) = \text{not zoë, but EcoEvoDevo's multispecies epigenesis} \)  
\( \Omega (\text{omega}) = \text{not bios, but recuperating terra's pluriverse} \)  
\( t = \text{worlding time, not container time, entangled times of past/present/yet-to-come} \)

Terrapolis is a fictional integral equation, a speculative fabulation a “niche space” for multispecies becoming-with, Terrapolis is open, worldly, indeterminate, and polytemporal a chimera of materials, languages, histories companion species — not “post-human” but “com-post” an equation for guman, for humus, for soil.

In this n-dimensional niche space, I am reminded that in her acceptance of the Pilgrim Award in 2008, Gwyneth Jones defined SF “as a volume, a set (overlapping with many others), in the vast, contained yet unlimited ocean of information—furnished with the icons of the genre….Within this volume, every significant writer opens up a new Imagination Space….Maybe the work of science fiction scholarship….is to forge links, build complexity, refine the details: and rescue the genuine novelty from each writer’s generic contribution.” I like this approach, but I want to characterize the work of SF scholarship, and SF as a whole, also as a game of cat’s cradle or string figures, of giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads and so mostly failing but sometimes finding something that works, something consequential and maybe even beautiful, that wasn’t there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site, to craft conditions for flourishing in terrain worlding. Like me, Jones says that she received her baptism in science fiction’s sexual politics from The Female Man. I want to end with string figures as SF partly in homage to Joanna Russ’s Janet Eavson, who landed on a desk in front of, to her while-away eyes, oddly dressed men, whom we, in Joanna’s world, know to be in military uniform, and proposes a game of cat’s cradle to calm them down. They did not understand; they did not pick up the threads and marvel at the patternmaking. Innocent that she is, Janet reasoned that cat’s cradle is a universal sign of peace. It is surely one of humanity’s oldest games, but like guman instead of homo, string figures are not everywhere the same game.

Like all offspring of colonizing and imperial histories, I—we—have to relearn that all string figures are not exactly the same as English and U.S. American cat’s cradle. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, United States and European ethnologists collected string figure games from all over the world; these discipline-making travelers were surprised that when they showed the string figure games that they had learned as children at home, their hosts already knew such games in greater variety. String figure games came late to Europe, probably from Asian trade routes. All of the epistemological desires and fables of this period of the history of comparative anthropology were ignited by the similarities and differences, with their undecidably independent inventions or cultural diffusions, tied together by the threads of hand and brain, making and thinking, in the relays of patterning in the “Native” and “Western” string figure games.

This picture shows the hands of Rusten Hogness, Donna’s partner, learning Ma’ii Ats’áá’ Yílwoí, in English “Coyotes Running Opposite Ways.” Coyote is the trickster who constantly scatters the dust of disorder into the orderly star patterns made by the Fire God, setting up the non-innocent world-making performances of disorder and order that shape the lives of terran critters.

In the Navajo language, string figure games are called náaatló’. They are one form of “continuous weaving,” practices for telling the stories of the constellations,
of the emergence of the People, of the Diné. These string figures are thinking as well as making practices, pedagogical practices and cosmological performances. Some Navajo thinkers describe string figures as one kind of patterning for restoring hózhó, a term imperfectly translated into English as harmony, beauty, and right relations of the world, including right relations of humans and nonhumans. Not in the world, but of the world; that is what leads me to include Navajo string figures, naa’atł’o’ in the web of SF worlding. The worlds of SF are not containers; they are patternings, risky co-makings, speculative fabulations. It matters which ideas we think other ideas with; thinking or making cat’s cradle with string figures with naa’atł’o’ is not an innocent universal gesture, but a risky proposition in relentless historical relational contingency. Janet Evasion refused to hear Jael’s claim that the wonderful world of Whileaway got its start from an act of biological warfare—genocide—that killed off all the human males. Like Joanna, we cannot afford that kind of forgetting. Anyone who recognizes the repeated acts of genocide that undergird that nonetheless precious thing called democracy surely knows this basic fact. How to be response-able is the consequential question in SF worlding.

String figure games are practices of scholarship, relaying, thinking with, becoming with in material-semiotic makings. Like SF, cat’s cradle is a game of relaying patterns, of one hand, or pair of hands, or mouths and feet, or other sorts of tentacular things, holding still to receive something from another, and then relaying by adding something new, by proposing another knot, another web. Or better, it is not the hands that give and receive exactly, but the patterns, the patterning. Cat’s cradle, string figures, naa’atł’o’ can be played by many, on all sorts of limbs, as long as the rhythm of accepting and giving is sustained. Scholarship is like that too; it is passing on in twists and skeins that require passion and action, holding still and moving, anchoring and launching.

So I end with renewed thanks to the SFRA and ongoing astonishment at receiving the Pilgrim Award. I hope that with others I can contribute to weaving this honor into the multicolored skeins and twists of SF worlding.

Endnotes

i Kurt Vonnegut’s 1963 Cat’s Cradle is probably the first writing SF people think of when they hear the term, but in all my ignorance, my umbilicus for SF string games traces to The Female Man. In this year of Joanna Russ’s dying, I need to record this matrix.

ii Isabelle Stengers on relay, via Guattarri, from “Relaying a War Machine”: “To try and take the relay, to try and become part of “an ambulant people of relayers, rather than a model city” [Guattari] produces a rather particular affect. …More precisely, commenting, if it means thinking-with, that is becoming-with, is in itself a way of relaying... But knowing that what you take has been held out entails a particular thinking “between.” It does not demand fidelity, still less fealty, rather a particular kind of loyalty, the answer to the trust of the held out hand. Even if this trust is not in “you” but in “creative uncertainty,” even if the consequences and meaning of what has been done, thought or written, do not belong to you anymore than they belonged to the one you take the relay from, one way or another the relay is now in your hands, together with the demand that you do not proceed with “mechanical confidence”.... Haraway’s own word for the kind of help she needs and loves unsurprisingly belongs to the register of the homely and the ordinary—cat’s cradling, a child’s game, apparently, but also a game versions of which exist in cultures all over the world. Two pairs of hands are needed [me in relay: or at least many tentacles, however attached to individuals or not], and in each successive step, one is “passive,” offering the result of its previous operation, a string entanglement, for the other to operate, only to become active again at the next step, when the other presents the new entanglement. But it can also be said that each time the “passive” pair is the one that holds, and is held by the entanglement, only to “let it go” when the other one takes the relay. A complex dance indeed.....”


vi The point was to read and teach these SF texts as the-
Remarks for Pioneer Award

Sherryl Vint (chair), De Witt Kilgore, Neil Easterbrook

For outstanding SF studies essay of the year:

SERVING ON the Pioneer Award Committee is one of the most time-consuming, but also one of the most rewarding things, that one can do to serve this field. This year the committee read over 300 essays published in journals and collections before selecting John Rieder’s “On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF and History” as the best critical essay of the year. One of the great pleasures of serving on this committee is that one gets to see how strong and rich the field of sf studies is: our choice was not an easy one given the wide range of excellent and innovative scholarship we read, but committee members unanimously agreed that John’s essay was outstanding among them.

The topic of genre boundaries and definitions has emerged as one of the central sites of debate in twenty-first century sf studies. The old distinction between sf and fantasy no longer holds as firmly, and motifs and themes those of us working in the field would recognize as “science fiction” are increasingly found in what used to be called mundane literature. The emergence of minute critical labels, old and new—interstitial fiction, speculative fiction, the New Weird, slipstream—try to grasp and contain this genre surplus. In this context, the committee felt that John’s essay made an important and timely critical intervention. It takes a step back from the fray and rather than coin a new term or defend a particular conceptualization of the genre, asks instead what is at stake in this desire to define and defend the boundaries of sf.

John lucidly works through what is at stake in five conceptualizing of the genre: (1) sf is a historical, mutable object; (2) sf has no singular essence or point of origin; (3) sf is not a set of texts but a way of reading and using texts; (4) sf’s identity emerges from its variable position in the shifting field of multiple genres; and (5) sf is continually being produced and so labeling a text constitutes an intervention into this process. Turning to Foucault, John compellingly argues that a full understanding of the genre requires us to be attentive to all these sites of agency and definition rather than to choose among them. In this view, sf is a product of overlapping communities of practice, and understanding the complexities of the genre require us to understand how it circulates as different ‘boundary objects’ among different communities of practice.

This year’s committee—myself, DeWitt Kilgore, and Neil Easterbrook—congratulate John on his fine essay and thank him for enriching the field of sf scholarship.

Pioneer Award Acceptance Speech

John Rieder
I WANT to express my thanks, first of all, to the editors of Science Fiction Studies, whose comments and suggestions, along with those of a couple of anonymous readers, helped me work through three drafts of the essay, vastly improving it in the process. I want particularly to thank Veronica Hollinger for her help and advice.

I also want to thank the SFRA for sponsoring this award—all of these awards—and for everything this organization does to support scholarship in the field. And of course I want to thank the members of the committee—Neil Easterbrook, DeWitt Kilgore, and Sherryl Vint—not for choosing my essay but for the monumental task of reading all the essays that were considered for this award. And finally thanks to Rob Latham and Pawel Frelak for their support and encouragement in nominating my essay for the Pioneer Award.

I think my essay could accurately be called an attempt to sum up a post-Suvinian or even counter-Suvinian theory of the genre of SF. I consider that a testimony to the tremendous, and tremendously positive, influence Suvin’s work has had on the field and on me personally. Nor do I think that the Suvinian paradigm is played out; witness, for example, Seo-Young Chu’s Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep? recently published by Harvard UP, which makes imaginative and productive use of the poetics of cognitive estrangement. When I teach my graduate course on science fiction I always have my students read Suvin, of course, and they consistently grab onto Suvin’s ideas as one of the most useful ways of thinking about the material.

But if Suvin’s poetics remain vital, it now seems pretty obvious to most of my students that his denigration of genres like fantasy, the fairy tale, or detective fiction was part of a moment in the establishment of the legitimacy of science fiction studies that has passed. What I see myself and so many of my colleagues working on is an exploration of the breadth and complexity of science fiction, an important part of which has to do with its neighborliness with genres like those just mentioned. I have been insisting, in my essay “On Defining SF, or Not,” and in my ongoing work, that science fiction is part of a mass cultural system of genre production and consumption, but I hope that observation is a way of opening up study of the genre rather than of confining it to a study of “genre fiction” as opposed to the so-called mainstream. Instead I would urge the view that science fiction’s history and its currency involve the tension felt at the intersections between modern mass culture and any number of nationally and historically distinct literary and folk cultures, as well as between commercial practices of publicity and genre construction and academic ones.

I’ll close with a personal note. Although I published a couple of essays in Science Fiction Studies back in the 1980s, I spent the first twenty years of my post-graduate professional career specializing in British Romantic poetry. The choice I made ten years ago to focus my research agenda on science fiction instead was one of the best and most fortunate career decisions I’ve made. Thanks to you all for being here and for making science fiction scholarship what it is today.

Remarks for Clareson Award

Paul Kincaid (chair), Andy Sawyer, Joan Gordon

For distinguished service

Joan Gordon: The wonderful thing about the James Tiptree Award is that it rethinks the whole awards system. My experience on the awards committee in 2006 demonstrates how that is the case. We formed a community that shared suggestions, argued with one another, compromised, changed one another’s minds, and through this process of discussion and argument finally came to a consensus—well, as I remember, we agreed to disagree and arrived at two winners, Shelley Jackson’s Half Life and Catherynne M. Valente’s The Orphan’s Tales: In the Night Garden.

One thing we struggled with was the vagueness of the qualifications—what, really, was the definition of “gender-bending sf” anyway? That vagueness was purposeful on the part of the Motherboard. Thus, the award resists the power structures, the orderliness, the self-importance, and the “old-boy” network (in this case, “old girl”?) that is so often associated with literary awards. Instead the James Tiptree Award is a messy, complex system that emphasizes process.

The prize and its presentation also undercut the traditional solemnity and hierarchy of the award system. Not only is there a cash award and the honor/bragging rights of the traditional award: in addition there is an art piece inspired by the winning work, a tiara to wear, a silly song, and, always, chocolate.

Therefore, even though this is a more traditional award with a plaque, we would like to add a bit of chocolate. So, I want to conclude by presenting to Pat Murphy and Karen Fowler, the representatives of the Motherboard, with full recognition that the presentation might not make it back to the other members of the board, two
boxes of Solidarność Śliwka Nałęczowska chocolates, chocolate covered plums made right here in Lublin.

Andy Sawyer: Unfortunately Paul Kincaid, who is the chair of the current committee, can’t be here, so we are going to have to do this in his absence, which is a shame as this is the first time the award has gone to a collectivity.

The idea of awarding the Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service to the Tiptree Motherboard has been around for a while and I’m not sure where it originated from; rather fittingly, it seems to be an idea whose time has come, although when suggested I remember it being as a question -- about whether it was possible to give the Clareson to a collective body.

A close textual analysis of the wording for why the Clareson is given – “for outstanding service activities” – would suggest that it is. The Tiptree award is unique in that it’s an award which sets out with a positive message – specifically not necessarily for the best work but one which does the best job of expanding and exploring ideas of gender – and does it with a kind of enthusiasm and originality which is its own brand.

Plus, there are seven of them and only three of us on the awards committee.

If ever there was “distinguished service,” it is that given to the sf community by the Motherboard.

The Tiptree Award has been going since 1991, since when it has drawn attention to a fantastic body of work from all over the world, beginning with A Woman of the Iron People by Eleanor Arnason and White Queen by Gwyneth Jones, and most recently Baba Yaga Laid an Egg by Dubravka Ugresic. Named, of course, after James Tiptree Alice Bradley Racoona Sheldon (jr.), the award is administered and awarded in the spirit of commemorating a writer whose identity-shifts marked the particular complexity of this idea of exploring gender.

As the Tiptree Award webpage remarks, the aim of the award is to seek out work that is “thought-provoking, imaginative, and perhaps even infuriating,” and this it does with the imagination that is the feature of the best promotion of ideas. It’s the “infuriating” which wins it, every time. And also, what no other award does, the Tiptree does not only with panache and imagination but also with chocolate and cake.

I have not had the privilege of seeing many Tiptree award ceremonies in action, but I have vivid memories of seeing M. John Harrison receive the award for his space-opera Light (2002). Harrison, for those not deeply familiar with his work, is a writer whose scath-}

ing reviews in New Worlds used to terrify me, and is not perhaps top contender for the position of Comedy Queen of Science Fiction. To see Harrison as the subject of a praise song specially composed in his honour and given a tiara (which I’m told he delightedly wore for the rest of the convention) was my highlight of that evening. In the best of all possible worlds, the Tiptree Motherboard would receive the Clareson to suitable harmonies, except that my singing voice and “harmony” are two things which don’t go well together.

So we have a substitute [play “The Martian Hop”…]. But there is chocolate.

Thank you, the Tiptree Motherboard!

Clareson Award Acceptance Speech

The Tiptree Motherboard (Karen Joy Fowler, Debbie Notkin, Ellen Klages, Jeanne Gomoll, Jeff Smith, Pat Murphy)

Karen Joy Fowler: As everyone in this room knows full well, when you join a volunteer organization you’d best expect virtue to be its own reward. That’s not meant as a complaint. Pat and I have loved every minute of running the Tiptree Award. We’ve met amazing people and read amazing work and it’s all been a very good time.

But we did start the award with a specific mission, to support and encourage a kind of speculative literature we worried was not being recognized, a literature very important to us. And it’s hard to see from the inside whether an impact has been made.

So we are enormously surprised, gratified, and grateful that you’ve chosen to honor us with this award. It makes us hope that we are, perhaps, achieving those initial, fundamental goals. Thank you very much.

Pat Murphy: It’s always nice to be honored for one’s work. But receiving this award from the SFRA is particularly meaningful. I’ve never met a group of people who read as carefully and think as deeply about the literature that we all love. Attending this conference has been an inspiration. I’d like to thank you all on behalf of the entire Tiptree Motherboard: Debbie Notkin, Jeanne Gomoll, Ellen Klages, Jeff Smith, Karen, and myself. Thank you all very much.

Remarks for Mary Kay Bray Award

SFRA Review 297 Summer 2011 21

The Mary Kay Bray Award recognizes the best feature, essay, or review to appear in a given year in the SFRA Review. This award was created in memory of Mary Kay Bray, an active member of the SFRA and Professor Emeritus of English at Willmington College in Ohio until her passing in 1999, by her close friend William L. Andrews of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

There are several past winners of this award in attendance here in Poland: Ed Carmien won in 2006, Ritch Calvin won in 2009, and I won in 2007. Speaking for myself, this is the award of which I am most proud. The variety of worthy reviews presents unique challenges for the award committee because these different works are of various lengths, approaches, and rigor. However, a clear consensus quickly formed among this year’s award committee.

I am very happy that this year’s winner of the Mary Kay Bray Award is Alfredo Suppia. Alfredo published two terrific reviews in the issue 292, Spring 2010, but the award committee selected “Southern Portable Panic: Federico Alvarez’s Ataque de Panico!” In this concise and well-written review, Alfredo not only demonstrates his breadth of knowledge and his command of review format, but he also explores Alvarez’s film within the constellation of Latin American science fiction film, world science fiction film, and science fiction theory. On top of all that, his humble essay on a short film does the big work of raising important questions on Hollywood-centrism and global cultural exchange. Alfredo, thank you for your writing and congratulations.

Mary Kay Bray Award Acceptance Speech

Alfredo Suppia

Dear SFRA Members and the Mary Kay Bray Award committee, good evening.

It came as a very big surprise to receive the wonderful news that I had been given the Mary Kay Bray Award 2011 for my work “Southern Portable Panic: Federico Álvarez’s Ataque de Panico,” a modest review of an Uruguayan movie, published in the SFRA Review. I truly appreciate the recognition. This award is certainly an honor and makes me even more enthusiastic and glad to be part of this academic Science Fiction community. Since my first contact with the Science Fiction Research Association in Kansas City, 2007, I have been rewarded with intense intellectual exchange in a friendly, cozy, but also extremely competent and challenging academic community. I’ve been trying to learn from and collaborate with members of this insightful environment in order to enhance communication between out hemispheres, broadening the Science Fiction frontiers southbound.

The film review that the members of the Mary Kay Bray Award committee have so kindly honored is simply an expression of my belief—one that is probably shared by so many friends in this room—that Science Fiction is a universal language, as much as film is, no matter where it is dreamt. In its speculations and investigations of frontiers—existential frontiers, space frontiers, time frontiers—I truly believe that science fiction is about exceeding limits, expanding boundaries, about collective dreams free of walls, chains, wires or flags. I look forward to honoring this prestigious academic community as much as it has honored me tonight. Thank you very much.

Remarks for Student Paper Award

David Mead (chair), Alfredo Suppia, Jim Thrall

Speech delivered by Alfredo Suppia

For Best Student Paper presented at the previous year’s SFRA meeting: Bradley J. Fest, “Tales of Archival Crisis: Stephenson’s Reimagining of the Post-Apocalyptic Frontier.” Student Paper Honorable Mention: Erin McQuiston, “Thank God It’s Friday: Threatened Frontier Masculinity in Robinson Crusoe on Mars.”

Overview

The committee had a difficult time choosing between the two top choices, which we found to be very different types of papers, each impressive in its own way.

Winner

Bradley J. Fest, Ph.D. Program, Department of English, University of Pittsburgh
Fest’s essay considers Neal Stephenson’s 2008 novel *Anathem* as a way to engage the contemporary issue of the creative and destructive potential of archives of information and the knowledge they represent. The essay takes risks in pioneering a possibly new field of studies, what might be called the “archival crisis” subgenre, suggesting that texts in such a subgenre may raise questions about traditional structures of narrative itself. We were impressed by the essay’s thought-provoking originality and theoretical ambition as Fest constructs a concept of “archival narrative” through a discussion of several diverse “narratives of archival crisis,” including Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story “The Earth’s Holocaust,” Jorge Luis Borges’ short story “The Book of Sand,” and Arthur C. Clarke’s novel *Rendezvous with Rama*. As he relates those texts to Stephenson’s work, Fest manages to lead readers through a complex argument with a discursive explanation set in a clearly shaped rhetorical arc.

Honorable Mention

Erin McQuiston, Ph.D. Program, Department of English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The committee also wants to acknowledge the excellence of McQuiston’s essay as the runner-up. We were impressed by the essay’s engaging clarity, and even elegance, in offering a compelling sociological and historical gender analysis of the 1964 film *Robinson Crusoe on Mars*. McQuiston adroitly weaves together contextualizing assessments of a number of American mythologies that converged in popular understandings of the early space race, including the founding myth of Western expansion, assumed gender roles of the 1950s and 60s, and belief in U.S. technological prowess and military might. Overall, we felt McQuiston’s well-researched and well-executed essay made a convincing and coherent case for its thesis.

**Student Paper Award Acceptance Speech**

Bradley Fest

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS my deep gratitude to the SFRA and the awards committee for naming me the recipient of the 2011 Student Paper Award. I am honored to receive this recognition from such a collegial, supportive, and exciting organization. I thoroughly enjoyed last year’s conference, so it is with great regret that I am not able to be there today to receive this award.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the University of Pittsburgh for supporting my research and making it possible to attend last year’s excellent conference. My paper, on what I call the “tale of archival crisis,” owes much to the vibrant intellectual community at Pitt, and in particular I would like to thank Philip E. Smith for his continued support and his commitment to fostering scholarship in the field of science fiction.

I thank you again, and look forward to attending next year’s conference in Detroit.

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**Draft for a Critical History of Argentine Science Fiction Cinema**

Alfredo Suppia and Lúcio Reis Filho

CLASSICAL FILM HISTORY has frequently overlooked science fiction (SF) in South American cinema. However, recent academic research (Paz, 2008; Suppia, 2008) has begun to call attention to a small, but impressive body of work in this genre. This brief study provides some remarks about Argentine science fiction cinema, in comparison to equivalent filmographies in Brazil and some other countries.

Probably the first Argentine film that could be associated with science fiction is *The Beast-Man* or *The Adventures of Captain Richard* (El Hombre Bestia o las Aventuras Del Capitán Richard, 1934), with script, direction and cinematography by C. Z. Soprani. The numerous twists and turns in the plot and the caricatured acting make *The Beast-Man* a peculiar, funny chanchada-like film, with a touch of exploitation.

From the late 40s onwards, the mixture of science fiction and comedy brought a foreign, Anglophone genre closer to Latin American audiences, sometimes starring popular comedians that guaranteed successful box-office. Examples are Miguel Delgado’s *The Superwiseman* (El Supersábio, 1948) in Mexico, Rubén Cova-lotti’s *Five Hens and the Sky* (Cinco Gallinas y el Cielo, 1957), in Argentina, and Victor Lima’s *The Cosmonauts* (Os Cosmonautas, 1962), in Brazil.

The trope of the mad scientist conducting eerie medi-
cal experiments was particularly influential in the first steps of Argentine SF cinema, as we can see in Manuel Romero’s *A Light through the Window* (*Una Luz en la Ventana*, 1942).

In 1951, an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) was released. *The Strange Case of the Man and the Beast* (*El Extraño Caso del Hombre y La Bestia*, 1951), produced by Sono Film, directed by and starring Mario Soffici, starts similarly to the original novella, with a conversation between two gentlemen about a strange door at the back of Dr. Jekyll’s house.

In Brazilian cinema, Stevenson’s story seems to have inspired only film parodies or chanchadas—low-brow mixtures of comedy and musical conceived for broader audiences. The reasons for this might help to clarify important distinctions between Argentine and Brazilian science fiction cinema.

In the 1960s, the American-Argentine production *Stay Tuned for Terror* (*Extraño Invasión*, 1965), directed by Emilio Vieyra, featured television spectators turned zombies by exposure to sinister TV signals. The film thus combined three popular threats since then: television, subliminal messaging and zombies, awkwardly anticipating several future Argentine movies concerned with television and metalanguage.

Written by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, Hugo Santiago’s first feature film, *Invasion* (*Invasión*) premiered in 1969 and soon became a cult movie. Invasion is about events in Aquilea, a fictional city that is being harassed by mysterious agents in 1957. Indeed, it is a science fiction film-enigma that fuses film noir and fantasy, anticipating internal political conflicts in the 1970s. According to David Cenek, the most important element in Invasion is the action, not the narrative. He also notes that Borges’s script of *Invasion* was inspired by Brecht’s “Writings on Theatre,” in which the German playwright defends pure action in itself (Fajkusová, 2004).

As with Alberto Pieralisi’s *The Fifth Power* (1962) in Brazil, *Invasion* is an SF movie that anticipates the military dictatorship that would befall Argentina. These two films have some interesting similarities. Both are about international conspiracies, foreign intrusion and authoritarian intentions. Although Invasión could be considered a film dealing with the fantastic, its narrative unfolds in a “realist” tone, with no irruptions of the fantastic within its fictional world. This and other aspects of Invasion make it a film of contradictions, a story that evolves through the clash of opposing models, relying on ambiguity in order to emphasize the action itself, rather than context or justification.

During the military dictatorship, Argentine science fiction cinema seems to have suffered a downturn, resuming visibility only with the return to democracy in the 1980s.

Scripted and directed by Eliseo Subiela, *Hombre Mirando al Sudeste* (1987) is a subtle science fiction movie about a patient in a mental hospital who claims to have come from another planet. Dr. Denis, a divorced man and somewhat disillusioned with life, initially treats his patient as paranoid. But little by little the psychiatrist begins doubting his initial diagnosis, reassessing his own values, life and profession.

According to Argentine researcher Mariano Paz, the narrative, set in an old, decaying building, can be read as a reference to the economic crisis and the collapsing state of public institutions in Argentina (Paz, 2008). Since *Invasión*, Argentine science fiction cinema has relied heavily on allegory as an instrument of social and political criticism. The Brazilian case is similar, but more restrained.

The resurfacing of science fiction in Argentine cinema of the 80s is further amplified by the release of *Lo que Vendrá* (1987), written and directed by Gustavo Mosquera, a movie inspired by A. J. Deutch’s short story “A Subway Named Moebius” (1950), which explored the concept of the Moebius Strip.

While working as a professor at the Fundación Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires, Gustavo Mosquera returns to science fiction cinema with *Moebius* (1996), a movie inspired by a. a. J. Deutch’s short story “A Subway Named Moebius” (1950), which explored the concept of the Moebius Strip.

In the beginning of *Moebius*, a subway train disappears and gets trapped in a paradox, transported to an unreachable dimension of space and time, continuously cycling through the entire span of the metro network. Moebius is a Borgesian film, on the borderline between fantasy and science fiction. For some critics, the disappearance of the train with thirty passengers is clearly a metaphor about the recent Argentine history (see Paz, 2008).

*La Sonámbula: Recuerdos del Futuro* (1998), Fernando Spiner’s feature film début, is another bold South American SF production. The story is set in 2010, after the explosion of a chemical plant has caused a major gas leak that has poisoned thousands of people, leaving them with amnesia. Buenos Aires is under the control of a totalitarian, technocratic state. The Ministry of Social Control is in charge of treating the amnesia vic-
tims, with the goal of returning them to “normal” life-situations. A resistance movement arises, organized by a mysterious rebel leader.

The allegory of a chemical accident affecting a community had already been treated in José de Anchieta’s Brazilian film Stop 88: Alert Limit (1978). La Sonámbula’s begins in a cathedral, and soon after moves to a futuristic city, in scenes evoking Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927). The totalitarian, techno-bureaucratic government, as well as the technology described in La Sonámbula, recall dystopias such as Terry Gilliam’s Brazil (1985) or Michael Radford’s 1984 (1984). La Sonámbula’s scriptwriter Ricardo Piglia (2009) confirms the film’s sharp criticism of the military dictatorship in Argentina.

Like Invasión, La Sonámbula is an example of self-insured South American science fiction cinema. In Brazil, during the same period, there was no equivalent production. In summary, La Sonámbula seems to confirm three things about science fiction in Latin American cinema: 1) the influence of American and European SF; 2) the ability to manage limited resources and 3) the possibility of increasingly sophisticated products with support of digital technology.

In the early 2000s, allegorical hints to recent Argentine history persist in films like Cóndor Crux (2000), a space adventure in 3D animation, directed by Juan Pablo Buscarini, Swan Glecer and Pablo Holcer.

More recent Argentine SF films are Fernando Spiner’s Goodbye Dear Moon (Adiós Querida Luna, 2004), Pablo Pareş’ Filmatrón (2005), a dystopia about a future in which the government imposes censorship on the circulation of images, Esteban Sapir’s The Aerial (La Antena, 2007), an intertextual piece that pays homage to the silent cinema, and Diego Lublinsky’s fantasy film Three Minutes (Tres Minutos, 2007). An adaptation of Héctor-Germán Oesterheld and Solano López’s graphic novel El Eternauta is long expected to be released.

Tres Minutos tells the love story of Alex, a journalist, and Ana, a young piano student. In order to gain success in their respective professions, they begin taking a substance to enhance their speed and performance – a motif that somewhat recollects H. G. Wells’ short story “The New Accelerator” (1901). In this accelerated state, they are transported to a parallel world, where they find one another in a magical state outside of time and motion.

Adiós Querida Luna is one of the few Argentine films whose story is set in outer space, complete with a spacecraft and astronauts. Before it there was only one comparable feature film (77 min.), El Satélite Chiflado (1956) directed by Julio Saraceni. Although Adiós Querida Luna explicitly parodies 2001: A Space Odyssey, it could also pass for a humorous Argentine Solaris, a mixture of chanchada and science fiction, relatively similar, at a first glance, to the Brazilian film The Cosmonauts.

La Antena is a dystopian tale in which the inhabitants of a fictional town had lost their voices decades ago. Sapir’s movie is an amalgam of influences, paying homage to a number of classic films. The most significant obvious is Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927). The sequence in which the bourgeoisie avidly gaze at the false-Maria (Brigitte Helm) dancing on the Yoshiwara’s stage, their eyes multiplied on the screen, has an analogous scene in La Antena. The urban landscape, the main characters, the sound visually suggested, the various superimpositions, all bring to mind the famous German futurist epic. The homage to Lang’s masterpiece is enshrined in the sequence of the experiment with “The Voice.” In addition to Metropolis, La Antena pays tribute to Georges Méliès’s Journey to the Moon (La Voyage dans la Lune, 1904), with its own reproduction of the famous anthropomorphic moon, as well as to the avant-garde cinema of Marcel Duchamp (Anémic Cinéma, 1926) and Dziga Vertov (The Man with the Movie Camera, 1929). Mr. TV’s company logo in La Antena recalls the spirals of Duchamp’s Anémic Cinema. The idea of people having their vital energy drained by television also refers to a relatively recent and less known Czech production, Jan Sverak’s Akumulátor 1 (1994).

Metropolis seems to have been quite inspirational for Argentine SF films. Interestingly, the country had recently the chance to reciprocate. The newest and most complete version of Fritz Lang’s mythical Metropolis was made possible by the finding of a copy of the motion picture, brought to Argentina by the film distributor Adolfo Wilson in the late 1920s, and kept in the country since then.

Sapir’s La Antena, together with Gustavo Mosquera’s Moebius (1996), Fernando Spiner’s La Sonámbula (1998) and Adiós Querida Luna (2004), shape a contemporary Argentine fantastic cinema that has no parallel in Brazil.

Gustavo Mosquera, Esteban Sapir and Lucrecia Martel are some of the Argentine directors that have studied and/or worked at ENERC (Escuela Nacional de Experimentación y Realización Cinematográfica). Mosquera’s and Sapir’s first short films, for example, reveal much about their inspirations, which they will
expand on in later projects in feature film. Sapir’s IV Éden (1989) already demonstrates the filmmaker’s fascination with television and metalanguage. Mosquera’s Arden los Juegos (1985) is a post-apocalyptic fiction about the anguish moments following a global catastrophe. Both Arden los Juegos and IV Éden demonstrate a relatively widespread interest in the dystopian or post-apocalyptic fiction by the Argentine SF cinema. The same can be observed in Brazil, though perhaps with less commitment or intensity.

In contrast to Argentine cinema, Brazilian films lack the familiarity and ease when dealing with the fantastic, the willingness to take on risky subject matter and to experiment by coming up with original formal and narrative devices.

Inspired by Daniel Burman’s Argentine feature film Waiting for the Messiah (2000), Brazilian film critic Jean-Claude Bernardet concluded that “the Argentines put the Brazilians to shame” (2009, p. 256-8).12 This contrast, continues Bernardet, is due, in large part, to the narrative forms (2009, p. 256-7), “rigid” cinematic storytelling generating what he calls “a Brazilian cinematic Parnassianism.”

Bernardet refers to a comparison between the Brazilian and Argentine film industry in general, with a slight emphasis on literary adaptations and contemporary dramas. However, in comparing the Argentine fantastic or science fiction film with its Brazilian counterpart, the stark contrast becomes even more pronounced.

In comparison to other Latin American filmographies, Argentina produced a proportionally significant number of SF films in the 1980s, a period of strong imposition of Hollywood blockbusters. Argentine cinema entered the 1990s with at least two highly accomplished films in terms of Latin-American science fiction: Mœbius and La Sonambula. The Brazilian film industry’s lack of regard for the genre might be understood by contrasting the lack of influence from Fantastic Literature on Brazilian filmmakers, with the obvious inspiration it has provided for much of the notable work that has been done by Argentine filmmakers, in a country whose legacy includes such world renowned writers as Borges, Biy Casares, Cortázar and others.

An additional explanation for a greater consistency or even acceptance of science fiction cinema in Argentina can be found in the increased production and appreciation of popular SF literature in the country. During the 50s, the publishing house Minotauro published science fiction modern classics in attractive editions, and the genre also took advantage of the visibility provided by the magazine Más Allá and the graphic novel El Eternauta.xiii Rachel Haywood Ferreira recalls that,

The ‘new elite’ readership of both Más Allá and El Eternauta – and the characters of El Eternauta themselves, whom [Pablo] Capanna has described as ‘masalistas’ [Más Allá-ists] – all exemplify this changing dynamic of science and technology in Argentine culture (El mundo 181). (Ferreira 2010, 285)

According to Mariano Paz, the absence of a strong film industry in Argentina and the small production budgets have led the country’s filmmakers to make more intellectual SF movies, devoid of lavish visuals, sophisticated special effects and so on. Instead of pure visual spectacle or “pyrotechnics” the emphasis is placed on references to the Argentine socio-political context (Paz, 2007). Thus, one could suggest that Argentine SF cinema follows a more “Europeanized” model, in opposition to the Hollywood SF paradigm. If this is true, it means that the Argentine cinema has found, in a context of budgetary constraints, an alternative outlet for the genre, a strategy rarely devised by Brazilian directors.

Finally, it is worth mentioning Argentina’s lively “alternative,” “underground” or independent SF film production, represented by films like César Jones and Trash Meyers’s 2176: Clones Bisex (2002), an SF hardcore porn, or Hernán Saéz and Pablo Parés’s Plaga Zombie (1997) and its sequel, Plaga Zombie: Mutant Zone (Plaga Zombie: Zona Mutante, 2001). By the way, zombie films have been voraciously replicating in Latin American independent SF atmosphere - needless to say how convenient they are for young digital filmmakers. In Brazil, such directors as Rodrigo Aragão, Felipe Guerra, Joel Caetano and Rodrigo Brandão owe much of their film careers to the tropical walking-dead.

This brief overview is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, it is part of a work in progress, a remapping of Latin American SF cinema, in accordance with new trends in film history and theory, such as Andrew Tudor’s proposal of “An Atlas of World Cinema” (2006, pp. 19-29), and Lúcia Nagib’s “positive definition of World Cinema.”xiv

Within this perspective, more concerned with global cinema interconnections and transcultural contributions, science fiction cinema is given a more universal character, thereby demanding further research free from restrictive economic and cultural paradigms.

For an insightful, seminal work on Argentine SF, please see Pablo Capanna’s El Mundo de la Ciencia-Ficción (1992). For an interesting and more compre-

Endnotes

i. This paper results from the research project “Cinema, Ciência e Tecnologia” and the research group Laboratório de Estudos em Ficção Científica Audiovisual (LEFCAV>IAD>UFJF: http://www.ufjf.br/lefcav).

ii. The chanchada is a very popular Brazilian cinema genre, basically a mixture of low-brow musical and comedy, emphasizing ease in accessibility of the films’ content to broader audiences. Examples of chanchadas combined with science fiction motifs are Watson Macedo’s Carnival on Mars (1954) or Victor Lima’s The Cosmonauts (1962). The chanchada had its apex in the 1940s, with the commercially very successful Brazilian film studio Atlântida. Amongst the most successful box offices in the chanchada genre were popular parodies of famous American productions, such as Cecil B. DeMille’s Samson and Delilah (1942) and Fred Zinnemann’s High Noon (1952). Underestimated as escapist entertainment for the “culturally deprived,” the chanchada’s role in Brazilian film history has been revised by critics and scholars.

iii. The basic idea of a city being threatened was proposed by Santiago. Borges and Bioy Casares wrote almost all of the dialogue, as well as contributing many significant suggestions.

iv. In collaboration with Alberto Lorenzini.

v. While the depiction of behavioral therapy is reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange (1971).

vi. Mariano Paz further analyses metaphor and allegory in films such as Moebius and La Sonámbula, as they relate to the historical context of the Argentine military dictatorship. (2008, pp. 81-103).

vii. Piglia also confirms that La Sonámbula was inspired by the Argentine fantastic literature, ranging from Borges, Bioy Casares and Julio Cortázar to Oesterheld and López’s graphic novel El Eternauta (Piglia, 2009). Another inspiration was Piglia’s own novel, La Ciudad Ausente (1993). The writer also notes that the creative process of La Sonámbula recalls that of Hugo Santiago’s Invasión (1969) (Piglia, 2009).

viii. In progress for much of 2009, El Eternauta, the movie, has recently lost its director, Lucrecia Martel, due to disagreements between her, producers and Oesterheld’s family. (Ferreira, 2010, p. 301)

ix. In El Satélite Chiflado, written by Max Aguirre, two comedians travel the cosmos and bring two beauties from Saturn back to Earth (Sapere, 2001).

x. It is worth noting that, in parodying or satirizing the foreign cinema and contemporary geopolitics, Adiós’s filmic discourse does not automatically assume an inferior or peripheral status. Thus, the film does not rely on any “creative inability to copy” nor on technical precariousness, in contrast with Brazilian film parodies such as Adriano Stuart’s The Codfish (O Bacalhau, 1976) and The Dabblers in the War of the Planets (1978). For more on this issue, see João Luiz Vieira, “Este é Meu, é Seu, é Nosso: Introdução à Paródia no Cinema Brasileiro,” Filme Cultura, no 41/42, RJ, Embrasilme, 1983, as well as an essay written by the same author in Randall Johnson and Robert Stam (Eds.), Brazilian Cinema (New York: Columbia, 1995), and Jean-Claude Bernardet’s review of Adriano Stuart’s O Bacalhau (1976).


xii. According to Bernardet, Waiting for the Messiah is an average movie, and thus is proof that Argentina has a lively and intelligent commercial film scene - something also suggested by other films such as Nine Queens (Nuove Reinas) or The Bride’s Son (El Hijo de la Novia). (Bernardet, 2009, p. 256).

xiii. Written by Oesterheld and illustrated by Solano López, El Eternauta greatly contributed to the popularization of SF iconography in Argentina (Molina-Gavilán et al. 2007: 385). Haywood Ferreira observes that “El Eternauta, particularly the less overtly ideological Eternauta of 1957-59, was a cultural icon long before Oesterheld’s death and in the intervening years it has achieved mythic status.” (2010, p. 297). Throughout the 1960s, SF texts continued being published regularly in Argentina, and the first major study of the genre in Spanish appeared: Pablo Capana’s El Sentido de La Ciencia Ficción (1966), later enhanced and reissued as...
El mundo de la ciencia ficción (1992). In the 1970s, the genre grew stronger in Argentina, with the publication of specialized series and several works from native authors. In the 1980s, science fiction thrived again with the return of democracy. “Between 1983 and 1989, more Argentine SF pieces were published than in the whole previous period: (Molina-Gavilán et al. 2007, p. 385). The specialized magazine El Pendulo stands out during this period of time. This fairly strong Argentine literary tradition in the field of science fiction might help us understand the greater prevalence of SF in the country’s cultural scene, in comparison to Brazil.

Inspired by Franco Moretti’s Atlas of the European novel 1800-1900 (1998), Dudley Andrew evokes the idea of “waves” as a proper metaphor for new approaches in film history and criticism. Among several types of maps constituting his “Atlas of World Cinema,” Andrew proposes the idea of “topographical maps,” film histories and critiques that cast light on eclipsed or less visible filmographies from throughout the world. (Andrew 2006, 25). Lúcia Nagib has argued that traditional oppositions (e.g. Hollywood vs. National Cinemas) have been deemed ineffective in describing the current international film production scene (Nagib 2006, 30-37).

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Resources

SPAIN has not been a country of science fiction for a long time. It is possible that this is caused by the mentality of its people, who have apparently never been too scientific, having virtually jumped from the Middle Ages to postmodernity without passing through modernity. The nation's SF literature is often not based on science and doesn't intend to break with our perception of the reality in the way that fantastic literature does. Rather, the genre develops from the tension between the modern positivist mentality and the modes available in non-mimetic literature.

Without any shade of doubt, the religious and politi-
cal characteristics of Spain have influenced this escape from materialism and its consequent literary repercussion. The myth of the realistic nature of Spanish literature and the few possibilities available for SF getting a sympathetic reception in the last decades are the main factors that have led to Spanish critics' historical reluctance to evaluate Spanish as well as foreign science fiction.

We can't help but wonder: in spite all of the difficulties, is there actually quality science fiction in Spain? This is not a simple question, and the virtual lack of a solid national tradition of serious SF criticism until recently makes it difficult to answer. However, Spanish SF of quality does exist and has always existed; the fact is that we just have to explore the history of the nation's literature more deeply to find it. I don't pretend to be exhaustive in this present article; I offer plenty of references for those interested in this history. I seek only to give an overview of Spanish science fiction written recently over the last several years. There is a growing interest for science fiction written in Spanish in academia. Inside this young and promising field of study, the term "prospective literature" has appeared to describe the most intellectual trends and criticism of Spanish science fiction.

Most Spanish SF belongs to two well-defined trends today: on the one hand, we have writers whose production has developed along the lines of fandom, and on the other hand there are authors who have approached the genre from different cultural circuits.

The writers who originated in the fandom, that is to say “within the genre,” published their first stories in specialized SF magazines such as Artifex or Gigamesh, among many others. They constitute a circle of authors, publishers and fans that have been stubbornly loyal to certain and limited features that they consider the pure manifestation of the genre. Even so, their literary ambition is superior to the commercial pulp publications popular during the Franco era, as many of them have a university education, and usually are more attentive to the stylistic dimension of their writing. Furthermore, contrary to their pulp forerunners, they try to avoid an overtly US literary idiom and focus on creating a more Hispanic-oriented science fiction. Moreso than their pulp predecessors, they know the latest international SF literature, having taken a more active part in the SF global community, at least from the 1990s. We could even argue that the decade of the 1990s was the golden age of Spanish science fiction fandom and fiction. Unfortunately, their works were virtually non-existent for mainstream critics, perhaps due to the fact that these writers had only the fan community in mind as an audience. One consequence of this fact is that even their stories of enduring literary quality, such as many of the ones written by César Mallorquí or Elia Barceló, among others, have been unjustly ignored by the Spanish literary establishment. However, these two writers ended up giving up science fiction for other, more prestigious, genres, while one of them, Félix J. Palma, has exceptionally succeeded in convincing a mainstream publisher to accept and heavily promote a time travel novel entitled El mapa del tiempo (Palma, 2008). This novel had commercial success and has even been translated into several languages. The only important fan writer who has remained loyal to the fan community is Juan Miguel Aguilera, the author, together with Javier Redal, of the main hard SF Spanish novel Mundos en el abismo (1988), as well as of a recent cosmic thriller entitled La red de Indra (2009). Other interesting recent SF fandom novels which could be mentioned are Atlántida (2010) and La última noche de Hipatia (2010).

Parallel to the large production of SF from with the fan community, a different stream of SF literature started to acquire a renewed strength. I am talking of the science fiction written by mainstream authors. There are two main groups within this stream: those who have an adequate knowledge of the genre, and those who seem to have entered this field just by chance, led by what they deemed an interesting speculative idea. Among the latter, the most renowned in the academia, perhaps due to her alleged feminism, is Rosa Montero, whose novel Temblor (1994) is her most famous one in the genre, even if some considered it as rather belonging to fantasy, while her last narrative (Lágrimas en la lluvia; Montero, 2011) is pure science fiction.

One of the main risks incurred by these kind of mainstream authors, who have only occasionally written science fiction, is the fact that they can develop speculative ideas which might look original if one does not know the SF tradition, but which have already been exploited far more skillfully by writers within the genre. A good example of this is that last novel by Rosa Montero, which revisits the world of the film Blade Runner, without really succeeding in renovating her subject from a speculative point of view. However, I am not implying that this novel has little interest, as her prose is certainly attractive. And, at any case, Rosa Montero has the merit of having publicly acknowledged her debt to the SF genre, contrary to other mainstream Spanish writers who have written books in this genre, while trying to
conceal this fact in their statements. For instance, the international best-selling novelist José Carlos Somoza has written quite a few SF works, including some superhero adventures such as *Las llaves del abismo* (Somoza, 2007), but has constantly denied any relationship with this supposedly low-brow genre.

Other mainstream Spanish writers of science fiction have proven that they know the genre thoroughly or, at least, the work of some of their practitioners, such as Lem or Dick.

Two interesting writers in this mode are Javier Fernández and Jorge Carrión. *Cero absoluto* (2005), by Javier Fernández, starts from the programming of feelings suggested in *Blade Runner* to create the image of a whole society which has abandoned the body in order to live in a virtual reality. Fernández explores skillfully the emotional problems that this situation entails. This novel combines different kinds of rhetorical devices, including a sizable part entirely made up of newspaper articles and company reports.

*The Dead*, by Jorge Carrión, focuses on the difference between fictional levels. This novel is divided in five well defined parts that combine the description of two seasons of a TV series, two academic studies about this series and an interview of the scriptwriters. Using the two studies, the worrying aspects of identity, memory, authorial intention, death and perception are questioned. This metafictional and meta-argumentative form clearly demonstrates the influence of popular culture on a highly intellectual example of recent mainstream Spanish literature.

At this point, we can ask ourselves if this varied SF literary production in Spain has any national features. In my opinion, there is something that definitely pervades Spanish science fiction: lyricism. We could believe that the lyrical mode is proper to science fiction written by mainstream authors. However, Elia Barceló, César Mallorquí and Eduardo Vaquerizo, among other fan writers, have also exploited the lyric possibilities of the genre. Another feature commonly found in Spanish science fiction is humor. There are many instances of parodies and of uses of science fiction as a kind of pleasant intellectual game, maybe because the Spanish have rarely understood the transcendence of scientific pursuits. These features can certainly be found elsewhere, but they seem to me quite common in Spain. We could ask ourselves, however, if a Spanish science fiction tradition as distinctive and thriving as the American really exists today. Giving an answer is not an easy task, as not every trend which I have shortly reviewed has revealed sufficient continuity to create a solid identity. There are now many writers exploring the science fiction field, but there is not a strongly organized community of writers and readers which could sustain a large market. Nevertheless, the taste for science fiction is increasing in Spain, as well as its quality.

Why is that? Why are so many Spanish writers interested in science fiction now? Science fiction has often been a nonconformist literature, if not a harsh mode of writing, as Ballard or Disch have shown. Moreover, it has often called for alternative ways of thinking and acting, very much against any puritan view of life. Was Spain just too conservative to enjoy this critical genre? Any prospective criticism of society needs both intelligence and an attitude open to the possibility of transgression. This is a sign of the fact that there is a connection between public dissatisfaction, as we are experiencing currently in Spain due to the deep economical and political crisis, and the public appreciation of prospective literature, because dissatisfaction lies deep in this kind of literature.

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"Not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be:"

Medicine in Science Fiction

Victor Grech, Clare Thake-Vassallo, and Ivan Callus

Introduction

DOCTORS AND MEDICAL ADVANCES have been fair game since SF's inception with Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1918), Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), often as crucial components, giving birth to the mad scientist/doctor trope, with commensurate appalling and godlike powers, such as the skill to create or transform living beings, including humans. Inevitably powers are not only used but also abused, and inexorably, hubris paves the way for tragedy in all of these narratives. Interestingly, the medical profession has not only been depicted more frequently overall in Campbellian and post-Campbellian SF, but has also been portrayed in a much better light than in mainstream literature.

*No Cure for the Future: Disease and Medicine in Science Fiction and Fantasy* (2002), edited by Gary Westfahl and George Slusser, comprises the first authoritative attempt to appraise this aspect of SF in any detail. This work examines medicine in SF, commencing with the pessimistic axiom that both medicine and doctors have been oddly marginalised within SF.

*No Cure for the Future* includes contributions from two SF authors and several distinguished scholars in the field, who have examined the nature of canon formation, the role of scholarly journals in legitimising academic inquiry, and the cultural politics of intellectual gate-keeping. This book will be considered, along with various depictions of doctors and medicine that feature broadly in SF narratives. An interdisciplinary slant will intrude throughout as the first author of this essay is a medical doctor, such that real-life parallels will be pointed out, as well as excesses that go beyond the bounds of reasonable poetic license.

Works

The creation of life in human form is an old trope, with Hephiasitos in the *Iliad*, for example, creating golden, young female assistants, prefiguring *Frankenstein* (Hard 167).

The introduction of *No Cure for the Future* acknowledges pioneering works of the 19th century by Poe, Verne, Wells and Bellamy, all of which integrated and reinforced the doctor-as-researcher fusion, and then attempts to rationalise the relative scarcity of SF works that deal with medicine and doctors despite the latter's celebrated lineage within the corpus of SF. Westfahl opines that this could be due to the relative dearth of medical advances in the 20th century when compared to innovations in the other sciences, thus losing appeal to traditional readers as “by the 1930s, it had become evident that most science fiction readers were adolescent males” (Westfahl 2). He also wonders whether “as medicine evolved into a vast, bureaucratic enterprise largely under the control of government, pharmaceutical companies and HMOs” (3) breaking with the traditional trope of the single, individual heroic doctor, this also decreased interest of medicine in SF. Later on in the collection of essays, it is also noted that both roles may coexist in film, as, for example, in *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) in which the protagonist is a medical doctor who struggles against an entire town, including his girlfriend and medical colleagues, all of whom have been taken over by alien pods, totally depriving individuals of their emotions and humanity (Siegel).

Westfahl also sweeping states that “to this day, the only way to achieve a successful series of medical stories in science fiction [...] is to combine medicine with space travel”(3). He correctly states that doctors have not often been satirical targets, despite the public's perception of the medical profession as becoming increasingly bureaucratic and riven by financial considerations that often lead to dubious ethical decisions, such as in *The Space Merchants* (1952) by Pohl and Kornbluth, a savage criticism of advertising and consumerism.

The author also affirms that doctors are often used solely as “supporting characters” (3), ignoring the vital importance of personages such as *Star Trek* Doctors McCoy, Crusher, Phlox, Bashir and the Emergency Medical Hologram, Doctor Helena Russell in *Space 1999*, and many others who were not only central and vital to stories, but often the heroic protagonists in many an episode.

Westfahl additionally comments on cyberpunk which is depicted as a partial cyborg metamorphosis for the sake of vanity and novelty, not medically necessary and utilised solely for personal purposes, such as enhanced function or greater strength, and notes that authors fail to display or elucidate the medical procedures and individuals that cause this transformation. He also criticises SF for only dealing with medical problems and ef-
facts, discounting the profession itself, but he disregards James White’s Sector General stories.

This series concerns a gigantic, 384-level hospital located in deep space, specifically designed to treat a wide variety of alien life forms and to house its equally diverse staff, with the ability to duplicate the living conditions for any species, and to reproduce suitable environments for previously unknown alien species. The series spans twelve books over four decades and stories revolve around exotic alien diseases: their aetiology, diagnosis and cure. Westfahl contradicts himself in a later chapter by commenting that

Sector General strangely is a place that seems designed to drive doctors insane [...] the problem of incipient madness is a result of deliberate policy decisions [...] is bizarrely a medical facility without any specialists [...] must be ready to deal with all medical problems involving all species at all times [...] follows the policy of preventing doctors from working (114).

Staff must therefore instantaneously learn about alien physiology and pathology from “Educator tapes” containing the recorded memories of the greatest physicians of various species’ (46), arguably a certain recipe for multiple personality disorders. Doctors with particularly stable minds become permanent recipients of up to seven different such tapes. The situation is further aggravated by the hospital’s chief psychologist whose ostensible role is to ensure the physical and mental well being of his staff. However, this is a medically unlikely appointment as he is medically unqualified, somewhat sadistic and a bully. There is clearly a manifestation to move from “crisis to crisis, but it is not clear that such crises come from outside to threaten a once stable and coherent entity. SF is produced from crisis, from its intense self-reflexive anxiety over its status as literature” (Luckhurst 47).

Mental instability is also highlighted by Greg Bear in an autobiographical section that emphasises the effectiveness of current mental therapy and contrasts it with representations of psychiatry in his novel Queen of Angels (1990), which continues in his novel Slant (1997) depicting bleakly “a society where therapy [...] is absolutely essential’ for the majority of the populace” (Westfahl 120).

Several interesting points are raised by the various contributors and these will be briefly mentioned. Franklin contrasts medical advances and inequalities of health care, with extremes such as those prefigured in Poe’s “The Facts of M. Valdemar’s Case” (1845) wherein a tubercular invalid is maintained in the mesmerised state at the exact point of death for several months.

The unfair assertion that “doctors’ helplessness in the face of so many unknowns” (50), with medics seemingly only functioning as a ‘greek chorus’ (33), and unable to clear up their own messes, is also highlighted several times. Several examples are quoted of particularly apocalyptic strains of SF: from early on in the history of SF, such as Shelley’s The Last Man (1826) and Jack London’s “The Scarlet Plague” (1915) wherein the medical profession is powerless to halt the ravages of plague. Early films also depicted mad doctors and scientists with a biological bent, such as Frankenstein (1910). A more positive view of the biological sciences has occasionally been depicted in films such as Fantastic Voyage (1966), and stories linked to nuclear warfare, as in Vonda M. McIntyre’s Dreamscape (1978) wherein a female healer is depicted in a dystopian, post-nuclear apocalyptic world, to doctor-biologist-researchers who develop potentially pestilential weapons as witnessed in Crichton’s Andromeda Strain (1968), and more recently in Gilliam’s Twelve Monkeys (1995). Thus, biological (or genetic) manipulation is the new misdemeanour, “and so, the molecular biologist has come to know sin” (60). Interestingly, HIV is an infectious disease on a mass scale that actually is sweeping over the planet, and although its effects are not instantly mortal, medicine has limited effects on this real disease, as is shown in Spinrad’s Journals of the Plague Years (1995).

Doctors are also viewed as artificially surviving inside a “bell jar” (36), requiring an anachronistic shield, a time-bubble that strives to maintain the status quo, and a particular example cited is Dr. McCoy in Star Trek who demonstrates Luddite tendencies, lacking faith in the safety of the instantaneous matter transporter which is an essential tool in the Star Trek universe, thereby representing him as a homely, conservative and conventional individual. The bell jar analogy is reinforced by the fact that physicians occasionally deliberately isolate themselves, as does "Frankenstein in his laboratory, Tyrell in his huge bedroom, or virus-hunters of the Andromeda Strain in their hypersterilised laboratory” (37). Rather unfairly, doctors are labelled as being “anal-retentive” (33) since they continually scrub and change, but this is a mandatory part and parcel of on-the-job hygiene! It must also be mentioned that SF’s escapist and overall optimistic outlook is repeatedly reiterated, and compared to a “gnostic urge to be elsewhere: out of this time, out of this body, out of this chain of circumstance that we call life” (24). Similarly, the point that SF often
depicts “high-tech doctors employing futuristic techniques on futuristic diseases, wielding speculative medical tools to heal [...] invented diseases” is frequently restated (32). This naturally leads to the Faustian trope, with doctors seeming to have access to a “vital force” that must be that can only be used or doled out in small portions (43). Any excessive release or abuse of this force is “hubris that challenges the natural order” (57), tantamount to an automatic Frankensteinian sentence. This unspoken rule brooks no exceptions, for punishment also results when doctors’ powers are artificially augmented for altruistic purposes.

The potential for the deliberately evil misuse of medicine is also raised, as in Orwell’s 1984 (1949), where curing thoughtcrime with doublethink appears to be the only role of IngSoc medicine, and medical practitioners are priests for the soul, teachers for the mind and inquisitioners, administering both physical and psychological torture with the aid of drugs, hypnosis and physical beatings. It must be noted that there is an inexorable trend for modern technology to be utilised in Big-Brother fashion, with CCTV cameras connected to image-recognition software that attempts to distinguish potential wrongdoers by detecting signs of anxiety. In more modern vein, magnetic resonance imaging and PET scanning have also been used to analyse brain chemical activity in order to correlate identify impressions, thoughts or memories (Kevles).

Howard V. Hendrix reinforces the deliberate misuse of medicine by citing Carpenter’s Escape from LA (1996) where the protagonist is blackmailed into undertaking a hazardous mission by military handlers who claim to have infected him with a virus for which only they have a cure. He also compares the alien downfall by bacteria in Wells’s War of the Worlds (1898) with the alien downfall by computer viruses in Emmerich’s Independence Day (1996).

An overall conclusion for the entire book is that “of all the scientific fields, medicine as the science of the healer most clearly partakes of mystical and metaphysical powers” (146), and that the doctors’ conventional single-mindedness on preserving health is inherently in conflict at a very fundamental level with the SF’s desire to surpass and transcend the human body. However, throughout, the various contributors emphasize that the trope of an (initially) unfathomable medical problem, ignoring the obvious: that the problem and it’s initially insolubility are an inevitable part of the storyline, preventing a premature ending to a story.

Medicine in SF has been ably summarised by Romain, who accurately stated that “Hollywood has often served as a predictor of science to come” (c5057), an assertion that additionally applies to all other SF narrative forms. Moreover, several vital potential consequences of biomedical technology are highlighted in this paper. For example, Gattaca (1997) depicts a dystopia where genetic testing is universal and leads to humans being binarily categorised into “valids” (with healthy genes) and “in-valids” (at high risk of specific diseases), such that in-valids are denied jobs and are treated virtually like second class citizens. The reality is that current testing is still far away from this situation, with current direct to consumer genetic testing producing “misleading and of little or no practical use to consumers” (Kurtz 4). This is because the risks defined by such tests are probabilistic by definition, it is very likely that consumers will receive results from these companies that do not comport with their knowledge of their own medical histories. [...] the predication made by these companies also serve to illustrate the lack of robustness of such predictive tests. Moreover, experts fear that consumers may misinterpret the test results because they do not understand such distinctions (9).

However, Romain notes that the US government is taking potential genetic discrimination seriously, to the extent of promulgating a Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act in 2008.

SF has embraced doctors in narratives of all forms, and all readers will be familiar with the exploits of the abovementioned Star Trek doctors who are all key protagonists in the episodes and whose skills often save not only lives, but the entire starship.

Virtually all other television series have included doctors as main protagonists, and these include Dr. Janet Fraiser from Stargate SG-1, Dr. Owen Harper from Torchwood, Dr. Simon Tam from Firefly, Dr. Carson Beckett from Stargate: Atlantis, Dr. Sherman Cottle from Battlestar Galactica, and Dr. Stephen Franklin from Babylon 5.

All of these medics are depicted as truly human with all of humanity’s failings as well as merits. To give only one example, Dr. Franklin develops an addiction to stimulants in his efforts to cope with the space station’s workload, and he not only faces this personal demon, but also overcomes it (Trevino).

Several series deliberately explore the role of doctors in SF. For example, Leinster’s famous Med Ship series, features doctor protagonists (Med Ship Men) who are not allowed to marry, in the vein of knight hospitalers, somewhat naively implying that this will ensure their
individuals will be briefly discussed. Nourse's *The Bladerunner* (1975) portrays an overpopulated dystopia where the general population’s access to medical care is dependent upon their acceptance of medical sterilisation. His *Star Surgeon* (1959) improbably features an alien “Garvian,” a tall and thin humanoid covered in fine gray hair whose anthropomorphic aim is to become the first alien doctor to practice on Earth. Comics have also frequently depicted doctors such as Dr. Pieter Cross who dons the mantle of Doctor Mid-Nite (Reisestein and Schmeier), Dr. Thomas Elliot who is also Hush (Loeb and Lee), Dr. Donald Blake, Thor’s original alter ego (Lee), and Dr. Cecilia Reyes from the *X-Men* series (Lodbell and Pacheco).

Doctors have also been heroic protagonists in several famous individual narratives and only a few examples will be given. Vonda M. McIntyre’s *Dreamsnake* (1978) depicts a female healer in a dystopian, post-nuclear apocalyptic world. Harrison’s *Spaceship Medic* (1970) is a juvenile novel which portrays a doctor who saves the lives of crew and passengers on a spaceship that is struck by a meteor, first by using his scientific knowledge to solve an oxygen shortage problem by the electrolysis of water, and secondly, by controlling an outbreak of an alien disease that is contracted from micro-organisms on the meteor.

Yet another juvenile novel is Nourse’s *Star Surgeon* (1959), a very tall and thin, humanoid alien whose body is covered with fine gray hair, and who comes to Earth with the somewhat anthropomorphic desire to become the first alien doctor to graduate from Earth’s medical schools.

SF has also depicted almost Mills and Boon type of medical space romances, formulaicly portraying attractive nurses and handsome doctors (Webb).

**Discussion**

SF has been embraced by scientists in general, with many writers of SF being scientists who have, by definition, forayed into the humanities in order to create SF narratives. Doctors too have successfully ventured into the genre, with stories that inevitably often have a strong medical slant. All of these narratives also tend to preserve Campbell’s influence which “valorises a particular sort of writing: ‘Hard SF’, linear narratives, heroes solving problems or countering threats in a space-opera or technological-adventure idiom” (Roberts).

Russ also commented on scientific accuracy or inaccuracy in SF, a theme prefurged by Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*. SF must perforce, frequently make assumptions with regard to new scientific
and technological advancements. While there can be no verifiability, there must be credibility, and assumptions must not be excesses that lead to inaccuracies that go beyond the boundaries of sensible and reasonable poetic license, as reasoned by Russ, “error-free science fiction is an ideal […] impossible of achievement […] not that […] the author can be excused for not trying; unreachable is, after all, what ideals are for” (113).

Medicine has advance to quasi-science fictional levels in its diagnostic and therapeutic abilities. Several critics have examined the ways in which SF narratives and scientific reality interpenetrate and prefigure each other, such as Steven Shaviro’s Connected, or What It Means to Live in the Network Society (2003). The converse, that is, the effect of new technologies on contemporary fiction is elucidated in Cognitive Fictions (2002) by Joseph Tabbi who examines contemporary works by authors who “are creating a new order of realism […] actually imagining those aspects of a cognitive system that have sunk below the level of operational awareness” (130).

Only one example will be given, arising out of the influence of a thesis by the first author of this paper (Grezh). Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) is a revolutionary process in which a single sperm is injected directly into a harvested ovum, and the zygote is then implanted using in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) techniques. ICSI has completely reversed the approach to male infertility with very few cases of male infertility remaining untreatable. Even men who can only produce few sperm that are poorly twitching and completely morphologically abnormal can avail themselves of this technique to ensure fertilization and pregnancy. Success rates for this procedure are comparable to IVF in men with normal sperm counts. In the few cases where even ICSI is not possible, insemination with donor sperm remains a possibility. If a woman is completely unable to gestate, it is possible for a surrogate mother to carry a baby to term on a couple’s behalf (Chew).

Unfortunately, these advanced assisted reproduction techniques frequently result in the creation of excess (more than two) embryos. Such supernumerary embryos are initially cryopreserved and if not used by the couple, are later discarded or used for scientific investigation such as stem cell research (Flamigni). While some religions, such as Catholicism, take the extreme view of frowning on almost all fertility treatments, many others would argue that this is equivalent to an abortion and at best, a waste of potential life (Schenker).

Even more worryingly, in species’ survival terms, are scientists’ concerns that males born by ICSI may inherit their fathers’ infertility problems, and it has been estimated that even if even half of infertile men were to use ICSI to father children, then the incidence of significant male infertility could double in developed countries within seven generations, a truly science-fictional prospect (Faddy). IVF is now so commonplace that it is also being used to boost the numbers of endangered species, such as pandas in China, a truly ironic situation stemming from a country wherein the populace is strictly schooled to a one-family, one-child concept (Wildt).

SF’s perspicacity, in all fields and not only in medicine, may also assist us by preparing us for “Future Shock” that results from potentially profound and fundamental transformations that our environment and our society may be forced to undertake due to the ever increasing impact of science and technology on everyday life (Toffle). Indeed, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay observes that “[a]mbitious theorists like Fredric Jameson, Jean Bau-drillard, and Donna Haraway turn to SF topoi not only as a major symptom of the postmodern condition, but as a body of privileged allegories, the dream book of the age” (Csicsery-Ronay).

This genre’s narratives are often thought-experiments of the “what if?” kind acknowledging, in Brockman’s words, that “we now live in a world in which the rate of change is the biggest change.” These investigations include the exploration of new technologies, including medical advances, with privileged insights as to possible actualities, or literalised metaphors that concretise aspects of everyday life. The commonest trope that emerges from these narratives is that of the cautionary tale, that excessive and Frankensteinian desire to wrest nature’s secrets, ignoring potential catastrophic outcomes, with deplorable hubris being met with tragedy.

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Using Book History to Teach Science Fiction
Ryan Speer

THE BORDERS BANKRUPTCY, just the most recent and dramatic indication of the changing (and perhaps waning) influence of printed books in the marketplace, offered some minor savings for interested shoppers, and I stopped in towards the end of the liquidation sale at our local store. The science fiction and fantasy section was still mostly intact, and I bought one of those Library of America Philip K. Dick volumes. I was intrigued to see wrapped around the familiar black dust jacket a neon green book band featuring miniaturized reproductions of original paperback cover art for each of the five collected novels. I wonder if and how the visual appeal of those original covers affected my decision to buy the book and. In recollection, my purchase and the idle questions it raised highlighted the importance of commercial aspects of the production of printed sf. Physical clues specific to individual magazines and editions of books, such as cover art and design, are often the only remaining evidence of what the publishing house thought of both the author and their readership. Science fiction studies as a whole largely neglect the bibliographic details of science fiction book and magazine production. It follows that university sf courses likely would benefit from the introduction of elements of book history into the consideration of their texts, and I’d like to suggest a few different ways in which this approach to considering sf and its readers might be employed in the classroom.

Cover art is an obvious and compelling introduction into SF book history. From the publisher’s perspective, cover art can be as important as or more important than the book’s contents. Phil Dick himself was not unaware of the significance of the cover as evidence of the real or perceived audience for a publication, and of the resultant implications for the author’s self-image. In the introduction to the 1980 short story collection The Golden Man, Dick described at length the personal, emotional rewards associated with his appearance as the guest of honor at the Metz Festival in 1977. The higher status Dick enjoyed in France was reflected notably in the manner in which French publishers marketed the work: “... it was fantastic (in the sense of not real) to be in France and see all my books in expensive beautiful editions instead of little paperbacks with what Spinrad calls ‘peeled eyeball’ covers” (xxiii). What would he think of the Library of America and the bright wrapper they saw fit to provide for their otherwise staid American edition of his work? Was Library of America knowingly juxtaposing their usual standardized sobriety with the more or less lurid genre cover art, or were they attempting to split the difference between sf fans and mainstream buyers? Or did Borders request the wrapper? While consideration of individual editions is useful and interesting for considering publishers, authors, and readers, a comparison of changes in cover design across the career of one author can also illuminate the various ways in which those texts might have been apprehended by different readers. Such an approach is especially relevant in the case of authors like Dick whose work has been adopted and championed by audiences other than those intended by the original publishers.

Another possible approach to teaching sf with book history is to focus on the formats in which various readers over the years have apprehended sf. The changing
interests and resources of mid-20th century SF readerships, and the emergence of a more durable and available book-based pool of sf texts from the fragile, fleeting joys of the pulps can be seen through an examination of the shift from magazines to books. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, magazine material moved from the pulps and digests to books published by and for sf enthusiasts and, once the financial viability of magazine reprints had been demonstrated through the success of products from small presses like Gnome, Fantasy, and Arkham, on to the lists of mainstream publishers. Considering the changing format of sf allows students to consider the changes over time in readership and the ways in purchasing patterns might reveal their possible expectations and approaches to texts. Single-title examples can be instructive here. Robert Heinlein’s “Beyond This Horizon” for instance, can be tracked through its initial appearance in two spring 1942 issues of Astounding Science Fiction, to the 1948 reprint by Fantasy Press, to a larger hardcover run by Grosset & Dunlap in 1950, and on through paperback incarnations which began with the 1960 Signet edition. Examination of the small presses of the 1940s and 1950s also allows for discussion of fandom and its role in canon-making through the republication of magazine sf; examination of the major publishers allows for discussion of ways in which, through packaging and format, an attempt was made to dignify the pulp tradition and make it appealing to a broader swathe of individual and institutional consumers.

Advertising in magazine sf is another possible avenue for learning about readers and publishers. Contemporary advertisements provide insight into magazine sf and its readership that will not be found in anthologies. It should be noted that magazine publishing companies often sold ad space in bulk, meaning that pulp sf magazines often ran the same ads as other category magazines in the same chain. This practice of bulk buying, a fruitful topic of discussion in itself, can be contrasted usefully with the placement of advertisement in more skillfully edited and purposeful publications such as Astounding under Joseph Campbell or Galaxy under Herbert Gold. Ads running in those magazines during the late 1940s and early 1950s document the evolution of the publishing landscape outlined in the previous example, with small booksellers, book clubs, and enthusiastic presses all advertised in the pages of Astounding and Galaxy, whereas the remaining pulps (Startling Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Planet Stories) of the same period still carried the familiar bulk ads for correspondence courses, false teeth, hernia-related garments, and the like.

A small teaching collection suitable for the examination of these and the larger world of sf book history can be assembled through online antiquarian book sources such as Advanced Book Exchange. Accessible secondary resources offering basic information on book history and related trends in bibliography include: Leslie Howsam’s Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture (University of Toronto Press, 2006), and David Hall’s “Bibliography and the Meaning of Text,” in The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America (University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Treatments specific to sf include: Algis Budrys’s essay Non-Literary Influences on Science Fiction (Drumm Books, 1983) which, though long out of print and primarily concerned with magazine science fiction, is likely the only significant appraisal of the impact of publishing and printing houses on the production of this literature; and Robert Weinberg’s introduction to his Biographical Dictionary of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists (Greenwood, 1988), which briefly and cogently summarizes a large swathe of science fiction publishing history. And, of course, an institutional sf collection and a knowledgeable librarian, where available, can be most helpful in incorporating book history into coursework. All of the preceding topics and examples were inspired by my own exploration in Georgia Tech Science Fiction Collection, but any collection of reasonably large size will be able to support the inclusion of book history in the curriculum.

Works Cited

Nonfiction Reviews

From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe

Nolan Belk

PETER PAIK (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) leaves out much that we might expect from a book focused on utopia, science fiction, and catastrophe. He makes no mention of much of the relevant fiction such as that of Octavia Butler, whose catastrophes would fit well in Paik's discussion. More significantly, Paik abandons any conversation with contemporary utopian and science fiction criticism, completely ignoring the work of Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini and only barely engaging with Darko Suvin, Frederic Jameson, and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay. Instead Carl Freedman's analysis of *The Dispossessed* is set up in two pages of the introduction, followed by a quick mention of Jacques Derrida's critical short-comings, to show the need for Paik's analysis. In an endnote to this critique of Derrida, Paik places himself in a critical heritage: that of Slavoj Žižek. Ultimately, it is this unexpected critical placement that is the heart of the book, while a sometimes fascinating if somewhat disjointed discussion of certain science fiction graphic novels and films serves to provide the meat on which the Paik can use Žižek's teeth.

At the heart of his discussion of the graphic novels and films, Paik's previous work in postmodern theology, including work on Žižek as well as on the political theology of the Left Behind series, shows up here along with his on-going engagement with the work of Simone Weil, Eric Voegelin, and Alexandre Kojève, among others. Paik's current argument is centered on the failure of utopian political idealism as represented by the Marxists. In his introduction, he explains why he chooses to discuss these science fiction texts: “the underlying contention of this work is that science fiction and fantasy, in particular narratives drawn from media often dismissed as unserious or trivial, such as the comic book and the science fiction film, are capable of achieving profound and probing insights into the principal dilemmas of political life”(1). Paik explains that science fiction texts “confront us with the harsh truths evaded or repressed by liberal and progressive thoughts. It is perhaps only such a fantastic realism that is at present capable of opening up a critical space for reflection between the alternatives of an enlightened obedience to a devouring and deteriorating beast and a headlong embrace of fate that masquerades as a godlike freedom” (22).

As his introduction makes clear, Paik's acknowledgment that science fiction is the genre that can provide such critical space is common enough, but the texts he chooses can be far from canonical in the genre. And, perhaps because the engagement with the literature is the fresh part of his argument, it is his close reading and viewing of the various literary texts that this reader finds most effective.

For the majority of his analysis, Paik chooses a mixture of commonly discussed texts such as *Watchmen, V for Vendetta*, and *The Matrix* and lesser known texts such as the Korean film *Save the Green Planet* by Jang Joon-Hwan, the manga *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* by Hayao Miyazaki, and the short film *Animatrix: The Second Renaissance*, written by the Wachowski brothers as a prequel to *The Matrix*. The first chapter deals mainly with Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen* along with a cursory discussion of Kurt Vonnegut’s *The Sirens of Titan*. The second chapter is a close viewing of *Save the Green Planet* that explains the entire film, a positive for those of us who are unfamiliar with it. The third chapter begins with a short discussion of Miyazaki’s famous film *Princess Mononoke* before carefully analyzing the complexities of his more-than-thousand-page manga *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. The lengthy final chapter is a discussion of *The Matrix* trilogy contrasted with *The Second Renaissance*, and then a discussion of the important contrasts between (and superiority of) Moore’s *V for Vendetta* graphic novel versus the Wachowski brother’s film version. Lacking a conclusion, the book ends with this chapter followed by endnotes and an index but without a bibliography. The individual chapters provide some fascinating analysis, but they do not connect together to form an over-arching argument. Additionally, the lack of conclusion and bibliography are notable weaknesses.

Despite the weaknesses, Paik provides some excellent analysis of the visual rhetoric of *Watchmen, Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, and Moore’s *V for Vendetta* as well as of *Save the Green Planet* and *The Second Renaissance*. This refreshing emphasis on the visual rhetoric of apocalypse is a central component of Paik’s overall argument, providing the key reason for his heavy dependence on graphic novels and films and his rather thin analysis of more traditionally studied literary texts. However, Paik consistently places the narratives he chooses in context with the larger canons of science fiction, utopian, and realist literature. Although the book is at times uneven—the third chapter has very little discussion of the critical theorists while the fourth chapter has one seventeen-page section which focuses solely on the theorists and fails to mention the literature once, Paik has provided his reader with a thoughtful examination of how science fiction can work to realize theoretical ideas, a necessity when it comes to discussions of things such as apocalyptic catastrophe.
If the book leaves its reader wanting a clearer line of argument, it nevertheless provides the groundwork for her to investigate new avenues of critical inquiry into science fiction. This book is recommended for scholars seeking ways to engage with the work of theorists such as Žižek as well as ways to bring the visual rhetoric of science fiction work to forefront, something that can only become more necessary as we begin to work on more graphically centered texts such as video games. Sections of the work could well fit beginning classes, but a true engagement with Paik’s ideas takes a good deal of grounding in theory or at least a level of comfort in quick-paced theoretical debate that many students are missing before upper-level or graduate work. Therefore, it is recommended for any university research library, and the cost makes it an easy buy for many home libraries as well.

**Kim Stanley Robinson Maps the Unimaginable: Critical Essays**

Neil Easterbrook


**KIM STANLEY ROBINSON** (KSR) is one of the most consistent and consistently successful SF writers of the current generation. Begin with the fact of his commercial success and the sheer number of awards and recognitions—as of summer 2011 he’s won 20 of the majors with another 105 additional major nominations. These awards and nominations span his entire career—beginning with a novella award in 1980 from *Locus* (for “On the North Pole of Pluto”) and most recently for the novel *Galileo’s Dream* (2009). He’s frequently been asked by newspapers and other mass media for high-profile interviews or position statements. And just as often, he’s played a prominent role at genre conferences, such as serving as the Guest of Honor at the 2010 Worldcon in Melbourne, Australia.

Although a special issue of the journal *Configurations* devoted to KSR is in preparation (edited by SFRA’s immediate past-president Lisa Yaszek and the SFRA Review’s co-editor Doug Davis), William J. Burling’s *Kim Stanley Robinson Maps the Unimaginable: Critical Essays* is the first critical anthology devoted entirely to his work. It is a valuable collection, and every academic library ought to have a copy. In his editorial introduction, Burling states his intent to “include as many as possible of the most widely cited and influential commentaries”; to follow the chronological development of KSR’s writing; to include commentaries not just on the three celebrated trilogies but on other texts as well; and, to try to show something of “Robinson’s international stature and significance” (3). Burling then divides the book into four sections, organized by topic and function: “utopia and alternative history; theory and politics; ecology and nature; and interview and biography” (3). 17 essays, five of them brand new, plus a reprint interview and a secondary bibliography, populate these sections. Many of the previously published essays first appeared in *New Left Review, Utopian Studies, Modern Fiction Studies*, and other first-rate journals. Given the book’s unusual 7”x10” size and small print, there’s lots of content. And that content, like KSR’s work, is consistently insightful.

Opening with essays by Thomas P. Moylan and Jameson is an excellent idea, for it establishes one essential theme of KSR’s work, one which seems central to all but two of the volume’s essays—the challenge of the in-exorable, irresolvable difficulty of living in the world, any world: there are no simple solutions or escapes, no magic wands to produce an unambiguous utopia resolving all human conflict with unsullied rainbows and pot o’ gold nova. This motif might be called the collection’s thesis, although individual writers spin it in varied webs of argument, description, and utopian hope. In “Witness to Hard Times: Robinson’s Other Californias,” which combines and supplements two previously published essays, Moylan examines the ways that KSR has produced a work of “critical utopia” (15) in KSR’s first trilogy, which is also called the Orange County or Pacific Coast trilogy. Moylan defines “critical utopia” this way: “I’d argue that the critical utopias—as formal expressions of a structure of feeling of their time—broke with the older modernist sense of Utopia as an object, as agenda or blueprint, and opted instead for an emphasis on Utopia as process or method” (30). Moylan points toward one of the essential features of KSR’s fiction: that the characters are rarely cardboard demonstrations of cold political abstraction, but instead are warm and intimate examples of how science and politics affect the personal.

In “If I find One Good City, I Will Spare the Man: Realism and Utopia in the Mars Trilogy,” Jameson addresses...
that series of books which seems to have provoked the greatest response (both from the critical essays collected here but also within the wider discipline of SF studies). Implicitly agreeing with Moylan that KSR’s work foregrounds possibility, Jameson fixes on terraforming as possibility’s synecdochic trope: “‘Terraforming’ then retroactively includes all those implements, all those receptacles of human value, and it becomes the fundamental dividing line between realism as the narrative of human praxis and ontology as the traces of Being itself” (55). While Jameson’s writing is complex, he is also a surprisingly accessible writer. Meditating on the fact that the three books are named by three differing colors, he uses color as a metaphor for KSR’s project: “But the name for this unnamable color is Utopia” (60).

The first section then includes four essays about history and possibility. The first is Carl Abbot’s “Falling into History: Imagined Wests in the ‘Three Californias’ and Mars Trilogy,” an essay about the political challenges of new utopian spaces in direct comparison with the motifs that marked America’s nineteenth-century expansion across the west. In a new essay, “Remaking History: The Short Fiction,” John Kessel provides a useful and informative appraisal of some of the thematic motifs that emerge first in the stories, at least those collected in Remaking History (1994), many of them written before KSR moved to the novel as his preferred form. One might even say, as KSR himself remarked about Philip K Dick, that the relation of the early to late fiction resembles that between “pencil studies [and] oil paintings” (xi). While Kessel does not cite this passage, he does think there are parallels between the shorter and longer forms. In a very short but informative essay, “The Martians: A Habitable Fabric of Possibilities,” Nick Gevers offers a nice thematic survey of KSR’s collection of short fictions concerning characters from the Mars trilogy.

The first section of the book concludes with another new essay, Phillip E. Wegner’s “Learning to Live in History: Alternate Historicities and the 1990s in The Years of Rice and Salt,” which addresses how alternative history produces “estranging transformations” (110) that lead away from despair and toward hope. (KSR is nothing if not an optimist with an asterisk.) A lively and perspicacious essay, Wegner’s piece is especially welcome for its focus on a wonderful but generally neglected novel. He concludes that “…perhaps the greatest achievement of this novel…is the way it works to teach its audience, in a true Brechtian fashion, to think and hence to live in history in new ways, to overcome the sense of paralysis and inaction that have been considered characteristic of postmodernism and to actively take control of our destiny once more…” (99).

Part Two of Burling’s collection opens with Carol Franko’s “The Density of Utopian Destiny in Red Mars,” an essay frequently referred to by the other contributors, which deploys the work of M.M. Bakhtin to outline the complexities, or densities, of utopian hope. Franko’s fine essay is followed by Robert Markley’s excellent “Falling into Theory: Simulation, Terraformation, and Eco-Economics in the Mars Trilogy.” As it was for Jameson, terraforming becomes a broad topological engine for describing just such complexities of hope. In “Chromodynamics: Science and Colonialism in the Mars Trilogy,” Elizabeth Leane then takes up color as one of the trilogy’s most revealing tropes, arguing that KSR features complex political and scientific dynamics that defeat simplistic synthesis and instead insist on direct engagements with the real difficulties of political life: “The Mars trilogy represents an escape, not from Earth, but from this monochrome vision” of simple resolution (155). The fourth essay of this section is Burling’s own “The Theoretical Foundation of Utopian Radical Democracy in Blue Mars,” which reads Blue Mars as a not particularly opaque demonstration of the theses of Ernesto Laclau and Chantel Mouffe’s Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (1985), especially the notion that capitalist culture’s “inherent instabilities, inconsistencies, and disagreements” provide an opportunity for real political change, which “support[s] the Blochian principle of hope” (168).

Of the final three essays in section two, the first two are brand new. In his essay “The Politics of the Network: The Science in the Capital Trilogy,” Roger Luckhurst examines how character, science, utopian hope, and instrumental realism (what he calls “proleptic realism”) are imbricated in complex networks. One of the best critics in SF literature and culture, Luckhurst highlights the collection’s central theme, that even some sort of postcapitalist utopian transformation would not result in an easy politics. Luckhurst foregrounds KSR’s utilitarian commitment to examining reactionary denials of climate change, which places his larger project of utopian hope into the background. The section’s second new essay is “Living Thought: Genes, Genres and Utopia in the Capital Trilogy” by Gib Prettyman. Prettyman provides an extended meditation on how the Capital series actually extends the overt utopianism of the Mars books: the newer series is “a formally and strategically postmodern utopian novel” (200), tracing elements of subject-positions, the complexity sciences, and an in-
terrogation of history as linear and cumulative. Prettyman also provides the book’s closest engagement with the hard sciences. William J. White supplies the section’s last essay—“Structuralist Alchemy” in Red Mars.” White deploys the Greimassian semantic rectangle to chart some of the ways that colors, qualities, themes, and characters share similar structural patterns, showing how these operate in reciprocal tensions with each other.

Part three contains four essays on the broad theme of ecosystem and nature. Alan R. Slotkin’s short “Ecological Newspeak” is an entirely analytical account of some of the grammatical and rhetorical features of KSR’s new coinage. Slotkin tries to suggest that KSR’s innovative thinking can be shown even in the case of linguistic form. The next three essays are much more properly about ecology. Unfortunately, the first two have the great misfortune of being juxtaposed to a third, one of the best essays in the volume, and one that sharply demarcates its difference with them. These two essays have similar trajectories, and they are the least successful in the book. Still, both are quite interesting. It’s in their attempts to suggest the resolution (by synthesis) of difficulties that, I think, misses what KSR is up to, something that the other essays better capture. In “Murray Bookchin on Mars! The Production of Nature in the Mars Trilogy,” Shaun Huston outlines the parallels between KSR’s thematics and the writings of Bookchin, an influential libertarian or anarchist socialist environmentalist. This essay is followed by Eric Otto’s “The Mars Trilogy and the Leopoldian Land Ethic,” arguing that KSR’s fiction “encourage[es] readers to synthesize continually a complex array of political positions” (254). Perhaps it’s just my difficulty with the word “synthesize,” which suggests resolve, since elsewhere in the essay Otto insists that KSR’s fiction denies the anthropomorphic claims of reducing (and hence resolving) the issues of land use to human use, a motif that is taken up in the book’s final essay.

After that essay is the fifth of the five papers written especially for Burling’s collection. “Dead Penguins in Immigrant Pilchard Scandal: Telling Stories About ‘The Environment’ in Antarctica,” by Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint, is the only essay in the collection that distances itself from the celebratory praise that marks most of the others. While none of the book’s essays might be called fawning, Bould and Vint “draw attention to one of the key aporia (sic) in attempts to bring together environmentalist and Marxist perspectives: the loss of focus on non-human life as an end in itself rather than as a means to human ends” (257). But even though distanced, their topic—attending to an impassable gap or abyss within KSR’s fictional logic—is entirely consonant with the collection’s central theme: to critique naïve or simplistic accounts of political or historical synthesis. They conduct their essay by outlining two aporias in his fiction. First, that KSR’s ecological stories of Pluto, Mars and Antarctica are incomplete because they have left out the key elements—plants and animals—that make the moral dynamics of human ecology so complex; in this sense, by clearing the landscape off all but human and rock or ice, KSR has committed the same kind of anthropomorphism he wishes to critique. Second, that no matter KSR’s central strategy of “demonstrate[ing] the ways in which language and narrative are always-already shaped by existing structures of power…they are nonetheless always-already susceptible to its recuperation” (259). As an alternative, Boud and Vint call for more complete, more nuanced, more complex stories (261, 269), arguing that, “The environment is more than a landscape organized around the proprietorial human subject. And it is more than a place. It is a community of non-human and human actants, of complexly interrelated intersubjects” (269).

Burling’s collection ends with a final section that is primarily a KSR interview with Bud Foote, and a select bibliography of secondary criticism. If the book has one failure, it’s a very small one: that a comprehensive bibliography of secondary criticism of KSR’s primary materials would have been a very useful addition.

From start to finish Kim Stanley Robinson Maps the Unimaginable is a first-rate collection, one that will be essential reading to any student of KSR and, given KSR’s importance, to almost all scholars of SF, whatever period or subgenre of their own focus. The strongest essays are the ones by Moylan, Jameson, Wegner, Luckhurst, Prettyman, and Bould and Vint—and likely to be the most memorable essays as well. Though my intention in singling out these scholars is not to slight the others, for the entire collection is worth reading closely, and there will be ample rewards for those who do.

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This important collection is edited by someone well known to most members of SFRA, the late Bill Burling, an excellent critic and an even better human being. There have been many testimonials to his insightful scholarship, and others to his undivided dedication to his students. I got to know Bill through the conference sponsored by IAFA and subsequently we became regular correspondents. As it happens, our last correspon-
idence concerned attending SFRA (and how we might slip out from the sessions to attend a baseball game). (Or two.) (Or three.) His cancer had recurred, so he could not attend. I never saw him again.

Kim Stanley Robinson Maps the Unimaginable will be one way to memorialize and remember Bill, to mark his generous and passionate attention to ideas that matter. For some of us, it will also be the final testament to Bill’s specific genius, a reminder that even if there’s now more beer for the rest of us we dearly miss him, and not merely because he would have edited many more such fine collections. But because of the intense compassion of conversation this book represents, and how, when we had such an opportunity to converse with him, Bill made us all feel so much more alive.

The Unsilent Library: Essays on the Russell T. Davies Era on the New Doctor Who

Susan A. George


THE BACK COVER of the The Unsilent Library: Essays on the Russell T. Davies Era on the New Doctor Who says it contains “ten in-depth critical essays,” and this is basically what I expected to find. However, what I found was an uneven collection of essays that not only focus on the Davies’s Doctor Who, but also on Doctor Who across the decades and through many generations. The essays all have interesting and engaging titles—“The Reasons and Functions Behind the Use of deus ex machina in Series One of the New Who,” and “Philosophies of Time Travel in the New Doctor Who”—but too many of the essays become (historical) overviews of Doctor Who and/or fall into listings of characters, episodes, and events rather than using specific and detailed examples to argue their cases. This makes a significant portion of the anthology more a nitpicker’s guide to Doctor Who than a critical collection.

For example, “Whatever Happened to Sarah Jane?” by one of the editors, Antony Keen, has almost four pages that list companions’ names, how they came to travel with the Doctor, and how and when they left. This extended list tends to disrupt the essay’s argument rather than prove its claims. In addition, the overview essays in particular demand an encyclopedic or photographic knowledge of Doctor Who past and present based on title alone. The “Appendix: New Doctor Who Episodes and Regular Cast and Crew,” is not much help in jogging the reader’s memory because it only gives title, writer, director, and first broadcast date—no plot summary to help the reader identify the episodes being referenced. Moreover, while it is interesting for the U.S. reader and Doctor Who fan and critic to be reminded, as several of the essays do, that in Britain Doctor Who is “Saturday teatime viewing for families with young children,” not adult entertainment as it is frequently thought of in the U.S., little attention is given to the reasons why this might be so (36). Certainly, it has something to do with when and where the show is broadcast in each country. In the U.S. it has been broadcast on BBC America and SciFi (now SyFy) station usually in later time slots.

That being said there are several strong essays in the anthology. One of the more engaging essays is Sydney Duncan and Andy Duncan’s, “How Donna Noble Saved the Multiverse (and Had To Pay For It).” Early in the essay it boldly states, “A more troubling and specific reading of Donna’s fate is that of a warning sign: in the updated, twenty-first century Doctor Who, female companions who presume equality with the Doctor pose a metacrisis solvable only by something close to death” (81). While the essay spends too much time making broad claims for my taste, by the end the authors prove their claims through close textual readings of various series four episodes (season four for U.S. viewers) and by placing them in context with other science fiction texts including “Flowers for Algernon” and the narrative trajectory of the X-men’s Jean Grey.

“Does the Doctor Dance? Heterosexuality, Omnisexuality, and Spontaneous Generation in the Whoniverse,” Catherine Coker’s contribution to the anthology, looks at sexuality and sexual preference in New Who analyzing it in relation to early Doctor Who and other science fiction TV series. Coker’s “primary interest will be the Doctor’s historical lack of sexuality and its role in the current Doctor’s characterization” (93). The essay examines the growing romantic relationship between Rose and the Doctor as well as the open “omnisexuality” of one of the Doctor’s companions, Captain Jack Harkness. By using the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community’s anger and irritation with the Star Trek franchise’s “treatment of gay issues”
as a starting point, Coker looks at the ways Davies “allows the LGBT population of his universe to exist and thrive—in the Doctor’s parlance—to dance” (93).

Another solid essay, James Rose’s “Conflict, Hybridity, and Forgiveness,” examines how the “greater story arcs” in New Who, a strategy “borrowed from U.S. serials such as The X-Files, Millennium and Buffy the Vampire Slayer . . . consolidate the revived series’ preoccupation with friendship, heroism, sacrifice, tragedy, loss and death, qualities which in themselves indicate a much larger and more violent story arc of the series, the Time War” (107-108). Through close and insightful textual analysis, the essay follows the new Doctor’s journey from “traumatized war veteran to a healed soldier” and survivor of the Time War with the Daleks (120).

Finally, although it covers ground frequently discussed in regard to the Doctor, wanders off track at times, and is riddled with long footnotes (which could be said of the anthology in general), Una McCormack’s essay “He’s Not the Messiah: Undermining Political and Religious Authority in New Doctor Who” is also worth mention. The essay uses the work of Michel Foucault, John Fiske and others to discuss the ways New Who is skeptical of utopian projects and the old series’ technocratic humanism.

Overall, however, The Unsilent Library is more fan- than “critical,” more nitpicker’s fan collection than “critical essays exploring how its writers have updated a series with a history stretching back five decades” (back cover). Although it contains a lot of factual details about Doctor Who past and present, including reasons for various cast and character changes, release dates, and other useful background information, it is hardly the stuff of an extended critical analysis. Although the essays discussed above are quite accessible for students and would prove useful in a class on media studies, ultimately the collection is too inconsistent for me to recommend.

**Black Atlantic Speculative Fictions:**

*Octavia E. Butler, Jewelle Gomez, and Nalo Hopkinson*

Keren Omry


INGRID THALER’S *Black Atlantic Speculative Fictions* is a welcome contribution to the study of SF, not least because it brings attention to an area of both SF and black literature too frequently overlooked. Her study seeks to demonstrate the interdependence of tropes and literary traditions so often deemed separate: transnational cultural expressions of what Paul Gilroy has called the Black Atlantic, and the genre of science fiction, historically perceived as both white and masculine. BASF thus enters into dialogue with and attempts to transform the gendered and racialized tropes that traditionally guide both Black Atlantic literature and readings of Speculative Fiction.

In a series of illuminating close readings, two underlying and interwoven analytical threads are constant and afford a critical perspective for Thaler’s project. The first of these, time, refers to the varying ways in which Black Atlantic notions of a past as haunting the present become literalized in tropes of SF. In each of the four novels she examines, in as many chapters, temporality is thematized through immortality, alternate histories, or envisioned futures, and thus creates a space for the authors to negotiate the possibilities of a past’s constant presence. Alongside this, Thaler considers dystopia as a pressing danger of limited historical perspective, and she examines how the four texts introduce utopian visions into their aesthetic.

In her first chapter, Thaler analyzes Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed*, and, referencing Paul de Mann, adopts allegory as the novel’s primary structural foundation. The allegory is premised on three pre-texts, by means of which, she argues, the novel establishes its “truth claims”: the Black Atlantic, the Old Testament, and 19th century study of genes. In all of these, as she shows, we have a conflation of the speculative with the historiographic and thus a “universal concept of time” is established. Moreover, each pre-text articulates various tropes of power structures that are ultimately manifest and explored in the relationship between Doro and Anyanwu, the two protagonists. The master-slave dialectic, modes of incest and alternative family units, Western modernity as posed against Butler’s envisioned utopia of Canaan, and essentialized power in the ‘breeding programs’ of the novel, all “present[...] the gendered unequal power struggle for reproduction between man and woman as eternally valid” (24).

In what is perhaps her most convincing and well-written chapter, Thaler’s analysis of Jewelle Gomez’ *The
Gilda Stories (1991) engages with Henry Louis Gates’ theory of Signifyin(g). Where Gates is primarily concerned with identifying intra-black textuality, however, Thaler “revises Signifyin(g) as a theory of intertextuality that addresses the interplay of black genres and white traditions” (46). Here, Thaler posits the literary tradition of gothic against a backdrop of the historical horror of African-American experience, as the central aesthetic and political basis of Gomez’s vampire tale. Thaler proceeds to identify ancestor texts and illuminates how each intertextual moment performs an empowering revision: the gothic rhetoric of Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Carmilla” (1872), for instance, and the female homoeroticism it establishes, Octavia Butler’s Kindred (1979) and its climactic rape scene, Sherley Anne Williams’ Dessa Rose (1986), with its reimagined power relationship between black and white women, and Anne Rice’s Interview with a Vampire (1976) and the stances of power and ethics it raises. All these echo productively in Gomez’ novel and allow Gilda, her protagonist, to refuse the status of victimization standard in the genre, and to “counter historical power equations” (52). Furthermore, the tale of the immortal vampire presents a temporal plane wherein the contradictory impulses of Black Atlantic to both take root and take to route are resolved in a liberatory vision of the future. Through the cultural exchange Thaler identifies, Vampirism presents a utopian possibility of family and salvation rather than embodying the destructive tendencies of contemporary society.

Thaler returns to Octavia Butler in the next chapter, picking up the thread of utopian visions begun in her earlier analysis. Concentrating on Butler’s (1993) Parable of the Sower, Thaler suggests that the novel redresses the dystopian pessimism of her earlier work with an embrace of the utopian: “the novel stages dystopia as a necessity for its ultimately utopian impulse. Dystopia and utopia are intimately interdependent in the novel’s concept of time” (79). The “spiral concept of time” (80), encoded in Black Atlantic aesthetics and manifest in the novel and its recurring image of the seed and the stars to espouse change, allows for a construction wherein ‘the human remains in the center’ (84), thus moving from the images of apocalypse to an ethics of environmental ontology. Adopting anti-globalization rhetoric, the novel examines the repercussions of contemporary global socio-economic structures and shifts the journey from a Westward quest, reminiscent of the Gold Rush era and the history of economic pursuit, to a journey north, the metaphorical journey to freedom. Somewhat confusingly, while Thaler argues that the novel reclaims the US-nation for Black Atlantic Speculative Fiction, she also posits a shift to address “the global dimensions of citizen- and subject-hood in the twenty-first century” (97).

In her fourth and final chapter, Thaler adopts ambiguity as a key critical term, both structural and thematic, as she returns to the notion of dystopia in an examination of Nalo Hopkinson’s Midnight Robber (2000). Defined as an in-betweenness which “is negotiated through language and storytelling” (102), Thaler suggests that the novel’s style interweaves the techno-textuality of Hard SF with the orality and Creole vernacular of Anansi tales and, thus, critically articulates the “two-sidedness of concepts, histories, tropes, and signs” (101). Revising the dystopian urban sprawl so often found in cyberpunk, Hopkinson has established a high-tech colonial utopia, posited against a postcolonial dystopian ‘premodernity,’ to imagine an “alternative to Western modernity and to the colonial practices with which the novel inscribes Black Atlantic liberation” (119). Ultimately, according to Thaler, the constructive ambiguity is resolved by “propos[ing] a spiral, not a cyclical concept of time, refusing the historical pessimism of postmodern black writing and adopting the critical utopian vision known from the 1970s for Black Atlantic Speculative Fiction […] The novel’s Third Space that opens up hopes in the future is located in a hybrid cybersubjectivity that may be able to transgress the limitations of the ‘human’ ” (128).

BASF is exceedingly good at constantly engaging with the critical scholarship underpinning Thaler’s ideas, making for a thorough, though at times somewhat cumbersome, analysis of the texts. Her notion of a Black Atlantic aesthetic which draws from both white and black cultural traditions is usefully expanded along a series of dichotomies: speculative/historical, vampire story /slave narrative, race/economy, United States/global, dystopia/utopia, and finally cyberpunk/Creole oral mythology. Although making what seems to be a fairly unobjectionable argument, particularly in light of the texts selected, Thaler manages to offer a rich and illuminating reading of all four novels and to begin developing a subtle but politically potent shift in interpretive perspective.
Fiction Reviews

**Tesseracts 14: Strange Canadian Stories**

Dominick Grace


**TESSERACTS 14: STRANGE CANADIAN STORIES** is, despite its title, the fifteenth volume in the Tesseracts series (the volume focusing on Quebecois literature was the unnumbered *Tesseracts*!). The series began in 1988 with a collection edited by Judith Merril and has been a consistent presence in the landscape of the Canadian fantastic since; in recent years it has been appearing annually, a testament to the number of Canadian writers working in the various subgenres of the fantastic. Some volumes are specifically themed (e.g. the Quebec volume, the horror-focused volume thirteen) but more often the series offers a potpourri of the fantastic, including verse. The latest volume, despite its subtitle, is one of the more general volumes. *The Strange Canadian Stories* subtitle and the cover image (a fedora-wearing, trench-coated mysterious figure with glowing smoke coming from his eyes) might suggest a focus on tales of the uncanny, and certainly many of the stories in the volume fit under that general heading, but there is a wide array of material included, ranging through SF, fantasy, humour, horror, slipstream, and in a few instances work that does not really qualify as fantastic in any literal sense but nevertheless employs fantastic tropes metaphorically or manages to provide cognitive estrangement within the parameters of the “real.”

In short, it’s an eclectic collection of stories, mostly by relatively unknown authors—and not just because they are Canadian. There are several well-known and popular Canadian writers of the fantastic, but the only one likely to be widely recognized in this volume is Robert J. Sawyer (whose contribution is an essay, “The Transformed Man,” rather than a story yet nevertheless manages to do much we expect of good SF, in a disjunctive, referential description of himself and Canada that manages to make the real almost as estranging as most of the fiction in the rest of the book). This lack of name authors is a strength and a weakness. Because it makes an open call for submissions, the series is a great venue for new writers, helping them get established; because it does not commission pieces, there is little incentive for established authors to write on spec for a potential pit- tance if accepted, so the draw of stories by writers you recognize is not a significant factor, thereby limiting the exposure of the new writers.

The eclecticism of the volume is also a strength and a weakness. For fans of literature of the fantastic, there’s a cornucopia of interesting material here; for fans of specific subgenres, there’s a lot of stuff they won’t be much interested in. That said, the broad approach makes the series important as a barometer of the Canadian fantastic, and this volume is very broad indeed. Colombo’s Foreword makes explicit his sense that “fantastic literature” (the term he uses to define the contents of the collection) includes “imaginative writing that is Science Fiction, Fantasy Fiction, and Weird Fiction” (3) and that the defining characteristic of the stories selected is, collectively, “Strangeness” (2)—hence the subtitle.

Many of the stories trade on the feeling of cognitive estrangement that can be created not by explicit fantastic elements but rather by style, or by a sense of oddness that might nevertheless be rationalized. Though the stories generally end up being explicitly fantastic in one way or another, many trade on the gray area between the rational and irrational in which Todorov argues the fantastic exists. The first story, for instance, a Bradbury-esque story (by way of Stephen King) by Tony Burgess called “Giant Scorpions attack,” locates itself in the liminal zone of childhood imagination in its narrative of two children who impose a map of their town onto a map of Italy and then convert that map to a map of all the strange, weird, and inexplicable local phenomena, as understood by children. Layers of fantasy are imposed on reality in the story in several ways, making it a good example of metafantasy. It sets the tone well for the collection.

If one were to track the literary antecedents of the stories, one would likely think of figures such as Poe, Lovecraft, Bradbury, Sturgeon, and others who tend to locate the fantastic as much in the mind or perspective of the characters as in external phenomena. Brent Hayward’s “The Brief Medical Career of Fine Sam Fine” is a horror story requiring no supernatural explanation (though it invokes a highly unlikely link between the sisters in the story) but that nevertheless qualifies as strange and estranging in its unorthodox invocation of a love triangle and murder-suicide. Susan Forest’s “The Director’s Cut” manages an interesting take on the cliché of the Faustian bargain (right down to the goateed devil figure),
Daniel Sernine presents a disorienting first-person narrative that (probably) is about ghouls but (possibly) is just about a Poe-style unreliable narrator who makes himself a monster, Michael Lorensen’s “Random Access Memory” combines elements of cyberpunk (it’s one of the few explicitly SF stories), crime fiction, and horror in its narrative of a virtual version of Russian roulette, David Nickle’s “Basements” takes us underground both literally and metaphorically while withholding an explanation for its odd events, and so on.

Some stories do not work as well as others, but this is nevertheless a strong collection. How useful it might be in a classroom setting, however, is not evident. There can’t be many courses specifically in the Canadian fantastic, though I’d use this book in one myself. Any course in the contemporary fantastic would find such a book useful, as it runs through most of the subgenres and styles one would be likely to cover—the fact that it includes poetry (one of the recurring strengths of the Tesseracts series) makes it especially interesting for coverage of the range of the fantastic (anyone interested in poetry as a fantastic subgenre would do well to check out the Tesseracts series). However, for the more focused kinds of courses that tend to be common—SF specifically, Horror specifically, and so on—this book probably does not offer enough relevant content to make it a good investment. It’s a very strong collection that does not quite fit the needs of the classroom in most instances, but if you want a stylish, literate, diverse collection of strange stories, this one’s an excellent choice.


Bruce A. Beatie


ACCORDING TO TEXT EDITOR Jonathan Eller, Bradbury “has published nearly 450 distinct stories” in his still-productive life. This first volume of the critical edition includes his first 23 “professional” publications (for which he was paid) and nine “amateur” stories (published in fanzines). This volume totals 546 pages, including all critical materials and apparatus, which amounts to 17 pages per story (the average textual space taken by the “professional” stories, not counting titles and blank space, is 10 pages); one can speculate, therefore, that the total length of the critical edition may reach some 7,650 pages, or a total of 14 volumes the size of this one. The mind boggles.

That being said, this edition by two respected Bradbury scholars is impressive—and it is an “Approved Edition” by the Modern Language Association Committee on Scholarly Editions. Toupone’s 1984 Ray Bradbury and the Poetics of Reverie: Fantasy, Science Fiction, and the Reader is a revision of his 1981 dissertation; it was followed by a Borgo Press book on Bradbury (1989) and Twayne books on Frank Herbert (1988) and Isaac Asimov (1991). In 2004 he and Eller published Ray Bradbury: The Life of Fiction, which laid the groundwork for this edition. Eller and Donn Albright, who has been Bradbury’s principal bibliographer for more than thirty years” (x), edited Match to Flame: The Fictional Paths to ‘Fahrenheit 451’ (limited ed. 2006, revised as A Pleasure to Burn: ‘Fahrenheit 451’ Stories in 2010.).

After the “Acknowledgements” (ix) by both editors, Toupone gives us an excellent, concise “Introduction: The Pulp Origins of a Literary Style” (xiii-xxv) that concentrates on the stories included in this volume. The “Bradbury Chronology” (xxxvii-xlvi) is more than the usual sketch: from 1924 (when his mother took him, at age 3, to see Lon Chaney in The Hunchback of Notre Dame) through 2009, there is a concise prose paragraph for each year of Bradbury’s life listing the major activities of his life as a writer.

The 23 “professional” stories (1-253) completed between Winter 1941 and April 1943 are printed in the order of their composition, a sequence that was extremely difficult to determine; the process of that determination is described in detail by Eller in the “Textual Commentary” (329-351, esp. 334-337). Indeed, the whole of the editorial process is there laid out exhaustively, and sometimes repetitively. The editor’s purpose was “to present the chronological sequence of stories through reliable texts that reflect Bradbury’s earliest settled intention for each tale.” (330) Reading the stories in this order is, as the editors claim, a fascinating experience. Not only were the publication dates of these stories vastly different from the completion dates (usually marked by the manuscript’s delivery to Bradbury’s agent Julius Schwartz), ranging from November 1941 to December 1949—story 5, “Is That You, Bert?” wasn’t published un-
til 2004! Not only did the stories appear in a variety of venues inaccessible to most of us now (two each in Astounding, Planet Stories, and Super Science Stories, three in Thrilling Wonder Stories, four in Amazing Stories, and five in Weird Tales), but most of us know the stories mostly from Bradbury’s own later collections like Dark Carnival (1947, republished with revisions as The October Country (1955), R Is for Rocket (1962) and others. Moreover, eight of the stories, including six of the first eight completed, have never been reprinted until now. Reading them here not only shows the development of Bradbury’s unique style and atmosphere, but also the influence of older writers: his first three published stories were co-written with Henry Hasse (little known today), and both Henry Kuttner and Leigh Brackett read and added parts of some of the early stories. Three of these early stories (“The Wind,” “The Lake,” and “The Small Assassin”) were rewritten by Bradbury in 1946 for inclusion in Dark Carnival.

Almost as interesting is “Appendix A: Selected Amatuer Publications” (259-287): nine stories published in fanzines, all but two between January 1938 and November 1940. Of particular interest are two stories which Bradbury published in his own fanzine, Future Fantasia: “The Pendulum” (Fall 1939, anonymously) and “The Piper” (September 1940, as by Ron Reynolds), and which were revised and published as his first and fourth “professional” stories. The first version of “The Pendulum” is a 1700-word third-person narrative of a scientist, Layeville, whose experimental time-machine explodes on its first test, killing “thirty of the world’s finest scientists” (268) invited to view the test; he is imprisoned on public view for a thousand years in a crystal-pendulum version of his own machine, watching as humanity is destroyed by aliens who die themselves and are survived by robots who feed him and care for the machine—until other visiting aliens arrive and, finding him dead in the still-swinging pendulum, break it. In its 3900-word “professional” version, co-authored with Hasse, published in Super Science Stories (November 1941) and titled simply “Pendulum,” the plot is similar, but the narrative opens with the final set of aliens finding and reading John Layeville’s journal; first-person excerpts from that journal tell the story. The only substantive change in the plot is that the robots, not a prior alien invasion, destroy humanity. Though the expanded version is certainly more sophisticated and interesting than the first, there is little in it that anticipates the style and moods of the mature Bradbury.

By contrast, the 1500-word fanzine version of “The Piper” does show elements of the later Bradbury—concise dialogue, short paragraphs, verb-less sentences, poetry, ecstatic music—though the plot is somewhat familiar: through the eyes of a young Martian (“perhaps the last pure Martian alive,” 277) and an old immigrant from earth, we see the unnamed Venusian Piper use his music to call out the millions of decadent, deformed dark Martian survivors to destroy the Terran despoilers that have ruined Mars; at the end “the little boy arose to start afresh a new world with a new mate” (279). Bradbury’s “professional” revision followed on the co-authored publication of “Pendulum” and was his “first as solo author” (365); he had learned from Hasse, and expanded the story considerably—Thrilling Wonder Stories, where it appeared in the February 1943 issue, insisted that it be “cut back” to 6,000 words and that the revision “downplay the ‘dictatorship or planet-conquering motif’” (366). The unnamed Piper of the first version became “Kerac, the Martian” (43) returning from a twenty-year exile on Jupiter, hoping for revenge on the Jovian despooiers of the planet. The outcome is the same (“There was no stopping the Dark Race now”), but there is no “new world;” Kerac is himself killed by “the black tidal wave” (56). Though the plot is more complicated, and the story was reprinted in Fantastic Story (Spring 1955) and in two anthologies, it has become a typical pulp tale of the period, losing its uniqueness of style and mood.

Appendix B (289-307) is an unnumbered “Summary of Bradbury’s Unpublished Fiction” by Touponce; he notes that “In retelling 35 stories written between 1938 and 1943;” he has “inevitably introduced my own interpretations in the very act of assigning them to a genre.” (289) The retellings range from five lines (“Algy—Drunken Master at the Zoo,” 289-90) to two and a half pages (“Lorelei,” 290-293—the 10,000-word tale is based on a painting by Hannes Bok that appeared on the cover of the first issue of Future Fantasia, and sounds well worth publishing), and the word-counts of the unpublished stories range (for the 18 stories where it is provided) from 750 or less (“Probability Zero,” 1941) to 10,800 (“The Emotionalists,” Spring 1941). The “Annotations” to both the “professional” and the “fanzine” stories (308-326) are brief, mostly on words and phrases: e.g., on the identification of Kerac in “The Piper” as “the last of the Golden Race” of Martians (45), the note (310) refers to the persistence of this description into The Martian Chronicles.

The final section of the book is Eller’s work, the “Textual Record” (327-489). His 31-page “Textual Com-
omentary” lays out in (often repetitive) detail, in six sub-titled sections, the procedures followed by the editors in identifying and emending the copy texts, establishing their chronology, and producing the critical edition of each story; the final section, “Overview of the Volume Period: 1938-1943 (344-351) parallels Toupance’s “Introduction,” but from a somewhat different perspective.

The “Textual Apparatus” offers a separate section for each of the 32 stories for which the volume presents a critical text. Each begins with a narrative history of the writing, selling, and publication of the story, including notes on reprints in journals and anthologies, concluding with a list of sources for the information in the narrative. Each section ends with “Textual Notes” similar to but not duplicating those in the “Annotations” (for all but 6 stories), “Emendations” (for all stories), “Historical Collation: Post-Copy-Text Substantives” (for only 15 stories—these are “substantive variations in subsequent forms of the text,” 342), an “Intermediate Fragment” (only for story 6), and “Line-End Hyphenation” for two stories—there is a final page [498] in the volume giving a list of “Line-End Hyphenations in the Edition Text.”

The volume’s final section is a “Chronological Catalog” by Eller, showing in parallel columns, year by year from 1935 to 1943, the completion dates of published and unpublished stories, and the publication data by year and date of those published in that period.

This collection, and probably the subsequent (13?) volumes as well, belongs in the library of anyone seriously interested either in Bradbury or the early history of science fiction as genre. It contains a great deal of useful information, only some of which I could touch on in an already overlong review. It is scrupulously edited; I caught no typos or stylistic problems, nor any inconsistencies from one section to another. The only criticism I have is that, in order to review the full information about any single story, one must read four separate sections: copy text, annotations, textual commentary, and the chronology. For the “professional” version of “Pendulum,” for example, that means pages 1-8, 308-9, 358-62, and 494—and that does not include the separate text and apparatus for the fanzine version.

Hex

Patrick Robert Casey


IN THE 300-PLUS EARTH YEARS since the first Coyote settlement was founded, its people have accomplished a lot. They have founded a civilization free from the political tyranny of their native Earth, fought off multiple threats to their sovereignty, weathered ecological and technological disasters, attempted reconciliation with Earth, and even made first contact and entered an interstellar trading community. After all this history, the obvious question for Coyote’s creator, Allen Steele, and his readers is “what now”?

Steele answers this question in Hex, the seventh novel set in his Coyote universe. Like previous Coyote novels, Hex focuses on the tension between personal liberty and political structures. This time, rather than shoehorn yet another examination of the pioneer mythos and libertarian philosophy into an increasingly crowded Coyote political history, Steele clears the way for new adventures by offering the people of Coyote a new world (Hex) to explore. Though free from Earthly influence, they are now subject to the obscure motives of the danui, an alien race who have offered them an uninhabited world in the danui solar system.

The characters in Hex are familiar: an aging captain, beloved by her crew but estranged from her son; a rebellious, but admirable son, too enamored of his father’s memory to forgive his mother’s failings; an academic turned bureaucrat; and, a soldier with a hitherto unknown intellectual bent. The other characters are as recognizable and serve as simple personalities necessary for advancing love interests and power struggles. Even the aliens exist as little more than coat hangers on which to fasten broadly drawn social customs and political ideologies.

Fortunately, Coyote novels rarely depend upon individual characters for their success. Even Coyote, the first and most ambitious novel in the series, uses its relatively complex characters as a backdrop for exploring the technological and political struggles of an emerging society. In this regard, Hex is no different. Even when personal issues are developed in modest detail (as in the relationship between Andromeda Carson, captain of the CFSS Carlos Montero, and her son, Sean), they exist primarily to illustrate the impact of political structures on individual relationships. The fact that Steele shows little interest in exploring complex personal motivations is offset by his ability to use the individuals to facilitate clashes between cultures and political ideologies.

In Hex, the clashes are fairly modest and play out on a small scale. Nothing threatens the entirety of Coyote society as in previous novels. Instead, only the skeleton crew of the Carlos Montero (the first Coyote mission
to Hex) and a few members of the survey team face any immediate danger, and even their missteps are too minor or too obvious to create much sense of urgency. Arrogance (or perhaps insecurity) masquerading as exigency nearly ends the mission before it truly begins, and a couple of cultural miscommunications put crew members at risk. Though entertaining, the outcomes of these small scale clashes are generally too predictable to be truly satisfying. The most intriguing clashes are the ones only hinted at in the novel. For example, as crew members explore Hex, they are surreptitiously watched by other powers. On one side is a shadow mission from the Coyote government who keeps tabs on both the crew of the Carlos Montero and their mysterious benefactors. On the other side are the danui, the apparently altruistic alien race who nonetheless leave the Carlos Montero crew in suspense and peril for much of their time at Hex.

Steele does a nice job insinuating motives to both parties without ever actually explaining them. The shadow mission may be benign observers, there only to relay information back to Coyote in case of an emergency. On the other hand, they may illustrate a growing distrust between the Coyote government and their interstellar trading partners, a distrust which may very well lead them to unwittingly repeat the mistakes of distant Earth governments. The motives of the danui are even more complex. Though apparently altruistic, their immense power alone is enough to render them suspect.

This power becomes overwhelmingly clear when Captain Carson and her crew arrive at Hex and learn that the “planet” is actually part of an immense danui construct. As D’Anguilo, the academic turned bureaucrat explains, the danui have reached such an advanced stage of technological development that they have consumed the entire resources of their solar system to create a massive “Dyson sphere” encircling their native sun. The sphere (a series of interconnected hexes each containing multiple habitats) captures the energy from the danui sun and provides habitats for all the races in the interstellar trading community. The danui serve as Hex administrators, inviting new inhabitants and enforcing a few non-negotiable rules (no weapons and no entering foreign habitats without permission). Their motives for providing this space are largely unexplained, but their power to enforce the rules by destroying entire habitats is abundantly clear. One does not have to be particularly cynical to question their motives, especially given their history (devouring the resources of an entire solar system) and their apparent elitism (they seem to treat the humans as barely civilized neighbors who are perhaps capable of further development).

Fans of Coyote and its progeny will undoubtedly be satisfied by this latest addition to the canon. Though less ambitious than Coyote and lacking the grand political dramas of previous Coyote novels, the actual and implied political and cultural tensions are enough to craft a satisfying novel. Hard sci fi fans will admire the technical detail of the planet and Steele’s ability to ground the fantastic in scientific principles, but academics may be frustrated by the too often cursory examinations of political and cultural struggles. In the end, Hex does a good job reestablishing some of the mystery that was lost as Coyote became increasingly civilized, and even frustrated academics will likely look forward to the future colonization of the new “planet.”

Rule 34

Christopher Hellstrom


IN THE COMPETITION for the title of Alpha Geek, Charles Stross has in a short time ascended high in the SF pecking order. Stross attempts to write in a variety of sub genres of SF, from the wild posthuman fiction of the Escatons series (Singularity Sky, Iron Sunrise) to fantasy of Merchant Princes series to his foray into Heinleinian Space Opera with Saturn’s Children. His latest effort, Rule 34, is written in the Halting State universe and is also a police procedural though it shifts thematically (from virtual reality to internet security) and emphasizes new characters. The story is set in Edinburgh a few years after the events of Halting State and revolves around a series of bizarre fetishistic murders of spammers. The central mystery becomes apparent early on but this is beside the point of the novel. In Halting State, the characters of Sue, Elaine, and Jack were a bit more engaging but the convoluted plot is often difficult to follow. Rule 34, while also having multiple twists, has a clearer plot and has a forceful ending that invites a second reading. Detective Liz Kavanaugh is a compelling character though the cover of the U.S. edition seems to be channeling a cyberpunk version of Stieg Larsson’s heroine, Lisbeth Salander, from the wildly popular Millennium series. The other major point-of-view characters are the criminal Anwar Hussein and the mysterious
The title Rule 34 references an internet meme that is defined by Stross as “If it exists, there is porn of it. No exceptions.” Though I have not perused thoroughly, the rule is quickly refuted if you try to find porn about the uploaded crustaceans from Stross’s short story “Lobsters.” Neal Stephenson has called science fiction “idea porn.” Readers of SF share with porn consumers a desire for brown bag secrecy to shield embarrassing pulpish covers displaying pouting women in tight silver jump-suits and bearded dwarves with broadswords. SF readers also often share with porn viewers a desire to skip ahead or fast forward through pesky plots and character development and get to the juicy parts—in this case, the ideas.

Rule 34 is indeed pure idea porn and becomes most engaging when Stross flat out argues his points in the ways he does with his blog. This is the real trick of the novel, which begins as a police procedural and ends as a meditation on what SF can do and how this genre can be remain vital and relevant. He critiques the augmented reality of CopSpace which “rots the brain.” He examines a world that has become an inescapable internet panop-ticon which needs “prosthetic morality enforcement” to counter a culture that is incapable of behaving behind anonymous digital interfaces.

Most notable is his headlong attack on Extropian and Transhumanist communities. When the charac-ter Kemal asks Dr. Macdonald about the Singularity, MacDonald bursts out laughing “You’ll have to excuse me… I have not been asked that one for years” This is Stross provoking and trolling his novel in the same way he is notorious for trolling his own website. He has poked SF fans by publically criticizing the idea of in-terstellar space travel (though he has written wild Iain Banks-style galactic scale space opera) and the Singularity (though his own Accelerando launched a thou-sand Kurzweils). He recently (in time for the release of this novel) dismissed transhuman fantasies of a rapture of the nerds as the “uploading of the libertarians” and concluded with the remark “Short version: Santa Claus does not exist.” Stross is scheduled to write three books in the next three years with a new space opera in the works and returning to mundane SF with a third book in the Halting State series. We can be sure Stross will be gearing up for a blog fight with each release. Though I’m not sure if The Lambda Functionary will be written from the second person perspective of the Halting State series, Stross surely will continue to adeptly explore the strangeness of the future present.
**Deceiver and Betrayer**

Ed McKeown


CJ CHERRYH IS THE PREMIER writer of what I think of as statecraft science-fiction. This is the stuff that occurs before the bullets start to fly that determines when they fly, how many of them fly, and who they are aimed at.

*Deceiver* is the 11th book of the Foreigner series that details the fate of a human colony after their ship becomes lost after a hyperspace jump. This isn't the homogenous crew of the Enterprise but a divided crew that further divides when colonists seek to escape the grim life of the lost ship and the space station it created. While the world is hospitable to human life, the local species, the Atevi, are less so. This is not surprising, considering that humans literally tear the roof off their fairly stable high-medieval world.

Conflict breaks out, more from misunderstanding than malice. Their differences lie in how the species bond, humans with love and friendship, Atevi from man'chi, which seems a combination of "imprinting" and the desire to be associate upward to a powerful leader in a form of herd instinct.

Fast forward through the centuries to the present day. Bren Cameron is the Paidhi, the chief diplomat and advisor to the Tabini, the essential shogun of the fractious aishidi’tat that governs much of the planet. Humans hold their own continent island of Mosphiera and the Atevi hold the rest of the world. This apartheid has been arranged to preserve the Atevi culture, or at least slow down the rate of change to something they can handle and prevent further conflict which the outnumbered humans could lose.

The Atevi are humanoid aliens, far larger (I have seen reference material advising between 8 and 10 feet) and stronger than humans, with black skin and golden eyes. But it is in the alien mind that Cherryh works her differences. Atevi have no words for “friend” or “love” as a human understands them. They are fascinated by numerology, sometimes to the point of superstition, and live wrapped in layers of decorum and devious diplomacy suitable for the imperial court of ancient Japan, which in many ways their society resembles.

Over the series of books, Bren Cameron, like many a colonial official, becomes more and more drawn in to the world of the Atevi, frankly going native. He eventually ceases to work for the human government, taking up Atevi titles, but always working for peace and better relations between the parties, backing the human-oriented Tabini, over traditionalists or those eager to get their hands on human technology for their own ends. Bren is the focus, originally because he controls the flow of technology, but later through his relationships with the powers of the world: Tabini, his grandmother Ilisidi (a combination of Lucretia Borgia and Eleanor of Aquitaine), a host of other nobles and Tabini’s son Cajeiri, the most accessible of the Atevi characters, a precocious preteen.

Bren is kept alive in these struggles by his bodyguards from the Assassin’s Guild: Banichi and his daughter Jago, an infuriatingly impenetrable character who becomes Bren’s lover.

A word of warning: Do not start reading this series with this book. Past a point in a series, especially if you are Cherryh, you simply stop making each book its own complete tale because otherwise your prologue would essentially be a college course.

A reader looking for action may find Cherryh’s work a little off-putting. There is a decorous pace to these books, especially *Deceiver*. Things like the colors of the new bus for the estate assume an importance that some readers might find trying, but as in the English “plays of manners” things are done just so in the Atevi world. Displays of wit and political acumen dominate. This world has fewer wars, or what humans would recognize as wars, than does our world. Battles are usually fought between differing sections of the Assassin’s Guild. So war on this world is more a struggle of elite security forces than we are used to.

Still, I find the actual military struggles vague and confusing. Even when actual battle breaks out and, as happens a number of times, Bren and his companions are caught in it, it’s sometimes hard to figure out what is happening. This is a book on grand strategy. So while we get the details of how households work, action is sparse.

*Deceiver* culminates in a sudden move by Bren and his small team of guards to move into the home of the Deceiver, Pairuti, a rather muted villain who has been manipulating events and destabilizing the local and nation governments with his machinations. There is a brief
blaze of action that determines the outcome. But was the Deceiver the puppet-master, or just another puppet? Stay tuned for Betrayer…

If Deceiver has a fault it’s that like most middle books, it’s the road and not the destination, and it very much feels that way. Interesting though the journey is and however amicable the company, you do sort of feel that it ends with less fanfare than one would hope. Pairuti seems a pallid villain for all that he almost ends Cameron’s career in the final pages. This is in part because as we only have Cameron and Cajeiri’s viewpoints, we see very little of what is going on, having to think our way through what we hear.

In sum, if you like CJ Cherryh’s dense, political plays of manners, you will jump at the chance in Deceiver to spend more time with Bren, Jago and Ilsidii, even if you sometimes don’t feel that you know some of them any better than when you first met them. Admire the machinations and the manipulations. Try to see the next move as if you were Hercule Poirot in an alien world. Expect to work and to think. These are not the easiest reads, but you will find a satisfaction at the end.

Betrayer plunges us further into the battle to stabilize the Marid province and prevent most of the Atevi world from going up in a civil war that would threaten to destabilize the prospace, pro-human government of the Tabini and its human ally and lead diplomat, Bren Cameron. War among the Atevi is conducted within strict bounds as different groups of the Assassins Guild struggle against each other to carry out or prevent judicially approved Filings of Intent to Kill. The isolated human colony on its island of Mospherea is sitting this one out but is understandably nervous about anything that happens with the planet full of Atevi.

But the fires of conspiracy and rebellion outrace diplomatic efforts. Cameron and his team flee as a Guild-conducted purge of the rebel Guild explodes among conspirators and loyalists alike.

Action and adventure abound in the second half of this book, in sharp contrast to Deceiver.

When Cherryh does small unit actions on the Guild level, it is well done and plausible. But there is a paucity of detail on the larger scale. Machigi, for example, comments that his people are a naval power. In a world that varies as wildly in levels of technology as does the Atevi one, I have no idea what that means: ironclads with steam power and Dahlgren guns yet still using sail? Dreadnaughts of the WWI or II era? Or are we talking about armed fishing trawlers? It may seem odd with a space station and a starship above them, but most Atevi live in the equivalent of our later 19th and very early 20th century.

Most of the fighting, which happens usually at the distance, is in deadly small unit scuffles between Guilds. Occasionally one sees a mob of hunters or other militia. From the military point of view the war is rather confusing and devoid of detail. Do they have tanks, artillery? Do they operate in divisions, battalions or mere companies? The military of all sides again seems sketched rather than drawn.

Betrayer pumps up the action quotient and the fast cutting back and forth between Cameron’s point-of-view as he escapes Marid, and Cajeiri as he juggles his deadly grandmother and his promise to Cameron to look after Barbara and Toby during the siege, is compelling. When young Cajeiri ends up in combat for the first time, you are truly fearful for this brave little boy even if he is the size of Cameron and Toby.

Betrayer is a strong entry in this series, enjoyable in all respects. I would have enjoyed a more leisurely denouement with more scenes between the principals. It is probably a good thing in a continuing series that the ending leaves you wanting to see and hear a little more, but in typical Cherryh fashion, when we wrap, we wrap damn fast.

The Highest Frontier

Carol Dorf


JOAN SLONCZEWSKI’S The Highest Frontier is a novel of biological and social invention. Her main character, Jennifer Ramos Kennedy, descended from former presidents on both sides of the family, is an 18-year-old beginning her first semester at the satellite college “Frontera.” The action takes place over the first trimester, and moves between a presidential election, an invasive alien species, a fraternity-type rape, a flood of the environment, as well as the kind of classes, and sports, one would expect at a school for the elite projected into the future. In the novel, the main character discovers her voice, and has a significant influence on the outcome of the election.

The political America of this novel is divided between an anti-environmental, fundamentalist Christian “Cen-
trist” party, who don’t believe the universe exists past the orbit of the moon, and a more environmentalist, in favor of social services “Unity” party that wants to develop solar resources off the planet and space travel to Jupiter. At the same time there have been significant social changes: gay marriage is accepted, children of the middle-class and wealthy are genetically engineered to protect them from environmental hazards, Jenny’s two-headed aunt is governor of California, taxes are collected through gambling games, and people are connected at almost all times to a webworld that works with only a small diode that can be attached or removed from the forehead, and much education takes place in that webworld.

For this reader the most interesting part of the novel was the projected biology. First there is a description of the habitat, the engineered anthrax cables that transport materials to the habitat, printers that print out copies of food and pretty much everything else needed in the environment, the living system that purifies the air and the water, as well as the biological creatures, microbial, plant and animal, that are part of the habitat. Second there is a description of the effects of climate change on earth, and of how attempts to cope with energy needs through vast solar arrays contribute to the problem. Third, a biology professor engineers plants that are capable of “laughter” and “wisdom,” and of producing chemicals that affect humans. And finally, and most interesting, is the rapidly evolving RNA based alien life form, that is realized to be sentient by at least some of the human characters, particularly Jenny and her biology professor.

The moral dilemmas in this novel include who should govern, whether it is acceptable to influence others biologically without their consent, how to respond to destructive (and apparently destructive) species, as well as the more typical college challenges of dealing with cross-class love, and responding to destructive behavior of other students.

My difficulty as a reader lies in solving problems by the viewpoint characters changing other characters without their consent, even if the means involve only breathing in chemicals that are part of the plant respiration cycle. The strengths of this novel are the believable developments in many areas of technology, social relationships that have changed in complex ways, the interesting characters in all levels of the university community—administrators, professors and students—and the connection between the characters and their political world on both a local and a national level. The dilemmas in this book will provide excellent starting points for many conversations.

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**Media Reviews**

**La Jetée and La Vie d’un Chien [photofilms]**

Alfredo Suppia


VERY BASICALLY, the photofilm consists of a series of film stills organized in an audiovisual narrative. The technique discards the inner movement that characterizes conventional film footage, which is shot at 24 frames per second. Thus, photofilms “freeze” and “stretch” the film frame, prolonging the spectators’ contemplation and preserving the macronarrative by relating each shot. Cinematic effects, such as pans or zooms, can be employed along with soundtracks and voice-over narrations in order to organize the photo sequences. Deprived of the putative film “magic” (the movement), photofilms intriguingly reaffirm their own cinematic status and proves that what defines cinema may reside elsewhere.

Érico Elias, in his master’s thesis Fotofilmes: Da fotografia ao cinema [Photofilms: From photography to film], available at http://www.ericoelias.com/upload/mestrado/Fotofilmes%20da%20fotografia%20ao%20cinema%20-%20Erico%20Elias.pdf] explains that the photofilm technique is closer to animation than conventional live-action cinema, as it is conceived frame by frame (153-54). According to Elias, the photofilm shares characteristics both of cinema and photography. The film is a restless flow of images—a constant revival—whereas photography is a petrified instant—the past, the absence. To Elias, photofilms are halfway between cinema and photography. The intervals between the stills stand out, highlighting the photographic status within the cinematic structure. Nevertheless, the result remains cinematic, as long as it is a flow of images existing over time (montage). The film stills, with their longer exposure on the screen, make the contemplation of the film frame much more significant, since the frames do not
“fade out” in the continuous narrative flow proceeded by conventional film projection (154).

Despite its creative potential, whole photofilms are quite rare and unconventional. In general, this technique only sporadically appears in feature films, circumscribed to brief passages. We find the photofilm technique in the epilogue of George Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968) and the prologue of Richard Fleischer’s Soylent Green (1973). George Roy Hill’s Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid (1969) employs a photofilm sequence right before the bank robbers leave New York for Bolivia. Agnès Varda’s Ulysses (1982) uses the photofilm with subjective or emotional purposes. Tom Tykwer’s Run, Lola, Run! (1998) resorts to photofilm in order to condense future possibilities in Lola’s quest. Danny Boyle’s Slumdog Millionaire (2008) also features some short scenes using the photofilm technique. Overall, photofilm when inserted in feature films can help to summarize or condense some sequences that otherwise could look fastidious or redundant, enhancing their significance as key-sequences in a kind of “elliptic chorus line” with emblematic status. In documentary cinema, photofilm sequences seem to be more comfortably inserted, given photography’s putative status as an established form of documentation. Several documentaries or “creative treatments of reality” (quoting Grierson’s famous definition) resort to photofilm, either partially or entirely, as do avant-garde cinema and the video art of Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin’s Letter to Jane: An Investigation about a Still (1972) or Godard’s Je Vous Salue Sarajevo (1993).

But perhaps the most prominent example of photofilm is Chris Marker’s La Jetée, a.k.a. The Jetty (1968), the insightful time travel tale that inspired Terry Gilliam’s Twelve Monkeys (1995). In his analysis of La Jetée, Raymond Bellour (Entre-Imagens, Campinas: Papiro, 1997) considers Marker’s masterpiece indispensible for any top documentary film list.

It is simple, although odd: photography in itself, but also in its difference from film, particularly when it is a fiction film, has an unquestionable documentary dimension. It does not duplicate time, as film does; rather, it suspends time, fractures it, freezes it and, thereby, “documents” it. It consists of, so to speak, an absolute truth about every instant upon which it holds its sway. (Bellour 171)

Fans of Chris Marker’s La Jetée (1962) will probably be interested in John Harden’s tribute to this French masterpiece: La Vie d’un Chien (2005), or The Life of a Dog. Written and directed by Harden, La Vie d’un Chien, like the Marker classic it is paying homage to, is a science fiction photo-romain—a tale told through film stills and supported by French narration from Julien Fadda (recalling Jean Negroni’s voice-over in La Jetée). Set in Paris in 1962 (the year La Jetée premiered), the story of La Vie d’un Chien is about a scientist (Donovan Dutro) who discovers a formula capable of temporarily transmuting human genes into canine genes. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson’s famous novella (1886), the scientist tests his formula on himself. In his canine form (Milo), the scientist spends a remarkable evening exploring the city, experiencing a kind of freedom inaccessible to human beings. Returning to his lab, while still in his incarnation of a dog, the scientist falls in love with Sylvie (Poppy), his loyal canine companion. The next day, returned to his human form, the scientist discloses the formula of his invention, which he calls K9. It is not long before K9 has become the “drug” of the moment, with people undergoing transformations into canine form in search of nights full of freedom, adventure and pleasure. The scientist’s invention causes such a social stir that authorities begin to suppress the use of K9. The scientist is then put under surveillance, and the authorities require him to produce a kind of antidote, a new substance capable of “freezing” the human genes and preventing the transformation offered by K9. The scientist resists, but the authorities use Sylvie as a hostage and he finally relents. In exchange, the scientist requires them to set Sylvie free upon presentation of the new drug. The scientist formulates the new drug and submits it to the authorities. He retrieves Sylvie and secretly discloses the new drug formula. The authorities are duped by failing to anticipate that the new formula could not only prevent the transformation of humans into dogs, but could also do the opposite, allowing humans to remain forever dogs. When they discover the ruse, the authorities return to hunting the scientist, but by the time they arrived at the lab he had disappeared into the streets of Paris with his beloved Sylvie, forever anonymous in his now permanent canine form.

La Vie d’un Chien is a masterful short film, an engaging tale that seduces us by means of its narrative simplicity and charming homage to a masterpiece of 1960s science fiction cinema. Loneliness and social anxiety are dealt with in fine irony, something rare in contemporary cinema. La Vie d’un Chien, creating an elegant fusion of humor and melancholy, is a poetic utopia translated into a beautiful tribute not only to Chris Marker’s La Jetée, but also to Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
Among other awards, in 2005, the short film won “Best Narrative Short” at the Los Angeles Film Festival, “Best Short Film” in Sci-Fi London Film Festival, and “First Prize” at the Three Rivers Film Festival Pittsburgh. It was also exhibited for four months in 2006 at the DeCordova Museum of Art (Lincoln, MA, USA) and at the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival (the “Cannes” of short films) in 2008. In 2010, La Vie d’un Chien was fully uploaded on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EP-qcze4FA&playnext_from=TL&videos=QmTWLEurem4 or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EP-qcze4FA. More information about Harden and his films can be found on the filmmaker’s personal website: http://www.johnfilms.com/.

Works Cited

*Hereafter* [film]
Benedict Jones


CLINT EASTWOOD has sealed his reputation as a director of gritty, realistic, and often controversial films. Unfortunately, his first foray into the fantastic is a thoughtful but ultimately disappointing effort that opens with a bang and ends with a whimper. *Hereafter* confirms that there is, indeed, an afterlife—a wondrous place only vaguely seen and described—but most science fiction viewers will be frustrated by the film’s relentlessly downbeat tone, its contradictions, and its pseudoscientific perspective.

The idyllic opening scenes rapidly morph into chaos. Marie Lelay (Cécile de France), a French television journalist, is browsing street vendors near a sunny beach in 2004 when she is swept away by the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami. As she drifts lifelessly underwater, the scene shifts to an apparent vision of the afterlife: bright light, shadows, indistinct human figures, vague structures, and the silhouette of a hovering helicopter. Once she revives, Marie becomes obsessed with near death experiences (NDEs).

Next, we meet George Lonegan (Matt Damon), a dispirited San Francisco factory worker and retired psychic who can contact the dead. Under protest, he allows his brother Billy (Jay Mohr) to pressure him into conducting a psychic reading for Billy’s potential business client, Christos (Richard Kind). A tortured soul, George would like nothing more than to forget his special ability and live a normal life.

Finally, we travel to London, where young Marcus (Frankie and George McLaren) loses a family member and, like Marie, becomes obsessed with the afterlife.

The film boasts international locations and an opening tsunami sequence that is spectacular, terrifying, and suspenseful. Yet, after such an explosive beginning, the rest of the film unfolds at a sedate and anticlimactic pace, and, predictably, the tripartite structure concludes in unity when all three characters converge in London. The ending is not particularly interesting, and no one will be surprised that all three characters face a happier future.

They could hardly have a bleaker one, for *Hereafter* is curiously somber and shamelessly manipulative. The boy Marcus is notable mainly for his perpetual melancholy, which is exacerbated by fake psychics who take his money but get him no closer to his loved one. Not to be out-anguished by a child, Matt Damon’s George plods through life, only brightening once when he dares to hope for love. He eschews his former profession, fends off his grasping brother, and avoids interaction with other human beings. After a budding romance with the charming Melanie (Bryce Dallas Howard) prematurely derails, he again falls into his customary despair over the relationship, yet another casualty of the talent that his brother calls a gift and he labels a curse. Similarly, the plight of Marcus and his twin Jason will tug at the heartstrings of the unwary; the boys’ mother may be a junkie, but she is a good junkie who dearly loves her neglected sons when she is sober—and, the film asserts, she fully intends to achieve permanent sobriety. The spirited journalist, Marie, cannot compensate for the moodiness of the other characters, especially when she, too, hits a low point after suffering her own array of losses. Three protagonists are, indeed, a problem when custom dictates that all of them must at some point hit rock bottom; the bathos is nearly intolerable.

For a film about the afterlife, *Hereafter* seems oddly uncomfortable with the subject and cannot commit to
a coherent approach. Many other supernatural films—from *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) to *Ghost* (1990) to the reprehensibly tacky *Lovely Bones* (2009)—are predicated on the certainty of life after death. But *Hereafter* purports to question the very existence of an afterlife, and contradicts itself in the process. For example, it comfortably concludes that there is a hereafter, yet George unhelpfully reports that the departed want the earth-bound to move forward and stop dwelling on death. Strangely enough, this has not been a successful strategy for George himself.

Academics and teachers may find fodder for discussion in this film because it half-heartedly invokes skepticism. For instance, George's first psychic reading invites multiple interpretations; this beautifully neutral scene never clarifies whether George's knowledge comes from true psychic ability or from intelligence provided by his pushy brother, who is a little too eager to secure Christos as a client. Even George's second reading leaves room for an atom of doubt. Also promising for skeptics, viewers clearly see that Marcus's fake psychics are indeed charlatans. Finally, we can interpret Marie's dying vision as merely the product of a moribund brain that struggles to make sense in its final moments.

However, the film also systematically attacks skepticism and inquiry in disturbing ways. George's final reading incontrovertibly identifies him as a genuine spiritual conduit. Marcus' fakes are offered only in contrast to the real thing (George). And, for an investigative journalist, Marie is remarkably credulous, wondering aloud what happens after death but never questioning why the figures in her vision wear the clothes they died in, or why they need clothing or even bodies at all. Not to mention, what use are helicopters in the hereafter? In addition, the only confirmed skeptic (Marie's lover Didier) proves to be an unspeakable cad, and the NDE expert, Dr. Rousseau, cheerfully conflates science, atheism, and closed-mindedness. Now a True Believer, the good doctor supplies reams of research alleging that her hospice patients have all experienced the same phenomena during their NDEs. The very similarity of these symptoms, she claims, cannot be explained by cultural conditioning or biology. Thus, evidence of an afterlife is "irrefutable." We can only hope that her conclusions will generate classroom debates about empirical data, confirmation bias, and the questionable scientific worth of subjective experience.

This film has limited value in a science fiction context. In the end, Rousseau's supposed empiricism is merely window dressing for a film that does not quite dare to question wishful thinking. Connie Willis' Hugo-nominated novel *Passage* does a much better job of seeking a scientific explanation for NDEs. But that novel was written for science fiction readers. *Hereafter* is supernatural pabulum for mainstream audiences.

### Being Human [TV series]

Amy J. Ransom


SYFY CHANNEL’s North American adaptation of the BBC television series *Being Human* offers a hip, adult reworking of the “traditional” rivalry between vampires and werewolves popularized by Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* franchise. It also addresses the question of humanity versus monstrosity as its three protagonists—a vampire, a werewolf and a ghost—explore the possibility of a “normal” life for themselves. Its portrayal of these engaging characters coupled with the quality of its writing and cinematography, place *Being Human* in a category with the cable network’s other recent success, the 2004-2009 *Battlestar Galactica*.

The premise is simple: two twenty-something hospital workers, Josh (Sam Huntington) and Aidan (Sam Witwer), meet and decide to share an apartment; they are soon joined by another, female, roommate, Sally (Meaghan Rath). The twist on this Three’s Company for the third millennium, foregrounded in the series’ title, is that “being human” is a shared struggle for this werewolf, vampire and ghost. Various episodes establish new lore for these traditional monsters and explore the moral and existential dilemmas they face trying to live human lives. For example, after being attacked by a werewolf, Josh has severed all ties with his family because of his fear of hurting them; when his sister suddenly reappears in his life, what should he do? Aidan, the two-hundred-year-old vampire, seeks his nourishment from the hospital’s blood bank, but occasionally loses control forcing him to contact Bishop, the leader of the New England vampire coven, for help. Power struggles between Bishop, Aidan, his prodigal son, and the Amish-style traditionalist vampires from Pennsylvania occupy several episodes and introduce debates over power and leadership. Sally, at first trapped inside the house where she has died, and which Josh and Aidan rent, struggles to remember how she died, meets other ghosts, and...
eventually must choose between vengeance against her killer and peace for herself.

Despite the possibility for cliché and for rehashing overworked territory, writers Jeremy Carver (Supernatural, 2007-2010) and Anna Fricke (Men in Trees, 2006-2008; Everwood, 2004-2006) adapt Toby Whitehouse's (creator of the original BBC Being Human, 2008-2011; Doctor Who, 2006-2011) work to offer a fresh, definitely grown up alternative to the overly romanticized and sanitized teeny-bop fare that has dominated the genre on the big screen. Indeed, the producers of this small screen drama set in Boston but filmed in Montreal achieve a high degree of its quality by hiring a series of international film directors for double-episode stints, including Adam Kane (US; Boondock Saints), Paolo Barzman (France/US; The Phantom, 2006), Jeremiah S. Chechik (Québec; Benny and Joon, 1993 and The Avengers, 1998; as well as episodes of the award-winning television series Burn Notice, 2007-2010 and Leverage, 2009-2010), Charles Binamé (Québec; Séraphin, un Homme et son pêché, 2002 and The Rocket: The Legend of Rocket Richard, 2005), Erik Canuel (Québec; Bon cop, Bad cop, 2006 and The Outlander, 2005), Jerry Ciccoritti (Canada; numerous television and miniseries, such as Dragon Boys, 2007 and Trudeau, 2002).

The cultural differences brought out by the UK to North American adaptation also offers fruit for comparative analysis, including the names of the actual characters and the appearance and class/ethnic markers of the actors cast in their roles. Soon to begin airing for a fourth season, the BBC series features “George” (Russell Tovey), “Annie” (Note: These remarks were based upon viewing a pilot episode; the role of Annie was recast with the multiracial actress Lenora Crichlow for the series’ BBC broadcast) and “Mitchell” (Aidan Turner). The British version of the vampire appears a bit more Goth than the more mainstream appearance of the North American Aidan, with the casting of disarmingly good-looking Sam Witwer (with credits in Smallville and Battlestar Galactica), whose cleft chin and dimples appear strategically chosen to lure in fans of Robert Pattinson in Twilight. Although the UK pilot episode cast a pale, blonde actress with a distinctive regional accent in the role of the ghost Annie, the decision to cast a multiracial actress, Lenora Crichlow, for the final series appears to reveal a desire to reflect the multicultural nature of contemporary British society. Following in suit, the US/Canada version of Being Human cast Meaghan Rath as Annie’s analogue. Why they chose to rename the South Asian coded actress’s character “Sally” remains unclear. The closest match appears in the casting of the werewolf in both versions of the series, with George/Josh (Sam Huntington, the zombie sidekick in the recent film Dylan Dog: Dead of Night [2010] and star of Fanboys [2008]) being cute in a cuddly, goofy way, physically fit—since he must undress to transform and both UK and US audiences are treated to full dorsal as well as nearly-full frontal nudes—and Jewish. Besides the forty-two minutes per episode on the commercial Syfy network compared to fifty-some minutes on the BBC version, other obvious cultural adaptations to the series’ content occurs, such as Aidan’s back-story including participation in the American Revolution and a stylish episode involving his love affair with a human set in Montreal in the 1970s. Furthermore, to accommodate a longer television season, some episodes were expanded and new sub-plots and storylines introduced in the Syfy network’s thirteen-episode season versus the BBC’s six episodes per season.

Each well-constructed episode offers a self-contained, dilemma-based storyline, while also tying in to the long-term trajectory of these riveting characters’ development. The series itself and/or individual episodes offer a range of discussion topics for scholarly analysis or classroom use, such as the nature of humanity, definitions of monstrosity, the ethical use of nearly absolute power, and the evolving image of vampires, werewolves and ghosts over time.

**The Bionic Woman [TV series]**

**Patrick Sharp**


**THE BIONIC WOMAN** (the original series) ran for two seasons from 1976-1977 on ABC, and then for a third season from 1977-1978 on NBC. The show was a spin-off of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and proved to be one of the most popular and influential SF television shows of the 1970s. The show also achieved popularity outside the English-speaking world when it was dubbed into languages such as Spanish (La Mujer Bionica) and Italian (La Donna Bionica). Unfortunately, the show has not received the scholarly attention it deserves in part because of the difficulty of acquiring copies of the show
since it first aired. While the series has been available on DVD in Region 2 format (Europe) and Region 4 format (Latin America), it has been largely unavailable in Region 1 format (North America) due to obscure copyright issues. The only readily available episodes in North America have been the main character’s two-part origin entitled “The Bionic Woman”—from *The Six Million Dollar Man* series—that was released on VHS in 1996. Finally, with the recent release of the digitally remastered Season 1 and Season 2, the entire run of *Bionic Woman* episodes from ABC is now available on DVD in Region 1 format along with the crossover episodes of *The Six Million Dollar Man*.

The origins of the bionic universe can be traced back to Martin Caidin’s 1972 novel Cyborg. Caiden’s story was adapted into a string of TV movies—and eventually a regular TV series—about astronaut and test pilot Steve Austin (Majors) who is transformed into a cyborg secret agent in order to save his life after a terrible plane crash. In early 1976, *The Bionic Woman* spinoff series was produced as a mid-season replacement that ran for thirteen episodes. The Season 1 DVD set is, therefore, fleshed out by including five episodes from *The Six Million Dollar Man* that actually constitute the first five appearances of the character Jaime Sommers (Wagner) on network TV: the two-part “Bionic Woman” origin, the two-part “Return of the Bionic Woman,” and the first episode of the two-part “Welcome Home, Jaime” that launched the new series. In these episodes, Jaime is introduced as a world-class tennis pro who is a rival of Billie Jean King. She is also the childhood sweetheart of Steve Austin, and when they meet as adults, they whirl into a romance that is complicated by a tragic skydiving accident. In order to save Jaime’s life, she is converted into a cyborg under the condition that she becomes a secret agent like Steve.

One of the most informative parts of this first disc of *Six Million Dollar Man* episodes is the detailed commentary on “The Bionic Woman” by Kenneth Johnson, the man who wrote the episode, created the Jaime Sommers character, and produced most of the Bionic Woman series. Johnson’s commentary for “The Bionic Woman” covers the process for creating a “female counterpart for Steve Austin” and the many drafts of the script he went through (including an early version where Jaime is telekinetic instead of bionic). The commentary also includes numerous insights about the nature and limitations of making network television shows in the final years of the pre-cable era. For example, Johnson explains why the network liked the unimaginative direction of Dick Moder: “he was mostly eager just to get the shots in the can and move on. . .people just sort of come in and stand there and get a master shot and a couple of close-ups, and then they move out.” Johnson’s commentary repeatedly draws attention to the low budget, plodding pacing, awkward stunts, classic sound effects, and painfully loud fashions that were hallmarks of the show (and 1970s TV in general).

Much of *The Bionic Woman*’s importance stems from what it shows us about 1970s feminism. As a sporting rival of Billie Jean King, Jaime Sommers is associated from the beginning with the feminist icon who had won the famous 1973 “Battle of the Sexes” tennis match against Bobby Riggs. Like King, Jaime “provides feminist object lessons on sexism and women’s equality” to her boss, her students, and weekly male guest characters who espouse stereotypical views of women (Sharp 509). At the same time, the show also goes out of its way to code Jaime as a vulnerable woman who is safely feminine (Sharp 516-17). For example, in the Season 1 episode “The Deadly Missiles,” Jaime needs the help of a paternal figure named J. T. Connors (Forrest Tucker) to complete her mission. Connors is a right-wing industrialist who Jaime describes as “to the right of Attila the Hun” politically. He comes under suspicion of launching a terrorist attack, and because he supported Jaime as a young tennis player, she is assigned to use their relationship to get access to his facilities. During her investigation, Jaime shorts out one of her bionic legs and is captured by J. T.’s lead scientist, who is the real villain. With J. T. and Jaime locked in a room, he is able to use his genius with electronics to fix her legs and fight the bad guys. In this way, Jaime is represented as a feminine feminist who is able to work productively with patronizing conservative men. She is strong, but she derives her physical strength from the electronics given to her by—and maintained by—sympathetic white men. She serves as a feminist to draw in women viewers who were coveted by advertisers. At the same time, her unthreatening combination of beauty and vulnerability was designed to attract male viewers (Sharp 507, 509-10).

This contradictory representation of the feminist heroine Jaime Sommers shows the ideological limitations of what was possible on network TV in the 1970s. However, it is clear that the Jaime Sommers character became stronger and less problematic once she had her own show. In *The Six Million Dollar Man* episodes, Jaime’s body is constantly rejecting her bionics, and she is prone to fits of hysteria. In *The Bionic Woman* episodes, Jaime is much more level-headed and effective in her
role as a spy, even when weakened and dependent upon men for help. The Season 2 DVD released in May 2011 shows how *The Bionic Woman* hit its stride in its full second season. The DVD set includes all twenty-two *Bionic Woman* episodes of the second season, plus two more *Six Million Dollar Man* crossover episodes. The set starts off with the two-part fan-favorite “The Return of Bigfoot,” a crossover with *The Six Million Dollar Man* that has Jaime and Steve facing off with the legendary monster and a band of colonizing aliens. Season 2 also has the most iconic episodes in the series, a three-part crossover with *The Six Million Dollar Man* entitled “Kill Oscar” that introduces the “fembots” of the evil sexist Dr. Franklin (played with relish by John Houseman). Dr. Franklin describes his fembots as “the perfect women: programmable, obedient, and as beautiful, or as deadly, as I choose to make them.” The fembots are basically Stepford wives created to infiltrate the government and steal secrets. When Jaime squares off with them, it is a battle between a good, independent feminist cyborg and hyper-feminized robotic women who do whatever men tell them to do (Sharp 519-20). Season 2 also has Jaime go undercover as a professional wrestler, a country singer, and a nun between her bouts with evil scientists and aliens trying to take over the world.

*The Bionic Woman* helped prepare a generation of nascent feminists to embrace Donna Haraway’s argument for a cyborg feminism that was encapsulated in her famous line, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess” (181). These digitally remastered DVD sets of the first two seasons of *The Bionic Woman* (and seven episodes of *The Six Million Dollar Man*) will facilitate the scholarly re-evaluation of the series and its place in SF history. They also make available a great teaching resource for classes that cover second-wave feminism, 1970s television, the history of SF, and issues surrounding cyborg identity. In the 1990s and early 2000s I recorded some episodes of *The Bionic Woman* off of the SciFi Channel for teaching purposes (ahem), and have used “The Bionic Woman,” “The Deadly Missiles,” and “Kill Oscar” in several different classes. Students enjoy them immensely: older students wax nostalgic, Spanish-speaking students remember *La Mujer Biónica*, and younger students are pleasantly appalled at what TV was like back in the days when there were only three networks. The series is accessible, and concisely captures the complexities of gender and SF in the 1970s. These DVD sets are also relatively inexpensive, and should be within the reach of interested scholars and university media budgets alike.

**The Mongoliad**


REMEMBERING a forgotten form and thrusting it forcefully into the new millennium with its Web 2.0 communication possibilities, the online publication project *The Mongoliad* tries to transgress established borders within the literary community that become ever more apparent. With the success of digital technologies, more and more electronic readers, smart phone apps and new distribution concepts on the rise, the traditional book market seems in dire need of new concepts. Authors such as Stephen King, Neil Gaiman, Bruce Sterling or Geoff Ryman have begun experimenting with web novels, hypertext publication, or even Twitter messages as possible ways to engage creative writing in the digital age.

One such example, not the earliest but a fairly successful one, is the serialized online publication *The Mongoliad*, created by a group of writers and artists spearheaded by SF&F writers Neal Stephenson and Greg Bear. The creative group, going by the collective name of “Foreworld Cabal,” has created a website where readers can subscribe to weekly installments of chapters (currently at #34) written by the Cabal authors and considered the canon. In addition to canonical chapters, the Cabal also provides video footage (e.g. of martial arts techniques), meticulously researched background information on history, technology or characters, maps, artworks and short sidetrack stories that usually would not have been included in a book publication. As such, *The Mongoliad* proves to be very much prolific of Web 2.0 possibilities, making use of hypertext, links, and the multi-media platform of the net, as well as encouraging fan-fiction and other forms of outside creative en-

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**Works Cited**


gagement with the canonical texts. On the other hand, though, the publication reminds both of 19th century newspaper serialization and early 20th century pulp magazine's fan interaction. Bringing back the good ol' days of the past to revive the consumption of textual creativity in the present. Similar to the Dickensian reader in Victoria's London, the postmodern reader can receive their weekly doses of The Mongoliad via app store or in Kindle-format, can read anywhere and any time. And just as during the Golden Age of the pulps, fans can write in to the makers, engage in discussion on the plausibility of story aspects, can offer suggestions and critique or plainly become authors, receiving a quasi-Asimovian commendation into the canon themselves. At least this is the theory, while in reality fan engagement and the addition of outside material has been rather sparse, aside from some nice fan artwork and the quite common forum-discussions on many topics. The possibilities are here, but unfortunately, except for a very limited group, a strong interactive reaction has not happened.

This is not due to an obscurity of the topic itself though, as The Mongoliad picks up a literary trend that has been around for a while but in recent years has even proven to be interesting to mainstream writers. Conceptualized as an alternate history, The Mongoliad squarely situates itself with other examples of the genre such as Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle (1962), Harry Turtledove's Ruled Britannica (2002) or even Philip Roth's The Plot against America (2004). Within the Foreworld (as the alternate reality is termed on the website), the genre-typical moment of historical divergence happens when the Mongol empire finds itself at the door-step of Western (i.e. European) civilization in 1241. Instead of decamping due to the untimely death of the Second Great Khan, in the Foreworld, Ögedei is alive and the armies remain in Europe to threaten the realm of Christianity as a religion as well as its established mundane, geographical boundaries. As Inken Frost in her review of The Mongoliad (Zeitschrift für Fantastikforschung 1.1 (2011): 140-3) suggests, the several strands of the story narratively mimic what the publication itself tries to do; in both form and content The Mongoliad deals with the “crossing of boundaries (technical, structural, geographical...) and the forming of communities in the newly created contact zones” (Frost 141). But whereas the characters of The Mongoliad succeed in transgressing boundaries of religion, nationality and gender, and where the Foreworld as literary creation represents a changed historical perspective (and a content oriented analysis within the genre here might prove very interesting indeed), the technical boundary posed by what Henry Jenkins calls “participatory culture” (Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York: NY UP, 2006; 3) has on a mass-audience level not been breached. Where a Web 2.0 savvy digital élite might move swiftly from audience to author to critic and back to audience again, hopping between text, film and artwork to participate in the creation and consumption of a product of “convergence culture,” the majority of readers does not—yet. The Mongoliad will continue (at least until October this year), and hopefully, as new audiences get more and more accustomed with interactive offers such as this, it will become part of what a new

**Announcements**

**Calls for Papers**

*Compiled by Jason Embry*

**Call for Papers - Conference**

**Title:** Paranoia and Pain: Embodied in Psychology, Literature, and Bioscience

**Deadline:** November 15, 2011

**Conference Date:** 2-4 April 2012

**Contact:** paranoia.pain@gmail.com

**Topic:** Paranoia and Pain is an international cross-disciplinary conference, seeking to raise an awareness of various intersections of literature and science. The conference aims to explore overlapping paradigms of paranoia and pain in psychology, biological sciences, and literary texts/contexts.

Considering the diversity of themes and questions for this conference, individual papers as well as pre-formed panels are invited to examine the following three key areas, proposed by the conference organizers. Other inter- and multi-disciplinary topics, relevant to the conference, will also be considered:

***Impressions* - Expression of paranoia and pain in literary/scientific contexts; Metaphorical and literal exposition of pain and paranoia; Paranoid texts, painful contexts; The image of paranoia and pain in poetry, prose, and visual arts; Textual culture and the symbols of pain; Stylistics of pain and paranoia in communication; How does the narrative of pain/paranoia identify with...
studies of affect?

*Intersections* - The biology of pain and the emotional interpretation; The biology/literature of anaesthesia; Physical symptoms, emotional translations; Aesthetics and affective perspectives on pain/paranoia; How have cultural attitudes to the experience of pain and/or paranoia changed over the course of history?

*Dissections* - Faith and the formation of our ideas on pain/paranoia; Side effects of pain-relief medication; Ethics and the questions of double effect; Is it ever appropriate to withhold pain relief in order to extend the life of a sufferer where analgesics have the side effect of shortening life?

**Submissions:** Deadline for 250-300 word abstracts for 20-minute papers and a 50-100 word biography for individual presenters (including each presentation within potential panels): November 15, 2011. Deadline for full draft of accepted papers and registrations: February 25, 2012. After the conference a selection of presentations, developed and edited, will be considered for publication. Please send submissions and enquiries to the organising board at paranoia.pain@gmail.com.

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**Call for Papers- Conference**

**Title:** Composting Culture: Literature, Nature, Popular Culture, Science

**Deadline:** Wednesday 29 February 2012.

**Conference Date:** 6-9 September 2012

**Contact:** David Arnold (d.arnold@worc.ac.uk) and John Parham (j.parham@worc.ac.uk)

**Topic:** ASLE-UKI – the UK-Ireland branch of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment – invites proposals for its 2012 biennial conference. The conference will take place between Thursday 6 – Sunday 9 September, 2012 at the University of Worcester, supported by the university’s Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts.

Recent work in ecocriticism largely recognises the complexity of ecological science and philosophy and its social and political dimensions. This has resulted in an increased emphasis on paradigms and perspectives that embrace that complexity: posthumanism; biosemiotics; discordance; consilience etc. Consequently, with regard to its objects of study, ecocriticism might increasingly be characterised as a multidisciplinary act of ecological intervention that has fermented an array of possible reference points – globalisation, science, neuroscience, spirituality etc – into an expanding range of cultural texts, stretching far beyond the literary canon of romantic nature writing that shaped ecocriticism in its early years.

This conference will explore the extent to which correspondences between more complex ecological understanding and cultural forms might be evident, most particularly, in non-canonical texts, or previously unexplored linkages between theories and texts, or in the upcycling of established literary or cultural forms, movements, writers etc. Conceptualised by Jed Rasula as a process of composting where ‘interanimating tendencies’ converge into the possible emergence ‘of newness, of the unpredicted,’ this ‘nutritive sensibility’ has recently traversed cultural theory and practice: in Harriet Tarlo’s identification of a conjunction between experimental poetics and radical landscape poetry; in the ‘new nature writing’ of ‘Edgelands’ (Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts), or places like Essex, which acknowledges the blurring of human-nonhuman, rural and urban; even in popular culture, for example in a recognition of technology’s perhaps paradoxical ability to inculcate both deep ecological awareness and a scientific sense of nature as process (as aspired to in Bjork’s recent Biophilia project). Keynote speakers will include:

- Thierry Bardini, Université de Montréal, author of *Junkware*, examining ‘junk’ in nature (DNA) and culture (science fiction) alike
- Jed Rasula, Helen S. Lanier Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia, author of *This Compost: Ecological Imperatives in American Poetry*
- Molly Scott-Cato, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, Green Party UK Speaker on Economics, author of *Green Economics*

Along these lines, we now invite papers and proposals that can offer, most particularly, a focus on hitherto neglected or unexplored interconnections between authors, texts, genres, and cultural forms. These might relate, but are not restricted to, the following themes:

- Recycling, composting, fermenting, or junk as cultural tropes
- Consilience: ecological science and cultural/literary texts
- ‘New nature writing’
- New perspectives on Romanticism
- Green media and popular culture
- Eco(poetics)/landscape poetry
- Posthumanism
- Postcolonialism or globalisation
Biosemiotics and Zoosemiotics
Biotechnology and ecotechnology
Ecological discordance or complexity
‘Edgelands’
The canon and ideas of cultural value etc
Rhetoric, metaphor or narrative
Environmental (in)justice
Nature, post-nature, ‘second nature’
Toxicity
‘Social Ecologies of the Imagination’

Submissions: Individual papers should be 20 minutes. Please send a title and 250 word abstract to David Arnold: d.arnold@worc.ac.uk and John Parham j.parham@worc.ac.uk by the deadline, Wednesday 29 February 2012. Further details – including registration costs and accommodation – will be circulated in the Spring. Our intention is to offer video conferencing, allowing for the participation of international delegates unable or reluctant to travel.

The conference is to be located in the historic city of Worcester and accommodation will be reserved at one of the university’s two campuses. The university is in easy reach of diverse landscapes: the Geopark Way, which explores 700 million years of geological history; or the River Severn floodplain grasslands and rare meadows. Considering the interaction between human settlement and environment, one might take a walk on the Worcester and Birmingham canal; or visit the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with its rich acid grassland and grazing sites, views of the Welsh Marches, iron-age earthworks, commons, and ancient semi-natural woodlands; or the local ancient orchards maintained by volunteers. With this in mind, at least one half day excursion, with a choice of locations, will be included in the conference schedule. There will also be a conference dinner at The Fold, a local eco café and arts and design centre, and the focus for a range of activities relating to sustainable development.

Call for Papers- Conference

Title: When Worlds Collide: The Face of Myth in a World of Reason
Deadline: 19 December 2011.
Conference Date: 12-13 April 2012 for the ORU Conference on Science and Science Fiction
Contact: E-mail all abstracts/papers to Dr. Andrew S.I.D. Lang, Conference Director (alang@oru.edu)
Topic: This two-day interdisciplinary conference – sponsored by the colleges of Arts and Cultural Studies and Science and Engineering at Oral Roberts University – will examine the relationships between science and science fiction, social science and science fiction, and theology and science fiction in all forms of science and science fiction, including science fiction stories, film, television, radio, graphic novels and theoretical physics.

Potential contributors are invited to submit an abstract or paper for this conference on themes related to any of the following conference tracks:

• Science Fiction and Theology. Investigating the relationship and metaphors in science fiction and theology.
• Science in Science Fiction. The plausibility of fantastical science fiction concepts such as time travel, warp drives, cloaking devices, and (quantum) teleportation.
• Hard Science Fiction. Scientific rigor in science fiction.
• Social Sciences in Science Fiction. Psychology, Sociology, and Cultural issues in Science Fiction.

Papers on the above themes are invited. However, papers on other subjects related to the above themes will also be considered.

Submission: Please submit an abstract or a full paper by December 19, 2011. Presentations are welcome in any format and style, including PowerPoint, and will depend upon the traditions of your discipline, but if you submit a paper to be read, it should be 8-10 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font) and needs to be an original work that has not been read at any previous conference. Regardless of the presentation format, participants will be held to a twenty minute presentation limit.

To insure prompt notification, please include your e-mail address on your submission. If you are willing to chair a section, please note this at the top of your abstract/paper.
Call for Papers- Conference

Title: SFRA 2012 Conference - Urban Apocalypse, Urban Renaissance: Science Fiction and Fantasy Landscapes
Deadline: 23 April 2012
Conference Date: 28 June 2012 - 1 July 2012
Contact: sdberman1121@gmail.com

Topic: Detroit is at once an apocalyptic city and a Renaissance city. Over the past ten years, Detroit has suffered immensely, especially during the economic downturn and the virtual demise of the auto industry. Its apocalyptic landscape of abandoned buildings, its negative image due to high crime rates, a recently impeached corrupt Mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, and the loss of close to 300,000 people in the last census have made it the symbol of a city with a hopeless future. However, there is hope as the so called Renaissance city of the 1970s may now be experiencing a true Renaissance. New venues for the Detroit Tigers and Detroit Lions, funding obtained by Mayor Bing to raze many of the abandoned buildings, the resurgence of the auto industry along with an invitation to the film industry, and a call for repopulation of Detroit with legal immigrants by New York Mayor Bloomberg may re-establish Detroit as the major city that it could be.

It is an urban landscape of change, revealing the end of one era and the beginning of another—an urban landscape that is ripe for science fiction and fantasy literature. The wide-ranging landscape of Detroit, Michigan is reminiscent of the various landscapes evident in science fiction and fantasy. Thus, Detroit can serve as an inspiration for paper topics considered at this conference. Papers can cover any topic concerning landscapes.

Here are some suggested topics:

- Apocalyptic Landscapes in science fiction and fantasy, as in the novels Slaughterhouse Five by Vonnegut, Dreamscape by Vonda McIntyre, or The Road by McCarthy
- Renaissance landscapes evident in utopic literature such as More's Utopia
- Psychogeography presented in recent novels like Valente's Palimpsest or Mieville's The City and the City
- Alien Landscapes: from the landscape in Weinbaum's “A Martian Odyssey” to Pohl's Venus in The Space Merchants to Le Guin's Gethen in The Left Hand of Darkness to Robinson's Mars trilogy to Vinge's Fire upon the Deep
- Landscapes created by terraforming
- Set design in SF films, like Syd Mead's set design in Blade Runner, based in part on the Detroit skyline of the early 80s
- Virtual landscapes as in the fiction of Greg Egan, William Gibson, Charles Stross, etc. or in films, such as The Matrix
- Foreign landscapes as evident in recent novels like Bacigalupi's Thailand in The Wind-Up Girl, McDonald’s Istanbul in The Dervish House, VanderMeer’s Ambergris in Finch, etc.
- Alternate history landscapes
- U.S. landscapes as in Gaiman's Minnesota in American Gods or Doctorow's San Francisco in Little Brother
- Ecological landscapes: The effects of pollution or eco-terrorism on landscapes
- Future landscapes as in Banks’ Algebraist, Stephenson's Anathem, or Wilson's Julian Comstock or past landscapes as in Butler's Kindred, Willis' Doomsday Book, or Clarke's Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell
- Space or the spaceship as a landscape?
- Gender Landscapes
- Non-conference themed papers and panels related to or focusing on science fiction and fantasy are also welcomed!

Submission: Please forward abstracts to sdberman1121@gmail.com by April 23rd, 2012. Presenters must be members of the SFRA. To join, go to sfra.org. Full conference details are available here: http://sfradetroit2012.com/
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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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.

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