

#250
Jan./Feb. 2001

Coeditors:
Barbara Lucas
Shelley Rodrigo
Blanchard

Nonfiction Reviews:
Neil Barron

Fiction Reviews:
Shelley Rodrigo
Blanchard

The *SFRAReview* (ISSN 1068-395X) is published six times a year by the Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA) and distributed to SFRA members. Individual issues are not for sale. For information about the SFRA and its benefits, see the description at the back of this issue. For a membership application, contact SFRA Treasurer Michael M. Levy or get one from the SFRA website: <www.sfra.org>.

SUBMISSIONS

The *SFRAReview* editors encourage submissions, including essays, review essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. Please send submissions or queries to *both* coeditors. If you would like to review nonfiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor. The general editorial address for the *SFRAReview* is: <SFRAReview@aol.com>.

Barbara Lucas, Coeditor
1353 Fox Run Drive, Suite 206
Willoughby, OH 44094
barlucas@yahoo.com

Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard,
Coeditor & Fiction Reviews Editor
6842 S. 40th Place
Phoenix, AZ 85040
<shelley.rb@asu.edu>

Neil Barron, Nonfiction Reviews
Editor
1149 Lime Place
Vista, CA 92083-7428
<rneilbarron@hotmail.com>

Visit Us At:
www.sfra.org



IN THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2

SFRA BUSINESS
SFRA ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT 2

APPROACHING VISIONS OF WONDER
A BRIEF USER'S GUIDE TO VISIONS OF WONDER 4
ON TEACHING VISIONS OF WONDER 8

THEORY AND BEYOND
BORDERLANDS THEORY AND SCIENCE FICTION 10

NONFICTION REVIEWS
MARTIN GARDINER 13
OUT OF TIME 14
SCIENCE FICTION, CRITICAL FRONTIERS 15
BEYOND DRACULA 16
CAULDRON OF CHANGE 16
MARY Shelley 17
THE DREAM OF SPACEFLIGHT 18
GEORGE TURNER 19
J.R.R. TOLKIEN 20
OZ 21
TITANS 21
RAY BRADBURY 22
THE NAKED AND THE UNDEAD 22
EDWARD GORY 23

FICTION REVIEWS
ATOM 24

SFRA ELECTS NEW SLATE OF OFFICERS

As those of you who are on the listserv may already know, the results of the SFRA election have been finalized. The new slate of officers are:

President: **Mike Levy**

Vice-President: **Peter Brigg**

Secretary: **Wendy Bousfield**

Treasurer: **Dave Mead**

Thanks to everyone who voted, in spite of the mail problems, and special thanks to all who ran for office for showing your willingness to help SFRA.

A REMINDER ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Dave Mead would like to remind renewing members to send their dues to him at the following address:

David Mead

College of Arts and Humanities

Texas A&M University-Corpus

Christi

Corpus Christi, TX 78412

PILGRIM AWARD COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

John Clute has agreed to join **Elizabeth Davidson** (chair) and **Adam Frisch** on the 2001 Pilgrim Award committee. He will, of course, also serve in 2002, and become chair in 2003.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to the winner of the award for the best student paper presented at SFRA's Conference 2000: **Sonja Fritzsche**, for "Out of the Western Box: Re-thinking Popular Cultural Categories from the Perspective of East German Science Fiction." Sonja is a PhD candidate in the Department of German, Scandinavian, and Dutch at the University of Min-

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mike Levy

I've never had to write a President's Message before. It wasn't required the last time I was president of something, the third floor of Blaisdell Residence Hall at the University of Illinois in Urbana back in 1971. Actually, as I write this, I'm looking over my shoulder, acutely aware of the materials piled up for the final Treasurer's Report that I should probably have written before beginning this piece. In any case, though, I want to start out by thanking four groups of people. First, there are the SFRA officers I've been privileged to serve with over the past four years: Joe Sanders, Joan Gordon, Alan Elms, Elizabeth Cummins, Carolyn Wendell, and Adam Frisch. Then there are the incoming officers: Alan as past president, Peter Brigg as vice president, Wendy Bousfield as secretary, and Dave Mead (who should know better) as treasurer, with whom I will be serving for the next two years. Also, there are the people who have worked so hard on the *SFRA Review* and our WWW site over the years: Amy Sisson, Karen Hellekson, Craig Jacobsen, Peter Sands, and the new crew, Shelley Rodrigo and Barbara Lucas. Finally, there are the other candidates who didn't get elected this year, but who might next time, Batya Weinbaum, Kenneth Andrews, Jake Jakaitis, and Bruce Beattie. I feel an urge at this point to list all of the SFRA's other past officers, candidates for office, editors, award winners, committee members, and so on, but will restrain myself. An organization is only as strong as the people who are willing to commit time to it, and this is as fine a bunch of people as has ever walked the planet.

I would also like to encourage all of you to make plans to attend our upcoming conferences. SFRA 2001, under the direction of Jan Howard Finder in Schenectady, NY, will feature one of my personal favorites, C.J. Cherryh, author of *Cyteen*, *Donnbelow Station*, and *Foreigner*, not to mention, award-winning fantasy writer Jane Yolen, popular novelist David Weber, and acclaimed space artist Vincent di Fate. With Cherryh, Weber, and di Fate attending, papers on space opera would seem to be particularly welcome. SFRA 2002, directed by Farah Mendelson, will be our first European conference. Set in the beautifully reconstructed 19th century utopian community (and entirely up-to-date conference center) of New Lanark, Scotland, and easily accessible from Glasgow International Airport, SFRA 2002 will feature an all-star line up including award-winning hard-sf writers Ken MacLeod, Pat Cadigan, and Paul J. McAuley. Although we aren't listing him as a guest of honor, Iain Banks has also promised to make an appearance. More details on both conferences can be found elsewhere in this issue of the *Review*.

So, now to tackle that treasurer's report and then send the 20-pound carton of materials off to Dave Mead.

SFRA ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Mike Levy, outgoing treasurer

December 31, 2000

The key issue of 2000, so far as the treasurer's report is concerned, is a troubling drop in membership, which was down by fifteen this year. Some of our losses were older, retired members who are no longer involved in the field. Some were tangential members who had never been very active or who had only been in the SFRA for a year or two. There were a couple of deaths and one Pilgrim Award winner, Pierre Versins, was removed from the rolls because we haven't been able to contact him in several years. The losses among longer-term, formerly active members are still significant, however, and worrisome. Without the substantial number of new members, mostly younger faculty and graduate

students, who have joined within the last few years, we would be in serious trouble. I'd like to suggest that our new vice president, Peter Brigg, among whose jobs is recruitment, make a point of trying to win some of these lost members back to the fold in 2001. Our new treasurer, David Mead, can provide him with a list of last known snail mail and electronic addresses for these people.

Another, less serious but chronic problem involves the Scholar Support Fund. Traditionally we've supported several kinds of people with this money, mostly scholars from countries like China, Russia, and Poland, but also the occasional overseas graduate student or postdoc living on a shoestring, or a worthy but financially precarious professional SF writer. Sometimes these people are nominated by SFRA members. Sometimes they request support on their own. The problem for me as Treasurer has always involved renewals of support. I've never been entirely sure if I should ask the scholars we're supporting whether or not they wish to continue, if I should automatically assume that they will continue to receive support from year to year, or if I should expect them or their sponsors to request renewal. Clarification from the membership or the board on how they feel this should be handled would be appreciated.

A few other topics are worth mentioning. The Pilgrim Awards volume is at long last making progress and should be available soon. With new on-demand printing techniques, the book has actually cost a good bit less than was originally expected and provided for. Royalties continue to come in from our anthologies at a small but steady rate. Our cash situation is good because the Board has worked hard to control costs, and for the past several years our Income has run slightly ahead of our Expenditures. We need to regain lost membership, however, or this may well change.

Expenditures	Projected 01	00 Budget	Projected 00	99 Budget	Projected 99
Extrapolation	4100.00	4026.00	4000.00	3945.00	4400.00
SF Studies	4400.00	4211.50	4400.00	4339.50	4400.00
Foundation	2600.00	2580.00	2500.00	2388.00	2500.00
NY Review of SF	2100.00	1991.00	2300.00	2020.00	2300.00
SFRA Review n.1	8500.00	7930.74	8500.00	8475.98	8500.00
Awards	1100.00	535.35	1100.00	1412.91	1100.00
Directory n.2	1400.00	600.00	1400.00	1346.52	1000.00
Conferences n.3	1000.00	500.00	500.00	847.60	500.00
Office Expenses	300.00	259.46	300.00	270.81	300.00
ExecBoard Mtng	300.00	288.51	300.00	255.76	500.00
Recruiting	100.00	0.00	100.00	70.00	100.00
Publications n.4	300.00	587.73	2000.00	0.00	0.00
Refunds	100.00	100.00	160.00	50.00	0.00
Tax help n.5	250.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CoEdtrs Slry n.6	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellans n.7	200.00	405.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tot. Expdntrs	26,950.00	24,465.29	27,760.00	25,422.08	25,600.00

n.1 Final costs for 00 may be up to several hundred dollars higher. We have not yet received final bill due to production delays.

n.2 Final costs may be up to \$800 higher. We have not yet received final bill due to production delays

n.3 At its previous meeting, the Executive Board voted to increase seed money for conferences from \$500 to \$1,000. This represents half of 2001 conference seed money.

n.4 This represents costs this year for publication of Pilgrim Award volume. The volume should be available at the 2001 conference, if not earlier.

n.5 When a non-profit averages \$25,000 income per year for 3 years, it must file with the IRS. This represents accountant's fee for looking at our books and

nesota.

THE MARY KAY BRAY AWARD

The **Mary Kay Bray Award** is named after a distinguished former member of the Science Fiction Research Association who died in 1999 and is endowed by her friend and former colleague **William L. Andrews**. It will be awarded for the first time at the 2002 SFRA Conference in New Lanark, Scotland. A three-judge panel will be asked to choose the outstanding contribution to the SFRA Review in the preceding calendar year.

The award will consist of a certificate and a check for \$100. Current editors of the *Review*, officers of the organization, and members of the judging panel will not be eligible for the award. Membership on the judges' panel will be for three years.

BOOK SFRA 2001 HOTEL RESERVATIONS EARLY

If you will be attending the annual conference in Schenectady, NY, please make your room reservation early. The room block is being held through **30 APRIL 2001**. After that date, SFRA members may not be able to get either a room or take advantage of the reduced conference rate. A room for 1 to 4 persons is US \$75.00 per night plus appropriate taxes (approximately 10.5%), making the total cost US \$82.88 per night. Suites are available for US \$105 (or US \$116.03 including taxes). Members may book a room by:

1. Writing directly to the RAMADA INN, 450 Nott Street, Schenectady, NY 12308, USA
2. Calling the Schenectady RAMADA INN directly at +1-518-

370-7151.

3. E-mailing the RAMADA INN at [amadareserve@global2000.net](mailto:atamadareserve@global2000.net) Remember to mention that you are with the SFRA 2001 CONFERENCE.

Any member experiencing difficulty booking a room, should contact **jan finder** (Conference Chair) at wombat@sff.net or +1-518-456-5242. Please include details of the any problems. There is taxi service from the airport to the hotel (for about US \$20 plus US \$2 per additional rider). The conference committee may also be able to arrange to pick up some members at the airport; please contact jan finder for more information.

BOWKER TRANSFERRING BOOKS TO GREENWOOD PRESS

The principal publisher to the book trade, **R.R.Bowker**, transferred to Greenwood Press approximately fifty children's and individually authored books on 1 January 2001. Greenwood will handle warehousing, order fulfillment, customer service and marketing of such books, along with their roughly 18,000 backlist titles, which they market to academic, school, public, and special libraries. New printings or editions of such books will bear a joint Bowker-Greenwood imprint. Bowker has in recent years concentrated on products like Books in Print, which are created by large groups of people and which are available both in print and as electronic databases. Among the fifty books are two of likely interest to SFRA members—Ruth Nadelman Lynn's *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young adults: An Annotated Bibliography* (4th ed., 1995, \$55, cloth) and my *Anatomy of Wonder* 4 (4th ed.,

filling out forms.

- n. 6 Token salary for editors gives them considerable tax advantages.
- n.7 Includes incorporation renewal fee; \$250 support to new journal, *Femspec*; and \$150 for SFRA presence at 2000 Worldcon.

Income	Projected 01	00 Budget	Projected 00	99 Budget	Projected 99
Memberships n.8	24000.00	22761.00	24000.00	23791.00	26000.00
Interest	600.00	588.99	600.00	678.13	500.00
Royalties	1500.00	2262.90	500.00	1893.58	100.00
Other Income n.9	500.00	25.00	500.00	1828.69	100.00
Tot. Income	26,600.00	25,637.89	25,600.00	28,191.63	26,600.00

n.8 Total membership dropped by 15 in 2000, resulting in lower than expected membership revenues.

n.9 We should be receiving some money from the Cleveland conference, possibly up to \$1500.

n.10 Support was extended to a Polish scholar, an Australian doing a post-doc in the US and our graduate student essay award winner.

	Received 00	Disbursed 00	Balance
Royalties	2262.90	1342.76	920.14
Schlr SpportFnd n.10	346.32	240.00	106.32
	Originally Received	Disbursed	Balance
Encumbered Income (Pilgrim Award Grant)	3613.64	1586.18	2027.46

Cash Balance as of 1/01/00 (does not include 2001 renewals) \$21,386.62.

Membership Count: 2000 – 286 1999 – 301 1998 – 305 1997 – 310 1996 – 306

APPROACHING VISIONS OF WONDER **A BRIEF USER'S GUIDE TO VISIONS OF WONDER**

Joe Sanders

I've used *Visions of Wonder* twice in my ten-week course on the SF short story. The first time, I used another anthology also and selected stories from both; the second time, *Visions* was the only textbook, supplemented with the latest issue of *Asimov's* during the last week of the quarter.

Since I teach at a community college, the students in my SF short story class are freshmen and sophomores, although some are older than what used to be considered traditional college students. Some have read a lot of SF, some are *Star Trek* fans or gamers, and some just want an elective to finish their humanities requirement. Generally, they lack an overall sense of what SF is or can be. The course offers a broad survey and introduces readers to contemporary writers.

Visions is a big anthology, representing the range of modern SF. Hartwell and Wolf's introduction explains that they intended to create an anthology that was "a bit quirky, full of juxtapositions, intentionally off-center." They succeeded. One of the pleasures of teaching the book, therefore, is helping students see comparisons and contrasts between stories. Diverse as *Visions'* contents are, the stories orbit around the same issues—how much can we understand and control the universe around us? how much should we try? Besides leading to discussions of ideas, the stories and essays in *Visions* encourage readers to examine choices in storytelling methods. There's a lot to talk about, an embarrassment of riches. But some of the organizational planning has been done for teachers already, if you'll trust the book at let yourself be guided by the way the table

of contents groups material into nine sections, each containing an introductory essay and samples of fiction.

The first section of the anthology, for example, contains Damon Knight's essay "Critics" (Chapter 1 of *In Search of Wonder*), followed by four stories: Anne McCaffrey's "The Ship Who Sang," Greg Bear's "Blood Music," Charles De Lint's "Paperjack," and Kate Wilhelm's "Forever Yours, Anna." Knight's piece is a good place to begin discussing SF as literature, since he argues that what makes mainstream fiction important to readers is that it tries to deal honestly with the major human concerns of "love and death." SF can handle those themes too, so it's important to appreciate SF's "different expression" of familiar needs. The stories in this section of *Visions* illustrate diverse approaches to the themes Knight identifies.

In McCaffrey's story, the only one set in a space faring future, the heroine is physically unable to live "normally" among other humans—too handicapped and too ugly. However, she is given an important social role that leads to intense emotional bonding with a partner. When he is killed while doing his duty, the grieving heroine considers giving up her responsibility and following individual, selfish desires; however, bouncing out of despair, she achieves an affirmative conclusion. "Blood Music" is set in the present and is much more emotionally restrained. It shows biological research (complicated by one personally inadequate researcher's yearnings) that leads to the total physical and mental reshaping of all humanity into a single entity; this is an especially challenging notion since Bear mitigates the horror of individual extinction with a suggestion of transcendence. De Lint's story is also about human relationships, in this case a young man's hopeless search for his lost/stolen lover; since this is a fantasy story, the woman's being misplaced in time simply reinforces the impression that our intelligence can't always solve the problems it learns to define. Wilhelm's "Forever Yours, Anna" deals with a comparable situation. Set in the present, the story seems to be a character study of a man whose emotional needs (growing emotional attachment to a woman he learns about secondhand) lead to a personal/intellectual discovery; the SF element, revealed at the conclusion, suggests that we can, sometimes, think our way to a satisfactory outcome.

That's one way to connect pieces in the anthology's first section. Beyond analysis and comparison and contrast of ideas, there's ample material for discussing critical evaluation too. I personally found McCaffrey's story a manipulative and simple-minded tearjerker. Students loved it. It's difficult to demonstrate its relative shallowness—except that other stories in the book are more complex and restrained, such as "Blood Music"; students usually are dismayed by that story's conclusion at first, but they eventually can see that there's more than one way to view the characters' fates and that there's even some satisfaction to be found in a story that lets readers make up their own minds how they feel about an outcome. Students were lukewarm about "Paperjack," one of De Lint's urban fantasy series that may be too dependent on others in the series for a full grasp of the characters and setting. Finally, students had trouble seeing Wilhelm's story as SF at all—no gadgets, aliens, or special effects; not even direct demonstration of the SF element. But isn't that part of modern SF, the choice of how intense the estrangement should be? If students should be getting a sense of modern SF's diversity, *Visions* offers good examples at the beginning.

That's what I discovered while teaching the first section of *Visions*, requiring about three hours of class time. To cover the rest of the book, I'll discuss selections themselves in parentheses, with some additional personal evaluations and teaching tips in brackets.

- David G. Hartwell, "The Golden Age of Science Fiction Is Twelve." SF especially attractive to people who haven't found their place in the world yet. [Stories deal with young people in adult-controlled worlds.]
- James Patrick Kelly, "Mr. Boy." Manipulation by grown-ups—but self-responsible too.

1995, \$39, trade paper). You may order by credit card by calling toll-free 800-225-5800.

Neil Barron

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES ADDENDUM

As noted in Issue 245's publishing opportunities guide, the entry under St. Martin's Press, the Scholarly and Reference Division is now Palgrave, uniting the books with the British Macmillan as well as books from selected other academic publishers. Consult www.palgrave-usa.com for the backlist and forthcoming titles.

STEAM ENGINE TIME

Specs: 2/year; 40 pp./issue; A4 (roughly 8x12"); circulation - 700+

Audience: primarily fan

Review: not refereed

Contact: Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, <set@acnestis.demon.co.uk> or Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood VIC 3066, Australia, <gandc@mira.net>

Website: none yet

Style: no guidelines yet

Decision: 4-8 weeks

Submit: 1 copy to each editorial address, paper or disc; if e-mailed, as attachment in Word 97 or less

Sample: free on request

To contributor: 1 copy

Copyright: retained by contributor; publisher has rights to first appearance

Length: 2,000-8,000 words

Comments: Seeking primarily review articles or essays that provide an overview of a theme or device within SF, or articles on authors not the usual suspects in academic journals (Dick, Le Guin, etc.), such as Paul McAuley, Pat Cadigan, or Brian Aldiss. No book reviews or other material likely to date. Articles on genre history welcomes, along with short polemical pieces.

Issue 1, dated April 2000, contains Gillespie's rationale for another fanzine (Gillespie's SF Commentary, 1969 - , three-time Hugo nominee, just published its 30th anniversary issue.). This inaugural issue reprints talks and articles along with a few original pieces. David Seed discusses Cordwainer Smith's Instrumentality saga; Paul Kincaid's polemic laments SF's giving up on the future; Maureen Speller's 1999 piece discusses Pat Barker's *Another World* (1998); Gillespie praises Stapledon in a 1997 talk; Paul Kincaid's 1998 talk discusses British SF, which he judges is flowering; Speller examines Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory* (1984); Elaine Cochrane's 1996 piece praises the virtues of the neglected R.A. Rafferty. A handful of "Essentials" (best books lists by various hands) rounds out the issue, which is neatly printed in a two-column format. By the time you request a free sample, they may have set a subscription price.

DOOR INTO OCEAN STUDY GUIDE NOW ONLINE

A "Study Guide" for *A Door into Ocean* has now been posted at: http://www2.kenyon.edu/depts/biology/slonc/books/adoor_art/adoor_study.htm

Joan Slonczewski says, "It includes answers to biological and political questions I'm often asked, as well as some great links to 'real biology.' Don't miss the mating blue-ringed octopi. Comments and suggestions are welcome."

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SF REVAMPS ITS WEBSITE

The Center for the Study of Science Fiction recently redesigned its Website. The site includes information on next summer's Writers Workshop and Institute, and

- Jack Williamson, "Jamboree." [Deft storytelling—concentrate on how hints and suggestions present background, context.]
- Gene Wolfe, "The Death of Doctor Island." Child under "care"/control of adult society; is goal the individual's cure or utilization? [Morally complex, ambiguous (as in story's title); "facts" the story offers are incomplete and contradictory, making this much more difficult to figure out than Williamson and denying reader satisfaction of having figured it all out before conclusion. Nice contrast to McCaffrey.]
- Orson Scott Card, "Ender's Game." [Another immediately popular, rather simple-minded story.]
- John W. Campbell, Jr., "What Do You Mean . . . Human?" SF as idea-based: Can we get past preconceptions? [Actually, students made this the "But that's not SF!" section.]
- Terry Bisson, "Bears Discover Fire." Not the expected violent paranoid/tabloid response to surprise; instead, out-of-kilter calmness, neighborliness. [See my essay on Bisson, *New York Review of Science Fiction* #110, October 1997.]
- Philip José Farmer, "One Down, One to Go." Recognizing humanity across social barriers. [Probably my least favorite story in the book: social worker as ninja.]
- Ursula K. Le Guin, "Sur." Women adventurers who deliberately avoid competing with emotionally fragile males. [Students resist following this story's action, let alone irony; I supplemented it with "Nine Lives" as clearly recognizable SF.]
- Judith Merril, "Introduction to England Swings SF." Excitement at new possibilities opening up, chance to escape the dead past. [Stories also show the possibility of sliding into rut, repeating the past.]
- Gregory Benford, "Doing Lennon." AI hungers for life and fresh chances? Perhaps more so than most humans. . . .
- Brian W. Aldiss, "A Tupolev Too Far." What do we learn about human nature by watching a man strayed into our grim world from a different, saner timeline? Does healthy society mean individuals will be better people?
- Judith Tarr, "Them Old Hyannis Blues." Alternative history—is there a difference between political heroes and rock stars?
- Algis Budrys, "Paradise Charted." Besides rather good survey of SF history [less sound in overall literary context], stresses focus on humans and nature, adjusting to reality.
- Fred Saberhagen, "Masque of the Red Shift." Playing with familiar story elements [even more obvious if one knows the Poe story and clichéd space opera.]
- Frederik Pohl, "Redemption in the Quantum Realm." Considering interaction of modern egoism, salesmanship, and mass religion. [Popular story; understated, wry humor. I supplemented with Dick's "Faith of Our Fathers."]
- Dean Ing, "Devil You Don't Know." Barely-future thriller, with more SF in conclusion. [Good for sensitivity to diversity in looks, lifestyle.]
- Robert Jordan, *The Eye of the World* (excerpt). [Students wanted to know what this was doing here: Why fantasy—and a novel excerpt at that? I couldn't answer.]

- Lisa Goldstein, "Split Light." Consequences of choice. [Also interesting for male/female attitudes in historical context.]
- Kathryn Cramer, "Science Fiction and the Adventures of the Spherical Cow." Hard SF gives readers "emotional experience of discovering what is true." [One of the students' favorite essays.]
- Lucius Shepard, "The Sun Spider." [Useful for discussing SF and fantasy, story shows hunger for scientific discovery leading to expression of vindictive emotions, which in turn propels into fantasy situation at conclusion. Since there is only one story in this section, supplement with Wells' "The Star" to discuss attitude of Master Mathematician as it is upheld, undercut, and qualified by conclusion.]
- Samuel R. Delany, "Science Fiction and Literature—Or the Conscience of the King." Flexible use of language, leading to appreciation of alternative viewpoints, the play of interpretive space.
- Joanna Russ, "Souls." Historical, religious setting as alien to most readers as far future.
- John Varley, "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank." [Characters (and readers) must adjust to strange technology, situation.]
- James Tiptree, Jr., "The Girl Who Was Plugged In." [Another useful contrast to McCaffrey: Tiptree's protagonist more clearly victimized, and Tiptree as much ironic as sympathetic.]
- William Gibson, "Burning Chrome." [Students like the crisp, hard-boiled style, romantic mood.]
- Joanna Russ, "Towards an Aesthetic of Science Fiction." [SF is didactic, teaching faith in scientific method.]
- Gwyneth Jones, "Identifying the Object." Approach to truth blocked by human preconceptions.
- Nancy Kress, "The Mountain to Mohammed." Social-medical SF. [Very timely with concern about HMOs, universal health care. Another very popular story]
- Walter Jon Williams, "Wall, Stone, Craft." Cause and effect in creation of literature; if Lord Byron hadn't been crippled, how would he have influenced creation of Frankenstein? [Students lack historical background to see difference between real events and what the story shows.]
- Suzy McKee Charnas, "Boobs." Violent response to high school cruelty. [Another of the students' favorite stories; they can, however, appreciate the moral ambiguity of their enjoyment of the story's conclusion.]
- Brian Stableford, "To Bring in Fine Things: The Significance of Science Fiction Plots." Stories remind us that we have a choice of goals; SF is important because readers actually can shape the future.
- Andre Norton, "Spider Silk." [Generally disliked, not simply because it was fantasy but because it was stereotyped and tired.]
- Charles Sheffield, "A Braver Thing." Compulsion versus choice in scientific research, personal behavior. [One of my favorites: morally complex, challenging.]
- Susan Schwartz, "Getting Real." [Another student favorite; the "temp" connection was easy to see.]
- Vernor Vinge, "True Names." Virtual reality; compare with Gibson. [Good for discussing uses of escapism; moving beyond fear of the future to discovery of one's true identity.]

about Jim Gunn's new book from Scarecrow Press, *THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE-FICTION WRITING*, along with a sample chapter on critiquing stories in a workshop. You can visit the Website at: <<http://falcon.cc.ukans.edu/~sfcenter/>>

WEBSITE TO WATCH

Redsine is a very nice webzine that may be of interest to SFRA members. The latest issue, available at www.redsine.com, features several short stories by Pilgrim Award winner **Brian Stableford**, plus an interview with Stableford conducted by **Jeff Vandermeer**.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mack Hassler's new e-mail address is extrap@kent.edu.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

- compiled by Neil Barron
- * Denotes a book to be reviewed, if copy received. If you'd like to review such books write rneilbarron@hotmail.com.
- Barad, Judith and Ed Robertson. *The Ethics of Star Trek*. HarperCollins, December 2000.
- Delasara, Jan. *PopLit, PopCult and The X-Files: A Critical Exploration*. McFarland, 2000.
- * Eberle-Sinatra, Michael, ed. *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Faulkner*. St. Martins/Palgrave, November 2000.
- Fonstad, Karen Wynn. *The Atlas of Middle-earth*. Rev. ed. Houghton Mifflin, spring 2001. First pub. 1981. This is a reissue of the 1991 rev.ed.
- * Hammond, J.R. *A George Orwell Chronology*. St. Martin's/Palgrave, November 2000.
- * Hammond Wayne G. and Christina Scull. *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*.

HarperCollins, UK, September 2001.

Jacobs, Edward H. *Accidental Migrations: An Archeology of Gothic Discourse*. Bucknell University Press, October 2000.

Lentz, Harris M. III. *Science Fiction, Horror & Fantasy Film and Television Credits*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. Scarecrow, 2001.

* Madison, Bob. *American Horror Writers*. Enslow Publishers, January 2001.

McCloud, Scott. *Reinventing Comics*. HarperPerennial, October 2000.

Nardo, Don, ed. *Readings on Frankenstein*. Greenhaven Press, October 2000.

Palmer, Randy. *Herschell Gordon Lewis, Godfather of Gore*. McFarland, 2000.

Ratcliff, John D. *A History of the Hobbit*. HarperCollins, UK, October 2000.

Resnick, Mike. *Putting It Together: Turning Sow's Ear Drafts into Silk Purse Stories*. Wildside Press, October 2000.

* Shippey, Tom. *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. HarperCollins UK, September 2000; Houghton Mifflin, spring 2001.

* Siodmak, Curt. *Wolf Man's Maker: Memoir of a Hollywood Writer*. Scarecrow Press, December 2000.

* Stanton, Michael N. *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards: The Wonders and Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings"*. St. Martin's/Palgrave, February 2001.

* Sutton, David. *On the Fringe for Thirty Years: A History of Horror in the British Small Press*. Shadow Pub., UK, October 2000.

* Theroux, Alexander. *The Strange Case of Edward Gorey*. Fantagraphics, September 2000.

Titans: The Heroic Visions of Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, text by

ON TEACHING VISIONS OF WONDER

Michael Levy

On the plus side, I'm fortunate enough to be able to teach science fiction once a year. On the minus side, I teach at a technical university, and our department's only major is in Technical Communication. On the plus side, many of my students are scientifically literate. On the minus side, few of them are literate in any other way.

I used *Visions of Wonder* for the first time last fall, was generally pleased with the book, and will use it again in September. Previously, I'd used a variety of anthologies, including the old Greenberg and Warrick SFRA text, Sargent's recent two-volume *Women of Wonder* books (for a one-shot course on SF and gender), and an old Silverberg anthology whose title escapes me. I generally do a combination of short stories and novels, and although I do tend to group stories thematically, I rarely set up elaborate organizational schemes. Dealing with non-English majors, my critical approach is basic, eclectic, and essentially jargon-free. I'm interested in three things: 1) did my students enjoy the stories? 2) did they understand them on the basic level of what happened? and 3) did they understand the most important underlying themes? I have to admit that we spend a fair amount of time on gender issues, matters of political content, and questions of how technological change will directly effect my students' lives in the near future. I deal with these issues both because I'm interested in them and because my students can connect with them (although it's worth noting that we frequently disagree, particularly on matters of gender and politics). I rarely deal with the stories' formal structure or style, largely because these two topics are of little or no interest to my audience.

The majority of my students do consider themselves fans of science fiction, although in most cases their primary familiarity with the genre involves *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and *Babylon 5*. In a class of thirty I'll have perhaps a dozen students who have actually read Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, Bradbury, and Herbert, perhaps two or three who have read Le Guin, Card, or Gibson, and probably no one who has read Kim Stanley Robinson, Octavia Butler, or Bruce Sterling. Here, with annotations, is my reading list from last year. I made no attempt to use all of the stories in the book.

- Saberhagen, "Masque of the Red Shift"—I started with this because it was the closet thing to old-fashioned space opera in the book and because I thought they might make connections with Poe. No one did, however, until I pointed them out, and I discovered that I really didn't like the story very much. My students had some trouble with the physics background, in part because Saberhagen's terminology is dated. I probably won't use it again.
- Gibson, "Burning Chrome"—I assumed that with all of the tech people in the audience, there'd be some cyberpunks, but no one identified himself or herself as such. The three goths in the class liked it, though. This is a wonderful story, and I will use it again; but my students found it very difficult to understand on the level of plot and language. Ditto *Neuromancer*, which I taught later in the semester.
- Kress, "The Mountain to Mohammed"—This was a very successful story, although several people insisted that it wasn't science fiction. My students found it a useful jumping-off point for discussing the near future of medicine, managed care, abortion, etc. Several interesting papers grew out of this story.
- Heinlein, *Double Star*.

- Bear, "Blood Music"—Several students found this story far-fetched and depressing, but it served as a useful jumping-off point for a discussion of scientific responsibility. In this regard it connected nicely with the Kress and Sheffield stories.
- Card, "Ender's Game"—Possibly the most popular story we read, as you might expect, at least with the men in the class. A few students had trouble believing in the concept of children as ruthless warriors. I tried to tie the story to *Double Star* and questions of xenophobia and mindless patriotism, with mixed results.
- Le Guin, "Sur"—I love this story, but it was pretty much of a failure so far as the class was concerned. Again, they couldn't see why it was SF. One of the main ideas in the story, as I teach it, is the fact that everything seems routine because the women plan well and don't do anything heroically stupid, but this idea either bored or offended a number of the men in the class.
- Varley, "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank"—This was a generally successful story, although the psychic transfer mechanism Varley describes is rather cumbersome. Students seem to like stories about virtual reality or people stuck inside of computers.
- Bisson, "Bears Discover Fire"—I love this story, and it seemed to work well, although again a number of students didn't see why it was science fiction. Many of my students come from rural Wisconsin and found that they could connect with the story's rural milieu. Also, the characters' willingness to accept what are in effect aliens compares and contrasts in an interesting fashion with Card's "Ender's Game" and *Double Star*.
- McCaffrey, "The Ship Who Sang"—This story really creaks, but the students love it, partly for the romance, I suspect. It led to an interesting discussion of the nature of free will and the question of whether or not the heroine should in fact return to her responsibilities.
- Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*.
- Benford, "Doing Lennon"—A popular story, in part because the students still know who John Lennon is, and in part, I suspect, because it interacts with a particular young adult fantasy. Worked with the Varley and, later, the Tiptree, in a number of discussions of identity and the nature of reality.
- Sheffield, "A Braver Thing"—I like this story, but the students didn't. It's possible that the questions of personal responsibility and cheating that it raised struck too close to the bone.
- Tiptree, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In"—The students generally liked this story, although they found it a bit painful. It made interesting connections with both the Varley and the McCaffrey stories. I received a very good paper comparing this Tiptree story to "The Ship Who Sang."
- Gibson, *Neuromancer*.
- Vinge, "True Names"—I was disappointed by this story. It didn't impress me as much now as it had when I first read it, and I found relatively little to say about it. The students' preferred it to *Neuromancer*, though, and particularly enjoyed it as a role-playing game.
- Charnas, "Boobs"—This was probably the most successful story we read, at least from the viewpoint of class participation. The title in particular led to an interesting discussion of symbolism and puns, and the students found that they could really sink their teeth into the story's complex moral issues. There were some fairly angry interchanges about high school sexual harassment that made some of the men rather defensive.



- Nigel Suckling. Thunder's Mouth, December 2000.
- Ullery, David A. *The Tarzan Novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs: An Illustrated Reader's Guide*. McFarland, 2001.
- Wiater, Stanley and Christopher Golden, eds. *The Stephen King Universe*. Renaissance Media, November 2000.
- * Winter, Douglas E. *Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic*. HarperCollins, October 2001.
- Yolen, Jane. *Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie & Folklore in the Literature of Childhood*. August House, October 2000. (Sixteen essays, six more than the 1981 ed.)
- * Zipes, Jack. *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*. Routledge, December 2000.

CALLS FOR PAPERS AND PROPOSALS

Literature and Metaphysics: A Collection of Essays

Deadline: April 2001

We are seeking essays exploring the rich connections between literature and the metaphysical traditions. Western scholarship has often overlooked the metaphysical and spiritual traditions in which authors and their literature participate. This neglect has been caused by a lack of knowledge about such issues, a materialist prejudice on the part of academia, the secrecy of many metaphysical societies, as well as other reasons.

Topics for such essays could include specific metaphysical organizations such as the Golden Dawn, Masons, and Rosicrucians; specific spiritual teachers such as Gurdjieff; myth and literature; religion and literature; astrology; transcendentalism; the Romantics; the Grail legend; alternative Christian history; alchemy; connections

to ancient traditions such as Celtic and Druidic, Teutonic, Native American, African, Moorish, Egypt, the Kabbala, the Essenes, Gnosticism, Eastern metaphysics, Vedanta, Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, shamanism and contemporary pagan. This list is suggestive, not inclusive.

Send contributions to Theresa L. Crater, Editor; Metropolitan State College of Denver; Department of English; Campus Box 32, P.O. Box 173362; Denver, CO 80217-3362; 303.556.4095; Cratert@mscd.edu.

The Journal of Popular Film and Television announces a special Summer 2002, issue entitled: FANTASTIC VOYAGES: Horror, Fantasy, and Science-Fiction/Speculative Cinema

Deadline: September 1, 2001

We wish to cast a wide net regarding subjects and critical approaches for this issue. Possibilities include:

Interrogation of contemporary technological developments and cultural conflicts.

Archival and historical investigation.

Gender-bending and challenges to traditional gender roles.

Genre blending: conflation of horror and science-fiction/speculative cinema with other genres.

Impact of the Internet and cyber-reality.

Utopian and dystopian futures.

Theophany and spirituality: horror, fantasy, and speculative cinema as "spilt" religion.

National inflection of these genres.

Body horror.

Due date for all submissions is 1 September, 2001. THIS DATE IS FIRM!

- Bujold, *Brother in Arms*. Combining with the Tiptree and the McCaffrey stories, we had an interesting discussion of disability and its portrayal in fiction.
- Wolfe, "The Death of Doctor Island"—The students didn't like this story very much, perhaps because it was hard and the semester was coming to an end.

[Ed. These two essays on *Visions of Wonder* were pulled from the October 1999 issue of the *Review* (#242) and grew out of a talk at the Mobile conference.]

THEORY & BEYOND

Edited by Joan Gordon and Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard

BORDERLANDS THEORY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Robin Anne Reid

In 1987, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa was published by Spinsters/Aunt Lute Press, an independent press. Twelve years later, a second edition was published by the same press with an introduction by Sonia Saldívar-Hull who is also the editor of *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature*. Anzaldúa's other publications include *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), co-edited with Cherríe Moraga; and *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990). These works all have one important similarity: they create a rhetorical and political space that crosses boundaries, a discourse that analyzes and confronts racism in Anglo feminism and mainstream American culture, sexism in Chicano/Latino communities (and in other "minority" American cultures), and classism and homophobia in all communities and cultures. The voices of these works are often those excluded not only by a dominant patriarchal culture but by revolutionary movements as well.

Anzaldúa's work is important in women's studies and feminist studies, as part of the growing contributions by women of color to feminist theory, and in Chicana/Latina studies. Saldívar-Hull claims in *Feminism on the Border* that *Borderlands/La Frontera* has appeared in "courses on feminist theory, contemporary American women writers, autobiography, Chicana/o and Latina/o literature, cultural studies, and even major American authors" (Introduction, 1). In a chapter devoted to *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Saldívar-Hull analyzes the methods Anzaldúa uses: an oppositional stance towards "history" (what has been recorded and what has been excluded); the need to recover an indigenous heritage, including the "centrality of female deities" (60); an awareness of the multiple aspects of identity for feminists of color; and new/recovered mythmaking. Such work, Saldívar-Hull argues and I would agree, is utopian in nature. However, Anzaldúa's work focuses on ways to develop the oppositional consciousness needed to bring about change.

While Anzaldúa is not the first writer or theorist to explore the concept of Borderlands, her complex and multilingual work is seen as contributing important concepts to feminist and cultural theory. The theory of "La conciencia de la mestiza," a "Mestiza consciousness," explores multiple aspects of identity and political awareness. Anzaldúa brings together class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, language, and historicity in a political manifesto. Although she speaks of her own life growing up in the borderlands culture between Texas and Mexico, Anzaldúa makes it clear that the physical, psychological, sexual, and spiritual Borderlands she explores are not particular to her story or situation:

In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.... It's not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger and exploitation are the prominent features of this landscape. However, there have been compensations for this

mestiza, and certain joys. Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind. I have the sense that certain 'faculties'—not just in me but in every border resident, colored or non-colored—and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened (preface, no page number).

The relevance of Anzaldúa's work to science fiction may not be immediately apparent, especially if "science fiction" is understood to mean only those literary works based on "hard" science. A search of the MLA Database in December 2000 shows that the keyword "borderlands" results in 102 hits, with 67 of those sources referring to or focusing on Gloria Anzaldúa's work. One of those citations brings Anzaldúa's work together with science fiction: Kevin Concannon's "The Contemporary Space of the Border: Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and William Gibson's *Neuromancer*," which appeared the 1998 winter edition of *Textual Practice*. A second citation leads to an article which uses the concept of the Borderlands without citing Anzaldúa: Carol Franko's "Acts of Attention at the Borderlands: Le Guin's *The Beginning Place* Revisited," which appeared in a 1996 issue of *Extrapolation*. And, although I cannot be absolutely positive, I am fairly sure that many of the courses in which Anzaldúa's work is taught exclude science fiction, although fantastic literature that comes under the academic label of "magical realism" may well appear.

However, if the genre category is shifted to "speculative fiction" (SF), as a broader and more inclusive terminology, and if the context also includes feminist SF and feminist approaches to SF, the relevance of Anzaldúa's work becomes more apparent. One feminist concept that has become almost commonplace is the extent to which women SF writers use the concept of "alien" to explore women's position in a patriarchal society. Given the extent to which immigrants to America are legally and uncritically categorized as "alien," Anzaldúa's use of the word "alien" in her description of the Borderlands (and in her construction of *mestiza* identity) focuses on exclusions based on race, ethnicity, class, and sexual identity, as well as gender.

Anzaldúa's concept of the Borderlands, a theoretical and political analysis of the relationship between cultures which characterizes identity as multiple and shifting, taking into account class as well as race, sexuality as well as gender, and focusing on the postcolonial "interstices" between national powers, provides useful ways of understanding some contemporary speculative fiction and may prove useful in developing readings of earlier sf works as well.

Earlier science fiction often reflects the sense of space as a frontier, a term used by President Kennedy in promoting space travel in the 1960s and picked up by Gene Roddenberry in the original *Star Trek* television show. The importance of the "frontier" to American history and culture was not original. The idea that America's development was more affected by the sense of a continual interaction with a changing frontier (and with the indigenous populations) than by imported European ideas was first and most famously propounded by an historian, Frederick Jackson Turner in *The Frontier and American History*. Additionally, the concept of the frontier as the defining characteristic of "American Literature" (the canonical American literature by white men) became a staple of American literary studies as well, though the centrality of the frontier thesis in both history and literary studies has been challenged in the second half of the 20th century.

The frontier as theoretical concept relies upon the idea of a central and more "civilized" or urbanized center, which is technologically advanced, in contrast to a more "primitive" and less advanced margin, or frontier. This point of view contains assumptions that are based upon the hierarchical structure of center and margin. Realistic and naturalistic American literature reflected a split between the civilized/central East and the marginal/marginalized West. In terms of power structures within America, the "center" is constructed as the domain of the elite



Papers hopefully no longer than 20 pages, including references, MLA format if possible. Disk, preferably PC, together with 2 hard copies, double space. SASE if return is desired.

Authors should indicate whether a paper can be considered for a general issue of *JPFT*, if it cannot be published in the special issue.

Send all submissions to Harvey Roy Greenberg, MD, 320 West 86th Street, Apartment 3A, New York City, NY 10024-3139. Inquiries to Dr. Greenberg at this address, 212 595 5220, or HRGSMES@AOL.COM.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT PAPERS BY E-MAIL.

MYTHOSPHERE

William G. Doty, Editor in Chief

University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

Mythosphere: A Journal for Image, Myth and Symbol is conceived as an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary journal in the humanities, and intends to aim for integration of information across several disciplines and fields of inquiry; authors will share their special expertise, not in the highly technical diction of specialist journals, but rather on a level of articulation appropriate for a wide range of scholars and educated readers from different backgrounds alike.

This journal proposes to present and analyze myths, mythology, ritual, symbols, and imagery, in folk and popular culture; encourages studies that recognize and emphasize the meanings of such materials within their socio-historical contexts (including secondary elaborations and indirect influences in the arts) rather than

as “textualized” artifacts treated in the abstract; invites contributions from many areas of interest, including American and cultural studies; classics; religious studies and philosophy; literature and languages; anthropology; gender, feminist and queer studies; fine arts and art history; semiotics, rhetoric, and speech communications; iconography and iconology.

Mythosphere is oriented towards hermeneutics, semiotics, iconography, and mythography: that is, toward accessible presentation and interpretation; for example, essays may focus upon analysis of the mythopoetics of a contemporary artist or poet, or upon multicultural manifestations of a particular image or mythic figure/theme; not oriented toward any particular methodology (such as that of Eliade, Jung, Campbell, or social-scientific approaches), *Mythosphere* welcomes reconsiderations of earlier scholarship and theoretical discussions of methodologies for the study of images, myths, and rituals; applied demonstrations of what various critical methods can reveal as new knowledge are particularly solicited.

The journal will be open to contemporary expressions of mythic materials in the arts; intends to be a place for interpretative analyses of the significance of cultural observances and expressions of value, and the changes in models of the hero/ine in films/paintings/literature; is concerned with gender modeling/issues related to traditional materials and whether contemporary gender studies new insights into traditional texts/rituals; seeks to loosen the disciplinary boundaries now so prevalent in academe by opening up to multicontributor essays, and/or

(primarily Anglo) culture, and the margins are inhabited by all minority cultures and, some feminists would argue, white women as well.

Arguably, American science fiction (a literature originating and rising with the Industrial Revolution) tends to reproduce that relationship between central power and marginal frontier in multiple and metaphorical ways with central/richer/more advanced planets or cultures (often Earth) in opposition to colonized/poorer/primitive planets or cultures. The criticism that sf reproduces a “white” future in which all other ethnic groups have apparently been eliminated is related to this tendency in sf. Given the historical developments of the second half of the 20th century that have affected America’s position in the world, the frontier metaphor/motif can no longer be uncritically accepted. Some American sf and SF writers reflect a shift to what can be analyzed as a Borderlands perspective, a perspective in which multiple aspects of identity are examined while boundaries previously thought to be solidly constructed fall. Science or speculative fiction which breaks down assumptions of heterosexism, which foregrounds consciousness of class issues, which questions American supremacy in space and technological development, which crosses gender boundaries, which presents multicultural futures (or all of the above) can be understood as sf or SF from the Borderlands.

Anzaldúa’s work can be used in a variety of courses, as Saldívar-Hull has noted, but I would like to show the pedagogical implications of using Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* by describing my graduate-level theory course, which was assigned to “Texts and Gender” and described in the catalog as: “A critical examination of how gender differences influence reading and writing strategies of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and film, including issues of gender and style, gender and usage, and gender stereotyping.” I focused the course around three different theoretical approaches to gender and incorporated novels that were built upon questioning traditional attitudes about gender. The three “theory” texts I used were: *History of Sexuality, Vol. I* (Michel Foucault), *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Gloria Anzaldúa) and “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” (from Donna Haraway’s *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*).

The three core novels were: Orlando (Virginia Woolf), *Ceremony* (Leslie Marmon Silko), and *Dawn* (Octavia Butler). Students then chose two novels from the following list to read and present on for class: *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Ursula K. LeGuin), *The Female Man* (Joanna Russ), *Ethan of Athos* (Lois McMaster Bujold), *Grass* (Sheri S. Tepper), *The Temple of My Familiar* (Alice Walker), and *The Gilda Stories* (Jewelle Gomez). Part of their presentation requirement was to do an analysis of the gender theories and roles in the novel, applying the theories we’d read earlier in the term.

Anzaldúa’s work gave them the most to work with. By the end of the course, the concept of the Borderlands not only helped them discuss the various SF novels, but also made meaning out of their experiences in graduate school as they struggled to learn a new language and to make sense of the dominant culture.

One potentially problematic issue could be the accusation of appropriation: an Anglo teacher (I am fourth generation Welsh-American.) “stealing” or colonizing work by a woman of color such as Anzaludua. The issue of appropriation is a serious one.

However, since I am interested in making connections between all the “marginalized” literatures and in questioning academic boundaries/borders as well as national and political ones, Anzaldúa’s work has proved invaluable in that effort. If the “borderlands” theory becomes as influential as the “frontier” theory, it will be because it makes sense when applied to a large variety of cultural texts and productions.

**FROM THE WANDERING JEW
TO WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.**

Neil Barron

Gardner, Martin. *From the Wandering Jew to William F. Buckley, Jr.: On Science, Literature and Religion*. Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive Amherst, NY 14228, October 2000. 350 p. \$27. 1-57392-852-6. Orders to 800-421-0351.

Gardner (1911 -) was a charter subscriber to *Amazing Stories* and laments in two of these essays and reviews that he didn't retain the early issues. I first read him when he wrote the "Mathematical Games" department from 1956 to 1981 for *Scientific American*, to which I subscribed for some years. Two of his reprinted book reviews deal with his long-standing interest in math. Others are linked to his early interest in pseudoscience, beginning with his 1952 book, *In the Name of Science* (revised in 1956 as *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* and still available as Dover trade paperback). He has had several later collections, such as 1998's *The New Age: Notes of a Fringe-Watcher* and the October 2000 book from Norton, *Did Adam and Eve Have Navels?*, which skewers similar imbecilities, some of them pseudoscientific, others religious. If you've read any of his essays written in this vein, you may find his debunking here a bit repetitious.

Of most interest to SFRA members are his pieces dealing with literature. A minor piece explores word play in the fantasies of L. Frank Baum, with more substantial pieces devoted to two of Baum's Oz series, *The Scarecrow of Oz* and *The Marvelous Land of Oz*. Also reprinted are introductions to Dover reprints of three of Wells' novels: *The Conquest of Time* (1941), a selection of six stories from *The Country of the Blind and Other Science Fiction Stories* (1911), and *Anticipations* (1901, revised in 1902, new introduction in 1914). He notes the mixed success of Wells as a prophet and his espousal of a "guided democracy" little different from the tyrannies of this century. His introduction from a 1991 reprint of Chesterton's 1904 fantasy *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (set in 1984) speculates that Orwell's choice of the same year was probably just a "curious coincidence." Orwell himself and scholars who have studied his work agree that the year was simply derived from the reversal of the last two digits of the year in which Orwell wrote most of his novel *1984*.

The one original essay in this collection is a nineteen-page profile of Hugo Gernsback, which reproduces the black-and-white covers of *Science* and *Invention*, which (with *Sexology*) were the only ones of the many magazines he founded and edited that lasted any significant time. Gardner praises Gernsback's boosterism for science and technology while readily admitting that his fiction was atrocious and his influence on SF lamentable. There's not much more here that isn't in Moskowitz's chapter in his *Explorers of the Infinite* and in Mark Siegel's short 1988 study from Borgo, *Hugo Gernsback: Father of Modern Science Fiction*, but Gardner's book is likely to be much more accessible to the average reader.

Gardner is an accomplished essayist and reviewer, and the plainness of his style contributes to his clarity. If you share his interest in these subjects, you'll find a number of essays worth your time.

[Although he does not deal with literary matters, Robert Park is a gifted writer and is equally—if not more—effective as a debunker in his *Voodoo Science: The Road from Foolishness to Fraud* (Oxford, May 2000). Voodoo is an umbrella term embracing pathological science (scientists fool themselves, e.g., cold fusion); junk science (worthless arguments are deliberately intended to mislead, e.g., as in the unsuccessful

theme- or methodology-driven collective contributions; will cover developments in new audio-visual and computer-intensive models of instruction and references; not only theoretical but pragmatic/pedagogical reflections will be included; will seek studies of visual or enacted (ritual) features of materials that are presently treated almost exclusively in textual terms.

E-mail questions or comments to the Editor at myth@rel.as.ua.edu or wdoty@simplecom.net or visit Mythosphere's web site at <http://www.gbhap.com/Mythosphere>. To see the journal's Notes For Contributors, go to <http://www.gbhap.us.com/journals/257/257-nfc.htm>.

Send all manuscript and inquiries to:

Mythosphere

P.O. Box 11005

Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-9617

For subscription inquiries, please call 1-800-545-8398 or send e-mail to: info@gbhap.com.

Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities

Deadline: May 1, 2001

Although the humanness of monsters (and the monstrosity of humans) has always been a theme in horror films and fiction, it was only after the simultaneous appearance of *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom* in 1960 that the cinematic representation of "human monsters" became of central interest to screenwriters, directors, and—most importantly—to the viewing public. Even a number of recent horror-thriller-suspense films ostensibly concerned with supernatural entities and/or occurrences (e.g., *Hideaway* [1995], *The Frighteners* [1996], *Fallen* [1998], *In Dreams* [1999]) have managed to

concoct more or less plausible ways of bringing psychotics, mass murderers, and serial killers into the mix.

Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities is calling for contributors to a special issue on "Realist Horror Cinema." Possible topics include, but are not limited to: sociohistorical, theoretical, or cinematic accounts of the "evolution" of this highly controversial subgenre; the aesthetics of violence in realist horror cinema; the creative merging of natural and supernatural elements in realist horror films; spectator analyses dealing with (e.g.) the extent to which the blurring of reality and fiction in these films reinforces un/justified feelings of paranoia in audiences; and the "bleeding" of realist horror cinema into other mediums (e.g., television, theatre), and other filmic genres (e.g., action, drama).

While the primary focus of this issue will be American realist horror films, papers on applicable international films will be considered as well. Also encouraged are substantive interviews with realist horror filmmakers, and book reviews up to 1,000 words in length.

Submissions should be previously unpublished, no longer than 24 pages, double-spaced, and including documentation (MLA preferred). Submit three hard copies of your manuscript, plus one disk copy (in WORD format). Include a SASE for return of manuscripts and disk, should that be necessary.

DEADLINE: MAY 1, 2001

Please address all inquiries, and send all submissions, to:
Steven Jay Schneider
Guest Editor, *Post Script* "Realist Horror" Issue
69 5th Avenue, Apt. 7J

suits against utilities for alleged cancer-causing power lines); pseudoscience (e.g., wearing magnets in your shoes); and fraudulent science (e.g., "vitamin O" = water). SF readers may resent his trenchant criticisms of manned (as distinct from unmanned) space travel, the space station, etc. You can sample Park easily by checking his weekly essays at www.aps.org/WN—Ed

NONFICTION REVIEW

OUT OF TIME

Neil Barron

Brosterman, Norman. *Out of Time: Designs for the Twentieth-Century Future*. Abrams, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011, November 2000. 96 p. \$19.95, trade paper. 0-8109-1939-2.

"Since people started dreaming, they have viewed and visited the future continuously; when they began writing about and drawing what they found, the rest of us got to tag along," says Brosterman, a writer, architect, artist, and collector (many of the ninety illustrations, forty-eight in color, are reproduced from the original drawings and paintings). The literary dreaming goes back centuries, but illustration was much less common until the 1880's, when the development of cheap wood pulp paper and half-tone photomechanical reproduction made illustrated magazines (*The Strand* in the UK and *Munsey's* in the US, for example) and books commonplace. No history of written SF or the pulps generally could be complete without an illustrated companion; two of the best are Vincent Di Fate's *Infinite Worlds* and Robert Lesser's *Pulp Art* (both 1997).

The important work of Albert Robida (1848-1926) is shown, one of the illustrations anticipating his many depictions of future military hardware. All the icons familiar to both long-time SF fans and others with even a casual interest in the history of technology are here, from always-streamlined vehicles (cars, monorails, and, of course, spaceships) to antiseptic metal, plastic, and glass cities. Technological optimism is by far the dominant tone; the nightmares of, say, *Metropolis* or *Blade Runner* are absent.

The illustrations come not only from the SF pulps but also from popular science magazines (including some of Gernsback) and from industrial and architectural design, some of it highlighted at various World's Fair exhibits. If your visit Manhattan, check out the Museum of the City of New York, which has a color gouache pavilion design by Frank R. Paul, submitted but never used for the 1939 World's Fair and never, so far as I know, ever reproduced elsewhere.

Brosterman is an exceptionally knowledgeable guide, and the text is informed and balanced. Most of the illustrators have short biographies, and the bibliography is an excellent one. Fortunately, you may not have to rely on reviews to see these works, which are part of a Smithsonian travelling exhibit, which opened in Tacoma, Washington, in November and will be at many sites throughout the country until it closes in May 2003 in Oceanville, NJ. Check www.si.edu/sites for the schedule.

Brosterman's words highlight the importance of the exhibit: "Like the undersung Frank Paul, none of the other artists responsible for delineating the last century in science fiction [...] and in the mechanix world [...] is likely to turn up in an art-history reference or textbook on modern architecture or design. But as a group they created an alternative twentieth century, a spirited, future-flavored zeitgeist whose impact and influence on the *real* world—in automotive and industrial design, fash-

ion, warfare, space exploration, high art and low—although barely acknowledged, has been universal.

NONFICTION REVIEW

SCIENCE FICTION, CRITICAL FRONTIERS

Amelia Rutledge

Sayer, Karen and John Moore, eds. *Science Fiction, Critical Frontiers*. St. Martin's, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, September 2000. Xii + 219 p. \$59.95. 0-312-23113-1. London: Macmillan. 0-333-74086-0. US orders to 888-230-8477.

This collects twelve essays from "Envisioning Alternatives: The Literature of Science Fiction," a 1996 conference sponsored by the University of Luton. The first four essays survey utopian SF theory from the 1960's through the 1990's. Darko Suvin surveys the politics and economics of the period between 1917 and 1989 and re-situates his seminal concept, the "novum," in a consideration of what is required to produce a historically informed and efficacious criticism of SF. He resists a retreat into easy apocalypse or into "atopic" textualizing, while affirming the need for both formal analysis and "dynamic alternatives" that resist hegemonic "polarities." Patrick Parrinder, opposing Suvin's use of metaphor as a defining characteristic of SF, asks whether a new prophetic SF will redefine this fictional mode as "metaphorical" as SF becomes less easily distinguished from the novel of ideas. Gregory Paschalidis' most interesting suggestion posits the new utopian SF as not simply embodying utopian ideals but also enacting them in its figural representations—responses to the postmodernist poetics of subjectivity and narrativity. Tom Moylan moves from the successful "concrete utopias" of the 1960's and 1970's to the possibilities for critical agency in SF today, selecting critical/theoretical work by Suvin, Russ, Jameson, and K. Spenser, among others, for special notice, and concludes with brief discussions of exemplary cultural critique in Butler's *The Parable of the Sower*, Piercy's *He, She, and It*, and the Orange County and Mars books by Robinson.

Eight essays comprise the second section, "Envisioning Alternatives: Reading SF." Carlos Seligo surveys the hybridization controversy in the writing of Linnaeus and Erasmus Darwin to argue that Shelley was less concerned with whether the creation of a nature/science hybrid was monstrous than with whether, given that Frankenstein succeeded, the natural/unnatural dichotomy was still meaningful. Salvatore Proietti discusses the "frontier" rhetoric of cyberspace as a reenactment of the tropes of Turner's American frontier thesis. Jeffrey Tucker's essay on Delany's *Dahlgren* joins a scrupulously close reading with an analysis of the ways Delany problematizes the production of narratives, especially that of the myth of the black rapist. Joan Haran traces the evolution of Piercy's feminist positions regarding science. A welcome essay is Susan Tebbutt's discussion of the reception of Gudrun Pausewang's anti-nuclear fiction for young readers; her perceptive readings indicate an author worthy of wider readership.

The subjects of the other essays include *Naked Lunch* and *Blade Runner* in the context of postmodernism, C.L. Moore's "No Woman Born" as anticipatory of current discussions of female subjectivity, Sheri Tepper's *The Gate to Women's Country*, and Card's Homecoming series as deficient in utopian content. A worthy addition to personal collections of SF criticism, but its price is likely to limit it to larger university libraries.

15

New York, N.Y. 10003

Tel: (212) 242-0956 // Fax: (646) 638-3438

E-mail:

<sschneid@fas.harvard.edu>

Homepage: <<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~sschneid/>>

or to *Post Script's* General Editor:

Professor Gerald Duchovnay

General Editor, *Post Script*

Department of Literature and Languages

Texas A&M University

Commerce, TX 75429-3011

E-mail:

<Gerald_Duchovnay@tamu-commerce.edu>

Post Script can be found on the web at:

<<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/litlang/PostScript.html>>

Slayage: An Online International Journal of Buffy Studies

David Lavery (Homepage: <http://www.mtsu.edu/~dlavery/>) and Rhonda V. Wilcox, the editors of an in-development book, *Fighting the Forces: Essays on the Meaning of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, solicit your possible contributions to *Slayage: An Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, a new, refereed, e-journal. Go here to see the *Slayage* site: <http://www.slayage.tv/>

We welcome proposals (including at least a full paragraph description of your essay and a title) or completed essays on any aspect of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

All essays should be submitted electronically.

Please contact the editors via e-mail: dlavery@mtsu.edu; Rhondapcas@aol.com

We are open to all kinds of ideas on any aspect of the series and/or its television context. Here

are some possible topics (this is not intended as an exhaustive list):

Allusions
 Ancillary texts (comics, novels, Watcher's Guides, The Monster Book, etc.)
 Buffy and Columbine
 Buffy and queer theory
 Buffy from a content analysis perspective
 Buffy from a cultural studies perspective
 Buffy from a feminist perspective
 Buffy from a Lacanian perspective
 Buffy from a narratological perspective
 Buffy from a reader/viewer response perspective
 Buffy from a semiotic perspective
 Buffy in the media
 Buffy on the Internet
 The characters/monsters/world of Buffy
 Dreams in Buffy
 Estrangement
 Faith
 Gender
 Generational interaction or Gen X depictions
 Humor
 Individual episodes
 Intertextuality
 Language
 Pop culture references
 Postmodernism and Buffy
 Representation of college/high school/teens
 Self-referentiality
 Subtexts
 Themes
 Vampire mythology
 Violence/action
 Witchcraft/Wicca
 Women in production

WisCon 25, The Conference of Feminist Science Fiction Memorial Day weekend, May 25-28 2001, at the Concourse

BEYOND DRACULA

Karen McGuire

Hughes, William. *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and Its Cultural Context*. St Martin's, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, October 2000. xi + 216 p. \$59.95. London: Macmillan. 0-333-74034-3. US orders to 888-230-8477.

Beyond Dracula contextualizes several of Stoker's novels in Victorian culture because Hughes believes too little attention has been given to Stoker's lesser-known works and to his interpretation of popular theology, women's roles, masculinity, and pathology in his society. Not doubt both assumptions are true, but Hughes needed an overriding premise to tie the societal interests and specific works he analyzed into a cohesive whole. Basically, he needed stronger justification for another text on Stoker's work because of a number of recent and better studies of Stoker's writing, such as David Glover's *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (1996), Carol Margaret Davison's *Bram Stoker's Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*, and Elizabeth Miller's *Dracula: The Shade and the Shadow* (1998). Of course, the latter two focus primarily on *Dracula*; whereas, *Beyond Dracula* does what its title states by emphasizing Stoker's other novels. However, the selections of *The Snake's Pass* and *The Man to illustrate Stoker's presentation of the chivalric gentleman or Under Sunset and Jewel of the Seven Stars* to illuminate Stoker's theological context, for example, seem arbitrary. Hughes also doesn't make a case for including some works while neglecting others, such as *Lair of the White Worm*, admittedly a novel worthy of neglect.

As Hughes says, each chapter can be read independently as analyses of the texts considered in that chapter. Therein lies a difficulty of this critical study. The parts read like independent articles with no continuity other than the necessarily vague "cultural context" for the issues examined in the various works. Aware of this lack of continuity, Hughes states that the chapters are interrelated "because of the plurality of discourses within Edwardian and Victorian society," but the same could be said of almost any society. The individual analyses never come together even though sections, such as Chapter 4 on hysterical pathology and physiological medicine in *Dracula*, present strong readings. This slim volume provides cultural contexts for seven of Stoker's works but needed to provide either more analysis of more works or a more sweeping focus to justify its price. I can recommend *Beyond Dracula* only to those who collect everything written about Stoker's works, surely a narrower audience than Hughes would wish to address.

CAULDRON OF CHANGE

Karen McGuire

Crosby, Janice C. *Cauldron of Changes: Feminist Spirituality in Fantastic Fiction*. McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, July 2000. ix + 205 p. \$28.50, trade paperback. 0-7864-0848-0. Orders to 800-253-2187.

Because Crosby (English, Southern University, Baton Rouge) carefully defines her scope, *Cauldron of Changes* fulfills her objectives with a well-organized analysis of feminist spirituality and provides effective readings of several fine works of feminist fantasy. She states, "My study focuses on the presence of spiritual feminist beliefs as they occur in contemporary fantastic fiction by European American, African American, and Jewish American authors." With that focus firmly in sight, she separates the analysis into sections on rewriting traditional legends, seeking personal empowerment, questing for the Goddess, and presenting women as healer/wisdom figures. Within each of these

subcategories, Crosby emphasizes close readings of characterization and themes in works by diverse writers such as Gale Baudino, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Octavia Butler, Patricia Kennealy-Morrison, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Starhawk, and Alice Walker.

Crosby argues that the subcategories mirror the journey of the individual in the feminist spiritual movement as the quester revises the traditional patriarchal place of women. However, this conjecture is less compelling than the analyses of the fantastic fiction that illustrates Crosby's view of her subcategories. For example, that analysis of Bradley's *Mists of Avalon* and Morrison's *Beloved* are especially well focused on revisioned myth and the wise woman respectively.

Crosby's opening chapter demonstrates her command of current feminist studies and proves that she has done her homework in this field with references to such works as Merlin Stone's early *When God Was a Woman* (1976) and Marleen Barr's groundbreaking *Alien to Femininity* (1987) as well as more recent studies. She does not strain to include what she does not know, while admitting that the feminist readings of fantastic fiction would benefit from a broader scope that would include such elements as Eastern thought and Asian American culture.

One of the great strengths of this study is the twenty-five page annotated bibliography that reads like a who's who of writers and feminist critics of fantastic fiction. The annotations are developed with sufficient detail to convey the tone of the critical study or the basic plots of the novels. Although the index should have been more complete to include the pages on which various critical texts are cited, this study is a bargain and presents an informed perspective on feminist spirituality in feminist fantastic fiction.

NONFICTION REVIEW

MARY SHELLEY

Robert O'Connor

Williams, John. *Mary Shelley: A Literary Life*. St. Martin's, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, September 2000. ix + 209 p. \$35. 0-31-22832-5. London: Macmillan. 0-33-69830-4, -69831-2, trade paper. US orders to 888-230-8477.

This is part of the Literary Lives series, to which Williams (University of Greenwich) contributed the Wordsworth volume. The series concentrates on those elements of the writer's life directly relevant to understanding his or her writing career, and it further highlights those aspects of literary, social, and political history that establish a context within which to evaluate the writer's achievements. In the case of Mary Shelley, this involves discussing her complex personal and creative connections with her father, William Godwin; her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft; her husband, Percy Shelley; and such distinguished literary friends as Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and Washington Irving. It also entails analyzing her sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes ambivalent reception of the radical political ideas of her revolutionary age, ideas often enunciated most articulately by those in her immediate social circle.

As in much recent work on Mary Shelley, best exemplified by Anne K. Mellor's *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, and Her Monsters* (1988), Williams sees Shelley's work largely as a response to the psychic difficulties she experiences in coping with an aloof father, a missing mother, a hostile stepmother, a brilliant but exasperating husband, a troubled and troublesome half-sister, and a persecuting and politically reactionary father-in-law. Williams traces the various trials and traumas connected with her unstable and frequently tragic domestic life, describes reformist hopes she shared with key friends and family members, and argues convincingly that a tension often existed within her fiction between her characters' need to solve the world's problems and a deeper need to establish harmony at home. Williams suggests that within Shelley's own life, the tension mani-

Hotel in downtown Madison, Wisconsin

Deadline: April 10, 2001.

We invite papers and presentations on any topic within feminism, science fiction, fantasy or horror (both literature and media). We especially welcome papers on the work of this year's guests of honor, Nancy Kress and Elisabeth Vonarburg; and special guest Carol Emshwiller.

Papers at WisCon cover a wide range of topics and ask many different kinds of questions:

Histories of feminist science fiction.

Whiter than white? If the future is going to be white, middle class, and American, can you kill me now?

Approaches to particular authors such as Karen Joy Fowler, Nalo Hopkinson, Ursula Le Guin, Maureen McHugh, C. L. Moore, Kim Stanley Robinson, James Tiptree, Jr. and many many others.

Are warrior women really the answer?

Histories and stories and adventures of feminist fandom.

Representations of men in horror films.

The class systems of the *Star Trek* universe.

The James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award.

Gender bending in science fiction comics.

U.S. Politics: Fantasy, Horror, or Science Fiction?

Send proposals via e-mail to: Justine Larbalestier
jazza@english.usyd.edu.au

Edited Collection: The Politics of Play: Sex, Gender, and Online Gaming

Deadline: None provided.

The editor is seeking preliminary proposals for an edited collection on sex and gender forma-

tion in Massive, Multi-user Dimensions such as Battle-mech, Starcraft, Ultima-Online and Everquest. As this CFP is merely "exploratory," all possible topics dealing with sex, gender, and online gaming are welcome.

Proposals should be brief (500 words) and include a working title as well as the author's full contact information. Please e-mail proposals to C. Jason Smith at smith_j@wvwc.edu. All proposals will receive responses and updates on the progress of the collection. This collection has not yet been placed with a publisher.

Society for Utopian Studies

Deadline: May 15, 2001

The 26th Annual Meeting of the Society for Utopian Studies will be held in Buffalo, New York from October 4-7, 2001. The Society for Utopian Studies, founded in 1975, is an international, interdisciplinary association devoted to the study of utopianism in all its forms, with a particular emphasis on literary and experimental utopias. Scholars representing a wide variety of disciplines are active in the association and approach utopian studies from such diverse backgrounds as American Studies, Architecture, the Arts, Classics, Cultural Studies, Economics, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, History, Languages and Literatures, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Urban Planning. The Society publishes the journal *Utopian Studies* and a newsletter, *Utopus Discovered*, which contains information about upcoming conferences and workshops, and a bibliography of recent publications in the field.

The Society's annual meetings provide an ideal venue for intel-

lectuals through an attempt first to read and then to write her way to a reconciliation of the duty to establish public justice and the desire to experience private security and unthreatened love. Her voracious consumption of books, rivaling her husband's, is seen as a means of seeking insight into the greater and lesser injustices of life, and both her fiction and her nonfiction are interpreted as addressing the personal and political problems which the brilliant but neglected daughter and wife of brilliant but distant revolutionaries found herself faced with.

Williams analyzes all of the novels and several of the short stories with particular care, more often as romances a clef in which the very recognizable proxies for the people she knew struggle through scenarios reflecting the individual troubles and broader socio-political issues central to her life and times. Although the comparatively condensed format of the series gives Williams less of the opportunity enjoyed by Mellor and others to ground his insights in extensive scholarly discussion, a constraint that occasionally shows itself through the use of phrases like "beyond a doubt" to introduce a claim that might benefit from additional support, the literary analyses are generally full and impeccably reasoned, and the connections between the life and the literature are strongly established.

Two matters need highlighting in conclusion. First because *Frankenstein* has been dealt with so extensively in other studies, Williams dedicated less space to it than to other longer works, a deficiency at least partially compensated for by his ample commentary on another work of interest to scholars of science fiction and fantasy, *The Last Man*. Second, Percy Shelley, the representation of whose character has ranged so widely during the past two centuries, from unregenerate cad to "bright and ineffectual angel," is, in this particular avatar, even a bit more of a cad than he is presented in other recent criticism.

NONFICTION REVIEW

THE DREAM OF SPACEFLIGHT

Paul Kincaid

Wachhorst, Wyn. *The Dream of Spaceflight: Essays on the Near Edge of Infinity*. Basic Books, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022, June 2000. xx + 225 p. \$22. 0-465-09057-5. Orders to 800-242-7737.

As T.S. Eliot said, "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." We need the real leavened by adventure. Not the sort of adventure that imperils us, but that about which we read and dream, that which creates our heroes and hopes. Journeys and explorations have often provided such adventures, and for a while, say between 1944, when Chesley Bonestell's paintings of alien worlds first appeared in *Life*, and the end of the 1960's, when Neil Armstrong stepped out on the moon, the journey into space seemed the very epitome of those dreams. With Apollo 13's splashdown in 1970, the spirit of adventure waned. Since then, spaceflight has stopped providing the dreams of heroes and adventures. Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins reveals the vital clue in one of these exquisite essays when he is quoted as saying that for an astronaut "boring is good because it means that you haven't been surprised, that your planning has been precise and your expectations matched." For spaceflight that is almost certainly true, but in Eliot's terms, it is almost too much reality. Space has stopped being the beaches Bonestell conjured, the surge of power that inspired Goddard and von Braun, the astonishment of star-filled nights and strange worlds that excited Kepler and Wells. And when the dream died, the reality did not long survive it.

It's the dream of spaceflight that historian Wachhorst explores and attempts to revive in the four central essays that comprise this small and beautifully produced collection. The first essay, "Kepler's Children," explores the hold that space and journeys in space have had as we

travel from Kepler to Verne to Percival Lowell to Edgar Rice Burroughs to Robert Goddard to George Pal's sending a slender silver ship to space, all elements of the thread of inspiration that ties them all together. "The Romance of Spaceflight" develops this theme further. "Soon there will be no one who remembers when spaceflight was still a dream, the reverie of reclusive boys and the vision of a handful of men," Wachhorst begins, establishing the elegiac tone that one of his key characteristics. Spaceflight in dream and in reality are very different things, and here he looks at the effect upon our imagination, in particular, of Bonestell's paintings and Pal's films. The third essay, "Seeking the Center at the Edge," steps back to look at the way we construct space, from the Egyptian pyramids to the Chartres cathedral, and from them to the towering Saturn rocket. Finally, elegy turns to regret in "Abandon in Place," which focuses on Apollo 13 and the retreat that followed, in public perceptions, political will, and scientific reality.

The notes that accompany these essays are filled with references to historians, scientists, biographers, psychologists, journalists, poets, science fiction writers, philosophers, and astronauts. A huge amount of information from many disparate sources has been synthesized here, although it's unlikely the interested reader will learn anything new. But that isn't the purpose of this book. What Wachhorst is doing is spelling out how necessary wonder is to our imaginative identity and how vital a part space has played, and should play again, in the evocation of that wonder. These essays are a lyrical hymn to all that we might lose as human beings if we turn away from space, and constitute the finest advocacy of the romance of spaceflight imaginable short of a reprint of Bonestell and Ley's *The Conquest of Space*.

NONFICTION REVIEW

GEORGE TURNER

Paul Kincaid

Buckrich, Judith Raphael. *George Turner: A Life*. Melbourne University Press, Box 278, Carlton South, Victoria 2053, Australia, September 1999. ix + 214 p. A\$45. 0-552-8480-0. Distributed in the US by Paul & Co., 2 Christie Heights Street, Leonia, NJ 07065, US \$45. Orders to 201-840-4748.

Over the last few years science fiction writers have finally been deemed worthy of biography, though some of these have been those whose fame (Arthur C. Clarke) or notoriety (L. Ron Hubbard) have extended beyond the genre. Now the Australian writer, George Turner (1916 - June 1997), has joined this august company. Turner is another whose fame extended beyond the genre, but in his case his reputation in the wider world was established long before he turned to science fiction and is now, probably, all but forgotten. (One thing Buckrich stresses repeatedly toward the end of the book is how, beyond a small circle of devotees, even his best SF has been virtually ignored in his native country.)

Turner was born in 1916, and while he was still a child, his father lost his job and deserted the family, leaving young George to be brought up in straightened circumstances by his mother, an indomitable woman he seems to have hated all his life. In this, Buckrich identifies the source of the two most persistent themes in Turner's work: the search for a father-figure and an often disturbing misogyny. Whether this fairly straightforward Freudian account really does justice to Turner's life and work is another matter. Turner appears to have been both self-destructive and anti-social judging from the account that Buckrich gives of intense alcoholism bringing him close to death on at least two occasions, of low-grade work to which he devoted little time or attention, of a painful reserve and lack of any identifiable emotional relationships, of intellectual snobbism, and of the fact that the most vivid and enjoyable period of his life was during World War II. Yet there are hints that this was by no means the whole story. Passing references

lectual interchange in a cooperative, non-competitive, congenial, and convivial environment. At each meeting the Society presents the Arthur O. Lewis Award for the best paper by a junior scholar given at the previous annual meeting and the Eugenio Battisti Award for the best article in each volume of *Utopian Studies*. Membership in the Society includes announcements regarding the annual meeting, *Utopian Studies*, and *Utopus Discovered*.

For more information on membership, see our website at www.utoronto.ca/utopia.

You must be a member to present a paper.

If you wish to organize a panel or present a paper, submit a 1-2 page abstract by May 15, 2001 to our Program Chair at the following address and/or e-mail:

Phillip E. Wegner, English Department, PO Box 117310, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-7310

<pwegner@english.ufl.edu> Telephone 352-392-6650 ext. 261, Fax: 352-392-0860.

to Turner training local sports teams and the exceptional loyalty of lifelong friends don't seem to belong to the Turner we have been presented with—but Buckrich doesn't explore any of these aspects of his life.

Buckrich is decidedly not the most assiduous of biographers. Most of his facts about Turner's early life are culled, often directly, from Turner's own autobiographical writings. And when she has something new, she does nothing with it. There is, for instance, a passing reference to the possibility that he was briefly married during the war, but she does nothing to confirm or disprove this. And though she repeatedly mentions suspicions of Turner's homosexuality, she never decisively settles the issue. Moreover, there are numerous small errors throughout the book—a picture caption referring to a 1976 convention held in 1979, habitually called the Arthur C. Clarke Award the “Arthur C. Clarke Prize”—which, though not serious in themselves, leave one distrustful of the book as a whole.

Only when Turner published his first novel at age 42 does Buckrich seem to engage with her subject. One begins to suspect that what she really wanted to write was a critical study, not a biography. Certainly, there is interesting analysis in particular of his early mainstream novels, and Buckrich makes a convincing case for regarding them as autobiographical. When in the mid-70's a chance meeting with John Bangsund brought a lifelong interest in SF to the fore and revived Turner's writing career, he seems to have entered on one of the satisfying periods in his life. He brought a new rigor to SF criticism and applied it to a sequence of novels (written at higher speed than at any time in his literary life, though Buckrich doesn't seem to notice this renewed vigor so late in his life) that may have been excellent (*The Sea and Summer*) or dreadfully poor (*Down There in Darkness*) but which were always filled with commitment and interest. But though SF was presumably what drew Buckrich to Turner in the first place, at this point she starts to lose interest in her story. Each successive novel receives less attention than the last, even though there are interesting biographical factors to be explored, such as the apparent settling of his demons, and his handful of excellent short stories are almost completely ignored.

George Turner deserved better than this, and Buckrich reveals such little passion for (or even interest in) her subject that one can't help wondering why she began this enterprise in the first place.

NONFICTION REVIEW
**J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND
 HIS LITERARY RESONANCES**

Bill Dynes

Clark, George and Daniel Timmons, eds. *J.R.R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances: Views of Middle-Earth*. Greenwood Press, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881, September 2000. viii + 213 p. \$55. 0-313-30845-4. Orders to 800-225-5800.

This is a substantive collection of essays on Tolkien's body of works, written by and for a scholarly audience. Timmons asserts two purposes for the book: “to recognize [Tolkien's] stature in literary history and to examine his works afresh” [and] “to enhance the literary world's sense of Tolkien's creativity and to inspire scholars to study his great contributions to literature.” The fourteen essays particularly focus on the narrative and social contexts within which Tolkien worked.

Several essays discuss sources for Tolkien's beasts and monsters. Jonathan Evans offers a rich and detailed discussion of Tolkien's evolving ideas about dragons in connection with his critical essay on *Beowulf* and medieval literature and folklore. Roger Schlobin critiques arguments that see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a source for Tolkien's works; he finds useful similarities between the “absentee villains” Morgan le Faye and Sauron, for example, but argues against parallel perceptions of heroism in Gawain and Frodo, and articulates a sharp contrast in the talismanic properties of the green girdle and the One Ring.

The range of interests and approaches among the essays make for interesting connections. Tanya Caroline Wood considers “On Fairy Stories” in light of Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*, concluding that Tolkien's essay uses many of the same rhetorical and ideological strategies but, echoing Schlobin, argues that the parallels she articulates “display the kinship of a common ancestry” rather than “direct lineal descent.” She briefly tackles the secondary place women hold both within Tolkien's stories and in his imaginative construction of the ideal reader. Fay Ringel, however, offers a study of four women fantasists, including Patricia McKillip, who have been consciously and conspicuously influenced by Tolkien's work. Her study of the ways in which these novelists have both imitated and interrogated Tolkien's fantasy premises should be a useful addition to feminist study of the novels.

Several other essays explore Tolkien's moral and didactic elements, albeit still in keeping with the collection's premise of literary history and background. Charles W. Nelson offers a plausible categorization of the peoples of Middle-Earth as a modern rendition of the medieval allegories of the Seven Deadly Sins, although his identification of Orcs as the representation of Anger contrasts in interesting ways with Tom Shippey's discussion of the role that humor plays as a means of connecting the ethical nature of Orcs and humans. Shippey suggests that the humor of the Orcs, along with other values

such as group cohesion and loyalty, point to a perception of evil as a “corruption [of] what was originally good,” rather than as an independent creation.

With a detailed index and extensive bibliography, this collection is a thoughtful and rich resource. Intended specifically for scholars interested in the literary history from which Tolkien drew and to which he contributed, these essays provide an intriguing range of insights that should enrich the Tolkien collections of larger academic libraries.

NONFICTION REVIEW



Neil Barron

Glassman, Peter, ed. *Oz: The Hundredth Anniversary Celebration*. Books of Wonder/HarperCollins, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019, October 2000. 52 p. \$24.95. 0-688-15915-X.

This is one of the many books celebrating the centenary publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Unlike all the others, the proceeds from its sale go to Reading Is Fundamental, a nonprofit organization promoting literacy. Glassman is a principal with Books of Wonder, which has reprinted children's books for some years, including Baum's fourteen other Oz books, his *Little Wizard of Oz Stories*, and great grandson Roger Baum's *Dorothy of Oz* (1999), whose covers are reproduced on the final three pages. If you've tired of the classic illustrations of W.W. Denslow or John R. Neill, or simply want to see something different, this slim book provides a number of alternatives. Nineteen illustrators accompany their work with words, which five have illustrations only (Maurice Sendak, Janell Cannon, Leo and Diane Dillon, Mark Buebner, and Chris Van Allsburg), and four writers, such as Robin McKinley and Madeleine L'Engle, include only short text. Jules Feiffer's pen-and-ink drawing of Dorothy, Toto in her lap, on a psychotherapist's couch proclaiming her innocence of killing the witch, is amusing. Robin McKinley, a military brat with more varied experiences than most girls, was tired of boys having adventures and girls staying home and being good (which equals boring), and found Dorothy a model of “Girls Who Did Things.” Michael Foreman grew up on the east coast of England in a town regularly bombed in World War II. His depiction of kids in an Oz play performed in the rubble of a bombed cinema is “an image of hope, of another world, and of Oz.” Oz touched the lives of all of these writers and illustrators, whose principal books, many of them winners of prestigious children's illustration awards, are listed in brief biographical notes. Older children will appreciate this book, which is catalogued as for adults. Larger public libraries should consider.

NONFICTION REVIEW



Neil Barron

Titans: The Heroic Visions of Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, text by Nigel Suckling. Thunder's Mouth, 841 Broadway, 4rth Floor, New York, NY 10003, December 2000. 160 p. \$34.95. 0-1-56025-273-1; Paper Tiger, UK, 2000.

Even if you read no SF, it would be hard to avoid the generic action-adventure images of illustrators like Boris Vallejo and his model/wife Julie Bell. Peruvian-born “Boris,” as he signs his work, is best known for his work on heroic fantasy/sword and sorcery in books, magazines, calendars, video games, and, in this latest collection, trading cards. This book assembles about 170 color images featuring X-Men, released about the same time as the X-Men film. The cover is of the four women (Storm, Jean Grey, Rogue, and Psylocke), who are a part of the X-Men, and they are obviously of the take-no-prisoners school, as are most of the male figures. Their muscles, abs, and pecs are even more exaggerated than the hunks of the typical bodybuilding magazines, which are gross exaggerations as is. If a single word had to describe the dominant emotion of the images, which are oddly static in spite of their action milieu, that would be “violence”—whether revenge, attack, or desperation. There is not softness in the women, no promise of pneumatic bliss (as in Eliot's Prufrock). Nothing Victoria's Secret sells, even under the counter, would appeal to them. Perhaps Harry Harrison could be persuaded to write a sequel about them titled *The Stainless Steel Vagina*.

Vallejo and Bell are part of the tradition of the pulp princess, the bimbos by Earle Bergey in lam² tights, as well as the pinups of the 1940's (Vargas, Petty, etc.), plus their older sisters like the sexual creatures of *Hustler*, and the sexually aggressive females of underground comics, as well as the more mainstream females in today's comics. The appeal of this type of illustration, so far as I can tell, is much the same as the ads, in the pulps and other downmarket magazines, by Charles Atlas, who appealed to “97-pound weaklings” to take revenge on muscle-bound jocks who kicked sand in their faces and grabbed

their girlfriends. The females are depicted more explicitly than their pulp sister of the 1920's-1950's but still serve as wet dreams for adolescents of all ages.

NONFICTION REVIEW
RAY BRADBURY
 Sherry Stoskopf

Reid, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Greenwood Press, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881, September 2000. xi + 133 p. \$29.95. 0-313-30901-9. Orders to 800-255-5800.

This useful companion to Bradbury's work treats its subject as a significant mainstream writer rather than as a science fiction writer. The book follows the established pattern of the series, starting with the biographical chapter, followed by a chapter that raises the question of why Bradbury is here treated as a mainstream writer: a major reason is because much of his work takes place on Earth and deals with fairly normal kinds of events, such as mysteries and Halloween stories. There is a lot of fantasy incorporated into his non-mystery novels, but it is not so fantastic, apparently, that critics and booksellers see Bradbury as an exclusively science fiction writer.

Each successive chapter deals with a single book, beginning with a summary, including the book's publication history. Reid then develops a plot summary/development or a summary of the rationale for the story collections. A section on character development identifies the narrative point of view, which in turn is followed by discussions of setting and themes. An alternative perspective concludes the main text. While useful as an elementary analysis, the book's shortness causes Reid to oversimplify the themes and, perhaps, the character development. For example, in *Fahrenheit 451* she overlooks the fact that the encounter with Clarisse McClellan is actually a third step in Montag's doubting and transformation, rather than the beginning of that intellectual change.

For readers unfamiliar with Bradbury, this gloss is useful for its high school/community college target audience and provides a good bibliography of source material on Bradbury and his works for those wishing to explore further. David Mogen's 186-page 1986 introductory survey in the Twayne series devoted to U.S. authors is for a slightly more advanced reader.

[About twenty-five Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers had been published by late 2000; see www.greenwoodpress.com for details. Subjects have included Arthur C. Clarke (also by Reid), Stephen King, Anne McCaffrey, and Anne Rice. —Ed]

NONFICTION REVIEW
THE NAKED AND THE UNDEAD
 Terry Heller

Freeland, Cynthia A. *The Naked and the Undead: Evil and the Appeal of Horror*. Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, CO 80301-2877, 2000. Xv + 320 p. \$26. 0-8133-6702-6. Orders to 303-444-3541.

University of Houston philosopher Freeland examines how horror films "answer questions about evil in relation to issues of gender, sexuality, and power relations between the sexes." She places her cognitivist approach in the tradition of Aristotle and Kant, taking as its goal the explanation of "intentionally created and well structured [works that] produce certain kinds of effects on both our emotions and our judgments." She emphasizes seeing viewers as active participants in the construction of their film experiences. For those acquainted with literary theory, her goals, methods, and readings look like a commonsense combination of close reading, reader-response, and rhetorical criticism. Reproductions of fifty-six black-and-white stills supplement the text.

Freeland connects her work with Noël Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror* (1990), Torben Grodal's *Moving Pictures* (1997), and Linda Williams' *Hard Core* (1989). She opposes C. Fred Alford's contention in *What Evil Means to Us* (1997) that popular horror films fail to provide a serious consideration of evil on the level that artists of the past have provided their cultures. She finds psychoanalytic approaches generally reductive, reserving special contempt for Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine* (1993) and for her interpretation of the *Alien* film series using concepts from Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (1982).

In her first section, Freeland examines mad scientists and monstrous mothers, beginning with several adaptations of *Frankenstein*. Then she turns to "women and bugs," looking closely at the *Alien* series,

Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986), and other "insect" films. She devotes a chapter to Cronenberg, especially to *Dead Ringers* (1988) and *Scanners* (1980). She notes a shift in the origins of monsters; though *Frankenstein's* progeny usually originate in hubris toward nature, the evil powers supporting the mad scientists who create these monsters vary from individual pride through Cold War issues to the military-industrial complex. Though one may see a trend toward greater female agency in more recent films, it's unclear how feminist this move is, for it may merely be easier to use a woman hero when monsters are female and the issues center on reproduction and nurture.

In her second section, Freeland links vampire and slasher films. She sees vampire films as complex explorations of evil, especially of the power of the vampire monster to attract and repel viewers. This power can subvert narrative closure and challenge the patriarchal order. Slashers, though they are human monsters, may extend the moral ambiguity of the vampire. Slasher films focus on psychopathic killers whose bloodlust drives them to extreme violence toward women. In the history of the slasher film, she sees a trend toward an emphasis on the spectacle of the violence, but she resists interpreting this trend simplistically as the revenge fantasy of an embattled patriarchy. Instead, she argues that some of these films—Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972), for example—present spectacles of the patriarchy as monstrous. She asks whether Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965) and Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) are feminist slasher films. *Repulsion* is feminist, showing a victimized woman in an unbearable patriarchal hell, slashing out in self-defense. *Lambs* is more ambiguous; does Clarice Starling subvert the system or buy into it?

In the first chapter of her final section, Freeland develops her own formulation of the uncanny using Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) and Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1978). Rejecting Freud's formulations as reductive, she develops the uncanny as anti-sublime. Drawing on Kant, Freeland defines the sublime as a paradoxical awe and terror in response to a natural phenomenon that threatens to overwhelm the imagination; this experience becomes pleasurable when the imagination does not succumb. The uncanny is a similar response to evil phenomena that threaten to annihilate the ego, meaning, and morality; but unlike the sublime, the uncanny deflates the ego, because it raises real questions about the limits of our powers to maintain self-integration. What makes this pleasurable is not the control of our imagination but the restraint of the threat within the aesthetic form of the film. She argues that *The Shining* in particular releases the uncanny. I suspect Freeland will encounter disagreement with her characterizations of the uncanny, the sublime, and *The Shining*; but her ideas are at least stimulating.

In her final chapter, Freeland examines "graphic horror," looking at the *Hellraiser* films, based on Clive Barker's stories, and Tobe Hooper's two *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* films. She notes that in both series, the first film is relatively subtle and complex, while the sequels generally shift to an emphasis on "numbers." Musicals organize narrative and other elements to provide opportunities for song-and-dance numbers; pornographic films feature sexual encounters. These sequels become collections of violent confrontations between protagonists and monsters, and they use simpler comic plots, in which the protagonists become virtually invincible heroes. Freeland interprets the sequels as cartoon-like presentations, featuring a Dionysian figure that is repeatedly dismembered and reassembled, like Road Runner cartoons for adults. This suggests, though Freeland does not go in this direction, that graphic horror series may be examples of Bakhtin's carnivalesque discourse.

Freeland's cognitivist approach will probably appear less revolutionary to most readers than she seems to believe it is, and one could wish for a more explicit analysis of concepts of evil to help frame her discussion. Her feminist analysis is notable for the unwillingness to accept simplistic and surface interpretations; her readings tend to be fairly subtle and complicated. Freeland's work is most interesting when she reads individual films.

NONFICTION REVIEW

THE STRANGE CASE OF EDWARD GOREY

Ranon Liber

Theroux, Alexander. *The Strange Case of Edward Gorey*. Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115, August 2000. 68 p. \$7.95, trade paper. 1-56097-385-4. Orders to 800-657-1100.

Alexander Theroux is not as well known as his brother, Paul, although his 1982 book *Darconville's Cat*, was a National Book Award nominee. He's a Cape Cod neighbor of Gorey, who he interviewed in 1973 for an *Esquire* profile, which is drawn on for this lengthier study. If you don't know Gorey's inimitable works, this quote suggests their character and appeal as well as showing off Theroux's own somewhat mannered style:

Gorey's is an unclassifiable genre: not really children's books, neither comic books, nor art stills. His work—sort of small and humorously sadistic parodies of the obsolete Victorian 'triple-decker'—comes in the form less of booklets than midget novels, each the size of a hornbook, withered into a kind of Giocomettian reduction of twenty to thirty

doomful pages of scrupulously articulated and curiously antiquarian Gothic illustration and a spare but sequential just-about-conclusive narrative, often merely wistful and understated captions of spare but distracting economy.

Anyone who has seen Gorey's work, under his own name or his many anagrams, or linked to the work of others (the PBS *Mystery* series animation is his work). Knows that it's as unique as a thumbprint. From 1953's *The Unstrung Harp* to 1999's *The Headless Bust*, he has authored/illustrated more than ninety of his own books and illustrated many more for others. He received a Tony for his sets for the Broadway production of *Dracula* with Frank Langella, which I still remember with fondness. Fans recognized his work as Best Artist in 1985 and 1989 with World Fantasy Awards.

Theroux shares a lot of Gorey's attitudes and prejudices, and is a sympathetic chronicler of a unique 20th century artist, a number of whose drawings are reproduced in this short study. If you're a Gorey fan, you'll want this economical essay, with its cover color photo of Gorey in what appears to be a box, which reminded me of William Steig's classic cartoon of a man in a box, captioned "People are no damn good." Libraries should have acquired *The World of Edward Gorey* (Abrams, 1996) by Clifford Ross, an artist, and Karen Wilkin, a curator, whose 192 pages provides a much more detailed portrait, along with many more illustrations, a chronology, and a primary bibliography. Gorey died last April, and a Cape Cod neighbor recalls reading Gorey's cleverly suggestive 1961 work, *The Curious Sofa* as by Ogdred Weary, as an adult and told Gorey. "He chuckled, his face split with an enormous, conspiratorial grin, and he said, 'A lot better this time, wasn't it?'" Gorey may be gone, but we'll see more of his work, according to one of his executors, who explored Gorey's fifteen-room home, finding (according to the December *Locus*) hundreds of stories and sketches, some finished, some unfinished. "Ample material for many future books and for plays based on his works."

FICTION REVIEW

Atom

David H. Wilson

Aylett, Steve. *Atom*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2000. 137 p. Paperback. \$14.95. ISBN 1-56858-175-0.

Steve Aylett emerged onto the American science fiction scene in 1998 with *Slaughtermatic*, a POSTcyberMODERNpunk novel that, spiritually and situationally, unifies the milieus of Franz Kafka, William Gibson, and, strange as it may sound, Jim Carey. A finalist for the Philip K. Dick Award, *Slaughtermatic* was followed in 1999 by *Toxicology*, a collection of darkly comic, fringe sf stories, and the end of 2000 saw the publication of Aylett's most recent novel, *Atom*. Like *Slaughtermatic*, *Atom* is written in a bombastic, pyrotechnical, if not carny vernacular overflowing with witticisms and figures of speech; and it is set in the city of Beerlight, where cops are bad guys and criminals are good guys, and where virtually everyone is packing some kind of metaphysical, psychogenic or otherwise freaky gun.

Atom is the last name of the narrative's protagonist, Taffy Atom, an eccentric, puckish private eye whose sidekick, equally eccentric and puckish, is a hybrid human-bulldog-fish named Jed Helms. The book opens with a heist, again, like *Slaughtermatic*. Only here a sacred book is not stolen from a bank. Rather, Franz Kafka's brain, which since the writer's death has been preserved and treated by collectors as a precious artifact, is stolen by Harry Fiasco from Beerlight's Brain Facility, "where hundreds of famous brains . . . including that of comedian Tony Curtis, were kept on ice." Fiasco is connected with the mobsters Eddie Thermidor and Mr. Candyman, both of whom seek Kafka's brain, both of whom request Atom's services when the brain fails to fall into the hands of either party. The bulk of the plot involves the quest for the brain amid Atom's vaudevillian antics. Eventually we learn it was inside the oblivious Candyman's head the entire time, in an idle state, and *Atom* climaxes when Kafka's persona devours Candyman's.

Such a science fictionalization of a canonical author has been done before: Dan Simmons' Neuromantic Keats in the Hyperion-Endymion Cantos and Alfred Bester's Blakean, Joycean Gully Foyle in *The Stars My Destination* come to mind. It seems appropriate here, however, given the profound influence Kafka has had and continues to have on the sf genre. Clearly Aylett has a distinct affinity for Kafka, whose presence is extremely visible in *Slaughtermatic* and *Toxicology* too; in the latter, for instance, there is a short, satirical, technofetishistic rewrite of "The Metamorphosis." But in *Atom* more than the others we see the sparks of the Kafka effect. Consequently, the text is ripe with theoretical implications and is especially interesting in light of the theory of Baudrillard and Deleuze and Guattari. Moreover, it exhibits a number of attributes endemic to postmodernism and would be useful in courses dealing with that subject, particularly those that are attentive to the cyberpunk subgenre and its station in postmodernity.

In short, *Atom* is a science fantasy text that synthesizes futique ambiances, artifices and characters with unreal ones. Kafka lovers will appreciate it more than anybody else, but you don't need to know Kafka to enjoy Aylett. A provocative, clever and often hilarious text, *Atom* is worth reading at home as well as in the classroom.

FEMSPEC

*an interdisciplinary feminist journal
dedicated to critical and creative works in the realms of
SF, fantasy, surrealism, magical realism, and the
supernatural*

. . . questioning gender across the boundaries of what is real and what is not real in a variety of feminist approaches, inclusive of ethnic and cultural diversity in an internationalist, multicultural perspective...

*Upcoming themes, articles and authors: Native American speculative writing; real and imagined blackness; women in surrealism; Latino-Latina writings; Jewish women's magical realism; sf film; horror; girls anime; Chinese fantastic women; **Veronica Hollinger** on utopian/dystopian works; **Robin Murray** on Terri Windling's *Magical Realist Ecofeminism*; **Theresa Crater** on the *Triple Goddess*.*

Batya Weinbaum, Editor

Ritch Calvin, Associate Editor

Paula Gunn Allen, Darko Suvin, Marleen Barr, Gloria Orenstein, Samuel R.

Delany, Contributing Editors

Octavia Butler, Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, Suzy Charnas, Florence Howe,

Pamela Sargeant, Advisory Board

Subscribe: *FEMSPEC*, Department of English, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH 44115 femspec@popmail.csuohio.edu

Science Fiction Research Association

www.sfra.org

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

SFRA Benefits

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

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

SFRA Annual Directory. One issue per year. Members' names, addresses, phone, e-mail addresses, and special interests.

SFRA Review. Six issues per year. This newsletter/journal includes exten-

sive book reviews of both nonfiction and fiction, review articles, listings of new and forthcoming books, and letters. The *Review* also prints news about SFRA internal affairs, calls for papers, updates on works in progress, and an annual index.

SFRA Optional Benefits

Foundation. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Three issues per year. British scholarly journal, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, reviews, and letters. Add to dues: \$30 surface; \$36 airmail.

The New York Review of Science Fiction. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Twelve issues per year. Reviews and features. Add to dues: \$25 domestic; \$34 domestic first class; \$27 domestic institutional; \$28 Canada; \$36 overseas.

SFRA Listserv. The SFRA Listserv allows users with e-mail accounts to post e-mails to all subscribers of the listserv, round-robin style. It is used by SFRA members to discuss topics and news of interest to the SF community. To sign on to the listserv or to obtain further information, contact the list manager, Len Hatfield, at lhat@ebbs.english.vt.edu or len.hatfield@vt.edu. He will subscribe you. An e-mail sent automatically to new subscribers gives more information about the list.

SFRA Executive Committee

President

Michael M. Levy
Department of English
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
levym@uwstout.edu

Vice President

Peter Brigg
#1 20 Budgell Terrace
Toronto, Ontario M6S 1 B4, Canada
pbrigg@uoguelph.ca

Secretary

Wendy Bousfield
Reference Department, Bird Library
Syracuse University
Syracuse NY, 13244-2010
wbbousfi@library.syr.edu

Treasurer

David Mead
Arts and Humanities
Texas A&M Univ.-Corpus Cristi
6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Cristi, TX 78412
Dave.Mead@iris.tamucc.edu

Immediate Past President

Alan Elms
Psychology Department
U of California-Davis
Davis, CA 95616-8686
acelms@ucdavis.edu



SFRA Review

Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard
6842 S. 40th Place
Phoenix, AZ 85040

shelley.rb@asu.edu

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
TEMPE, ARIZONA
PERMIT NO. 45