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BARSOOM ON THE CHEAP

Red Planet: Scientific and Culture Encounters With Mars is a DVD-ROM for home, library, or school use, to be shipped 20 August 2001 by the University of Pennsylvania Press (800-445-9880. www.upenn.edu/pennpress). You can preview it at www.mariner10.com. It contains more than four gigabytes of material, including video interviews with scientists, cultural critics, and visionaries, and includes animation, hundreds of pages of text, voiceover narration, biographies of key figures, bibliographies, and technical glossaries. Hyperlinks provide access to additional resources, including regularly updated Websites. *Red Planet* includes discussions with Kim Stanley Robinson, N. Katherine Hayles, and scientific figures such as Richard Zare, Carol Stoker, and Robert Zubrin. The DVD was created by Robert Markley (WV University, Literature), Harrison Higgs (WSU, Vancouver, artist and designer), Michelle Kendrick (WSU, Vancouver, electronic media and culture), and Helen Burgess (University of British Columbia, computer science). \$29.95 + shipping for orders received by 30 June 2001, \$39.95 thereafter. Details on site licensing for libraries and institutions are available from Bruce Franklin, bfrankli@pobox.upenn.edu. Neil Barron

BORGO PRESS REMAINDERS FOR SALE FROM AUTHORS

Here are the responses that I received from the two listserv announcements asking anyone who'd bought stock of their remaindered Borgo books and wanted to sell them directly. If you have such books, send me the same type of details for your books as for these. Price is delivered cost via surface

SFRA EXECUTIVE BOARD: MINUTES

Submitted by Wendy Bousfield

The SFRA Executive Board met on January 28, 2001, via a telephone conference call. In attendance were Michael Levy (Chair), Peter Brigg (Vice President), Alan Elms (Immediate Past President), Wendy Bousfield (Secretary and Recorder), David Mead (Treasurer), Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard (Coeditor, SFRA Review), Barbara Lucas (Coeditor, SFRA Review), and Peter Sands (Web Editor). As organizer of SFRA 2001, Jan Finder was present at the outset of the meeting as a guest, providing a progress report on the conference. Each participant gave a brief report. Major items for discussion included the 2001 conference, strategies to recruit new members, and plans for print and electronic publications.

REPORT ON 2001 CONFERENCE:

Conference organizer, Jan Finder, reported that abstracts of conference papers will be posted on the conference website: (<http://www.klink.net/~fcs/sfra2001.html>). Persons from seven countries besides the U.S. will attend the conference, including David Ketterer (London). Kenneth Andrews has publicized the conference via journals and Websites, and fliers for SFRA 2001 will be distributed at both SFWA and IAFA conferences. Jim Gunn has made arrangements for conference and other SFRA material to be archived at the Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. Those with information for the conference program book can reach Jan at wombat@sff.net or 518-456-5242.

Elizabeth Davidson will present the Pilgrim Award. Copies of her talk and that of the recipient will be published in the Review. Daryl Mallett's collection of Pilgrim Award speeches, representing SFRA's first publishing venture, was shipped on Jan. 26th.

Officers' Reports:

Alan Elms, Immediate Past President: Alan noted that the SFRA Review (#248, September/October 2000) included his "President's Message: Looking Backward, 2000-1998." During Alan's two years as president, SFRA developed its Website (with Peter Sands as web editor), the SFRA Review was reestablished, and SFRA had two strong conferences. In the future, he wants SFRA to increase its involvement in book publishing. He hopes to expand the SFRA Review and to make it available in both print and electronic formats.

Mike Levy, President: The forthcoming SFRA Review will include the president's report. Mike expressed concern that the Scholars Support Fund, intended for Third World, Eastern Europe, or Chinese scholars, is little used. He recommended that someone be put in charge of this fund.

Peter Brigg, Vice President: Peter is concerned about the decline in SFRA membership. Last year it fell below 300 for the first time in a decade. Peter recommended that SFRA attempt to recruit faculty who teach approximately 400 science fiction courses in Canada and the U.S.

Wendy Bousfield, Secretary: Wendy will send out information on the SFRA 2001 conference with renewal reminders. When the new directories are available, Wendy will exchange copies with SFWA and IAFA.

David Mead, Treasurer/Mike Levy, former Treasurer: SFRA is living within its means and currently has a balance of \$20,000. Dave has received \$15,000 in renewals. Dave suggested that SFRA identify respected scholars who might be called on to assess the value of scholarship during tenure reviews.

Barb Lucas and Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard, Coeditors, SFRA Review: Barb mentioned that it is difficult to get people to discuss new writers in the "Theory and Beyond" and "Approaching" columns. In the interest of a smooth

transition, Shelley will work with Craig Jacobsen, previous fiction editor, on layout, printing and mailing of the January/February issue of the Review. The editors agreed that they needed to give highest priority to issues appearing on time.

Peter Sands, Webmaster: There are presently 1,037 files on the SFRA web site (<http://www.sfra.org/>). There have been 624 visits to Coyote Song, Rich Erlich's book on LeGuin. Hal Hall has contributed annotations of science fiction web sites, and Peter hopes that others will contribute to this project. The site will include syllabi, publishing opportunities, and solicitations from the Review editors. Peter will test a weblog, an easy-to-update page for news and announcements. The SFRA Review site is now more closely tied to the official SFRA site.

Old Business:

William Anderson will fund the Mary K. Bray Award, a \$100 prize honoring the best article to appear in the SFRA Review.

SFRA 2002, organized by Farah Mendlesohn, will be held in New Lanark (near Glasgow), Scotland. Guest of honor will be Paul J. McAuley, Ken MacLeod, and Pat Cadigan.

SFRA 2003, organized by Peter Brigg, will be held at the University of Guelph, June 27th-29th. Rooms in a campus residence will be available. The conference will include a film series.

Kent State will not support publication of *Extrapolation* after this year. SFRA is considering joint support. Recommendations included making it juried and publishing it as an e-journal with an annual print compilation.

Next Meeting scheduled:

The Executive Board will have a business meeting at SFRA 2001, Schenectady: Sunday, May 27, 8:00 a.m.

THEORY AND BEYOND

Edited by Joan Gordon and Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard

**TRANSFORMING THE SUBJECT: HUMANITY,
THE BODY, AND POSTHUMANISM**

Karen Hellekson

The 1940's and 1950's saw the creation of new fields of endeavor: what we now call cybernetics and information theory. The far-reaching impact of these new fields is now being seen to a greater degree than ever before in critical writing: these theories are being co-opted by humanists and brought to bear on texts and on critiques of liberal humanism, culture, deconstruction, gender, and post-Enlightenment thought in general. The result of incorporating these notions into the discourse of critical theory has profound implications for articulations of the role of humanity and humanity's relationships with machines. This relatively new kind of critical theory (N. Katherine Hayles calls it "posthumanism," but it might also be called "postinformatics" or even "postpostmodernism") destabilizes elements of humanity that most consider crucial to an understanding of the self—notably, the body and the mind—and turns the subject-centered Derridean universe on its head. Crucial to posthumanism's discussions of humanity's newly articulated roles are the fields of cognition, cybernetics, information theory, and chaos theory. Ross Farnell notes that posthumanism's destiny is "peerless cultural *bricolage*," combining several discourses, such as "art, theory, science, and sf," to create "a feedback loop that sets up a standing wave of reciprocity between different discourses" (86, n. 1).

Science fiction, a literary genre deeply concerned with humanity, what it means to be human, and humanity's place in the universe, has always critiqued the same subjects that posthumanism critiques. The new vocabulary of posthumanism can be brought to bear particularly usefully on science fiction,

book rate in the US; query for overseas postage. All editions are trade paperbacks in new condition.

Walter Albert, Ed. *Detective and Mystery Fiction: An International Bibliography of Secondary Sources*. Much enlarged from 1985 first editions. Many SF/F authors also wrote detective fiction. 662 p. \$75. Albert, 7139 Meade Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208; walt.albert@worldnet.att.net.

Stephen W. Potts. *The Second Marxian Invasion: The Fiction of the Strugatsky Brothers*. 1991. 104 p. Eaton award winner. \$15.

Stephen W. Potts. *From Here to Absurdity: The Moral Battlefields of Joseph Heller*. Rev. Ed. 1995. 176 p. \$15; Potts, 120 Via Canabria, AIB, Encinitas, CA 92924; swpott@ucsd.edu.

Neil Barron

STUDY OF STRUGATSKY BROTHERS ANNOUNCED

George Slusser and Gary Kern have written a new study of the Strugatsky brothers tentatively scheduled for this summer, *Stalkers of the Infinite: The Science Fiction of Arkady and Boris Strugatsky* (Xenos Books). Slusser wrote the majority of the chapters, with Kern translating articles by the Strugatskys and preparing a detailed bibliography. Their work is placed in two contexts, that of Russian/Soviet literature and that of the SF tradition. Some untranslated works are also analyzed. Kern authored a study of Zamiatin's *We* and is a Russian scholar. Slusser was the 1986 Pilgrim Award recipient. Neil Barron

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

RECENT AND
FORTHCOMING TITLES

- Barrett, Michele and Duncan. *Star Trek: The Human Frontier*. Routledge, Spring 2001.
- *Benford, Gregory. *Beyond Human: The New World of Cyborgs and Afdroids*. TV Books, May 2001. Companion to PBS program premiering May 2001.
- Black, Jeremy. *The Politics of James Bond: From Fleming's Novels to the Big Screen*. Praeger, November 2000.
- Bloom, Harold. *Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451; Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five; Ray Bradbury*. Chelsea House, 2001 (see www.chelseahouse.com for many similar glosses).
- *Booker, M. Keith. *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964*. Greenwood, June 2001.
- *Boon, Kevin A., Ed. *At Millenium's End: New Essays on the Work of Kurt Vonnegut*. SUNY Press, April 2001.
- Brom. *Darkwerks: The Art of Brom*. Paper Tiger/Sterlling, Winter 2000.
- Burger, Patrick R. *The Political Unconscious of the Fantasy Subgenre of Romance*. Edwin Mellen, March 2001.
- Delmare, David. *Mermaids and Magic Shows*. Paper Tiger/Sterling Pub, April 2001. Text by Nigel Suckling.
- Dendle, Peter. *The Zombie Movie Encyclopedia*. McFarland, Winter 2000.
- *Grant, Michael, Ed. *The Modern Fantastic: The Films of David Cronenberg*. Praeger, November 2000.
- *Gottlieb, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. McGill-Queens University Press, August 2001.

which has, even before its elevation to a genre, been littered with cyborgs and disembodied intelligences, not to mention critiques of science and culture.

Anne Balsamo argues that science and technology affect “technologies of culture” (162), foregrounding the technology and constructedness of culture. Ihab Hassan, in his 1977 essay “Prometheus as Performer,” notes that “We need first to understand that the human form—including human desire and all its external representations—may be changing radically, and thus must be re-vised,” and he goes on to say that humanism is being transformed “into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism” (205). Science fiction, with its willingness to not only put forward this re-vision but to play with it, is thus a useful site for the praxis of posthumanism.

The primary metaphor of the posthuman is the cyborg, a term that is a conflation of the words “cybernetic” and “organism.” Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline coined the word in 1960 to describe an enhanced person who could survive in a non-Earth environment. The meaning of the term has since expanded to include organisms with artificial implants or constructs. Mark Dery, in “Cyberculture,” notes that “ours is an age of engineered monsters, a partial listing of whom would begin with all who have undergone prosthetic surgery, had their bodies augmented with pacemakers, cochlear implants, artificial kidneys, or myoelectric limbs” (506). Dery goes so far as to include in his listing of cyborgs a Mr. Universe who used steroids to pump himself into “an androgen-addled android” (507); and Balsamo includes in her *Technologies of the Gendered Body* a discussion of bodybuilders. Cyborgs in popular culture, however, are the cyborgs we think of when we hear the term: the Borg, the Bionic Woman, Seven of Nine—humans augmented by technology to become superhuman. But in the rhetoric of the posthuman, the cyborg indicates not a physical entity but a way of looking at something. Jenny Wolmark, for instance, notes that writers such as Ore, Piercy, and Vonarburg use the cyborg metaphor “to examine the relationships of power that are concealed within and disguised by cybernetic systems” (127). As gender is to feminism, the cyborg is to the posthuman: an informative, useful construction awaiting critique. And just as feminism seized on the metaphor of gender—critiquing and deconstructing it—the metaphor of the cyborg awaits similar work, with, as Donna Haraway would have it, a similar end: the reinscription of the social structure and the rewriting of the politics of power.

Posthumanism tacitly relies on the notion of gender as a social or cultural construction; the cyborg, a creature of literal construction, embodies this understanding, just as the cyborg embodies the merging of nature (the body) and culture (the mechanical). The work of Teresa de Lauretis is informative here: in *Technologies of Gender*, she points out that using gender as sexual difference has become a limitation because it “keeps feminist thinking bound to the terms of Western patriarchy itself” (1). de Lauretis sees gender as not only a construct, but as a deployment of social technology (3). *Technologies of Gender* aims to foreground the hypothesis that “the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation” (5), one with political and social implications. de Lauretis concerns herself with the gaze and with the body as created and re-created through representation, particularly through expressions of popular culture, but her point relies tacitly on the difference (or *différance*) of gender. Posthumanism takes from de Lauretis the realization that gender is technologically created, but it rejects the difference (and, as we shall see, the black/white logos of Jacques Derrida’s *différance*).

We Are All Chimeras

Donna Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto” (in *Simians*), a frequently cited essay that first appeared as “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s” in the journal *Socialist Review* in 1985, lays out the definition of the cyborg and the posthuman (although she doesn’t call it that in this particular essay) in terms intimately connected with feminism and socialism.

Haraway, who has a PhD in biology and who works with nonhuman primates, is also a cultural critic. For Haraway, the cyborg, an organism-machine hybrid that Haraway genders as female, exists now, and this existence provides an opening for the reinscription of gender and society. To Haraway, “we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machines in organisms. . . . The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics” (150). Haraway centers the creation of the cyborg in the context of three moments: the wiping away of the differences between humans and animals (the cyborg appears at the point where “the boundary between human and animal is transgressed” [152]); the distinction between organism and machine (the cyborg disturbs the notion of organic wholes); and the boundary between the physical and the nonphysical (cyborgs are “about consciousness—or its simulation” [153]).

The posthuman thus comes out of a postpostmodern moment, one where the very articulations of what it means to be human and not something else (such as an animal or a vessel for consciousness) are called into question. The impact of technological advances in fields such as computers and biochemistry on society and everything “society” codes (gender roles, the meaning of work, the kind of work that is performed) has greatly changed the landscape, and Haraway wishes to seize this unprecedented moment to ensure that the posthuman can be coded in a way that permits the cyborg to have power: “The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self. This is the self feminists must code” (163). Writing is one such subversive way that coding may take place; Haraway cites in particular science fiction writers such as Russ, Delany, Varley, Tiptree, and Butler. The goal of such cyborg stories is the recoding of communication and intelligence “to subvert command and control.” Cyborg writing does not seek origins or wholeness; rather, it is about the “power to survive” by “seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (175). Cyborg writers seek to inscribe a new world—a “monstrous world without gender” (181).

The notion of cyborgs grows out of an historical moment that is only beginning to explore the possibilities of a technocrat culture. The hierarchy that structured society and gender roles is being replaced, whether we like it or not, with a new structure. Haraway articulates this new world order as an “informatics of domination.” Rather than representation, we have simulation; rather than realistic novels, we have science fiction and postmodernism; rather than heat, we have noise; rather than reproduction, we have replication; rather than nature/culture, we have fields of difference; rather than sex, we have genetic engineering (161–62). A world order based on gender roles is on the way out; cyborgs are on the way in.

Haraway calls on the posthuman cyborg to reinscribe reality. This new reality does not depend on isolation, duality, and bodies, as do previous articulations of the self. Rather, the cyborg stands as what Haraway calls a “myth” to expand our bodies past our sensorium (“why should our bodies end at the skin?” [178]); to consider ourselves interconnected, not separate, with other entities (made easier, perhaps, by the recent completion of the rough map of the human genome, indicating that humans are frighteningly like worms in terms of DNA structure); and to consider a new form of embodiment, one separate from the organic and its attendant connotations of motherhood and everything that means. Haraway concludes her essay with the famous phrase, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess” (181), emphasizing her pleasure in helping to write into being a new worldview.

But is Haraway’s view too totalizing? In “Grammars of Transgression: Golems, Cyborgs, and Mutants,” William A. Covino uses Haraway as a jumping-off point to expand and contrast Haraway’s inscription of cyborgs with the inscription of the golem, the constructed human made by a kind of magic by Jews. His discussion of golems in literature, essays, and Hebrew texts provides him with fodder for a description of magic, not science, in a construct (the golem) that is literally spoken into being. Covino argues that this construct allows trans-

*Haining, Peter. *The Classic Era of American Pulp Magazines*. Chicago Review Press, April 2001.

*Hellekson, Karen. *The Alternate History: Refiguring Historical Time*. Kent State University Press, February 2001. Focuses on Aldiss’s *The Malacia Tapestry*, Moore’s *Bring the Jubilee*, and Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*.

*Henderson, C.J. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction Movies*. Facts on File, August 2001.

*Holmsten, Brian and Alex Lubertozi, Eds. *The Complete War of the Worlds: Mars’ Invasion of Earth from H.G. Wells to Orson Wells*. Sourcebooks, April 2000. Includes 2 CD’s (broadcast, interviews, music), radio script, letters.

*Holte, James Craig, Ed. *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night*. Greenwood, March 2001. Papers from the 18th ICFA, 1997.

Ingham, Patricia Clare. *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain*. University of Pennsylvania Press, May 2001.

*Kaluta, Michael. *Wings of Twilight: The Art of Michael Kaluta*. NBM, March 2001.

Karr, Phyllis Ann. *The Arthurian Companion*, 2nd ed. Green Knight, January 2001.

Keller, James R. *Anne Rice and Sexual Politics: The Early Novels*. McFarland, September 2000.

*Ketterer, David, Ed. *Flashes of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the War of the Worlds Centennial*. Greenwood, April 2001. From the 19th ICFA, 1998.

*Lancaster, Kurt. *Interacting with Babylon 5: Fan Performances in a Media Landscape*. University of Texan Press, July 2001.

Lee, Gwen and Elaine Sauter. *What if Our World is Their Heaven? The Final Conversations of Philip K.*

Dick. Overlook Press, April 2001 (repeatedly delayed).

*Lindskoog, Kathryn. *Sleuthing C.S. Lewis: More Light in the Shadowlands*. Mercer University Press, June 2001. Asserts that C.S. Lewis's posthumous books are partly forged.

*Lindskoog, Kathryn Ann. *Surprised by C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, and Dante: An Array of Original Discoveries*. Mercer University Press, June 2001.

*Lupoff, Richard A. *The Great American Paperback: An Illustrated Tribute to the Legends of the Book*. Collectors Press, April 2001.

*Magistrale, Tony. *Student Companion to Edgar Allen Poe*. Greenwood, June 2001.

*Matarese, Susan M. *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination*. University of Massachusetts Press, January 2001.

*McNally, Raymond T. and Radu R. Florescu. *In Search of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. Renaissance Books, December 2000.

Molinari, Matteo and Jim Kamm. *The Horror Movie Survival Guide*. Berkley Boulevard, April 2001.

*Miller, Ron and Frederick C. Dumont III. *The Art of Chesley Bonestell*. Sterling Publishing, May 2001.

*Mitchell, Charles F. *A Guide to Apocalyptic Cinema*. Greenwood, March 2001.

Muir, John Kenneth. *Terror Television: American Series 1970-1999*. McFarland, Winter 2000.

Pickover, Clifford A. *Dreaming the Future: The Fantastic Story of Prediction*. Prometheus, March 2001. Publisher says no discussion of SF.

*Pordzik, Ralph. *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia: A Comparative Introduction to the Utopian Novel in the New English Literatures*. Peter Lang, February 2001.

gression. Cyborgs, because they are by definition totalizing, cannot transgress. Covino's essay is particularly useful as a critique of the implications of Haraway's argument, suggesting that the construct of the cyborg results in a lack of free play, which limits it as a means of criticism and of social change.

The Politics of the Posthuman

N. Katherine Hayes, who has degrees in chemistry in addition to degrees in English, works from some of the ideas presented by Haraway. Rather than focusing on the opportunity for social change, Hayles places her ideas within the context of hermeneutic criticism. In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles argues that a consideration of the posthuman works against Derrida's presence/absence logos, replacing it with pattern/randomness (285). To destabilize the self, Hayles points out, deconstruction required a "metaphysics of presence." With information theory, this presence is replaced by what Hayles calls "the erasure of embodiment" (xi)—following Hans Moravec, human identity ceases to be associated with the body that houses it, being comprised instead of information, just as information is different from the machines that house it. For pattern/randomness, origin does not stabilize signification; rather, systems move toward an unknown end, "an open future marked by contingency and unpredictability" (285). Further, randomness has become meaningful and necessary in biological and nonbiological systems. Hayles argues that the posthuman means not the end of humanity, but rather the end of a privileged view of humanity that suggests humans may be conceptualized as autonomous, with agency and choice. In one reading (of many possible readings) of the posthuman view of humanity, "emergence replaces teleology; reflexive epistemology replaces objectivism; distributed cognition replaces autonomous will; embodiment replaces a body seen as a support system for the mind; and a dynamic partnership between humans and intelligent machines replaces the liberal humanist subject's manifest destiny to dominate and control nature" (288).

The fear in posthuman discourse is the fear of the dissolving of humanity. When humans are augmented with computer technology, the fear is that the machine will take over humanity, somehow making a person lesser, or less human, or nonhuman. As long as humans are perceived as having boundaries separate from that of the machine (seeing cyborgs as having a human half and a machine half, for instance), then "real life" is on one side and "fake" virtual reality is on the other, a split that posthumanism rejects but that many find deeply disquieting. Most disturbing of all is the lack of a body, which becomes a thing to house the "real" element of humanity: consciousness, articulated as reproducible data. The articulation of the posthuman thus results in a fundamental fear of humanity's form, humanity's authority, and humanity's place in the universe. Veronica Hollinger, in her reading of cyberpunk literature as "one symptom of the postmodern condition of genre science fiction," considers cyberpunk to be "anti-humanist" (30). The interfacing of machine and humanity requires that we "deconstruct the human/machine opposition and begin to ask new questions about the ways in which we and our technologies 'interface' to produce what has become a *mutual* evolution" (42). In other words, cyberpunk is *posthumanist*. It takes Derridan logos, crumples it into a ball, and tosses it at the computer monitor.

Posthumanism articulates what Annette Kuhn calls an "integrated circuit" of "technologies, images, simulacra and social relations, in which all fixed notions of subjectivity and difference are banished" (181). Just as Haraway called on feminists to seize the opportunity to inscribe meaning on the blank body of the cyborg, science fiction will seize the opportunity to explore the possibilities inherent in a worldview that dissolves difference—between men and women, between species, between human and machine—and that celebrates our "wildest dream of magical beings morphed by technology" (Dery 522).

Selected Works

- Balsamo, Anne. *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).
- Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
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- Farnell, Ross. "Attempting Immortality: AI, A-Life, and the Posthuman in Greg Egan's *Permutation City*." *Science Fiction Studies* 27, no. 1 (March 2000): 69–91.
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- Harding, Sandra. *The Science Question and Feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
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- Moravec, Hans. *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics; or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1948.
- Wolmark, Jenny. *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism and Postmodernism*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994.

NONFICTION REVIEW

**SHADOWS IN THE ATTIC: A GUIDE TO
BRITISH SUPERNATURAL FICTION**

Neil Barron

Wilson, Neil. *Shadows in the Attic: A Guide to British Supernatural Fiction 1820-1950*. British Library, November 2000. xvii + 554 p. £45. 0-7123-1074-6. Distributed by Turpin, <turpin@turpinltd.com> and the British Library Bookshop, <bl-bookstore@bl.uk>.

Wilson, a librarian, wrote all the descriptive and critical text, while the British Library provided the bibliographic information for the first British editions, which include the British Library's press mark (roughly, the call number). The information does not include the points of interest to collectors. Like its American counterpart, the Library of Congress, the materials in the British Library must be used on site, and like the Library of Congress, the British Library receives copyright deposit copies of almost all books. A "small number" of titles known to be published and not deposited are also listed.

- *Russo, Joe and Larry Landsman. *Planet of the Apes Revisited*. St. Martin's/Thomas Dunne Books, June 2001.
- Schreck, Nikolas. *The Satanic Scream: An Illustrated History of the Devil in Cinema*. Creation Books, June 2001.
- Spignesi, Stephen J. *The Essential Stephen King: The Greatest Novels, Short Stories, Movies, and Other Creations of the World's Most Popular Writer*. New Page Books, June 2001.
- Stine, Scott Aaron. *The Gorehound's Guide to Splatter Films of the 1960's and 1970's*. McFarland, Winter 2000.
- Swade, Doron. *The Difference Engine: Charles Babbage and the Quest to Build the First Computer*. Viking, August 2001.
- Tomlinson, Paul. *Harry Harrison: A Bibliography, 1950-2000*. Wildside Press, January 2001.
- *Vieth, Errol. *Screening Silence: Contexts, Texts, and Science in Fifties Science Fiction Film*. Scarecrow, June 2001.
- Warren, Bill. *The Evil Dead Companion*. St. Martin's/Griffin, January 2001.
- *Wells, H.G. *The War of the Worlds: A Critical Text of the 1899 London First Edition*. Leon Stover, Ed. McFarland, Late Winter 2000.
- White, Tim. *Chiaroscuro*. Paper Tiger/Sterling, April 2001. Reprint of 1988 edition.
- *Wright, Bradford W. *Comic Book Nation: Transforming American Culture*. Johns Hopkins University Press, April 2001.

The coverage is of British supernatural fiction published 1820-1950, with later works listed if the author's earlier work had appeared prior to 1950. A convenient list of the two hundred authors profiled, with cross-references from pseudonyms, is provided. The bibliographic portion may contain one or all these sections: first UK editions of collections or anthology appearances; first UK novels; related works by the author, sometimes nonfiction; biography/autobiography; bibliography; and critical studies. Each section is arranged chronologically. Generally, only the fiction is annotated. Each individual work is numbered, and the 45-page title index is keyed to entry number (even when the story isn't mentioned in the entry), and all such listings are cumulated in the title index.

Wilson's foreword explains his choices, "a personal selection of two hundred authors whose work best represents the numerous styles and gradual evolution of British supernatural fiction between 1820 and 1950. The intention has been to provide as complete a portrait of the genre as possible within the space available, not to create a 'top 200' listing of its 'best' writers." The entries for the authors occupy 480 pages, ranging from one page per entry to nine pages for Algernon Blackwood, the lengthiest entry. The total number of stories listed, from short fiction to novels, is about 4,100.

The bibliography roughly comparable to Wilson's and listed in his four-page list of sources consulted is Bleiler's *The Guide to Supernatural Fiction* (Kent State, 1983, OP), which is far more comprehensive. Its scope runs from 1750 to 1960, with 1,775 books and 7,200 stories individually annotated, including fantasy, books for younger readers, and a great many books published by non-British writers, some of them translations. The differences are perhaps best illustrated by comparing the treatment of an individual author, Blackwood.

Wilson lists ten short fiction collections (plus eleven anthologies with an Algernon Blackwood story), six novels, and a short story, plus one autobiography and two bibliographies. Bleiler annotates fifteen collections, ten novels, and the same story, and annotates six of the anthologies by others (three in Wilson were published post-Bleiler). The numbers don't indicate the main difference: Bleiler is far more detailed in commentary, and annotates every supernatural work once and lists the stories when they appear elsewhere. Bleiler's *Supernatural Fiction Writers* (2 vols, 1985, OP) profiles about 145 writers, classical to modern, fifty of which (the more important) are covered by Wilson, although much more briefly. If your goal was to determine if a given writer or some of his or her works were worth reading, Bleiler is by far the best guide and is much more comprehensive. Wilson will be most useful for users of the British Library and those whose interest is in earlier supernatural fiction. Ramsey Campbell's four-page introduction emphasizes post-1950 supernatural fiction but recognizes the continuities with the older fiction. He judges the Wilson book as "essential." I don't think so; most of Wilson's two hundred writers are infrequently read today (some with good reason). Scholars and large academic libraries should consider but few others.

NONFICTION REVIEW

***THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE FICTION WRITING & ON WRITING:
A MEMOIR OF THE CRAFT***

Neil Barron

Gunn, James. *The Science of Science Fiction Writing*. Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706-4310, October 2000. ix + 232 p. \$14.95, trade paper. 1-57886-011-3. Orders to 800-462-6420.

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. Scribner, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, October 2000. 288 p. 0-784-85352-3. Orders to 800-223-2348. Pocket Books, June 2001. \$12.95, trade paper.

It would be a rare year for no books to be published on how to write fiction. The first such book for SF was that edited by Fantasy Press publisher Lloyd Eshbach, *Of Worlds Beyond* (1947), which has essays by Heinlein, Williamson, van Vogt, de Camp, E.E. Smith, John Taine, and John W. Campbell. It was followed by dozens of others dealing with fantastic fiction, almost all written by practicing authors/editors. Few are more qualified than James Gunn, emeritus professor at the University of Kansas, director of a summer workshop on writing SF at his university, a writer of fiction since his first story was published in 1949, and the only person to serve as president of both the SFWA and SFRA. His 1992 book, *Inside Science Fiction*, reprinted eighteen essays dealing with the history and teaching of SF, including writing for film and television. Here, he focuses on writing fiction (part 1) and writing SF (part 2), while profiling a handful of key writers, like Wells, Heinlein, and Asimov (part 3). The first useful appendix incorporates detailed notes (fifteen pages) from his 1998 writing workshop; the second is a five-page syllabus for a writing workshop developed for an eight-week online course in SF writing. Eight of the twenty chapters are reprinted essays.

Gunn's topics are those usually treated in how-to guides, such as story structure, ideas, characterization, milieu, dialogue, etc. He uses examples from his own and others' fiction, but he clearly and comprehensively explains distinctive characteristics of SF. (The thorough index shows the wide range of stories cited or used as examples.) Admission to

Gunn's summer writing workshop is limited, and the cost is far greater than this modestly priced paperback. It's not a substitute for the workshop, but any wannabe writer could learn a lot from this readable and well-organized guide, even if he/she already owns either of two other recent guides, Orson Scott Card's Hugo-winning *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1990) and *Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1991), edited by Gardner Dozios and others, both still in print as trade paperbacks (\$14.99 AND \$11.95, respectively).

Stephen King, perhaps the most prominent of the "brand-name" writers, has written a book quite different from Gunn's. As the subtitle suggests, it's largely a personal memoir, including a graphic account (reprinted in *The New Yorker*) of King's automobile accident last summer; the driver who struck King later died, presumably of natural causes (no mummy's curse is suspected). The book is a bit like Frankenstein's monster, composed of disparate parts. The center of the book is an idiosyncratic writing guide that uses examples and exercises from his own work and from other popular writers. King's distinctive, informal voice is ever present, and he explicitly says he wants to avoid "bullshit," providing instead relatively few general considerations and specific rules, along with a few exercises. As the *Publishers Weekly* review aptly noted, "The real importance of this congenial, ramshackle book, however, lies neither in its autobiography nor in its pedagogy, but in its triumphant vindication of the popular writer, including the genre author, as a writer. King refuses to draw, and makes a strong case for the abolition of, the usual critical lines between Carver and Chandler, Greene and Grisham, DeLillo and Dickens." With a 500,000 copy first printing, the appeal of King's book extends far beyond wannabe writers. If you're on the road a lot, consider King's eight-hour unabridged reading on eight CD's or six cassettes (Simon & Schuster, \$35 for either set).

NONFICTION REVIEW

UNRULY PLEASURES: THE CULT FILM AND ITS CRITICS

Jay McRoy

Harper, Graeme and Xavier Mendik, Eds. *Unruly Pleasures: The Cult Film and Its Critics*. FAB Press, Box 178, Guildford, Surrey GU3 2YU, England, May 2000. 253 p. £14.99/\$19.95, trade paper. 1-903254-00-0.

The editors say their anthology "sets out to build a bridge between the cult film fan and the cult film theorist." And while some of the attempts are far more successful than others at unifying these two by no means disparate cultures, the collection's focus on audience (both "fan"-based and scholarly) provides a useful unifying thread for linking an eclectic grouping of essays composed from a variety of theoretical approaches. Any collection that interrogates a genre as expansive and subjective as cult cinema is destined to disappoint as many readers as it excites.

For readers searching for a decidedly academic approach, *Unruly Pleasures* offers a welcome alternative to predominantly review/appreciation-oriented works like Philip and Karl French's *Cult Movies*, Danny Peary's trilogy *Cult Movies/2/3* (1981/1983/1989). Like Jeffrey Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum's *Midnight Movies* (1991), the essays here explore the liberating potential of cult cinema, particularly in its impact upon its viewers. But as several contributors quickly acknowledge, cult films are often ideologically recuperative as well, mending the social fabric even as they gesture toward rending it.

The methodologies range from psychoanalysis to Marxism (cult fiction in their own rights), and the films range from '70's Kung Fu flicks to the movies of Chesty Morgan, from hardcore lactation pornography to snuff films. Among the more successful essays are Mikita Brottman's "Star Cults/Cult Stars: Cinema, Psychosis, Celebrity, Death"; Julian Hoxter's "Taking Possession: Cult Learning in *The Exorcist*"; and Harper and Mendik's "The Chaotic Text and the Sadean Audience...."

Each essay combines an analysis of the politics of watching (audience reaction/participation/proliferation) with an analysis of that which is watched (the film) in a way that comes closest to investigating the union of cult fan and cult theorist. Brottman, for example, reads the cultural fetishism as symptomatic of cultural anxieties over mortality and corporeal durability. Likewise, Hoxter approaches "classic" cult films, most notably Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1973), through an exploration of the ways in which fan Websites work to contain narrative and semiotic violence by providing environments that allow for the recognition of "commonality of experience" while closing off opportunities for attaining a greater understanding of the experience of censorship." Lastly, in perhaps the best essay, Harper and Mendik read the films of Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez (a discussion of 1996's *From Dusk Till Dawn*'s schizophrenic narrative takes center stage), ultimately arguing that the *cultification* of film narratives results from the collision of pleasures and expectations, both visual and narrative, within an avid, heterogenous collective/audience.

Not all the essays are as developed as they could be; even some of the compelling readings feel underdeveloped in places, as if trimmed to the length and scope of the other essays. Nor will every fan or critic find his/her favorite texts or genres treated: blaxploitation films, Japanese anime, and queer and transgender cinema are conspicuously absent. Nevertheless, *Unruly Pleasures* provides a much-needed contribution to what Barry Keith Grant correctly posits as "an intensely popular yet at the same time surprisingly undertheorized category of cinema." Fans of cult films, as well as film students with an interest in the politics of spectatorship and "fringe" cinema, will find much of value here. And, given their overarching goal for this collection, the editors would be much pleased by the union of these interpretive communities.

NONFICTION REVIEW

A GEORGE ORWELL CHRONOLOGY

Neil Barron

Hammond, J.R. *A George Orwell Chronology*. Palgrave, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, November 2000. xx + 122 p. 0-333-76033-6. (Simultaneously issued in the UK through Macmillan.) US orders to 800-221-7945.

Hammond compiled other volumes in the Author Chronologies series devoted to Wells, Poe, and R.L. Stevenson. The format is standardized. A genealogical chart of the Blair family follows Hammond's introduction. The 94-page chronology is divided into two parts, from Eric Blair's birth in 1903 to the end of 1932, followed by his life as Orwell to his death in 1950 from pulmonary tuberculosis at age 46. His readings, reviews, essays and books, trips, visits to and from others are all here, made more accessible by a three-part index (books and essays/poetry, people and organizations, and places). Supplemental sections include Orwell's circle (sixty-one people with a paragraph on each), a chronology of his books, of his addresses in London, and of the development of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with a two-page list of sources. The chronology is designed to permit quick checking of a fact. Like most Palgrave books (a joint St. Martin's/Macmillan imprint), this is a bit pricey for what you get. Only the largest libraries and Orwell specialists need consider. For others, I suggest instead 1982's *A George Orwell Companion* by Hammond (OP) and biographies like the authorized one by Michael Sheldon (1991; OP). The best value today is the new trade paperback reprint from David R. Godine of Orwell's four-volume 1968 set, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (\$17.95 each).

NONFICTION REVIEW

HISTORIES OF THE FUTURE: STUDIES IN FACT, FANTASY, AND SCIENCE FICTION

Paul M. Lloyd

Sandison, Alan and Robert Dingley, Eds. *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy, and Science Fiction*. Palgrave, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, January 2001. xviii + 202 p. \$59.95. 0-312-23604-2; 0-333-77641-0 outside North America. US orders to 800-221-7945.

The Australian editors are joined by a dozen Australian, British, and American contributors, most of them academics. Harry Harrison's introduction discussed the beginnings of SF criticism, which he traces to Kingsley Amis and I. F. Clarke in the mid-1960's, neglecting pioneers of serious SF criticism such as Mark Hillegas, Tom Claerson, or Darko Suvin.

Ken MacLeod talks about his own novels of alternate history. Dingley traces the theme of future travelers visiting unfamiliar modern scenes, a theme that is found as early as the late 18th century. Roslynn Haynes traces the presentation of the figure of the scientist in the 20th century films, often treated as mad eccentrics when they are not villains. Bruce Basington's "Boys, Battleships, Books: The Cult of the Navy in Juvenile Fiction, 1898-1919" is a fascinating glimpse of juvenile fiction dedicated to military speculation in the early 20th century, with special emphasis on the possibilities of naval weaponry.

Charles Gannon deals with the prediction (subsequently confirmed in fact) of new weapons in SF, with the discussion divided between the origins of the tank, an intriguing critical detective story, and the SR-71 aircraft of more recent years. David Seed looks at a variety of post-World War II future war stories, whose theme's history was pioneered by Pilgrim I.F. Clarke. Somewhat similar is Brian Baker's "The Map of Apocalypse: Nuclear War and the Space of Dystopia in American Science Fiction." Alasdair Spark looks at some predictions from the '90's that have been proved false in a short time.

Robert Crossley's fascinating article, "Sign, Symbol, Power: The New Martian Novel," shows how Mars as a symbol of a different and yet somehow Earthlike planet has evolved since the late 19th century. As writers have striven to make their picture of Mars correspond more closely to the scientific view of the planet, they have lost none of the sense of awe that characterized many of the early Mars stories. Tom Shippey analyzes Heinlein's sentimentalized views of a hard-line military man confronting modern society (Pournelle's similar attitudes are also discussed), contrasted hilariously with Harrison's buck private view in *Bill the Galactic Hero*. The final article by Damien Broderick stresses that attempts to predict the future inevitably fail as the course of increasing scientific and technological innovation seems to be leading society to a unique and unpredictable "singularity." A varied and interesting collection for larger academic libraries and historians interested in counter-factual thought experiments.

NONFICTION REVIEW

As He Sees It, Journeyman: The Art of Chris Moore, & The Art of Rowena

Walter Albert

- Freas, Frank Kelly. *As He Sees It*. Text by Frank Kelly Freas and Laura Brodian Freas. 112 p. 1-85585-847-7. Paper Tiger, 2000. \$29.95. Distributed by Sterling Publishing, 387 park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8810; US orders to 800-367-9692.
- Moore, Chris. *Journeyman: The Art of Chris Moore*. Text by Stephen Gallagher. 128 p. 1-85585-849-5. Paper Tiger, 2000. \$29.95. Distributed by Sterling Publishing, 387 park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8810; US orders to 800-367-9692.
- Morrill, Rowena. *The Art of Rowena*. Text by Doris Vallejo. 112 p. 1-85585-778-2. Paper Tiger, 2000. \$29.95. Distributed by Sterling Publishing, 387 park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8810; US orders to 800-367-9692.

Frank Kelly Freas is undoubtedly the best known contemporary science fiction illustrator, with a record of ten Hugos that is surpassed only by Michael Whelan's twelve. He has been active since the 1950's, when he illustrated more than 160 stories in *Astounding*, and is still much in demand. Both the American Rowena Morrill and the British Chris Moore began their careers in illustration in the 1970's, with Rowena (as she signs her work) specializing in sensual oil covers and Moore a fine practitioner of SF hardware art. Like Freas, he prefers acrylics to oils but also increasingly uses new computer-based graphic tools.

This is the fifth book to be devoted to Freas's work, but it's the first in almost two decades. The earliest, a portfolio, was published by Advent in 1957, followed by three books documenting his prolific output compiled by Freas. *The Astounding Fifities* (1971), with its particular emphasis on his black and white interior illustrations, demonstrates his mastery of a skill that is certainly the foundation of any solid technique but is much less prized in the contemporary illustration field. There are a few examples of this aspect of his work in *As He Sees It* (although a 1996 example on page fifty one shows that his pen has lost none of its magic), but most of the illustrations are in color and concentrate on the work published since *A Separate Star* (1984). There's perhaps less of the whimsical humor than formerly, although it surfaces with delicious pungency in the 1993 *Famous Monsters of Filmland* convention poster, dominated by a portrait of Forrest J. Ackerman gazing benignly upon a crowd of movie monsters climbing out of the pages of a pile of issues of his magazine. The text provides a running commentary on specific works and Freas's working methods, as well as his lively opinions on a variety of topics.

If Freas is the best know of these three artists, Chris Moore is probably relatively unfamiliar, at least in this country, although his appearance at a number of American SF and fantasy cons has begun to correct that. *Journeyman* is a fine introduction to his career, which spans a quarter of a century, and the text, a transcription of an interview with Moore by Gallagher, is informative. Moore comes across as a modest, hardworking, talented illustrator, and the layout of the book, with the pages filled with double-page, full-page, and spot drawings that often demonstrate the evolution of a particular painting, presents an attractive portrait of the man and his work. The handsome endpapers are a collage of book covers illustrated by Moore, many of them showing his ability to use a small drawing adroitly in combination with a strikingly designed text, this in contrast to the current style that seems intent on crowding as much visual detail as possible into a small area. Moore's sense of drama is always in evidence, with massive ships, planes, and automobiles and a sense of arrested motion that's palatable in its intensity. A small drawing "Agent of Destruction" (page 71), in which a fist pushes up forcefully, scattering what appear to be a group of tiny spaceships, is particularly effective in showing his precision, strength, and economy of style.

The Art of Rowena is affectionately dedicated to the artist's companion, Fabio Chiussi, a Fabio she takes care to separate from the model whose well-muscled sensuality has been featured on a generation or two of paperback covers. Rowena has used Fabio for some of her paintings, but he and the other men she photographs in her meticulous preparation for her paintings never take the viewer's attention away from the spectacular females, many of the nude, who are featured. Whatever their pose, whatever their state of dress (or undress), her women are strong and self-assured, flirtatiously teasing monsters and would-be male conquerors, reveling in their healthy, fully developed bodies. Her early work in *The Fantastic Art of Rowena* (1983) is scarcely distinguishable from the cross-section of more recent paintings here. She still works in oils, something of an anomaly in an acrylic-dominated field, and no bright acrylic glaze can ever approach the warmth and richness of her lovingly rendered costumes or the brilliant aquamarine tints of her water scenes. Her subjects may be too close to those of paperback romances for some tastes, but the richness of her palette and the playful, even exuberant, indolence of her voluptuous women does a great deal to compensate for the conventional poses.

The Freas volume should be an automatic purchase for any library of contemporary fantastic and SF illustration, with the other two books additions that would reflect both the range and quality of contemporary work.

NONFICTION REVIEW

THE TIME MACHINES: THE STORY OF THE SCIENCE-FICTION PULP MAGAZINES FROM THE BEGINNING TO 1950

Neil Barron

Ashley, Mike. *The Time Machines: The Story of the Science-Fiction Pulp Magazines from the Beginning to 1950*. Liverpool University Press, 4 Cambridge Street, Liverpool L69 7ZU, England, November 2000. xi + 300 p. £32. 0-085323-855-3; £12.95, trade paper, 0-085323-865-0. Distributed in North America by ISBS, \$52.95 and \$21.50. Orders to 800-944-6190.

Mike Ashley (1948 -) is probably the closest counterpart in the UK to the late Sam Moskowitz (1920-1997), and his work owes a lot to his Pilgrim predecessor, as he'd be the first to admit. Some regard the pulps as the wellsprings of today's SF, while others are less charitable, viewing them as depositories of crude if vigorous and colorful fiction for a mostly younger, undiscriminating audience. Just as jazz largely evolved in its early years in the bordellos of New Orleans, mostly among black Americans, an origin that tainted any study of it for decades, so the crumbling pulps are regarded with affection, often mixed with mild or acute embarrassment by the diminishing number of those who know them firsthand.

Ashley is today the foremost chronicler of the fantastic fiction pulps. Some may remember the four-volume set he wrote/edited for New English Library, 1974-78, *The History of the Science Fiction Magazines*, which took the story up to 1965. Each of these volumes included with its historical narrative, ten stories representative of their decade. Next was the magisterial *Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Weird Fiction Magazines* (1985), which he co-edited with Marshall Tymn, whose 970 pages probably tell you a lot more than you want to know. This new history, at about 100,000 words, is considerably more detailed than the narrative portions of the first three volumes of his NEL set and reflects a lot of later research, much of it listed in the five-page bibliography.

The first of the five chapters reviews the development of popular magazines, including a nod to dime novels, prior to the founding of *Amazing* in 1926. Four chapters provide a detailed history of the next twenty-five years, by which time the pulps were dying, replaced by mass-market paperbacks and television. Many of the more prominent fanzines and specialty book publishers are also discussed. Ashley loves this stuff, and if you do too, you won't be put off by the blizzard of names and titles that almost inevitably make up most of the history. You may also devour the four appendices: a brief survey of magazine SF in seven non-English speaking countries; a detailed listing of all the magazines published during this period; a directory of magazine editors and publishers; and a directory of magazine cover artists (Frank R. Paul has the longest list.). The epilogue suggests the first twenty-five years of the SF pulps could be divided into seven phases, while recognizing that "science-fiction editors left their mark on the development of sf in a far stronger way than if the sf magazine had not come into existence, though not always for the better." I think Brian Stableford's division is more useful: the first thirty years magazine-based, the next thirty years book-based, with our current period dominated by film and television. What is lacking here is the wider historical perspective and wit in what is still the best book on the SF pulps, Paul Carter's *The Creation of Tomorrow: Fifty years of Magazine Science Fiction* (1977).

Throughout the book are references to Volume Two of this three-volume history, *Transformations*, written but not yet scheduled for publication, which covers the 1950-1970 period. The concluding volume, *Gateways to Forever*, "looks at the way in which magazines have survived following the new wave of the sixties, the punk era, the computer age, and the astonishing popularity of the big-budget blockbuster sf movies." Ashley said last June that this final volume will be preceded by four typically modest projects, a biography of Algernon Blackwood, encyclopedias devoted to crime fiction and Arthuriana, and a comprehensive history, *The Gernsback Days*, a Borgo Press orphan likely to be published by Wildside Press.

Only about five dozen mostly academic libraries worldwide have significant collections of fantastic pulp magazines, and only a handful of them could be described as "comprehensive." Add a few hundred people interested in the development of this aspect of popular culture, and you've identified the market for this book. Some large public systems and large university libraries should consider this, and not be put off by the garish cover by Leo Morey from a 1931 *Amazing*. For anyone else, it's readable enough but more than a little esoteric.

NONFICTION REVIEW

THE HORROR READER

Karen McGuire

Gelder, Ken, Ed. *The Horror Reader*. Routledge, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001-2299, 2000. xiii + 414 p. \$75 0-415-21355-X; \$24.99, trade paper, 0-415-21356-8. US orders to 800-797-9803. UK prices are £42.75 and £14.99.

Editor Gelder accomplished his goal to "Organize a field of study, identifying key terms and key interests, and representing the best work in that field to date." He groups the twenty-nine reprinted articles and extracts into eleven

sections, such as “The Fantastic,” “Monstrosities,” and “Queer Horror,” and provides section introductions and a head note explaining each article’s focus. All this permits the reader to navigate easily to sections of interest.

Two recent examples assemble critical studies of horror, *Modern Gothic: A Reader* (1996), edited by Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith, and Clive Bloom’s *Gothic Horror: A Reader’s Guide from Poe to King and Beyond* (1998), but Gelder is more inclusive, drawing on many examples from film as well as novels, and more varied approaches to the study of horror. Gelder’s categories include most of horror’s domain, from monstrosity to the fantastic, and from regional horror to slasher cinema. There’s a balanced mix of the theoretical, such as Sue-Ellen Case’s “Tracking the Vampire,” and close readings, such as Jennifer Wicke’s “Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and Its Media” and Patricia White’s “Female Spectator, Lesbian Specter: *The Haunting*,” examples which typify the high quality of the analyses.

That latter half emphasizes cinema, especially of the last twenty years, but Gelder balances articles and extracts about classic filmed novels like *Dracula* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with those discussing *The Attack of the Fifty-Foot Woman* and *Leech Woman* (covered in an outstanding piece by Vivian Sobchack). There’s even a section of “New Regional Horror” that includes critiques of Caribbean horror literature and Chinese ghost films, an eclectic coverage, which transcends the usual British and American myopia in similar collections.

For range of topics and quality of materials, *The Horror Reader* ranks high among anthologies of horror criticism, in spite of occasional proofreading errors. The twenty-page bibliography is an excellent resource, whose names read like a who’s who of scholars of Gothicism. A worthy effort made readily affordable in the paperback version.

NONFICTION REVIEW

STICKS AND STONES: THE TROUBLESOME SUCCESS OF CHILDREN’S LITERATURE FROM SLOVENLY PETER TO HARRY POTTER

Michael M. Levy

Zipes, Jack. *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*. Routledge, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001-2299, January 2001. xiv + 213 p. \$24.95. 0-415-92811-7. Orders to 800-797-3803.

A professor of German at the University of Minnesota, Jack Zipes has long been one of our most perceptive, and occasionally one of our most controversial, critics of children’s literature. From a position firmly on the left, Zipes almost effortlessly utilizes a variety of feminist, Marxist, post-modernist, and culture studies techniques, whatever tools seem appropriate. In *Sticks and Stones*, a gathering of essays, most of which have their origins in talks delivered at various children’s literature-related conferences, he confronts a series of difficult issues. Several essays center on what Zipes describes as the commodification of contemporary children’s literature, the increasing tendency of its publishers to see books for children as nothing more than an individual link in a product chain that includes films, toys, games, videos, and so forth. Other topics include the problems inherent in adult attempts to evaluate children’s books or interpret children’s reactions to those books; the Americanization and contamination, for better or worse, of the Grimm’s fairy tales; and the increasing tendency of children’s books to serve as tools aimed at teaching the values of capitalism and the consumer society. In his last two chapters, Zipes explores two classic examples of children’s literature, Heinrich Hoffman’s *Slovenly Peter* (1844) and Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, examining what the popularity of these two works tells us about the cultures in which they were created. Some of his conclusions are a bit unsavory, but they have the ring of truth. Jack Zipes cares passionately about children, what they read and how their reading affects them. *Sticks and Stones* clearly reflects this passion and should be of considerable interest to anyone who shares his concerns.

NONFICTION REVIEW

META-MORPHING: VISUAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE CULTURE OF QUICK-CHANGE

Darren Harris-Fain

Sobchack, Vivian, Ed. *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*. University of Minnesota Press, 111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520, January 2000. xxiii + 286 p. \$47.95. 0-8166-3318-5; \$18.95, trade paper, 0-8166-3319-3.

Morphing, the cinematic special effect of seamlessly transforming one creature or object into another via computer technology, is relatively new, but the concept of metamorphosis is ancient. With an eye upon the past and a focus upon the present, these dozen essays explore the significance of human transformation in its various and fluid manifestations. Topics include quick-change artists, metamorphosis in myth, cosmetic surgery, theories and technologies that underlie morphing, the movie *Forrest Gump*, and the French performance artist Orlan. But most essays deal with examples drawn from fantasy and SF movies and television—specifically *The Abyss*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Mask*, *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, and Michael Jackson's video for "Black and White."

Just as the book deals with the concept of transformation, so these essays illustrate the protean state of recent scholarly work, ranging from straightforward explanations and analyses to the jargon-laden meditations commonly found in much academic writing in the humanities. Reading essays like these is a daunting task even for someone with a PhD in English. A few essays could be read without difficulty by a general audience, but most of intended for graduate students, professors, and others who might be familiar with and can tolerate dense academese.

So what does this book offer its limited readership? Sobchack notes of morphing and the morph, "Both are novel—and specifically historical—concretions of contemporary confusions, fears, and desires and both [...] allegorize the quick changes, fluid movements, and inhuman accelerations endemic to our daily lives." Briefly stated, this describes the essays which in one way, shape, or form explore the historical context of the morph in its cultural and psychological significance.

Norman Klein's "Animation and Animorphs: A Brief Disappearing Act," while heavily theoretical and hard to follow, uses multiple examples to argue for morphing as a metaphor of social change. Metaphorical meanings underling morphing are also discussed by Louise Krasniewicz, one of the more readable authors. Most essays are much tougher by comparison, but all certainly contain interesting insights into what morphing might symbolize or represent and why we respond to it as we do. These essays are especially interesting when they shift from the metaphysical to the critical, from abstraction to actual discussion of specific films and television programs, most of the SF or fantasy.

Krasniewicz says, "our fascination with digital morphs can tell us something about ourselves and our own circumstances at the turn of the millennium," an idea I hadn't considered before reading these essays, which are challenging both stylistically and intellectually. They led me to think about morphing in particular and visual media in general in new and interesting ways, which is surely one of the intentions of such compilations. While I wish that more academic writers would follow Ludwig Wittgenstein's dictum that everything that can be said can be said clearly [Hear! Hear! —Ed.], I would still recommend it to scholars interested in contemplating themes implicit in fantasy and SF film and television.

NONFICTION REVIEW

UTOPIA: THE SEARCH FOR THE IDEAL SOCIETY IN THE WESTERN WORLD

Arthur O. Lewis

Schaer, Roland, Gregory Claeys, and Lyman Tower Sargent, Eds. *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016-4314, October 2000. xiii + 386 p. \$49.95, 0-19-514110-5; \$27.50, trade paper, 0-19-514111-3.

This is a companion to the exhibit mounted at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the New York Public Library. The combination of copious illustrations drawn from the exhibition and twenty-two articles written by sixteen of the most distinguished living scholars of utopia provides a significant introduction to the utopian phenomenon. Those interested in utopia, novice and expert alike, will find this book easy to read and very informative. The French companion volume *Utopie. La quête de la société idéale en Occident*, is similar to this one, although there are a few minor differences in text, illustrations, and the two exhibitions.

Recent cultural exchanges and technological cooperation between two great institutions, the NYPL and the BN, led to the idea of a joint exhibit. Furthermore, "the links between New York and Paris, between the United States of America and Europe, have found ideal expression in the theme of utopia." A review of the exhibition by Robert Hughes (*Time*, 4 December 2000) called it a "show about a failure." This book amply refutes that judgment and affirms the vitality of the utopian quest.

The opening section places utopia in context, with essays on "Utopia: Space, Time and History" (Schaer), "Utopian Traditions: Themes and Variations" (Sargent), and "Society as Utopia (Alain Touraine). The next section describes "Ancient, Biblical, and Medieval Traditions" (Danielle Lecoq and Schaer) and "Plato's Atlantis: The True Utopia" (Jean-François Pradeu). Together, these five discussions lay the groundwork for examination of more specific kinds of utopian proposals and attempts. The third section's pieces cover the impact of the new world, the intellectual power of cities, the Reformation, the

fringe areas of satires and Robinsonades, and the lesser-know utopian activities in the “Indies of Castille.” “Utopia in History” carries the story through the American (Sargent) and French (Schaer) revolutions, the “ruins” of utopia at the end of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries (Bronislaw Baczko), the major impact of the nineteenth century socialism (Claeys), and the interweaving of utopia and literature in nineteenth century France (Laurent Portes).

Slightly more space is devoted to “Dreams and Nightmares: Utopia and Anti-Utopia in the Twentieth Century.” Literary, practical, and visual arts approaches make significant contributions to these descriptions of what happened to the utopian dream in our recent past. Utopias, dystopias, and anti-utopias (Krishan Kumar); communal movements (Yaacov Oved); avant-gardes (Schaer); and urban influences (Eaton) each had important roles to play. Frédéric Rouvillois gives us a chilling reminder of how close the perfect society can come to a dictatorship. That indefatigable bibliographer Sargent finds continuing interest in utopia, both literary and practical, and identifies “approximately 360 utopias (eutopias, dystopias, utopian satires, and critical utopias and dystopias) published by US authors from 1990 to 1999.” The concluding two essays both return to More’s *Utopia* to trigger philosophical discussion of the role of space in forming utopia, and circle, square, diagonal, and the naked body in illustrations of utopian ideals. The book concludes with an excellent chronological selective bibliography of important utopian works, a bibliography of secondary sources, and a personal name index.

There are many books about utopia, including specialized works that look more thoroughly at various aspects of the field. But none of them achieve the purpose of describing the search for utopia as effectively as this one. It looks like a coffee-table book, but don’t be fooled. It’s a genuine work of introduction, explanation, and scholarship in which the 300 illustrations, many in color, reinforce the text.

Schoene-Harwood, Berthold. *Mary Shelley: Frankenstein*. Columbia University Press, 61 West 62nd Street, New York, NY 10023, December 2000. 208 p. \$?. 0-231-12192-X; \$14.50, 0-231-12193-8, trade paper. London: Icon Books, 2000. Karen McGuire

Here is a practical guide to help undergraduates sort through the myriad of critical approaches to Shelley’s novel, a volume in the Columbia Critical Guides series. The author teaches at Liverpool John Moore’s University. Each chapter is effectively developed with commentary that both contextualizes the cited critic’s opinion and evaluates the specific critical approach under scrutiny. Because he does not assume that the student will be familiar with traditional arguments or critical terminology, he offers an explanation of an argument or a counter-argument to the cited quotation and provides definitions (sometimes needlessly, e.g., for ego, id; Athena, the Greek goddess). These inclusions could be annoying for someone already familiar with critical jargon but would be helpful for a student unfamiliar with the large body of criticism surrounding *Frankenstein*. Other definitions, such as the meaning of Derrida’s *différance*, are helpful reminders for scholars and students alike.

In six concise chapters, Schoene-Harwood provides substantial (often six or eight pages) passages from critical studies and adds linking commentaries on such issues as the critical reception of *Frankenstein* through the years, psychoanalytic readings, feminist approaches, and film adaptations. Each chapter begins with background on a particular critical issue; for instance, the chapter on feminist approaches summarizes the arguments of the seminal critics—Ellen Moers, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, and Barbara Johnson—before presenting lengthy extracts from the more recent interpretations of Anne K. Mellor and Burton Hatlen. For an undergraduate audience, the detailed explanations of counter-arguments are the real strength of this study. For example, in Mellor’s analysis of the DeLacey family as the idealized embodiment of non-traditional gender roles espoused by Mary Wollstonecraft, Schoene-Harwood points out that Mellor overlooks Shelley’s 1831 emendations that bring more stereotypical gender roles to Felix and Agatha.

This critical study is certainly worth the paperback price in spite of a lame conclusion. The six-page bibliography is adequate and provides a good starting point for undergraduates to search for their own conclusions.

[Cataloging note: The Library of Congress CIP shows Schoene as the surname. The cover and title page show Schoene-Harwood.—Ed.]

FICTION REVIEW

THE GLASS HARMONICA

Phillip Snyder

Marley, Louise. *The Glass Harmonica*. New York: Ace, 2000. 334 pages, paper, \$13.95. ISBN 0-441-00729-5.

An orphan in 18th century London, a musical prodigy in 21st century Seattle, and one of the world’s strangest

but loveliest musical instruments combine their voices with Benjamin Franklin, brain and cognitive science, and a few bends in the space-time continuum to produce Louise Marley's splendid SF novel, *The Glass Harmonica*. In one of the novel's two alternating storylines, a 13-year-old orphan named Eilish Eam scrapes together a living as a street musician, playing the musical glasses on the busy corners of 18th century London. She is discovered and taken up by Ben Franklin, who employs the girl to demonstrate to admiring audiences his newest invention, the glass harmonica, during his (real) 1762 residence in England. In the other storyline, 23-year-old Erin Rushton is making a name for herself a virtuoso of the modern glass harmonica, newly popular in the early 21st century.

Throughout the book, Erin and Eilish have visions of one another, which grow progressively clearer and more distinct until at last they converge, more or less, in what amounts to a kind of time-traveling ghost story. The real connections between these two stories, however, lie not so much in this sleight-of-plot as in Marley's deft thematic parallels. One track, for instance, Marley treats the reader to perfectly harrowing descriptions of 18th century medicine, including primitive electroshock (courtesy of the ever innovative Ben Franklin) as well as the more "conventional" therapy of cupping and bleeding. On the other track, though, Marley's descriptions of 21st century medicine can be equally horrific. A modern physician's professional excitement about his sophisticated neurological technique (which at one point actually leaves the patient blind) bears an eerie resemblance to the smugness of his predecessors.

While the novel incorporates hard science, it also makes use of social science. In Eilish Eam's London, the notorious slum of Seven Dials is rendered in all its heartbreaking misery, with deeply affecting close-ups of its poverty, prostitution, and despair. But in the Seattle of 2018, with its homeless underclass segregated in a "Tent City," it is not at all clear that social evolution has kept pace with technological progress in the intervening centuries.

Shrewd as these parallels are, they are certainly capable of working independently of any overt science-fictional underpinnings, and a reader could perhaps be forgiven for reading the book as contemporary mainstream fiction crossed with a historical novel. There is, after all, a tender love story for the romance crowd, plenty of period detail for history buffs, a cold (but sentimentally redeemed) mother, and other such made-for-TV material.

A special bonus for readers of every stripe is the novel's remarkable evocation of the world of music and musicians. Marley, a professional opera singer from Redmond, Washington, knows whereof she speaks. Music, she knows, "is more than just sound organized by pitch and rhythm and duration. . . There's just—there's magic in it!" There is indeed, and Marley captures it with precision and grace. The feel of a symphony rehearsal, the exhilaration and exhaustion of a performer's life on the road, the hard-nosed business and bare-knuckle politics of orchestras and ensembles—all are beautifully narrated here, along with poetically exact descriptions of the music that transcends these trappings in so glorious a fashion.

But for all its mainstream appeal, *The Glass Harmonica* is science fiction down to its very bones. The phenomena of time-traveling apparitions, for instance, is worked out as a special case of Einsteinian physics whereby "it may be a fairly simple process to transfer information from one [space-time] fold to another." Erin's psychic experience is blended with quantum connectedness in a manner "neither inconsistent with science nor necessarily consistent with insanity." (Psi powers! Shades of the Golden Age!)

Yet another strand of the story demonstrates Marley's skill with more contemporary speculations and extrapolations. Dr. Eugene Berrick, a young neurologist, is working to restore mobility to Erin's wheelchair-bound brother. Charlie Rushton, himself a gifted composer, suffers from Friedrich's ataxia, and his condition permits Marley to conduct a wide range of speculations on everything from the engineered nanoviruses that temporarily arrest his disease's progress to a truly original imagined therapy of "augmented binaural beats." This last item, in particular, allows her to join both the medical and musical sides of her novel, when Charlie composes a piece of experimental music using an ingenious adaptation of the same neurotherapy designed to address his neurochemical imbalance. When the neural stimulation of Dr. Berrick's technique is combined with the already eerie effect of Erin's glass harmonica, the effect on audiences is as thought provoking as it is spectacular.

Marley's first novels, a trio of competent science fantasies, introduced her as a writer with a talent for storytelling and a capable hand at characterization. With *The Terrorists of Irustan*, she took a giant step forward, combining hard-edged feminist politics with a complex meditation on faith and fanaticism. *The Glass Harmonica* registers another such step, marking Marley clearly as a writer to watch. Recommended.

FICTION REVIEW

CERES STORM

Phillip Snyder

Herter, David. *Ceres Storm*. New York: Tor, 2000. 240 pages, cloth, \$22.95. ISBN 0-312-87493-6.

Readers of Gene Wolfe may find much to admire in *Ceres Storm*, a first novel by Clarion West graduate David Herter. So might fans of Samuel R. Delany's *Nova*-era space operas and John Varley's early clones-across-the-solar-system extravaganzas. But it is chiefly with the far-future sagas of Wolfe that readers of Herter's debut will feel an unmistakable resonance. The armature for the novel is a hero's quest across a colorful and mysterious solar system. Young Daric, along with fellow clones Yellow and Black Daric, Jason, and the golden Grandpapa, sweeps across the starlines in quest of the lost technologies of their ancestor Darius the Leader, legendary ruler of planets and creator of the nanotech storm of the title. In the course of Daric's journeyings, he is kidnapped by agents of a powerful cartel headed by the Krater-Tromon Clan, escapes on the haunted Starswarm Pyre, and gradually begins to piece together both his heritage and his destiny.

Fairly pulpish, this. But ultimately, *Ceres Storm* is more redolent of Iain M. Banks than of Doc Smith, and more reminiscent of Wolfe's *Fifth Head of Cerebus* than either. Set in a future so distant that its science and technology seem like magic, the novel is a rich blend of myth and machine, of ancient wonder and modern marvel. The timescale alone is gratifyingly vast: it is 8,000 years in the story's past that Darius the Leader's thousand-year reign carried humanity to the edge of the solar system and beyond. It is a time of interplanetary telepresence ("doppeling"), of insectile surveillance devices called "weeforms," of "information drinks" permitting the liquid infusion of nanotech databases, and the fabled "Machineries," unimaginably powerful technologies capable of transforming entire planets. It is also, however, a time where far future meets distant past in the Moebius strip of science fantasy. *Ceres Storm* is a world where characters bear names like Quintillux and Penthesilia, where judgments are rendered by the Scales and enforced by the Pain Dragon, where castles are buried within planets, and a hero may (or may not) be transmogrified to an oak. Most of the time, the result is magical indeed, albeit a bit chilly.

Herter presents the reader with an array of narrative artifacts, their meanings layered like sediments through multiple levels of understanding, and the reader may (or may not) make sense of the pattern. Occasionally, like young Daric himself, the reader is overwhelmed by surfaces and blind to patterns. Amid the novel's shimmering bits of crystal, of Tyrian purpose, of century roses and eidolons and avatars, it's not always easy to keep one's bearings, partly because Herter has yet to learn the trick of deeper, warmer characters to stand out against his exotic backdrop. And for all the similarities otherwise, Herter's fantasy lacks the passion of Delany's space operas, the engaging wit of Zelazny's, the brashness of Varley's. Minor cavils, perhaps. *Ceres Storm* is not only a first novel, after all, but also merely the first installment of a series, and its sequels may begin to emulate Herter's models not only in their density, but in their richness of character, as well.

FICTION REVIEW

EATER

Kenneth Andrews

Benford, Gregory. *Eater*. New York: Eos [HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.], 2000. 337 pages, hardcover, \$24. 0-380-97436-3.

Dr. Benjamin Knowlton is head of the High Energy Astrophysics Center on Mauna Kea, Hawaii. His wife, Channing, a fellow astronomer and ex-astronaut, is dying of cancer. Kingsley Dart, British Royal Astronomer, is Channing's first love and Benjamin's life-long professional rival. A small black hole is headed toward Earth, and it turns out to be intelligent. Billions of years ago a fragment of a supernova struck an ancient civilization. It saved itself by uploading its civilization into representations residing in the magnetic halo of the fragment. "... it was made by a very early, intelligent civilization whose planet was being chewed up by the black hole. They managed to download their own culture into it ... into magnetic information stored in waves" (p. 147). For 7.5 billion years the Eater has been journeying through the cosmos, forcing intelligent species to upload specimens into its magnetic menagerie, indifferently destroying the remainder. Now it is humanity's turn. The Eater provides the necessary technology for humans to upload their consciousness to it, and it demands specimens. Dictatorial regimes sacrifice convicted criminals, although the Eater starts demanding specific individuals. Benjamin, Channing, and Kingsley must find a way to thwart the Eater.

The U Agency, a secretive and powerful arm of the U.S. government, intrudes. Factions within the government persuade the President to launch nuclear weapons at the Eater from submarines off the shores of China and Korea. (If the Eater is destroyed, then everyone will be happy. If the Eater destroys China or Korea in retaliation, everyone will be

happy.) The Eater is neither harmed, nor fooled, nor amused. It microwaves the USA from the Midwest to Washington, D.C. Earth's last hope is Channing. Since she is dying anyway, she uses the Eater's upload technology to have her consciousness put into a rocket armed with nuclear weapons. She then pilots the rocket toward the Eater, destroys the magnetic fields holding its consciousness, and frees the magnetic ghosts of past lives from their bondage. However, have no sorrow for Channing. The outer boundary of the Eater's ergosphere warps space and time, so she winds up somewhere (another universe?) with all those doomed civilizations (the "Eaten"), which have not been destroyed after all.

This novel is interesting in describing how astronomers solve problems and interact professionally. It cautions against scientific overspecialization that make scientists unable to understand areas outside their own, or to communicate with each other. The novel introduces plasma physics to the non-scientist. It is amusing to see how the fictional scientists of the novel (and perhaps Gregory Benford) view practitioners of other disciplines. Semioticians (who study the interrelations between language and culture) are portrayed positively, while politicians come off poorly. "The team from the White House sat in the front row ... They probably had never advanced beyond high school chemistry ... and saw the world as wholly human, filled with the vectors of human power. Technology was to them the product of human labor, no more, and science consisted of stories heard on TV, of no interest to people involved with the Real World" (p. 111). "[The President] was a bright man, but he had lived in a world in which only what other people thought mattered. The physical world was just a bare stage" (p. 206). The fictional President mangles *magnetosphere* as "magnet sphere" (p. 209). (Of course, Benford makes a valid point. When it comes to science policy, the grasp of American political leaders is particularly limited and short-sighted. On the day I wrote this review, President Bush declared that solving the US energy crisis had priority over addressing global warming.)

Eater is really a variation on *Godzilla*: a monster arrives from a strange place (Eater from outer space/Godzilla from the nuclear contaminated ocean off Japan). The monster attacks and eats humans. Humans fight back via aerial bombardment. Eater emits microwaves/Godzilla breathes fire. Humans send more flying machines. Humans kill Eater/Godzilla. If you have not seen a good *Godzilla* movie lately, I moderately recommend *Eater* to curb your appetite.

FICTION REVIEW

FALLING STARS

Steven H. Silver

Flynn, Michael. *Falling Stars*. New York: Tor, 2001. 446 pages, cloth, \$25.95. ISBN 0-312-85525-7

Falling Stars is the fourth and final novel in Michael Flynn's elaborate future history. In *Firestar*, Flynn began introducing his enormous cast of characters to his readership, as well as the underlying idea that the Earth is not safe from a major asteroid strike. *Rogue Star* envisioned the first human landing on an asteroid, only to discover signs of an alien presence. While *Lodestar* tended to focus on characters who had been secondary and the world of computer science, Flynn has managed to tie all of his characters and their concerns together in *Falling Stars*. At the same time *Falling Stars* provides a conclusion to this series, it also manages to stand on its own, although the characters are stronger with knowledge of what they have been through.

The novel opens with the news that at least one asteroid, affected by an alien intelligence, is on a collision course with the Earth. A world-wide recession means that the resources to avert the asteroid strike may not exist. Flynn's characters must overcome economic and human concerns as well as technical issues in order to confront the disaster, which may be looming in the skies overhead.

Mariesa van Huyten, the protagonist of the first novel and the driving force behind events through all four books, takes a smaller role in *Falling Stars*. In this book, Flynn's focus is on the people she has developed through the earlier books, although her presence is always felt. Flynn cycles between several characters whose activities overlap. This allows him to present a variety of views of the same event as well as to flesh out his characters by showing them as a multitude of different people see them. In addition to ranging across several age ranges, his characters come from different backgrounds and cultures, although all of them are rooted in Flynn's version of a future United States.

The vast number of characters Flynn employs should allow him to examine issues from a variety of points of view. The underpinnings of the story, that research and exploration are necessary, mean that anyone who is opposed to Flynn's basic premise comes off as a crackpot or closed-minded demagogue. Flynn doesn't dismiss these characters for the simple reason that his primary characters must either deal with them or work their way around them, but their ideas and opinions are never displayed as a reasonable alternative to the activities of Mariesa van Huyten and her cadre of scien-

tists, poets and pilots.

Falling Stars is among a sub-genre of asteroid-striking the earth disaster stories which includes Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle's *Lucifer's Hammer* (1977), Arthur C. Clarke's *The Hammer of God* (story, 1992; novel, 1993), Jack McDevitt's *Moonfall* (1998), J. Gregory Keyes's *Newton's Cannon* (1998), Anne McCaffrey's *The Skies of Pern* (2001) and several recent, and not so recent, disaster movies. However, Flynn's focus is not on the disaster aspect of an asteroid strike, although that subtext is never far from the surface, but rather on the human ingenuity necessary to avert a catastrophe. *Falling Stars*, and the previous novels in the series, are a call to arms to take preventative measures. Flynn portrays a possible method of avoiding the disaster described in so many of the earlier novels.

Flynn method also serves as a procedural for expanding the space program. The world described in *Falling Stars* may not be an entirely realistic view of the world in just twenty years, but Flynn is careful to populate his planet and orbits with a wide variety of pilots, engineers, construction crews, financiers, writers, and other assorted people whose help would be necessary to achieve his vision. Flynn, and through him Mariesa, understands that it is necessary to inspire the

Pilgrims and Pioneers: The History and Speeches of the Science Fiction Research Association Award Winners

edited by Hal W. Hall

& Daryl F. Mallett

The Science Fiction Research Association announces the publication of *Pilgrims and Pioneers: The History and Speeches of the Science Fiction Research Association Award Winners*.

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