

#266

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Editor:
Christine Mains

Managing Editor:
Janice M. Bogstad

Nonfiction Reviews:
Ed McKnight

Fiction Reviews:
Philip Snyder

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SUBMISSIONS

The *SFRAReview* encourages all submissions, including essays, review essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. If you would like to review non-fiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor.

Christine Mains, Editor
Box 66024
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
<cemains@shaw.ca>

Janice M. Bogstad, Managing Editor
239 Broadway St.
Eau Claire WI 54703-5553
<bogstajm@uwec.edu>

Ed McKnight, Nonfiction Editor
113 Cannon Lane
Taylors SC 29687
<emcknight@ac.edu>

Philip Snyder, Fiction Editor
109 Northumberland Road
Rochester NY 14618
<psnyder@monroecc.edu>



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News Items:

The **Science Fiction Foundation** seeks entries for its annual graduate essay prize. £250 will be awarded for the best unpublished essay in science fiction criticism. The winning entry will be published in the journal *Foundation*. The judges of the competition are: Andrew M. Butler (Canterbury Christ Church University College): editor of *Vector* Elizabeth Hand: author and reviewer for *The Magazine of F&SF* Gary K. Wolfe (Roosevelt University, Chicago): reviewer for *Locus*. The deadline for submissions is 31st May 2004. Entrants must be registered for a higher degree. The judges reserve the right to withhold the award. Two electronic copies should be submitted, one anonymous, of 5000-8000 words. Submissions should be sent as a Word document to: Dr Farah Mendlesohn, *Foundation*, <farah@fjm3.demon.co.uk>. All submissions will be considered for publication in *Foundation*.

The **SFRA2003 Graduate Student Award** went to Sarah Canfield Fuller for her paper "Speculating about Gendered Evolution: Bram Stoker's White Worm and the Horror of Sexual Selection." The Graduate Student Prize Committee (Joan Gordon [chair], Veronica Hollinger, Wendy Pearson, and Mike Levy) would also like to mention the close runner-up, Sophie Levy's "'My Mother was a Computer': Myth and/as the Mother Machine in Canadian Feminist Speculative Fiction."

The **Official Frederik Pohl** website is looking for contributions. Contact Rich Ehrlich by email: <erlichrd@muohio.edu>.

SFRA BUSINESS

Message from the President

Peter Brigg

When Chrise Mains reminded me that I have this message to write I pointed out that I was underneath a pile of 100 essays and 130 exams. She was relentless: so here is your President's message.

The coming events in the life of the SFRA are two in number. If you have not already done so please send Dave Mead your membership renewal. Your executive is making continued efforts to expand the membership of the Association. For 2003 we have hovered around the 285 members. 300 is such a pleasant number that I encourage everyone to find that friend who should also belong to the association and place a copy of our membership form in her/his hand.

The other thing to consider is registration for the conference in Skokie in June. Bev Friend and Betty Anne Hull deserve an early vote of confidence from the membership. As someone who's recently gone through the throes of running a convention I know a lack of early registrants raises most unnerving possibilities. So get out your registration form and your cheque book. You probably already know that you are going, so give them our vote of confidence early.

Your president has been given a year of study leave from the University of Guelph. From January 1st until February 15th, my wife Andrea and I shall be traveling in Asia and Australia. Janice Bogstad will be acting as President during that time. Then I shall settle down to do research at the Macmillan Brown Institute for Pacific Studies in Christchurch, New Zealand. I'll be back on-line by about the 20th of February and will continue to run the association by e-mail. I'll be flying back across the Pacific for the Skokie conference and then probably fly back to New Zealand for the rest of the year.

And now I fear I must get back to those unmarked exams. 85 of them are from my science fiction course and I am once again convinced that this is either case of slow learners or bad teaching. The very word "examination" seems to act as a mental block for most of my students. And by this time in the semester I have pretty well forgotten how to spell a large range of common words.

SFRA BUSINESS

Message from the Editor

Christine Mains

Way back when in the mists of time, when I still referred to myself as the "Princess of Procrastination," I would never have imagined myself to be the kind of person who worried about meeting deadlines. Undergraduate studies began to teach me the error of my ways (what do you mean, a late penalty?) but it wasn't until I began graduate studies, and more specifically took on such tasks as editing the *SFRA Review*, that I realized the need to forfeit my crown. Now I'm the one nagging others about deadlines and worrying about keeping things on schedule. I certainly don't need to stop nagging and worrying, but we do seem to be improving a little bit with each issue. I look forward to the day, sometime soon, that I won't need to begin these messages with an apology.

Aside from the usual reviews, we have a couple of additional articles in this issue. University of Nottingham scholar Lincoln Geraghty had something to say in response to an article he'd read on science fiction and fantasy films in *TIME Magazine*, so we decided to use that article to kick off what will

hopefully be a new feature: Comments on Culture. We hope that other SFRA scholars will take the opportunity to contribute short informal pieces on their research or on popular culture as it's perceived by those outside of our field. A more formal argument about the future of science fiction in relation to the growing appeal of fantasy is put forward by Darko Suvin in his contribution to *Theory and Beyond*. Because of the length of the article, we've decided to break it into two parts, with the second part being published in the next issue.

Finally, I'd like to remind SFRA members again that we would very much like to resurrect the Approaches to Teaching feature. I'd like to ask that members send in titles of novels and short stories that should be included on syllabi for SF courses, whether because they're classics or because they're cutting-edge. Just send me a list, long or short, of the titles you consider in your courses and add a line or two explaining why. My email address is <cemains@shaw.ca> and I'm always eager to hear from you.

COMMENTS ON CULTURE

A Step Back in Time: The Lord of the Rings and Star Trek.

Lincoln Geraghty

One cannot help getting caught up in the hype and anticipation over the long-awaited third instalment of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Return of the King*. Because of this immense expectation it is no wonder that some people are trying to understand its significance; they are looking more closely at the cultural and social connections that might explain why Tolkien's world brought to life on screen is proving to be such a hit. Lev Grossman's article "Feeding on Fantasy" in *TIME Magazine* (December 9, 2002: 68-72) tries to explain exactly why *The Lord of the Rings* – and other fantasy films such as the *Harry Potter* instalments – are so popular. In the same article, Grossman also argues that science fiction films are becoming less attractive to cinema-going audiences. Grossman posits that science fiction films such as *Star Wars*, *Independence Day*, and big franchises such as *Star Trek* are no longer captivating their audiences; that "we've been dreaming very different dreams. The stuff of those dreams is fantasy – swords and sorcerers" (68). Attempting to reveal the reason behind the growing appeal of fantasy film which seems to look to the past and the decreasing appeal of science fiction film which looks toward the future, Grossman convincingly explains that American society has developed a "darker, more pessimistic attitude toward technology and the future" (70) making science fiction less popular because we would rather fantasise about the way things used to be rather than take a chance on what the future might bring. It would seem from this statement that Americans increasingly prefer a fantastic history that does not frighten them with the technology that once seemed full of promise. However, for Grossman, America's shift toward fantasy is not purely due to "nostalgic Luddism" but rather a reaction to uncertain times where America and the world are "wandering deeper into a nebulous conflict against a faceless enemy" (72) who prefers to use terrorism to achieve its aims. Similarly, I would say that after the terrorist atrocities of the last two years it is no wonder that we as a global community might want to be shielded from reality. Tolkien's imaginary conflict between the forces of good and evil in Middle Earth highlights America's, if not the world's, current predicament. The non-technological past seems a simpler, less frightening place.

However, I would argue that the use of history in science fiction film,

The **British Fantasy Awards** were presented on November 23 at the British Fantasy Convention in Stafford. Best Novel: *The Scar*, by China Miéville; Best Short Story: "The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke," by Mark Chadbourn; Best Anthology: *Keep Out the Night*, edited by Stephen Jones; Best Collection: *Ramsey Campbell, Probably*, by Ramsey Campbell, edited by S.T. Joshi; Lifetime Achievement Award: Alan Garner

The **Sunburst Award** for 2003 was awarded to Nalo Hopkinson for *Skin Folk*.

World Fantasy Award Winners: Life Achievement (two awards): Donald M. Grant and Lloyd Alexander; Novel (tie): *The Facts of Life*, Graham Joyce and *Ombria in Shadow*, Patricia A. McKillip; Novella: "The Library", Zoran Zivkovic; Short Story: "Creation", Jeffrey Ford; Anthology (tie): *The Green Man: Tales from the Mythic Forest*, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, eds. and *Leviathan Three*, Forrest Aguirre & Jeff VanderMeer, eds.; Collection: *The Fantasy Writer's Assistant and Other Stories*, Jeffrey Ford

UC-Santa Cruz, which has been the home of an archive on **Robert Heinlein** for several years, has received a gift from the estate of Virginia Heinlein, his widow, who died earlier this year. The latest acquisition includes all of his honors and tributes including his four Hugo awards, plus artwork and other memorabilia, as well as his extensive working and personal libraries. William H. Patterson, Jr. has been selected by UC Santa Cruz as the campus Heinlein Scholar for 2003-04.

Carnegie Mellon University has established a **Robot Hall of Fame**. The first four robots, two from fiction and two from reality, will be inducted at a ceremony on November 10. The initial thirteen person panel which will vote on the inductees includes SF author Arthur C. Clarke, SimCity creator Will Wright, and International RoboCup Federation founder Minoru Asada. Panelists will serve two year terms.

Science fiction author **Hal Clement (b. 1922)** died in his sleep on October 29. Clement, whose real name was Harry Stubbs, was a grandmaster of the SFWA and perhaps best known for his novel *Mission of Gravity*, among many hard science fiction novels and stories. In 1996, he received a RetroHugo for his story "Uncommon Sense." When not writing science fiction, Clement taught science. Donald Hassler reviews Clement elsewhere in this issue.

Recent and Forthcoming Titles:

Beatty, Scott. *Wonder Woman: The Ultimate Guide to the Amazon Princess*. London: Dorling Kindersley, 2003.

Croft, Janet Brennan. *War and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.

Eller, Jonathan R. *Ray Bradbury: The Life of Fiction*. Kent State U P, 2004.

Ginway, M. Elizabeth. *Brazilian Science Fiction: Cultural Myths and Nationhood in the Land of the Future*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell U P, 2004.

Hayhurst, Robert. *Readings on Michael Crichton*. San Diego, Calif.: Greenhaven Press, 2004.

Hayward, Philip. *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema*. Eastleigh: John Libbey, 2004.

particularly in *Star Trek*, is not that far different than it is in fantasy films such as *Lord of the Rings*. One is futuristic, the other mythic, but I believe it would be wrong to discount *Star Trek's* role in picturing a narrative past (including character back-stories and famous events in humanity's future history) that could provide comfort and offer advice to those who believe the real future is a dark and scary spectre on the horizon. Because it uses technology as a means to tell its stories does not mean that audiences should ignore its humanising message. Grossman's "Feeding on Fantasy" all too quickly dismisses *Star Trek's* dream and its potentially valuable lessons for a nation which feels more and more out of control. For me, *Star Trek* is history; it is more than just good televisual entertainment. *Star Trek* is a historical, narrative discourse that not only feeds our passion for what the future might bring but also forms a relationship with our own history mediated through television and film.

Perhaps the most telling example of *Star Trek's* obsession with its own narrative and our history is its newest and most eager project to date: *Enterprise*. The defining premise of *Enterprise* is the pioneer spirit, space exploration at its most rudimentary level, not much improved from today. It charts the history of Roddenberry's future, where fan favourites such as the transporter and warp drive are in their infancy. Unlike Grossman, who asserts that we now fear technology, *Star Trek* fans obviously still enjoy watching how we as a race will learn to create and use technology. *Enterprise* provides definitive fan interaction and appreciation because it caters to fans' fascination with (not fear of) the utopian possibilities of technology, as well as with *Star Trek* continuity and the franchise's ever increasing, labyrinthine history of the future. The continued appreciation for representations of a technological future suggests that the line between science fiction film and fantasy film is not as sharply defined as Grossman's article suggests.

Grossman appears to only understand science fiction movies as those that deal with technology or the future of the human race. Because, according to Grossman, the audience now supposedly fears technology, movies that deal with technology offer inadequate comfort for the audience that once enjoyed escaping into futuristic worlds: "Our fascination with science fiction reflected a deep collective faith that technology would lead us to cyberutopia of robot butlers serving virtual mai tais" (68,70). Grossman seems to believe that only non-technological fantasy films can offer this enjoyable escape. However, I believe that, like fantasy films, SF cinema does offer us not only escape but also some possible answers for many of the questions that are troubling American society today. Both offer the same pleasures of excitement, fantasy and escape, whilst also grappling with some of the oldest questions about what it is to be human.

Star Trek's fixation with its own past in *Enterprise* is further evidence for a postmodern entanglement with history and myth hinted at by Grossman who says that the magic has "to come from somewhere else" (70); in this case *Star Trek* is romanticising about a history that has scientific and historical grounding in reality. For *Star Trek* mythology is a narrative tool with which it can illustrate and correct historical indiscretions, frame many of its episodes and plot lines, and create hope for the future – Gene Roddenberry foresaw a world without war, poverty, or discrimination. If such problems arose when the crew of the *USS Enterprise* encountered new lifeforms humanity would be able to adapt because it had learnt not to fear the outsider, the alien. At the same time fans believe wholeheartedly that *Star Trek's* reality has existed, still exists, and will continue to exist far beyond their lifetime; the "dark and pessimistic" future prophesied by Grossman's article does not seem such a problem for these fans who believe in Roddenberry's future. As a result, the mythic and future times offered by *Star Trek* offer a way out of dealing with contemporary life; it is not because audi-

ences want to live in a mythic past but rather that history and myth offer a better template to fantasise about and create the future. I would say that both *Star Trek* and *The Lord of the Rings* view myth and fantasy as a means to counteract the turmoil and uncertainty of American, and perhaps global, society. Grossman is right to point up the importance of *The Lord of the Rings* and its timely response to the audience's fear of technology and terrorism but wrong in ignoring franchises such as *Star Trek* because they would come under his rubric as technological therefore frightening in this current climate. *Star Trek* is not just about faith in technology but faith in ourselves hence fans do not find its portrayal of technology as dangerous.

History is a representation of the past; it is information transformed into story, which, over time, becomes part of a shared mythology. These stories and myths are told by *Star Trek* as futuristic narratives; by Tolkien as stories of magic wizards and elves. The stories *Star Trek* recounts about the past in the future produce images that at a simple level some Americans use to perceive themselves as individuals both separate from and within society, and, at a more comprehensive level, use to recognise America as a community or nation. By telling the right stories, science fiction in the form of *Star Trek* can accomplish the same thing as fantasy in the form of *LotR* or *Harry Potter*: help America imagine itself acting as a community, pulling together to resolve its problems often tackled in weekly episodes, ultimately overcoming a national anxiety deeply rooted in the conception of its own history. Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy and Tolkien's original do offer audiences some of the very same things that *Star Trek* has offered us but Grossman should next time look beyond the bright lights and fast ships of *Star Trek*'s vision of the future and look closer at its stories; pay attention to the narrative. I am looking forward to the release of *The Return of the King* just as much as I look forward to a new *Star Trek* episode or film because they all offer me the chance to examine crucial issues that have troubled the present and the past. At a time when Grossman believes we watch *The Lord of the Rings* to forget our troubled times, science fiction and *Star Trek* allow me the luxury of remembering the past alongside examining the present and imagining what we can make of the future.

THEORY AND BEYOND

THE FINAL CHAPTER OF SF?: ON READING BRIAN STABLEFORD

Darko Suvin

1. The redoubtable Brian Stableford has given us in his essay in *Foundation* much food for thought about the "shifts of fortune" befalling SF in the last quarter century. I wish to reflect here on his data and conclusions (mainly on pp. 49-55) about the future of SF, especially as facing the invasion of Heroic and Horror Fantasy aimed at the core of its earlier readership. Since I've been for somewhat similar reasons engaging in a discussion of that invasion (Suvin, "Considering"), I'd like to build on that essay of mine in *Extrapolation* [1], reusing some data and arguments from it by adding them to Stableford's ones and then somewhat varying his gloomy conclusion.

Stableford tells an amazing story, with major consequences for our understanding of SF. In my words, it would be that Fantasy (in the 20th Century a literary genre or group of genres whose audience and characteristics are in a close though confusing—multiple, unclear, love-hate, complementary, contradictory—relation with SF) has advanced from "a parasite on its more popular cousin, science fiction" (Scholes 12-13) to an undoubted

Heuser, Sabine. *Virtual Geographies: Cyberpunk at the Intersection of the Postmodern and Science Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003.

Kerekes, David. *Creeping Flees: The Horror Fantasy Film Book*. Manchester: Headpress, 2003.

Manlove, C. N. *From Alice to Harry Potter: Children's Fantasy in England*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Cybereditions, 2003.

Moylan, Tom. *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Mucke, Dorothea E. von. *The Seduction of the Occult and the Rise of the Fantastic Tale*. Stanford, Calif. London: Stanford U P, 2004.

Peeples, Scott. *The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003.

Pinsky, Michael. *Future Present: Ethics and/as Science Fiction*. Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson U P, 2003.

Redmond, Sean. *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader*. London: Wallflower, 2003.

Svehla, Gary. *Fantastic Journeys: Sci-Fi Memories*. Baltimore, Md: Luminary Press, 2003.

Thompson, Gary Richard. *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe: Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds and Contexts*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004.

Weaver, John A. *Science Fiction Curriculum, Cyborg Teachers & Youth Culture*. New York: P. Lang, 2004.

Weaver, Tom. *Eye on Science Fiction: 20 Interviews with Classic SF and Horror Filmmakers*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003.

Werner, James V. *American Flaneur: The Cosmic Physiognomy of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Willett, Edward. *J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Imaginary Worlds*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2004.

CFPs:

WHAT: Taking Science Fiction Seriously—but not solemnly

WHO: SFRA2004

WHEN: June 3-6, 2004

WHERE: Skokie, IL

TOPICS: Guest of Honor: Connie Willis. The focus of this year's SFRA is on humor in Science Fiction. We also welcome proposals for individual papers and for academic sessions and panels on any aspect of the fantastic.

CONTACT: Beverly Friend, Oakton Community College, Faculty Support Office, #B206 7701 Lincoln Ave, Skokie, IL 60076
<friend@oakton.edu>

SUBMISSIONS: Proposals should include an abstract no longer than 200 words.. Paper presenters should plan to speak for 20 minutes or less to allow ample time for questions and discussion. The presentation may be a (self-coherent) excerpt of a longer paper. To be listed in the conference program, participants must preregister for the conference by May 1, 2004. Review the information needed and complete the forms on the SFRA website. Conference registration forms will be sent to all current SFRA members. Electronic correspondence is welcome.

DEADLINE: April 10, 2004.

INFORMATION: <www.sfra.org>

WHAT: Reasons of the Heart: Myth, Meaning and Education

WHEN: 9-12 September 2004,

WHERE: University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

TOPICS: What accounts for the enduring appeal of Greek mythology, Arthurian romances, the tales of Grimm, Anderson and C.S. Lewis to young and old alike? How can we

commercial—and I'd add ideological—victor over SF. As David Hartwell encapsulated this: "In the latter half of the twentieth century, with certain best-selling exceptions, fantasy is produced by writers of science fiction and fantasy, edited by editors of science fiction, illustrated by SF and fantasy artists, read by omnivore fantasy and SF addicts who support the market. Fantasy is not SF but part of the phenomenon that confronts us" (20). The huge quantitative burgeoning of Fantasy began in the late 1960s, when Tolkien's term of "Fantasy" also came to the fore. Significantly, since the mid-70s this burgeoning is accompanied by a growing quantitative stagnation of SF (see Hartwell 185-92) and to my mind clearly also a qualitative stagnation of its bulk.

In 1987, the most knowledgeable John Clute estimated that, if one eliminates reprints and anthologies, out of 650 novels published in the USA as "fantastic literature," 298 are SF and 352 "fantasy and horror novels" (18; he endearingly adds: "For this writer, bad sf can be seen as a category of trash, and can be junked at sight. Bad fantasy. . . is *junk-food*, an addictive mockery of the true meal, which sticks to the stomach, and eats it.") The data we all use stem from the year-end breakdown of publications in *Locus* magazine, which I find not wholly reliable as they put into SF a number of titles that are to my mind partly or wholly Fantasy. Even so, Clute estimates that in their 1992 data, the total of new novels is: 308 SF, 275 Fantasy, 165 Horror (e-mail communication to me of 30/1/2000). Since I've argued at length that Fantasy comprises both Heroic and Horror tales, we have a proportion of 440 titles of what I'd call Fantasy vs. 308 SF. And the equally knowledgeable Stableford concluded from the sharp drop of SF titles in the 1990s (down 1/3 from 1991 to 1994!), and from the fact that by 1994 the ratio in new novels was 204 SF vs. 234 "Fantasy" plus 178 "Horror," that SF—which I believe has a better chance of cognitive approaches to history—will soon be the least produc[ed] of the three genres..." (49). A glance into any bookstore teaches that this decennial trajectory, which had by 1994 arrived at a 2:1 preponderance of Fantasy, is continuing and solidifying. Furthermore, the economically and for consumer-psychology important bestsellers were by far drawn more from Fantasy than from SF. Indeed, Stableford went on to gloomy speculations that perhaps habitual SF readers have always had much in common with Fantasy readers, since the two genres as it were have a common denominator in "futuristic adventure stories which were essentially exercises in costume drama" and which always constituted a solid majority of SF (51-52). These facts delineate a whole different lay of the land for SF too, so even those critics much less interested and still quite dubious about dominant trends in Fantasy (like me) cannot treat it as not pertinent to our concerns. Stableford concludes: "The summation of all these trends implies that the more earnest and thoughtful kinds of science fiction are in danger of being removed altogether from the commercial arena" (55).

I think this makes it mandatory to look more closely at Fantasy, which obviously fulfills at some level (that may not be the healthiest one) widespread reader interests. Thus before proposing my variant on Stableford's doom prospect for worthwhile SF, I'll branch out a bit into these interests and their causes.

2. Patrick Parrinder wrote in 1982 a brief essay, "The Age of Fantasy," in which he, among other points, proposed to link Fantasy strategically with desire; and already Tolkien had recognized that Fantasy stories "were plainly not primarily concerned with possibility, but with desirability" (40). What

desires were responsible for Tolkien, Conan, and Co. having encountered such favourable ground in the US and then European counter-culture of the 1960s? A very brief answer would be that at that point a revolt had spread in depth and breadth against a stifling military-cum-bureaucratic Establishment, whose main institutionalized ideology was (and with suitable changes still is) technoscientific rationality subservient to profit-making. Possibly the best depth diagnosis of it was given by the prescient Karl Marx who in the mid-19th Century pinpointed the central building block of the alienated mega-oppressive apparatuses of capitalist industry and organization of life (market intertwined with State), in general overview as well as in its central cell, the industrial shop-floor:

The worker's activity [the use-value, i.e. the material quality of production by labour], reduced to a mere abstraction, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite. The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery to act purposefully, by its construction, like an automaton, that science does not exist in the worker's consciousness but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself. Living labour [is appropriated] by the objectified labour inherent in the concept of capital. (*Grundrisse* 692-93, transl. modified)

The worker becomes "a mere living accessory" of the machinery, which includes the bureaucratic private and public apparatuses, measured against which any personal "value-creating power. . . is an infinitesimal, vanishing magnitude," and which "destroys every connection of the product with the direct need of the producer" (693-94). The domination over Nature by technoscientific apparatuses is consubstantial with their domination over the producers or creators: "The right of property originally appeared to be based on one's own labour. Property now appears as the right to alien labour, and as the impossibility of labour appropriating its own product." (458) Machinery (fixed capital) is objectified past labour, now dead, that zombie-like seizes the living: a demonic possession.

Thus, for all the mealy-mouthed celebrations of reason, in the practice that determined the life of a huge majority, rationality decayed from the Enlightenment hopes and split into what was reasonable and perfectly functional in terms of personal and sensual goals for individuals and large classes of people (self-determination, shorter working time, psychophysical use-values) but irrational to the ends of the ruling apparatuses—and vice versa, into what was an apparatus reasoning perfectly meshing with the military-bureaucratic complex (cf. Gorz 53 and passim). The rationality claimed by bureaucracy and technoscience is in fact an impoverished pseudo-rationality: for ex., a huge quantitative and functional improvement of means for genocide and ecocide. This could not but give reason a bad name. The immense potentialities of science and technology for making people's lives easier are themselves as alienated as the people affected by them. In war, the condensation of everyday politics by other means—and there were over 30 wars in 1999 alone!—dehumanized humanity looks through the media "at its own annihilation as an esthetic pleasure of the first order" (Benjamin I: 508). It is scarcely surprizing, even if not healthy, that some strata of the population began to place their hopes in all kinds of occult sciences, magic or a return to reactionarily refunctioned religious beliefs, flying from alienated reason to unfalsifiable doctrine. As dogmas go, the Invisible Hand of the Free Market making for universal contentment was no better than being washed in the

explain the more recent explosion of interest in the works of Tolkien, Rowling and Pullman? This unique and timely conference aims to examine the metaphorical, analogical and allegorical character of myths, legends, fables and other forms of human story, not only theoretically, but also with regard to issues of social and educational policy and practice. Proposals are invited from the areas of philosophy, psychology, social studies, theology, anthropology, literary criticism, education and the arts. Suggested themes include: Myth, society and culture; Mythical narratives and identity; Myth, art and literature; Myth and education; Religion and myth; Psychology, psychoanalysis and myth; Myth, reason and truth.

Conference fee and submission date:
SUBMISSIONS: Send 150 word abstracts for 20 minute papers or proposals for workshops, performances, or exhibitions to Mrs. Jennifer Myles at <J.Myles@educ.gla.ac.uk>. or Mrs. J. Myles, University of Glasgow, Gillis Centre, 113 White House Loan, Edinburgh EH9 1BB, Scotland UK.

DEADLINE: 15 February 2004

INFORMATION:

<davidc@education.ed.ac.uk>

<j.conroy@educ.gla.ac.uk>

<r.davis@educ.gla.ac.uk>

<dj.de.ruyter@psy.vu.nl>.

WHAT: A Commonwealth of Science Fiction

WHO: Organized by The Science Fiction Foundation

WHEN: August 5-8, 2004

WHERE: Liverpool, UK

TOPICS: By the end of the twentieth century, sf had come to be dominated by American books and magazines produced by writers in the Gernsbackian-Campbellian tradition. Equally television, films and comics have been dominated by agendas and conventions established in Hollywood

and New York. But this is not the only kind of science fiction available to writers and readers, producers and consumers. Sometimes challenging the US tradition, sometimes appropriating it, sometimes entirely separate, there is a whole Commonwealth of Science Fiction. We wish to bring scholars, critics, researchers, academics, librarians and readers together to consider that Commonwealth and the commonwealth: the Empire writing back, centres and margins, national histories of sf, national identity and science fiction, dialects and idiolects, hybrid identities, post-imperial melancholy, international and local markets, the 'Special Relationship', the Pacific Rim vs. the North Atlantic, and discoveries and rediscoveries, evaluations and re-evaluations of science fiction in any media, written or visual, from Commonwealth countries. Guests of Honour: Damien Broderick, Jon Courtenay Grimwood and Nalo Hopkinson

SUBMISSIONS: Send abstracts or expressions of interest to: Andrew M Butler, Dept of Media and Arts, Canterbury Christ Church University College, Canterbury, CT1 1QU, UK or email <amb21@cant.ac.uk>. DEADLINE: 31 January 2004.

WHAT: The Spectacle and the Spectacular

WHEN: 24th April 2004

WHERE: Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College

TOPICS: Is there as, Guy Debord contended, no longer any sense of reality, of history, of time, of class? Is the world merely a spectacle, an asignifying mass of unrelated images in which as Cronenberg puts it in Videodrome, "tv is reality, and reality is less than tv"? And in the light of September the 11th, and the second Gulf War, are Debord's pro-

Blood of the Lamb, the UFOs or whatever Maharishi was around.

In particular, sad to say, technoscientific culture as developed in, by, and for capitalism is as a rule—however individual scientists may diverge—non-culture in relation to all that is not technoscientific: not merely arts, but all non-violent and sensual activities. Post-Modernist cultists often claim that the new "clean" techniques of the computer have changed all that. Well, they certainly have not changed the horrible exploitation of the young Chinese or Malayan women producing microchips. Have they changed the life of us users? We could have a discussion about the effect on intellectuals such as myself: I think the jury is still out on that, though it is already clear the computer and the Web have deepened the chasm between global North and South, and that a great majority of computers is used for the tsunamis of global financial speculation. On the industrial shop floor, computerization has made plant operation much less transparent to the workers, whose erstwhile skills have largely been frozen onto the software instructing the machines, which they do not understand. The abstracting or "ephemerization" of work is even clearer in the "service" sectors and offices, where "the product itself is abstract" (Chapman 307). In sum, technologies without self-management "have boxed far more people into a life of artificial, animated stupefaction. To these people. . . [l]ife becomes a kind of phantasmagoria of. . . technological features" (idem 308). Technoscientific culture subservient to the profit principle necessarily disregards the cost to the environment and to the degradation of human senses (such as the hearing faculty subjected to the bellowing amps). It has proved incompatible with respecting fleshly bodies of other people or exalting their sensitivity and pleasure, which is the only way to exalt one's own sensitivity and pleasure. True, for a privileged mercenary minority in the field of, say, molecular genetics or informatics, "[f]etishism has never been more fun, as undead substitutes and surrogates proliferate. . . . Ask any biodiversity lawyer whether genes are sources of 'value' these days, and the sources of commodity fetishism will come clear" (Haraway 134). But treating workers or employees as means to a misnamed "productive" end, as mere labour-power, is a repression of the subalterns' as well as of the masters' sense and sensitivity. Beside the workplace, this is evident in our housing, urbanism, noise, pollution, lighting, materials, and other matters over which the ordinary citizen has no control, including most education. Marx's diagnosis has been confirmed in spades.

The culture of ruling institutionalized violence in feedback with technoscience is thus, deep down, a barbaric culture. In such circumstances, which dominate most people since the Industrial Revolution, life outside work ("leisure") becomes the opposite of and compensation for life at work. How can we from this vantage point view the delight in Conan and similar less brawny heroes? As a complex mixture of ideology and utopia, I'd suggest: on the one hand a condensed reproduction and reaffirmation of cruelties from the readers' alienated reality, and on the other a compensatory glimpse of use-value qualities which that reality lacked. The Heroic Fantasy stories have at least the merit of, first, showing this openly, second, marrying it to individual initiative and sensuality, and third, holding at arm's length the particular causal nexus of the violence around the reader or moviegoer which has made the simplified circumstances of Iron Age life seem less alienating. This does not cancel out their overall stultifying, sometimes frankly semi-fascist, horizons. But it does mean that both Heroic and Horror Fantasy, as well as what might be the options for SF in an environment dominated by them, have to be looked at in more detail; which I'll try to do in the second and final

instalment of this essay.

Note

[1] I owe thanks for further arguments to Matt Beaumont and K.S. Robinson.

In order not to augment the confusion of the tongues, I shall accept the probably unfortunate term "Fantasy." One of its problems is that it almost inextricably stands for three corpuses of different historical scope: 1/ the post-Tolkien corpus of "heroic" plus "horror" fantasy; 2/ the Morris-to-just-after Tolkien corpus of what may by now be called "classical" Fantasy, up to say the mid-1970s; and 3/ the tradition that can be retrospectively identified as having shaped these corpuses, beginning in Gothic novels and German Romantics and continuing in a phase of inserting the fantastic Novum into realistic surroundings after 1830-40 (Gogol, Poe, Hawthorne, etc.).

[The concluding Part 2 will appear in the next issue of SFRA Review.]

NONFICTION REVIEW **Cybercultures**

Janice M. Bogstad

Bell, David and Barbara M. Kennedy, eds. *The Cybercultures Reader*. Routledge, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001. April, 2000. ISBN: 0-415-18379-0. \$29.95. 768 p. (Originally issued in HB, April 2000, \$95.00)

Bell, David. *An Introduction to Cybercultures*. Routledge, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001. August 2001. ISBN 0-415-24659-8. \$22.95 224 p. (Originally issued in HB, August, 2001. \$75.00)

Originally published as separate volumes, one year apart, these two approaches to the changes wrought by cybercultural phenomena (virtual, real, and imagined), have recently come out in trade paperback. They are now available at affordable prices and have been packaged to look like a set, with the same imagery on the covers and different background colors. The packaging is interesting in this case as the titles are related in very real and potentially useful ways, but address different audiences. They pursue two very different paths to the pedagogy of an emerging cross-disciplinary study that has absorbed the attention of technical, cultural, theoretical, and popularizing theorists alike for the past decade. Bell's book is his own rendering of a complex array of ideas and the *Reader* is a collection of essays put into thematic groupings and prefaced by short explanatory pieces by either Bell or Kennedy.

The terminology of cyberculture, cyberfeminism, cyberspace, cyberpunk, cybersex, teledildonics, virtual reality and the other 'virtuals' is pervasive in Western, if not yet in World, culture. These books both reflect that phenomenon and attempt to chart its path and explain its growth. Secondly, the books share an author/editor, David Bell. Bell and his co-editor for the *Reader*, Barbara M. Kennedy, are both faculty of the School of Humanities and Social Studies at Staffordshire University, Bell as a Lecturer in Cultural Studies and Kennedy as a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies. The *Reader* was published first, in 2000, and can easily stand on its own with 48 essays, some of which are well-known in the field and a few of which will be new to those who have studied only some of cyberculture or cultural theory, or feminism, or queer theory, diaspora theory or science fiction criticism independently of the other disciplines.

An Introduction to Cybercultures allows Bell to focus on his own under-

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nouncements all the more relevant. What does this mean for the possibility of political intervention; and have we all become passive spectators in the face of the proliferation of simulacra?

SUBMISSIONS: 200 word proposals to Dr. Colette Balmain <cbalma01@bcuc.ac.uk> or Dr. Lois Drawmer <ldraw01@bcuc.ac.uk>. DEADLINE: January 9, 2004.

WHAT: Mesmerism

WHO: Slought Foundation

WHEN: April 3, 2004

TOPICS: An interdisciplinary arts symposium that will address the history of Mesmerism in 18th, 19th, and 20th-century literature, political and social philosophy, medicine, and dynamic psychotherapy.

SUBMISSIONS: Direct correspondence to: Aaron Levy at <alevy@slought.org> or Executive Director / Senior Curator, Slought Foundation, 4017 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3513
INFORMATION: <<http://slought.org>>.

WHAT: WisCon 28

WHEN: Memorial Day weekend, May 28-31, 2004

WHERE: Concourse Hotel in downtown Madison, Wisconsin.

TOPICS: We invite papers and presentations on science fiction and fantasy, with an emphasis on issues of feminism, gender, race, and class. We especially welcome papers on the work of this year's guests of honour, Eleanor Arnarson and Patricia McKillip.

SUBMISSIONS: 50-100 word proposals (absolutely no longer) via email to Justine Larbalestier <jazza@english.usyd.edu.au>
DEADLINE: 13 February 2004
INFORMATION: <<http://www.sf3.org/wiscon>>

WHAT: Tenth International Conference: Invention: Literature and Science

WHO: British Comparative Literature Association

WHEN: 12-15 July 2004

WHERE: University of Leeds

TOPICS: Papers should be comparative and/or interdisciplinary. The following potential subject areas are suggested: alchemy and magic; ecology and nature; medicine and literature; poetry and science; hypertexts; technology and fiction; popular science writing; early science fiction.

SUBMISSIONS: Title and 200 word abstract to Dr Jean Boase-Beier. "Invention" Conference, School of Language, Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of East Anglia Norwich NR4 7TJ UK or email <j.boase-beier@uea.ac.uk>

DEADLINE: 30 January 2004

INFORMATION:

<<http://www.bcla.org/invention/>>.

WHAT: Post•hu•man•ous: A Special Edition of Reconstruction

WHO: Guest Editors: C. Jason Smith, Ximena Gallardo C., and Geoff Klock.

TOPICS: The guest editors for *Reconstruction 4.3* invite submissions on any aspect of the posthuman. Essays, cultural criticism, theory, book and media reviews, interviews, and creative works will be considered for this special edition. *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* is an innovative culture studies journal dedicated to fostering an intellectual community composed of scholars and their audience, granting them all the ability to share thoughts and opinions on the most important and influential work in contemporary interdisciplinary studies. The website is meant to include both the journal as well as the other projects that are

standing of the vast array of disciplinary studies in literature, culture and popular culture, sociology, technological development, economics, etc. that have been published around the topic of Cyberspace over the last decade or more. With this 224-page book, Bell has taken on a formidable task with varying results. He even invents his own metaphorical terminology of "Storying" cyberspace in order to span the vast chasms and explain the many intersections of these separate disciplinary conversations. He tries yet one more time to define and create a non-anecdotal history for the terminology, even to the inclusion of a self-selected glossary at the end.

The *Cybercultures Reader* as an anthology has a definite purpose, creating and expanding the field for the study of Cyberculture. The selections explore not only technological developments and uses of email and the web, but also the many cultural and social phenomena which have either grown out of or migrated into cyberspace. A number of the essays found here are also present in almost every anthology on cyberspace, of which there is now a satisfying body since the early collections such as Benedikt's *Cyberspace: First Steps* (which is cited) and Vitanza's *CyberReader* (which is not). These include essays by Benedikt, M. Dery, D. Haraway, V. Sobchak, A.C. Stone, to name only a few. But they also include essays by feminists well known outside the field of cyberstudies, such as Hayles, and Anzuldua, who, like the less well-known Lisa Nakamura, also comment on racial issues. In fact, the *Reader* is surprisingly well balanced in terms of race and gender, which is unusual for such collections to date. And as noted above, it draws from a wide range of disciplines in an attempt to include the ever-increasing symbolic force of cyberculture as a centralizing concept in the contemporary West. The essays are, in general, engaged in a sophisticated level of cultural analysis and criticism, which the undergraduate might find somewhat daunting. They are, in fact, the makings of a very rich soup of ideas that comes out of a longer British tradition of culture studies and includes the technical, the artistic and the popular media as objects of consideration.

Science Fiction fares well in this collection, with essays which include the standard Gibson and Sterling, but also several others such as Maureen McHugh, Pat Cadigan and Melissa Scott (whose *Trouble and Her Friends* I have often used in a class entitled Women in Cyberspace). There are also studies of film and other media, along with studies of the academic (although not so-named), gaming, marketing, military, music, pornographic, religious, right wing and survivalist, and techie subcultures. Either Bell or Kennedy writes an introduction to each section, and these include: Approaching Cyberculture, Popular Cybercultures, Cybersubcultures, Cyberfeminisms, Cybersexual, Cyberbodies, Post-(cyber) Bodies, Scaling Cyberspaces and Cybercolonization.

While one might quibble with the hyped-up terminology (I now have a much modified spell-checker) and with the grouping of essays within a particular section rather than another, it is apparent that the editors are very familiar with their subject. They have done a great deal of thinking about how to collate, present and explain the various sub-currents that are playing themselves out in academic discussions of the emerging cultural forms and the transmutations of older ones. At 754 pages of dense prose, this collection offers no easy answers to the basic questions: What is Cyberspace? Where did it come from? And where is it going? Anyone who's been following the aforementioned theoretical currents will have read at least 15 of the 48 essays over the course of a number of years. Those just entering the field will need to do background work in order to understand more than half of them, but that work is set out for the beginning reader first in the introductions, then in the selections and finally in suggestions for further reading. The anthology does not neglect controversial topics. For ex-

ample, in the Cybersexual (391-470) section, Thomas Foster's "Trapped by the Body? Telepresence technologies and transgendered performance in feminist and lesbian rewritings of cyberpunk fiction," is notable for the few lesbian writers mentioned. The most cited are Gibson, M.H. McHugh (briefly) and Melissa Scott.

In general, the introductory pieces are upbeat and the selections included are predictably positive about the effects of cyberspace on human cultures. For example, the most critical essay in the book is probably Susan Zickmund's "Approaching the Radical Other: The Discursive Culture of Cyberhate," which appears in the "Cybersubcultures" section, but nazi and survivalist cyberinvasions are discussed on a sophisticated critical plane which virtually de-politicizes the very real threats, using such theorists as Heidegger and Althusser. While an interesting speculation, it would be more useful with some non-theoretical discussion of the results of subversives having better avenues for disseminating their (mis)information. Perhaps most arresting are the juxtapositions of Jon Stratton's "Cyberspace and the Globalization of Culture" and Ziauddin Sardar's "Alt.Civilizations.Faq: Cyberspace as the Darker Side of the West."

It must not be forgotten that in selecting, grouping and commenting on the essays, these editors of the *Reader* have demonstrated a broad knowledge of vast theoretical areas related to their topic. With this in mind, they have done an excellent job of presenting the state of the art of Cybercultural studies for the educated reader.

Bell's *Introduction*, a much shorter book, takes a more summarizing and totalizing approach to Cyberspace and is obviously meant as a beginning reader for the uninitiated. Published one year after the *Reader*, his book breaks up cyberspace and cyberculture into slightly different topic areas but connects them to readings in the joint anthology. Each section of Bell's book relates the author's informed opinion on these topics, complete with a page or two of qualitatively different 'Hot links' for each chapter/topic. The first section of these hot links always cites chapters from the *Reader*, the second, Bell's suggestions of books for further reading, and the third, a list of related websites. Chapters are short and positively coded about the phenomena they identify as major debates and discussions in the new chic of cybercultural life.

I would judge Bell's book to have a few, more limited, audiences such as the uninitiated (who might also have difficulty finding it), teachers who want to 'quick start' a course or their knowledge base; teachers who want a text for a short course or one which substitutes a less-esoteric vocabulary than the theorists found in the anthology, and those who want to use it along with the anthology. While Bell digests (in both senses of the word) the wide range of material under the rubric of "Cyberspace is the stories we tell ourselves," he clarifies the analysis as his own and carefully identifies theorists on which he bases his opinions. He's also obviously conversant with both the jargon and the youth cultural hot-topics and can be somewhat coy about the interfaces between on- and off-screen print cultures. "The trick is to think about cyberspace as a product and a producer of culture simultaneously. Another hypertext moment" (p. 2). This second sentence was very much unneeded but would probably titillate a younger reader. Additionally, his prose is awkward at times. For example, each chapter begins with a mild variation of "This chapter is about." Nevertheless, he's also attempting to explain the broader meaning of cyberculture, and does not neglect sex, race, class, gender or the non-technological parts of the world. His sections include: "Storying Cyberspace: Material and Symbolic Stories," (here he presents the oft-cited history of networking, email and the web), "Cyberspace: Experiential Stories," (where he places anecdotal evidence), "Cultural studies in cyberspace," "Identities in



carried on by the contributors and editorial board.

SUBMISSIONS: Please send all proposals, submissions, and queries via email to all three co-editors: C. Jason Smith, <dr c Jason smith@yahoo.com>; Ximena Gallardo C, <Ximena gallardo c@yahoo.com>; Geoff Klock, <geoffklock@earthlink.net>.

DEADLINE: 1 March 2004

I N F O R M A T I O N :
<www.reconstruction.ws>

WHAT: Science Studies and Science Fiction

WHO: edited by Margret Grebowicz

TOPICS: This collection calls on specialists in science studies to explore the implications of science fiction for their particular areas of inquiry. Critical essays will explore the actual and potential roles of the genre in academic interrogations of the sciences, from theoretical, pedagogical, and historical perspectives. I am soliciting essays which address works of science fiction in any medium from any of the following vantage points: epistemology; philosophy of technology; social studies of science (including critical race/queer/feminist; critiques); history of science; philosophy of biology; bioethics; environmental studies; cognitive science/philosophy of psychology; philosophy of physics; metaphysics of time and probability; science and public policy.

SUBMISSIONS: 500 word abstract and CV to Margret Grebowicz, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Department of Social Sciences, University of Houston-Downtown, Houston, TX 77002.

Email <grebowiczm@uhd.edu>

DEADLINE: January 10, 2004

WHAT: Bridges to Other Worlds: Thirty-five Years of Mythopoeic Scholarship

WHO: 35rd Annual Mythopoeic Conference (Mythcon XXXV)

WHEN: July 30-Aug 2, 2004

WHERE: Ann Arbor, Michigan

TOPICS: Guest Scholar Charles Huttar. Guest of Honor Neil Gaiman. Papers on the work of the Inklings or on any mythopoeic fantasy. Suggestions: Bridges between fantasy and other literature (cross-genre writing; influence of fantasy on mainstream art forms); Bridges between artists (collaborations; illustrated books; influence of the Inklings on each others' works); Bridges between literary forms (book-to-movie; movie-to-comic; hypertext); Bridges between text and reader (fan fiction; criticism).

SUBMISSIONS: 200 word abstract for 20 minute papers to Janet Brennan Croft, <jbcroft@ou.edu> or Judith Kollman, <jkollman@umflint.edu>.

DEADLINE: April 30, 2004

INFORMATION:

<<http://www.mythsoc.org>>

WHAT: Special Issue on Technology and Society

WHO: GR, an interdisciplinary journal for graduate student researchers

TOPICS: include, but are not limited to: Digital Culture; Biotechnology; E-Learning & Virtual Universities; Technology Integration Issues; Multimedia Innovations; Information & Communication Technologies; Virtual Reality; Technology Design and Development Issues; National Policies on Technology; International Projects with Technology; Dot-Com Institutions; Virtual Museums; Wearable Technologies; Ethical Issues in Technology & Society.

SUBMISSIONS: Printed submissions

Cyberculture,” and “Bodies in Cyberculture.” The last two sections seem to be his areas of interest as they each end with a longer list of titles from the *Reader*. The book ends with sections on “Cybersubcultures,” where he deals with the extreme right- and left-wing, and pornographic subcultures, among others, and a final section on “Researching Cyberculture.”

By the end of the book, one has a basic grasp of some major areas of debate, but it is clear the author has taken on a big job, and it is unclear whether the book could stand on its own or would leave an inexperienced reader with the unfortunate sense that they have learned enough. Bell obviously struggles with this problem himself. In keeping with his introductory stance, Bell's after matter includes a short list of what he clearly identifies as those works he gives to students who want to get a basic understanding of Cyberspace, and he hits all the expected authors such as Benedikt, Cavallaro, Dery, Cherny and Weise, and Hayles. His list of terminology is also very abbreviated, perhaps designed to be used only with this book, and his Bibliography, while adding cultural theorists such as Baudrillard, Deleuze, Foucault, Lykke, and Wacjman that are discussed in the essays of the *Reader*, leaves out many science fiction writers who should have been mentioned and focuses on Gibson (and one reference to Sterling), as the major figure in science fictional explorations of cyberspace.

Thus, while I could recommend either book to different audiences, the most apparent connection between them is Bell's references to sections of the *Reader* in the after matter of each essay. Each book has its uses, but Bell's *Introduction* is more dependent on the *Reader* than that anthology is on his book. Perhaps it was wholly designed to serve that function, but it should be read with an eye to its references both to the anthology and to other original texts. In its favor, it should be considered for offering accessible explanations of complicated phenomena to readers who need to enter the many dialogs at a beginning, if not basic, level. If you are only buying one, however, buy the *Reader*.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Utopian and Dystopian Writing For Children and Young Adults

Michael M. Levy

Hintz, Carrie and Elaine Ostry, eds. *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*. New York and London: Routledge. (2003) 244 pages, \$95.00 ISBN: 0-415-94017-6. Children's Literature and Culture, Vol. 29.

Routledge's Children's Literature and Culture series, edited by Jack Zipes, is probably the most prestigious venue there is for the publication of scholarly non-fiction about children's literature, which may partially explain the book's stratospheric price tag. This latest volume in the series features a foreword by Zipes, a long introduction by Hintz and Ostry, ten well-done essays by mostly junior scholars in the field, four short essays by fiction writers, an interview with Lois Lowry, author of *The Giver*, an extended bibliography of children's and young adult utopian and dystopian works, and a brief afterword by the noted utopian scholar Lyman Tower Sargent.

In their introduction, Hintz and Ostry set the tone for the book by suggesting that “Utopian writing for children and young adults examines the roots of social behavior and encourages the child to question his or her own society. It often sets up a confrontation between the child and the adult world.” Moreover, they suggest, such works empower children by giving them “the major responsibility for the formation, survival or reform of...society.” They then

divide the volume into four parts, the first of which is rather whimsically titled "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles: Utopia in Transit." The first essay in this section, Alice Jenkins's useful "Getting to Utopia: Railways and Heterotopia in Children's Literature," invokes Foucault's well-known concept, but substitutes trains for ships as what Foucault called "heterotopia par excellence." She suggests that the train often operates as a sort of mobile liminal space, a means of getting from our world to the utopian or dystopian locale. This is particularly obvious in the Harry Potter books, of course, but can also be traced in a variety of other children's and YA fantasy texts, from Lewis's *The Last Battle* to Diana Wynne Jones's *Fire and Hemlock* to Joan Aiken's *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*. Jenkins's essay is followed by a solid piece by long-time SFRA member Fred Erisman entitled "American Boys' Series Books and the Utopia of the Air." Erisman points out that throughout the early-twentieth century writers of air adventure stories, and especially the Ted Scott and Tom Swift books, almost invariably lobbied for the airplane as means of social change, a tool for attaining utopia. This section of the book ends with a somewhat odd meditation by Argentine writer Alberto Manguel on the work of H.G. Wells.

The second and longest part of the book, entitled "Community and Socialism," begins with an essay by Sara Gadeken on "Sarah Fielding's Childhood Utopia," which examines the first English novel for children, Fielding's *The Governess, or Little Female Academy* (1749), a utopian vision of education for girls. It then continues with an impressive piece by Cathrine Frank, "Tinklers and Time Machines: Time Travel in the Social Fantasy of E. Nesbit and H.G. Wells." Frank points out that Nesbit and Wells had similar politics and that the children's writer references Wells in her classic fantasy *The Story of the Amulet*. She argues that the two writers were intensely dissatisfied with both the political situation and the reigning fictional realism of the day and that for this reason, their books, "though... directed at different audiences, share didactic, thematic concerns that cross generic boundaries." The third essay in this section, Holly V. Blackford's "The Writing on the Wall of *Redwall*," is a rather nasty, but effective, deconstruction of the social underpinning of Brian Jacques's popular series. Blackford leaves very little doubt that, although the author "claims his fantasy to be a timeless pastoral," he actually evokes "a feudal medieval past with strict [and intensely regressive] politics of identity (class, gender, species)." This piece is followed by Carrie Hintz's appreciative discussion of Zilpha Keatley Snyder's much underrated "Green-sky Trilogy," which concerns a seemingly utopian society whose members eventually discover that their good life is based upon the sufferings of another group. Hintz's comparison of Snyder's ambiguous utopia with that of Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is particularly telling. The section then concludes with short essays by James Gurney, on the origins of his *Dinotopia* series, and Katherine Paterson, on her surprise at the many and intense reactions of young readers to the utopian elements in her *Bridge to Terabithia*.

Part three of the book, "Child Power," features Rebecca Carol Noël Totaro's "Suffering in Utopia: Testing the Limits in Young Adult Novels," and Maureen F. Moran's "Educating Desire: Magic, Power, and Control in Tanith Lee's Unicorn Trilogy." The former essay centers on the ways in which child protagonists are often forced to suffer or sacrifice within utopian fictions. Totaro centers her perceptive essay on L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, Lowry's *The Giver* and her *Gathering Blue*, Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and Sonia Levitin's *The Cure*. Frequently the protagonists' suffering, Totaro points out, comes from their awareness of their own difference, their own inability to fit into what is for others a utopian world. They then begin a search for a place where they won't be misfits. She suggests that it is the role of the young adult novel to educate "readers

(in duplicate) can be sent to: Graduate Researcher Consortium, 2030 MacKay Street, Montreal, Canada, H3G 1J1. Direct Inquiries to: R. Luppincini, GR Editor
DEADLINE: January 16, 2004
INFORMATION:
<<http://consortium.Concordia.ca/publications.htm>>

WHAT: Space and Fandom
WHO: Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media
TOPICS: This issue of *Refractory* explores the spatial dynamics of fandom, conceived broadly to encompass works addressing issues of internet culture, globalization, travel, conventions, private/public sphere, nationality, and spatial metaphors within fandom, including fanfiction. Articles are sought that examine fandom on macro and micro levels. As a journal of entertainment media, a range of fan texts across various media are welcomed, as well as both contemporary and historical works. Papers are sought that take new approaches to texts that have a history of fan scholarship, but also less-known or less-studied texts that might bring a new perspective to fan studies. The aim of the special edition is to bring together articles examining a wide range of texts.
SUBMISSIONS: completed articles of 3,000-7,000 words to the guest editor Djoymi Baker
<djoymib@unimelb.edu.au> as RTF format, or c/o Cinema and New Media Program, The School of Art History, Cinema, Classics and Archaeology, The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 Australia.
DEADLINE: March 31, 2004
INFORMATION: re style details, <<http://www.ahcca.unimelb.edu.au/refractory/>>.

JUST FOR FUN
(HOLD ON TO YOUR WALLET)

Publishers Weekly had a roundup of fall 2003 gift books, a few of which might interest members:

Michael Benson assembled 295 illustrations, including four eight-page gatefolds, in *Beyond: Visions of the Interplanetary Probes* (Abrams, Oct 03, \$55), a companion to an exhibition and symposium at NY's American Museum of Natural History.

John Cork and Maryam D'Abo (the last in *The Living Daylights*) provide more than 200 photos about 007's temptresses in *Bond Girls are Forever* (Abrams, Nov 03, \$40).

Ariane & Christian Delacampagne depict a menagerie of imaginary animals—sphinxes, chimeras, dragons, etc—in works by Bosch, Goya and Picasso in *Here be Dragons: A Fantastic Bestiary* (Princeton, Nov 03, \$45).

If you shared my rage at Gary Larson's retirement from cartooning some years ago, get ready to write a check for a copy of *The Complete Far Side* (Andrews McMeel, Oct 03, \$135). A deluxe, two volume slipcased set that contains every Far Side cartoon ever syndicated—more than 4,000—plus 1,100 that have never previously appeared. Steve Martin wrote the foreword.

Tolkien is alive and well in several Houghton Mifflin publications:

The Maps of Tolkien's Middle Earth (Sep 03, \$25) by Brian Sibley and John Howe is a slipcased collection of four full-color maps.

through the pains of social and physical metamorphosis" and that, in this role, YA fiction and utopian fiction overlap significantly. In her more tightly focused essay, Moran argues that Tanith Lee's protagonist, by visiting a series of dystopian and utopian worlds, gains "self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-control." Utopia, she suggests, is thus attained by "the release and acceptance of desire." This section concludes with a short piece by Monica Hughes on finding a balance between the utopian and dystopian elements in her own science-fiction novels.

Part four of Hintz and Ostry's book is entitled "From the Wreckage: Post-World War II Dystopias and Utopias." It includes two essays, Kay Sambell's well-done "Presenting the Case for Social Change: The Creative Dilemma of Dystopian Writing for Children," and Karen Sands-O'Connor's perceptive "The Quest for the Perfect Planet: The British Secondary World as Utopia and Dystopia, 1945-1999." Sambell begins by commenting on how many dark, dystopian YA novels have been published over the past thirty years, but points out that very few of these works are entirely despairing. Unlike much dystopian fiction published for adults, such novels as Robert Swindell's *Brother in the Land* and William Sleator's *House of Stairs* invariably end with some hope. Previous critics have sometimes seen this as essentially a cop out, an unwillingness to take a bad situation to its furthest, darkest end, but Sambell suggests that, instead, the authors of YA dystopian fiction may be trying "to create conditions for young readers to rehearse, actively, almost playfully, a way of reflective thinking that focuses on asking questions, discovering analyses, and hypothetically testing out solutions at their own pace in an imaginative environment that is affirming and supportive, but which also articulates dark truths." In the book's final essay, Sands-O'Connor examines how British YA dystopian fiction has often mirrored the post-war re-evaluation of Britain's place in the world. She sees most British children's fantasy, from Lewis's Narnia books, to John Christopher's Tripods trilogy, to Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to Diana Wynne Jones's Chrestomanci novels, to, surprisingly enough, Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, as essentially representing "a conservative vision of British society." Sands-O'Connor argues that for these writers "Utopian societies are for the chosen few, and generally these few are those who obey the laws of an older, pastoral Britain where the population was more patriarchal and monochromatic."

Hintz and Ostry close with an interview and a bibliography. Lois Lowry, who may well be tired of being interviewed about *The Giver*, and particularly about that novel's apparently (in Lowry's opinion) non-existent connections with other dystopian YA fiction, comes across as somewhat terse and grouchy—one gets the mental impression of the interviewers wincing at her responses with some regularity—but there's a fair amount of interesting information in the piece. The bibliography, although far from comprehensive, should serve as a valuable starting point for those interested in further exploring the fascinating world of young adult utopian and dystopian fiction.

Overall I would rate this an excellent selection of scholarly essays; there isn't an obviously weak piece in the bunch. Although I enjoyed them all, I would particularly recommend the selections by Jenkins, Frank, Totaro, Sambell and Sands-O'Connor, and the Blackford essay also has its particular pleasures as an exercise in demolition. At \$95.00 this book is not likely to interest many readers as a purchase for their home or office libraries, but I would strongly suggest that it be recommended for acquisition by all academic libraries with significant holdings in the scholarship of utopian literature, science fiction, or young adult fiction.

Decoding Gender in Science Fiction

Ed McKnight

Attebery, Brian. *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*. Routledge, (2002). xi + 210 pages (including index). Cloth, \$85.00, ISBN 0-415-93949-6. Paperback, \$22.95, ISBN 0-415-93950-X.

I'm about to do some serious name-dropping.

I first heard that Brian Attebery (perhaps best known as the editor, along with Ursula K. Le Guin, of *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*) was writing a book on gender and science fiction in a hotel lobby in Cleveland, Ohio. I heard this from Brian Attebery himself, while we were waiting for Justine Larbalestier, Karen Joy Fowler, Samuel R. Delany and numerous other luminaries of the science fiction world to join us for a spirited game of Mafia.

Brian Attebery is *very* good at Mafia.

Now that I've gotten that out of my system, I have to confess to having felt a wave of disappointment that Brian Attebery's new book was going to focus on gender issues. This was due, in part, to the fact that I had found *Strategies of Fantasy*, his 1992 study of fantasy literature and narrative theory, to be one of the most fascinating and useful books I'd ever read. One chapter in that book, on "Women's Coming of Age in Fantasy," had provided what I thought was as thorough and insightful a discussion of the topic as it deserved, and seemed slightly less compelling to me than his chapters on Tolkien and the Theorists, Postmodernism, and Science Fantasy.

My disappointment was primarily due, however, to my mistaken notion (what I must now refer to as my *ludicrously* mistaken notion) that I already knew what *any* book on gender and science fiction was going to say: men bad, women good; science fiction by bad men sexist, science fiction by good women not sexist. In other words, I assumed that Attebery would not get very far beyond Heinlein's phallic imagery and Uhura's miniskirt.

It was a failure of the imagination on my part. Yes, this might well have turned into a very boring book, especially if it had been written by a male author who had merely attempted to validate his own dubious feminist credentials by saying exactly what he thought he ought to say (men bad, women good, etc.)

Attebery attempts far more, and in the attempt he produces the exact opposite of a very boring book. In his opening chapter (playfully titled "Secret Decoder Ring" in reference to the hermeneutic circle formed by the interaction between gender and genre) Attebery alleviated some of my doubts (and raised others) by announcing that "what I originally imagined as a structural study of selected works has become, in effect, an alternative history of SF" (10). This alternative history serves to illustrate that "gender is not merely a theme in SF" but "an integral part of the genre's intellectual and aesthetic structure" (10). In other words, Attebery argues that science fiction doesn't just happen to show us some interesting things about gender; it's fundamentally *about* gender.

Attebery's audacious approach is summed up by the first word in the book's title; by treating *both* gender and science fiction as narrative and cultural codes, he reveals unexpected features of both. His second chapter, "From Neat Idea to Trope," examines the emergence of the science fiction *code*, with its own unique set of narrative expectations, out of gothic literature, by way of Hawthorne, Melville and Poe. Attebery explains that "in order for science fiction to become a code in the first place, it had to accumulate a set of signs, develop an orderly way of combining those signs, establish relationships with other sign systems

The Lord of the Rings Book/Bookends Gift Set (Nov 03, \$75) packages a one-volume edition of the three novels bookended by statuettes of Gandalf the Grey and Bilbo Baggins in a "limited" (20,000 copy) edition.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King Visual Companion by Jude Fisher (Nov 03, \$18.95) is a trade paperback companion to the concluding film.

—Neil Barron

and with categories of experience, and create a community of writers and readers who understood the code in the same way” (18).

The code of science fiction, in turn, is capable of revealing cultural codes that were invisible to the gothic code. Attebery argues that, by “literalizing old metaphors and generating new ones, and generally treating gender as if it were simply and completely a code” science fiction is uniquely suited to see beyond gender as a *natural* condition, and instead to see it as an artificial construction, something like a language in itself. This, to me, is fascinating stuff.

Decoding Gender in Science Fiction is, as Attebery states, a kind of alternative history of the genre, tracing its development from the pulps (in which the role of women was chiefly to serve as the female glue between the adoptive father figure of the older male scientist and the younger male protagonist, yearning to be initiated into the masculine world of science and technology) to such contemporary writers as James Morrow and Gwyneth Jones. Along the way Attebery examines the familiar figure of the Super Man, revealing it to be a strategy for identifying all that is culturally masculine with evolutionary superiority, and all that is evolutionarily inferior, by default, with the feminine.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book (a difficult call to make, when every chapter has its claim to the title) is “Women Alone, Men Alone,” Attebery’s examination of the single-sex utopia. (If anyone collects oxymorons, this strikes me as a wonderful new addition to the list: darkness visible, military intelligence, jumbo shrimp, and single-sex utopia). Taking a metaphor from art criticism, Attebery coins the term “intaglio effect” to describe what happens when one writer describes a dystopian nightmare that is virtually identical to another author’s utopian vision. As Attebery points out, the male-dominated society in Suzy McKee Charnas’s *Walk to the End of the World* is almost indistinguishable from that of Robert Heinlein’s *Space Cadet*, except that one is undeniably evil while the other is ostensibly good!

The subject of gender and science fiction could be seen as a potential minefield in which the only safe passages have already been thoroughly plowed. (Even as I write this wonderfully mixed metaphor I can see my own unexamined sexism spilling out upon the page, like . . . oh, never mind). In his final chapter, “Who Farms the Future?” Attebery makes far better use of the farming image than I have to describe the science fiction genre as a field rich with possibility for writers of a variety of different, even conflicting perspectives. *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* demonstrates that an insightful reader has much to discover about the complex and fascinating interaction of gender and science fiction which, far from being a narrow passage through a minefield, is also a field rich with possibility.

NONFICTION REVIEW
Astrofuturism
 Holly Henry

Kilgore, De Witt Douglas. *Astrofuturism: Science, Race and Visions of Utopia in Space*. University of Pennsylvania Press. June 2003. 294 pages. Paperbound, \$19.95 ISBN 0-812-21847-7.

De Witt Douglas Kilgore offers an insightful and long-needed investigation of the social and political implications of Twentieth-Century utopian visions of our human futures in space. Kilgore defines astrofuturism as “the tradition of speculative fiction and science writing inaugurated by scientists and science popularizers during the space race of the 1950s” and who posited alternative, even utopic, human communities in space or on other planets (2). These astrofuturists, inspired by advances in the technosciences, imagined human communities on space stations, on the moon or on Mars as positive alternatives to the social and political difficulties America was facing in the 1950s. Kilgore’s research, informed by science studies theorists Donna Haraway, Sharon Traweek, and Emily Martin, presents an important cultural analysis of the astrofuturist fiction of Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Gerard K. O’Neill, Ben Bova, Carl Sagan, Octavia Butler, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Vonda N. McIntyre, among others.

As Kilgore sees it, astrofuturism has evolved through three generations of scientists and science fiction writers. The first generation included German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun as well as science fiction writers Robert A. Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke. Many of those first dreaming our human futures in space were engineers in government service interested in developing public support for a human space program. It was particularly through science fiction that writers like von Braun, Heinlein and Clarke “were able to find a language with which to communicate their . . . passion [for space exploration] to like-minded Americans” (80).

While inspired by the possibilities for new human futures in space, Heinlein, Clarke and von Braun did not envision, Kilgore contends, significant alternatives to questions of class, ethnicity and gender that America was struggling to resolve. Heinlein's male protagonists often simply "re-create the American myth of western expansion and conquest" (84). Moreover, women are rarely equal adventurers in Heinlein's space futures. Kilgore notes, "Their biological destiny as wives and mothers, a destiny that Heinlein firmly advocates, forecloses that possibility" (85). In Arthur C. Clarke's *Rama* novels, Kilgore finds that the introduction of humanoid robots as a means of reducing human labor serves only as "an evasion, not a solution" to issues of ethnicity and of class (141).

A second generation of astrofuturists, largely academic scientists, popular writers of science fiction and popular science writers, perhaps are best represented by Princeton physicist Gerard K. O'Neill, who envisioned space as an endless resource for solving international aggression over earth's limited fossil fuels and other natural resources. In response to this, and to the Civil Rights and feminist movements of the 60s and 70s, O'Neill posited the proliferation of innumerable and vast space vessels populated by communities of shared common interests. But as Kilgore points out, O'Neill's futurist space communities suggest social and political homogeneity. "Thus a 'separate but equal' doctrine defines the limits of O'Neill's hopes for peace," Kilgore explains, "Within this strand of astrofuturism, we find that political differences are not resolved, but escaped. The dream of a good and just society, a democratic commonwealth, which depends on diversity of opinion and persons for its health, is deferred" (169).

It is among a third generation of astrofuturists, including Ben Bova, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Vonda N. McIntyre, that Kilgore finds "outer spaces that experiment with diversity and hybridity, and break with terrestrial powers that would fix human potential into bounded, governable forms" (226). Theirs is a futurist fiction that imagines alterity, hybridity and human diversity as strengths. Indeed, history bears out that diversity and hybridity have been the hallmark of success in extreme exploration on our own planet, as demonstrated independently by P.J. Capelotti and Barry Pegg in their investigations of polar exploration. In every case, success in reaching the North and South poles relied upon European explorers adopting technologies from other nations and local knowledge from indigenous peoples. "We have set human feet upon only one North Pole," writes Capelotti, "in space, there are millions of North Poles waiting to be discovered" (*By Airship to the North Pole* 175). We may one day stand on the north pole of Mars. De Witt Kilgore suggests that astrofuturist visions that celebrate human complexity, hybridity and diversity throw open the positive possibilities for experiments in building peaceable heterotopias—both here and in space.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Science Fiction, Canonization, and the Academy

Miriam Jones

Westfahl, Gary and George Slusser, eds. *Science Fiction, Canonization, and the Academy*. Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy 97. Donald Palumbo, Series Adviser. Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 2002. vi + 179 pages (notes, index and bibliography). Cloth, \$63.95, ISBN: 0-313-32064-0. ISSN: 0193-6875.

This collection does not suffer from the diffuseness of many critical anthologies; it is clearly focused on a series of related questions about, as the title promises, canonization and the relationship of SF to the academy. It is perhaps inevitable that many of the authors address the nature of the genre itself in their own canon formations. What is SF? And, what isn't? The reader will not find single answers, but a passionately argued dialogue from across the political spectrum. Herein lies the collection's main strength.

The collection consists of an introduction by co-editor Gary Westfahl and thirteen essays divided among three sections: overviews of SF and the academy; "Mechanisms of Canonization"; and case studies: articles about awards, anthologies, and publishing. The majority of the contributors are academics, a significant number of whom are also SF editors. Some are also SF authors. Others write outside the academy; a couple are scientists. Westfahl writes that "this volume represents the collective judgment of both those who have endeavored to control science fiction and those who have felt the influence of their endeavors" (3), though the former group significantly outnumbers the latter. Practically all the contributors write from the United States.

In the introduction, Westfahl writes that science fiction "offers unusually fertile grounds for an examination of these

continuing processes of literary canonization and marginalization” (1) because of its contested relationship within the academy, its internal processes of canonization, and the intervention of extra-academic forces in this latter process. He maintains that there is a “foundational quality” (2) in SF that threatens literary tradition. All the essays engage with these points in one way or another.

The four essays in the “Overviews” section exemplify the somewhat uneven quality of the collection as a whole. Tom Shippey, in his useful “Literary Gatekeepers and the Fabril Tradition,” argues, from a revised notion of Darko Suvin’s “novum,” that it is the newness of science fiction that threatens conservative groups, including academics. He draws a parallel between being a science fiction reader and being gay, though as far as this reviewer knows, no-one has ever been killed or beaten for reading (or even writing) science fiction. He points to H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) as an expression of powerful contempt, “a deliberate attack on literary and linguistic tradition” (12). Worse, it blurs the jealously defined distinction between humans and animals, and intervenes in one of the most contested scientific, philosophical and religious debates of the period: the Darwinian debate. Well’s text is clearly aligned with the forces of progress and science which were seen as so destructive by Victorian conservatives. He further categorizes Moreau as an imperialist text, and notes a presence of imperialist culture in much mainstream science fiction—Heinlein is an example—out of sync with most critical thought. This, however, is only one strain of SF, though to Shippey it seems to define the genre. Shippey writes that the authority of science, unlike religious or past political authorities, has not been deposed, and literary critics feel horror at acknowledgment of a power outside the text. This argument does not explain, however, the lack of a general critical acceptance for so-called “soft,” or social, science fiction. In conclusion, he offers a way to integrate sf into literary studies: the Fabril: the dark, alien “other” of the pastoral (“faber” means one who makes with the hands; hence the text is artificial, or “postrealist,” to use the term the author offers [9]). This is a surprisingly academic solution after Shippey’s criticisms of academic literary criticism.

In the second essay in the section, “Seven Types of Chopped Liver: My Adventures in the Genre Wars,” one has the sense that Frank McConnell is playing out various personal arguments, which makes for a frustrating read for the uninitiated. Susan Kray, in her flawed “The Things Women Don’t Say,” maintains that most SF, even that written by feminists, retains gender binaries. Like Shippey she seems to include only “hard” SF within her definition of the genre, as when she claims that the two main enterprises of SF are “having adventures and solving problems” (38).

Jonathan Langford rounds out the section with his well-considered “Why the Academy Is Afraid of Dragons: The Suppression of the Marvelous in Theories of the Fantastic.” He presents a useful synopsis of criticism of the fantastic since Tzvetan Todorov which addresses many of the main critics: Todorov himself, Eric Rabkin, Rosemary Jackson, Kathryn Hume, and Brian Attebery (though where are Ursula Le Guin? C.N. Manlove? Charlotte Spivack?). He takes Todorov’s notion of the marvelous, which he claims has not been fruitfully developed by critics (53), and roughs out some areas for further work. He criticizes those who dismiss the marvelous as a class (57) and sketches an argument for its truly subversive power.

The second section of the collection, “Mechanisms of Canonization,” opens with Edward James’s “The Arthur C. Clarke Award and Its Reception in Britain.” This article persuasively uses the award as a case study of struggles over the meaning of SF. It focuses on the SF community and its internal struggles with definition, not within the academy but in publishing and marketing. He reminds us that “science fiction is a genre consciously produced by self-defined science fiction writers” (71). He attributes what he describes as the ghettoization of SF in the UK to the British class system, a lack of scientific education, and anti-Americanism.

In “Popes or Tropes: Defining the Grails of Science Fiction,” Joseph D. Miller takes a swing at *The Norton Book of Science Fiction* (1993). He deplores the absence of “iconic” figures in the anthology and is critical of what he describes as the “political correctness” of the selection (84), and of editor Ursula Le Guin’s focus on aesthetics (80). His tone is nitpicking and mean-spirited, and he seems very confident in his ability to decree what is SF and what is not. Stephen P. Brown’s “Science Fiction Eye and the Rebellion against Recursion” is a refreshing antidote to Miller. In this analysis of the development of Science Fiction Eye, Brown describes “the claustrophobic SF community” (93) and the “recursive fan” who reads only SF as leading to stasis.

In “Case Studies,” the final section, co-editor George Slusser offers “Multiculturalism and the Cultural Dynamics of Classic American Science Fiction,” a staunch defense of a “classic American SF” that is Heinlein’s “lengthened shadow” (106) against the “multicultural assault” (103) of the likes of Le Guin. Quoting Robert Bork, he defines SF as an engagement between the individual and the forces of nature (104). Exemplifying Brown’s “recursive reader,” Slusser maintains that “the Emerson-Heinlein dynamic” is the dynamic of “classic SF” (106). He writes with confidence of “the culture that reads SF” (106), as if there were only one, and makes the astonishing claim that SF is “extracultural” (106). Farah Mendlesohn’s

strongly argued “Science Fiction in the Academies of History and Literature; Or, History and the Use of Science Fiction” offers a historical approach to early and pulp SF in the U.S.A., within a larger context. “Science fiction,” she refreshingly writes, is “better seen as a product rather than a critic of social patterns” (120). Elyce Rae Helford’s “(E)rac(ed) Visions: Women of Color and Science Fiction in the United States” explores the publishing histories of Octavia Butler and Misha (the working name of Misha Nóggha). This is a useful article, especially in its introduction of Misha to a wider audience, and its insights into the differences between the visions of women of colour, and the white feminist utopias of the 1970s.

In “Hard Magic, Soft Science: The Marginalization of Kevin J. Anderson and Doug Beason’s *Assemblers of Infinity* and Bruce Boston’s *Stained Glass Rain*,” Howard V. Hendrix writes about the dilemma of the SF writer: go literary, or go mainstream? (140). He treats two “liminal” novels which “shift out” of the SF subculture, one literary and one mass-market, and situates them on a continuum, from character and culture (the authority of history) at one end and plot and the marketplace (the authority of science) at the other, with most SF tending towards this latter end of the spectrum. In perhaps the most open-ended attempt to “define” SF in the collection, he quotes John W. Campbell Jr.’s definition of SF as an exploration of the impact of technology on human beings and social systems (141). He reminds us that all writing is political (143), and offers another continuum: hard SF as right-wing and outer-directed, and “soft” SF as leftist and inner-directed. In its presentation of a series of parallels, this article offers a useful schema for positioning SF within the canon wars, and a clear reading of the politics of cultural authority.

This collection will be useful for anyone teaching or writing about science fiction. It could also offer food for thought to those who dismiss science fiction, but of course they are the people least likely to read it. Indeed, we might be glad that they won’t, as some of the articles here reinforce many of the negative stereotypes of the “sci-fi” aficionado, particularly the several rants about “political correctness.” Many of the writers here speak with authority on behalf of what they see as a beleaguered genre, but they fail to acknowledge the wider range of science fiction, not just in their privileging of hard SF, but in their stubborn defense of “classic American” SF (103). These essays, taken together, form a genuine dialogue, with all the irritation involved in actually having to listen to the “other side.” No one will like more than half of them. But as collections go, that is not a bad average. The editors are to be commended for creating the space for a genuine exchange, something all too rare.

NONFICTION REVIEW
Elephant House
 Neil Barron

McDermott, Kevin. *Elephant House, or, The Home of Edward Gorey*. Pomegranate Communications, Box 808022, Petaluma, CA 94975, Fall 2003. Unpaginated. Hardbound, \$35. 0-7649-2495-8.

Gorey is no stranger to our pages. His enigmatic drawings and tales have long attracted nuts like me as well as collectors. He was the subject of a variety of interesting interviews in *Ascending Peculiarity* (2001), reviewed in *SFRA Review* 256.

McDermott met Gorey in 1985 at age 21 and performed in many of his dramatized stories, gaining a thorough knowledge of Gorey’s unique sensibility as well as a strong personal liking for a man almost four times his age. When he learned of Gorey’s sudden death in April 2000, he was given permission to photograph Gorey’s Yarmouthport (Cape Cod) home, Elephant House, which was opened as a public museum in summer 2002.

Amidst the 129 pages of black & white and color photographs of books (25,000), cats, and assemblages of all types of objects, is some narrative text and selections from his poetry and examples of his drawings. Here’s a macabre example from an early work, *The Listing Attic*:

Each night father fills me with dread
 When he sits on the foot of my bed:
 I’d not mind that he speaks
 In gibbers and squeaks.
 But for seventeen years he’s been dead.

A doubtful choice for most libraries, but of interest to Gorey collectors.

FICTION REVIEW

Burndive

Philip Snyder

Karin Lowachee, *Burndive*. New York: Warner, 2003. Paperback, \$6.95, 417 pages. ISBN 0-446-61318-5.

Somehow I missed *Warchild*, Karin Lowachee's debut novel, which won the second of Warner Aspect's First Novel awards. (Given the literary trajectory of Nalo Hopkinson, the award's first winner, I definitely should have been paying more attention.) Here now is Lowachee's second novel, and I'm grateful I didn't make the same mistake twice. *Burndive* is a follow-up, though not exactly a sequel, to *Warchild*, set in the same imagined universe as the earlier novel and featuring some of the same characters. Having read *Burndive* on its own, I can testify that it works perfectly well as a standalone novel, though I'm sure that *Warchild's* readers will enjoy the new depths that *Burndive* brings to her ongoing saga.

It's a story that surprises with its levels, layers, and angles. Decorating its surface is a colorful panoply of alien attacks, deepspace pirates, and intricate politics on a galactic scale. Just beneath that surface is a wonderfully sudsy soap opera devoted to the gossipy excitements of who's sleeping with whom, who's hot and who's not, and much hugger-mugger about secrets and suspicions. At the heart of this space opera, however, is a serious treatment of a seriously dysfunctional family, and at the heart of that story is a coming-of-age tale about a young man who seems at first merely an obnoxious twerp, but who by novel's end has brought us to care about him, and care deeply. Add an oddly ambiguous gay subtext, along with a thought-provoking theme about the price that children pay in wars, and you have a novel that ought to fly apart from sheer centrifugal force. But it works.

Our young man who comes of age is Ryan Azarcon, a pretty boy and a party boy, given to interminable bouts of self-pity, brittle witticisms, and a good deal of pouting. Given Ryan's age (which might charitably be described as 19-going-on-16), his principal difficulties are laid, naturally, at the door of his parents: father Cairo Azarcon is a military hero, cold and controlled, and mother Songlian Lau is a senior public information officer devoted to the masterful manipulation of image. Only Marine Corporal Tim Sidney, Ryan's bodyguard for the last seven years, seems to Ryan to be even remotely understanding.

All is not mere adolescent angst, however. The family is indeed a mess, split by distance both literal and emotional. Captain Azarcon, commander of the deepspace carrier *Macedon*, has long ago put his family well behind his ambition, and in fact has only had contact with his son at four-year intervals. His estranged wife, likewise, is a pretty glacial personality. These issues are compounded for Ryan by some very twisty allegiances: his bodyguard (and best friend) is sleeping with Ryan's mother; early in the novel, Ryan is practically kidnapped by his father and installed on the faraway *Macedon*; while Corporal Sidney has a tangled braid of military, romantic, and fraternal obligations stretched nearly to the breaking point by the other three characters.

These private woes, furthermore, are intimately connected to the public arena in which the novel's principal action takes place. This family drama is embedded in a framework of military SF, whereby EarthHub Central (home of Ryan and his mother) is ranged against the deepspace colonies (represented by Ryan's father and his rogue carrier) in a dispute over whether or not to seek a truce in a war with aliens ("strit-na" to their supporters, "strits" to their detractors) and the renegade deepspace humans who have joined them ("sympathizers," if you're on their side, and "symps" if you aren't). A potential threat to all of these parties, meanwhile, is the pirates, the fascinating culture at the core of the earlier *Warchild*.

What elevates *Burndive* considerably above this template for an action-thriller, however, are Lowachee's ambitious attempts to connect with something deeper. For *Burndive* is a story about the pull of the past. Cairo himself is a former pirate, it turns out, as is Jos Musey, a returning character from *Warchild*. The child is father of the man, the mismatched marriage is the beating heart of an authentic family, the personal is political, and everyone in the novel is hostage to what has come before. All this—and some really cool aliens—makes for a novel not to be missed.

FICTION REVIEW

Coming Home

Donald M. Hassler

Hal Clement, *Noise*. New York: Tor, 2003. Hardcover, \$23.95. 256 pgs, ISBN: 0765308576

At a key moment near the conclusion of this small and tidy little tale, one of the travelers comments, “It would be nice to get home again sometime” (228). The speaker Mike, a Maori South Sea islander, has journeyed very far, indeed, from Earth to a region on a distant and exotic planet where the conditions are much like his own South Sea region. But the basic story is that all of us are far from home; and, furthermore, on this alien planet “home” actually moves or floats. The reader, however, does not find any real existential angst, or breast-beating, over this situation. The characteristic Hal Clement effect is just to enjoy the uncertainty and to cope. Well, we know there is much uncertainty. As I write, I feel with particular poignancy this sense of loss and uncertainty since Clement has been dead now just a week. A draft of this review was done in the summer, but I am adding this note now for the editors of the *Review*. Clement’s long and seminal career, his journey from Mesklin throughout a great literature of hard science fiction, has led him home; and it has been a joy for me to watch all of his coping, even to the end. Perhaps I will have the opportunity to write again in larger ways, but now just a review of this last and important published “noise” or genuine message from this great writer and great traveler.

The point of view character Mike is, of course, a great traveler, scientist, researcher. Clement has named the new planet that he is studying Kainui. Earlier names for planets in the Clement universe have been Tenebra, Abyormen, Dhrawn, and, of course, Mesklin. Strange names for his exotic and wonderful universe. The first in the list above sounds Christian, and now this final name is Polynesian. Someday, we need more on the Clement semantic choices. He was a fine linguist, in his way; and so “Noise” in the title here is, indeed, always message and never just random. But planet morphology is more the Clement signature, and here Kainui is one huge planetary ocean, over a thousand miles in depth, plus polar ice caps. Immense seismic sound waves (one phenomenon pointed to in the title) are continuously generated by plate tectonic movement where the mantle meets the ocean bottom, and the reader learns a lot about oceanography as the adventure unfolds. Had Clement been reading the new popular Simon Winchester book on Krakatoa for this final project of his? He was a great and eager reader as well as a great writer.

Kainui has a twin planet, and both orbit a binary star so that an observer on the surface sees numerous eclipses which Clement loves to describe. His first love has always been practical astronomy. Further, the ocean here is rich in compounds that can be extracted such as iron, gold, nitrogen. Oxygen can, also, be broken out of other compounds although the atmosphere is mostly carbon monoxide. (I remember Clement lecturing me well on chemistry years ago when I talked with him about his book *Nitrogen Fix*; I think I need his help again now as he was very good talking about his other basic science that he taught for so many years at Milton Academy.) On Kainui, weather is extreme with continuous thunder and lightning storms—also pointed to in his title. There is no indigenous life on this textbook world of exciting plate tectonics, oceanography, chemistry, meteorology, and celestial mechanics. But the world has been colonized from an over-crowded Earth by Polynesian islanders who are comfortable on the ocean and who have perfected an advanced science of genetic engineering as well as skills, much beyond mine of course, with all of the sciences mentioned above. One of the pleasures in reading Clement for me has always been the return to the rich environment that must have been his prep school classroom.

An element the planet lacks in quantity is silicon to use in computer chips, and there is also no radio transmission because of the extreme weather—gain, just “noise.” These shortages figure nicely in Clement’s minimal plot development, as we shall see; but clearly Clement is more interested in presenting all the planetology and other sciences than in most anything else. This final novel is pure Clement. His character Mike is, also, an historian and student of culture and language with the prime mission of studying all that can be discovered in the colonies on Kainui. He travels with a three-person team from one of the colonies. All the colonies “grow” their cities as well as their ships and, even, their environmental armored suits that prevent them from being crushed by the seismic waves—an interesting genetically engineering future technology. Mike learns to speak the sign language they use called “Finger” that has to be used when they are encased in the armor, and he is good also with the Polynesian dialects that have evolved on the planet. So the limited sociology is almost as interesting to the reader as the hard sciences of the planet. Mike’s hosts are a husband and wife team, with the wife as captain of the ship, and a very clever ten-year-old who is apprentice on the ship learning to become a shipmaster herself. The child belongs to wealthy parents, not the couple crewing the ship, and has with her a sophisticated computer device or “doll” that is rare on the planet.

Clement's plot is very simple. Mostly it deals with educating the child, and Mike, to cope with the numerous crises that result from weather and equipment failure. Most exciting and interesting is the encounter that closes the story with a floating city way to the South that has been colonized by New Zealand Maori who landed originally on the Antarctic polar cap of the planet. They grew their city, then, from an iceberg. At first, they seem to pose a threat to Mike and his shipmates. But all differences are eventually resolved in trade, in the genetic engineering of sea plants that produce gold, and in plans to buy more silicon chips from offworld with the gold. I suppose that every twist is plausible in Clement's treatment of the hard sciences, but the human problem solving at the end seems to me a bit inconclusive and non-consequential.

On the other hand, what may seem to the reader just more "noise" in plot is continual sociological message about the details in these strange colonies. Clement seems to be saying that all the moves reinforce the need continually to trade and to learn, and to do these enterprising things far from home. I always suspect that this sort of fiction is difficult to read for those of us who like to romanticize and to personalize feelings about home and about humanness. In other words, this sort of hard science fiction is far from the usual novel we love. In a sense, Clement is the ideal hard science fiction writer who projects all possible contingencies on the digital basis of a step-by-step expansion of knowledge. In short, virtually anything is possible and all sorts of newness may be engineered with the continual use of questioning, inventiveness, and wit. For the reader of the "human-centered" novel, almost all Clement stories are Frankenstein monsters that click and clank along, as though in armor, and that make messages out of noise.

Clement worked at this sort of project for a very long time, and he was stubborn in his rationality. Hard science fiction may change our notion of what story is, but I doubt that that will happen because we all have such a commitment to home and to our sense of old humanness. Further, I think it is no accident that these scientific projects coming out of the Enlightenment are linked to the dissenting Puritanism of Defoe and his lonely Crusoe, to the 19th-century rationalist liberals descended from Jeremy Bentham, and most recently to the computer jocks like Greg Egan. It is a world of lonely puritans coping on a harsh frontier, a world of infinitudes. In the hardest of realities now, Clement has come home to his mortality. But in another sense, he will always be out there, far from home. I like his work very much. He is one of the finest of hard science fiction projectors.

FICTION REVIEW

Mojo: Conjure Stories

Philip Snyder

Nalo Hopkinson, *Mojo: Conjure Stories*. New York: Warner, April 2003. Trade paperback, \$13.95, 352 pages. ISBN 0-446-6729-1.

"Like so much of African American culture," says Nalo Hopkinson, "the word 'Mojo' has entered our consciousness and can now be found everywhere as a symbol for personal, subversive magic. When Muddy Waters sings 'got my mojo working,' we can feel his magic begin to rise, and we know it's going to be a good ride." The same can be said of her splendid new anthology of 19 stories, all original to this volume, that explore the personal and the subversive folk-magic of African-Caribbean culture.

Hopkinson is no stranger to either the cultural tradition or the literary challenge embodied in this project. Born in Jamaica, raised in Trinidad, and a long-time resident of Toronto, she is the daughter of a poet and a playwright and a child of the African Diaspora. Her novel *Brown Girl in the Ring* was the first winner of Aspect's First Novel Contest; her follow-up novel, *Midnight Robber*, was nominated for the Hugo and Nebula, and her collection of short stories, *Skin Folk*, won this year's World Fantasy Award for Best Collection. She is also the editor, previously, of *Whispers from the Cotton Tree Root: Caribbean Fabulist Fiction*. For *Mojo*, her second outing as an editor, Hopkinson invited contributions from writers "who could reflect the magics of the African diaspora, or because I felt they could walk in African shoes for a bit and write me a story that would sing."

And sing they do. Among the most arresting of their songs are those that touch directly on voodoo's encounter with the institution of slavery itself. Gregory Frost's "The Prowl" takes its narrator from the horrors of a slave ship in Angola to a shapeshifter's violent retribution on a South Carolina plantation, while Barbara Hambly's "The Horsemen and the Morning Star" pits African gods against Christianity's devils in the slave cabins of Louisiana. From Nisi Shawl comes "The Tawny Bitch," a story that stretches from Africa to England to a colonial plantation in its exploration of miscegenation, forbidden love, and supernatural intervention. Pride of place in this category, though, belongs to the contribution by Sheree

Renee Thomas, herself the editor of *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*. In “How Sukie Cross de Big Wata,” Thomas’s eponymous hero swears at the very moment of her birth that “I’ll eat the clay of my own grave ‘fore I’ll slave a day in this life or the next for any man, woman, child, or spirit – white, negra, or other” (328), and her determination and outrageous power just keep growing from there. Told in the cadences of oral legend, the tale is a brilliant celebration of the spirit of defiance.

Not all of the anthology’s more chilling selections are about slavery, however. Several of the stories herein concern themselves with sexual abuse, children at risk, and other somber themes. Among the best of these is Kiini Ibura Salaam’s “Rosamojo,” a corruscating account of a young girl’s darkly magical response to her incestuous violation. Along with a handful of similar stories in the book, “Rosamojo” demonstrates that slavery is not the only practice with the power to haunt and disturb, nor the only form of brutality amenable to address by potent acts of imagination. Nor do all of *Mojo’s* stories attempt this same unsettling emotional register. Lighter stories of adventure, and even humor, season the mix. A. M. Dellamonica’s “Cooking Creole,” for instance, is your basic Tall Tale About a Deal with the Devil, albeit with an entertaining culinary twist. Leading off the anthology is Andy Duncan’s “Daddy Mention and the Monday Skull,” the story of a jailbird, a trickster gator, and a swamp, told with the spicy Southern brio that readers have come to expect from the author of *Beluthabatchie and Other Stories*.

Several of Hopkinson’s writers explicitly connect the African and Caribbean past to the American present. Eliot Fintushel’s “White Man’s Trick” takes us from the holds of slave ships in Africa to the theater district in Lower Manhattan. In Neil Gaiman’s “Bitter Grounds,” a modern anthropologist is drawn to New Orleans in search of the “zombie” coffee girls of early 20th Century Haiti. Ancient Ibo gods bring terror to a Boston ghetto neighborhood in “The Skinned,” a story by Jarla Tangh that will remind readers of a certain famous story by Harlan Ellison. And deals with the devil are still made at the crossroads, though these days the conjure bags may need to be loaded with videos and computer disks, as Gerard Houarner shows in “She’s Make a Dead Man Crawl.”

Hopkinson is especially to be congratulated for the diversity of the anthology’s contributors. *Mojo* showcases not only a mix of black and white writers, or of men and women writers, but also of mainstream voices and genre stalwarts, of recognized stars along with bright new talents. Among the SF heavyweights (who happen also to be African-American) is the husband-and-wife team of Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due. “Heartspace,” the Barnes offering, is a powerful treatment of fathers and sons, while Due’s “Trial Day” sets a little girl’s love for her brother against a father’s fear of white prejudice. Prominent SF newcomers include Writer of the Future winner Tobias Buckell, and Writer of the Future finalist Nnedima Okorofaro, both of them recent Clarion graduates. (Sheree Renee Thomas, mentioned earlier, is a 1999 graduate of Clarion West.) From outside the genre, meanwhile, comes San Francisco Poet Laureate devorah major, whose “Shining Through 24/7” puts an SFnal spin on a young woman’s recovery from crack addiction; she is joined by Marcia Douglas, a creative writing professor whose previous fiction and poetry has appeared in a number of literary journals, and whose “Notes from a Writer’s Book of Cures and Spells,” in this anthology, evokes the magic, appropriately, of words, of writing, and of stories.

The gems of the collection are Jenise Aminoff’s “Fate” and Barth Anderson’s “Lark till Dawn, Princess.” Aminoff (yet another Clarion graduate – this anthology is a class reunion of sorts) here makes her professional fiction debut with a powerful story about parents and children and Anansi the Trickster. Anderson, member of a loose confederation of writers calling themselves the Rat Bastards, has begun to be published in a number of genre markets, but has not yet broken out of the pack. This story should change that. “Lark till Dawn, Princess,” a pitch-perfect elegy for a drag queen, is most certainly a story with its mojo working overtime, a performance that bids fair to mark this particular Rat Bastard, anyway, as one of the true Writers of the Future.

FICTION REVIEW

Singularity Sky

Warren G. Rochelle

Stross, Charles. *Singularity Sky*. New York: Ace Books, 2003. 313 pages, uncorrected proofs, \$23.95. ISBN 0-441-01072-5

In an August 2003 *Locus* interview, Charles Stross describes one of the goals of his work this way: “What I like to do is give people something they don’t expect, but they end up preferring” (84). I’m here to tell you that *Singularity Sky* is

definitely the unexpected. In the 21st century, faster-than-light travel is discovered and a sentient artificial intelligence is somehow created, the Eschaton, that takes it upon itself to re-order human civilization. Human colonies are scattered over three thousand years of time and a thousand parsecs of space and there is one primary rule the Eschaton, the Big E, enforces: “Do not build a time machine or I will whack you” (85). And whack you, the Big E will.

The events of the novel occur some four hundred years after the Eschaton’s re-ordering in the territory of one such colony, the New Republic, which wants no part of the Eschaton or any technological advance. The New Republican government has isolated its citizenry from other human worlds, to prevent the evils of advanced technology, such as the Eschaton. Any technology that is developed is suppressed. Then, out of nowhere, in the skies of one of the New Republic’s planets, Rochard’s World, appears the Festival, whose *raison-d’être* is the dissemination of information. Telephones rain out of the sky. Answer one, as does a street urchin in Novy Petrograd, the planetary capital, and this is the question posed: “Hello. Will you entertain us?” The boy asks why. “Entertain us and we will give you anything you want” (2). *Anything*. Suppressed technology is available to any and to all. The old are made young. Cornucopia machines crank out food, riches, weapons—stuff, lots and lots of stuff. Rebellion and chaos follow. Enter Martin Springfield, from Earth, who is secretly working for the Eschaton. Meet Rachel Mansour, an agent for the Earth’s UN, who has an amazing bag of many tricks. And they are on the fleet from the New Republic’s capital planet to fight the Festival and restore Rochard’s World to the fold. Fighting the Festival is, of course, impossible. Can order be restored anyway, if Rochard’s World’s duke is a boy who is rejuvenated over and over again? Stay tuned, as the adventure continues.

According to Stross, this novel is space opera, and given the space fleet, the spies, and the wild chaos from the Festival, I tend to agree. While the Eschaton remains, in this novel, off-stage, another generic niche fitting Stross’s tale is artificial intelligence and its consequences. There is a strong streak of satire in this novel as well, particularly in the political machinations of Rochard’s World’s rebels. And the book is just plain funny. I can easily see this novel being used as a contemporary example of space opera or as a companion to Shekley’s funny, crazy satire. Both have that air of wild, yet controlled invention—free association with a leash, as it were.

Singularity Sky is a fun read, and Stross, who is relatively new on the SF scene, is an author worth watching. Definitely unexpected.

FICTION REVIEW

The Silver Gryphon

Janice Bogstad

Turner, Gary and Marty Halpern, eds. *The Silver Gryphon*. Urbana, IL: Golden Gryphon Press, 2003. ISBN: 1930846150. 300p. \$27.95.

A handsome volume of twenty stories largely by authors well established in the field of science fiction, this volume represents the best of what Jim Turner was hoping to achieve when he founded Golden Gryphon Press in 1996. The motivation for this, the 25th volume of fantastic fiction published under the imprint, is to feature both a number of writers published in the press’s annual volumes and the vision that Turner and his successors since his death in 1999 have for well-crafted, imaginative fiction. In order of appearance are James Patrick Kelly, Jeffrey Ford, Michael Bishop, Kage Baker, Richard Lupoff, Kevin J. Anderson, Howard Waldrop, Paul Di Filippo, Geoffrey A. Landis, George Zebrowski, Ian Watson, Lucius Shepard, Warren Rochelle, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Richard Paul Russo, Robert Reed, Andy Duncan, R. Garcia y Robertson, Neil Barrett, Jr. and Joe R. Lansdale. Each of the stories is original for this anthology. Each is paradigmatic in its performance of the English language. Most are both timely and vaguely disturbing in their extrapolations about our near and far futures. The most immediate has been noted by other reviewers, and that is George Lupoff’s speculation about what would happen if Gore and Bush ‘shared’ the White House (if briefly). His “The American Monarchy” has just the sardonic twist that one expects from both Lupoff and other books in the Golden Gryphon pantheon. Or Michael Bishop’s ghost story, “The Door Gunner,” as it accurately represents the irreality of the Vietnam War to our soldiers on the ground.

While I can’t claim to have read other selections by all of these authors (I think I am missing three), I can attest that those 17 whom I have encountered before have put forth their best efforts for this anthology. While I lament the fact that there is only one female writer among them, there are also examples of male writers with a considerable grasp of the opposite sex and their dilemmas, such as Kelly’s “Mother,” which uses the pretext of birth-control out of control to create a forceful

female hero. Richard Paul Russo's "Tropical Nights at the Natatorium," while tragic and amusing simultaneously, also functions as the anthology's 'cautionary tale' about a far future where rich and poor are the only two classes, and a reminder of how revolutions come about. I can't help but enjoy Rusch's "Cowboy Grace," which deals as baldly with stereotypes females place on each other as it does with the techniques used by their unscrupulous male husbands and lovers. As Grace's erstwhile female friend hears: "When I told you about my lumpectomy" Grace said, "you didn't care. I was scared. I told you that and you didn't care. When I found out I didn't have cancer, I called you to celebrate and you didn't care. Seems to me like you vanished first" (247). To turn her life from tragedy to triumph, Cowboy Grace undergoes a series of psychological transformations that are lovingly detailed in her own entertaining monologues and dialogues, realistically embedded in the foibles of our own social system and much more satisfying than, say, "Thelma and Louise." But for sheer inventiveness and wit, I enjoyed Paul di Fillipo's "What's Up Tiger Lilly." The connected stories in this humorous tale are predicated on the recent-future travails associated with a new material called Proteopape. With infinite capabilities for morphing from one form into another, as programmed this invention becomes the center of a lover's quarrel between the inventor and an old, apparently quite angry, girlfriend. The story contains a generous dose of in-jokes ("Forget it Jake, It's Chinatown," 146), puns and inter-relational clichés which are bound to fascinate literati and techie alike. I've represented these few stories because they caught my fancy in particular, not because they are appreciably better than most of the others in this excellent example of the craft of science fiction.

FICTION REVIEW

In the Presence of Mine Enemies

Warren G. Rochelle

Turtledove, Harry. *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. New York: New American Library, 2003. 454 pages, uncorrected proofs, \$24.95. ISBN 0-451-52902-2

In the Presence of Mine Enemies is Turtledove's exploration of one of the most popular of alternate history what-if's: what would the world be like if the Nazis had won World War Two? As such, this is a dystopian novel, set in Berlin, in 2010, in a harrowing and relentlessly grim and depressing future. The Germanic Empire dominates the world "stretching from England deep into Siberia and India." France, the United States, and Canada are occupied territory, and the Italians have an empire "around the Mediterranean." Only the Empire of Japan, "with Southeast Asia, China, the islands of the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, and Australia, came anywhere close to matching the Germanic Empire in size" (26).

In what now seems to be typical Turtledove fashion, the novel is structured as a linked series of oftentimes connecting and chronological narratives, focusing on the lives of various individuals and their families. Unlike previous novels, there are no famous personalities here—perhaps because by 2010, those the contemporary reader would recognize are dead or too old to be in power. But, unlike what Turtledove often does, there is no cross-section of German society. Instead, the protagonists of *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* are just that: a tiny remnant of Jews in Berlin, a handful of families, who have somehow managed to survive World War Two and the subsequent horrors and World War Three (fought in the 1960's with the United States).

They, of course, live lives of constant secrecy and desperation in a culture in which they are almost uniformly damned. They have to send their children to schools where it is a matter of course that their children are taught "Jews were filthy and wicked and diseased and racially impure. That's why the wise Reich got rid of them" (13). It is the telling of one child, ten-year-old Alicia Gimpel, of her true heritage that opens the novel. This is a ritual fraught with fear and great risk, yet essential to their survival. The children must know, they must carry on, yet even a casual remark could result in the entire family's extermination. As Alicia's father, Heinrich Gimpel, tells her, "If anyone learns you're a Jew, the *Einsatzkommandos* will come for you, and for your sisters, and for your mother and me . . . and after that, probably for other people, too" (13-14). Some day, her uncle Walther tells her, "we can be safe living openly as what we are. Maybe. Till then, we go on" (14). The novel is the story of one year of "going on," until Alicia's next sister is told when she becomes ten.

World War Two is a favorite for Turtledove to explore in alternate versions. His *WorldWar* and *Colonization* series focuses on an alien invasion interrupting the war and the aftermath of this interruption. The Reich survives. His *Great War* and *American Empire* series are leading up to an alternate Reich, a ultra-racist Confederacy setting up camps in Louisiana and other places. *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* clearly fits into Turtledove's oeuvre, with his usual close attention to detail, which

adds a richness and verisimilitude to the alternate worlds he is creating. The novel also joins the ranks of the many Axis victory alternate histories, such as Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and Robert Harris' *Fatherland*, among others. What Turtledove does that is uncommon is, to the best of my knowledge, that he examines one of these dark alternate futures from the personal perspective of ordinary Jews.

Any instructor teaching a course focusing on Turtledove or on alternate history would do well to consider adding *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* to the reading list. If the course focused on dystopias, this novel would also be a good fit. I can easily see this novel being included in a course on the Holocaust. Is it the masterpiece one critic said earlier that he was waiting for Turtledove to write? I don't know—probably not—but it's worth considering.

FICTION REVIEW

The Thackery T. Lambshead Pocket Guide to Eccentric and Discredited Diseases

Michael M. Levy

VanderMeer, Jeff and Mark Roberts. *The Thackery T. Lambshead Pocket Guide to Eccentric and Discredited Diseases*. San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 1993. 286 pages, \$24.00 ISBN 1-892389-53-3

Working with one of his numerous co-conspirators, the talented and prolific VanderMeer, author of the short story collection *City of Saints and Madmen* and the novel *Veniss Underground* (and co-editor of the World Fantasy Award-winning *Leviathan* anthology series) has here created what may well be the oddest and most narrowly-defined theme anthology in the history of fantasy literature. This heavily-illustrated volume does exactly what its title implies, collecting a series of short, fictional medical descriptions of eccentric and discredited diseases, most of them rather humorous, some of them thoroughly disgusting. Among the diseases recounted here are Ballistic Organ Syndrome, Delusions of Universal Grandeur, Razornail Bone Rot, Hsing's Spontaneous Self-Flaying Sarcoma, Post-Traumatic Placebosis, Reverse Pinocchio Syndrome, Third Eye Infection, Ouroborean Lordosis, and Diseasemaker's Croup. Each disease is given a carefully laid out history, a list of symptoms, and suggestions for curing it (although many of them seem to be invariably fatal and a number of the diseases seem to afflict the experts who are writing about them).

The Thackery T. Lambshead of the title, a sort of medical Indiana Jones, supposedly published the first edition of the Pocket Guide more than eighty years ago, based on his own research in obscure and out-of-the-way places, and the book also includes a series of short "essays" outlining his many outrageous adventures. The volume's own rather outrageous list of contributing authors, nearly seventy strong, includes such illustrious medical personnel as Neil Gaiman, Michael Moorcock, Alan Moore, China Miéville, Michael Bishop, Gahan Wilson, Kage Baker, L. Timmel Duchamp, Jeffrey Ford, Cory Doctorow, David Langford, Rachel Pollack and Brian Stableford. Although occasionally uneven, this is, on the whole, an amazing book. Not for the faint of heart, the easily shocked, or those who see fantasy literature primarily in terms of warlike-elves and interminable quests, VanderMeer's anthology plays a variety of delicious post-modernist games that are sure to delight the discerning (and slightly warped) reader.

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SFRA Executive Committee

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#120 Budgell Terrace
Toronto, ON M6S 1B4, Canada
pbrigg@uoguelph.ca

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239 Broadway St.
Eau Claire, WI 54703-5553
bogstajm@uwec.edu

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2111 Cowan Blvd. #16C
Fredericksburg, VA 22401-1076
wrochell@mwc.edu

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Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Dave.Mead@iris.tamucc.edu

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Department of English
University of Wisconsin—Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
levym@uwstout.edu

