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Science Fiction and Fantasy Female Writers (SF-FFW) has announced the creation of the Roots of Writing Award, recognizing seven influential women in the field of science fiction and fantasy: Betty Ballantine, Madeleine L'Engle, Anne McCaffrey, Ursula K. Le Guin, Kate Wilhelm, Joanna Russ, and Andre Norton.

The 2005 Arthur C. Clarke Award was awarded to China Miéville for Iron Council.


Editor's Message

Christine Mains

Oh dear. I’m going to sound like a broken record, aren’t I? But yes, once again, my editorial message can be summed up in four words: Get those reviews in. Oh, wait, five: Get those reviews in, please.

This time around, the delay in receiving reviews has affected our ability to get the SFRA Review out on time. We’re about a month late, which means it’s likely that this issue won’t reach you before you’re on your way to Las Vegas. We’d really hate to make a habit of this, but there’s not much we can do without the content, and for that, we need you.

In addition to the reviews, we have a couple of special features in this issue. First up is a group of reviews on C.J. Cherryh: a nonfiction review of Ed Carmien's anthology The Cherryh Odyssey followed by two fiction reviews of Cherryh's Destroyer. We also have a brief excerpt from a study guide to Robert Silverberg's The World Inside, provided by Rich Erlich. Due to space considerations, we’ve included only part of this extensive guide, and we’ve had to do some reformatting, but we’d like to thank Rich for contributing to our attempt to revive the feature “Approaches to Teaching.” In the last issue, Margaret McBride provided a similar guide to Ursula Le Guin’s Lathe of Heaven. We very much appreciate receiving these guides, and would like to encourage other SFRA members to go through their files and see what they have to share in regards to teaching SF texts.

President’s Message

Dave Mead

The Annual Meeting of the SFRA is coming up soon (I write this in early April) and as Co-Chair of this gathering, with Peter Lowentrout, it is much on my mind.

We will have a wonderful guest-list in Las Vegas. For the first time in many years, our long-time member and Pilgrim Award winner Ursula K. Le Guin will attend. She has generously volunteered to participate in a number of panels, readings, and discussions, although she declines to make any formal presentation or speech. While Ms. Le Guin is our Distinguished Author Guest, a number of other distinguished authors will be joining us also. Not only will John Barnes, Kij Johnson, and Tim Powers participate, but recently we have learned that Joan Slonczewski, Elizabeth Bear, and Stephen Brust will also participate. It should be a wonderful three days, and a great opportunity to learn from and about our guest writers.

We are also very pleased that the annual awards banquet will honor a number of very worthy scholar-teachers. Our Pilgrim Award recipient is the distinguished French scholar-critic-author Gerard Klein. We are all hoping that Mr. Klein will be present to receive his award in person. Lisa Yaszek will receive the Pioneer Award, Bruce Beatie will receive the Mary Kay Bray Award, and my dear friend and mentor Muriel Becker will be honored with the Thomas D. Clareson Award. It should be a great evening.

Peter and I have been planning/hoping for about a hundred registrants. The program is developing nicely, although there is always room for a few last-minute additions. Of course, we are eager to have lots of papers about all our guests.

Long-time member Ron Larson – of Red Dragon Books in San Fran-
informative and entertaining event. Perhaps drink and eat. We’re still working on that.

conference, there will be a conference suite, where the elite may meet and greet. And during the conference, there will be a conference suite, where the elite may meet and greet. And perhaps drink and eat. We’re still working on that.

I hope to see you at the annual meeting. It should be a very interesting, informative and entertaining event.

NONFICTION REVIEW
Ray Bradbury
Neil Barron


If a representative poll were taken of book readers asking them to name SF authors, it’s likely that Ray Bradbury (1920–) would be, if not the most frequently mentioned, certainly among the top three. The Martian Chronicles (1950), synthesized from many earlier pulp magazine stories, has been a steady seller for more than half a century. His appeal extends well beyond the SF field. Not surprisingly, he has been the subject of a number of books, most recently Ray Bradbury: The Life of Fiction by Jonathan R. Eller and William F. Toupance, both English professors at Indiana University (Kent State UP, 2004, xxxi + 510 p.) and detailed study, is to explain the evolution of Bradbury’s fiction by examining successive versions of his stories and books (including many unpublished works), and to show how he moved from the marginal field of SF to the literary mainstream. The authors use the carnival, in the broadest sense, as an explanatory metaphor intrinsic to much of Bradbury’s fiction, poetry and other writings. Myths and masks are also important elements in their analysis, which begins with 1947’s Dark Carnival, known to most in its revised version as The October Country, 1955. One of the eight chapters devotes to his four crime novels. A 78-page appendix provides a listing, 1938-2003, of his published books (100+), individual stories (400+), plays, etc., citing both their original appearances and many reprints. A second appendix lists typescripts of his many unpublished works, long and short. Notes, a selected bibliography and an index complete the study, which will be valuable for serious students of Bradbury. Public libraries should select based on likely reader interest, but many will judge this too scholarly. A good alternative choice, although a bit dated, is David Mogen’s Ray Bradbury (Twayne, 1986). Jerry Weist’s lightweight survey, Ray Bradbury: An Illustrated Life (Morrow, 2002) may suffice.

As Bradbury’s popularity and appeal widened, he was the subject of an increasing number of interviews, 21 of which are collected in Conversations with Ray Bradbury, ed. by Steven L. Aggelis (UP of Mississippi, 2004, xxxvi + 208 p, $48 cloth, $20 trade paper). Aggelis says he has a list of 335 interviews, an emphatic
The 2006 Nebula Weekend will be held in Tempe, Arizona at the Tempe Mission Palms, May 4-7.

A European version of the venerable Clarion Writers Workshop is set to begin in 2007. Pat Cadigan, Liz Holliday, Leslie Howie, Gwyneth Jones, Farah Mendlesohn, Justina Robson, and Geoff Ryman are working to create the branch of the workshop which was begun by Damon Knight in 1968.

Amy and Gary Bennett of Philadelphia have announced that they are donating an extensive collection of science fiction magazines dating back to the 1940s to the J.Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas.

The third annual Robert A. Heinlein Award, recognizing published work in hard SF or technical writings, will be presented to Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle at CascadiaCon, this year’s NASFiC, in Seattle on September 4.

The winner of this year’s Philip K. Dick Award was announced at Norwescon. The winner is Gwyneth Jones for the novel Life. A special citation was awarded to Lyda Morehouse for Apocalypse Array. The 2005 judges are Charles Coleman Finlay, Kay Kenyon, Robert A. Metzger, Lyda Morehouse, and Graham J. Murphy (chair).

The British Science Fiction Awards were presented at Eastercon. These awards are presented for works published in the United Kingdom and are voted on by the membership of Eastercon. Best Novel: River of Gods, by Ian McDonald. Best Short Fiction: “Mayflower II,” by Stephen Baxter.

measure of Bradbury’s mainstream status. His selection is balanced and minimally repetitive, with Bradbury often providing multiple perspectives on the same work when questioned. The interviews are arranged chronologically from 1948, the year after the publication of his first book, to a concluding conversation with the editor in October 2002. The interviews range from two pages to the lengthiest, 20 pages (and one of the best) by Ken Kelley in the May 1996 Playboy. Collectively they cover Bradbury’s short fiction, novels, plays, and film, radio and music adaptations. A four-part bibliography of published books begins the book, followed by a balanced introduction by the editor, which includes brief quotes from many of the interviews. A useful ten-page chronology is followed by the “conversations” and an index. More readable and accessible than the Kent State study, this is a good choice for most public libraries.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Gene Wolfe

Dave Samuelson


James Gunn once opined that writers who vary their methods to suit each piece we call storytellers, while writers perpetually obsessed with the same material we call artists. I have always seen this as a simplistic categorization, though Gunn may not have meant to ignore both craft and literary politics. It has, however, enabled some SF critics to pin the label on Philip K. Dick, a pulpy prose stylist whose often monotonous recitations of his central themes has won plaudits from those who share some of his political concerns. The artist label may more successfully adhere to Gene Wolfe, whose strategies and style are more elegant and varied, and whose subject matter, though equally obsessive, is considerably less overt.

Wolfe won admirers in the science fiction community even before his obsessions grew progressively more insistent in his five-volume tetralogy, The Book of the New Sun, and its multiple successors. Unlike Dick’s work, Wolfe’s resists simple interpretation; the very opacity of his narratives has generated considerable industry as well as controversy, as the two books under review illustrate. Peter Wright provides a very useful introduction to Wolfe’s work, centering on the tetralogy and using its antecedents and successors more or less as keys to unlock its nihilism. Less ambitious, perhaps, but more intense, Robert Borski is considerably more speculative in his interpretations. What neither entertains is the possibility that the clothes are not the emperor, i.e., that mystification and design in themselves are not enough. SF critics, even from the halls of academe, regularly strive to make silk purses of sow’s ears, conferring greatness or superiority on objectively modest accomplishments.

Wright’s coherent study explores Wolfe’s short fiction as parables to showcase his propensity for puzzle-making which embodies a central idea: the inescapable isolation of subjectivity makes humans easy to manipulate. Based on previously published responses to Wolfe’s work, his readers may be as susceptible as his characters, unable to escape several levels of traps set for them, however much Wolfe may hope for them to escape his labyrinths, while admiring them and their creator.
Previous reviewers have succumbed to his manipulation of their expectations of simple continuity, generic formulas, and both mythological and metafictional conventions, according to Wright. Misleading allusions generate blind alleys, as in a computer game; apparently mastering one level, they typically are foiled on another.

Readers concerned with continuity may drop out early in the quest for understanding, but keep reading for sheer suspense, as an often fascinating succession of events and characters continually turns in, on and into each other. Generic confusion results from actions and diction highly reminiscent of fantasy, though given a covert science fictional rationalization, which Wright admits is often no more than pseudo-science and pseudo-history. More sophisticated readers may be disarmed by familiar literary techniques, accepting more or less at face value the ostensible autobiography of Severian, a first-person narrator with an eidetic memory, presenting himself as a monomythic hero. Chosen by aliens (the Hierodules), however, for his inability to analyze his adventures and surmount their cover story, Severian seems to have been originally a non-human, who was killed and reconstructed twice. Moreover, he is ostensibly trying to retell a tale lost for at least ten years, which in turn may have been invented for him by a character within his own narrative—as reported by an editor of this manuscript who exists eons in his past. In other words, at the outside (pointedly not the outset) of Severian’s narration, Wolfe offers a number of clues not to take it literally.

Wright sees Wolfe’s protagonist as self-deluded about his memory, his abilities, and his understanding of what goes on around him. Singularly gullible and incunous, he follows a circuitous path predestined by the aliens, whose superior technology is responsible for the apparent magic in his environment far in our future, and whose continuation as a species depends on their finding someone like Severian they can manipulate into acts of representation and propagation he virtually never understands. Severian’s role might be compared to that of Siegfried in Wagner’s Ring Cycle who was conceived and bred so that his heroic acts might rescue the gods who created and nurtured him. Although the incestuous interaction with humans is self-defeating for the German gods, Severian holds that in his case it succeeds, at least for the aliens. Human beings on this far future Earth undergo a cataclysm when Severian’s quest apparently succeeds in replacing our dying sun with a new one. Severian’s identification with the sun (and the Son of Christian myth) apparently clouds his judgment.

To the discerning reader, Severian’s solipsism, the dream-like events, landscapes, and timescapes of his narration; and its perpetually shifting and interpenetrating characters are all products of the manipulating author ostensibly outside the narration. This equation is not peculiar to Wolfe’s work, of course; it is objectively true of any work of fiction and even non-fiction. Wright derives his interpretation largely from the fifth book’s role as a coda to the tetralogy which in many ways contradicts Severian’s interpretations in the first four volumes; from directing a skeptical eye at Severian’s claims; and from his own concise summaries of seven (or eight) sequels to the tetralogy, restating its premises in progressively simpler terms. Not having read the sequels puts me at a disadvantage, but Wright’s readings of what I have read carry an air of authenticity.

His interpretation is ingenious if inevitably incomplete, accounting for many if not all the multifarious loose ends puzzled over by his predecessors. Just as fantasy elements supposedly resolve into science fiction when seen from a wider perspective, he sees sophisticated devices such as metafiction, autobiography, Roman Catholic allegory, and Campbellian monomyth as subterfuges for the story’s essential concern (like that of virtually all Wolfe’s fiction) with the human inadequacy to interpret reality. Perhaps theological at a higher level (God works in
The William L. Crawford Award for best new fantasy author was presented to Steph Swainston for the novel *The Year of Our War*.

The IAFA Distinguished Scholarship Award went to Damien Broderick.

The Lord Ruthven Assembly presented its annual award to David Sosnowski for his novel *Vamped*.

This year’s James Tiptree Award, named for the nom de plume of Alice Sheldon and given to science fiction or fantasy that expands or explores our understanding of gender, went to Joe Haldeman for *Camouflage* and Johanna Sinisalo for her novel *Troll: A Love Story*.

The winner of the Mary Kay Bray Award for 2004 is Bruce A. Beatie for his review of L. Frank Baum, Creator of Oz by Katharine M. Rogers in *Ap/May/June 2004 SFRA Review*.

The Pilgrim Award Committee (Veronica Hollinger, Andy Sawyer, and David Hartwell) has selected Gérard Klein of Paris, France, as the Pilgrim Award recipient for 2005.


Muriel Becker is the recipient of the Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service for 2005. She will receive her award at the annual meeting of the SFRA in Las Vegas in June.
Both Wolfe and his interpreters seem convinced by the example of Joyce that making scholars work hard for understanding confers literary stature, but this is a fallacy of imitative form. Just because sf critics get together at conferences doesn’t turn the Science Fiction Research Association into the Modern Language Association. Like Joyce, Wolfe has offered hints, often misleading, to critics lost in his labyrinth. Joyce did so mainly in interviews and in judicious suggestions to disciples like Stuart Gilbert, Frank Budgeon, and Samuel Beckett. Wolfe has also dropped hints in interviews, as well in other acknowledged fiction and non-fiction, contemporary and subsequent, and of varying lengths, some of them collected in a book of oddments, The Castle of the Otter. Wright and Borski call attention to the systematic planning that went into Wolfe’s tetralogy and the ingenious depths to which the author goes both to deceive and (ultimately, they say) to play fair with the reader. But neither the ingenious planning (and sheer chance) that went into Finnegans Wake, nor professors’ progress in unravelling it makes it a great book (having laborediously studied the entire thing, I can now in fact actually read some pages with enjoyment, not having to consult a dozen resources every time).

Wolfe’s fiction provides little understanding of human behavior (Sevenan, the only character with any depth, is a virtual basket case) and none at all of the behavior of aliens and monsters, whether they are said to live backwards or forwards in time relative to us. He may of course provide us with some idea about how his own mind works as well as those of fantasy and science fiction readers who thrive on intellectual puzzles, but I suspect that is something we “always already” knew, as the poststructuralists like to say.

It may matter only to purists, moreover, but categorizing Wolfe’s work as science fiction as Wright does (Borski is more noncommittal) is problematic to anyone unwilling to grant semi-divine powers to alien beings or Humpty Dumpty-like semantic manipulations to the author (“A word means what I want it to mean, no more and no less”). Yes, there seem to be technological relics treated as sacred, biological regression as the sun cools, and “scientific” reasons even the Hierodules can not explain (sometimes because they are above Severian’s understanding, or because the aliens are as usual seeking to deceive him.). Clarke’s Third Law (“any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic”) may be a measure of human misunderstanding, but its invocation is a stroke of mystification, speciously pretending to “explain” apparent violations of what we count as physical laws of the universe. Wolfe never does “explain” in scientific terms bodily resurrection (with minimal decay), extreme longevity, personality ingestion, apparently random time travel, or moving a star at faster-than-light speeds over incalculable distances so as to rekindle life on a third rate planet whose sun is failing.

If Borski’s industry outweighs his achievement, Wright’s prodigious labors may have undermined their reason for being. Attendees at a Mythopoeic Society conference once objected to my declaring Charles Williams (virtually a saint in their pantheon) a very literate writer of pulp fiction. Wright contributes to my judgment of Wolfe as not far from that mark. His prose is serviceable (hardly even that in the fifth book of the New Sun series), his stories race, his puzzles mystify, his use of antique diction and symbolic images evoke a “sense of wonder” which may be nostalgia for a simpler time. If a writer’s reputation rests primarily on his ability to mystify and the scholars turn the mysteries into the mundane, however, what’s left?
There can be no question that writers of speculative fiction, and their compatriots, writers of SF criticism, have had to struggle for what little respect they have earned in a world where the literati prefer “realistic” fiction. Any hint of the fantastic is often deemed trite, populist and unworthy of consideration. (One need only consider the number of so-called “literary magazines” that will not even consider works that entertain SF themes.) It is this prejudice that Martin, whose previous books have included fantasy fiction and literary criticism, takes to task in An Inquiry into the Purposes of Speculative Fiction. In a series of semi-independent essays, Martin explores the ways SF offers more insight than realism into the human condition through its examination of the supernatural. Utilizing a method reminiscent of Frazer and the comparative school of mythopoesis, Martin discusses narratives as diverse as the Protean myth, Kipling and Stanislaw Lem. His interpretations are, at moments, insightful and poetic. However, his execution falls somewhat short of his ostentatious purpose. Overall, the book lacks a strong theoretical basis for unifying his diverse treatments. The result is a scattering of valuable insights that, chapter by chapter, fall short of a convincing analysis of the relationship between SF and truth.

Excluding the Foreword and Afterword, the book is divided into thirteen chapters covering an impressive range of topics, several of which are only peripherally related to speculative fiction. The first four chapters focus on myths and folktales with the remainder of the book treating a variety of (primarily) lesser-known works of speculative fiction with several broader treatments interspersed in between. In the Foreword, Martin introduces the unwieldy term “Ultrafiction,” which he does not develop in any detail later in the book. Though he briefly defines this term as “the freeing of the imagination from the last trammels of realism” (xii), he does not explain the use of “ultra” in this term. In a field already littered with too much technobabble, I am certain that critics do not need a new rubric to argue over. Moreover, Martin continues to use the abbreviation FF (fantastic fiction) as his term of choice throughout most of the book. Further, in the several chapters where Martin discusses utopia and dystopia, he substitutes the terms kalotopia (beautiful place) and kakotopia (bad place) for the long-accepted fantastic fiction as his term of choice. He even makes the suggestion that SF is “hyperfiction” instead of “ultrafiction.”

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Part of the challenge for Martin comes from the very diversity of his subject. Some of the narratives he covers are certainly little-known to a number of his readers, and fall outside of the common SF canon (if the collections by James Gunn and others are to be believed). For example, he treats in some depth several fantasists who write in French—Jan Potocki, Jean Ricardou and Jules Supervielle—in addition to covering Lem, Kipling and tales from The Arabian Nights. Martin should certainly be commended for the universe of knowledge from which he
draws his analyses. While such diversity, in and of itself, is not a flaw, it has caused the author to spill a considerable amount of ink, often the greater balance of his chapters, summarizing the works in question for his readers. Martin also has a tendency to quote copiously, which leaves him little room to develop his analyses in significant detail.

This being said, several of his chapters deserve close attention. When Martin does allow himself to theorize and draw conclusions from the works he puts before the reader, he does so well. The stronger essays appear in the last third of the book where he discusses utopia, dystopia, the concept of awe, and the depths of the human imagination as they are rendered in speculative fiction. In spite of this, it is not until the Afterword that he makes the clearest statement of his purpose:

FF cannot be understood unless it is seen as referring multifariously, very much as poetry does, relating to a whole range of possible experiences. Thus, compared with 'realist' fictions, FF relates to reality in more ways than they do, and 'refers' to the world in a less reductive, more comprehensive manner.

The function of FF and SF is to stimulate the mind to new understanding, not to rehearse the already known. That it revolves in a world of imaginary or speculative events is no objection to its having a bearing on truth. (262)

If Martin’s purpose is to allow texts to speak for themselves and reflect loosely on this theme, then he has accomplished his purpose. If, however, he seeks to validate this thesis in a more proactive way, then he has not. While certain essays are valuable for introducing mythic patterns and lesser-known works of SF, it is not the best book to read to gain an understanding of the relationship between fantasy and the world-at-large.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Projections

Tom Morrissey


Anthologies of criticism—academic or otherwise—present a special difficulty to a reviewer. Since such works are, by definition, a collection of self-contained parts, it is difficult to give attention to all of the contributions in the space of a short review. That difficulty is compounded when the anthology itself does not take its own announced boundaries seriously. Does a reviewer ignore strong contributions simply because he can’t understand how they relate to the anthology as a whole? Since even critical reviews should help books find their audience, should it matter that a collection featuring several strong articles doesn’t really function as a coherent whole if that collection would nevertheless find readers?

Projections: Science Fiction in Literature and Film presents such challenges. Editor Lou Anders has assembled a very readable book, but this should not surprise anyone who glances through the contributor biographies in the back. Nebula and Hugo winners like Robert Silverberg and David Brin abound, and every single essayist has published novel-length fiction. Yet while there is much readerly pleasure here, there is little global coherence, despite Anders’ annoying decision to number all the footnotes in the text consecutively. The vaguely aca-
WHAT: Open to View: Popular Fiction and Visual Narrative
WHEN: Nov. 19-20, 2005
WHERE: Dean Walters Building, Liverpool John Moores University.
TOPICS: The 12th Annual Conference of the Association for Research in Popular Fiction calls for papers in the area of Popular Fiction and Visual Narrative. Topics might include: book covers and illustration, animation, the graphic novel, cartoons, CGI, film and television, magazines, narrative documentary, websites and narrative, public monuments, museums, exhibition and display, comics, photography, drama, fashion, visual narrative and genre. Papers considering popular fiction in any media or historical period are welcome.
CONTACT: Nickianne Moody, <N.A.Moody@livjm.ac.uk>
DEADLINE: Aug. 1, 2005
INFO: <www.arpf.org.uk>

WHAT: Brigham Young University’s annual Smith Symposium
WHEN: Feb. 16-18, 2006
WHERE: Provo, Utah
INFO: <http://members.aol.com/ltue42>

WHAT: Edited Volume on Intelligence in Popular Television
TOPICS: The focus is on representations of intelligence in popular television. The book has the interest of a publisher. The book addresses the issue of the constructions of intelligence and intellectuality in popular television and the social/cultural implications of those constructions. Papers might focus on constructions of intelligence and intellectuality in various forms including professors and teachers, classrooms and schooling, scientists, individuals with advanced degrees, distinctions made between “book smarts” and “street smarts,” advanced degrees, distinctions made between “book smarts” and “street smarts,” and teachers, classrooms and schools.

The weaker essays, though entertaining reads, suffer from a tendency either to present a catalog of film and fiction titles without giving much analysis, as does James E. Gunn’s “The Tinsel Screen,” or to make provocative yet unsupported assertions. An example of the second vice can be found in Brin’s “Achilles, Superman, and Darth Vader, Or Why Star Wars Has It in for Our Rebel Civilization.” In this essay Brin asserts that “plenty of evidence shows that George Lucas hates a civilization that’s been very good to him” (35) and then fails to provide any of that evidence. This kind of hyperbole is often found in articles written for online magazines like Salon.com, where this piece was initially published, but it seems oddly petulant when appearing in a print anthology with a pretentious title. This tone is especially unfortunate since Brin does much to advance his thesis that there are crypto-facist overtones in the Star Wars films.

There are also several very short pieces that fit within the thematic bounds that the title lays out, but do not reach the level of rigor or depth of treatment usually seen in anthologies of serious criticism. For example, Lucius Shepard’s “eXcreMENt” is a review of the film X-Men, not a critical essay. In other words, it’s the type of writing about film designed to help someone decide whether or not to go and see a particular film, and it is therefore difficult to understand why it would be anthologized outside of a casebook of criticism focusing on X-Men. Proof of this comes in Shepard’s conclusion, which compares X-Men to other commodities. Employing a pizza metaphor, Shepard tells his readers that the “film is not a top-of-the-line pie” neither “the slimy cardboard with orange sauce” sold by street vendors, so if they “need a nosh, hey, go for it” (245). One could make much of the discrepancy between the title and the review’s conclusion—who noshes on excrement, after all?—but the real issue here is deciphering why such an explicitly ephemeral exercise merits preservation.

Many of the essays, however good or bad, fall outside the boundaries that the anthology’s title announces. Indeed, the most amusing essay in this collection is John Grant’s “Gulliver Unravels: Generic Fantasy and the Loss of Subversion.” Here, Grant bemoans the impact of “Dragonspume Chronicles of the Sorcerer Kingdom Ancients, or whatever bloated trilogy the publisher’s presses choose next to excrete into the toilet bowl of the book trade” (181) on a genre he sees as essentially subversive. Yet that genre is Fantasy, not Science Fiction, and Grant’s analysis does not breathe a word about film. Furthermore, as the quote above suggests, the essay spends a great deal of time dealing with how fiction is manufactured and marketed. Yet the term “literature” in the anthology’s title at least implies that the works of written and filmed Science Fiction will be treated as objects of art that have profound social and cultural meaning, not as products that need to be matched with the right consumers.

These market-based concerns recur frequently, however, and since all of the
Contributors to this anthology are working fiction writers, there is an insider quality to much of the discussion that may limit the appeal of the arguments being made. For example, in the essay “In Defense of Science Fiction,” John Clute speculates about the way the covers for Science Fiction novels are designed, wondering why “knowledge about the difference between a book and its cover” is not applied to the way Science Fiction is marketed. Clute asserts that writers in other popular genres, such as mystery writer P.D. James and spy novelist John Le Carre, see their works “slide ‘upmarket’ with some ease; and, without losing the allure of their genre underpinning, appeal to an audience that does not believe it dabbles in kids’ stuff” (26) because of the way their novels are packaged. I do not wish to take issue with the substance of Clute’s argument. But such mundane and invidious comparisons don’t really help critics understand the cultural importance of Science Fiction.

Yet despite the inevitable weak essays and lack of focus, this collection does have an audience, albeit a small one. Because of the anthology’s overall readability and breadth of subject matter, this would make a good addition to the hardcore fan’s library. Furthermore, the accessibility of the strong readings of literary or filmic Science Fiction would make it of interest for teachers looking for supplementary material for undergraduate courses. *Projections*, however, will not do much for scholars engaged in serious research.

**EDITORIALS**

**Cult Television**

Elyce Rae Helford


As a scholar whose publications center in “cult” texts but who never names them as such, I found Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson’s collection of interest for its goals of defining and exploring the cult television phenomenon. From chapters that theorize the meanings and uses of cult TV to those that celebrate it, *Cult Television* will provide a variety of types and levels of information and enjoyment for diverse (academic) readers. *Cult Television* begins with an editors’ introduction followed by two chapters invested in defining and mapping the contours of cult TV. Subsequent chapters take individual series or characters as case studies, sometimes developing from a specific thesis that uses the program as illustration rather than centering the chapter on the series itself.

Generally speaking, cult TV in this book is defined by the editors’ as a “metagene,” combining “[i]ntertextuality, metatextuality, ironic and/or surreal humor, eclecticism, pastiche, and self-referentiality […] to draw viewers into intense imaginative and interpretive engagement with the series” (Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson, “Introduction” xv). Such qualifications and qualities are discussed overtly in some chapters, left implied in others.

The editors also provide perhaps the best explanation I have read for why cult TV is so often genre TV, particularly science fiction and fantasy TV. They write, “These genres permit non-linear narratives that can go backward and sideways as well as forward, encompassing multiple time frames and settings to create a potentially infinitely large metatext and sometimes the seemingly infinite display of the resolution of narrative hemeneutics” (xii). Though other chapters affirm that the term “cult” can be applied to sitcoms and non-genre drama, the book definitely
WHAT: Collisions and Elisions: A Symposium on Popular Culture and the Literary
WHEN: Oct 14-15 2005
WHERE: University of Wisconsin-Madison
TOPICS: two-day symposium exploring the relationship between popular culture and the literary. This year’s symposium aims to bring together these oft-divided categories to examine questions of gender, race, politics, and history. We are particularly interested in papers that examine how popular culture and the literary have informed each other through both violent collisions and subversive absorptions. We invite participants who explore these categories to challenge and reorient the borders drawn between them. The Symposium Planning Committee welcomes papers from all literary periods (medieval through the 21st century) and encourages interdisciplinary, cross-medium approaches in keeping with the objectives outlined above. Julian Wolfreys is the keynote speaker. Panels will be organized by thematic similarity, and may include papers pertaining to diverse locations, literary periods, and genres. Each panel will include two graduate students and one professor. Travel assistance for students may be available.
CONTACT: Rachel Miller <rsmiller1@wisc.edu> (please use subject line “Popular Culture Conference Proposal.”
DEADLINE: June 15, 2005

WHAT: Neal Stephenson panel
WHO: 20th-Century Literature & Culture Conference
WHERE: University of Louisville
TOPICS: Of particular interest are responses to the recently published centers in science fiction examples.

Several chapters develop useful related concepts, including David A. Black’s notion of charactor, “a character that is particularly resistant to abstraction from a given actor” (106) and Sara Gwenllian-Jones’ discussion of the cult TV metatext as today’s best realization of virtual reality.

For those more interested in content studies, the book offers Petra Kuppers’ exploration of Babylon 5 as “quality” television, Karen Backstein on race representation in The X-Files, Mary Hammond on European/American distinctions in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and two chapters on The Avengers (David A. Black on the translation of Emma Peel from original series to film and Toby Miller on avid original series fans). Least satisfying for me are chapters that seem primarily to celebrate a program, character, or cult TV actor (e.g. Petra Kuppers on Babylon 5 and Roberta E. Pearson on Patrick Stewart).

More engaging is the nod to cult TV life beyond the U.S. and England in Eva Vieth’s work on the German “Star Trek-like” series Raumpatrouille Orion. I cannot equally praise French scholar Philippe Le Guern’s dense theoretical treatise on defining “cult.” This exercise in high theory strays far from focus on television, and the discourse is sometimes so dense as to be incomprehensible (though this may in part be a problem of translation from the original French). If the collection truly intends to be international, I must wonder where Japanese cult TV is (or even western fandom that renders Japanese animated series into cult TV metatext), for example.

For me, most compelling are those chapters that use a series to explore larger, more significant questions, particularly those that challenge taken-for-granted perspectives on cult TV fandom. Engaging and well written is Alan McKee’s investigation through Doctor Who fandom of oversimplified oppositions between “production” and “consumption” within media fan criticism (such as the work of Henry Jenkins and Constance Penley).

The best chapter in the book, however, has to be Mark Jancovich and Nathan Hunt’s work on defining cult TV. Not only do they draw useful distinctions between cult film and cult television, but they also explore conflicts within fandom, argue that media texts invite rather than shun fan interventions, and propose that academic and fan discourses share similar middle-class, educated perspectives and goals. Outing the ways in which fans try to “legitimate themselves” via the academic and contemporary academics “establish themselves” through studies of fandom (41)—notably within a book where such interdependence can be found in a number of chapters—resonates powerfully. (Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson deserve praise for their provocative editing decision to include the chapter.)

In conclusion, there is something here to please and annoy every SF TV critic. While I wish there were more rich, compelling studies like McKee’s and Jancovich/Hunt’s, others will likely relish the fannish gush of Kuppers or the theoretical babble of Le Guern. The book is worth having for all SF TV scholars, in any case.

NONFICTION REVIEW
More Matrix and Philosophy
Richard D. Erlich


This anthology is number 11 in the series Popular Culture and Philoso-
Baroque Cycle, but the panel will not necessarily be limited to these works. Other potential areas of interest: Virtual worlds, “Virtual” histories, War and violence, Cyberpunk and post-cyberpunk, Digital computers and technology, Stephenson’s place in the contemporary canon.

CONTACT: Please send a one-page abstract or completed 20 minute paper as a Word attachment or in-line text to Jonathan Lewis <jon.lewis@uncp.edu>
INFO: <www.louisville.edu/a-s/cml/xxconf/index.html>

WHAT: A book, On Joanna Russ
WHO: Farah Mendlesohn
TOPICS: This is a re-opening of a call for papers on the work of Joanna Russ. The current state of the project is that all the spaces for essays on Russ’s critical work have been filled. I am looking for up to six papers on Joanna Russ’s fiction, each of between six and seven thousand words long.
CONTACT: farah.sf@gmail.com

More Matrix and Philosophy offers a brief introduction, sixteen essays, an edited selection from “The Book of the Machines” from Samuel Butler’s Erewhon (1872), a list of contributors, and an index. The index is serviceable; citations are by footnotes of varying density (from some to none); there is no Works Cited. The essays are divided into four “scenes”: “The Sequels: Suck-Fest or Success?”; “A Splinter in Your Mind: Freedom and Reality”; “Global Philosophy Unplugged”; and “We’re Not Living in Zion: Social and Political Issues in The Matrix.” The list of contributors is called “The Merovingian’s Minions,” and each entry ends with a comic one-liner; the index is called “The Keymaker’s Index.” Irwin et al. are trying to make philosophy fun, but they cut no slack on the trilogy itself: readers are required to know who the Merovingian and the Keymaker are, in addition to far less memorable characters.

Unsurprisingly, the essays vary in quality. Jorge J.E. Garcia and Irwin’s “Race Matters in The Matrix: Is Morphheus Black? Is Race Real?” is beautifully pitched for US undergraduates; more sophisticated and cosmopolitan readers might find it parochial, basic, and overly didactic. Irwin’s solo piece, “The Matrix of Control: Why The Matrix Still Has Us,” says some good things about sequels and some positive things about Stoicism (seen as almost Daoist in valuing the action of water [22]), a philosophy attacked in a later essay; Irwin also comments on The Animatrix—an anthology of Matrix-based animations that gets too little coverage here—and insightfully applies to The Matrix trilogy some of Krishna’s teachings in the Bhagavad-Gita (23). Irwin then sermonizes on the text “Cast Off the Fruit of Action” and adjures us to abjure consumer culture—good advice, but heavy-handed: something an editor should tone down. Irwin’s other editorial failure is with what could have been a fine essay: Slavoj Zizek’s “Reloaded Revolutions.” This is the most Theoretically-involved of the essays, and in some ways the most politically daring, relating the inconsistencies in the trilogy to current problems on the international Left: “If The Matrix: Revolutions were to succeed, it would have to produce nothing less than the appropriate answer to the dilemmas of revolutionary politics today […]” (206). Zizek also does good critical readings of the possible realities in the Matrix series. However, the essay is part of what one Americanist calls the European tradition of not revising, certainly not revising for clarity or appropriateness for an audience, not an in-group. Zizek assumes his readers know that “Lacanian” refers to Jacques Lacan, and what a reference to “Deleuzian” means. He also either assumes readers know the rat imagery for Jews in Nazi propaganda such as The Eternal Jew (film 1940), or he doesn’t care if he sounds like a bigot in describing Agent Smith as “a proto-Jewish figure, an obscene intruder who multiplies like rats […]” (207). Or, Zizek is a bigot, and Irwin didn’t call him on it. (The index does catch the Jacques Lacan reference but misses Gilles Deleuze.)

Most useful in the anthology are the essays interpreting the Matrix films through Hindu Vedanta philosophy and the cosmological journey in neo-Platonic Islamic tradition. The Vedanta reading by Anna Lännström explicates the train station as a liminal space—and a Hindu reading generally is reinforced in Theodore Gracyk’s analysis of the music in the series: the music over the credits in
and for Neo’s death both have a choir singing “Sanskrit words from […] the Upanishads. […] ‘From darkness lead me to light / From death lead me to immortality’” (116), a text quoted also by Lännström (128). Idris Samawi Hamid’s “Islamic Matrix” helps us understand The Matrix’s variation on the three-part Journey of the Hero, and allows deeper insight into the meaning of the Architect and Oracle, and the mirror in the first film.

Insights on other characters in the films are offered by William Jaworski (on Morpheus, Lock, Hamann, Soren) and by Ben Withenington III (the “trinity” of Morpheus, Neo, and Trinity); and by Mark A. Wrathall, whose investigation of “[…] Schopenhauerian Pessimism, Nihilism, and Nietzschean Will to Power” allows him to present an excellent Nietzschean taxonomy of five major characters. And Theodore Schick, Jr., can use competing views of determinism to clarify “Choice, Purpose, and Understanding: Neo, the Merovingian, and the Oracle.”

James Lawler offers a low-key rhapsody on Love out of Plato’s Symposium and, along with the Wrathall essay, helps to analyze the Matrix series as a philosophical love story: “In Nietzschean terms, the love of Trinity becomes Neo’s ‘condition of preservation,’” where he defines “himself as the lover of Trinity,” whom he will save even at the cost of the human species ( Wrathall 63). And David Detmer can offer a view of different realities in The Matrix that turns out to be too simple when the mystic traditions enter into the analysis but still makes for stimulating reading: noting that the series both uses and differs from Jean Baudrillard, Detmer favors The Matrix. On philosophical grounds, “The Matrix thesis is vastly superior […]” Taking a nuts-and-bolts political approach, Henry Nardone and Gregory Bassham condemn the series for glorifying violence and making violence seem cool and fun. There are problems, but for a moralistic essay, “Pissin’ Metal: Columbine, Malvo, and the Matrix of Violence” is very well-written and entertaining.

Again, More Matrix and Philosophy is not the place to begin study of the Matrix series; it is a good book to move toward understanding what the Wachowski’s have attempted and why Reloaded and Revolutions are more success than “Suck-Fest.”

NONFICTION REVIEW

**Fantastic Literature**

*Ed McKnight*


For years I’ve been hoping that someone would put together a book like this one: a collection of historically-organized theoretical essays (beginning, of course, with Plato), similar to David Richter’s popular anthology The Critical Tradition, Vincent Leitch’s The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, or Hazard Adams’s aptly-named Critical Theory Since Plato, but one that focuses specifically on fantasy literature.

As useful and necessary as such a book might appear to be, it seems obvious why an editor might have misgivings about actually putting one together: any attempt to present a thorough yet balanced survey of the field must inevitably leave something out. Omit Freud’s essay on “The Uncanny” and the psychological critics will be dissatisfied; overlook Northrop Frye’s The Anatomy of Criticism and those who prefer a mythological approach will be unfulfilled; ignore Tzvetan Todorov’s The Fantastic and the structuralists will note the absence; disregard Fredric Jameson’s The Political Unconscious and the Marxists will rise up in protest.

If you do somehow succeed in including every important theorist from Aristotle to Harold Bloom, some of your readers are certain to ask: “Where are the fantasy writers themselves? Why haven’t you included the first-hand insights of such experienced authors as G.K. Chesterton, H.P Lovecraft, Italo Calvino, Damon Knight or China Miéville? And where is Ursula K. Le Guin’s illuminating essay ‘From Elfland to Poughkeepsie’?”

Astonishingly, David Sandner actually manages to include each of these critics, as well as twenty more, in less than four hundred pages. As Sandner writes in his introduction, “The collection mixes both brief and longer excerpts of critical works beside full essays, attempting to be inclusive rather than exclusive, opening dialogue wherever possible.” So within these covers Brian Attebery and Gary Wolfe can rub elbows (metaphorically, at least) with John Ruskin and Mikhail Bakhtin.

A few excerpts are tantalizingly brief, Aristotle’s Poetics is reduced to one page, and Damon Knight’s In Search of Wonder is represented by a single paragraph. I wondered why Sandner would even bother to include the latter until I read the line: “We live on a minute island of known things. Our undiminished wonder at the mystery which surrounds us is what makes us human.” On the whole, however, most of what Sandner omits from one critical work seems justified by what he is able to
include from another.

This desire for inclusiveness doesn't mean that Sandner himself is without an agenda, or at least an informed opinion, regarding the historical development of fantasy literature and literary criticism. That he definitely does is clear from the table of contents, which, after skipping directly from Plato and Aristotle to Renaissance author Philip Sidney's “Apology for Poetry”, takes an unexpected pit stop in the eighteenth century for the rather surprising contributions of Joseph Addison, Richard Hurd and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. After all, the Age of Enlightenment is not the literary era that springs immediately to mind when one thinks of fantasy criticism.

This becomes somewhat less surprising upon noticing that Sandner’s own contribution to the collection is entitled “Joseph Addison: The First Critic of the Fantastic,” and perfectly clear upon reading in Sandner’s introduction that this study “proposes a genealogy of the fantastic that seeks not to construct a teleological narrative of genre formation but to isolate an objective precondition for the fantastic in the eighteenth century.” Well, “perfectly clear” may be something of an overstatement for describing that particular pronouncement, but it is evident that Sandner is not simply paving a critical highway from Plato to *The Lord of the Rings*. (In fact, Tolkien’s famous essay “On Fairy-Stories” is probably the most notable absence from Sandner’s anthology). Instead, he brings a healthy eighteenth-century bias to the critical study of a genre that too many readers seem to assume didn’t even exist until the 1960s.

Most importantly, Sandner doesn’t simply dig up excerpts from mainstream criticism that can be applied to fantasy; he actually reverses the equation, demonstrating the significant role that fantastic literature has always played in the development of literary criticism itself. As Sandner states in the close of his introduction: “*Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader* proposes to bring together the different discourses of fantastic literature under one cover, reviewing important work already done by genre critics and writers, providing a necessary review of the work done by mainstream critics on the fantastic, and establishing the place of fantastic literature in the history of literary criticism proper.”

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**Poiesis and Possible Worlds**

Christine Mains


In recent years, a small number of scholars – including Lubomír Doleček (*Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*), Ruth Ronen (*Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*), and Marie-Laure Ryan (*Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*) – have been attempting to adapt insights drawn from philosophical logic, specifically possible worlds semantics, to the study of narrative and the creation of fictional worlds. Given that scholars of science fiction and fantasy are perhaps more concerned than are most with the construction of worlds, it is somewhat surprising how few genre critics have made use of, or are even aware of, the possible-worlds approach. In *Poiesis and Possible Worlds*, originally his Ph.D. dissertation from Purdue University, Thomas L. Martin, assistant professor of English at Florida Atlantic University, surveys the history of possible worlds semantics and describes how the application of this approach could enable literary criticism to escape from “the anomalies of a linguistic methodology derived from early twentieth-century language philosophy” and take new directions (4).

The book is divided into three sections. In Part 1, Martin begins by examining the paradoxical claims of post-structuralist theory and the weaknesses of the one-world approach to semantics. Providing a comprehensive overview of the major theorists of language and meaning, including Lyotard, Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, and most particularly Derrida, he concludes that although their work has enabled us to talk about language and by extension literature in ways that were not possible before, post-structuralism cannot adequately account for the richness and diversity of the imagined possibilities revealed in postmodern literature, for the plurality of possible and virtual worlds which a satisfying theory of literature must encompass. Martin finds it especially urgent that theories of literature and of meaning in language incorporate insights about the nature of reality arising from different fields of enquiry, such as quantum physics and, from philosophy, possible worlds semantics. The shift to theories of plurality in these other fields has left much of literary theory behind, working with an outdated model of meaning, but a possible-worlds approach to literature can provide a “more comprehensive and more productive way” to examine the operation of language and literature (26).

Summarizing post-structuralist theory in a nutshell with the claim that “language alone fully and finally determines
one's construction of the world” (27), Martin goes on to detail the development of two very different approaches to language, borrowing from the work of Jaakko Hintikka: the assumption of language as the universal medium and the possibility of language as calculus. The second approach, which is derived from the study of possible worlds semantics, argues that language is variable and freely reinterpretable rather than fixed in meaning, that it can be treated as an abstraction and manipulated in a variety of ways; in other words, language is an instrument of calculation. After an overview of the history of the first approach, with reference to Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Wittgenstein, Martin turns to a consideration of the ways in which this approach has affected the development of theories of literature, including New Historicism and the argument that because language shapes the world, there is no outside point from which to observe the world, no place to escape discourse. Finding this one-world approach unsatisfying as a means for explaining the ways in which readers respond to literature, Martin posits that a possible-worlds approach might resolve some of these difficulties.

In Part 2, he reviews the development of theories of possible-worlds semantics in opposition to earlier, more limiting philosophical approaches which could not account for impossibility in language, that could not perceive fiction, for example, as anything other than a lie. However, he observes, “Once modern semantics – particularly philosophical logic and linguistics – moved from a semantics that countenances only a single universe of discourse to a possible-worlds semantics, it overcame these and other limitations” (61) such as the difficulty of discussing fictional characters as though they were real people. The rest of the section discusses the advantages of modal theory over a purely syntactic approach to the study of meaning, including the ability to more adequately account for fantastic components of fictional worlds, such as faster-than-light travel or dragons and unicorns. Certainly the possible-worlds approach provides a means for discussing the worlds within worlds of science fiction including alternate realities and parallel universes in addition to the more usual philosophical discussion of “worlds” created by desires, dreams, and wishes.

Part 3 discusses what it might mean to theories of literature to apply some of the insights made possible by the view of language as calculus. “Language as calculus applied in this way therefore reconciles two common conceptions of verbal art: the power to expand the expressive power of language and the power to create worlds” (133). Specifically he examines how this approach might more adequately explain the nature and function of metaphor. Martin suggests also that the possible-worlds approach acknowledges what many readers already feel, that literary worlds do “exist” in some real way for their readers, that readers do access such worlds and travel within them. Therefore, literary theories that refuse to acknowledge this sense of existence are unable to provide a fully satisfactory interpretation of works of literature. Martin further argues that such an approach is already being taken by many scholars moving away from “high theory” and instead using a toolbox of theories from which they pick and choose as desired. A possible-worlds approach overcomes many theoretical limitations, can address the relationship between author, text, reader, and world, and can be applied to many literary genres, including narrative, poetry, and drama. Simply stated, “this approach captures more of what literature does” than do other theories of literature (151).

To date, few of the scholars working in this field have provided sufficient concrete examples and models to provide a basis on which to build more text-specific analyses using the possible-worlds approach, and Martin's contribution, while valuable, does little to address this lack. And Martin's concern is, of course, chiefly with theories of literature more generally than with a specific discussion of speculative fiction, with the hope that the possible-worlds approach can aid in developing alternatives to current theories which are proving unwieldy and unsatisfying to a number of scholars. While his historical overview of the development of theories of language, meaning, and literature is detailed and comprehensive and thus extremely useful in providing a context for understanding the value of the possible-worlds approach, I would have preferred more description of how the new theories of literature might look. Certainly more discussion of specific texts, especially texts in the genres of science fiction and fantasy, would be valuable, but that work remains to be done, either by Martin himself or by other scholars. In the meantime, this book is an essential addition to the library of any scholar interested in the construction of the worlds of science fiction and fantasy.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**The Cherryh Odyssey**

Jeff D’Anastasio

Just in time to acknowledge C. J. Cherryh's upcoming thirty-year anniversary of the publication of her first two novels (Gate of Ivrel and Brothers Of Earth in 1976), The Cherryh Odyssey is a remarkable anthology of personal tributes and literary analysis. Before the book is even opened, the striking cover of Cherryh with rays of light emanating from her head catches the eye. In the short explanation “About The Cover,” brother David Cherryh explains how he first painted the image for the short story collection Visible Light (1986), but it was not warmly received by the publisher (17). That past loss is editor Edward Carmien's gain, for the compelling cover image evokes the high quality present throughout.

The twelve essays gathered here, bookended by Carmien’s “Preface” and closing piece, move quite elegantly from four testimonies to eight analytical pieces. Science fiction author James Gunn’s “Introduction: What We Do For Love” touches upon her status as a female writer entering a male-dominated field, notes her three Hugos (“Cassandra” 1978, Downbelow Station 1981, and Cyteen 1988), and argues that Cherryh's devotion to crafting tales on her terms is done out of love for what she does, rather than for money. Gunn concludes that, in return, Cherryh is a worthy recipient of such affection from fans and scholars. He admits that most of the book's contributors have starry eyes, but they are not blinded (22). While enthusiasm for Cherryh permeates The Cherryh Odyssey, Gunn's analogy is correct in that the assembled authors consistently link their claims to clear supporting evidence.

Jane S. Fancher's “The Cherryh Legacy... An Author's Perspective” builds upon Gunn's brief introduction, launching the personal tribute phase of the book in a big way with her compelling mix of Cherryh biography and writing style analysis. Fancher, Cherryh's longtime business and writing partner, provides a fascinating account of Cherryh's childhood, when she began to write her own stories at age ten after favorite TV show Flash Gordon was cancelled (27). We are taken through Cherryh's college and graduate school years, where her Classics degrees and friendship with a successful genetics student are clearly shown to have influenced her future topics. The tour-de-force section of this essay is Fancher's convincing explanation and exemplification of the TPI-squared (Third Person Intense Internal) style that Cherryh has made her own. Intermixed is Fancher's own journey from would-be graphic novelist to published genre author thanks to Cherryh's encouragement.

Betsy Wollheim writes a similarly moving, firsthand view of Cherryh as an about-to-be-published writer in “A Pioneer Of The Mind.” She recalls Cherryh as shy, but she was never timid (57). Wollheim is the daughter of Cherryh's initial publisher Donald A. Wollheim, and recounts the special bond shared between her father and his “discovery.” She also describes Cherryh's desire to travel in space, a desire expressed in the lived-in environments so vividly depicted in many of the Alliance-Union novels. Cherryh's genuine interest in space is further shown in the fact that most of her science fiction books “take place in actual star locations (and) have been worked out on an astral map” (60). Wollheim concludes, “if given the choice, I truly believe that she would live somewhere in the Alliance-Union universe.... When a writer truly wants to be in the place she or he creates, how can a reader not want to go there, too?” (61).

The theme of Cherryh's sincerity for what she creates is further emphasized in the final tribute, “Oklahoma Launch” by Bradley H. Sinor. Sinor grew up in Lawton, Oklahoma, the same town Cherryh lived in for part of her young life. He did not realize this until meeting Cherryh at a University of Oklahoma science fiction club meeting just after Gate of Ivrel was published. From that point, the account of how the two continually cross paths makes for a fun read, due to Sinor's ability to show the extent of the influence Cherryh has had on his writing and personal life.

The second major emphasis of The Cherryh Odyssey, essays that are more academic and analytical about Cherryh's works, begins promisingly with a solid take on “C. J. Cherryh's Fiction” by Burton Raffel. Perhaps retitling the essay “C. J. Cherryh's Science Fiction” would be more accurate, for Raffel does an admirable job of offering brief, insightful observations on the literary aspects of almost all of Cherryh's science fiction novels to date. Arguing that Cherryh writes high-quality fiction, regardless of genre labeling, Raffel concludes with an extended look at how the style of the epic Cyteen (1988) supports his claim that Cherryh is a master of detail, tone, and emotional wallop.

Lest a reader feel that The Cherryh Odyssey is pure lovefest, Carmien wisely includes an excerpt from noted critic John Clute's: “scores Reviews 1993-2003. Clute expertly dissects Hammerfall (2001), taking the tale of genetic manipulation and alien intervention to task for a number of reasons, particularly the literal back-and-forth slog through the desert that occurs throughout. He never quite finds an answer to his question ‘Why was competent, trusted, trustworthy, tough C. J. Cherryh insisting that we pay sedulous heed to a vicious circle?’” (91). He expands the original review with a skim of the sequel Forge of Heaven (2004), concluding “the payoff is not yet. The texture of the book is all prelude and talk” (94), despite being book two of three.

Next, Heather Stark addresses a question that many may have at this point: what happened to all the fantasy?
fics may or not like her answer. *The Cherryh Odyssey* as a whole does skew towards science fiction, and Stark’s “C. J. Cherryh—Is There Really Only One Of Her?”, while acknowledging her “floaty hair all over the cover” fantasy, weighs clearly in favor of the science fiction (98). Stark creates a genre output chart indicating that, from 1996-2003, Cherryh’s science fiction novels barely numbered more than her fantasy. She expresses relief that “Science fiction still outweighs fantasy” (99) even if it has steadily declined compared to 1976-1995. Besides arguing persuasively for why Cherryh’s science fiction works while the fantasy does not, Stark also entertainingly considers whether one person could really write more than sixty novels (not including short stories or co-authored books) in not-even thirty years.

Fortunately, all hope is not lost for Cherryh fantasy fans, thanks to Janice M. Bogstad’s “Shifting Ground: Subjectivities in Cherryh’s Slavic Fantasy Trilogy.” Arguably one of the highlights of the book, her essay incisively explains how the role of magic in a less-known Cherryh trilogy complicates and questions typical high-fantasy tropes, particularly wizards and magic powers. Bogstad’s thorough working through of the harrowing consequences of magic on the characters in *Rusalka* (1989), *Chernenog* (1990), and *Yugenie* (1991), while impressive in itself, also contextualizes the series in terms of Cherryh as a whole: “Whether in space, between worlds, or in medieval southern Slavic territories, Cherryh’s fiction engages her readership through details of character and...her characterization questions the usual portrayal of easy human adjustment to shifting frames of knowledge” (116). With great clarity, Bogstad defends her claim that Cherryh’s books are satires of their respective genres due to the conveyed intensity of the mental and emotional challenges the characters face in their out-of-the-ordinary experiences.

J. G. Stinson continues the consideration of how Cherryh portrays humans involved with the unfamiliar, in this case alien cultures, in “The Human As Other In The Science Fiction Novels Of C. J. Cherryh.” Her clear thesis states, “The characters Elizabeth McGee (40,000 in Gehenna), Sten Duncan (The Faded Sun series), Thorn (*Cocoon’s Egg*), Raen A Sul hant Meth-maren (*Serpent’s Reach*) and Bren Cameron (the Foreigner series) all absorb elements of the thinking, behavior, and worldview of their ‘adopted’ cultures” (135). Stinson’s insightful analysis of these characters and their fates culminates in a fitting conclusion, “Cherryh’s repeated use of Others as her viewpoint characters produces a literary combination that gives readers a highly believable window into worlds and minds outside their own” (146-147). She then connects Cherryh’s ability to present a convincing outsider viewpoint to the trait of all great art to stir the knowledge and spirit of the audience.

Gender roles are analyzed effectively in Janice C. Crosby’s “A Woman With A Mission: Or, Why Vanye’s Tale Is Morgaine’s Saga.” The four books comprising the Morgaine Saga—*Gate of Irrel*, *Well of Shiuan* (1978), *Fires of Azeroth* (1979), and *Exile’s Gate* (1988)—are discussed through the shifts in the relationship between the main character Morgaine, a fierce woman warrior, and her male squire Vanye, from whose point of view the story unfolds. Crosby observes that “Morgaine’s largest challenge to patriarchal gender roles comes from the fact that she is a woman with a mission that is more important than any relationship” (156); however, by the fourth book, Cherryh “speaks to all women who wish to world-hop, wield power, change history, save lives, and maybe even have someone by their side” (160).

The final two essays focus on Cherryh’s masterpiece *Cyteen*. It is fitting that the anthology conclude with cogent analysis of this elaborate tale of scientific and political power, set firmly in the Alliance-Union milieu. Both essays focus on the trajectory of relationship and consequence that plays out between elite leader Ariane Emory (who clones herself) and the naive to blame anyone, his bafflement that she has not received more attention from critics is a feeling that most readers of *The Cherryh Odyssey* will likely share after their own journey through the book. His argument, supported by Cherryh, that her writing fits a “Romantic Literature” tradition offers an interesting take on the literature vs. genre dilemma (202). Carmien also writes an introductory paragraph or two before all of the essays, showing particular concern for the level of academic writing.
and citation style each author uses.

Refreshingly, Carmien's concern for the audience's comfort level with scholarly articles indicates his hope that The Cherryh Odyssey will find a wider audience than a typical academic anthology. His desire to make readers who are unfamiliar with literary criticism comfortable is admirable, if perhaps something that only needs mentioning once, instead of numerous times. However, whether one is a Cherryh fan or researcher, or just curious, much praise is due Stan Szalewicz, whose “Selected Bibliography Of C. J. Cherryh” is a fifty-six page treasure trove listing articles, web resources, works, and reviews. Ultimately, the combination of biographical information from knowledgeable sources, plus readable, thought-provoking essays on Cherryh’s fiction makes The Cherryh Odyssey a must—not only for all of her fans, but also for anyone teaching her works. Finally, any library that has her books should also have this one.

FICTION REVIEW

Destroyer

Warren G. Rochelle


Previously in the Foreigner universe: Two years ago, our hero, Bren Cameron, the paidhi or interpreter to the atevi court of Tabini-aji, ruler of the Western Association, left the planet shared by a small colony of humans and the indigenous atevi, on the starship Phoenix, on a rescue mission. Over four thousand human spacers were under attack by an allegedly hostile alien race, the kyo. Bren, his staff, and the indomitable aji-dowager, Ilsidi, along with others, managed to negotiate an end to the spacers’ difficulties and conduct a successful first contact with the kyo. The planetside humans and the atevi, are, after all, experts at alien interface, ever since humans were stranded on the atevi planet over two hundred years ago.

Now they are back at home, safely docked at the human-built Alpha Station, with a shipload of hungry people, as the four thousand spacers have seriously drained the Phoenix's resources. But that is the least of Bren's troubles, as all hell has broken loose with the atevi. Tabini has been overthrown and is missing, he may be dead, and a usurper has taken his place in Shejidan, the capital. Supplies to the station have been cut off. Civil war may be imminent. Bren has to get planetside and the only safe place is Mosphiera, the island human enclave.

Can Bren land safely on Mosphiera with the aji-dowager and with Cajeiri, Tabini's son and heir? Can the dowager and Cajeiri be kept safe? Once there, can they get across to the mainland? Find Tabini? Is the aji even alive? Drive the usurper from the capital? And what about Bren's relationships with his family—his brother, his former fiancée, who is now engaged to his brother? Will Bren even have time to mourn his mother's death? These questions and the answers pretty much sum up the plot of the latest episode in Cherryh's Foreigner universe, an ongoing story of first contact and human survival as the Other on an alien world, and as well a continued exploration of an alien society, that of the atevi. As has been the case with the previous installments in this now-seven-and-soon-to-be-nine novel series, Cherryh comes through with her usual richness of detail in both character and the coexisting cultures on the planet, the Mosphieran humans, the atevi, and the most recent addition to the already tense mix, the humans on the Phoenix. The convolutions of atevi politics and society are no less Byzantine and the tensions between the opposing sides and different cultures are no less palpable. While Destroyer, as all the previous novels are, is told from Bren's perspective, the reader can never forget that on this world, in this universe, humans are the Other, the alien intruders. And the reader can also never forget that this is a story about people—persons, human and atevi—caught up in a political and historical drama in a society undergoing rapid and traumatic change.

Clearly Destroyer will be next on the Cherryh scholar's reading list, and the novel will be a likely candidate to appear on any course list that focuses on Cherryh. Teachers and scholars who are exploring First Contact as a dominant theme would do well to examine the Foreigner series in general, and not just this latest addition. I would also like to suggest that any SF course that focuses on the sociological and the political would find Cherryh more than a little useful. I think another thematic area that could prove interesting to explore through Cherryh would be that of the interplay and connections between humans and their societies, particularly a closed and/or controlled society, such as those on the ships and stations in Cherryh's Alliance-Union universe, and that of Mosphiera and its "parent," the Phoenix, in the Foreigner universe. A very interesting and potentially instructive comparison could be made, I would like to suggest, between the closed society and the open or "wild" society, such as that of the atevi or the Chanur. One particular facet of atevi society explored in Destroyer, the small villages and country
Cherryh fans will find that in *Destroyer* she is still doing what she does best. The adventure continues. Stay tuned.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**Destroyer**

Ritch Calvin


In her new novel *Destroyer*, C. J. Cherryh initiates the third and latest installment in her Foreigner series. The previous titles include two trilogies: the first includes *Foreigner* (1994), *Invader* (1995), and *Inheritor* (1996). The second trilogy includes *Precursor* (1999), *Defender* (2001), and *Explorer* (2002). The third picks up where the last trilogy ended, with the human Bren Cameron returning from the mission at Reunion Station aboard the ship Phoenix. He accompanies the atevi Ilisidi, the great-grandmother of the aiji Tabini (leader of the atevi) and Cajeriri, the son and heir-apparent to Tabini. In the previous book they had rescued the humans from Reunion and survived a dangerous first contact with the kyo, another sentient species. Upon returning to the atevi home planet, they quickly discover that things are not as they had left them two years ago. The volatile political situation has exploded, leaving Bren, the dowager, and the heir-apparent to set things aright.

Of course, to begin this new trilogy, Cherryh must provide a lot of backstory. The events in this novel are preceded by the events of six novels. In *Forge of Heaven* (2004), in the “Gene Wars” series, Cherryh provides a lengthy and detailed “History” section before the narrative begins. In *Destroyer*, however, Cherryh integrates the backstory into conversations between the principal characters and into the thought processes of Bren Cameron, as he tries to sort his way through the complicated, alien politics and alliances among the atevi clans and regions. If I had read *Explorer*, the prior book, more recently, I might have found the repetition cumbersome; however, since it had been three years, the reminders of events and relationships were effective and useful.

In the series in general, and in this novel in particular, the humans on the planet are relegated to an Island called Mospheira. The rest of the planet is occupied by the indigenous atevi. While some science fiction has tended to make alien species (or even humans, for that matter) homogeneous, Cherryh does nothing of the sort. The atevi are decidedly heterogeneous. While the general ideological distinction is marked by the continental divide that divides the mainland into east and west, the atevi are divided within those categories, as well. However, the atevi have devised, over the long history of their development, a system of Guild Assassins. They serve, in many senses, as the final arbiters in disputes. The assassins fight the fights, not the common farmers and shopkeepers. According to their logic, this system brings a measure of justice and reduces the loss of life.

However, the humans arrived on the planet with much more sophisticated and deadly technology, and as in many cases with First Contact stories, the humans and the atevi worry what effect the sudden introduction of these technological devices might have on the atevi. And they are profoundly divided on the human presence on the planet and the technology they bring. For this reason, the contact between humans and atevi is strictly limited. The only real contact is through the paidhi, a sort of translator and mediator. He serves directly under the aiji and advises him on interaction with the humans and the rate of technological advance. This includes the expansion into space, and issue that catastrophically divides the atevi. The paidhi Bren Cameron advises the aiji Tabini to push outward to the station that orbits above the planet. And while Bren, the dowager, and the heir-apparent are off in space at Reunion Station for two years, the dissenting faction forces Tabini from power through a coup. And this is the situation to which Bren, Ilisidi, and Cajeriri return.

Despite all his training and years of experience, the paidhi Bren Cameron struggles to fully understand the atevi mind and culture. He finds atevi concepts such as man’chi nearly impossible to grasp. Although the human-atevi dictionary translates the word as “bond” or “friendship” or perhaps even “love,” he knows that that is not really an adequate translation. He believes, for one, that the bond formed through man’chi is “hardwired” and functions at a biological or chemical (215) level. He is moved when he sees the two youngsters Antaro and Jegari pledge man’chi to the “young aiji” (213), despite the fact that they are from a rival region. Given his own history of relationships with his family and lovers, given human history of betrayals and loyalties, Bren finds it difficult to understand the ways in which, and the depths at which, man’chi functions.

Of course, developing alien minds and alien concepts has been the strength of Cherryh’s novels over the past 25 years. The mri from the Faded Sun books, the han and the kif from the Chanur books, and now the atevi and kyo from the
Foreigner series have all been praised as true aliens. What Cherryh often constructs is one alien amongst others, trying to understand the alien psychology of those around him. In the Chanur books, the human Tully was alone among the han, for example. Arguably, however, her most successful, and most alien species are the majat from Serpent's Reach (1980) and the alien Trishanamarandu-kepta in Voyager in Night (1984).

The atevi are certainly aliens, though by the seventh novel with them, one begins to feel as though they are a bit less alien than they once were—although one can also see the kyo will re-enter the narrative and complicate things further. One criticism of Cherryh's work in general, and of this series in particular, has been the lack of action. Of course, such criticism is based on the assumption that action is a good thing and that psychological introspection is not. In this seventh novel in the Foreigner series, Cherryh gives more of the latter than of the former. Nevertheless, as the novel reaches its climax and all the significant players come together at a small house, the discussions on the course of action are heated. Some, such as Ilisidi, wish to push the action further, to take their advantage and strike. Others, such as Lord Tatischegi, argue that they should be more prudent and wait for diplomatic solutions to work. In this sense, the novel is about different cultures, and different values within a culture, trying to find a way to exist together, and, as is so important to the atevi mindset, harmoniously. It is a lesson we need today more than ever.

**Fiction Review**

**Tritcheon Hash**

Marleen S. Barr


Once upon a time many many moons ago when scholars were beginning to explore feminism's relationship to science fiction, I remember taking my first foray into this then new literary enterprise via what I retrospectively and fondly call the “truffle pig approach.” (Think again if you expect me to launch into a diatribe against male chauvinist pigs! Stay tuned to find out how my bygone “truffle pig approach” literally refers to porcine quadrupeds.) I remember rooting around bookstores' science fiction shelves on all fours intently sniffing book spines until, wonder of wonder and miracles of miracles, I experienced a Eureka moment: the ecstatic feeling which occurs immediately after successfully unearthing a feminist science fiction text at a time when feminist science fiction was still uncharted terrain. Those were exhilarating days my friend and I thought that they were at an end—until now. That is, until I read Sue Lange's *Tritcheon Hash*. Eureka! Sue Lange is the new Joanna Russ, a twenty-first century feminist science fiction writer par excellence. Lange, whose novel echoes Russ's marvelous stridency by vociferously asserting that patriarchy is not kosher, resonates big time on my presently antique “truffle pig approach” radar screen.

Biped male chauvinist pigs have not become extinct in Lange's world set in the year 3011. Her female protagonists, who reside on the feminist separatist planet Coney Island, have corralled them on a garbage sodden foul Earth. Taking her cue from the feminist science fiction hero protagonists who preceded her, Lange's brash high flying test pilot Tritcheon Hash embarks upon a fact finding mission to ferret out the nature of the animalistic human male Earth denizens. Tritcheon Hash is certainly not described by the title of Russ's hilarious story “The Clichés From Outer Space.” Instead, it is an hysterically funny timely take on the battle of the sexes which transcends stereotypes.

In addition to its connection to Russ, Lange's work also can be understood in terms of Octavia Butler: both Lange and Butler are Mark Twain's literary descendants. Butler's time travel tale *Kindred* has been compared to Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. The narrative newness which appears as the slang Tritcheon articulates provides a means to connect Lange to Twain. Tritcheon's far future vernacular adheres to the tradition of incorporating American informal speech patterns within American literature Twain established. Lange, then, writes in the vein of canonical American literary tradition as well as feminist science fiction tradition.

I will allow Lange to comment upon Tritcheon Hash in her own voice: “In regard to feminist SF, my novel takes the stance that much of woman's status throughout history and today stems from the fact that women are blamed inappropriately for too many things... I don't believe women are here to help men survive together in an always smoldering, stewing, highly explosive atmosphere, ready to go blow up if there isn't enough estrogen around to dilute the testosterone. Men are responsible for their own lives. Humorously I say, 'And if men don't shape up, women will ship out.' Wouldn't ever happen.
but why not take the challenge seriously? . . . Why don’t women expect men to shape up by themselves? Why do women continue to take the blame as written down by a man all those centuries ago? And why can’t women just move on? . . . Why should we accept things as they are? Let’s at least make up a solution” (Email to Marleen S Barr, February 1, 2005). Lange’s term “ship out” echoes Russ’s notions about separatism in feminist utopias. “I believe separatism is primary, and that the authors are not subtle in their reasons for creating separatist utopias: if men are kept out of these societies, it is because men are dangerous. They also hog the good things of this world.” (Although Russ’s comment appeared in my 1981 anthology Future Females, the “truffle pig approach” is not derived from her use of the word “hog.”)

I can unequivocally state that I have thoroughly examined feminist science fiction—warts and all (and its portrayal of male chauvinist warthogs too!). But never have I encountered a protagonist who, like Tritechon, suffers from hemorrhoids. It is perfectly reasonable for Tritechon to have this particular medical problem, though. Being an interstellar feminist science fiction test pilot protagonist is not completely glamorous; the job, after all, requires a great deal of sitting. Or, as Tritechon explains, “But I gotta tell you, my hemorrhoids’re growing by leaps and bounds. . . . You should have to sit in the same position all day and see how fast you scrap.’ . . . The unfortunate thing was that, as soon as she said the word hemorrhoids, her asshole started to itch as if a trickle of sweat had run down her back and dripped through the crack—riding the sphincter,’ so to say.”

What is the meaning of hemorrhoids busting out all over from within a twenty-first century feminist science fiction novel? Is Lange asserting that even in 3011 male chauvinistic pigs are a pain in the posterior? Does a new interpretation of The Left Hand of Darkness involve linking Lange’s novel to how Tritechon handles assuaging the discomfort her itching “asshole” causes? I, of course, cannot be certain of the answers to these questions. Tritechon’s hemorrhoids do figure in my overall response to Tritcheon Hash, however: Hurray for Sue Lange’s kick ass feminist science fiction!

FICTION REVIEW

Tales

James Davis


The Library of America is a non-profit organization which, over the past 25 years, has established itself as the gold standard for popularly available scholarly editions of America’s literary treasures. Its stated purpose is to foster “appreciation and pride in America’s literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, authoritative editions of America’s best and most significant writing.” The volumes in the series are uniformly impressive, both in terms of scholarly presentation and physical production. The texts chosen are always the most highly respected scholarly editions, and the editors are (usually) picked from among the leading scholars in the field. Physically, the volumes are fairly compact clothbound books, printed on highest quality acid-free paper. The most common external presentation is a very distinctive solid black dust jacket with a portrait of the author on the front, which design is uniform for all volumes in the series. American Lit professors everywhere cherish these books.

I open this review with a paragraph on Library of America because what is important here is not that someone has published yet another collection of Lovecraft stories (ho hum), but that Library of America has published a collection of Lovecraft stories. This self-proclaimed (and rightfully so) guardian of America’s literary treasures has up until now published no speculative fiction, except those pieces by classic authors such as Poe, Hawthorne, and Twain which could be classed as such. What makes this neglect doubly hurtful is that LOA dived headlong into hardboiled detective fiction a full decade ago, with a two-volume complete works of Raymond Chandler in 1995, followed since by the same treatment for Dashiell Hammett, and two compilations of various other noir authors from the ‘40s and ‘50s. Maybe SF’s time is coming ‘round at last.

The Lovecraft volume itself, however, is a disappointment. In the first place, the obvious choice as editor would be S.T. Joshi, since he is the recognized authority, and they are using his corrected texts. However, the job of selecting and editing went to Peter Straub, a best-selling horror author to be sure, but not noted as a scholar. The only explanation I can think of is name recognition for the mass buying audience. Straub selected 22 of Lovecraft’s 60 or so stories, arranged them in chronological order, wrote a page explaining that the texts were Joshi’s, and contributed 140 explanatory notes, for help with the preparation of which he gives credit to Joshi and David E. Schultz. The majority of the notes are simply watered-down
versions of Joshi’s notes from his four Arkham House volumes, and whereas Joshi averages about two notes per page, Straub gives us only one note every six pages.

The story selection raises other questions—mainly, why so few? True, we do get 808 pages of fiction, but as LOA volumes go, that’s very thin. The whole book is barely over an inch thick (don’t get the idea that the paper is onion-skin thin; it is not—as I said, production quality and physical readability are outstanding). But when most LOA volumes average about 1100 pages, and 1400-1500 is not uncommon, we could have had so much more. For example, none of the Dunsany-inspired dream stories is included. In fact, all of Lovecraft’s fiction, poetry, and essays, and a healthy sampling of his letters, could have been included, had he been granted the dignity of a two-volume complete works that was afforded to Chandler and Hammett. Again, the only reason that occurs to me to limit the size of the volume would be economic—the thicker LOA volumes sell for $40 or $45, which cuts down on sales appeal.

The stories that are included also raise a few eyebrows. “The Dunwich Horror” is here, probably due to name recognition from the movie, even though Joshi himself calls the story “an aesthetic mistake” on Lovecraft’s part. Also, Peter Cannon, an associate of Joshi’s who tends to be less charitable to Lovecraft, has called “The Horror at Red Hook,” “The Dreams in the Witch House,” and “The Thing on the Doorstep” three of Lovecraft’s weakest stories, especially the last two which were written in the midst of the great stories at the end of Lovecraft’s career. All three are included here.

Everything about this volume seems to indicate that it was dumbed-down in an attempt to increase its mass-market appeal. The other feeling I get is that the editors don’t really respect Lovecraft or his work the way that they do other aforementioned genre authors.

In short, as a scholarly text this is but a pale shadow of the Arkham House/Joshi editions. Even the Penguin trade paperback editions are better. But that doesn’t matter—this is a huge, huge event in the publication history of speculative fiction. Partly because the Arkham editions are available, the scholarly shortcomings seem to fade in significance next to the monumental event of Library of America finally recognizing speculative fiction as real American art. Now, if only someone could convince them of the artistic value of Sturgeon, Dick, Le Guin, Delany, etc. (www.loa.org) (hint, hint).

FICTION REVIEW

Mindscan

Philip Snyder


What might it mean to be human – and how might it feel to be human – when individual minds can be instantiated in separate bodies? Once a fairly popular SF trope, found typically in stories and novels about human cloning, the question has lately been asked with renewed energy by scientists and writers alike. In Mindscan, his new standalone novel, Robert Sawyer adds an exciting crowd pleaser to the growing library of SF novels that explore this intriguing idea. Richly informed by current interdisciplinary research in the burgeoning field of consciousness studies, and alive with provocative speculation of its own, Mindscan is a heady brew of hard SF, blended with enough comedy, romance, and adventure to appeal to a wider audience, as well.

The novel opens in 2018, when Canadian teenager Jake Sullivan witnesses the stroke that reduces his father to a persistent vegetative state, a stroke brought on by a congenital brain disease called Katerinsky’s syndrome. The condition is hereditary, and Jake is at risk. Cut to the year 2045: Jake, now middle-aged, elects to cheat Katerinsky’s via the newly developed Mindscan technique, having his consciousness copied into a near-indestructible android body, while his biological body (and original consciousness) takes up residence in High Eden, a kind of retirement paradise established on the far side of the moon by the Immortex corporation, creators of the Mindscan process. Premise in place, the novel then kicks into high gear: Jake (the “new Jake”) falls in love with Karen Bessarian, an octogenarian who has undergone the same process; Jack (the “original” Jake), finding himself on the moon, has second thoughts about his new status. Karen’s son, meanwhile, sues the “new” version of his mother in probate court upon the death of his “original” mother, and from there, things get complicated, suspenseful, and eventually violent.

That, at least, is the Michael Crichton-ish chassis for this vehicle. But Sawyer, no mere manufacturer of thrillers, locates the serious fun of his novel in its bundle of scientific ideas. Whether discussing such neurological issues as the role of sleep in
consolidating memory, or playing with concepts of quantum entanglement, or inventing nanogel brain surgeries, *Mindscan* is a Hard SF reader's delight. At the same time, Sawyer is nobody's starry-eyed idealist about the wonderful world of science. He can be quite sobering, for instance, about the potential horrors that could ensue if consciousness studies were to become an actively experimental science, and he is mordantly funny about the potential lack of appeal of cyborg sex: "I wanted it to be sexy," a character complains, "but it was just plastic and Teflon rubbing together, silicon chips and synthetic lubricants." Sawyer has worked with some of these ideas before—most notably in last year's "Shed Skin," the Analog story which was the starting point for this novel, and to some extent in his two earlier novels, *The Terminal Experiment* (1995) and *Factoring Humanity* (1998)—but *Mindscan* is both deeper and wider than these predecessors.

Especially wider. Pulling out all the pop fiction stops, Sawyer also serves up an excellent courtroom drama, a bittersweet comedy, tons of adventure—even a simple trip to the moon, in Sawyer's hands, is made to seem exciting again—and plenty of touches that are just plain fun. It's a kick, for instance, that Karen Bessarian is the famous author of the Dino World series (a nod to her Sawyer's own *Quintaglio Ascension*), and it's an even bigger hoot when she is offered a $100 million advance for her next novel. (O brave new world, that has such treats for writers in it!) All this, plus the thriller, plus the romance, are shoehorned with surprising ease into a book that is already stuffed with long discussions of the work of science superstar Roger Penrose, micro-lectures on opposing language theorists John Searles and Daniel Donnet, and extended asides on Julian Jaynes's seminal *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*.

For readers who can't get enough of the hard stuff, *Mindscan* includes an annotated bibliography of books on consciousness, and also puts in a plug for that valuable publication, *The Journal of Consciousness Studies*. Even more readers, though, will find themselves going back to their bookstores for more helpings of Robert Sawyer.

**FICTION REVIEW**

***Od Magic***

Christine Mains


Over the past several years, scholars interested in the work of American fantasist Patricia McKillip have been able to look forward to a new book each spring, and this year is no exception, with the June release of *Od Magic*. But the prolific author has an extra gift for us this year; a collection of her short stories is expected in November. This is good news for McKillip scholars looking for more of the author's signature observations on magic as a metaphor for power. Like earlier works including *The Book of Atrix Wolfe* (1995) and *Ombria in Shadow* (2002), *Od Magic* explores the development of individual autonomy in relation to the social constraints placed on the free exercise of personal power.

Much of the narrative is set in the city of Kelior, in the wizards' school founded by the mysterious wizard Od, who long ago saved the land of Numis from its enemies using the power of wind and water. Eventually, the school came under the king's control, and laws were passed requiring everyone with any hint of magical power to be trained there, to learn only what magic the king deemed necessary and useful and to wield that power only on the king's command. New students learn the consequences of their desire to develop their talents: "You will be taught how best to use your powers for Numis. You will never leave Numis to go roaming out of curiosity and wonder, as Od does. [. . .] If you are permitted to leave, it will be to fight Numis's battles. If you go without the king's permission, you will be considered a traitor, a renegade, an enemy" (21-22). In the land of Numis, the natural powers of magic are bound.

In return, the king's protection has ensured safety and comfort for the wizards, but some have begun to question the price they pay for their comfort, accepting the limits placed upon their knowledge and their freedom. Yar Ayrwood, who had come to Kelior nineteen years before in order to develop his gifts, chafes under the restrictions, explaining to a particularly curious student that "Great wizards pursue knowledge and magic, not power. They are never content with what they know [ . . . ] They are not confined by the boundaries of a king's power, nor by any law except the laws of magic, which are exacting and as compelling as any king's" (129). Magic itself is not forbidden, only the methods of teaching it, in order to keep any wizard from becoming more powerful than the king, from turning that power against the state. But over the centuries, this process of education, of learning only what is deemed necessary and stifling any interest in what is not, has lead to not only lack of desire to pursue knowledge for its own sake but also fear of anything new and unknown.
However, there are several sources of magic unknown to the wizards and thus outside of the king's control, forces converging on the city and threatening to disrupt the peace and stability that have long reigned. A grieving young man named Brenden Vetch, who possesses a gift for understanding growing things, is invited by Od to become the school's gardener. Brenden's magical connection to the natural world, developed in isolation from others, is something outside of the school's understanding. Princess Sulys, the king's daughter, is unwillingly betrothed to Valoren, a recent graduate of the school who zealously represses any hint of power that might threaten the land. Sulys has some natural talent for magic, but keeps it hidden from everyone save her somewhat dotty great-grandmother, who had been raised in a distant land where magic was common, and who teaches Sulys small tricks. Raging equally against the need to deny her magic heritage and the restrictions placed on her because of her gender, she wonders “What does magic do when it is freed?” (107).

Another source of potential disruption is the city's Twilight Quarter, where residents work by night and sleep by day, and where carnival reigns. Because in the past they had been enchanted there, causing dangerous riots, students of the wizards' school are forbidden to enter the Twilight Quarter, where the magician Tyramin and his daughter Mithral entertain the crowds with dazzling displays of magic that they claim are nothing but illusion and trickery. Aside from the Twilight Quarter, there is another force of magic in Numis, an ancient mystery in the northern mountains: “They were of a wild magic, as ancient as wind, as night. They had known the force of wind before it had a name; they had become fire before it had been tamed” (263). In the climactic scenes of the book, all of these forces of untamed magic converge in the king's court.

The opposition between the wild magic inherent in nature and what some have termed High magic, the magic of spellbooks and staffs and other forms of technology, is a convention explored by many fantasists. This opposition is often gendered, with female witches having a natural connection to wild magic and male wizards trained to wield a more civilized and controlled form of magic. McKillip both follows and departs from this convention: the female wizard Od, always accompanied by a menagerie of wild creatures, is clearly associated with nature, but so is Brenden the gardener, and both Sulys and Mithral use tools and spells to work magic, just as Yar and Valoren do. In the end, it is female power that transforms the world, as the wizard Od, Princess Sulys, and Mithral the magician's daughter wake the wild magic and force a change in the king's attitudes towards the education of wizards.

These are themes often explored in McKillip's work: gender issues, the ethics of power, environmental concerns about the exploitation of natural resources, even the value and purpose of education and the true object of the pursuit of knowledge. It is also difficult, given the state of affairs in the world today, not to read this work against a background of the impending loss of individual freedoms in the name of peace and security. I've said often that McKillip's work deserves much more critical attention than it has received thus far, and Od Magic is yet further evidence of that claim. It is a book that belongs in the library of any serious scholar of fantasy.

APPROACHES TO TEACHING

**Silverberg's The World Inside**

Rich Erlich


NOTICE: TWI is a “new wave” work in which sex is handled seriously and explicitly (if briefly in each instance: TWI is neither erotic nor romantic). It also deals with religion and politics, completing the set of issues one isn’t supposed to discuss at family gatherings. There is violence, but lethal “state” violence is mostly a threat, although a constant threat, while individual violence in this world is, by our standards, minimal. There are also futuristic forms of drugs and rock’n’roll. I will deal with sex, religion, drugs, and politics in this study guide. Anyone—minors especially—who have qualms about reading sex scenes may negotiate with me an alternative assignment from Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants*, or Pohl’s somewhat revisionist sequel, *The Merchant's War*.

Sources/Analogs: The dystopian tradition, plus the continuing debate on overpopulation. Note especially the following works (first two citations from Erlich and Dunn's *Clockworks* bibliography):


Genesis 1.26-28 (Revised Standard Version [i.e., moderate Protestant Bible], P-code narrative) Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them [sic: plural] have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth […]. So God created man in his own image […] male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” For an alternative version, with a garden and stewardship more than dominion—but with a more Patriarchal twist in other ways—see Genesis 2.4-24. For a repetition of the injunction to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,” see the end of the Noah story, Genesis 9.1-7. Note, though, that God forbids Noah and his descendants (= all humans) both murder and, equally emphatically, eating “flesh with its life, that is, its blood” (9.4-6). The people of the urbmon world have no meat to eat so literal blood isn’t an issue; but those among us citing the injunction to Noah to “be fruitful and multiply” shouldn’t do so while eating rare meat or meat blood sausage—and maybe not, if they believe in transubstantiation, just after taking communion.

*Nature of the Beast*: The book is dystopian science fiction, but additional formal classification gets tricky. *The World Inside* is labeled “fixup” in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, i.e., a publication as one work of stories previously published independently (in British usage, “fixup” carries no esthetic judgment on the “unity” of the finished product, and no condemnation; in US usage “fixup” can be pejorative). TWI may be seen as a set or suite of linked short stories; Thomas P. Dunn and have argued that it can be read as a novel with chapters and a unifying villain-hero: Urbmon 116 (“The Mechanical Hive: Urbmon 116 as the Villain-Hero of Silverberg’s *The World Inside*,” *Extrapolation*, 21, 1980, 338-47).

*Narration*: Third-person, “limited omniscient,” in an old-fashioned formulation—“free, indirect discourse” to appropriate (and perhaps inappropriate) a technical term from rhetoric. Unusually, the tense is present (our usual story-telling tense is the past). I’ll characterize the narration as “third-person, present-tense, ‘over-the-shoulder’ narration, with limited omniscience”—with a point-of-view character whose thoughts we get, indirectly, from the Narrator. Narrative strategy is established in the first paragraph of chapter (story?) ONE, with the description of Charles Mattern’s waking: “He stirs. God bless, he thinks.” I.e. “he” for third-person, plus an objective description, “He stirs,” and a subjective thought, “God bless, he thinks”—present tense (with the “bless” complex).

Note however. The book begins with “Here begins a happy day in 2381” (1); it will end with “Sleepers stir. Life goes on. God bless! Here begins another happy day” (184; ch. 7). The story (now ch. 1—or, anyway, “ONE”) will end “It has been a happy day in 2381, and now it is over” (17). See below for orgional publication of part ONE as “A Happy Day in 2381”; note that a major dystopia is named for a unit of time: George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (also 1984).

Note the second: The second sentence of the book is not about Charles Mattern or any other human but about Urbmon 116. In “mundane” (Realist) fiction, the sentences about the building would be establishing of setting; TWI, however, is science fiction, where the setting/character distinction can get blurred (e.g., as Ursula K. Le Guin, jokes, if the scenery can eat you).

*Utopian/SF Concerns*: Try to tease out the nature of the politics and social order of “the world inside” Urbmon 116, and the large world in which it is a part. Now and then, judge which aspects you respond to as utopian (“good place”) improvements over our system and which dystopian (bad-place); TWI is a dystopia, but a complex and nuanced dystopia. For TWI as (social) SF, try to spot “nova” (singular novum): new things, especially in technology and social changes that are rooted in scientific or technological change. Silverberg’s interests here are primarily utopian/social, so expect understated technological innovations, especially those conventional to science fiction ca. 1970: lift- and dropshafts instead of elevators, data ‘cubes’ instead of paper or tapes, high-tech food-delivery systems—etc. Expect them to be “of course” for the Narrator and people in the novel, accepted without explanation. (There is also an assumed audience, which may be implied to be a farther-future audience in past-tense SF. [Work through the logic.] What is the assumed audience in a present-tense story of the future?)

*Gaps*: *Children*: TWI does a very good job handling teenagers—by having them adults, which may be the usual status
for teens in human history. Child-care is not developed, however, and we do not get the point of view of a child in Urbmon 116 or in the nearby agricultural commune. Note, though, that all art is highly selective and that children may be ignored so regularly that adult readers don’t notice the silence.

Gaps: Race, Ethnicity: Samuel R. Delany says that as a Black kid reading SF, he was impressed that Robert A. Heinlein waited until pretty late in *Starship Troopers* (1959) to tell readers that his hero was a Brown Filipino. Delany liked the idea of a future when the only time a man’s skin color was relevant was when he was deciding on cosmetics (it’s also a future in which a firmly, if mostly hypothetically, heterosexual Green-Beret analog might occasionally wear makeup). I can’t bring myself to re-read *Starship Troopers* with enough care to find the passage—and Delany might misidentify the book—but his main point remains: There’s something to be said for a future in which race is generally irrelevant. There’s also the question of whether one wants one’s own group featured in satiric works. Still, the absence of one’s group in a future world might arise from the wishing away of one’s group, or absence for significant reasons (Ursula K. Le Guin’s future Earth has undergone famines and other catastrophes, and few Whites remain: when the going gets really tough among social species, the cooperative survive, and Le Guin suspects most Whites are too competitive to hack it). From what we see, what’s the race/ethnicity mix like in Urbmon 116? If it’s pretty “white-bread”—in terms of skin color and/or culture—what should we make of that? Be sure to think up at least two different hypotheses.

Just assuming that all DWA[M]s—Dead White Americans/American Males—were conscious or unconscious racists until the day before yesterday isn’t particularly useful for cultural criticism and may be guilty of what’s been called “Presentism”: the assumption that we’re ever so much more liberated than our benighted ancestors. Racism has been endemic in American culture the last three centuries or more, but the same can be said for venereal disease (and I worked for Illinois Public Health when “endemic” was said for gonorrhea); not everyone contracts an SDI; not everyone is a racist. Also, by rigorously racist standards, Silverberg wasn’t White. Allowing for hyperbole, it’s correct to say that everything in US culture is inflected by race—and we have a lot of racists and racism in our history; still, judge each work carefully.

Editor’s Note: What follows in the study guide is a close reading of the text, page by page, which is more than can be accommodated here. But if you email Rich, I’m sure he’d be pleased to share the details.
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