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SFRA would like to thank the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for its assistance in producing the SFRAReview.

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

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The following are the members for the SFRA awards committees:

Pilgrim: Charles N. Brown (c); F. Brett Cox; Elizabeth Anne Hull
Pioneer: Lisa Yaszek (c); Chrissie Mains; Larissa Koroleva
Clareon: Bruce Rockwood (c); David Hartwell; Doug Davis
Mary Kay Bray; Tom Morrissey (c); Ritch Calvin; Patrick Sharp

Graduate Student Paper: Paul Brians (c); Pawel Frelik; Jim Davis

The John W. Campbell Memorial Award was presented at the Campbell Conference Awards Banquet in Lawrence, KS the weekend of July 6-8 to Benova for Titan.

The winner of this year's Theodore Sturgeon Award for best short story is “The Cartesian Theater,” by Robert Charles Wilson.


The Sidewise Award for Alternate History have been presented to: Long Form: Charles Stross, The Family Trade, The Hidden Family, The Clan Corporate. Short Form: Gardner Dozois, Counterfactual.

The British Fantasy Award winners were announced at Fantasycon 2007 in Nottingham, England on Septem-

Editor's Message

Ed Carmien

It has fallen to me once again to write on behalf of Chrissie Mains and the SFRA Review staff. In issue 280 I commented about that special Heinlein-focus issue, timed to coincide with our co-conference in Kansas City. We provided more than 450 copies of issue 280 to Heinlein Conference attendees, and an editor's message that highlighted the special Heinlein content was thought to be useful. This time, as host of the informal discussion panel about the Review, I've been called on to comment on that experience which our hard-working editor was unable to attend (but look for her in Dublin come June, 2008) Review veterans such as Karen Hellekson, Bruce L. Rockwood and Janice Bogstad joined with the still newish fiction review editor (yours truly) and a number of SFRA members old and new to talk about our fine publication—not to mention a few drift-ins from the Heinlein part of the conference.

Bruce L. Rockwood presented an enlightened version of his Sixty Days and Counting review, enlightened by way of the illumination he cast on the process he used to arrive at the finished and polished product he sent to a grateful fiction review editor. I spoke briefly about fiction reviewing do's and don'ts and with luck encouraged future participation in the audience.

Karen Hellekson provided a similarly revealing discourse about writing non-fiction reviews, basing her comments on the different approaches she employed in the writing of her two reviews in issue 280. Janice Bogstad provided an excellent overview of the inner workings of the Review. Of course many others contributed interesting thoughts to the discussion as well.

I thought the informal discussion was well worth the time, and I hope others in attendance agree with that assessment. The Review plans a similar session in Dublin under the capable guidance of Christine Mains, Editor—and we hope to see you there. In the meantime, on to the current issue, which features words by Karen Hellekson, Bruce L. Rockwood and Janice Bogstad joined with the still newish fiction review editor (yours truly) and a number of SFRA members old and new to talk about our fine publication—not to mention a few drift-ins from the Heinlein part of the conference.

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the truly “speculative” way that solid SF functions remains an open question—personally, I enjoyed both films but had to strain my intellectual faculties mightily to maintain any sort of Coleridgean suspension of disbelief. But both films should remind us about the vital importance of “illusion” in our lives. In these troubled times, when many of us worry about waking up to news about another killer hurricane driven by record warmth in Caribbean waters, or a terrorist attack with nuclear weapons, or a stock-market total collapse, it is easy to become disillusioned with our contemporary world in general, a world that certainly hasn’t lived up to the wonderful utopian visions we had for it when we were growing up reading SF juveniles. And the apparent postcontemporary pessimism of much mainstream literature and film these days does little to dissuade us from such disillusionment. But our SF genre owes its very existence to a juxtaposition of “science” and “fiction,” using our logical faculties to establish connections between the world as we are experiencing it and the amazing fictional visions conjured up via the printed page or on a film, TV or computer screen. While some of those visions paint discouraging apocalyptic portraits about where our current world is headed, especially when conjured up by more mainstream artists such as novelist Cormac McCarthy or director Alphonso Cuaron, their most other SF works/illusions almost always give us some way to escape complete disillusionment, some reason to continue to strive towards using our rationality to challenge and change those contemporary global social structures seemingly bent on attaining entropic conditions as soon as possible.

It is for this reason that your SFRA Review welcomes serious scholarly reflections on SF “illusions” from all media. And in the meantime, dream sweet dreams about your own future amazing visions that will surely occur at our 2008 meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

SFRA BUSINESS

Conference Chair's Report - SFRA 2007

David Mead

The annual meeting of the SFRA in Kansas City seems to have been an academic and financial success. Including several new members who joined at the door, we had eighty-one participants, including our wonderful guests Kathleen Ann Goonan, Jim Gunn, Fred and Betty Pohl, and Allen Steele. Thanks to the Robert A. Heinlein Centennial, we had a great venue at the Westin Crown Center Hotel, where both guest rooms and conference spaces were comfortable and easily accessible.

The conference ran a small surplus, half of which has been donated to the Heinlein Centennial to help offset their deficit. The other half has been returned to the Association to support future conferences.

Thanks to all those who helped bring this meeting to a successful conclusion. Special thanks to Carolyn Wendell and Philip Snyder, the program Co-Chairs; to Tina Black and Jim Gifford of the RAH Centennial, who did almost all the ‘heavy lifting’ to make the joint meeting a success; to Jim Gunn and Chris McKitterick, for coordinating our meeting with the Campbell Conference; and to my wife Joan Mead, for being the Conference’s gracious and efficient staff.

I look forward to seeing you all next year in Dublin.
McDonald; Best Short Story: “Impossible Dreams” by Tim Pratt; Best Related Non-Fiction Book: James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon by Julie Phillips; Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: Pan’s Labyrinth. Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: Doctor Who - “Girl in the Fireplace.” Best Editor, Long Form: Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Best Editor, Short Form: Gordon Van Gelder; Campbell Award: Naomi Novik.

stories, by Susanna Clarke; The Empire of Ice Cream, by Jeffrey Ford; American Morons, by Glen Hirshberg; Red Spikes, by Margo Lanagan; Map of Dreams, by M. Rickert.

Robert J. Sawyer won the Chinese Galaxy Award for Most Popular Foreign Author of the Year. The award, voted on by Chinese fans, was presented to Sawyer at the Chengdu International Science Fiction and Fantasy Festival, the largest fan gathering ever held in China.


Elizabeth Moon was presented with the Robert A. Heinlein Award on July 7, 2007, the centennial of Heinlein’s birth, at the Heinlein Centennial celebration in Kansas City. The Heinlein Award was established in 2003 to honor outstanding published works in hard science fiction or technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space.

Recent and Forthcoming Nonfiction (Fall 2007)


Davidson, Joy. The Psychology of Joss


Whittingham, Elizabeth A. The Evo-
2. Website—have not yet recruited a support person
3. Support a Scholar
1. Lisa added the following to the new brochures: “All members are invited to contribute to and apply to research, travel, and/or membership relief grants.”

2. Action item: develop a more detailed Call for Proposals and Evaluation Guidelines for the three types of grants: research, travel, and membership relief grants.

5. New Business
1. Board Recommendations 2008 membership dues structure stay the same: moved, seconded, passed unanimously
Respectfully Submitted,
Shelley Rodrigo
SFRA Secretary
7/7/07

SFRA BUSINESS

General Membership Board Meeting
Shelley Rodrigo

Date/Time: July 8, 2007; 9:00 am
Agenda
1. Pass Out Executive Board Minutes
2. Officer Reports
   Adam Frisch, President
   Lisa Yaszek, Vice President
   Shelley Rodrigo, Secretary
   Donald M. Hassler, Treasurer
   David G. Mead, Immediate Past President
3. Convention Updates
   2007-Kansas City-Dave Mead
   2008-Dublin-Farah Mendlesohn
   2009-Atlanta-Lisa Yaszek
   2010-Phoenix-Craig Jacobsen & Shelley Rodrigo
   2011-Poland-Pawel Frelik
4. Old Business
5. New Business
Number of conference participants present: 17 plus executive board

General Announcements:
Jim Gunn—thank support for About SF website and program; report on activities:
   Hal Hall’s repositories by library and author
   online course in SF aimed at HS teachers, traveling roadshow (1-2 day workshop on teaching SF):
   able to get support SFWA, Tor, SFRA, and other individuals, university provides office space, clerical help, oversight; we hope it is a service to SF;
   next project we would like to get is a repository of information about academic programs
Action item: have membership submit undergrad/grad programs in science fiction to be added to database/website
Agenda Items
Passed out copies of minutes from 7/5/07 executive board meeting
Reports

WHAT: The Sublime in the Fantastic
WHO: ICFA 29
WHEN: March 19-23, 2008
WHERE: Orlando Marriott Airport Hotel, Orlando FL
TOPICS: The focus of ICFA 29 is on the relationship between the sense of wonder embodied by the sublime and the fantastic in literature, film, and other media. The sheer magnitude of the universe gives rise to the amazing, the astonishing, the astounding, the thrilling, and the wondrous. Edmund Burke argued it is “infinity [that] has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror which is the most genuine effect and truest test of the sublime.” It then should come as no surprise that the sublime has been a mainstay in science fiction, fantasy, horror, and other related fantastic modes. In addition, we especially look forward to papers on the work of our guests: Guest of Honor: Vernor Vinge, author of “The Technological Singularity” and Hugo Award-winning A Fire Upon the Deep. Guest of Honor: Greer Ilene Gilman, author of the Crawford Award-winning Moonwise. Guest Scholar: Roger Luckhurst, author of The Trauma Paradigm (Routledge) and Science Fiction (Polity Press).
DEADLINE: October 31, 2007 (submissions will still be considered to Nov. 30)
INFO: www.iafa.org for registration info and contact info for Division Heads

WHAT: Life, the Universe, and Everything XXVI
WHO: The Marion K. "Doc" Smith Symposium on Science Fiction and Fantasy
WHEN: February 14-16, 2008
WHERE: Brigham Young University

TOPICS: Guests include Gail Carson Levine. We are especially interested in papers in the following areas: Literary criticism/analysis of sf&f and related literature (medieval, renaissance, mythology, magic realism, etc.); Science and technology (especially new or unusual); Analysis of sf&f relating to poetry and/or theatre; Morality, culture, literature, and society in relation to sf&f; Serious analysis of sf&f in cinema, television, radio, and other media.

INFO: http://ltue.byu.edu

WHAT: Special Issue on Geoff Ryman
WHO: Extrapolation
WHEN: Summer 2008
TOPICS: Ryman is increasingly recognized as an important writer in the field of novels and numerous other works, including those in the following areas: Literary criticism/analysis of sf&f and related literature (medieval, renaissance, mythology, magic realism, etc.); Science and technology (especially new or unusual); Analysis of sf&f relating to poetry and/or theatre; Morality, culture, literature, and society in relation to sf&f; Serious analysis of sf&f in cinema, television, radio, and other media.

Support a Scholar—changing guidelines to not only support international, but also support domestic students; also make sure to support a scholar fund; Action item: membership, let Lisa know of anyone who should be targeted in her direct targeting membership campaign; Vice President's informal membership goal—400 members
fantasy and history. Indeed, Ryman’s brief discussion at the end of *Was* on the importance of using fantasy and history against each other has been widely taken up in the discussion of sf and fantasy more generally. The editors of this issue invite consideration of any aspect of Ryman’s work, including his hypertext novel 253, and his involvement with the ‘Murdane SF’ movement, which calls for an emphasis on near future and present day ‘realist’ sf.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Essays should be approximately 4000–9000 words, written according to MLA standards and include a 100 word abstract. Neither embedded footnotes nor generated footnotes that some software systems make available should be used. Please send an electronic submission in either MS Word or WordPerfect.

**CONTACT:** Wendy Pearson <wpearson_at_uwo.ca> or Susan Knabe at <sknabe_at_uwo.ca>

**DEADLINE:** 15 October 2007

**WHAT:** Women in the Sciences Area
**WHO:** Film & Science: Fictions, Documentaries, and Beyond
**WHEN:** October 30–November 2, 2008
**WHERE:** Chicago, Illinois

**TOPICS:** When former Harvard President Larry Summers asserted that women lack the scientific mettle to compete with men, he provided only the latest example of misogyny in the sciences. Women continue to face real obstacles, even at research institutions like WISELI (Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute). Unfortunately, the occasional appointment of women to high-ranking positions at technical universities (such as MIT and Lehigh) does not offset these cultural hurdles, which draw so much of their weight from film and television. Ranging from...
early the book-to-film successes of Rachel Carson’s “Silent Spring” and Diane Fossey’s “Gorillas in the Mist” to the solution-seeking documentaries “The Gender Chip Project” and “Women Who Walk Through Time,” from sexed-up television fantasies featuring bionic women, crime science investigators, spaceship personnel, and aliens to the questioning heroines embodied by Marlee Matlin in “What the Bleep!..” this area will examine the portrayals of women in the sciences or science fiction. How has the feminist movement been incorporated, represented, revised, or rejected within these constructs? Are there other social, cultural, or ideological movements that have served to undermine or support the female presence in science? Does the future for women appear to be brighter through these lenses?

SUBMISSIONS: 200-word proposal CONTACT: Sally Hilgendorff, Chair, Women in the Sciences Area, Principal Historian Show Me History! 43 Wakefield Street Reading, MA 01867 <smhilgendorff27@juno.com> DEADLINE: November 1, 2007

WHAT: Science Fiction in British Film and Television WHO: 2008 Film & History Conference WHEN: October 30-November 2, 2008 WHERE: Chicago, Illinois TOPICS: The consistent quality of science-fiction films and television programs in Britain has won audiences for generations, both in the UK and around the world. One reason for this sustained popularity lies in the ability of British cinema and TV to constantly reinvent the genre, keeping it socially and philosophically elastic. How, for example, has community of like-minded people out there makes an enormous difference for a beginning academic living in a small Australian city. My experience at the 2006 SFRA Conference was entirely positive. I left inspired and eager to contribute to this exciting field.

In particular, my thanks to everyone who was involved in the judging of this year’s Award. Your positive feedback was much appreciated.

I am very sorry that I can’t be with you this year, but I keep my fingers crossed that I will see you all again in Dublin in 2008.

SFRA 2007

Mary Kay Bray Award
Edward Carmien

Thanks for the honor. Unlooked for, it is all the sweeter. I was completely surprised by Adam’s call announcing I’d won this award. I’d also like to thank David Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer for providing great grist for the mill. There are good books one wishes to hang onto, and then there are great books one is compelled to give away—and I gave my review copy of Space Opera Renaissance away during the holiday season last year. I echo Adam’s call for all to partake in the Review—you, too, can have a voice in our printed conversation. Too many of our voices are never heard, so make it happen!

SFRA 2007

Clareson Award Introduction
Donald M. Hassler

I have two minutes to speak on the topic of Michael M. Levy because we want to honor him this year with the Thomas D. Clareson Award that recognizes service to the community of science fiction. One must know what this community is, and one must know what service is to comprehend this award. Mike is the epitome of both sorts of knowledge. He is, also, a fine and productive scholar. But today we honor him for a different sort of knowledge. He knows what priorities are. He knows what work is. He knows what love for human organization is. Mike has devoted hours and days and months to the skillful work of keeping both SFRA and IAFA viable as organizations. He has arranged and presided over conferences and meetings. He has reviewed books continually. He has created and maintained websites. Now, in a month or so, he will take over duties as one of the lead editors of the journal founded nearly fifty years ago now by Tom Clareson himself. For many years, Mike has been a strong presence in most everything we think and do in this genre, this family.

We like to say sometimes that massive amounts of work like his is “selfless” work. But we know that it is always Mike Levy doing this work for us. And so with great pleasure we want to honor Mike Levy for this work of love and commitment at this time.

SFRA 2007

Clareson Award Speech
Michael Levy

Last week I hurt my shoulder and hand helping a new faculty member at my university move into her apartment. For this reason I’ve essentially had to type this Acceptance speech one handed, so it’s on the short side, which is probably for the best.
Thank you very much for this award. I am, of course, honored to receive any award named after Tom Clareson, particularly when I look at the list of past winners, people whose work I’ve admired for years. I would also like to give my special thanks to the Clareson Award committee members: Martha Bartter, Mack Hassler, and Neil Easterbrook.

Mack Hassler (who warned me that he was going to roast me by the way) has read you a list of things I’ve done in the field of science fiction and, like most of the past winners, I suspect, I feel a certain amount of pride to hear those accomplishments mentioned, but also some embarrassment. After all, I didn’t do them in the hope of being rewarded, but rather because they simply needed to be done and I happened to be there at the right (or wrong, depending on how you look at it) moment. The strange thing, from my point of view, is that I’ve never really understood why people have wanted to put me in charge of things. To tell the truth, I’m just a shy, introverted, non-alpha science fiction nerd academic who’s never really seen himself as a leader, hardly the traditional Heinleinian “man who knows how things work,” as Alexei Panshin once put it. The fact of the matter is that I’ve almost never volunteered for the things I’ve done or the positions I’ve held. Rather, I’ve simply said “yes” when asked to do them. I guess you might just call me the boy who can’t say no (although I am, I hope, in recovery from this addiction). I therefore want to take this opportunity to briefly blame, excuse me, I mean single out for recognition, those people who, for better or worse, have over the years urged me to be an active participant in the scholarly community of science fiction. In a very real sense they’re directly responsible for whatever I’ve accomplished.

First, I need to mention Neil Barron and Bob Collins who initially suggested that I might want to write book reviews for various SFRA-related publications and then published them, thus encouraging my initial participation in this community back in the late 1970’s and opening a sort of floodgate that led to my later review work for the NYRSF, Publisher’s Weekly, and other venues. Then, in 1987, at an IAFA conference, there was an important (to me) meeting with Chip Sullivan (one he probably doesn’t even remember), which led to a number of other professional friendships, not to mention publication and editing opportunities, that quite literally changed my life and made it entirely clear to me why attendance at conferences like ICFA and SFRA are absolutely vital to academic success in our field. Then, in 1995, there was my friend Janice Bogstad, who made me consider the possibility that more active participation in this organization was worthwhile when she came up with the odd idea that it would be fun to do an SFRA conference in Eau Claire, WI on one year’s notice and asked me if I wanted to help. I was enormously aware of every typo in the program that year and have to admit that I wanted to run away and hide when one of the guests of honor had a heart attack the day before the conference, and I certainly didn’t enjoy having one conference attendee’s baby daughter wet all over me. Still, people less obsessed with the event than I was evidently had a good time and almost no one yelled at me. Given my own only partial satisfaction with that SFRA conference, however, I was surprised when then SFRA president, Dave Mead, he of the friendly shark-toothed grin and gambler’s instincts, suggested that I might want to run for SFRA treasurer at the next election. Dave also assured me, wrongly, that the other guy would probably win. Only after I was elected, by the way, did he notify me that it was generally assumed that treasurers would run for two terms, since, he said, it really takes that long to figure out how to balance the books anyway. Then, four years later, there was my seemingly innocent interaction with the subtle and persuasive Carolyn Wendell who, while we were sitting in a conference hotel bar in Mobile, Alabama, where it was too dark for me to know what I was doing, said to me...
alities/characters.
SUBMISSIONS: C. Jason Smith <jsmith@lagcc.cuny.edu>
DEADLINE: Nov 15, 2007

WHAT: SF/Fantasy Area
WHO: Southwest/Texas Popular Culture/American Culture Ass'n
WHEN: Feb 13-16, 2008
WHERE: Albuquerque, NM
TOPICS: The Area Chairs of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Area would like to invite paper and panel proposals on any aspect of science fiction and fantasy.
SUBMISSIONS: Ximena Gallardo C <xgallardo_at_lagcc.cuny.edu>
DEADLINE: Nov 15, 2007

WHAT: Literature, Science, and Ecocriticism
WHO: A collection of critical articles
TOPICS: C.P. Snow predicts a new “third culture” emerging to close the intellectual gap between literary critics and scientists. E. O. Wilson identifies a trend he calls “consilience,” the linkage of science and humanities to create insights into human endeavors; Lawrence Buell suggests that the “discourses of science and literature must be read both with and against each other.” N. Katherine Hayles argues that narrative is at the heart of science and culture, and it is through literature that science enters the body politic. What is the “proper” relationship between humanities and science? Are humanists and scientists partners in the production of cultural knowledge? How can cultural critics theorize the relationship between humanities (especially literature) and science? What is the role of ecological criticism and ecocritics in this

in an off-handed fashion that nonetheless brooked no denial, “Well, of course you’re going to run for president, aren’t you?”

Well, I survived my time as an officer in SFRA and I suppose that there’s no reason to go into detail concerning various issues that occurred during those years, for example the problems with a previously unrecognized deficit in the treasury, or with SFRA Review editors (neither of them still involved in the organization) who turned out to be manic-depressive or who used the newsletter to publish their own reviews of Star Trek novelizations, or for that matter the flood and fire that literally wiped our printer off the map of North Dakota one year. The point is that the organization survived and no one blamed me for the problems!

In the interests of brevity, I won’t go into the machinations that various IAFA people like Len Hatfield and Veronica Hollinger used to get me involved in that organization. It is a wonderful organization by the way, although being an officer in IAFA was (is) in some ways even more crazy making that holding similar positions in SFRA. Nor will I do more than mention my activities with the Children’s Literature Association, where I was asked to run for a board position a few years back but then, thankfully, lost. Most recently, as Mack suggested, I’ve been one of the people involved in trying to replace him as a co-editor of the journal Extrapolation. I have to admit that I actually volunteered for that duty, so perhaps I’m not entirely recovered from my addiction. We’ll see how that goes.

All joking aside, the people I’ve worked with over the years have been what made all of this worthwhile. Everyone I’ve mentioned so far was a joy to work with, but I need to list a few more people. First, and foremost, the amazing Joan Gordon, then Joe Sanders, Rob Latham, Bill Senior, Donald Morse, Chrissie Mains, Allen Elms, Craig Jacobsen, Shelley Rodrigo, Karen Hellekson, Adam Frisch, Peter Brigg, Phil Snyder, Betty Hull, Munel Becker, Liz Cummins, Bev Friend, the list is endless and I’m sure I’ve forgotten several important people. I can only ask their forgiveness.

Finally, I’d like to especially thank my wife, Sandra Lindow, who has graciously supported me in all of my professional endeavors over the years with relatively few complaints, but who, resolutely refusing to sink into codependence when I’ve been talked into running for yet another office, has, on occasion, been known to vote against me.

Again, thank you for this honor.

SFRA 2007

Pioneer Award Introduction
Lisa Yaszek

We are delighted to name Amy J. Ramsom as the winner of the 2006 Pioneer Award for Outstanding Scholarship. Ramsom’s essay, “Oppositional Postcolonialism in Québécois Science Fiction,” is an exemplary piece of scholarship that clearly demonstrates how broad context can and should be put in the service of particularized analysis. Ramsom begins by briefly articulating the nature of postcolonial theory and some of its early theorists. She then explores how this critical method can be applied to science fiction in general and SFQ, the French-language science fiction of Quebec, in particular, focusing on specific pieces of literature by specific authors. As one member of the committee notes, a number of good writers might be able to articulate one or even two of the many contexts that interest Ramsom (including history, theory, SF theory, and Québécois SF). But only a rare few are able to so succinctly discuss them all in light of three or four key authors’ works.
The committee was particularly impressed with Ransom’s ability to show how SF does more than simply demonstrate particular theoretical frameworks. Instead, as Ransom persuasively demonstrates, SF authors have much to teach critical theorists as well. As Ransom observes, Quebec’s unique history complicates the usual reduction of postcolonial theory to a simple opposition of colonizer/colonized, and she demonstrates clearly and inarguably how that history has shaped the Francophone contributions to both colonialist and anti-imperialist themes in the works of authors who should be better known by readers and scholars of SF. We applaud Ransom for a producing such a provocative essay and look forward to her future contributions to SF studies.

**Pioneer Award**

Amy J. Ransom

Wow! What a thrill to be here. How much better can it get? We’ve found a way to incorporate reading the kinds of things we’ve always loved to read and then traveling to conferences to talk to other people about them as part of our “professional responsibilities.” Let’s face it—we’re all here because we’ve figured out a way to make our fan identities appear at least marginally respectable, right? So, instead of some self-satisfied speech about the appropriateness of my pioneering work on Québecois SF earning this award or pointing out the irony of my essay application of postcolonial theory to SF winning the “Pioneer,” I want to use my three to five minutes to engage in that ultimate of fan activities: telling you my “coming to SF” story.

I’ve been working on several projects lately, focusing on the so-called “postmodern” self-consciousness of genre writing. So as a first, I thought it might be clever to tell my story using the tropes of the genres I’m working with: SF, horror and alternate history. I started with horror. It went something like this:

A young French professor, looking to build her credentials, innocently answers a call for papers. What could be safer than a contribution to the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*? But wait, this volume is dedicated to Canadian Writers of Science Fiction and Fantasy. She fails to heed the warning signs: if she has to study science fiction, at least let it be *French* science fiction, not—gasp—French-Canadian! As her work progresses, she comes closer and closer to the edge of the abyss. It is too late when she realizes that she has stepped over the threshold into a void, falling deeper and deeper, pulsed into a vortex from which there is no return! Even in French, the acronym for what she studies, *la science-fiction québécoise*, la SFQ, ends with *le cul*, the bottom! Ahhhhhhhhhhh!

Well, my AH version was even worse (it turned into a heroic fantasy in Al Gore defeated the Axis of Evil and 9/11 never happened). I didn’t even make it to SF! My little exercise renewed my respect for genre writers and it brought me back to the primary rule of *Creative Writing 101*—“Write what you know”—a rule, of course, that our objects of study intentionally break every day.

Well, what do I know? From almost as far back as I can remember, science fiction, fantasy and horror were among my favorite things to read. I also read the *Little House on the Prairie* series in second grade or so —ah! Perhaps the origins of my pioneer spirit can be found there. But I cut my teeth on Poe and Lovecraft. But my coming to SF really happened, I think, around age 10 or 11. My grade school took a field trip to Ludington, MI, to visit a place called something like the Ludington News Factory. (I tried to google it and got nothing, so maybe this trip occurred in an alternate reality.) Anyway, it was a book warehouse with discount prices. Heaven, for me, really. My purchases included several volumes of Lovecraft, some MAD!
Magazine books, a collection of Harlan Ellison stories and Samuel Delany's *Dhalgren*. Looking back, I had pretty good taste! (Well, I also bought some Victoria Holt romances.)

During adolescence horror—appropriately, if psychoanalytic critics are to be believed—took the ascendant. I devoured every Stephen King novel through *The Stand* and honed my research skills scouring the public library in Billings, MT for every book I could find on Vlad the Impaler, Aleister Crowley, and the Marquis de Sade. In graduate school, I discovered a wonderful canon of French *contes fantastiques*. By the time I really did answer a call for the DLB's volume on Canadian *Writers of SF & F*, I had forgotten all about my youthful flirtation with SF. As I began to read Francine Pelletier and other SFQ writers—which, I can tell you, was pretty damn tough to get in the geographical center of Alabama—I realized that I actually liked it. It was good. Even better, the people writing this stuff were alive and accessible, unlike Balzac or Maupassant I could ask them about their work without the aid of a spiritualist!

Anyway, it's time for me to bring these ramblings to a close and try to find some point to my being here. My thanks to you for indulging me in this little stroll through memory lane and to the award committee members, Christine Mains, Janice Bogstad and Lisa Yaszek, for bothering to read my essay. I also have to thank Veronica Hollinger at *Science-Fiction Studies* for publishing it, as well as my first essay on SFQ, which resulted in an invitation to the annual Congrès Boréal in Montréal where I met Élisabeth Vonarburg, Jean-Louis Trudel, Daniel Sernine, Patrick Sénécal and Joël Champetier for writing such great stuff that has so inspired me that I have a hard time finishing one project before I find another to be passionate about. That passion is what I hope to share in my scholarship, because rather than a pioneer, I usually refer to myself as a proselyte, spreading the good news of French-Canadian SF & F. Well, missionaries usually accompanied the explorers, didn't they?

**SFRA 2007**

**Pilgrim Award Introduction**

Gary K. Wolfe

Long before I began reviewing books on a monthly basis, I was aware that the review could be a significant vehicle for SF criticism, history, and even theory. The reason I knew this was that, in the early days of SF criticism, some very high standards had been developed by a handful of “in-house” reviewers, who—long before there were academic journals or university presses involved with SF—collectively invented modern SF criticism. These reviewers included James Blish, Damon Knight, Joanna Russ, and Algis Budrys, whose reviews for *Galaxy* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* remain among the most provocative and insightful reviews the field has seen. Two of these—Knight and Russ—have already been honored with the Pilgrim Award. I am delighted that the third award for this pioneering group is being presented to Algis Budrys.

But Budrys was also a true scholar of the field. His long historical essay “Paradise Charted,” which originally appeared in Northwestern University's *Triquarterly* literary journal in 1980 and was reprinted in the SFRA anthology *Visions of Wonder*), was a pioneering view of the genre's development from a practitioner's perspective. A later essay, “Nonliterary Influences on Science Fiction” helped establish the principle that magazine SF is as deserving of close textual criticism as any other literature—as long as it takes into account the realities under which the magazines were produced and edited. Yet another essay, “Literatures of Milieux,” argued provocatively for the primacy of setting in SF texts. Together,
this trilogy of essays covering history, technique, and publishing constitutes as
clear a view of SF as I've seen from inside the field. All are collected in his 1997
book Outposts, just as the Galaxy reviews were collected in the 1985 Benchmarks.
Unfortunately, we're still waiting for the collected F&SF reviews.

On a more personal note, A.J. also proved to be a wise, patient, and
demanding mentor during my own early years as an SF critic. He insisted that
criticism be written with clarity, passion, and honesty—and with wit, if you could manage it. He taught me never to apologize for writing about SF, and never to give
a book a “pass” because it was “only” SF. He believed fully in the potential of SF
as literature, and he practiced this belief in his criticism as well in his fiction. Both
as a writer and a critic, he helped us all grow up.

SFRA 2007

Pilgrim Award Acceptance

Algis Budrys

First of all, I want to thank the people who named me for this award. I
was astonished to learn that the SFRA remembered me at all, and furthermore
remembered me so kindly;

I began my career with the November 1952 issue of Astounding Science
Fiction, with a story called “The High Purpose,” which was agented by Frederik
Pohl. I was twenty-one, the story was written when I was eighteen, and was clearly
intended for Astounding all along, but it had then been rejected by John W. Campbell
Jr., ASF’s legendary editor. It was subsequently rejected by a series of editors—in
fact, all the editors of all the science fiction magazines in existence. The sole exception
was L. Jerome Bixby, once editor of Planet Stories, but now assistant editor of
Thrilling Wonder Stories, who had some nice things to say about it in a note,
suggested changing the nauseating part, and told me that unfortunately Sam
Mines, the editor of Thrilling Wonder Stories, had rejected it…which I knew because
the story was returned to me in the same envelope with Jerry’s note.

Through a series of subsequent events, I began playing poker with Jerry,
at the apartment home of Horace Gold, editor of Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine.
It was there that I met Fred Pohl, and there that Fred agreed to take me on as a
client. As part of that, he took the same manuscript of “The High Purpose”—
including the nauseating part—but enclosed it in a red Frederik Pohl Literary
Agency folder, whereupon it promptly sold to Astounding and John Campbell.

In the days to follow, my stories sold to Galaxy, to Lester Del Rey’s Space
Science Fiction, and a number of other magazines which included Robert W.
Lownde’s Future and Science Fiction magazines. (The same company published
Archie comics.) The thing about all these stories was that they were all short and I
had written them years earlier, and had been unable to sell them, until they were
enclosed in Fred’s magic folder.

The other thing about all these stories was that they sold for about two
cents a word (which was a 150% improvement over rates in the 1930’s and even
the ’40’s in many cases). Science fiction was not the means to financial indepen-
dence.

By now I was sleeping on the floor in Jerry’s Brooklyn apartment, my
parents not being supportive of my ambitions. Jerry persuaded me that it was
time I wrote a novelette, and loaned me his typewriter for the purpose. I did so.
“Dream of Victory” bounced around the field for a while and then sold to Howard
Brown’s Amazing Stories, which at that brief episode in its convoluted history was
so flossy that it had two-color illustrations, easily outdoing in appearance all its
competitors, including Astounding.
And I considered that sale, as I had all the others, marginal failures because they were not to *Astounding*. I was not alone in regarding *ASF* as by far the best place to appear in. In fact, it was in many ways the only place, all other magazines representing salvage markets. Or so I felt.

Let me explain. I had been reading science fiction since I was a small boy, beginning with comics in the Sunday papers and then picking up *Planet, Amazing, Astonishing, Starling, Thrilling Wonder, Future*, and whatever else came along with the typical garish covers, usually showing a scantily clad female being desired by a bug-eyed alien. (Like, I felt, most readers, I knew that this was merely the publisher's formulaic best reading of the marketplace, and the stuff inside was pretty puny.) But I tore the covers off anyway before bringing the magazines home.

All that changed with my stumbling, finally, across the November 1942 issue of *Astounding*, I found it in an unprepossessing store I never went into, on a rack full of general-interest magazines. I picked it up with very low expectations. What was this *Astounding*, and who was this A.E. vanVogt who had the lead novelette, and what was the cover illustration, reminiscent of a woodcut, mostly done in greens and blacks, showing a long shot of what appeared to be two distant human figures and a very simple space ship, with a tiger in the foreground? In other words, the tiger did not desire the human female except as lunch—if, indeed, there was a human female. Well, of course I picked it up anyway, but I had very low expectations, as I said. It barely looked like a real science fiction magazine. Then I began to read—a vanVogt story in which a cosmic storm overtakes an interstellar vessel, and soon enough causes it to break into pieces, each of which is a lesser spaceship, one such with only two people landing on an unknown planet. The man being a rather ordinary person and ahah!—woman being a very highly placed empress-type who would never deign to notice him. And so forth.

As it happened, I was not alone in feeling that the magazine was a peculiar duck—although my first reasons had been all wrong. *ASF* it swiftly turned out, stood as the graduate course in science fiction, all others being variously charming but definitely lesser. I was hopelessly hooked, and the other stories in that issue only reinforced the almost religious feeling that I had stumbled on a kind of SF that took the cliché icons of science fiction and dealt with them sensibly and realistically, as I had not known them to be until *Astounding* opened my eyes. What made it this way? John W. Campbell, Jr. (1910-1971).

Campbell was a genius manqué, full of quirks and contradictions he did not usually know about. As an undergraduate he had rocketed up and down the Boston Post Road, on his way to MIT, in a Ford Model A he had rebuilt. After three years, it proved impossible for him to pass the required German classes, so he graduated from Duke University. But while at MIT, at the age of twenty, he had published the first of many stories, beginning in one mode—the Arcot, Wade and Morey series, for example, which were like the sort of “superscience” being done in the SF magazines of the day—and an entirely new and qualitatively different mode later, which he wrote under the name of Don A. Stuart. As Stuart, he authored such gems as “Twilight” and the superb 1938 “Who Goes There?” (which incidentally shares its plot with the earlier “Bran Stealers of Mars” by John W. Campbell.

The mark of Stuart was the often brilliant idea that had never been thought of before, told in a quiet, in fact ruminative style, as the author was sneaking up on his central point. This was made manifest first, to my knowledge, in “Twilight” which had been rejected by F. Orlin Tremaine, editor of *Astounding Stories*—and I believe all the other editors then in the field—because it wasn’t the superscience jump-up-and-down science fiction story that they were familiar with.

The story, which I first read in Donald Wollheim's pioneering *The Pocket Book of Science Fiction*, was an account of a thirtyish century time traveler who shoots back a little too far—into our time—when returning from a trip into the far, far future, when the few surviving men no longer care about why things are the way they are. He must set the machines, which are everywhere, to develop curiosity. He does not know whether he succeeded. And he sits around a western campfire and tells his matter-of-fact story to a bunch of cowhands, gradually communicating to them as much of the truth as they are able to understand.

The story—gloriously moody—had to wait until Campbell succeeded Tremaine as *Astounding*’s editor, in late 1937. (Tremaine having been promoted upwards by Street & Smith, the publisher.) Shortly thereafter Campbell changed the name to *Astounding Science Fiction*, and stopped buying from the magazine’s established names, attracting instead Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon, Alfred van Vogt, L. Ron Hubbard, Clifford Simak, Jack Williamson, Henry Kuttner (“Lewis Padgett”), C. L. Moore, L. Sprague De Camp, Fritz Lieber, Lester del Rey, Hal Clement, and all the rest of the hitherto largely or totally unknowns who were to write what we called “modern science fiction.” Some, like Kuttner, Simak and Williamson, he converted from superscience writers to rather different people. (In the case of “Padgett,” very different indeed; and with his wife, C. L. Moore, even more different as “Lawrence O’Donnell,” while Moore turned from being a *Weird Tales* fantasy writer who had difficulty writing endings to a superb, complete, science fiction writer.)
I cannot guess what resonances these names strike in the minds of contemporary SF readers. But to my mind, they are the pantheon.

There are several very interesting things about them. One is that we were at war, which meant that Heinlein, except for “And He Built a Crooked House” in that same Wollheim anthology, was not known to me—nor was Hubbard, author of “Final Blackout,” which I finally read in a Hadley small press book after the war. Another was that I actually tasted the full flavor of “modern science fiction” in a 1946 anthology, Adventures in Time and Space, edited by Raymond Healy and J. Francis McComas. In it, they placed story after story calculated to evoke awe in an SF fan of my age (and possibly of your age), and while a very few of these stories were from other sources, the overwhelming majority were from the immediately pre-war Astounding, (I strongly recommend that you find a copy, in an antique bookstore or on EBay. Get the original if you can; the much later paperback version omits several stories. I didn’t say either book would be cheap.)

The telling point here is in what I failed to realize; the stones were pre-War, but it was 1947 (when I found the book). I was not alone in that failure. But first let me tell you more about John Campbell.

The pathway to an editorial career had typically led young men to sell a few stories and then to take up junior positions, under the guidance of such more seasoned people as Leo Margulies, who oversaw their relatively unskilled efforts for the chain of many magazines, incidentally including Thrilling Wonder Stories, incidentally home of Campbell’s Peyton & Blake series.

Leo’s method of supervising this bullpen full of editors of the many magazines in the Thrilling chain was to walk from desk to desk and observe the number of corrections each person had penciled over the author’s typing. (Some of these editors, legend has it, would pencil in “corrections” which were identical to the blackened typing, in order to satisfy Leo’s formulary demand for improvements. But Leo was a pretty shrewd person. I rather doubt that there actually was much of this evasion of the senior editor’s demand. Nor do I doubt that in the usual case the demand was justified.)

Into this world came John Campbell, a widely successful superscience writer. But he was married now—to Donna Stuart—and what this estate demanded of the young Campbell was a steady paycheck. (You will remember what the word rates for fiction were. Editorial salaries were no better, but they were steady).

You will also remember that Campbell was an engineer, by natural inclination dating back to, probably, the day he was born. He saw the universe as made up of chunks, with any chunk potentially connectible to any other chunk. And it seems clear that he saw himself as a chunk and a senior editor’s salary as a chunk he needed a connection to, even if he had no editorial training. I don’t actually know whether he made this exact decision or whether he had a number of alternate plans—and neither does anyone else—but it doesn’t matter. For at this juncture, he was offered F. Orlin Tremaine’s superseded position at Astounding Stories.

There is a story, which was told to me by Julius Shwartz, once the first literary agent for Ray Bradbury and much later editor of Superman at D.C. Comics, and which I think is true, that one day John W. Campbell, twenty-seven, well known as the freelance author of the Peyton & Blake and the Arcot, Wade and Morey stories, walked into the editorial office of Mort Weisinger, under Margulies at Thrilling, and said he was curious about what an editor did, exactly. Eager to show off what he had just learned, five years younger than Campbell, Mort spent some time telling him, and John nodded his understanding. As he was leaving, John said, by the way, he was now the brand-new editor of Astounding, and thank you very much.

However that may be, Campbell came into what was perceivable as a very good position. Tremaine had done an excellent job, bringing Astounding from a run-of-the-mill imitator of Amazing under Clayton Magazines, to the top-of-the-heap standing as a superscience magazine under Street & Smith after they had acquired it, with a pack of others, in 1933. Now, having been named Editorial Director, he reached out to John W. Campbell of all people.

I think that what happened is that he expected Campbell to do as before…to be a shadow of Tremaine, from John’s seat as the top competitor to E. E. Smith, and continue to attract stories from Nat Shachter, et al, who were imitators of John W. Campbell. What he got instead was Don A. Stuart.

Why was Stuart? In fact, what was Stuart? Stuart didn’t even write like Campbell; if I didn’t know better, I’d swear they were two different people. Stuart’s writing style did not use the same sentence-rhythms, the same mix of narrative and dialogue, or, in truth, the same vocabulary. It is the most acute case I know of a writer imposing a different personality on a pseudonym.

The other odd thing was that Campbell stopped writing fiction, entirely but for one years-later exception, when he became editor of Astounding. He said it was because he didn’t want to compete with his writers, or that he wished to avoid the appearance of selling to himself, or that he was too busy, or that he had some other excuse. No one now knows the truth of
the matter. There were a few stories published after October, 1937—most notably, “Who Goes There” in March, 1938—but that piece might well have been in inventory while Tremaine was still the editor.

Campbell was frequently described as being “bearlike.” I may be the only person who saw him, in profile, as a fox. I have a pet story to go with that observation.

In 1994, Cleve Cartmill was published in *ASF* with the story “Deadline”, about a man describing an atomic bomb, in detail a year before the actual atom bomb was used on Hiroshima. The FBI called on Campbell promptly, with the demand that he stop publishing atomic bomb stories. It took some sincere talking on his part to convince them that the story was mere science fiction, and that if they wanted to keep such stories from being published, they could hardly give the enemies of the U. S. a broader hint.

The only problems with this statement by Campbell are that the story is about the conflict between the Seilla and the Ynamreg, that the hero is captured by the Opatseg in the next room from the bomb—which is the German atomic pile model, not the U. S. design—and that the hero suddenly escapes by whipping the gun out of the Opatseg interrogator's hand with his prehensile tail, shooting everybody, and getting away. Oh, yes! If you believe that as accustomed a writer as Cartmill could have done this story with a straight face, then you can stop believing me.

I think that Campbell suspected the U. S. was doing something nuclear and got together with Cartmill to lay a trap. The story is ludicrous, except for the description of the Ynamreg bomb. Campbell made this guess as to the bomb design—which was not right but was based on the best pre-War thinking—and waited for results. Which he got, and thereafter had the satisfaction of knowing the U. S. was working on a bomb. I think the reason for the outlandishness of the story was to lend credence to its being mere science fiction.

Immediately after the War, Campbell published a nonfiction book called *The Atomic Story*, which did a pretty fair job of telling layman readers what a radioactive atom was, how it would work in a bomb, etc. It was the first such book. It was signed by John W. Campbell, Jr., Nuclear Physicist.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt as to his greatest accomplishment, which was the gathering together of the stable of major talents in a tightly knit bunch which met in Campbell's house, on occasion, and traded ideas back and forth. Campbell was a prime source of these ideas, but he did not claim credit for them, saying that ideas were “in the air” and not worth anything except as the initial basis for stories, which were the concrete result. In fact, he often gave the same idea to many of his writers, knowing that it would not spark stories in most of them on this particular occasion, but what stories he did get would be so different from each other that most of his readers would never realize their common origin. (As, for instance, Heinlein's *Sixth Column* and Fritz Lieber's *Gather, Darkness*.)

And, perhaps, Clifford Simak's *Time Quarry*. But the thing about *Time Quarry* was that it appeared as the lead serial in the first issue of *Galaxy*, in 1950.

*Galaxy* was at first one of a large number of magazines launched in the American market by an Italian publisher under the imprint of World Editions. How a science fiction magazine got into the mix of titles intended for young home makers, I do not know. I imagine the credit goes to the editor, Horace Gold, formerly a writer for *Astounding* (and later its brief but beloved fantasy companion, *Unknown*), under his own name and, earlier the pseudonym of Clyde Crane Campbell. That coincidence dated from 1934, well before John W. Campbell was the editor in 1937, and the Clyde Crane Campbell byline then vanished from *ASF*'s pages.

Be that as it may, the World Editions *Galaxy* was (A) a physical package produced on the incredibly cheap and (B) paid three cents a word for its stories, (C) it featured many of the same names as had formerly been pretty much exclusive to *ASF*. Why was this?

I didn't even think on the deeper implications. I was simply glad that some of *ASF*'s writers had another outlet. But what was actually happening was that stories that had been backed up...written but set aside because their writers did not want to sell to Campbell but did not want to sell good stories to the salvage markets, or else not written at all, in a species of boycott of *ASF*. What had happened?

In a word, Hubbard. When Campbell published “Dianetics” he set off a firestorm, to the point that other magazines, competitive with *ASF*, published “symposia” on Dianetics, featuring pro and con reactions by Campbell writers...most of them bitterly con.

Why such bitterness existed, I don't quite understand, to this day. But perhaps it was because I hadn't sold anything yet, had never met Hubbard—never did, my personal contact being limited to being in the back of a convention hall, once,
when Hubbard was speaking. But I much later learned that it was extremely difficult to regard Hubbard as just another writer. He could be amazingly charming—as he was with Campbell and van Vogt—or he could be amazingly difficult to like if he was a competitor. It was because he was a salesman...indefatigably a salesman, twenty-four hours a day, from youth.

He came out of the hospital, after the War, in which he had been gravely injured, and then sat down and reasoned out Dianetics as a form of self-therapy. He then sold it to Campbell, who not only published his first approximation of it but also established a therapy center in New Jersey, as van Vogt did in Los Angeles. If you did not like Hubbard in the first place, you surely hated him—and Campbell—now.

All this passed over my head except as data. I had been so thoroughly conditioned by my discovery of Astounding, and the pre-War stories in anthologies, that I didn't realize what was happening. And ASF continued publishing good stuff by Poul Anderson, Gordon Dickson and some others, eventually by me—not particularly good stuff, usually—but the balance had swing, irrevocably, to Galaxy and Horace Gold.

Not that Galaxy did not have its troubles, including a change in publishers when World Editions pulled out of America and once John pulled a miracle and the magazine's printing broker, Robert Gunn, took over. But Gold also had quirks which eventually did him in. For one thing, he had been exposed to Leo Margulies' school of editing as a young man, and edited the manuscripts for Galaxy accordingly. But there is a difference between a penny-a-word writer and a three-cent writer, especially one who had grown up with ASF, where Campbell did not change anything. Not eager to go on with Galaxy, but not very willing to go back to Campbell, the writers looked around for other markets. They found them in the paperbacks, both reprint and original, which were beginning to take a significant part of the readership dollar. Quite a few of them sold to the magazines only as an occasional sentimental exercise. And the new writers which Gold attracted were pretty lame.

Campbell, meanwhile, went on to push very hard for the Dean Drive—a mechanical means of apparently creating antigravity (but only in spring-based scales, as it turned out). There were many more instances of Campbell's creativity beating its wings against the bars of Campbell's reasoning. But they are best summed-up by a story I do not think is true in its roundness but is essentially true—if you know the people involved. It goes as follows:

One of Campbell's gang of writers was George O. Smith, author of the Venus Equilateral stories. Smith, a fetching joker, was an engineer for Emerson electronics and a drunk. He was one of the type of drinker who swiftly loses touch with ongoing events but goes on as if he is sober; for instance, Smith was a brilliant card player when he was drunk, and would not remember playing when he sobered up. He was famous for this trait. And George bragging about this bothered Campbell. One day at the Campbell home, John produced two graduated beakers of alcohol, unequally filled. He explained to George that drunkenness was a function of body weight—this was John's beaker and that was George's, and they would see that after they had finished them off, they would be equally drunk. "O.K." said George, the story goes, draining his beaker, and after that drunkenness was a function of body weight—this was John's beaker and that was George's, and they would see that after they had finished them off, they would be equally drunk. "O.K." said George, the story goes, draining his beaker, and after John passed out, George ran away with Donna.

They were married after a while. So was John, to Peg, the motherly-appearing sister of Joseph A. Winter, MD, a physician who had been interested in Dianetics, but who, like Campbell—and van Vogt—eventually gave up contact with it. Campbell wrote one last story, for a hardcover anthology of originals, which was a Stuart story but was signed by Campbell. It was an O.K. story, but not a great one.

Galaxy, after its start as an echo of Astounding's glorious past, drifted farther and farther into publishing a peculiar blandness. This dull period in its history was followed by a notable resurgence; Gold left, to be replaced by Frederik Pohl, who, in his guise as a literary agent, had supplied the ASF-based stories of Galaxy's beginnings, and then, in partnership with his friend from the old, old days at Astounding, C. M. Kornbluth, had written the ground-breaking Gravy Planet, and a number of other stories, before becoming editor. (He hired me to be the book reviewer. A brilliant man despite that.)

This—all this about Astounding—had gone largely over my head. The name of Astounding changed to Analog Science Fiction—Campbell could not change it to Science Fiction, without any adjective, which is what he really wanted, because Science Fiction was owned by Archie Comics—but I continue to regard Campbell as S.F.'s top editor to the end, when a burst aneurysm in his aorta took him from us. But in fact he wasn't a top editor any more, and hadn't been for some time.

And I was selling many of my stories to Robert P. Mills at a sister to The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, called Venture, an amazing hypnotic—if, sadly, short-lived—market for which a number of well-known writers also sold, with purpose-written stories, despite its not paying a great deal. There was something about Mills, you see. But be that as it may.
Fantasy is filled with tales of wish fulfillment gone awry. Be careful what you wish we are told over and over. My own career as a teacher of science fiction has found me in much that same dilemma. Thirty seven years ago I began a traditional History of Science Fiction course at Hofstra University which I’ve taught sporadically to advanced English students and to more self-motivated students in our “New College.” Eight years ago I was happily teaching in my university’s most recent attempt at creating a freshmen program that would stop students from transferring or dropping out. First Year Program, or FYP as it was called, co-joined three core classes where the faculty and students all interacted, thus creating a greater rapport between students themselves, as well as between students and faculty members. My group at that time included a philosopher, a drama professor, and myself; I taught composition through the use of plays. Being totally happy and comfortable isn’t my style, however, so I suggested a new unit, merging a Composition through Science Fiction course (using primarily Golden Age stories) with an Intro to Astronomy and the mandatory philosophy course. The idea was quickly accepted and I soon found myself (and continue to find myself) in that black hole conundrum of being sorry that I wasn’t more careful about what I had wished for. What kid who has grown up on a rich diet of SF and basic astronomy texts (Patrick Moore comes to my mind here) wouldn’t kvell with joy at being able to fulfill such a lifelong dream? But who knew? Now into the program for seven years I’m still asking why I agreed to this. Let me explain the logistics and pitfalls of my particular course. For one thing, it wasn’t hard to get personnel into the program; keeping them, however, was another matter. My astronomy colleague (really an astrophysicist) is a brilliant young man from MIT and Cal Tech, probably the same age as my oldest daughter. He’s well-liked by the students, serious but much more lenient than I am and also a more generous grader. The philosophy member of the unit has been, for no discernible reason, in a constant state of flux. In the seven years of the program, we’ve had seven, different professors, such as the Israeli woman who couldn’t communicate with the students because she felt they were all stupid (they weren’t ALL stupid), the really cool guy from Chicago who flew in on Tuesdays and back home on Thursdays, and the youngster who looked barely old enough to be in college much less teach it. Where have they gone– and why? Just another one of life’s enigmas. Last year we started anew with an attractive young woman who seems to be on the same page as we are, having just taught a Philosophy of Science Fiction Movies course. (I wish I had taken that one myself.)

As part of the program (now called FYC: First Year Connections), our first responsibility is to communicate amongst ourselves. Hofstra encourages us to do this—and happily for us pays an extra teaching credit. To prepare for last semester’s course, for example, we met once in person the previous semester, exchanged e-mail addresses, set up a late August meeting, and agreed to start the year off with a bang by discussing “Endings”—thanks to the new findings about the Apophis asteroid which may possibly solve our ecology, greenhouse, and political problems all at once. What we had to do before we met our first class was to set up our three syllabi in tandem with one another. No, we did not team-teach (the only time we were in the classroom at the same time was the first day of class when we introduced ourselves to the students). Instead we did collaborative teaching. We tried to support one another’s subject matter so that the students could see the relationships between the material, even though the subjects don’t and can’t always collide as often as we might like. Because of the yearly change in faculty and the constant flow of astronomical data, our ordering of material is similarly in flux. We also try to work out assignments so that the students aren’t hit with major papers or assignments at the same time. And yearly we discuss the possibility of shared papers which I, the old traditionalist, constantly resist. I don’t want to be correcting an astronomy or philosophy paper because I would then be doing the work of a copy editor; I don’t want to be grading an SF story—or any creative writing—because I’d rather read it for pleasure (I’m always optimistic that it will be a pleasurable experience!) and then give them advice, not advice and a grade. I will, however, be happy to give them extra credit for such endeavors—and I’m very generous with extra credit because I will do almost anything to get them to write for their own pleasure.

Quite honestly, I believe that in this triumvirate mine is the hardest job and not simply because I must mark a paper a week for each student over the fifteen week semester (or approximately 540 papers, not counting finals). I might add that because this program is a Favored Child of the administration’s we have a maximum of 18 students in the comp sections and a maximum of 36 in the lecture groups. (I meet with the students divided into two sections while...
my colleagues have them in one larger lecture class, though the astronomy class holds small evening lab classes on the rooftop observatory from time to time.) The reason I feel particularly challenged is two-fold: my course is first and foremost a composition course in which I must teach them all the basic fundamentals of expository writing (and at Hofstra there is a writing proficiency exam which they must pass at the end of English 2 lest they have to take a remedial course). It is my responsibility, therefore, to lay the groundwork for them to be able to write an analytical argument comparing two reasonably sophisticated essays. That, in itself, is an increasingly growing challenge in an age when students seem to have read and written less than ever before in their pre-college days. However, besides having to meet that challenge, I also want to teach at least a rudimentary history of science fiction as well as the unique protocols for reading it. One would think that a student who has opted to be in an interdisciplinary unit such as ours would come with an innate interest in our subjects-and even a background in having read SF for pleasure. Not so! In the six years I’ve been teaching the course, I’ve had very few, very, very few students who have read any SF to speak of. In some classes I’ve had no students at all who have even heard of Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke—though a few have heard of or even, wonder of wonders, read some work of Ray Bradbury’s though unless it was Fahrenheit 451, they can’t remember the names of what they’ve read. I know this because I always begin my course with a questionnaire. I like to know the make-up of my classes and always harbor the fantasy that I may have some real SF fanatic in my course—which did happen many years ago when I taught an advanced SF class. It hasn’t happened since. In fact, the truth is that most of my freshmen are clueless as to what an SF story is, how it differs from mainstream literature, and how to go about reading it—if they plan on doing any of the reading at all. Many don’t—and they’re shocked to learn that this won’t be course in watching Star Wars or Star Trek movies (though I will show at least one film just before Thanksgiving when we all need a break.) Their general ignorance of the subject gives me a feeling of being needed and an agenda.

What I’ve found to be particularly difficult over the years is working out a syllabus in which I can use SF short stories to teach expository writing while the average composition course is using traditional essays. As a result, what I’ve done is to work out a basic comp skeleton and then flesh it out with SF stories. For example, I’d normally begin with the subject of effective introductions—so I begin by having them “surf” through the text (James Gunn’s The Road to Science Fiction, volumes 2 and 3) to choose three stories whose introductory paragraphs “grab” them and ask them to explain to the class why they’ve made their choices. They actually enjoy seeing what others have chosen and sometimes even bond with those who have liked the same introductions. I then move through the traditional expository divisions (narration, description, analysis, comparison-contrast, argumentation, etc.) as well as stylistic devices (such as rhetorical parallelism) using SF stories that demonstrate these features particularly well. I might ask them to write a comparison of Judith Merril’s “That Only a Mother” with Richard Matheson’s “Born of Man and Woman” or a short analysis of Clifford Simak’s use of parallelism in “Desertion.” This aspect of the course alone would be a relatively easy task; however, although I want to take these writing skills in an order that logically builds one upon another, I’m also trying to coordinate my subject matter with that of my two collaborators—and therein lies the problem. It’s still a Problem in Process—and we continue changing and refining the ordering of the subjects in the hope that we’ll someday find the perfect solution—or at least a better one. In the meantime, we do the best that we can, occasionally muddling up the order—and continuing to meet and correspond through e-mail during the semester. (Every other year the FYC administrators allow us to continue our unit into the second semester, however eliminating the philosophy segment. This makes the course much easier to teach and I can focus on more modern novels such as Gateway by Fred Pohl, The Listeners by James Gunn, and The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. LeGuin.)

There are, of course, real pleasures built into the program. The freshmen do get to know one another much more rapidly because they’re in three common classes together, but aren’t totally stultified because the rest of their program is taken within the university as a whole. As a result, there are generally more class discussions, greater camaraderie—and so far as the administration is concerned, a much lower drop-out rate. The perks that the university bestows upon the students in these FYC classes include field trips such as to the Rose Planetarium (not a soaring success), to the Brooklyn Academy of Music to see an interdisciplinary program where solar photography was used as the backdrop of very modern Music (too modern, perhaps!), and last year to Brookhaven National Laboratory where they got to walk into a particle collider (impressive)!

I’ve personally taken a few interested students each year to the Long Island Cradle of Aviation to hear former astronauts speak which was a particularly rewarding experience because they were witty, articulate, and wonderful advocates for the space program. Another especially pleasant treat last year was winning over many students: we were allowed to take students, as many as we want and as often as we want, to the University Dining Club. Many friendships have been forged there over giant
bowls of pasta,

All in all, it’s been an interesting journey with its fair share of hurdles and bumps—but when our group took a year off for our astronomer to go on sabbatical, I sorely missed the opportunity to teach a course I especially love, my own “baby.” And what with a new asteroid on a collision course with earth—really and truly—we’ll have plenty of arresting material to try to startle our students out of their complacency and away from their computer games. I am optimistic enough to believe in our ultimate success.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Approaches to Teaching
Pohl and Kornbluth’s The Space Merchants
Eric Otto

TEXTS


PURPOSE

There are two purposes for this lesson, both relevant for composition classes, literature surveys, science fiction classes, general humanities classes, and the like. Broadly, I want my students to exercise making connections between contexts—historical, cultural, critical—and cultural production. I want them to take a critical idea, such as an “against-the-grain” analysis of the status quo, for example, and locate places in literature where that analysis is artistically represented. Additionally, and more specifically, I want my students to come away from this lesson with a sense of the critical potential of science fiction, a genre that most students have engaged with only in non-academic settings but that says so much about the culture within which we live. Pohl and Kornbluth’s particular contribution in The Space Merchants, as many critics have pointed out, is its blazing critique of consumer capitalism, an economic system that shrouds us so completely that we are often oblivious to its methods and effects.

PART I: CONTEXTS FOR ANALYSIS

The first part of this lesson requires my students to examine six key terms and ideas as Ewen and Willis use them in their essays: advertising, consumer engineering, desire, capitalism as totalizing, consumption as a value system, and the real work that produces the commodity. I have my students read the two essays for homework. Then in class I count the students into groups and assign the six terms accordingly. Each group then analyzes relevant passages from the essays (which I direct them toward), drawing broader conclusions about their assigned term and then presenting their ideas to the class. Below is a brief guide to these terms:

1. Advertising: Ewen historicizes the advertising industry, which emerged during the decades between the 1890s and the 1920s. These years saw an increase in “mechanized system[s] of mass production,” resulting in surpluses of goods (Ewen 178). Industry needed to unload these surpluses, necessitating the creation of markets for what it now produced in massive quantities. Thus was born advertising. But “Advertising not only sought to inform people about the availability and appeal of industrially produced goods, it also contributed to a restructured perception of the resources and alternatives that were available to people in their everyday lives” (Ewen 178). Advertising made people aware that products were available, while it also created a culture in which such products became the essential stuff of everyday existence.

2. Consumer engineering: If industry was to unload its surpluses, people needed not simply to be persuaded to buy industrial goods, but more deeply to become individuals whose lives were defined by such goods, no matter the real relevance of the advertised products. In short, industry needed to create consumers out of people. As Ewen writes, the product designer Egmont Arens coined this effort “consumer engineering” (181).

3. Desire: Early twentieth-century advertisers and producers found much success in marketing to and designing for people’s desires, particularly the hidden psychological desires then being studied and revealed by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and others. Advertising and product design offered “consumers a subliminal promise of polymorphous gratification,” not
4. Capitalism as totalizing. In her essay on Disney World, Willis writes, “There are no cultural objects or practices that do not constitute capital, no reserves of culture that escape value” (590). In this regard, capitalism is totalizing, a concept Willis attends to a bit later when she notes Disney’s “totality as a consumable artifact” (592). Together, these two brief quotations point to a characteristic of capitalism that deserves much critical scrutiny: its tendency to commodify everything, whether by turning whatever into a product or wherever into a manufacturing site. (I often ask the group working on this concept to make a list of things that have not been, or cannot be, commodified. Predictably, that list is very short, if not blank).

5. Consumption as a value system. Willis writes, “In a world wholly predicated on consumption, the dominant order needs not proscribe those activities that run counter to consumption, such as free play and squirming, because the consuming public largely policies itself against gratuitous acts which would interfere with the production of consumption as a value” (586).

In chapter one, Fowler Shocken—the head of New York City’s largest advertising agency—attests to capitalism’s totalizing tendencies. Speaking to his employees, he gloats, “We remember . . . how we put Indiastates on the map. The first advertising agency . . .” and so on. (I often ask the group working on this concept to make a list of things that have not been, or cannot be, commodified. Predictably, that list is very short, if not blank). Willis’s argument follows her observation of children playing freely at Disney World, amusing themselves at a distance from the rides and themed areas and thus outside of the proper, prescribed consumable channels. Such play is “a waste of the family’s leisure time expenditure,” corrected only through a “purposeful consumption” that would establish the consuming individual—the freely playing child turned roller-coaster rider, for instance—as one now doing what she is supposed to do (Willis 585).

6. The real work that produces the commodity. “The unbroken seamlessness of Disney World . . . cannot tolerate the revelation of the real work that produces the commodity” (Willis 592). The “magic” of the Disney experience would disappear “if the public should see the entire cast of magicians in various stages of disassembly and fatigue,” if the public should witness what goes on behind the scenes of Disney’s always unspoiled productions (Willis 592). And indeed, to extend this discussion, the magic of our entire consumer culture could be threatened should the public see what goes on behind the scenes of industrial production: sweatshop labor, injustice in the workplace, environmental degradation, and on and on.

PART II: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The second part of this assignment requires my students to engage The Space Merchants within the critical contexts established in our class discussion of the above ideas. The writing assignment that follows our reading of Pohl and Kornbluth’s work obliges my students to analyze the book on their own, making valid claims about the narrative and the contexts we have set up (see PART III). But I do spend time preparing them for this type of analysis; and quite wonderfully, this preparation can happen largely in a class discussion of The Space Merchants’ first chapter.

In chapter one, Fowler Shocken—the head of New York City’s largest advertising agency—attests to capitalism’s totalizing tendencies. Speaking to his employees, he gloats, “We remember . . . how we put Indiastates on the map. The first advertising agency . . .” and so on. (I often ask the group working on this concept to make a list of things that have not been, or cannot be, commodified. Predictably, that list is very short, if not blank). Willis’s argument follows her observation of children playing freely at Disney World, amusing themselves at a distance from the rides and themed areas and thus outside of the proper, prescribed consumable channels. Such play is “a waste of the family’s leisure time expenditure,” corrected only through a “purposeful consumption” that would establish the consuming individual—the freely playing child turned roller-coaster rider, for instance—as one now doing what she is supposed to do (Willis 585).

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The concepts of advertising, capitalism as totalizing, desire, real work, and consumer engineering get further play in chapter one and indeed throughout The Space Merchants. To give my students a complete sense of the potential connections between the ideas we have discussed from Ewen and Willis and the novel, and thus to leave them with much opportunity to dig deeper into the book while writing the lesson’s assignment, I touch on the remaining concept: consumption as a value system. In chapter eight, Mitch—who as an employee of Fowler Shocken is very much embedded in the capitalist structure and in the motives of advertising—meets a worker, Gus, who is part of a conservationist organization that works against capital. About this man, Mitch reflects:

I hated the twisted minds who had done such a thing to a fine consumer like Gus. It was something like murder.
could have played his part in the world, buying and using and making work and profits for his brothers all around the globe, ever increasing his wants and needs, ever increasing everybody’s work and profits in the circle of consumption, raising children to be consumers in turn. (82)

Similar to the children amusing themselves at Disney, Gus is functioning outside of capitalism’s prescribed channels and thus has no value in a hyper-capitalist culture in which one’s meaning is wholly determined by his or her participation in the market, by his or her level of consumption.

PART III: WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The Space Merchants Essay (1200 words): In reading Stuart Ewen’s “The Marriage Between Art and Commerce” and Susan Willis’s “Disney World” we have developed a pool of ideas with which to analyze and interpret Frederick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth’s The Space Merchants. Write a 1200-word essay observing up to three of Ewen’s and/or Willis’s ideas operating in the novel. Make a focused and manageable claim regarding Pohl and Kornbluth’s book in connection with the terminologies we have discussed in class. Support this claim with both detailed explanations of the terms and clearly articulated analyses of relevant passages from the novel.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction

Neil Easterbrook


While the opening sentence of Gene Wolfe’s shrewd introduction to Jeff Prucher’s Brave New Words reads “You will be spared all references to Samuel Johnson,” unfortunately I am not so judicious. In his famous Dictionary of the English Language (1755), Johnson defined “lexicographer” as “a harmless drudge.” Ambrose Bierce was a little more pointed when in his infamous The Devil’s Dictionary (1906) he defined the same as “a pestilent fellow who, under the pretense of recording some stage in the development of a language, does what he can to arrest its growth, stiffen its flexibility and mechanize its methods.” Brave New Words, however, isn’t the least bit prescriptivist. While it may have some normative effect in how a few phrases or terms are used, it serves primarily to collect and index words commonly associated with SF or created by SF.

Lexicographers have long played a curious role in western culture—their efforts actually quite valuable, though it always seems the sort of unimaginably dull work that, for example, kept us all from pursuing careers in accountancy. Yet it’s also marvelous that someone else finds it sufficiently stimulating; just as we need balance sheets that actually balance, we need good dictionaries. And it’s especially wonderful to discover that someone else has done all the tedious work for us. This is more-or-less how everyone should feel about Aristotle, for example, especially in instances such as The Poetics. Sure, it’s the most important work of literary criticism and theory in western history, but thank god it’s already been done. Leaving us to get on with having fun.

Brave New Words details approximately 3,000 terms, beginning with “actifan” and ending with “-zine,” drawn directly from SF or from authors, critics, and fans of the genre. Each entry is supported by three to six citations, almost all from twentieth-century uses. Prucher began with the database compiled by the Oxford English Dictionary’s on-line Science Fiction Citations Project (still up and running at www.jessesword.com/sf). Prucher lists 201 names as contributors to that database; many of the names will be familiar to any member of SFRA (Brian Aldiss, Ted Chiang, Gardner Dozois, etc.) and many are members of SFRA (John Clute, Hal Hall, Andy Sawyer, etc.) While without an index, the book does provide a guide to use, a full bibliography for the citations, and suggestions for secondary studies of the principal SF authors.

The source material ranges widely, from canonical SF and criticism to The Simpsons; references from film and television supplement the literary texts; that Prucher includes citations from some sources of dubious authority, such as novels by William Shatner and the satirical web-paper The Onion, actually makes the citations far more lively.

Most of the terms themselves are the pedestrian bedrock of the SF lexicon. From fiction come death ray and fli, teleport and warp drive; from criticism come cognitive estrangement and edisonaide, mainstream and planetary romance. Such familiar terms are complemented by including more particular and peculiar uses—grok, tanstaafl, and the like. Prucher offers lots of variants—22 for “earth” and 19 for “time,” and this count doesn’t include variants where the word is the second part of a
compound. It may well be that the book will settle some academic bar bets. It’s nice to see evidence that Heinlein didn’t coin “tanstaaff” (many of us knew this already) and that Gibson didn’t coin computer “virus” (many of us didn’t). It’s surprising to know that the first case of “posthuman” was Lovecraft, and in 1936, which is the sort of fact you could use to make a very good bar bet indeed. (But not for long—word will get around.)

Included too are many terms I didn’t know, such as “egoboo” (ego + boost, as in seeing your own name in print), “lay story” (where the characters of well-known stories get laid), “presser” (a beam that has the opposite effect of a tractor), “tri-dim” (it’s really not worth defining, trust me), and “Twonk’s disease” (the essential problem of people like us, who read books like these and then write reviews like this). As a pedant myself, I appreciate knowing the precise source of a term and something of its etymology; not only does this enable me to be more accurate in my teaching and scholarship, I look forward to winning more bar bets.

Despite the detail and the large number of citations, there are surprisingly few errors, even though the review copy supplied was an “uncorrected advance reading copy.” No doubt many of the small textual and typographic errors have already been corrected, but it still rankles to see such things as “Bladerunner” as a single word. There’s still much more substantial work to be done, and no doubt future editions will resolve ambiguous or disputed etymologies, clarify usage, or add new terms. The entry on “sharecropping,” for example, names Gardner Dozois as the source but adds Dozois’ own denial, sent in an email to the OED. Some expected terms (Geoff Ryman’s “mundane sf,” for example) aren’t there, and new terms pop up all the time. My most recent favorite comes from the cover blurb on China Miéville’s *Perdido Street Station*; there Peter F. Hamilton describes that novel combination of sf, fantasy, steampunk, and weird ethos as “technoslip,” a term that strikes me as perfectly balanced and useful. (Though no one else agrees, as you’ll discover if you Google the word.) It would also be lovely to have a cross-referenced topical index—of the sort one finds in dictionaries of synonyms.

In *Inventing English: A Portable History of the Language* (2007), Seth Lerer tells us that Johnson invented the persona of the lexicographer as a wit offering interpretive stories of the language. It was the great project of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (led by James Murray and beginning publication in 1884) to delete the wit and create the science: multiple sources collected, verified, and edited into a reliable, neutral project. While primarily still a product of the OED ethos, *Brave New Words* retains something of the essential wit of the SF community. Since the John Clute and Peter Nicholls *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2/e, 1994) is a more encyclopedic glossary, I suspect I’ll still use it as my first choice for definitions and interpretive stories about SF. Most of us eagerly await the third edition, now in preparation. A text such as Clute and Nicholls’ combines idiosyncrasy and accuracy as few do. Even if there are small errors or omissions—and there are surprisingly few of these—*Brave New Words* will be a useful resource to both fans and scholars. It’s the kind of book that you’d be unlikely to buy for yourself but would be glad to receive as a gift, and all libraries—both public and university—ought to add it to their reference collections.

**Nonfiction Review**

**Monsters of Our Own Making**

Amelia A. Rutledge


Marina Warner’s *Monsters of Our Own Making* is a paperback reissue of her 1999 *No Go the Bogeyman*: *Scaring, Lulling, and Making Mock*, which was reviewed by W. A. Senior in *SFRA Review* #244 (August, 1999): 40 (available in hard copy only). The body of the book is identical in letterpress to the earlier edition, but Warner has added an afterword that contextualizes the volume for the world post-September 11, 2001, and includes an eloquent defense for the continuing need for readers to engage actively with myth and the fantastic grotesque.

The previous review of Warner’s book is both astute and comprehensive, and covers topics such as Warner’s references, occasionally not accurate, to the grotesque and terrifying in popular culture. I would add that students and scholars of mythology, folklore, and the fantastic mode will find much that is useful, especially in Part One “Scaring,” and Part Three “Making Mock.” The former focuses on classical devourers—Kronos/Saturn and the Cyclops, with references to “The Juniper Tree” by the Brothers Grimm. The latter discusses the fantastic sublime, with a historical survey of chimeras and
variations on the brutal sorcery of Circe.

Part Two, “Lulling” examines the nexus of terror and comfort to be found in lullabies. Those interested in the literature of childhood (not coterminous with children’s literature) will find much of interest in Warner’s discussion of maternal anxieties and the horrors of bereavement from the Coventry Carol to a contemporary Chechen lullaby. Warner’s discussion of historical representations of the Slaughter of the Innocents, in both the visual arts and in drama, adds an interdisciplinary dimension to her study. This section can be read profitably along with a different treatment of maternal fear and loss, Diane Purkiss’ At the Bottom of the Garden.

Monsters of Our Own Making remains a valuable addition to personal and academic libraries, recommended for advanced undergraduate and academic professionals.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Plagues, Apocalypses and Bug-Eyed Monsters
Rikk Mulligan


Urbanski examines how speculative fiction (sf) reflects contemporary fears and anxieties—nightmares—and keeps them from occurring by providing the symbols or metaphors for their public discussion through the filter of popular culture. To establish the rhetorical, cultural, and political contribution of sf she engages in a rhetorical analysis of its cautionary tales portrayed in prose, film, and television, while avoiding narratives she sees as social commentary. Sf is defined as both science fiction and fantasy texts that “deliberately violate the bounds of reality as we currently understand it” (8). She uses broad strokes to sort recurring themes into the three categories and seven subcategories of her Nightmare Model, and applies literary criticism and elements of cultural studies to the discussion of these images, amplifying her analysis with the commentary of fans, authors, and editors of the genre. The core of her study uses metaphor analysis to evaluate the impact of the cautionary sf tale through the repetition of specific images in the mainstream rhetoric of news coverage and political discourse.

Urbanski’s nightmare considers fears of science and technology first, more specifically nuclear war, information technology, and biology as contemporary anxieties. As with the other sections, each manifestation is considered in its own chapter, followed by one of metaphor analysis. The broad analysis of science and technology suggests that the use of Godzilla, Dr. Strangelove, the Terminator, and both Frankenstein requires little context when brought into mainstream discourse. That these concepts are part of popular culture supports the argument that they are more than mere fringe images, but not that they are necessarily effective warnings.

Themes of the abuse of power—individual and state—comprise the second category. Darth Vader (military), and “Jekyll and Hyde” (mental instability) are used repeatedly in critiques of power. Big Brother and surveillance is a fear of government control and the abuse of information technology, illustrating the survey’s strength although the overlap calls her nightmare categories into question.

The Unknown completes her model with monsters, aliens, and “other” beings, in one chapter and “progress” in another. Aliens (invasions and abductions), mutants (X-Men and genetic mutations), and mental abilities (telepathy, telekinesis) figure prominently while they also overlap science and technology. Progress tends to offer dystopia as a recurring concept, especially the loss of individual control or identity, such as in The Matrix trilogy or episodes of The Twilight Zone.

The strongest aspect of Urbanski’s study is the concentration of images she pulls from a large number of sources. She successfully argues that the specific expression of each nightmare is refitted to incorporate new science and technology and reflect contemporary anxieties. In her preface, Urbanski writes that this five-year project was inspired by author Greg Bear’s Guest of Honor speech at the 2001 Science Fiction Worldcon. Her passion for the subject is evident; unfortunately in her enthusiasm she may cast her net too widely. Her survey is set primarily in the mid- to late-twentieth century and is more often taken from film and television. This study may have benefited by limiting the scope to science fiction alone, and focusing on either television and film or literary sources.

The breadth of her surveys also limits her ability to devote attention to particular sources and sometimes limits her to a superficial analysis of plot devices (such as the nuclear war in Brin’s The Postman) rather than possible resonances with issues of race, gender, sexuality, or nationality. In a similar vein, the strongest voices in her study are those of writers, especially Greg
Bear, Gregory Benford, and *Analog* editor Stanley Schmidt. While she does incorporate the scholarship of critics such as Tom Moylan, Kingsley Amis, Damon Knight, and M. Keith Booker, it often appears more anecdotal than methodical; the study is not in dialogue with similar works such as Mark Hillegas’ *the Future as Nightmare* or the more recent criticism of Thomas Disch or James Gunn. Regardless, this study does provide a well-researched survey that offers an intriguing discussion of speculative fiction in popular culture for a general reading audience.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**These Are the Ways the World Ends?**

*Thomas J. Morrissey*


SF has long been a congenial home for Jeremiads. From Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* on, SF writers have created visions of our world gone bad and of us simply gone. H. G. Wells took readers well past the human heyday in *The Time Machine*, a novel in which we are the victims of our own greed and cruelty towards our own kind. The nuclear age gave us a whole subgenre, the nuclear holocaust story. Those who read SF, and certainly those who write it, are also likely to follow doomsday scenarios in popular and scientific literature as well. Since, well, Jeremiah, prophets of doom have pointed to our decline and/or demise with varying degrees of respect for scientific accuracy. Once again, the atomic age gave rise to a plethora of non-fiction. Late in the last century, however, responsible researchers introduced a variety of new ways for us to suffer extinction, including bolide impact, super nova irradiation, and global climatic catastrophe. The revolver, knife, rope and lead pipe of the game Clue are no match for this arsenal. This review considers three recent pre-mortems of our species. This is the first time I have reviewed three books at one time, so this will be my Trinity Test.

Of the three texts, the one that has thus far attracted the most attention, including a review in the *New York Times* and multiple TV and radio appearances by the author, is journalist Alan Weisman’s *The World Without Us*. Weisman’s theme is the vanity of vanities. By imagining how our planet would prosper without us, he indicts the technological footprint under which lie the remains of extinct species and ruined habitats. Our consistent mismanagement of the planet has led more and more of us not to like what we see in the collective mirror. Nancy Kress’ send-up of human contrariness, *Nothing Human*, envisions radical genetic transformation as the key to human survival, and Kress is but one of many writers who have reached the conclusion that we must change fundamentally or perish. If we really were placed in and kicked out of Eden, we have adapted poorly to exile.

Weisman’s book is the simplest of the three. It sends a good message to humans: clean up your act or get out of the way and let evolution run the show. The humanless world that Weisman envisions is a wild one with vast forests and a revived and diversified menagerie of competing beasts. Head lice will miss us; most of the biosphere will not. Like Ozymandias, we will leave artifacts, but aside from bronzes, radio signals, and, perhaps, radiation from our finale, our work will have come to naught, swallowed by time, vegetation and oxidation.

Perhaps the most startling theme in Weisman’s book is the human impact on the grandeur of the animal kingdom. We have killed most of the giants, he tells us, from the mammoths and other Pleistocene colossi to the 800 pound groupers that once prowled coral reefs (which, by the way, we are also doing in). Imagine Columbus’ ships running aground on a shoal of giant sea turtles—it could have happened in 1492.

*The World Without Us* features an index and selected bibliographies. The book is clearly intended for a popular audience. Weisman’s shape-up-or-ship-out message echoes in the work of William Langewiesche and Peter D. Ward, but these authors have written more complex calls to action. *The Atomic Bazaar* is a case study in how and why a poor nation acquired a nuclear arsenal. The book reads like a long magazine piece of investigative reporting, which is what one might expect from a prolific freelance non-fiction writer. Its focus is Pakistan’s entry into the nuclear club and the man principally responsible, Dr.
A. Q. Khan. Far from being a mad scientist or evil genius, Dr. Khan is a Muslim who loves his country and his faith and who has over-compensated for a tough beginning in life by thinking and elbowing his way to the top of his society, at least for a time. A refugee from the 1947 Partition of British India, Khan hates Hindus and domination of the developing world by the industrial powerhouses. By hook and by crook, Khan brought to Pakistan the know-how and hardware to pursue his nation’s dream of instant status.

Dr. Khan’s story is not likely to have a happy ending. After the revelation of his attempts to sell nuclear capability to such pariahs as Libya, Iraq, and Iran, he was put under house arrest by his former sugar daddy Perves Musharraf, Pakistan’s General/President. That Khan is being held incommunicado is very likely designed to protect Musharraf from even more embarrassing publicity since his government had to be behind Dr. Khan’s proliferation efforts, at least at some levels.

Dr. Khan comes off as an ego-maniacal overreacher, which is pretty much how humans come off in all three of these books. Like Oedipus, he succumbed to the adulation of the masses. But he is still a national hero in Pakistan and in much of the world as the maker of what he himself has called “the Islamic bomb.” Langewiesche’s depiction of the suffering and disorder in much of the Third World makes American foreign policy seem not merely stupid and counterproductive but downright catastrophic. He argues that the rich and powerful cannot prevent any nation that wants nuclear weapons badly enough from getting them and that in our era more and more of the world’s people have less and less to lose, thereby endangering our very survival. If we want the world to last, we must help to make it better and fairer, and we had better start now.

The Atomic Bazaar has neither an index nor bibliography; it does have a list of acronyms used in the text. Sources are cited within the text. Dr. Khan’s story has been told in the popular press, but this book gives it in-depth treatment and the added evidence of the author’s many interviews with players in the nuclear game.

Environmental degradation and climate change are exacerbating the predicament of poor nations, thus making it likely that more Dr. Khans will come along. That is one of the conclusions in Peter D. Ward’s Under a Green Sky. This is, perhaps, the most frightening book I have ever read. It is not, however, sensationalist. Under a Green Sky is a whodunnit that turns into a whodunnit. The “what” is the cause or causes of the series of mass extinctions that have punctuated evolution and life on earth. The “who” is the human species whose activities have been altering the environment through technology since the invention of agriculture but especially since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Dr. Ward is a Professor of biology, earth and space sciences at the University of Washington and the author of a dozen prior volumes. He has preached his version of the climate change gospel since at least early 2005, and he and fellow researcher Dr. Lee Krump outlined their argument for the Great Dying at the end of the Permian period on “Nova scienceNOW,” Episode 7 in November of 2006. Their TV appearance with Neil deGrasse Tyson, reincarnation of Science Lama Carl Sagan, was fascinating but nowhere near as powerful as the fuller version in Under a Green Sky.

Even as Ward was writing this book, the picture of how life developed and nearly ceased on our planet was changing. When Luis and Walter Alvarez won a Nobel Prize for proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the dinosaurs were snuffed out by a 10 kilometer bolide impacting at Chicxulube 65 million years ago, the rush was on to find the other rocks that might have wiped out many other species at various times, especially the culprit responsible for the huge mass death at the end of the Permian. Capturing what appears to me, a layman, to be the essence of the scientific search, Ward makes a steadily strengthening case for terrestrial causes for most of the non-Chicxulube catastrophes. With lucid explanations of the experimental methods and the evidence they yielded, including an intriguing discussion of how scientists learn about past climate by measuring residual isotopes of oxygen, he demonstrates how global warming, prompted by volcanic eruption and aided and abetted by poison gas and ultraviolet radiation, is the likely suspect. It is certainly unsettling for a species that has ruled the planet during a period of relative climatic stability to learn that at various times the earth has either been frozen from pole to pole or so hot that the iceless anoxic oceans have suffocated life and belched out formidable quantities of hydrogen sulfide that poisoned the air and wiped out the ozone layer. In those ancient times it was volcanic activity, not people, that spewed forth the carbon dioxide that warmed and possibly nearly killed the world. This land has not always been made for you and me.

What makes Ward’s book intriguing as well as cautionary is his rendition of scientific rivalries. Reading about how invested researchers can become in their ideas and how personal their internecine fights can grow recalls Langewiesche’s recounting of A. Q. Khan’s blind hatred of his chief Pakistani rival, another Dr. Khan. Although these practitioners know that the fate of the world may be at stake, sometimes their own careers take center stage. Survival in such a realm requires more than a good brain. One needs persistence, patience, thick skin, luck, and a willingness to entertain the possibility that
one is wrong. Fred Hoyle’s stubborn refusal to acknowledge the Big Bang is good evidence for what happens when ego-born faith subverts scientific judgment. Beyond the grants and the choice gigs, the ultimate goal of science is to construct as clear a picture of reality as possible, and, according to Ward, that picture is not looking good.

Dr. Ward has the privilege to work with a powerful research team at UW, including the near legendary Dr. David Battisti, whose soul-searing visions of a future terrestrial hell close the text. The rate at which CO$_2$ is being pumped into the atmosphere has doubled since the 1970s and is now a whopping two parts per million per year. Failure to curb and reverse this trend will result in short order in a global disaster that will surpass in horror anything and everything that humans have had to endure. Using the mounting evidence of multiple planetary die-offs allegedly resulting from global warming, Ward and his mentor show us a future of drowned cities, massive dislocation, famine, disease, and, probably, war. The haves and have-nots will likely have to fight it out until no one has anything. Imagining a pale green sky stretching across a dead, poison-emitting ocean is the scenario from which the book’s title comes.

In his introduction, Ward says that his book contains “words tumbled out powered by rage and sorrow but mostly fear, not for us but for our children.” Yet there is nothing hysterical about his method or his prose. The climatic mystery unfolds chapter by chapter as he lays down scientific principles and recent discoveries in solid sedimentary layers that lead to an inevitable range of conclusions as imposing as a massive outcrop. What he shows is a very inconvenient truth indeed. Ward is aware that what he details will change with future discoveries. For a decade scoffers have punched holes in individual climate projections as new research reveals their shortcomings. Go to Globalwarming.org if you want to see how the well-financed climate change deniers pursue their goal of debunking the data-induced positions taken by the vast majority of climate scientists. Ward knows that his book is not the last word. It is only in the last four years that scientists have discovered that the Greenland ice sheet is disappearing much faster than expected; the concept of mass death by hydrogen sulfide bubbling up from stagnant oceans, the Krump hypothesis, is also a recent arrival. Ward is careful to present us with a range of future scenarios that assumes that our current knowledge is limited. However, no major discovery in recent years has done anything to undermine the scientific consensus that Earth is warming at an alarming rate and that that warming is, in the words of the 2007 report of the United Nations Panel on Climate Change, the “very likely” result of human activity. Carbon dioxide and methane are doing their deadly work; Ward wants us to face and possibly alter the future.

Each of these books is a snapshot of the world and our role in it. By taking us out of the picture, Weisman shows us how damaging our presence has become. By studying close up one nation’s rise to nuclear status, Langewiesche shows us that nuclear proliferation is a danger not just because there are more bombs in more hands, but because those hands belong to desperate people who are likely to become more desperate as the competition for resources stiffens. Finally, Ward offers a sober and somber status report on our stewardship of the planet, one that shows that the point of no return, the so-called “tipping point,” is on the horizon, though no one knows exactly how far away it is. All we have to do is nothing, and nothing is what we will have. All three books are good reading for twenty-first century sentient beings who care about future human generations. The end of this new century will unfold within the lifespans of some children alive today and certainly within those of their children. That's too close for comfort or complacence.

I recently began a review of Julie Bertagna’s Young Adult global warming novel *Zenith* with a quotation from the text. I will end this review with the same quotation because these three books either imply or pronounce that we owe more to those who will inherit the planet. This is what Bertagna’s young protagonist thinks as she struggles in a drowned, globally warmed world: “They didn’t think about the future, did they? They never thought about us.”

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**Tolkien and Shakespeare**

Justin Everett


Recognition of the literary value of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and other works has been a long time in coming. In spite of W. H. Auden’s early endorsement of the epic, it was not well received by the majority of literary critics, beginning with Edmund Wilson’s stinging review, “Ooh, Those Awful Orcs!” Even when it became immensely popular in the 1960s—largely
due to promotion by the minority of professors of literature who did see its value, followed by their students, who initiated the "Tolkien Craze"—most critics did not know what to do with it, so they spent much of their time discussing its sources and its relationship to Tolkien's great lecture and essay, "On Faerie Stories." Even now, after being thrust once again into the popular culture limelight thanks to the Peter Jackson films, Tolkien criticism is just beginning to identify its chief avenues of criticism.

One area where criticism has been particularly tenuous is the attempt to discuss any relationship between Tolkien and Shakespeare. The comparison is a difficult one to make. Even if Tolkien's clearly expressed dislike of Shakespeare (largely, though not exclusively, for his treatment of fairies) is put aside, the authors are difficult to compare. Shakespeare, hands down, is one of the greatest wordsmiths of the English language, and Tolkien, admittedly, is not; Shakespeare's characters are complex, and Tolkien's are archetypal; and Shakespeare found much of his material in his own contemporary world, whereas Tolkien intentionally created a world remote from our own. However, as the authors of the essays within Janet Croft's collection, *Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language* demonstrate, there is much to be gleaned from a comparison of these strikingly dissimilar authors. Though this collection is not particularly significant for any of the essays it contains, it has done an important service by assembling a serious attempt to understand the value of comparing Tolkien and Shakespeare.

Following an introduction by the collection's editor, the book is divided into four sections: "Faerie," "Power," "Magic" and "The Other," with each section containing three to five essays. Plays treated, as might be expected, include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry V* for their treatments of fairies and warfare. I was pleasantly surprised to discover treatments of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, and *King Lear* also within this collection. As might be expected, certain essays within each section were weaker than others, but this perception on my part might more accurately reflect my interest in the particular subject matter of certain essays and less interest in others. This being said, some essays, while demonstrating a reasonable familiarity with Tolkien scholarship, at times demonstrate an ignorance of significant trends in Shakespeare scholarship.

Though all of the collection's sections make useful contributions to thought regarding Shakespeare's influence on Tolkien, the first, "Faerie," is of particular interest because it concerns Shakespeare's treatment of Faerie and Tolkien's negative response to that treatment. The second section, which deals largely with themes of kingship and warfare, is less relevant, if not less interesting. However, some of the comparisons that are made are, in my opinion, tenuous at best. Whereas *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is relevant for its treatment of Faerie, and *The Tempest* is relevant for its depiction of wizards, links between themes and characters in the second section are questionable. The third and final sections somewhat redeemed this flaw, however. Comparisons between Prospero and Gandalf are compelling, though one essay in this section attempts to find an inspiration for the Ents in *Macbeth* that is a stretch at best. I found the last two essays in the book the most interesting of all for their discussion of the relationship between Gollum's dual nature, *Othello*, and *The Tempest's* Caliban.

Overall, Croft's collection casts a wide net. Because of this, none of the four areas it treats (perhaps with the exception of the initial discussion of Faerie) is developed in significant detail. Each of the sections could be developed into a book of its own. This should not be considered as much a criticism of this collection as recognition of the book's scope. That said, though several of the essays within the collection are thought-provoking, others suffer from questionable comparisons and tenuous arguments. No single essay in the collection stands out as particularly groundbreaking. The collection does, however, begin a conversation that has been much in need of starting. While this book is certainly not a "must-have" for a Tolkien scholar, the usefulness of some of the essays it contains makes it a worthwhile addition to a university library. I would not, however, consider it necessary for my personal collection.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**Sixty Days and Counting**

Bruce L. Rockwood


*Sixty Days and Counting* is the third book in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Climate Change Trilogy*, which began with *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004) and continued in *Fifty Degrees Below* (2005). It brings the myriad themes and subplots of what is really one
extended novel published in the traditional three-parts of SF publication to an optimistic if somewhat uncertain conclusion. Major personal conflicts that have been building in the first two installments are at least temporarily resolved, and the author leaves us with a hopeful prognosis for the ability of 21st century global society to address the political, institutional, economic and scientific challenges of realistically addressing the rapidly unfolding consequences of climate change.

Accomplishing all this even in three volumes is a tall order, but Robinson has similarly tackled environmental themes with political overtones in The Mars Trilogy and The California Trilogy, and is adept at introducing complex scientific concepts and political insights through credible characters whose individuality is not lost amidst the exposition. His plot entwines the reconciliation of Tibetan exiles with a China threatened by ecological devastation, and the election as President of Phil Chase, a Senator whose values and determination seem a combination of FDR and Al Gore. With the help of a rogue intelligence agent whose software leak is reverse engineered by clandestine associates of Argentine immigrant scientist Edgardo Alfonso, a black-Ops intelligence-gathering unit fails in its attempt to steal the election by manipulating computerized voting, and Chase’s election is “unstolen.” The black-Ops unit may be in league with establishment political figures reminiscent of Dick Cheney or Karl Rove. The scientist Alfonso is motivated by his recollection of the dirty war in his own country (180-188) to help the main character in this final volume, Frank Vanderwal, protect both Chase’s election chances and the agent, who is Frank’s lover Caroline. Frank is a troubled academic on leave from UC/San Diego’s Department of Bioinformatics to work at the NSF, who finds himself homeless after the flooding that devastates Washington, D.C. in the first book in the series. He then blends a feral life in a tree house or living out of his van, exploring his paleo-human nature with fellow homeless Washingtonians, with his day job as aid to the new White House Science Advisor in the Chase White House. He keeps tabs on various R&D projects around the world, and we see the changes and challenges through his eyes as he travels in his work. Other insights are gleaned through the family life and crises of Charlie Quibler, a Chase environmental staffer and primary care giver for his two young sons, and his wife Anna Quibler, whose continued work at NSF aims to provide seed money and support for responsive science wherever she can.

The uncertainty left open for our consideration is whether — even with the right leadership finally in place in the United States after years of denial and neglect, and the coordination of scientific innovations with financial support from world governments, the World Bank (141-142), and the reinsurance industry — there are still the time and resources available to stave off global disaster in the next fifty years.

James Lovelock, creator of the Gaia hypothesis, offers one answer to Robinson’s uncertainty. He posits that it is too late to avoid major dislocations, and argues for quick reliance on nuclear power to enable us to reduce our carbon dependence immediately or risk the loss of civilization, in The Revenge of Gaia: Earth’s Climate Crisis & the Fate of Humanity (N.Y.: Basic Books, 2006). Elizabeth Kolbert’s investigative journalism in The New Yorker, published as Field Notes From a Catastrophe (Bloomsbury, USA, 2006) is not much more optimistic. Robinson recognizes that even with Phil Chase as President, acting with redoubled vigor to push his legislative agenda after surviving an apparent assassination attempt, we won’t find solutions quickly. “This is just a start,” Phil would say at the end of his press conferences, waving away any questions that implied he had suddenly become more radical. “All this had to be done. No one denies that, except for special interests with some kind of horrid financial stake in things staying the same. We the people intend to overturn those destructive tendencies, so grab this tiger by the tail and hold on tight.” (323)

The novel concludes with Phil Chase finally helping Frank to run down Caroline’s ex-husband and his fellow clandestine agents, who seemed hell bent on using a frighteningly believable “total information awareness” system to control the country. There is enough ambiguity at the end to leave you wondering about Caroline’s motives, and the work that remains to be done is as great, if not greater, than what faced the protagonists at the end of Sinclair Lewis’s novel of a fascist take-over in America, It Can’t Happen Here (1935). That is, the radical reconstruction of American values is underway, but don’t kid yourself into thinking that we are home free yet. Unlike contemporary commentators who see America’s primary “enemy” as the “other” in foreign lands, whom we must confront through military might — whether terrorists in the Middle East, or Robert A. Heinlein’s bugs in Starship Troopers (N.Y.: Putnam, 1959) — Robinson’s novel reflects Pogo’s insight that our greatest challenge is our own way of life. [One solution is suggested by the stabilization wedges advanced by Robert Socolow at Princeton; see: http://www.princeton.edu/~cmi/ ]

Throughout the novel, Frank makes use of philosophical reflections on Emerson and Thoreau from his “Emerson for the Day” web site to center himself as he struggles to overcome his increasing inability to make decisions, while the Quiblers ponder the meaning of the close connection their youngest son, Joe, develops with the Khembalis (Tibetan) community. Robinson demonstrates sensitivity to issues of gender, race and sexuality in a variety of settings that stands as
a rebuke to the shrill personal and political discourse of our present day. In that respect, his novel may be seen as an alternative view of our present situation, more utopian than dystopic, hopeful and understated. It would make a perfect Robert Altman movie.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**The Kip Brothers**

John Clute


There is one name unspoken anywhere in the fairly long pages of *The Kip Brothers*, a tale about judicial error written by Jules Verne in 1898 and published in 1902. That name is of course Dreyfus. *The Kip Brothers* may not exhaust its interest for the twenty-first century reader in a post facto examination of Verne's conflicted attitude toward the Dreyfus scandal; but the extreme oddity of this novel about the murder of a ship captain, and the subsequent framing of the two Kip brothers for the crime, does generate, even in the non-specialist, some suspicion that it is a tale driven by that shaping absence.

It should be made clear immediately that nothing original will be suggested at this point beyond a nuance not perhaps emphasized fully in the literature about Verne: that a book like *The Kip Brothers* may be best understood in terms of its conflicts, but with no presumption that these conflicts are either resolved in its pages or were not true conflicts to begin with. The central and highly visible conflict exposed in the book must (one guesses) have been shared by most of those intelligent French men and women who, like Verne, were for political and other initially colourable reasons convinced that Dreyfus was guilty of the charges laid against him; but who, like Verne, whose son constantly and vehemently presented to him the growing body of evidence that Dreyfus had been framed, found their rationality at war with those deep convictions. It is hard to believe that Verne wrote his novel — about the framing of the eponymous brothers for the regicide murder of the captain of the ship on which they were taking passage — without some awareness that he was encoding in this tale of injustice a potential demolition of his own complexly sourced feelings about Dreyfus, and fealty to the fatherland.

Nothing of what I am saying here is new to Arthur B Evans, the editor of Wesleyan University’s beautiful version — the first in English — of *Les Freres Kip*; or to Jean-Michel Margot, whose introduction and notes display a completeness and clarity and methodological sanity sadly missing from much MLA-infected Anglo-American scholarship in the humanities; or to Stanford L Luce, whose translation of the text seems exemplary (and it certainly complete). Margot makes it clear that Christian Porq, in two untranslated essays from 1994, has argued convincingly that Verne, who often inserted codes and anagrams and puzzles into the undertext of his tales, certainly did so here. Numerous connections between the Brothers and Dreyfus are coded in this fashion, exactly establishing a similitude that Verne himself, upstairs in his “real” life, strenuously denied; and none of the scholars examining this evidence — the Verne industry in France is alarming busy and admirably competent — suggest that this linking together of the two levels could be truly accidental. Nor is it denied anywhere that the book’s illustrator, George Roux, drew Mr Hawkins — the owner of the ship where the murder has taken place, and an unwavering defender of the Kip Brothers’ innocence — “in the likeness”, as Margot states in one of his unfailingly lucid notes, “of Mr Alfred Demange, the lawyer for Captain Alfred Dreyfus.”

Margot only seems to lose the thread for a moment when he suggests that — given Verne’s anti-Dreyfus views, which he never abandoned — these hints and similitudes cannot in the end mean that he actually “secretly patterned much of his story on the legal tribulations of the French officer.” My own sense of Verne’s secret blind-side gestures, and of how these gestures contradict the clear concern for visual clarity that (Margot elsewhere argues) characterizes *The Kip Brothers*, is that we should not look for resolution here; but, as already suggested, conflict, or maybe we should call it conflictedness. I do not think Verne confesses the truth about Dreyfus in his novel about the framing of a Dreyfus (two of them in fact); nor do I think he gives up his loyalty to civilized values he espoused throughout his career by — in the nightmare passages of this novel — showing the precariousness of rational jurisprudence, even administered with compassion, when exposed to the acid baths of an evil world. Incompossible intuitions may be hard for the daylight mind to access; but they are the grist of dreams.

Maybe the proof is in the lateness of the pudding. The strangest aspect of the telling of *The Kip Brothers* is how deeply that telling resists coming to the point. The book is divided, as often the case with Verne’s novels, into two
“volumes”, each about the same length. For almost the whole of the first volume of *The Kip Brothers*, Verne focuses the reader’s gaze on a series of almost prelapsarian descriptions of the life of Europeans in the vast regions the tale covers: New Zealand; the paradisal archipelagos to the north; and Tasmania. We follow Captain Gibson as he demonstrates, from one port to another, what might be called a translucent fatherliness in his dealings with his loving son (who comes on board with the ship’s owner), with his crew, with natives good and besotted, with the firm’s commercial partners, and finally with the Kip brothers, who were shipwrecked on a desert island and who are now safe. Every relationship — between master and man, owner and captain, father and son, brother and brother, husband and wife, entrepreneur and enterpriser — is as translucent as the good Captain’s visible good soul. There are nearly 200 pages of this. Nothing is allowed to penetrate the resistance of *The Kip Brothers*: not the Gilbert and Sullivan plotters in the ranks who hope to murder the Captain and become pirates; not the weather; not any wry anti-British or anti-German sentiments of the kind Verne often expresses) which might undercut the sense expressed here that the whole enterprise of South Pacific imperialism is profoundly and transparently clement: that everyone benefits, that the seas and the jungles and the fields are infinitely fertile, and that the natives of the region have been painlessly uplifted.

At some level of his deeply troubled mind, Verne must have been aware that this conflictless Eden was both thinish and nonsensical; his own other novels demonstrate, as we know, a far more complex picture of things than is allowed here. And when the murder eventually takes place, it takes place off-stage, at the very end of volume one; it almost cannot be told. The second volume of the tale takes us swiftly to Tasmania, where the mistrial will occur, a land which, thanks to the colonizing genius of England, . . . is a country of free men where a deeply rooted civilization now prevails, where formerly there had been the most complete savagery.

Moreover, the indigenous population has entirely disappeared. In 1884 could be seen, as an ethnological curiosity, the last Tasmanian, an old woman. Of those Negroes, stupid and warlike, belonging to the lowest rung of humanity, there now remains not a single representative. No doubt, this same fate awaits their Australian brothers under the powerful hand of Great Britain.” (page 203-204) Margot’s notes, which are of a quite extraordinary comprehensiveness, do not flyspeck this passage, which may be the first utterance in the entire novel open to the possibility that we may be intended to take ironically the more grotesque assumptions of late imperialism about the nature of the world being appropriated.

I cannot myself avoid the feeling that in this passage, and in some others at this turning point of the tale, Verne is waking himself up from the blastemata-blank expanses of creative denial that mark the first volume, and that [kept him from having to open himself to the badlands of the very terrible events he must describe, though only in terms of art (which he clearly doesn’t trust at this point) not life (which is can of worms). The wicked sailors who have murdered the peace, and killed the father, but who are now at legal risk for an attempted mutiny, now contrive to blackmail the Kip brothers, who are framed at the very point their frank and honest testimony seems to have cornered the miscreants. On false but thoroughly plausible evidence, the brothers are found guilty of murder, and are hustled off to a penal colony so fast the eyes blur. A year of loathsome imprisonment skids by very quickly — as though (we speculate) the very thought of the tortures endured by unjustly imprisoned officers might endanger the psychic truce between incompatible understandings of the burden of the tale. It is thin ice for Verne (I think). The brothers help two Fenians escape, and are tricked into escaping themselves to free America; but they come back, in order to continue to fight for justice. Their eventual exculpation is enabled by just and caring men of law, but in fact there is nothing in the tale to demonstrate on Verne’s part any conviction that civilized jurisprudence will ensure a just outcome in the end. In the only sf moment of the novel, the Captain’s son examines a close-up photograph of his dead father, whose dead eyes are wide open in horror, and sees in those eyes a retinal image of the true murderers. Justice is done (does that mean that Dreyfus, who is still in penitentiary as Verne writes, has had justice done to him?) but ex machina, arbitrarily (does that mean Dreyfus is an innocent man who lacks a fluke gimmick to free him from a fallible system?).

*The Kip Brothers* ends in scenes of restrained and strained rejoicing, the most Verne can allow himself to muster, given his depiction of the true fragility of justice in this world. Nor does the bereaved author allow himself any sense that the prelapsarian imperium of volume one might ever return, which is a just surrender on his part to the conflictedness of the world, and to Dreyfus still in chains.

“They ate Jorgensen first.” So begins Jeff Carlson’s taut post-apocalyptic novel. The overall plot of the novel predicates a “machine plague,” a nanotech cure for cancer that got out of containment and out of control. The nanotech was developed in small, privately funded lab in Sacramento. It was designed to draw its energy from the living host and target only cancerous cells. In order to contain the machine, the developers designed a failsafe—the machine can only operate a 70% or greater of normal atmosphere. So, in theory, the patient would be placed within a hyperbaric chamber and the nanotech introduced into the body. Once the nanotech device has done its job and eliminated all cancerous cells, the pressure in the chamber would be dropped below 70%, and the machine would be destroyed. But, the machine is released into the atmosphere before it is completed, and the plague attacks all warm-blooded creatures below 10,000 feet elevation. Consequently, the only survivors are those who were able to get to high ground. These clusters of people are scattered among the mountains, largely on the west coast and in the Rockies, largely isolated from one another. The narrative picks up approximately a year after the plague was released, and focuses on the attempts to devise a cure.

The novel seems to be constructed as a triptych, in three informal sections and with three general foci. The first part of the novel centers upon Cameron Luis Najarro (Cam) and Albert Wilson Sawyer (Sawyer), two of the plague survivors, scrabbling out a subsistence living on a spit of rock in the California Sierras, near a ski resort. In the wake of the plague, the survivors banded together and put aside differences in order to survive. The small group on the peak has managed to survive, though barely, and after a year, they have already utilized many of the nearby resources, so long-term survival is uncertain. But the conditions are brutal and the resources are running out, and as a consequence, the worst of them begins to emerge. One day, a stranger appears, who had clearly come from another peak and who is suffering the effects of the plague machine to which he’d been exposed in order to cross through the valley to reach them. He tells them of their enclave on another peak, with better conditions and actual buildings still intact. And they have a radio. But en route across the valley, the factionalism that had been simmering on the peak erupts and a gunfight breaks out. Between the bullets and the nano “locusts,” very few make it to the new enclave.

The middle part of the novel centers upon Ruth Ann Goldman, a scientist on the International Space Station. The scientists and military personnel on the ISS have been above the devastation. Although Goldman has been able to contribute to the efforts on the ground to develop a cure, she feels limited by distance and equipment, and believes that the world’s best hope is for her to return to Earth. The shuttle does return, but not for purely scientific, nor for purely altruistic, reasons. Instead, the U.S. government has political designs on the shuttle occupants and on the anti-nano nano (ANN). On the ground, the government has relocated at Leadville, California. Once a tiny town, it has swelled from 3,000 to 650,000. Leadville and the small college just outside town also serve as the center of the research being done.

The final section of the novel centers upon the “rescue” mission. The government learns that someone claiming to have worked in the lab that created the plague has survived and is on a mountaintop in California. Goldman, several scientists, and a cadre of military personnel fly to talk to Sawyer, but the locusts have ravaged his body severely. Nevertheless, they determine where the lab wherein the plague was created and mount a mission to retrieve the files and equipment from the lab. But access to and possession of the nanotech is fraught with political implications. While Goldman and (some of) the scientists desire only to create an ANN, (some of) the politicians and military figures desire to use it as a weapon against the Russians and Chinese. Should the information be in the hands of the government and politicians, or should it be controlled by the scientists? What use will they make of the information? Will it be used to reclaim the space below 10,000 feet for all or for only the chosen few? Will it be used to consolidate national political (and economic) interests? Most of the third section of the novel deals with the mission to the lab, and the battles among the factions trying to control the information and equipment.

In some ways, *Plague Year* seems to be part *Frankenstein* and part *Twelve Monkeys*. Like *Frankenstein*, it operates as a cautionary tale: (as James Rollins notes in the blurbs provided by Ace). Although the scientists in *Plague Year* were attempting a noble enterprise—to wipe out cancer—even with the built-in failsafe, it was uncontrollable once released into the world.
Carlson makes the connections with *Frankenstein* clear when Goldman ponders the comparisons of nano-scientists and God, an idea that Goldman finds "goofy" (34). But the focus on *Plague Year* is a bit more like *Twelve Monkeys*, in that it features a plague that was released upon the world by an individual, a plague that has wiped out the vast majority of the world's population, and a group of scientists attempting to locate the source in order to effect a cure. The only thing missing here is the time travel paradox.

A couple of things set *Plague Year* apart, for me. For one, the writing is good (though not consistent throughout the novel). In the first section of the novel, the prose is often highly imagistic and poetic. The writing seems to be at its strongest when the characters are engaged in internal battles, with themselves, others, or the environment. Once the writing shifts to the externals battles (the gunfight and the rescue mission), it becomes less metaphorical and more pragmatic.

For another, although *Plague Year* is well grounded in current science, Carlson does not get bogged down in the details of the science. At the 2007 SFRA conference in Kansas City, James Gunn was speaking at a panel on Heinlein, and he noted that John W. Campbell contended that good science fiction should assume that the setting and technologies were commonplace, that it should not dwell on explanations of new technologies, and that the innovations should not get in the way of the storytelling. For example, Wil McCarthy's novels *To Crush the Moon* and *The Collapsium* read very much like his non-fiction book, *Hacking Matter*. In other words, the two novels dwell so heavily on the science that it impedes the narrative. In contrast, *Plague Year* contains two very brief segments that deal specifically with nano technology, but they do not seem out of place within the narrative and they do not hinder it.

As for teaching *Plague Year*, I believe that it is fast-paced enough to hold most readers' attention, and it is an excellent updating of *Frankenstein*. The reality of nano-technology is (or will be soon) the reality of our students' lives, and *Plague Year* raises compelling questions, not just about scientific developments and the horrors they (might) spawn, but the relationship among and the responsibilities of science, government, and the military.

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**FICTION REVIEW**

**Birthstones**

Dominick Grace


*Birthstones* is Phyllis Gotlieb's tenth SF novel. In a career spanning five decades, Gotlieb has not been prolific, which perhaps helps explain why she is generally undervalued and overlooked. (The cover copy trumpets *Birthstones* as a novel "In the tradition of James Tiptree, Jr., and Ursula K. Le Guin," both better-known authors whose SF careers began after Gotlieb's but who produced major bodies of work during the long silences between Gotlieb's novels.) Nevertheless, Gotlieb is unquestionably Canada's most important SF author and arguably one of the major woman authors of SF. *Birthstones* is less ambitious in scope than her other work (it is shorter than all but her first novel), but it is a noteworthy addition to Gotlieb's canon.

All but Gotlieb's first SF novel (and several of her short stories) are set in the far-future world of the Galactic Federation, a Space-Opera environment, and readers familiar with Gotlieb will recognize some of the settings and alien races in *Birthstones*. However, *Birthstones* is a stand-alone work; while it acquires additional resonances in the context of Gotlieb's other work, it can be read on its own. *Birthstones* deals with the planet Shar and its people, also known as Shar. Their planet, an inhospitable environment at the best of times, has been further degraded because of corporate exploitation by off-world industries. The resultant pollution has had a deleterious effect on the Shar, especially their women, who have mutated into mindless monstrosities that can function only as breeding machines. The males are also increasingly losing reproductive capacity, becoming sterile. The Galactic Federation has promised to try to help reverse this trend, and the novel's plot turns on this problem and the efforts of GalFed to help.

The plot is typical of Gotlieb's work, intricate, complex, and multi-stranded. Competing factions among the Shar, as well as opposition from the off-world corporations, lead to murder attempts, kidnapping, and various plots and counter-plots across the planet Shar and on the planet Fthel IV, Galactic Federation's headquarters. The action is fast-paced, engaging, occasionally confusing, occasionally horrifying, and really secondary to what makes the novel interesting. The conspiracy-laden plot serves primarily as an excuse to explore political, social, and gender-based issues (hence, perhaps, the comparisons to Le
There are parallels between the Shar situation and some aspects of contemporary life on Earth. The corporate exploitation and contamination of Shar suggest a commentary on environmental abuses, and the linking of environmental abuse with reproductive viability serves as a vivid metaphor for the dangers of rapacious exploitation. Indeed, throughout her career, Gotlieb has addressed the plights of marginalized peoples living in inimical environments being further victimized by corporatist interests; the focus of her previous three books was the exploitation of genetically engineered life forms. Rather than a powerful Empire, the Galactic Federation often seems to be an ineffectual bureaucracy, barely able to protect its members from the worst of abuses.

But an eco-friendly message is not the book’s only agenda. The gender-specific impact of the mutations creates a scenario in which men are forced to breed with monstrous unwomen if they wish to become parents and to assume maternal as well as paternal roles in childcare, while also grappling with burgeoning impotence. While many Shar find the situation intolerable and wish to see women restored to full functionality, perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the novel is its depiction of the Shar faction opposed to any such restoration. Though Gotlieb is not doctrinaire and avoids providing any clear or simple answers, she is clearly interested in exploring gender roles and the conflicting and occasionally frightening factors that contribute to sexual politics. The most intractable problem the Shar face is their own ambivalence; the central Shar figure, Aesh, is vilified both for attempting to restore fully healthy women and for failing to do so.

Herein resides the novel’s central political point: there is no utopian solution, though Gotlieb’s plot does allow for an almost miraculous movement towards a restoration in its final pages, in the novel’s one significant misstep. The peoples involved do not, themselves, really know what they want. Gotlieb’s choice of names for the Shar becomes illuminating at this point. In her afterword, she notes that when she first created the Shar, she unconsciously assigned then Hebrew nouns as names; when she recognized this pattern, she deliberately retained it. Consequently, the novel has Middle East resonances. The Shar can be seen as analogues for Jews, and their situation an oblique allegory, or at least echo (allegory is perhaps too strong a term, since there is no schematic representation of real-world scenarios here) of the tensions in Israel and the Middle East. Gotlieb’s Jewish roots have been reflected elsewhere in her writing, notably in her often-anthologized short story “Tauf Aleph” and in the first section of an earlier GalFed novel, A Judgment of Dragons.

In short, Gotlieb’s novel delivers on several fronts. It can be read as a relatively straightforward Space Opera adventure, dealing in galaxy-spanning action with the fate of an entire people at issue. It becomes far more interesting when one takes into account Gotlieb’s complex meditations on gender, capitalism, and politics, especially in light of her reluctance to provide the all too common deus ex machina which in much SF provides a radical and over-simplified solution for complex problems in the denouement. While Gotlieb allows the reader some hope of such a resolution by having more or less healthy Shar women turn up in remote locations in the final chapters, thereby possibly simplifying and accelerating the process of regeneration, she is also makes quite clear that full recovery, if it occurs at all, will require ongoing work and the passing of several generations. This novel is especially interesting as an unconventional take on Space Opera as well as for its complex commentary on environmental, social, and political issues.

Fiction Review

Brasyl

Jason W. Ellis


Ian McDonald hacks reality in his latest novel, Brasyl. It’s a postcolonial cyberpunk SF story that goes far beyond The Matrix. Instead of humanity being plugged into a network run by a powerful machine intelligence, humanity and what we believe to be reality are merely bits flipping in the grand simulation memory of the largest of all possible computers: the multiverse, parallel universes amounting to the sum of all possibilities. The author combines Nick Bostrom’s philosophy of living within a computer simulation and Stephen Wolfram’s mathematical cellular automata with the latest developments in quantum theory to enact this paradigm shifting SF story.

McDonald begins developing the reader’s estrangement by subtly disconnecting the naming of Brazil from its accepted origins while accurately and poetically constructing a past, present, and future space instantly recognized as Brazil. It’s interesting that McDonald titled the novel Brasyl, which is the Erse word for “land of the blest,” according to Arthur Percival.
Newton in his 1970 work, *The Great Age of Discovery*. Also, this name is connected to the Irish myth about a hidden island known as “Hy-Brazil.” This sets the land and its name apart from the more accepted etymology of Brazil, which derives from “brasil,” the Portuguese word for embers originally used to describe red brazil wood.

The story follows three emblematic protagonists in different times and universes, but all orbiting the physical space known as Brazil. Football (i.e., soccer, not American football) is juxtaposed with religion, renaissance science, reality TV, and “brasil,” the Portuguese word for embers originally used to describe red brazil wood.

Known as “Hy-Brazil.” This sets the land and its name apart from the more accepted etymology of Brazil, which derives from the land and people, and control of a country carved out of the Amazon similarly to the Congo in Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* (1902). The rewards for those who wish to strike out from the simulation means the creation of something new and exploring a life not yet played through several times over.

 Appropriately enough, the most significant hack is the re-creation of the Estádio do Maracanã in Rio de Janeiro. Therein lies the heart of McDonald’s postcolonial thesis. Football, originally a European sport, is appropriated by Brazil and is subsequently integrated into Brazilian national identity. They took a European (i.e., the colonizer) sport and improved upon it by developing arguably the best football players in the world. Analogously, quantum theory originated in the minds of European and American thinkers (i.e., the power elite of the Northern hemisphere). Again, quantum theory and its many strange ways are unraveled and utilized to recreate something close to the heart of Brazilian national culture.

Brasyl continues McDonald’s record as both an SF writer of postcolonial narratives and a first rate author. He recreates the richness of Brazil in this novel by sampling its language and history. Also, he provides a useful glossary at the end of the text to assist readers with Brazilian words. The author proves that estrangement from the Western norm need not take place on other planets or between the stars. He poetically constructs the story and setting for Brasyl as beautifully and expertly as he does in other works such as the “Chaga Saga” including *Evolution’s Shore* (1995), *Kirinya* (1998), and *Tendéléo’s Story* (2000), which is set in Kenya. Another recognized work by McDonald in the same vein as Brasyl is River of Gods (2006), which is set in India. Just as connections may be drawn between River of Gods and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981), it’s the author’s striking descriptions, metaphor, and pacing in their works that unite the talents of these two authors. Not only is Brasyl a powerful work of SF, it’s also a fine work of literature.

McDonald employs good scientific theory and an artful explanation of the quantum nature of reality and quantum computing necessary for the reader to see the underlying processes in the story as more than magical effects. His making Brazil central to the battle for quantum reality is artfully accomplished via the Amazonian curupairá, a golden frog that secretes a chemical that empowers individuals to see the vastness of quantum reality. Additionally, his depiction of hopping worlds is beautifully and expertly as he

The novel’s cyberpunk connections come from the technology employed by particularly characters. The parallel 2032 world is featured as one vision of a cyberpunk world. Edson has a pair of I-shades, which are heads-up display computers that connect to a network of overflowing information more vast than our current Internet but recalling the ubiquity of information in John Brunner’s *The Shockwave Rider* (1975). His dead girlfriend’s doppelganger, the “other” Fia, comes from a parallel world where computers are integrated into our flesh as animated full body tattoos. Edson’s Brazil is a world of complete surveillance and RFID chips that give away one’s movements and habits much like Stephen Spielberg’s *Minority Report* (2002), unless of course you’re as resourceful and enterprising as Edson. However, McDonald breaks with earlier cyberpunk stories in that the quantum computers Edson steals are tools used for various real-world purposes rather than eye candy.

Ian McDonald’s *Brasyl* is a significant work of SF deserving critical and academic attention. The novel would be easily integrated into undergraduate postcolonial and philosophy reading lists. Additionally, librarians should stock this title for the independent research that it will undoubtedly garner. The author is at the top of his craft with *Brasyl* and I can sense my many other selves in parallel universes equally shouting its praises!
POETRY REVIEW

Yaddith, Yuggoth, Doom and Slime
Sandra J. Lindow


Speculative poet Ann K. Schwader’s book, In Yaddith Time, is an ambitious thirty-six sonnet sequence inspired by H. P. Lovecraft’s famous sonnet cycle, Fungi from Yuggoth (coll. 1941). Schwader, an exceptionally talented poet, is able to tell her story in naturally rhythmic conversational verse that builds in intensity, pulling the reader across the galaxy via the Lovecraftian Cosmos, megalomania, madness and a great deal of slime. She begins,

Beyond the pallid sparks of wholesome space,
lost Yaddith drifts forever in her void
of primal nightmare, temple to a race
whose lightest thoughts might leave a world destroyed.

Thus the crew of a space ship lands on Mars and finds hidden cave crystals that when disturbed by the crew’s emotionally unbalanced captain wake the last vestiges of a lost, immensely powerful elder race, the Mi-go, who have the apparently effortless ability to kill or drive mere humans mad. What follows is a first person narrative describing the emotional fragmentation and demise of the entire crew, all except the narrator, a relatively inexperienced young woman—Agatha Christie’s Ten Little Indians seen through a Lovecraftian lens. Instead of Lovecraft’s book of arcane esoteric knowledge, it is a space transporter gate with “twisted yellow metal holding rough-cut stones in latticework of alien make” that opens the way to Yuggoth. The next line, “This was our first—and mankind’s last—mistake” Implies that not just the crew but all of humanity will eventually be doomed. The Mi-go, blobbish crustacean-like creatures with the power to detach heads and hold brains in cylinders that can be attached to devices allowing the brains to continue to function, lure humans with promises of knowledge, “the lore of deep Na’morha’s ageless heart,” but in typically Lovecraftian style this proves too much for any sane person to handle.

In Yaddith Time represents a small part of the genre that assumes that humans cannot face the chaotic alien or the empty vastness of space without deteriorating into depression, dysfunctionality and eventual death. Schwader describes this as “That fragile candle called the mortal mind.” As in Swedish Nobel laureate Harry Martinson’s novel-length poem Aniara, (1956) whose 103 cantos relate the tragedy of a spaceship that is swept out of the solar system after originally being bound for Mars with a cargo of colonists from war-ravaged earth, Schwader’s narrator observes the dissolution of her remnant fellow crew members into capering “parodies of men/ who sang & piped & wept ... then sang again,” but remains rational despite keeping “a weapon close at hand” and “burning “every light / around the clock” Sleeplessness, however, begins to take its toll on her in a way that Schwader elegantly describes as “dragging my ravaged consciousness past night’s event horizon,” late twentieth century science used to create an image that likely would have been as alien to Lovecraft as anything in his Ghooric Zone is to his readers.

Lovecraft’s father, a traveling salesman, went mad when H. P was two, probably from syphilis. It is no wonder that for H.P. life often did not make sense and human sanity was a fragile fabric easily rent. Most of his work was published in the years immediately following World War I, a time of international disillusionment. Martinson’s Aniara was deeply influenced by World War II and the cold war that followed. It is not surprising then that In the Yaddith time comes at a time when we are engaged in another war where human life is routinely wasted—and most often for incomprehensible reasons, this time an unholy mix of politics, religion and oil revenues. As in all literature, whether space opera or horror fantasy, the back story is really us, our lives on this generation ship called Earth. Schwader concludes:
In feeble death flare flickers & falls dark,  
devoured by a thousand nameless powers  
rupturing space-time to resume their sway. 
The destiny of Man is to give way. 
Here the words “rupturing space-time” recall nuclear holocaust. While the sanest of us might wonder why the world can’t hold a cribbage tournament or a potluck supper instead of a war, Schwader’s poems remind us that twenty-first century humans have learned little. We still hover precariously on the edge of total human annihilation. Thus, *In Yaddith Time* becomes a cautionary tale.
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