

Editors

Doug Davis
Gordon College
419 College Drive
Barnesville, GA 30204
ddavis@gdn.edu

Jason Embry
Georgia Gwinnett College
100 University Center Lane
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
jembry@ggc.edu

Managing Editor

Lars Schmeink
Universität Hamburg
Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Von Melle Park 6
20146 Hamburg
lars.schmeink@uni-hamburg.de

Nonfiction Editor

Michael Klein
James Madison University MSC 2103
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
sfranfictionreviews@gmail.com

Fiction Editor

Jim Davis
Troy University
Smith 274
Troy, AL 36082
sfracfictionreviews@gmail.com

Media Editor

Ritch Calvin
SUNY Stony Brook
W0515 Melville Library
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3360
sframediareviews@gmail.com

Submissions

The *SFRA Review* encourages submissions of reviews, review essays that cover several related texts, interviews, and feature articles. Submission guidelines are available at <http://www.sfra.org/> or by inquiry to the appropriate editor. All submitters must be current SFRA members. Contact the Editors for other submissions or for correspondence.

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EDITORS' MESSAGE**300**

Doug Davis and Jason Embry

THIS IS THE 300TH ISSUE of the *SFRA Review*. While you are reading the opening pages of this historic issue of the *Review*, consider turning to final pages—the calls-for-papers section in particular. There you will find another milestone in the history of the *Review*. The present editors of the *Review* along with Susan George and Ritch Calvin are preparing an edited collection of our “101 Feature” articles, *Science Fiction 101*. Karen Hellekson and Craig Jacobsen began running “101” articles back in the winter of 2008. Since then, nearly twenty articles have been published in this popular and unique series, the latest of which is Sha LaBare’s article in the present issue, “The Ecology of Everyday Life.” While some of these articles will be revised and reprinted in *Science Fiction 101*, we are also looking for new ones. Take a moment to read the call for papers and consider contributing to *Science Fiction 101*. We are excited about this project. Nobody has published a collection quite like it before. It will be a valuable resource for students, educators and scholars alike. We invite you to be a part of it. All of the editors of *Science Fiction 101* will be at the SFRA annual conference in Detroit and any one of us would be very happy to speak with you about what you can contribute to the collection. Take a moment to read the Immediate Past President’s Message as well and consider nominating someone—or yourself—for election to a position on the SFRA’s Executive Committee.

SFRA BusinessPRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**The Motor City Is Back**

Ritch Calvin

THE ANNUAL SFRA CONFERENCE in Detroit is fast approaching. And while I know that a few of you

have yet to start your paper, I have mine safely in my DropBox, awaiting a few final touches on the plane ride. The Detroit conference looks to be great. If you have been following Steve Berman’s regular updates, you will see that he has assembled an excellent lineup of guest scholars and writers. Eric Rabkin (winner of the 2010 Pilgrim Award) will give a keynote talk. He will be joined by Saladin Ahmed, Minister Faust, Melissa Littlefield, Robert Sawyer, Sarah Zettel, and Steven Shaviro. And on top of that, a perusal of the program reveals an exciting slate of panels and talks. As is often the case, I will want to be in several rooms at once to hear all the interesting talks. The program can be found here: <http://sfradetroit2012.com/>.

You will have also noticed that next year’s SFRA conference will be held in conjunction with the Eaton conference in Riverside, California. The Executive Committee made a decision a while back to foster working relationships with other organizations that also deal with science fiction and fantasy. We held a joint conference with the Campbell Conference in 2007, which was a success. We are also planning a joint conference with WisCon in 2014. However, while the SFRA conference has traditionally been held in late June or early July, the Eaton conference is traditionally held in April. So, be sure to mark your calendars for the SFRA/Eaton conference April 10-14, 2013. Notice the much earlier submission deadline for a panel/paper proposal! And be sure to see the announcement in the SFRA Detroit program, on the SFRA FaceBook page, and on the SFRA website.

You will also notice that the SFRA website has been completely redesigned by Matt Holtmeier. One of the points of discussion at the business meeting in Lublin, Poland was the state of the website. The EC undertook a study of other, similar professional websites in order to determine the look, feel, and function of our site. As you might have read in Matt’s email, the front-end design has been completed and the back-end redesign is under way. This will allow us to better create and maintain membership subscriptions and data, including the Membership Directory. The down side is that we could not simply port the existing user data into the new site. Each member will have to login and create a new user ID and password. We will have a laptop available in Detroit specifically for this purpose. Please look around the new site and be sure to send your comments along to Matt. Thanks, Matt!

As has been documented here, the *SFRA Review* has

had to go through some dramatic changes in the recent past. We have been compelled by circumstance to alter our entire means of production and distribution. Certainly, we are not alone in this. Many publications, including a number of them within the SF field, have had to make similar decisions and changes. In order to make this change, we have had to revise the membership dues structure and find and secure a print-on-demand printer for those individuals who still prefer a hard copy of the *Review*. All of these change threw the publication schedule off. We are in the process of rectifying that, and intend to return to our usual seasonal publishing schedule with issue 301 this summer.

When we shifted to the electronic publication in mid-2011, we were left with three issues still “owed” to paying members. After much deliberation, we decided that, despite the cost to the organization, that we would find an inexpensive printer (which turned out to be Lightning Press) and print and mail all three issues in one volume. We have just completed the process of compiling the three 2011 issues and sending them a printer, so the three-in-one volume should land on your doorsteps soon.

One of the successful features of the *SFRA Review* has been the introduction of the “101” pieces. This series of short pieces was instituted by then-editors Karen Hellekson and Craig Jacobsen. The SFRA is now in the process of compiling a volume of 101s for publication. The book will include some of the old 101s and will solicit new 101s on a range of topics. Please see the Call for Contributions in this issue of the *Review*, and please consider contributing.

Finally, elections for officers of the SFRA are fast approaching. You will have already received a notice via listserv from Immediate Past President Lisa Yaszek about the upcoming elections. Please see her announcement in this issue of the *Review*. And please do consider running for one of these important offices.

Next stop, Detroit. Looking forward to seeing many of you there.

VICE PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Our Updated Online Presence

Jason W. Ellis

GREETINGS, ALL! Many of us are undoubtedly pre-

paring to leave for this year’s SFRA Conference in Detroit, Michigan hosted by Steven Berman. Publicity Director R. Nicole Smith, SFRA Tweeter Andrew Ferguson, and many SFRA members put the word out on the street about the Detroit conference. I believe that our efforts will make this a very fine meeting. I would like to thank you for your hard work! According to the program (available on sfra.org), there are an impressive number of presentations from established and new members of the organization. I am looking forward to seeing many of you there, and for those of you who could not make it this year, I am very likely to see you virtually on Facebook, on the listserv, or the website.

Speaking of the website, we have just launched the latest revision to our official site at www.sfra.org! Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our organization’s Webmaster Matthew Holtmeier, we have streamlined and simplified the organization of the website as part of the first phase of the site’s current redevelopment. The goals for this phase of the redesign were very straightforward: consolidate the site’s hierarchical organization and improve the general user experience for members and potential members. I believe that Matthew has accomplished these goals, but we are soliciting feedback from everyone about the new design. Please email me at dynamicsubspace@gmail.com, and I will forward your feedback to Matthew.

The second phase of the website redesign will take the remainder of the summer months to accomplish. Matthew is developing a new backend or under-the-hood enhancement that will enable the executive committee now and in the future a one-stop-shop membership management system. Currently, the website and the treasurer/secretary maintain separate membership databases that require reconciliation and extra work by more hands. With the new system, we hope to create a new workflow that is maintained through the website with the appropriate access given to those officers who require information for renewals, journal subscriptions, etc. Furthermore, this new system will simplify the renewal process for existing members and it will remove some of the steps required for new members to sign up for a membership. Considering the economic necessity of moving to electronic journals, it also makes sense to make the organization’s online presence better integrated into the cost-effective systems that we will employ moving forward. A side effect of the website’s enhancements is that the online database will need rebuilding. This will in no way affect your membership

with the organization—the treasurer maintains an up-to-date database of all memberships—but it will require everyone to recreate their website accounts. This will be a slight inconvenience, but the long term rewards of this update to the website will simplify organizational management for the executive committee and individual membership management for each member. Matthew will address this in an email announcement to the listserv, so stay tuned for that update soon.

Our website is an important tool for the organization to promote the work that we all do and to attract new members to join our ranks and take part in our numerous conversations. In particular, I believe that the website changes that we are making now will pay ample dividends in the future as the organization responds to new financial challenges and additional demands on our time. Its new look will present a better image of the professionalization promoted by the SFRA and its new management system will create new efficiencies for organizational and membership administration. It might not be a time machine or a jet pack, but the new website is a bit of futuristic technology that will carry the association into the future.

2011 AWARDS

SFRA Awards Winners

Ritch Calvin

I am pleased to announce the winners of this year's awards:

Pilgrim Award (for lifetime contributions to SF/F studies). Winner: Pamela Sargent. Committee: Marleen Barr (c); Brian Attebery; Roger Luckhurst.

Pioneer Award (for outstanding essay-length work of the year). Winner: David M. Higgins for “Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction” *American Literature* 83.2 (June 2011) Honorable Mention: Everett Hamner for “The Predisposed Agency of Genomic Fiction,” *American Literature* 83.2 (June 2011). Honorable Mention: Heather Latimer for “Reproductive Technologies, Fetal Icons, and Genetic Freaks: Shelley Jackson’s Patchwork Girl and the Limits of Possibilities of Donna Haraway’s Cyborg,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 57.2 (Summer 2011). Committee: De Witt Kilgore (c); Neil Eastbrook; Keren Omry.

Thomas D. Claerson Award for Distinguished Service. Winner: Arthur B. Evans. Committee: Andy Sawyer (c); Joan Gordon; Alan Elms.

Mary Kay Bray Award (for the best essay, interview, or extended review in the past year’s SFRA Review). Winner: T. S. Miller for “Review of Rise of the Planet of the Apes.” Honorable Mention: Lars Schmeink for “Video Games Studies 101.” Committee: Susan George (c); Sharon Sharp; Joan Haran.

Student Essay Award (for best student paper presented at the previous year’s SFRA conference). Winner: Florian Bast for “Fantastic Voices: Octavia Butler’s First-Person Narrators and ‘The Evening and the Morning and the Night.’” Committee: Alfredo Suppia (c); James Thrall, Sonja Fritzsche.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Call for Executive Committee Candidates

Lisa Yaszek

The SFRA seeks candidates, including self-nominations, for this fall’s election for the following executive committee positions, effective January 1, 2013: president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. Nominations or questions should be sent to Lisa Yaszek (lisa.yaszek AT gatech.edu), SFRA immediate past president. Job descriptions, drawn from the official duties of each officer found on page 35 of the 2009 SFRA Member Directory and from the bylaws available at <http://www.sfra.org/bylaws>, are as follows:

President (term: 2 years; may not succeed themselves in office): The president shall be chief executive of the association; he/she shall preside at all meetings of the membership and the Executive Committee, have general and active management of the business of the association, and see that all orders and resolutions of the Executive Committee are carried out; the president shall have general superintendence and direction of all other officers of the association and shall see that their duties are properly performed; the president shall submit a report of the operations of the association for the fiscal year to the Executive Committee and to the membership at the annual meeting, and from time to time

shall report to the Executive Committee on matters within the president's knowledge that may affect the association; the president shall be ex officio member of all standing committees and shall have the powers and duties in management usually vested in the office of president of a corporation; the president shall appoint all committees herein unless otherwise provided.

Vice president (term: 2 years; may not succeed themselves in office): The vice president shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the president during the absence of the latter and shall have such other duties as may, from time to time, be determined by the Executive Committee. At any meeting at which the president is to preside, but is unable, the vice president shall preside, and if neither is present or able to preside, then the secretary shall preside, and if the secretary is not present or able to preside, then the treasurer shall preside. The vice president shall have special responsibility for membership recruitment for SFRA.

Secretary (term: 2 years; may succeed themselves in office): The secretary shall attend all sessions of the Executive Committee and all meetings of the membership and record all the votes of the association and minutes of the meetings and shall perform like duties for the Executive Committee and other committees when required. The secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the membership and special meetings of the Executive Committee and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee or the president. In the event the secretary is unable to attend such meetings as may be expected, the Executive Committee may designate some other member of the association to serve as secretary pro tern.

Treasurer (term: 2 years; may succeed themselves in office): The treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the association and have charge of all receipts and disbursements of the association and shall be the custodian of the association's funds. The treasurer shall have full authority to receive and give receipts for all monies due and payable to the association and to sign and endorse checks and drafts in its name and on its behalf. The treasurer shall deposit funds of the association in its name and such depositories as may be designated by the Executive Committee. The treasurer shall furnish the Executive Committee an annual financial report within 60 days of the fiscal year; the fiscal year shall end on December 31.

The Ecology of Everyday Life

Sha LaBare

"Maybe you shouldn't use the word 'science fiction.'"

WHEN I SHARE MY PASSION for ecological ethics with people, I often hear this phrase or something like it. Science fiction, it seems, still turns people off, or perhaps instead, it throws them off the scent, evoking a heavily-codified world of robots, spaceships, and light sabres. The many and varied arguments used to justify or even glorify sf – including my own preference for considering sf as a way of thinking about and being in the world – can only ever come after this kneejerk reaction, and this, in short, is why I came up with the course I call “the ecology of everyday life.” Basically, I wanted to find a way of teaching what I have to teach without giving prospective students the wrong idea. The Ecology of Everyday Life seemed like a sexy title, one that might lure interesting students into a course built around sf. Of course, what I had in mind was not so much teaching ecology through sf – a more traditional approach – as teaching sf through ecology. Another way of putting this is that sf is the theory through which I think ecology, and a quick glance at the course description probably makes this quite clear:

Ecology – literally “household knowledge” – is a key word for the 21st century. While global warming and other large-scale transformations of our environment may seem beyond our control, “The Ecology of Everyday Life” suggests that such global changes are rooted in everyday habits, practices, and choices. Drawing on several fields of knowledge – especially science studies, cultural studies, design studies and animal studies – “The Ecology of Everyday Life” aims to wake us up to the often invisible impact of those everyday choices. Students in this course will investigate some “thing” in their everyday lives – e.g. a Honda Civic, a housefly, capitalism – and write, in three drafts, an “ecography” tracing the pasts, presents, and futures of that thing. Drawing both on their own experiences – textures, sounds, smells, etc. – and on

extensive research, students will thereby create a partial picture of their own ecological handprint. Key to this project – and to the course more generally – is opening up a sense of wonder at the incredibly complex and beautiful world we live in, moving away from the guilt and panic that can sometimes accompany environmental awareness and embracing instead our own complicity and positive responsibility. In the process, “The Ecology of Everyday Life” aims to open up alternatives and new possibilities for designing a world that works.

Not even a mention of sf, but this description is obviously written in what Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. has called the “sf mode.” In contrast to the variously restrictive definitions of sf still so dear to many of us, I take sf for a way of thinking about and being in the world, one that embraces making first contact with the other critters and widgets around us, imagining alternatives to the world that is alas the case, and testing the limits of time, space, scale, and, especially, anthropocentrism. These characteristics, among others, have made and will make sf a powerful tool for both the theory and practice of ecology, and *ecology*, I argue, is key to both the immediate futures and the long-term survival of humans and the rest of us on this planet – and beyond.

I can *imagine* that all this might have been exciting to prospective students, but imagine is all I can do, because things didn’t work out like that. In practice, the first and only time I taught this course neither the title nor the description had any bearing on enrollment. As a one-year postdoctoral fellow here at Carnegie Mellon’s Humanities Center (2011-2012), one of my duties was to teach a course for the Humanities Scholars Program. While I had at first dreamed of luring in a mixed bag of engineers, designers, artists, and computer scientists, in fact the only students who were eligible to enroll – students in the Program – were also pretty much obliged to, and they did it without knowing the title, description, or instructor’s name. There were ten of them and, in spite of the Program’s name but in keeping with Carnegie Mellon’s general vibe, there was only one bonafide Humanities student among them. All second-semester sophomores, their majors included creative writing, economics, global studies, and decision science.

As ignorant of the students as they were of me, I opted not to give them a syllabus right away. How could I map out a course in the ecology of everyday life with-

out having some sense of who and what was in the room? The kind of first contact I associate with the ecology of everyday life is predicated first and foremost on ignorance, not passive ignorance but an act of unknowing. In light of this Socratic notion, I devoted the first week to not knowing who the students were and what they were up to. Our first readings – drawn from Paulo Freire and bell hooks – were devoted to pedagogical theory, to the ecology of the classroom and what it means to be an active participant in the discovery and invention of knowledge. With these texts I also modeled one of the weekly practices of the class for them: writing 200-word abstracts for each work we read. This form of compressed writing – trying to sum up an entire article or book chapter in 200 words – would put us in good stead for the main activity of the course: the writing of ecographies.

As for the readings, the first few weeks of the course were devoted to introductions. Good introductions are excellent examples of compressed and informative writing, not to mention that with their promise of knowledge to come they can easily be read as sf. I paired the intro to David Abram’s *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996) with that of Jane Bennett’s *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (2001), then the intro to Timothy Morton’s *The Ecological Thought* (2010) with that of Gregory Bateson’s *Mind & Nature* (1979), and finally the intros of Donald Norman’s *The Design of Everyday Things* (1988) and Ben Highmore’s edited collection, *The Everyday Life Reader* (2002). By week four we all had some sense of key themes for the ecology of everyday life: *first contact*, so brilliantly illustrated by Abram’s invocations of stars, wind, and rock, of ants, fireflies, and spiders; *ecology*, in the broadest sense of intimate relatedness amongst living and nonliving matter, what Bateson calls the “pattern which connects”; *everyday life*, with its imposition of invisibility on the brute facts of our existence in this world that is alas the case; *worlding*, the active process of making the world we all engage in through both theory and practice; and *sense of wonder*, what Bennett calls “enchanted materialism”, the capacity and willingness to be amazed and engaged by the critters and widgets all around us. While I had in fact given students a syllabus by this time, the readings remained largely TBA; further readings ended up including Philip Fisher and Samuel R. Delany on wonder; Michael Pollan on eating and being eaten; extracts from Donna Haraway’s *The Companion Species Manifesto* and Tim Ingold’s *Being Alive*; DeLanda on nonorganic life, Bennett on thing power,

Latour on technical mediation, Zoë Sofia on container technologies. At only one point did we read genre sf, essentially to clarify (and problematize) the notion of first contact: Le Guin's "Mazes", Bisson's "They're Made Out of Meat", Cadigan's "Roadside Rescue", Tiptree, Jr.'s "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side", Kij Johnson's "Spar", and Mark Rich's "On the Collection of Humans." (I made "Spar" optional and warned students that it was a bit *risqué*; they all read it anyway.) Perhaps our most important text, however, was Donna Haraway's "Chicken", the closest thing I could find to a model for ecography writing. A short, detailed, and playful written engagement with the figure of the Chicken in our modern world, this essay helped students begin to imagine what their own ecographies might turn out to be.

Indeed, as I suggested above, while reading was important to the course, it was research and writing that were central. One class a week we discussed the readings, and the other we devoted to ecographies. Each ecography was to explore some "thing" from our everyday lives, with *thing* distinguished both as Latour's "gathering" and as Haraway's "knot in motion." Given that I had coined the word "ecography" specifically for this course, it would be our task not to so much to discover it as to invent it. While I at first thought I would offer my own ecography as a model for theirs, once I'd written it I realized that it was a poor prototype, a bit like showing them an ostrich as the model for "bird." For my own thing, I chose the house centipede (*Scutigera coleoptrata*) – a horrific but benign sfnal beast –, but students took the word "thing" more literally than I would have liked and picked only *tools*: iPhone, violin, mink coat, Tartan scarf, eyeglasses, telescope, *keffiyeh*, plushie, utility pole, Dr. Bronner's soap. (I later suggested that this unanimity of choice said something about the anthropocentric bias of our society, and encouraged students to discuss what they would write about if they *had* chosen some kind of living critter: trees, mold, houseflies and scorpions all came up.) We started with scrapbooks, with mind maps, with show-and-tell, and with discussions of the ways that each thing students had chosen were entwined with the others. If, according to Haraway's deeply ecological formulation, *relation is the smallest unit*, then how might we both imagine and portray our things as themselves knots of relation?

After some very promising first drafts, I decided I needed to shake things up a bit. What, I asked, has *absolutely nothing to do* with your thing? On the flip-

side, what if the things that have *everything to do* with your thing had, in fact, *nothing to do* with it? What if the telescope had nothing to do with astronomy, the Palestinian *keffiyeh* nothing to do with politics, the iPhone nothing to do with consumerism? What, then, might these things become instead, or be discovered to already be? For my part, I figured that Antarctica had nothing to do with the house centipede, but with our expanded idea of ecological interconnectedness in play, we compiled lists: the sine qua non list named a bunch of things without which our thing couldn't exist, while the somersault sine qua non list reversed this, detailing a bunch of things that couldn't exist without our thing. I soon realized that without Antarctica and the ocean currents it generates, neither the house centipede nor I would even exist!

In addition to such exercises, I also adapted the abstract-writing as we went along, first having students write abstracts of each other's ecographies, then proposing what I call "gistifications", 200-word abstracts aimed at giving both the *gist* and the *justification* not of texts but of people, institutions, and ideas. Finally – and just prior to the deadline for the second ecography draft – I asked students to do gistifications of themselves, to consider themselves a sine qua non both for their own things and for the class more generally. In any case, the multiple drafts – a trick I picked up TA-ing for Donna Haraway's Science as Culture and Practice class at UCSC – provided both valuable training in producing polished texts and the opportunity for ongoing, in-depth, and layered feedback on the themes and concepts employed by each student. (The small class size was of course what allowed me to provide this level of feedback; a larger class would demand some other method.) Throughout the ecography writing process, I asked students again and again to consider how they could write a text they would be proud of – and frankly, when I read even the second drafts I literally wept with joy. They are that good. One ecography masquerades as a field guide to the North American utility pole, a "thing" that gets retheorized in the final draft as a "tethered system"; another jacks the crazy style of Dr. Bronner's soap labels to explore cleanliness, godliness, and the history of soap. I learned about the agency of wood in violin-making, how to see the mink coat as a shelter technology, and what the world might look through the eyes of a Pokémon plushie.

Nearing the end of the course, it seemed to me like it had all gone by in a blur. Time flies when you're having fun, and much fun was had by all – but what, if any-

thing, had we learned? The students were unanimous in the feeling that they'd never had a course quite so confusing, exciting, and enlightening, but between the moment they had first walked into the class – knowing nothing of “anthropocentrism” or “ecological ethics” – and now, what had actually changed? Most importantly, what could we do to fix that change in our minds and, better yet, to share it with the world? In other words, I asked them, how could we end this course with a bang and not, as I was afraid, with a whimper? We had a lively conversation on the topic and came up with a plan. One student suggested that they each write a gistification of the course itself, while another came up with the idea of a randomized campus-wide mass mailing. We agreed to combine these two ideas, and on the last class we mailed out three hundred copies of nine different student gistifications, all carefully formatted by our resident graphic designer. Here's only one example:

The ecology of everyday life concerns *ecology* – or “household knowledge” – and the *everyday*, that is, *everything* that permeates our lives from moment to moment, whatever it may be. Investigating everyday life from an ecological standpoint means stripping arbitrary societal constructs of their authority and showing us what was right before our eyes all along: that everything in the world, past, present, and future, is intrinsically connected. Through *worlding* – that is, exploring what exactly makes up our world – we begin to see this truth more clearly: exclusionary terms like “natural,” “artificial,” “human,” and “animal” lose their power, opening up room for a more inclusive view of life, time, location, and matter. In short, thinking ecologically means bringing both rationality and wisdom to our present – and to our futures.

The other gistifications are at least as inspired and inspiring, and you can find the complete set here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/92289203/Ecology-of-Everyday-Life-Gistifications>.

Needless to say, I got my bang! There's no way of knowing what if any impact these random missives will have on the students who get them, but this is true throughout the ecology of our everyday lives. Worlds are big, complicated places, and as often as not the effects of our worlding will remain forever unknown to us. What I can say for certain, however, is that the Ecology of Everyday Life course taught us all some of the most important lessons that sf as a way of knowing the world has to teach: humans are not the only people

out there, worlds can and should be made and unmade, and imagining alternatives is not only a possibility but even perhaps an obligation as we turn to face the uncertain futures.

Possibilities and Improbabilities in Human-Alien Interbreeding

Victor Grech, Clare Thake-Vassallo, and Ivan Callus

Introduction

DIFFERENT SPECIES have readily mated together in mythology, and Zeus, for example, is said to have taken a bull's form in order to seduce Europa (Hard 13). This trope also has Biblical precedent when, in ancient times, the sons of God (angels) found human women fair, took them to wife and begat children off them, a scenario repeated in two popular films, Ephron's *Michael* (1996) and Silberling's *City of Angels* (1998). In a more sinister vein, succubi (female) and incubi (male) were purported demons that allowed mankind to consort sexually with the devil. Such folklore is not restricted to Christianity and accounts of diabolical intercourse are common cultural phenomena with parallels from non-Christian sacred texts including Arabian djinn or jinn, Greek satyrs, Hindu bhuts, Samoan hotua poro, and Celtic dusii (Sagan). Scientists abhor such superstitions and an excellent review of how scientists wish the non-scientist to learn critical and sceptical thinking so as to be able to identify pseudoscience and so-called magic is given in Sagan's, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* (1995).

Xenology may be defined as the scientific study of all aspects of extraterrestrial life forms. Xenobiology is a subset of xenology and refers to the study of the biology of extraterrestrial lifeforms. *Xenogamy* (Greek, *xenos*=strange, *gamos*=marriage) is the transfer of pollen grains one plant to a different plant and is also used to refer to sexual relations across alien species.

This paper will discuss SF's depiction of interspecies sexual relations through a comprehensive reading of related texts. An interdisciplinary flavour will be noted throughout as the first author is a medical doctor, such that real-life parallels will be highlighted while excessive poetic licence that goes beyond the bounds of reasonable speculation will be pointed out.

Narratives

The first alien/human sexual relationship, a man with an insect, was by Farmer in "The Lovers" (1952), which was rejected by the leading magazine editors of the time, John Campbell of *Astounding* and Horace Gold of *Galaxy*, presumably because of its perceived risqué adult theme. Farmer is often credited with introducing mature sexual themes into SF. Many of Farmer's early works handled these themes very explicitly and an excellent review with regard to the lack of sex in SF prior to this story is given by Moskowitz, *Philip José Farmer: Sex & Science Fiction* (1964).

Human-humanoid alien offspring are common in SF, and one of the first and most romantic liaisons was penned by Burroughs, that of John Carter, an Earth human, with the incomparably beautiful Dejah Thoris, who, although perfectly humanoid in appearance, comes from the red-skinned Martian oviparous (egg-laying) race, and indeed, their son is born after hatching from an egg.

However, it is in the *Star Trek* universe where trans-species unions are most common and result in fertile offspring. A bewildering number of species seem to be able to intercross but undoubtedly, the most famous hybrid not only in *Star Trek*, but in all SF is Spock, the son of a Vulcan male and a human female, as first exposed in Pevney's "Journey to Babel."

Numerous crosses are said to be possible in the *Star Trek* universe, with or without the help of genetic technology, because of the shared genetic ancestry of most of the humanoid races of the galaxy who had been seeded by an ancient race known as the "Progenitors" (Frakes, "The Chase"). All of the *Star Trek* series have depicted inter-species mating and the produces thereof, and the most commonly involved race in such unions is humanity. Many of these narratives have revolved around the prejudices that the resulting children provoke in their respective parents' societies, being outcasts in both, as revealed in even the last *Star Trek* movie (Abrams).

However, even if such crosses were possible, it is highly likely that they would be sterile, such as mules on Earth, the result of a cross between a horse and a donkey. Such a scenario is portrayed in Boucher's "The Quest for Saint Aquin" (1951), the sterile union of man and Martian, and in more interestingly, in Kurten's *Den Svarta Tigern* (1978) which suggests that blond Neanderthals were fatally attracted to the dark Cro-Magnons, resulting in sterile matches.

The ultimate in *Star Trek* credibility-challenging fecundity is the combination of a mobile holographic emitter with the DNA of a male human and cybernetic Borg nanoprobes to produce a 29th century Borg drone (Landau). Yet another fantastic situation is portrayed in the *Star Trek* episode "Blink of an Eye" (2000) when the holographic doctor claims to have somehow fathered a child.

Equally incredibly, Butler's *Dawn* (1988) portrays humanity at risk of extinction after a nuclear war on Earth, and redeemed by its transformation "through genetic exchange with extra-terrestrial lovers/rescuers/destroyers/genetic engineers, who reform earth's habitats [...] and coerce surviving humans into intimate fusion with them" (Haraway, "Simians, Cyborgs and Women"). This novel "interrogates reproductive, linguistic, and nuclear politics in a mythic field structured by late twentieth-century race and gender," (Ibid.) but is based on a highly implausible premise, the ability of an alien species to readily be able to incorporate and utilise genes from other, equally alien races.

Moreover, infertility is portrayed as the basis for interplanetary war in Buchanan's *Mars Needs Women* (1966), where Martians with a genetic deficiency that produces only male babies launch a mission to Earth to recruit female volunteers for Mars, meeting strong resistance from Earth governments.

Similarly, in Fowler's *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958), the menfolk of an American town are taken over by an alien species whose females have been rendered sterile and have come to Earth to marry and breed with human females in order to revive their race. Lee's "Beauty" (1983) takes this further by turning human females into surrogate mothers, with no genetic contribution to their offspring, who have embryos implanted by sterile aliens in an attempt to perpetuate their race. Similarly May's *The Many-Colored Land* (1981) depicts an alien race in Pliocene Earth (5.3-2.5 million years ago) who use humans who travel back to this time as breeding stock, since their own females have are infertile. Also, in Nour's *Love's Captive* (2005), interstellar pirates abduct fertile females as wives for the men of a planet whose race is endangered due to their women's sterility. A more menacing approach is taken in *The X-Files*, where the protagonists thwart a government conspiracy to help inimical aliens colonise the Earth, including attempts to create a slave race of human-alien hybrids through the use of bio-weapons (Manners, "Requiem").

Humanity has typically withheld fertility from its own

hybrid creations with the earliest example of this conduct occurring in what is widely recognised as the first SF novel, Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1918), wherein Victor Frankenstein, the archetypal mad scientist, comes to "the realization of the reproductive potential in creating a mate for his monster;" a blazing comprehension which gives Victor second thoughts, and "leads to her destruction before she is even brought to life, and ultimately to the deaths of all those whom Victor loves" (Pearson 2). The monster was constructed from material collected from the charnel-house, the dissecting-room and the slaughter-house, implying a mixture of man and beast. An almost identical story is mooted in Duffy's *Gor Saga* (1982) where a chimeric monster raises anxieties about cross-species pregnancy should the creature attempt to mate with a human female.

An even more improbable scenario is represented in Dozois' only solo novel, *Strangers* (1978) where a human male allows himself to be genetically altered so as to allow him to father a child with an alien female with whom he has fallen in love. This is clearly paradoxical since our DNA defines our species and very nature, and such a radical alteration would transform the individual from a human to an alien.

More realistically, concern with regard to the possibility of both sex and reproduction, with an alien who has incredible psychic abilities to make plants grow, are voiced by the human female protagonist in Moore's "The Fellow who Married the Maxill Girl" (1960), but unbelievably, and fortunately for her, both turn out to be possible.

Such interbreeding is extremely unlikely in that human-alien crosses would be virtually impossible unless species shared an identical genetic code, an infinitesimally small probability as the odds of species evolving independently on different planets and yet having compatibly identical genetic codes are vanishingly remote. Moreover, more mundane biological impediments to such unions, assuming some form of sexual reproduction, would be insurmountable, and these include genital anatomy and mating cues, as will be demonstrated.

A more practical approach is taken by Niven in the *Ringworld* (1970) where sexual intercourse is an important ritual for the sealing of agreements or contracts in the huge environment that constitutes the Ringworld where a multitude of different humanoid species speciate to fit every ecological niche, and the various subspecies, while able to mate, are infertile with each other. Speciation refers to processes that lead to the creation of new species, and occurs when a parent species splits

into two or more reproductively distinct species that may be able to have sexual intercourse but from which no offspring can ensue. Charles Darwin described these processes after observing them in the Galapagos and Canary islands during his epic voyage on the Beagle, speculating that survival and speciation occurs through "natural selection of varieties having different innate constitutions" (141).

Speciation also features in Harrison's *Planet of the Damned* (1962) wherein human colonists on an alien planet make massive adaptations to survive. This leads to a high level of infertility that is countered by artificial insemination, with an elevated rate of miscarriage and early infant death.

The reality is that human-alien mating is well nigh impossible, as graphically illustrated in Tiptree's "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side" (1973) where sexual relations with aliens are depicted as deviant and fetishistic by both of the involved races. The apt Keatsian quotation of the story's title is from the last stanza of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," representing aliens as the intoxicating yet indifferent Belle Dame while humanity is compared to the poem's pally-loitering knight. The same author repeats this theme in "The Milk of Paradise" (1972) in which the son of a famous interstellar explorer is rescued after being shipwrecked on an alien planet as a child and raised by grotesque aliens, surviving to adulthood and having sexual relations with said aliens. Sex with aliens is similarly regarded as a perversion in Fast's *Mortal Gods* (1978). *Star Trek* improbably depicts the Deltan race, highly sexually evolved humanoids who sexually irresistible to humans. Hence, before serving in Starfleet, they are obligated to take an oath of celibacy ensuring that they would not take sexual advantage of any non-Deltan crew (Wise).

A more realistic view of interspecies unions, possibly in a contract form such as marriage, is depicted in the platonic relationship between a woman and a bird-like alien in Knight's "To the Pure" (1966). The impossibility of a pregnancy during a one night stand experienced by a human male with a beautiful and superhumanly intelligent alien female is also made abundantly clear in Leiber's "Game for Motel Room" (1963), and finally, in *Watchers of the Dark* (1966), traders marry across species to reinforce trading alliances but legitimately have mates of their own species for the purposes of sex and procreation, and these mates may also be married themselves to members of other species. Formal marriages are therefore infertile but offspring are still pro-

duced.

However, despite the impossibilities of human-alien sex or interbreeding, the UFO literature is redolent with such possibilities that are science-fictional. Indeed, “the ur-abduction, the Betty and Barney Hill case of 1961 [...] contained many of these elements-particularly recovery by hypnosis,” (Luckhurst, “The Science-Fictionalization” 31) such that now, “it is the very elision of sf and UFOlogy that has caused exasperation, and ensured mutual suspicion between UFOlogists and the sf community” (Ibid).

The possibility – or impossibility – of human-alien reproduction was decisively highlighted in Niven’s classic essay “Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex” (1971). Niven speculates that Superman is a result of parallel evolution on an extrasolar planet (Krypton). Niven posits several potential problems, quoted verbatim:

1. What arouses Kal-El’s mating urge? Did kryptonian women carry some subtle mating cue at appropriate times of the year? Whatever it is, Lois Lane probably didn’t have it. [...] A mating between Superman and Lois Lane would feel like sodomy-and would be, of course, by church and common law.
2. In addition, [e]lectroencephalograms taken of men and women during sexual intercourse show that orgasm resembles “a kind of pleasurable epileptic attack.” One loses control over one’s muscles [...] What would he do to the woman in his arms during what amounts to an epileptic fit?
3. Consider [...] the monomaniacal urge to achieve greater and greater penetration. [...] Superman would literally crush [...], while simultaneously ripping her open from crotch to sternum.
4. Ejaculation of semen is entirely involuntary [...] Kal-El’s semen would emerge with the muzzle velocity of a machine gun bullet. In view of the foregoing, normal sex is impossible. Artificial insemination may give us better results:
5. Kryptonian sperm [...] can travel with equal ease through water, air, vacuum, glass, brick, boiling steel, solid steel, liquid helium, or the core of a star; [...] translight velocities. What kind of a test tube will hold such beasts?
6. If the genes match... One sperm arrives before the others. [...] the cell wall now thickens

to prevent other sperm from entering. [...] ten million kryptonian sperm arrive slightly late. [...] A thickened cell wall won’t stop them. They will [...] enter the egg, obliterating it entirely.

7. There are still tens of millions of frustrated kryptonian sperm. [...] The sperm scatter. [...] with several million microscopic perforations all leading deep into her abdomen. [...] Peritonitis is inevitable. Meanwhile, tens of millions of sperm swarm in the air over Metropolis.

8. There they are, minuscule but dangerous; for each has supernormal powers. [...] The Metropolis night comes alive with a network of narrow, eerie blue lines of Cherenkov radiation. And women whom Superman has never met find themselves in a delicate condition.

9. We must use a single sperm.

10. The single sperm may crash through [...] abdomen at transsonic speeds. [...] We can expose it to gold kryptonite, [...] robs a kryptonian of all of his supernormal powers, permanently [...] then use standard techniques for artificial insemination.

11. But if some or all of the kryptonian genes are dominant... Can the infant use his X-ray vision before birth? [...] That would leave LL sterile. If the kid starts using heat vision, things get even worse. But when he starts to kick, [...] he will kick his way out into open air, killing himself and his mother.

12. We can make LL wear a kryptonite [...] belt around her waist. But too little kryptonite may allow the child to damage her, while too much may damage or kill the child. Intermediate amounts may do both! And there is no safe way to experiment.

The problem raised by point 1. above is fictionally depicted in Watt-Evan’s “One of the Boys” (1995). This comprises part of an anthology (Mainhardt and Varley) of twenty-five short stories about unusual cartoon heroes who, unlike the conventional pantheon of clean cut heroes, have weird and sometimes warped viewpoints. Many of the stories are satirical and have unexpected endings. “One of the Boys” graphically portrays a being with powers practically identical to Superman but who is unable to have sex with women, and indeed, unable to fit in as his brain is not designed to interact with humanity, although he looks perfectly humanoid. Indeed, he prefers a different ambient temperature,

humidity and food to humans, and is truly inhuman despite his mundane, human appearance. Like Superman, he is alone among humans but unlike Superman, it is not only his superpowers that set him apart but also his lack of any affect and reaction to human females, including those who throw themselves at him.

Discussion

The creation of an alien/terrestrial hybrid requires the parent species to have proteins, with identical amino acid sequences, the same protein molecule optical rotation, and matching numbers of chromosomes that are of identical size and shape and containing the same types of genes on the same chromosomes at the matching locations. Even if such a hybrid could be somehow created, *in vivo* or *in vitro*, since it is estimated that 50% of all normal human pregnancies end in spontaneous abortion, such an unusual hybrid stands an infinitesimal chance of surviving in utero till term (Jacob). And if despite all of these improbabilities, this hypothetical hybrid was given birth, it would most likely be sterile, like the liger or the common mule, counteracting any arguments in favour of hybrid vigour resulting from the union of such disparate organisms.

In some ways, interspecies relations have been explored by Donna J. Haraway in *When Species Meet* (2008), in which she contemplates the interactions of humans with other species, and after wondering “whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?” (1) and continues to argue that when we touch an animal, such as a pet, do we only touch the animal or does our touch shape our world-view of our multispecies world? Intriguingly, in her “Manifesto for Cyborgs,” Haraway asserts that we are all hybrids, or rather, “we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs,” (150) and then paradoxically implies our premature desexualisation as “[t]he cyborg is a creature in a postgender world” (ibid.).

This reading shows that SF narratives that deal with cross-species sex discuss “issues around sexuality and gender [...], still extraordinarily fraught areas of human existence and thought,” (Pearson 2) reinforcing the admonition that in SF as in life, ‘sexuality is a complicated and remarkably intransigent subject of inquiry, one whose material consequences can be ignored only at the peril of both individuals and cultures’ (ibid.).

Some of these stories foreground humanity’s foreboding with technology and science, and where these might lead us, as “SF [...] is a popular literature that

concerns the impact of Mechanism [...] on cultural life and human subjectivity,” (Luckhurst, “Science Fiction” 4) with all of these sub-tropes comprising metaphors, a form of “discursive challenge to the naturalized understanding of sexuality and its concomitant sociocultural surround” (Pearson 19).

These narratives also fulfill several other roles, including “satire on contemporary culture, a prediction of biological advances, a commentary on the social roles of science and scientists, and a plan for reforming society” (Woiak 106), reiterating the versatile nature of the genre.

The narratives’ dates clearly show that sex in SF surfaced quite late in the day, as Russ recounts, in the Golden Age, the genre “resolutely ignored the whole subject” of homosexuality, and indeed, of kind of sexually explicit material (Russ 22). Such material was very rarely to be found, almost as if editors felt that they must protect their principally adolescent male readership. This could be attributed to the then contemporary business model, where “the conservatism of a primarily male audience—and the editors, publishers, and distributors who were trying to outguess that audience—kept gender exploration to a minimum” (Attebery 5).

And although the pulp covers of the 1930s and 1940s frequently hinted at interspecies sexual relations by depicting scantily-clad maidens attired in brass underwear (Sullivan 42-3), menaced by repugnant, bug-eyed aliens while being liberated by square-jawed heroes, the covers were invariably far more lurid than the magazines’ contents, paralleling contemporary prejudices. Indeed, the perpetrator, Earle K. Bergey, was quite renowned for his magazine cover art that frequently portrayed implausible female costumes, including the classic brass brassieres. SF’s image of the time was strongly associated with his *Startling Stories* magazine covers for 1942-1952 (Westfahl). Such covers prefigured factual and published scientific accounts by Kinsey et al (1953) of attempted copulation between a female eland and an ostrich, a male dog and a chicken, a female chimpanzee and a tomcat, and a stallion and a human female, despite obvious ‘gross morphologic disparity’ (503).

This attitude persisted until the 1960s, when the genre began to generate works such as those included in Harlan Ellison’s 1967 *Dangerous Visions* anthology.

Nevertheless, the commonest SF approach to diversity is usually tolerance, unless bigotry and prejudice form part of the plot, and this is best exemplified by the Vulcan race in *Star Trek*. Vulcans embrace IDIC: Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations. Arguably, overall,

this concept is a cornerstone of Vulcan philosophy, of the *Star Trek* universe, and of SF in general (Senensky).

It is, however, important to note that terrestrial interspecies mating is possible, and has been possibly documented as far back as the origin of man, since recent work suggests that Neanderthals contributed to at least 5% of modern man's gene pools, some 45,000 to 80,000 years ago, after the initial divergence of the two lineages some 400,000 years ago (Wall). Even further back, it is believed that after human and chimpanzee lineages initially diverged 6.3 million years ago, interbreeding between the two lineages continued, before sufficient divergence due to speciation precluded fertile mating (Patterson).

This leads to the biological contention that there may not actually be such a thing as a scientifically fixed species identity as, for example "99.4 percent of the most critical DNA sites are identical in the corresponding human and chimp genes" (Hecht). However, anthropologists counterargue that the "extent to which our DNA resembles an ape's predicts nothing about our general similarity to apes, much less about any moral or political consequences arising from it" (Marks).

Nature spontaneously provides us with such unions as several genetic studies have revealed the existence of interspecies offspring (Kinsey). Science further confounds and challenges these boundaries with hybrids and chimeras that cannot possibly exist in nature. A hybrid is the product of breeding two different species (naturally or in vitro) such that each cell of the resultant offspring contains a mixture of both parents' genes. A chimera consists of two entirely different cell lines with completely different genes within the same individual. Clearly, both creations "present challenges to western heteronormative notions of kinship," (Hird 217) while extending "the notion of kinship to include non-human animals as well" (219), wrecking our concepts as what biology formerly said is now "neither transparent nor immutable" (220). These representations also portray contemporary fears of miscegenation and help us to understand how 'the other' may not be so different after all.

These narratives further underpin the assertion that "laying no claim to prophecies except for its statistically to be expected share, SF should not be treated as a prophet: neither enthroned when apparently successful, nor be-headed when apparently unsuccessful" (Suvín). These SF contentions assume that the future will be superior, more open-minded, outward-looking and accepting, and by destabilising the boundar-

ies of species, prefigure the shape of things to come, somehow reducing the "future-shock" effect of rapid imposed scientific change (Toffle), a potentially naïve attitude since we can have no assurances of any sort of enlightened future.

Finally, in SF as in real life, "creating intraspecies hybrid animals might attack speciesism" (Pence 154) but also warns us that we may also victimise such creations "into interchangeable resources" (Ibid.) thereby providing cautionary tales as to what such liaisons might imply for the individual and for humanity.

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©*ontext*: Further Selected Essays on Productivity, Creativity, Parenting, and Politics in the 21st Century

Kevin Pinkham

Cory Doctorow. ©*ontext*: Further Selected Essays on Productivity, Creativity, Parenting, and Politics in the 21st Century. San Francisco, CA: Tachyon Publications, 2011. Paperback, 238 pages, \$14.95, ISBN 978-1-892391-047-6.

CORY DOCTOROW HAS firmly established himself as a gifted SF writer, nominated for and winning a variety of awards. Like many writers, he also possesses a quick wit and a gift for clear discussions that he has displayed in insightful and often hilarious essays in a variety of outlets. His book, ©*ontext*, collects forty-four of those essays, gleaned from newspapers and magazines, such as *The Guardian*, *Locus*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Make*, and from a handful of blogs, among them the eminently entertaining *boingboing.net*, of which Doctorow is co-editor and a frequent contributor.

Reading ©*ontext* is like whiling away a few hours diving down Internet rabbit holes. There does not appear to be any clear organizational schema underlying ©*ontext*; the essays are not published chronologically or thematically. Instead, they meander from topic to topic, following whatever thread Doctorow's (or his editor's) cerebral cursor clicks on. While such a collection may sound chaotic, the effect is really quite entertaining, as all of us who have been lost in the net have experienced in our own careening from topic to topic. It is not unusual for Doctorow to discuss one topic in an early essay and then revisit that topic in later essays, providing links that unite the anthology around more than just his name. For example, Doctorow's daughter Poesy appears in a few essays, providing him a character around whom he can address issues of technology, media activism, copyright law, and privacy in a heavily surveilled age. In "Jack and the Interstalk: Why the Computer Is Not a Scary Monster," Poesy allows Doctorow to discuss how technology can bind parent and child together rather than serve as an ersatz babysitter.

Although not mentioned by name, Poesy makes a brief appearance in Doctorow's essay, "Writing in the Age of Distraction." Here, he argues that the Internet will not kill one's writing and then offers aspiring writers some very practical advice, such as write in twenty minute blocks a day, refuse to research during that time, and turn off all realtime communications tools, such as IM, Skype, and anything that involves an alert. In "When I'm Dead, How Will my Loved Ones Break My Password," Poesy provides the inspiration for Doctorow and his wife to draw up wills, and he is confronted with the reality of figuring out how Poesy and other survivors will be able to access his data, financial or otherwise.

Doctorow's novel *With a Little Help* appears in a number of essays in which he discusses the struggle writers who believe in creative commons licenses can have with the economics and realities of publishing in the twenty-first century. For example, in "With a Little Help: The Price is Right," Doctorow describes the battle between the publisher Macmillan (who publishes Doctorow's novels through its Tor imprint) and Amazon, which wanted to refuse Macmillan's demand to raise prices on ebooks. While understanding Macmillan's reluctance to commit to Amazon's pricing structure—thus losing some measure of control over its profit margin, Doctorow recognizes that Amazon has been immensely successful in selling ebooks and could more effectively line Macmillan's pockets. Ultimately, libertarian Doctorow sides with Macmillan, writing "I am constantly amazed at how good [Amazon is] at [selling books]. But I don't believe in benevolent dictators. I wouldn't endorse a lock-in program run by a cartel of Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, and Mohandas Gandhi. As good as Amazon is at what it does, it doesn't deserve to lock in the reading public. No one does" (104).

The libertarian hotbutton of privacy is, of course, another issue that frequents the essays in the collection. In the excellent essay, "Personal Data Is as Hot as Nuclear Waste," Doctorow brings readers' attention to the imminent dangers surrounding all of our personal data that we unwittingly release into the world, arguing that our data should be as closely monitored and controlled as nuclear waste. Comparing the unintentional leaking of personal data by the UK's HM Revenue & Customs department (equivalent to the IRS in the U.S) to a nuclear accident, Doctorow wonders how long such a data spill will poison the lives of the affected. While such an accident may be beyond the control of taxpayers and reveals the naïveté and ineptitude of governments when it comes to protecting data, other

potentially damaging data is collected daily, often with our consent. Offering the example of the London Underground's Oyster Card, which requires users to fill out a form with extensive personal information, Doctorow argues that

...Transport for London is amassing a radioactive mountain of data plutonium, personal information whose limited value is far outstripped by the potential risks from retaining it.

Hidden in that toxic pile are a million seams waiting to burst: a woman secretly visits a fertility clinic, a man secretly visits an HIV support group, a boy passes through the turnstiles every day at the same time as a girl whom his parents have forbidden him to see.... (221)

It is quite easy to forget the possibility that our presumably private lives could suddenly be the focus of secret public scrutiny. The realities of our glib surrendering of our personal data concern Doctorow, who often plays Morpheus to his readers' Neo, crying out for us to wake up. His writing, both his fiction and his essays, exhibits what Doctorow calls in another essay, "Radical Presentism," the responsibility of the SF writer to make sense of the confusing realities of the breakneck technological change we both endure and enjoy in the twenty-first century.

©*ontext* offers a wide variety of diversions for its readers. The immense quantity of topics explored in ©*ontext* can never be adequately discussed by any reviewer. While there is little critical analysis that might contribute to academia and be of interest to SFRA members, certainly Doctorow's musings on the publishing world would be of great interests to scholars who seek to better understand how books are marketed in the age of the Internet. However, the collection is highly entertaining and deeply educational. Its affordable price would make it an excellent addition to the personal collection of any reader interested in Doctorow and/or technology. Doctorow offers ©*ontext* as a free download at his website craphound.com, asking only that those who can would donate a hard copy to a library. It should be on the shelves of most public libraries, and is definitely recommended for colleges and universities preparing students for the science-fictional world in which they live.

Science Fiction and Computing: Essays on Interlinked Domains

Christopher Leslie

David L. Ferro and Eric G. Swedin, eds. *Science Fiction and Computing: Essays on Interlinked Domains*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011. Paper, x + 317 pages with chapter notes and index, \$40.00, ISBN 978-0786445653.

THIS CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY brings together eighteen commissioned essays about the interrelatedness of the history of computers and science fiction. Although computer scientists are among the most vocal of the technical fans of science fiction, the direct relationship between science fiction and the development of computer technology bears some more definite exploration. The editors are from different departments at Weber State University: David L. Ferrer is an associate professor of computer science, while Eric G. Swedin is an associate professor of information systems and technology. This interdisciplinary approach is successfully carried through all of the contributors. Some are science fiction scholars, others specialize in the history of technology or media studies, and others come from communications and computer science departments.

The scope of the anthology is quite broad. Thomas Haigh opens the collection with an essay connecting science and technology studies with science fiction, using computers as a test case. Chris Pak and the editors contribute two essays about the early days of science fiction computing. Pak reminds us that the 1909 nightmare vision of E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" involves a control device that, while not exactly a universal Turing machine, represents an early expression of a sentiment that will preoccupy many later visions about the computer. The anthology makes some nods to the international scene: Jaakko Suominen writes about a Finnish robot series in the years after World War II, and Alfredo Suppia writes about the use of the image of the computer in Brazilian cinema.

The largest number of articles is, perhaps understandably, devoted to understanding the connection between cyberculture and science fiction. Janet Abbate, the author of *Inventing the Internet*, the best history of the technology behind the Internet, covers some of this ground with her study of Vernor Vinge's *True Names*. Thierry Bardini, author of an important study of hypertext researcher Nelson Englebart, considers

the connection between cybernetic prophecies and the development of the technology. David A. Kirby considers the transformation of a Stephen King story into the virtual reality movie *Lawnmower Man*.

One of the benefits of this volume is that it provides an ample bibliography of stories that one could follow up on for research or teaching. There are the usual suspects—Isaac Asimov’s robot stories, Robert Heinlein’s *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, Harlan Ellison’s “I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream,” and William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*, along with the movies 2001 and *Lawnmower Man* and television’s *Star Trek*. But the authors contextualize other stories that are worth thinking about, such as Murray Leinster’s 1932 story “Politics,” John D. MacDonald’s 1948 story “Mechanical Answer,” John Brunner’s 1975 *Shockwave Rider*, and Cory Doctorow’s 2005 “I Row-Bot.” In addition, the authors provide insight into the theoretical perspectives that support an understanding of the interaction between science fiction and engineering. Bruno Latour’s concept of “translation” is used to explain how technology is adapted by different communities, and William Aspray and Donald Beaver’s idea of “technological inertia” is applied to the hangover of the “electronic brain” of early computing science fiction. Thomas P. Hughes’s concepts of “reverse salients” comes into play as well.

There are always those who are uncomfortable with the effort to connect science fiction to science fact. Paul E. Ceruzzi does an evenhanded job of this, pointing to the disconnect between the voice interfaces that concern much computing in science fiction and the cold reality of technical advance, where human space travel and artificial intelligence have been limited to less interactive applications. Ceruzzi points out sardonically that the inventors of the LISP programming language, which was to aid in programming artificial intelligence, probably had more than the Roomba in mind when they began their work, but he credits science fiction for keeping the dream alive while the early stages are developed.

Other attitudes in the volume, however, are harder to understand. Although Joshua Cuneo credits *Star Trek* fans for being early adopters of the Internet and World-wide Web, he says that the original *Star Trek* failed to implement the Internet and calls the isolated starship computers “quaint.” Considering that the Enterprise exhibits many of J. C. R. Licklider’s concepts from his 1965 *Libraries of the Future*, however, one could say that the series was quite advanced. What is more, Cuneo’s complaint that the Enterprise uses a locally stored

copy of the Federation database should be rethought; this vision of distributed computing seems like a deliberate foil to the destructive, centralized systems that the crew encounters. Cuneo also makes the questionable comment that the room-sized ENIAC computer and its descendants are the inspiration for the consoles in *Star Trek*; the aficionado of submarine films of the 1950s, of course, can see a more contemporary antecedent in the control rooms of post-war submarines.

Similarly, R. C. Alvarado complains that there was nothing like an “abstract, universally programmable machine” in science fiction prior to 1948 (205), perhaps blaming the genre for failing to predict this development. However, analog calculating devices had already been in use and seemed adequate to the task; to say that science fiction should have predicted the universal Turing machine seems disingenuous. Nevertheless, science fiction did well prior to 1948. Other authors in the anthology consider Murray Leinster’s 1946 story “A Logic Named Joe,” which reminds many people of a networked society back when the SAGE missile defense system was still trying to be the programmable analog machine known as Project Whirlwind. One might also mention the calculating device in John W. Campbell’s calculating device in his 1930 “When the Atoms Failed” and Jack Williamson’s story “With Folded Hands...,” which tells of a networked collective of robots in 1947.

This anthology fits in well with other efforts to explore the connection between science fiction and the history of technology, such as Gary Westfall’s *Cosmic Engineers: A Study of Hard Science Fiction* (Westfall contributes an article about science fiction and Superman to the volume) and Brian M. Stableford’s *Science Fact and Science Fiction: An Encyclopedia*. This volume appeals to an academic audience, particularly those who are teaching or working with science fiction in the context of the history of technology and media. It is a credit to the editors and contributors, however, that the anthology appeals to computer scientists, new media designers, and general readers who are curious about the history of computing.

Nested Scrolls: A Writer’s Life

Rob Latham

Rudy Rucker. *Nested Scrolls: A Writer’s Life*. Hornsea, UK: PS Publishing, 2011. Hardcover signed limited

edition (includes CD), 329 pages, £49.99, ISBN 978-1-848631-52-6.

WHEN I INTRODUCED Guest of Honor Rudy Rucker at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts in 2005, I said the following:

The tradition of philosophical science fiction cast in a comic mode is a long and honorable one, though it has not received a great deal of critical attention. One would have thought the posthumous canonization of Philip K. Dick might have rectified this neglect, but we are still waiting for serious studies of the work of Robert Sheckley, John Sladek, Ron Goulart, R.A. Lafferty—and, I would add, our Guest of Honor this year, Rudy Rucker. Writers who mask their profundities behind a smirk or guffaw are obviously in danger of not being taken fully seriously. This is a particular problem when their whimsical invention is as deranged, and their black humor as borderline-ultraviolet, as Rucker's has been throughout his career. His persistent tone of genial *ennui* can too easily be misread as cynicism, when in fact it is the stoic pose of a wounded spirit disenchanted with the broken promises of technological transcendence. Indeed, Rucker is one of the most perceptive anatomists of the allures and pitfalls of techno-utopianism currently practicing, and I hope that our honoring him here may mark the beginning of a serious critical appraisal of his work and of his role within the genre. ("Long Live Gonzo: An Introduction to Rudy Rucker," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 16.1 [Spring 2005], p. 3)

In the six years since, Rucker has continued to publish steadily—four SF novels and a collection of stories, plus a substantial nonfiction study of the philosophy of computers and, now, this autobiography—but the critical response remains muted. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database on the Texas A&M library website lists a total of 30 items on Rucker's work, most of it fairly ephemeral pieces (like my introduction) rather than substantial scholarly studies. Compare this to the 369 items on William Gibson and the 615 on Bruce Sterling, Rucker's literary contemporaries and erstwhile partners in crime. Damien Broderick's *Transrealist Fiction: Writing in the Slipstream of Science* (Greenwood Press, 2000), whose title borrows a term

Rucker himself coined to describe his work, remains virtually the only significant critical guide to Rucker's fiction—until the publication of *Nested Scrolls*.

Nested Scrolls is a genially written, occasionally intense, and always engaging look at a very complicated—not to say checkered—career. Its writing was prompted by a near-fatal cerebral hemorrhage in 2008, which led the author to cast a nostalgic eye back over the events of his life, from his St. Louis childhood in the 1950s, to his brushes with the counterculture during his studies at Swarthmore College and Rutgers University in the 1960s, to his intersecting careers as math professor, computer scientist, and gonzo sf author in the subsequent decades. His discussion of that last-named calling will probably be the chief interest of this volume for those who are not hardcore Rucker fans, and that dimension is what I will principally focus on in this review, though I should say at the outset that his treatments of mathematical inquiry and software design are wonderfully detailed and exciting as well. As Rucker says about the former: "Of all the outré subcultures that I eventually became involved with, mathematicians take the crown for being strange—and never mind about hippies, science fiction writers, punk rockers, computer programmers, or Berkeley cyberfreaks" (115). His account of a meeting with Kurt Gödel while the legendary math guru was in residence at Princeton is both funny and gripping, and his chronicle of the 1980s and '90s Silicon Valley scene gives an invigorating sense of the ferment surrounding the so-called "information revolution" (there is a great description, for instance, of a wild party at the Berkeley offices of cyberculture magazine *Mondo 2000*, where "the air was filled with a combination of licentiousness, California weirdness, and business chatter" [259]). Rucker clearly thinks of these three aspects of his persona as an integrated whole, with his software hacking and his explorations in higher math inspiring his fiction and vice versa; indeed, he speaks movingly of their fruitful points of connection, even though the remainder of this review will concentrate on only one facet of these "nested scrolls."

Rucker discusses the roots of his literary career in his youthful reading, making clearer than any other commentator I know how deeply interconnected a fondness for SF was with an appreciation for the work of the Beat movement among those with offbeat tastes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During this heady period, Rucker was devouring Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959), and

the journal *Evergreen Review* (1957-73) alongside the novels and stories of Philip K. Dick and Robert Sheckley. Rucker's concept of transrealism, a form of fiction in which everyday life would be transmuted through an SF prism, derives from this early immersion in these two bodies of work. As he points out, the Beats themselves "regarded the genre as an avant-garde and uniquely American art form, a bit like jazz. For me, that's still how I think of SF when I'm writing it—as mass-market surrealism" (102). For their parts, it's clear that Dick and Sheckley were, if not fans of Beat literature, then (from what we know of their biographies) quasi-beatniks themselves; and there are some amusing anecdotes here of drug-fueled conversations with the latter author, who became both an inspiration and a mentor to Rucker. His personal encounter with the Beats occurred at a 1981 seminar at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, where he exchanged banter about SF with a sardonic Burroughs and shared a hot tub with an ebullient Allen Ginsberg. Other influences filtered into his work—especially Sixties-era forms of zany satire, such as *Zap Comix* and the Firesign Theatre—but at its core is a fusion of Kerouacian confessional meditation and biting Sheckleyesque whimsy that is uniquely Rucker's own.

I rehearse this background to underline the fact that Rucker had a fully developed aesthetic sensibility long before he became associated, during the 1980s, with the cyberpunk movement—an association still routinely cited by SF scholars whenever lists of cyberpunk authors are drawn up. Not that Rucker shies away from this connection; indeed, there are warm and funny stories about his times hanging out, often deeply stoned, with Gibson (and his strangely "flexible-looking head" [208]), Sterling (one of the few reviewers to appreciate his early novels *White Light* [1980] and *Spacetime Donuts* [1981]), and John Shirley (whom Rucker would sometimes wake up to find staring at him, "trying to analyze the master's vibes" [208]). And, when he moved to the Bay Area in 1986, it was largely with the local cyberpunk contingent—Richard Kadrey, Pat Murphy, and Marc Laidlaw (with whom he learned to surf)—that he socialized. Still, as Rucker stresses, he was older than most of these writers (he was born in 1946), and his interest in cyberpunk derived as much from his sense that belonging to a movement would make him feel like "an early Beat" (205) than from any deeply shared aesthetic ideology (aside from a desire to shake up genre complacency). When he was writing his "cyberpunk masterpiece" *Wetware* (1988), his touchstone

remained "the bizarre Beat rhythms of Kerouac's writing—indeed, I'd sometimes look into his great *Visions of Cody* for inspiration" (216).

Moreover, the idyllic pastimes he was always drawn to—camping, hiking, scuba diving (of which there are some powerful accounts in this book)—makes plain that he was always more of a bucolic hippie than the other cyberpunks, just as comfortable with nature in the raw as with the various second natures of electronic media. Indeed, the computer companies that hired him in the 1990s—for his expertise on cellular automata, artificial life, and chaos theory—were often irked that he spent his time designing droll software simulating flocking birds and swarming ants. His 1994 novel *The Hacker and the Ants* was triggered by these conflicts between fuzzy artistic/natural inspiration and hard-headed techno/business imperatives, and it remains, alongside Douglas Coupland's *Microserfs* (1995), one of the best novels ever written about Silicon Valley.

Rucker differed from the cyberpunks also in his choice of drugs, which seldom moved beyond alcohol and marijuana; when he met Gibson at a Baltimore SF convention in 1983, Rucker recounts that "he was high on some SF-sounding drug I'd never heard of. Perfect!" (208)—but Rucker doesn't ask for any. His own drinking and pot-smoking took a toll on his writing and marriage, leading him to sober up in 1995—significantly, during a solo backpacking excursion at Big Sur, where he could feel his chemically unaided consciousness expanding to encompass "a sense of the cosmos all around and within everything, a sense of the universe being filled with love" (277). Just try to imagine Sterling or Gibson writing a sentence like that with a straight face! In short, Rucker's association with cyberpunk was ultimately a limited—and perhaps limiting—thing; yet though "Cyberpunk" is but one fifteen-page chapter (out of 24) in his eventful life, the linkage has marked Rucker's career indelibly, possibly for the worse. Since the movement has waned, critical attention to Rucker has faded, even though he continues to write fascinating works of SF, such as *Mathematicians in Love* (2006) and *Hylozoic* (2009). It's conceivable that he may now regret his brief attempt to retrofit his transrealist aesthetic onto the cyberpunk bandwagon (see his 1986 manifesto "What is Cyberpunk?" in *Seek: Selected Nonfiction by Rudy Rucker* [Four Walls Eight Windows, 1999], pp. 315-22)—though of course, ever amiable, he doesn't say so here.

In fact, if there is one complaint to be lodged against *Nested Scrolls*, it would be its unfailing affability, which

makes the author a pleasant companion to be sure but rather dilutes the volume's impact. Despite being at the center of some of the most ferocious debates ever waged within the genre, Rucker never raises his voice or seeks to settle a grudge; for example, he recounts a contentious panel on cyberpunk at a 1985 convention in Austin, Texas, where the hostile audience behaved like "a lynch mob," causing Sterling, Shirley, and Lewis Shiner to stalk angrily off the dais (209)—but Rucker stayed put and took the heat. He does observe, with evident satisfaction, that the cyberpunks were "mak[ing] the plastic people ... uptight" (209), but he never specifies who these synthetic varmints might have been. Compare this discretion to Sterling's hilarious polemics against cyberpunk's enemies in the pages of his fanzine *Cheap Truth* or Shirley's diabolically abusive "Let it Screed!" column in *Nova Express* (which were admittedly produced in the heat of the 1980s battle); it is simply impossible to imagine Rucker in this mode of implacable aggression.

Rucker's chapters on the 1960s and '70s are similarly gentle, featuring little mention of that era's fraught politics except as they came to impinge on his own life, as when he was denied tenure by the Math Department at SUNY-Geneseo in part because he was a long-haired hippie freak. An almost supernatural serenity emanates from these pages, with darker moments not so much glossed over as absorbed into the easygoing flow. It is this very tone of oddball merriness that has, as I noted in my ICFA intro quoted above, likely led SF critics to slight his fictional achievement. If it seems perverse of me now to raise the same objection to his memoir, it is only because this genre of writing would seem to demand a sharper edge of self-reflection than is on display here. Naturally, too, I would have enjoyed the book more had Rucker been more willing to kick asses and name names, but such abrasiveness is simply not in his character (which is another way of saying that he is a better man than I am).

Nested Scrolls was released in early 2011 by the UK small press PS Publishing in two editions: a reasonably-priced trade softcover and the expensive autographed hardcover reviewed here, which comes complete with a CD containing the author's personal notes on thirteen of his books published between 1990 and 2010. These notes are an extraordinary resource for Rucker scholars (if there are any) and a treasure-trove of insights for his fans, but unfortunately they have been gathered into a single vast PDF file (over 2000 pages) that lacks internal links, so negotiating the maze of materials is

something of a nightmare. Happily, this compendium has since been disentangled into a series of files on individual books, which are available for downloading at the author's homepage at <<http://www.rudyrucker.com>>. (This is a wonderful site, by the way, not only archiving many of the author's writings but also hosting his blog, featuring galleries of his paintings, and providing links to the San Jose State University server where his computer simulations are housed.) A US edition appeared from Tor Books in early December 2011, sans CD and with a slightly altered title: *Nested Scrolls: The Autobiography of Rudolf von Bitter Rucker*.

Vader, Voldemort, and Other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media

Jonathan R. Harvey

Jamey Heit, ed. *Vader, Voldemort, and Other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2011. Paperback, 233 pages, \$35.00, ISBN 978-0-7864-5845-5.

THIS BOOK IS A COLLECTION of thirteen essays by thirteen different authors about the role and cultural influence of evil in films, fiction, and television shows. The book is accessible and often compelling, but many of the essays leave the reader wanting more: more close readings, more definitions and analyses of ethical concepts, or more nuances to arguments that often seem restricted to a narrow focus on morality. While the subject matter is intriguing and a few of the essays are quite good, the book in general lacks enough contemporary discourse on the philosophy of evil, often assuming, with a few important exceptions, that the binaries of good/evil, God/Devil, and hero/villain are sufficient for approaching the analyses of the fictions' ethics.

Some of the authors do attempt to delineate more complex definitions of evil. In his Introduction, Jamey Heit explains how what we regard as "evil" is contingent on the villain's role in a narrative: "[E]vil's role in contemporary cultural narratives underscores the extent to which evil is a thread that often stitches our stories together" (6). Heit hopes to prove through this collection that "[e]vil is pervasive and therefore needs to be taken seriously" (11), because pretending as though evil does not exist, especially in a culture that favors postmodern

cultural relativism, is an insidious trick of the devil (4). So at least the editor suggests from the outset that the collection is guided by a Judeo-Christian stance, which is an important component of the interpretations several of the essays. But an even more direct statement about critical perspective appears in Bryan Dove's essay, "Wanting the White Witch": "I am operating out of a Christian theological tradition in which evil exists not only as a way of characterizing anti-social actions, postures, and behaviors, but also as a force or an anti-force within the cosmos" (114). This helpful disclaimer makes explicit a critical perspective which many of the other authors seem to assume as a given. For example, nine out of the thirteen essays reference the book of *Genesis*, most commonly Adam and Eve's temptation by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, as a way of explaining the origin of evil, but often fail to delve deeper into later Biblical scholars or modern moral philosophers for a more in-depth, nuanced discussion of evil.

The exceptions include those essays that offer innovative, ethically-based interpretations of popular texts. Kelly Kelleway's "Sim Evil: Avatars and the Ethical Game Mechanic" provides an interesting categorization of how video games handle ethical choices. Games like *Manhunt*, for instance, are Deterministic because they move players through a linear sequence that requires them to perform vile acts, while games like *Fallout 3* or *Dragon Age* are Embodied because they offer a wide range of ethical choices in an open world (148). Kelleway contends that video games involving "evil" or at least ethically questionable" actions are appealing because "they justify by rendering intelligible the morally fraught choices of the player in the context of the game world itself" and "offer moral 'truths' through their programmatic or predetermined nature," in contrast to the nebulous morality of the real world (147). In "No Laughing Matter," Heit analyzes The Joker in *The Dark Knight* by making careful connections to both Biblical narratives and Nietzschean philosophy, ultimately demonstrating how The Joker's brand of evil is compelling because it resists the paradigmatic "binary of good-versus-evil" (179). Other essays take a personal, less formal approach, including Dove's essay on the *Narnia* series and Daniel A. Forbes's "The Aesthetic of Evil," which explains how the "cool" look of villains such as Darth Vader is essential to their appeal and, thus, the meaning of the narrative (14).

A few of the essays are not as convincing because they attempt to examine too many primary texts and spread their arguments too thin. One is Ken Rothman's

"Hearts of Darkness: Voldemort and Iago, with a Little Help from Their Friends." In less than fourteen pages, Rothman attempts to make bold connections between the *Harry Potter* series, Shakespeare's *Othello*, Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," and the book of *Genesis*, creating a mishmash of texts and ideas that seems frustratingly chaotic. Likewise, in trying to evaluate the entirety of Philip Pullman's richly detailed, complex *His Dark Materials* trilogy, E. Quinn Fox's essay "Paradise Inverted" spends many pages providing a synopsis of the plot and characters, then abruptly shifts tone to defend all of Christendom from "Pullman's anti-Christian chauvinism" (138). Perhaps it should be no surprise that essays on evil tend to discuss the subject in broad strokes; still, I would have liked to see more direct references to relevant moral philosophers to ground several of the arguments.

Because of its sometimes-simplistic assertions about the influences of Biblical narrative, especially when such interpretations can seem out of place in fantasy and SF texts, *Vader, Voldemort, and Other Villains* might appeal more to students of theology than to scholars of philosophy or literary criticism. However, composition instructors who wish to bring more SF readings into their courses could also consider this book for two reasons. Its subject matter would likely interest students who are already very familiar with *Star Wars*, Harry Potter, video games, the *Twilight* saga, Disney movies, and so forth, and instructors could use these essays as familiar springboards for discussions of ethical interpretations on these pop culture icons. In addition, the conciseness and variety of the essays could serve as examples—both positive and negative—for students writing their own research papers. Despite its flaws (including a humorous misuse of the "Replace" function, in which the word "up" is replaced by "University Press" in two places [104 and 106]), the book is often enjoyable to read, and it is quite possible that composition students would appreciate it more than many other essay anthologies.

Sightings: Reviews 2002 – 2006

Carol Franko

Gary K. Wolfe. *Sightings: Reviews 2002 – 2006*. Essex, U.K.: Becon Publications, 2011. Paperback, 434 pages, £ 17.00, ISBN 978-1-870824-61-3.

GARY K. WOLFE BEGINS a review of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* observing the irony of how "Sf is still widely regarded as something with both an Interior and an Exterior" despite "all the recent discussions about genre-bending, fabulism, ... transrealism, [and] slipstream" (*Sightings* 138). Wolfe sympathetically views Atwood's disclaimers that she writes speculative fiction, not science fiction, as a form of "protecting the Atwood market" rather than "demeaning the SF market" and reminds us that Robert Heinlein used a similar strategy with his own preference for the term speculative fiction (139). Wolfe has been a book reviewer for eighteen years for *Locus*, *The Magazine of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Field*, and this collection, containing "most of his review columns from the years 2002-2006" (back cover) and including an index compiled by Leigh Kennedy, demonstrates that he continues to be one of the finest critics and historians of the multivalent field of fantastic literature. Having five years of his reviews in one volume is convenient, pleasurable and instructive, allowing one to survey the recent history of sf and fantasy through Wolfe, who, as a kind of ideal reader, combines in-depth and wide-ranging knowledge of genre and mainstream literatures with a keen insight into narrative form. *Sightings*, the third collection of Wolfe's *Locus* reviews, the first one titled *Soundings: Reviews 1992-1996* and the second *Bearings: Reviews 1997-2001*, is highly recommended for teachers of science fiction or fantasy, for research libraries, for public libraries (providing readers with enticing possibilities for what to read next) and for lovers of science fiction and fantasy.

Many of the reviews are useful to those who seek to increase our knowledge of the history of sf. These sections include Wolfe's reviews of biographies, such as Julie Phillips' *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*, and Emily Pohl-Wearly's *Better to Have Loved: The Life of Judith Merrill*. Wolfe's elaboration of the daring themes and styles in Philip José Farmer's science fiction could inspire a revamping of syllabi (review of *The Best of Philip José Farmer*, 347-50), as could his enthusiastic and informative discussion of Albert Robida's nineteenth-century classic *Le Vingtième Siècle*, made accessible to twenty-first-century English speakers in the translation by Philippe Willems for the Wesleyan University Press's *Early Classics of SF* series (218). Also of interest for science fiction history are the reviews of two anthologies by David Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer: *The Hard SF Renaissance* (2002) and *The Space Opera Renaissance* (2006). Wolfe provides his

torical background for the debates concerning sf and its subgenres taken up by Hartwell and Cramer. He also combines appreciation for the quality and quantity of sf stories provided by these volumes with well-reasoned skepticism for some of their claims to corrective definitions (of hard sf, of space opera), although he doesn't settle the question of how to define space opera.

The reviews concerning contemporary science fiction and fantasy authors, including fine discussions of works by Kelly Link, Peter Straub, Elizabeth Hand, M. John Harrison, and James Morrow, are instructive and satisfying because of the knowledge Wolfe brings of each author's contributions to sf or fantasy, and often because of his insight into how plot, narration, exposition and theme can complexly intertwine in fantastic narratives. A case in point is Wolfe's overview of "the three [historically] disparate narratives" in Nalo Hopkinson's *The Salt Roads*, which, he explains, are linked through Hopkinson's narrative devices such as "the sometimes quizzical voice of the goddess [Ezili, of Haitian tradition]" (166). Other reviews cumulatively reveal Wolfe's appreciation of Kim Stanley Robinson as an exemplary writer of alternate history and ecological science fiction, even when Wolfe finds Robinson overstraining a narrative with lessons (*Forty Signs of Rain*, 141-3). Wolfe points up Neil Gaiman's skillful portrayal of the sexual tensions of fairy tales (52) and posits a double ambition evident in novels by Robert Charles Wilson—to combine stories of humane interaction and desire, "Robert Nathan-flavored romances," with ones of "big science-fictional ideas, "Clarkean speculations" (264; review of Wilson's *Spin*).

When discussing writers like Margaret Atwood, who draw inspiration from sf yet define their fiction apart from genre sf, Wolfe acknowledges the continued perception of sf as possessing an intact inside and outside. However, throughout *Sightings* he emphasizes a theme that dominates his other works like the recent *Evaporating Genres: Essays on Fantastic Literature* (Wesleyan UP, 2011): the mutability and ubiquity of narrative elements from the fantastic genres—science fiction, fantasy, and horror. In *Sightings*, Wolfe's interest in "the chronic instabilities of the fantastic genres" (*Evaporating* vii) appears in at least two ways. Many of the reviews—of novels by Steph Swainston, Jonathan Carroll, Sean Stewart, and Peter Straub, and of story collections by Kelly Link, China Miéville, and Tim Powers—show that Wolfe delights in fantasy authors reinventing narrative through their distinctive blending of narrative elements—their treatment of genres "as deep pockets

full of colorful tiles” that may be endlessly rearranged (58).

Genre-bending also appears in Wolfe’s analyses of how hard sf is at odds with the paranoid thriller even when it has mated with it. Of special interest is Wolfe’s contrasting of Greg Bear’s *Darwin’s Children* with Michael Crichton’s *Prey* (103-106). Crichton’s novel exploits the thriller’s movement toward “containment” of possible extensive change while Bear’s novel exemplifies a characteristic of “[g]ood SF ... the failure of containment” (104). Elsewhere, Wolfe muses on how hard sf writers increasingly combine their stories with the “international-conspiracy thriller,” while the wide audience for thrillers “is looking for... validation of pre-existing fears and suspicions” (330). This uneasy merger apparently reflects what Wolfe refers to in his introduction as “some sort of post 9/11 sensibility [that] begins showing up in the fiction of this period” (3). But whether his analyses are somber or celebratory, Wolfe remains an indispensable guide to the science fiction and fantasy field.

The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction

Aaron Dziubinskyj

Rachel Haywood Ferreira. *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011. Paperback, 320 pages, 15 illustrations, \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-8195-7082-6.

THIS MILESTONE BOOK by the respected Latin American sf scholar Rachel Haywood Ferreira is organized into four chapters, with introduction, conclusion, and a comprehensive chronology of additional works of Latin American sf published between 1775 (the year of publication of the Mexican friar Manuel Antonio de Rivas’ *Sizigias y cuadraturas lunares*, the earliest known work of proto-sf from Latin America) and c.1920. Her study is guided by the principle of retro-labeling as sf many of the early texts, some obscure and others well-known, representing the best examples of an emerging Latin American sf. By making the argument for retro-labeling, a practice borrowed from Hugo Gernsbeck to designate “a body of existing works that he felt belonged to the same tradition” (1) of those published in his *Amazing Stories* in the late 1920s, Haywood Fer-

reira refocuses existing scholarship through the lens of scientific discourse, thereby introducing us to an ever-expanding canon of Latin American sf.

In her introduction we learn that the practice of retrolabeling of Latin America’s sf did not begin until the late 1960s. No longer a genre that exists on the fringes of mainstream literature, Latin American sf is still susceptible to the “inverse phenomenon” (8) of being mislabeled or even unlabeled as fantastic literature or magical realism, calling into question its claim as a legitimate, self-validating literary expression within the global sf framework. Further complicated by varying and often conflicting political, cultural, or economic perceptions with regard to the relationship of science and technology to the construction of national identities, the process of modernization, and even its production and readership, from the 19th-century until the present day, the place of homegrown sf in Latin American society has enjoyed a reputation of being anything from a genre of the educated elite, to one of low-brow pulp fiction of the undereducated masses, to a literary form hailed for its introspection of the realities from which it emerged. What all of the authors that Haywood Ferreira considers in her book share, though, is the strong belief in sf as an agent of progress, of political, economic, and social transformation in the building of solid national identities.

The organization of *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* allows for a thematic study of the works in question while providing the critical framework necessary for Haywood Ferreira to make her case for retro-labeling them as sf. In chapter 1, “Displacement in Space and Time: The Latin American Utopia and Dystopia,” the author “examines three generations of texts which employ strategies of cognitive estrangement in order to comment upon modernization, national identity, and political and sociocultural issues of the day” (12). Several of these texts were serialized in literary magazines or newspapers, perhaps reflecting their authors’ desire for a wide readership. Each responds in some way—but from the conventional sf vantage point of temporal or spatial distance so as to avoid the possibility of direct criticism of either author or subject matter—to the political instabilities or potential for rapid scientific and social progress facing their respective countries. For example, in Argentina, the recent transition from the heavy-handed control of the government by the caudillos to relative political stability was the backdrop for Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg’s *The Marvelous Journey of Mr. Nic-Nac* (1875-1876), a work that chronicles the

space voyage to Mars of its protagonists, who reflect on the possibility of an equally advanced and utopian society on Earth, while the violent and volatile state of the Mexican presidency sets the stage for Fósforos-Cerrillos' "Mexico in the Year 1970" (1844). Haywood Ferreira's discussion of Eduardo Urzaiz's *Eugenia* (Mexico, 1919), a futuristic utopian/dystopian, eugenic-inspired novel, is also found in this chapter.

Chapter 2, "The Impact of Darwinism: Civilization and Barbarism meet Evolution and Devolution," is an exploration of the debate—one that can be read into Latin American literature in general - over civilization versus barbarism as a function of the triumph of progress over chaos. The works examined in this chapter depict voyages into the interior of Latin America, away from the civilizing influence of Europe and into the continent's "natural, historical, and cultural pasts" (83). Perhaps more fantastic than scientific, the sf retrolabeling of these works—such as the Brazilian Augusto Emílio Zaluar's *Doctor Benignus*, and the Argentine Holmberg's *Two Factions Struggle for Life: A Scientific Fantasy* (both published in 1875)—is justified by the noticeable influence of Verne and Darwin, and by their reliance on naturalist science and "pseudoscientific uses of evolutionary theories... and the representation of South America as the locus for a utopian future" (83).

Chapter 3, "Strange Forces: Exploring the Limits of Science," examines those early sf texts "in which the border between the science fiction and the fantastic is most blurred" (13). These writers—the Argentine Leopold Lugones and the Mexican Pedro Castrera, for example—cast doubt on the ability of science to adequately substitute religious beliefs or bring modernization to Latin America. As Haywood Ferreira suggests, "[T]heir disillusionment with the empirical sciences leads them to suggest practices such as Magnetism, Spiritism, Theosophy, and the use of sundry 'strange forces' as viable alternatives for attaining and extending knowledge" (14).

The final - and for me the most philosophical - chapter "traces the passage of science fiction in Latin America from an elite to a more popular genre" through the creation of a double (14). The works highlighted here, such as the *Frankenstein*-influenced tales of Holmberg ("Horacio Kalibang" - 1879) and Horacio Quiroga (*The Artificial Man* - 1910), explore the very meaning of life, the capacity to create something from nothing, and the scientist's commitment to and ultimate responsibility for his or her own creation. As Latin America moved from a university-based science of the elite, to

one that was more technological, pedestrian, and accessible to the masses, scientific knowledge and technological know-how took on new meanings.

The Latin American texts that Haywood Ferreira discusses engage science and technology to varying degrees, but the reluctance of both contemporary and current literary critics to recognize that the developing societies of this vast region have been capable of producing sf on par with their European or North American counterparts have compelled scholars to overlook Latin America's early contributions to the genre. This could be due in part to the fact that while most of the authors that Haywood Ferreira examines had "either a professional scientific background or a strong working knowledge of the sciences" (222), the majority of them "wrote in many genres, literary and otherwise, and did not identify themselves primarily as writers in the science-fictional vein" (223).

The list of works included in the chronology is impressive—over 90 from eleven different countries—for its geographical and thematic range, although upon inspection one quickly notices that the majority come from just three countries: Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. It is there that Haywood Ferreira focuses her study, and while one might argue that three countries cannot possibly represent such a vast and diverse region of over 20 nations, the author reminds us in her introduction that these countries in particular

are home to three of the strongest sf traditions in Latin America. They hold several elements in common, such as Iberian colonial pasts, heterogeneous populations, unequal modernities, and the challenges of consolidating national identity and unity in the face of direct and indirect Northern influence. All are located on the periphery of political influence and scientific research, yet all have potential for advancement in both arenas. Despite these commonalities, the three nations also illustrate the geographical, linguistic, political, racial, economic, and sociocultural diversity of the region. (11-12)

In the arena of Latin American sf studies there are precious few books that match the caliber of Rachel Haywood Ferreira's for its thoroughness of scholarship, penetrating historical and theoretical discussions, thematic organization, and accessibility to a wide audience. For scholars of Latin American sf—myself included—*The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* has been much anticipated, mainly for its new approach to canonical texts. For scholars of sf in general looking

to broaden their understanding of non-European and non-North American early sf, this book will undoubtedly be a welcome addition to their libraries.

Fiction Reviews

Time and Robbery

Helen Collins

Rebecca Ore. *Time and Robbery*. Seattle: Aqueduct, 2012. Trade paper, 178 pages, \$16.00, ISBN 978-1-933500-87-4.

JOSEPH TAVISTOCK heads a team whose job is the “detection of illegals.” He finds that the most recent request for a British passport, from a William Velius Parker, is oddly familiar. He searches back through 150 years of passports and discovers five or six with almost identical content: a young man coming from France born of British mother. In the only two passports with photographs the young men could be twins. With this startling discovery the reader is off on another romp with Vel who appeared in Rebecca Ore’s *Centuries Ago and Very Fast*, nominated for the Phillip K. Dick and the Lambda awards.

Tavistock and later his whole team become detectives, following clues and seeking information from disparate sources. They uncover a history stretching back to the Paleolithic.

Vel was born 14000 years ago in land now under the North Sea. He has always belonged to a large family or tribe, the members of the present generations of which are living in England in Somerset. Over time some members of the family have been long lived, some short lived, and a few were time jumpers. Vel is both long lived and a time jumper. He has spent his whole life preserving the existence the continuity of the family, rescuing its endangered generations. He steals meat from one flourishing period to bring back food to an earlier time when the family was in risk of dying out. He has led some generations to safer places, away from enemies, or toward easier climates. The descendants exist today because of him. The history also contains examples of cruelty, blackmail, hostage holding on both sides. Yet not everything Vel has done has been related to the family. “He often brings birds and

other animals in danger of extinction forward in time and releasing them.”

There are still questions. Who knew the truth besides Vel? The entire family? Every generation? Any outsiders? How could the secret have been kept for fourteen centuries?

Finally the team gets more answers than they can deal with and must get the help of higher authorities to make decisions involving the existence of Western Civilization.

In *Time and Robbery* Ore calls Vel a time jumper rather than a time traveler. The difference is significant. Jumping emphasizes abrupt leaps from one place to another. Vel can and does jump back and forth and back again, and over things--all the time and all through time. “He has had huge gaps in his stories . . .” a grandson says.

There are strong parallels between the structure of the novel and the story itself. The theme of leaping from time period to time period is reflected in Ore’s design of the novel. She leads us from episode to episode without conventional transitions. The connections become obvious only as we move into the content of the scene. I think that perhaps the prose itself might be part of the plan. Often the narrator or characters speaking seem to be making strings of unconnected statements. Similarly the chronological pattern through which Tavistock and his team lead the reader in pursuit of the facts reflects the order or disorder of the episodes of Vel’s life span.

The twists and turns of Ore’s plot and structure enhance the conventional and controversial topics and rules that satisfy us time travel lovers. She doesn’t break them. She exaggerates, complicates or shrugs, but she doesn’t argue with them.

“ . . .I’ve felt like I’ve known how to play solitaire since forever. . . .”

“Doesn’t that corrupt the past or something?”

“The past is already corrupt. . . .”

Time loops and paradoxes are acknowledged. A technical device must not appear a century before it is invented. Vel is careful not to encounter himself, but because he must ensure the survival of a much earlier starving generation, he deals from a distance with an earlier, more innocent variant of himself. How is time travel possible? Ore’s explanation is not machine- or quantum-based, or folds in time, but biological--certain rare genetic material. And it does lead to discussions of DNA discontinuity and interesting genealogi-

cal questions.

A few components of the novel seem a bit too much, diminishing the strength of important elements. Do we need the hostile cousin of the family who appears and disappears, literally, or incidental telepaths in addition to all the other wonders?

Through all the chronological complexities the characters still have time for plenty of sex. Sexual relationships include long-lived and short-lived (immortal and mortal), earlier characters and later ones, physically old and young, gay and gay, and straight starting with Tavistock and his future wife on page one. Ore describes the scenes with vivid, lively, and unforgettable images. And throughout there is straight-faced humor. One investigator says, "He's been alive for 14,000 years. He's nothing more than an antique dealer."

The "lie detector" scene is really great!

I think the novel will appeal to diverse readers. It's fair to say that it fits three or four genres: detective story, romance, SF and fantasy, and comedy.

The Doctor and the Kid

Nicole Kilpatrick-Copeland

Mike Resnick. *The Doctor and the Kid*. Amherst, NY: Pyr, 2012. Trade paper, 323 pages, \$16.00, ISBN 978-1-616145-37-8.

MIKE RESNICK'S *The Doctor and the Kid* was my introduction to both the author and the "steam punk" genre. Having never read previous works by Resnick or works of the genre I was unsure what I would be reading. I was pleasantly surprised when I opened the novel and was immediately introduced to a recognizable character in Doc Holliday, of Wild West fame. Resnick's use of familiar characters such as Holliday, Billy the Kid, Thomas Edison, Pat Garrett, and American Indian legends such as Geronimo made the novel feel very familiar from the beginning and made the book an enjoyable read.

Resnick's concept of the Wild West being protected against the expansion of the US Government by the powerful magic of native medicine men is interesting given the actual history of expansion across the Mississippi River. The use of shape shifters, powerful medicine magic, and the purpose behind the magic was not so farfetched that it became comical, nor was it disre-

spectful to the culture or legends passed down through generations of native people. I only wish Resnick had incorporated Geronimo and Hook Nose more into the story because it was such an interesting angle and idea to use as an underlying element in the novel. The eventual meeting of the two powerful medicine men was inevitable and provided an excellent conclusion to the novel; in addition, in using one of Edison's inventions as part of the battle, Resnick incorporates science with mysticism as well as giving a glimpse of reality in that it was the white man's creations that brought about the downfall of many native people. Was that something Resnick intended, or was it a biased view of my own coming through? I'm not sure, but it was an interesting combination to leave the reader something to think about even after the last page has been turned.

One of the strongest positives for me as the reader that kept me turning the pages was the humanity Resnick gave to the character of Doc Holliday. This was a man known for gun slinging and the bodies left on the ground when the dust cleared. Yet Resnick gives him personality and a conscience and, dare I say it, a soul. Doc rejects the notion he is a shootist, and instead constantly reiterates he is a dentist and a gambler, nothing more. He doesn't kill for pleasure; he kills for justice and self-defense. His concern for bounty hunter Charlotte Branson is at times touching, and the reader sees that underneath the tough exterior is a man like any other, one who cares about others and who has feelings. His own mortality being ever present due to consumption, he seems to distance himself from most people, but the friendships he has developed with Thomas Edison and Ned Buntline, as well as his concern for the welfare of Charlotte, show that there is a softer side to the notorious gun fighter. At times I caught myself hoping Edison would come up with a cure for Holliday's consumption while he was creating new electrically charged guns, nitroglycerin bullets, and ways to break the sound barrier and reduce a mine to rubble. Resnick's use of Thomas Edison's genius and progress in the field of electricity were not so out of the realm of possibilities, even for the time period of the novel. These were ideas taking place and forming in the minds of scientific men, and while they may have been seen as the kooks and strange weirdoes in that time, they were extremely forward-thinking men. Edison's harnessing of electricity and sound waves for use against the magic and protection of the shaman could be explained in a "real world" sense as the use of gun powder and technology that was actually used against the native people

in the actual expansion efforts.

The Doctor and the Kid is more than just a steam punk novel, more than just science fiction, more than simply a reimagining of the Wild West. It is a combination of all three and written in a way to hold the interest of someone who is already a fan of the genre and Resnick's previous works, as well as the reader who is venturing for the first time into the realm of battery-operated high-powered pistols and air conditioned horseless carriages. He builds from one story of an educated gunslinger with a conscience and weaves throughout it a story of technological advancement, native American mysticism, respect for the "outlaw," friendship, and even a slight hint at romantic feelings, all without being heavy handed in any of them and doing it in an effortless way that keeps the reader interested.

Media Reviews

The Avengers [film]

Catherine Coker

The Avengers [film]. Dir. Joss Whedon. Perf. Robert Downey, Jr.; Tom Hiddleston; Chris Evans; Scarlett Johansson; Chris Hemsworth; Jeremy Renner; Mark Ruffalo; Samuel L. Jackson; Clark Gregg. Marvel Studios, 2012.

THE AVENGERS has several distinctions up front: It is one of the highest grossing movie pictures in history; it is the second theatrical release written and directed by Joss Whedon; people have been waiting for this film for a very long time. The film is the culmination of over four years of planning across five other films, not to mention fifty years of comic book history. Anxiety over the film was minimal considering the blockbuster success of the previous films—*Iron Man* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), *Thor* (2011), and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011). Further, auteur and admitted fanboy Whedon had penned the introduction to Mark Millar's initial collection of Avengers-based comics *The Ultimates* in 2004, emphasizing both his role as a writer within comics as well as his history as a fan. In the introduction to the book, which collected the first thirteen issues of a modern reboot of the long-running comic book team, he writes,

"These people are together because the world needs saving. And this flawed, bizarre group of mismatched myths is the only team in the world that can save it and watching them do it is a glorious thing."

Perhaps presciently, this statement provides the thesis for his film eight years later.

The Avengers is not a one-to-one correlation for any individual story—or even set of stories—within the greater Marvel history. Instead, the film takes the characters as interpreted through the other films and puts them together about as well as one would expect: Tony Stark/Iron Man admittedly doesn't play well with others; Steve Rogers/Captain America has a serious case of PTSD and isn't adapting to the twenty-first century all that well; Bruce Banner/The Hulk has been on the run for years; Thor has returned to Earth seeking his brother, the mad and destructive Loki who had betrayed him; S.H.I.E.L.D. Agents Natasha Romanov/Black Widow and Clint Barton/Hawkeye have jobs to do. They are all, one way or another, complete outsiders who work best alone—with the exception of Hawkeye and Black Widow, comrades-at-arms with a past that's just hinted at and expertly telegraphed in the small moments they share together. As Ruffalo's Banner says at one point, "We aren't a team.... we're a time bomb!"

Thus, two-thirds of the film is the assembling of the team, bringing together the six principals as well as the secondary characters and the villains. Whedon takes what should be a top-heavy story and makes it look graceful; further, he is one of those rare writer-directors who actually knows what to do with an ensemble. In contrast, J. J. Abrams's *Star Trek* (2009) suffered from repetition and a story that placed all the narrative and emotional weight on only two leads. In *The Avengers*, each character has a specific purpose to being where and when they are, and unlike *Star Trek*, it's not just to utter a cherished catch-phrase or two. This is perhaps best articulated through the single most beautiful moment of the film: A lengthy tracking shot of the Avengers in battle, the seamless progression of the camera through the cityscape of New York as it follows each member of the team working together to defeat their enemies. An economical filmmaker, Whedon uses this visual trick to reinforce both the concluding narrative arc as well as the emotional pay-off, with each hero finally finding their "place" in the world both physically and metaphorically.

Scholarly interest in *The Avengers* will likely be limited to those already interested in Whedon's oeuvre and those interested in comics history and its adaptations.

While to some extent it is “just another superhero flick,” the film does raise the bar in that it acknowledges a shared universe on a grand scale—something that other franchise films simply have not. The film also presents several of Whedon’s continual preoccupations, including the created family, the natures of power and purpose, and the evolution of the outsider. For instance, in *Firefly* and *Serenity*, the banality of government corruption was represented through the small group of smugglers determined to live outside the system. In *Dollhouse*, the joint forces of corporate greed and its political underpinnings were explored prior to the fallout of a near-future dystopia in which people could be wiped into mindless zombies or reprogram themselves with whatever skills they desired. Though Loki never actually utters Whedon’s catchphrase “It’s about power,” it is very much his *modus operandi*, and the nature of moral conviction is as handily explained by Phil Coulson as Angel or Shepherd Book. Unlike his other work, though, there is no handy Whedon stand-in character to be the heart of the group—that, instead, comes from the assemblage itself.

Work Cited

Millar, Mark. *The Ultimates: Ultimate Collection*. Marvel, 2004, reprinted 2010.

Announcements

Call for Papers- Book Article

Title: Science Fiction 101: Tools for Teaching SF in the Classroom

Deadline: 1 September 2012

Contact: Editors Ritch Calvin, Susan A. George, Doug Davis, and Jason Embry. Email: SFRA101s@gmail.com

Topic: Beginning in Winter 2008 (issue #283), the *SFRA Review*, under the new editorship of Karen Hellekson and Craig Jacobsen, began running a series of articles called the “101 Feature,” which they described as “a 101-level primer hitting the high points of important topics that . . . are of interest to SFRA members.” The underlying idea was that these brief articles would provide a set of tools for anyone teaching SF in the classroom. They would provide a brief, but nevertheless, thorough and useful, background for a particular topic related to SF studies. The initial article

was “Science Studies 101,” by Patrick Sharp. Since that time, the SFRA Review has continued to publish the 101 features. To date, they have included:

Comic Studies 101
 Critical History of Argentine SF
 Fan Studies 101
 Feminist SF 101
 Genre Fiction in the (Pre)College Writing Classroom
 Medicine and Science Fiction
 Mundane 101
 New Weird 101
 Postmodernism 101
 Pride and Wikiness
 Recent Spanish Science Fiction
 Scholarly Research and Writing 101
 Science Studies 101
 SF Anthologies
 SF Audio 101, or “It’s Alive”
 Slipstream 101
 Using Book History to Teach Science Fiction
 Video Games 101

Given the success and popularity of the 101 features, and given that more and more teachers are beginning to use SF in their classrooms—from YA fiction, to movies (long and short), to comic books and graphic novels, to video games, and various other forms—a resource for teachers (at all levels) would be invaluable.

The Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA) plans to publish an anthology of 101 features. The potential topics for someone teaching SF in a classroom are boundless. Potential additional topics may include, but are by no means limited to:

Adaptations 101
 Alternate Histories 101
 Anthropology and SF 101 (Philosophy, Political Science, etc.)
 (Astrophysics, Computers/Computing, Physics, Robots/Robotics, etc.)
 Biopunk 101 (Cyberpunk, Dieselpunk, Nanopunk, Steampunk)
 Biology and SF 101
 Canadian SF 101 (Indian, Japanese, Russian, and others)
 Chinese SF 101
 Ecofeminist SF 101
 Film and SF 101 (and/or Short SF Films 101)
 FTL 101
 Genetics and SF 101

Military SF (and/or War and SF 101)
 (Post)Apocalyptic SF 101
 Postcolonialism 101
 Posthumanism 101
 Religion and SF 101
 SF Poetry 101
 Singularity 101
 Space Opera 101 (The New Space Opera 101)
 Time Travel 101
 Utopian/Dystopia SF 101
 Vampires 101
 Young Adult SF and Fantasy 101

Submission: Please consider writing and submitting a 101 feature to the editors for consideration. Contributors MUST be members of the SFRA. All submissions will go through a peer-review process. Please query the editors first for topics. Please submit an abstract (250-300 words) by September 1, 2012. Completed submission due by October 1, 2012 (or any time prior to that!). All inquiries should be sent to sfra101s@gmail.com. Word count limit for final essay: 3500.

Call for Papers- Conference

Title: The 2013 Joint Eaton/SFRA Conference

Deadline: 14 September 2012

Conference Date: 10-14 April 2013

Contact: Melissa.Conway@ucr.edu


Topic: Science Fiction Media. This conference—co-sponsored by the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy (UC Riverside) and the Science Fiction Research Association – will examine science fiction in multiple media. The past several decades have witnessed an explosion in SF texts across the media landscape, from film and TV to comics and digital games. We are interested in papers that explore SF as a multimedia phenomenon, whether focusing on popular mass media, such as Hollywood blockbusters, or on niche and subcultural forms of expression, such as MUDs and vidding. We invite paper and panel proposals that focus on all forms of SF, including prose fiction

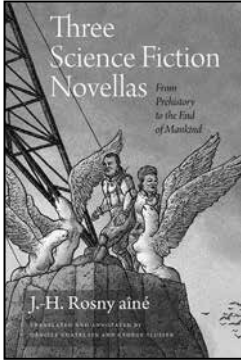
The conference will also feature the fourth Science Fiction Studies Symposium on the topic of “SF Media(tions),” with speakers Mark Bould, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., and Vivian Sobchack. Keynote speakers and special guests will be announced as they are con-

firmed; see the conference website at <http://eaton.ucr.edu> for periodic updates.

Conference sessions will be held at the newly remodeled and centrally located Riverside Marriott Hotel, with rooms at a reduced conference rate (\$109). For more about the hotel, see their website at <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/travel/ralmc-riverside-marriott>. A block of rooms will also be available at a discount (\$139) at the historic Mission Inn Hotel and Spa two blocks from the Marriott: <http://missioninn.com>. Rooms in both hotels are limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Submission: Abstracts of 500 words (for papers of 20-minutes in length) should be submitted by September 14, 2012. We also welcome panel proposals gathering three papers on a cohesive topic. Send electronic submission to conference co-chair Melissa Conway at Melissa.Conway@ucr.edu with the subject heading: EATON/SFRA CONFERENCE PROPOSAL. Please include a brief bio with your abstract and indicate whether your presentation would require A/V. Participants will be informed by December 1 if their proposals have been accepted.





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Ritch Calvin
SUNY Stony Brook
W0515 Melville Library
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3360
rcalvink@ic.sunysb.edu

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