

Editors

Doug Davis
Gordon State 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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SFRA Review

A publication of the Science Fiction Research Association

In this issue

SFRA Review Business	
Mainstream Summer.....	2
SFRA Business	
Looking Backward, Looking Forward.....	2
New Position(s).....	3
Promoting the SFRA through Your Blog.....	4
Current Research in Speculative Ficiton, 2012 (CRSF 2012).....	4
Report on SFRA Research Awards.....	5
Where We Stand, Numbers and All.....	7
Executive Committee Business Meeting.....	8
SFRA General Membership Business Meeting.....	9
Candidates' Statements for SFRA Executive Committee	
Positions 2013-2014.....	10
2011-2012 SFRA Awards	
Remarks for the Pilgrim Award.....	14
Pilgrim Award Acceptance Speech.....	15
Remarks for the Pioneer Award.....	19
Pioneer Award Acceptance Speech.....	20
Remarks for the Claerson Award.....	20
Claerson Award Acceptance Speech.....	21
Remarks for the Mary Kay Bray Award.....	22
Mary Kay Bray Award Acceptance Speech.....	22
Remarks for the Student Paper Award.....	22
Student Paper Award Acceptance Speech.....	22
Employment Stories for SFRA Members	
Finding a Job Should Not Be Science Fiction.....	23
Science Fiction: Asset and Icebreaker on the Job Market.....	24
Finding the Science Fiction Lightning Bolt.....	25
Feature 101	
Animal Studies 101.....	26
Apocalypse in the Mainstream 101.....	30
Nonfiction Reviews	
<i>Power and Control in the Television Worlds of Joss Whedon</i>	38
<i>London Peculiar and Other Fiction</i>	40
<i>Liminality in Fantastic Fiction: A Poststructuralist Approach</i>	41
<i>Murray Leinster: The Life and Works</i>	43
Fiction Reviews	
<i>C. M. Kornbluth: The Life and Works of a Science Fiction Visionary</i>	44
<i>Nebula Awards Showcase 2012</i>	45
<i>The Science Fiction Issue: Whatever</i>	47
<i>The Science Fiction Issue: Exploring New Liminality</i>	48
<i>Adriftin the Noosphere</i>	53
<i>In the Lion's Mouth</i>	55
<i>Bowl of Heaven</i>	56
Media Reviews	
<i>The Industrialist</i>	58
Announcements	
Calls for Papers.....	59

EDITORS' MESSAGE**Mainstream Summer**

Doug Davis and Jason Embry

IN THE 2011 EDITION of the century-old series, *The Best American Short Stories*, guest editor Geraldine Brooks proudly tells her readers that she was able to include George Saunders's science fiction story, "Escape from Spiderhead," in the present volume. Saunders's story is "that rare example of full-bore speculative fiction to make it through the literary magazine's anti-sci-fi force field," Brooks notes in her introduction. "Coming across this story elicited the same joyful surprise I once felt when offered a glass of wine after a dry week in Riyadh." Saunders's story was originally published in *The New Yorker*, a magazine that earlier this summer published its first issue devoted to science fiction. Of course, as the magazine's fiction editor was quick to point out, *The New Yorker* has long featured works of science fiction. For that matter, several stories in not only the 2011 volume of *Best American Short Stories* but also the 2010 volume edited by Richard Russo (and the 2009 volume edited by Alice Sebold, and...) can be classified as science fiction too. Still, a special issue of *The New Yorker* devoted to science fiction feels like an occasion worth noting.

To mark science fiction's summer in the mainstream we offer you two very different reviews of *The New Yorker's* June 2012 Science Fiction Issue. We also offer you two new features in the SFRA Business section: a "Report on SFRA Research Awards" and "Employment Stories from SFRA Members." Every year the SFRA awards "support a scholar" grants to support research. All members of the SFRA are of course encouraged to apply for a "support a scholar" grant. In this issue's report, Lisa Yaszek and Patrick Sharp discuss how they used their SFRA research grant to visit the Eaton Collection at UC Riverside and the Science Fiction Hub at the University of Liverpool. Following Lisa and Patrick's report, you will find a new column edited by Jason Ellis and devoted to offering employment advice for all SFRA members. Each issue of the *Review* from now on will feature short essays by SFRA members who have recently been on the job market. In this issue, two of our members describe how they recently landed a job.

If you have an employment story to tell or advice to offer, please contact Jason.

Lastly, it is SFRA election season once again. At the end of the Business section you will find statements from this year's candidates for Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and President.

SFRA BusinessPRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**Looking Backward,
Looking Forward**

Ritch Calvin

SO, WE'RE BACK FROM DETROIT and the annual SFRA conference. By all accounts, the conference was a great success. On behalf of the SFRA, I would like to thank Steve Berman, Jaema Berman, and Deborah Randolph for all their hard work and organization. They did a fabulous job on the conference. And from my perspective, it went off without a hitch (though, as a one-time conference organizer, I know that Steve, Jaema, and Deborah might have a different take on it...). I greatly enjoyed the guest authors in attendance: Eric Rabkin, Saladin Ahmed, Minister Faust, Melissa Littlefield, Robert J. Sawyer, Sarah Zettel, and Steven Shaviro. Thanks to all of them, as well, for making it an intimate, informative, and engaging conference. I walked away with a renewed energy and excitement about many topics and texts.

Next year, the SFRA annual conference will be held in conjunction with the Eaton Conference in Riverside, California. However, while the SFRA conference has traditionally been held in late June or early July, the Eaton conference is traditionally held earlier than that. So, be sure to mark your calendars for the SFRA/Eaton conference April 11-14, 2013. Notice the much earlier submission deadline for a panel/paper proposal! You can find the announcement for the conference on the SFRA FaceBook page and on the SFRA website. You can also go directly to the Eaton Conference site. This year, the Eaton Conference will be honoring Ursula K. Le Guin, Ray Harryhausen, and Stan Lee.

Be sure to send your abstracts for your conference paper, or proposal for conference panel, to the conference co-chair, Melissa Conway, by September 14, 2012! You

are also encouraged to book your hotel room early, as the Mission Inn will doubtless sell out.

The constitution of the five awards committees has also been announced. Thanks to all the individuals on these committees. Their contributions to the organization are so vital to its continued vitality.

- Pilgrim Award (for life time contributions to SF/F studies): Brian Attebery (c); Roger Luckhurst, Lisa Yaszek;
- Pioneer Award (for outstanding SF studies essay of the year): Neil Easterbrook (c); Keren Omry, Amy Ransom;
- Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service: Joan Gordon (c); Alan Elms, Ed Carmien;
- Mary Kay Bray Award (for the best essay, interview, or extended review in the past year's SFRA Review): Sharon Sharp (c); Joan Haran, T. S. Miller;
- Student Essay Award (for best student paper presented at the previous year's SFRA conference): James Thrall (c), Sonja Fritzsche, Eric Otto.

Once the *SFRA Review* made the shift to a digital format, we contemplated some of the possibilities that were now available to the organization. One possibility is the ability to create links to the books, videos, games, etc. that are reviewed within the *Review*. Beginning with this issue, you will begin to see links to the titles under review. These links will redirect you to the SFRA Amazon storefront. If you decide that you are interested in or motivated by the item, and if you purchase the item when you follow the link, a small portion of the sale will be credited to the SFRA organization. As we work out the technology and as we build the inventory in our storefront, you will also begin to see links to titles mentioned within the reviews—but that may take some time.

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. More details to follow.

Finally, elections for officers of the SFRA are here. The full slate of candidates has been duly posted on the list-serv. Please see the Immediate Past President's message in this issue of the *Review* for more on the elections.

First, I want to thank each and every individual who has put her or his name up for election. The membership will soon receive a notice of when the elections will begin and will close. As decided at this year's business meeting in Detroit, the elections will be held online. Second, I want to encourage all of you to vote. These things do matter! Please take the minute or two required to complete the online ballot.

Until next time...

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Position(s)

Jason W. Ellis

GREETINGS, ALL! I hope that you are doing well and doing good work. I imagine many of us are preparing for an exciting new school year. For myself, I am beginning a new phase of my career by returning to where my SFRA journey began at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). I earned my B.S. in Science, Technology, and Culture from there in 2006—the same year I attended my first SFRA conference in White Plains, New York. Now, I will be teaching at Georgia Tech as a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication. I believe that it is a kind of science fictional experience to transform from student to professor. This is especially true now that I am returning to my alma mater, leading from the lectern rather than participating from the gallery, and working with colleagues who were my former professors. However, it is my hope that I can provide my students with a special insight and affinity as one of their own who “got out” (Tech graduates rarely say “graduated”) and returned to tell his tale. You can be sure that I will tell my students about the origins of SF at Tech through the teaching of Bud Foote and I will also tell them about the many resources that Tech offers for those interested in SF (e.g., the Georgia Tech Library's Science Fiction Collection, Lisa Yaszek's SF/Lab, and other events like the recent Neuro-Salon + Neuro-Humanities Entanglement Conference, which brought together neuroscientists, engineers, SF scholars, and SF authors including Kathleen Ann Goonan). And of course, I will tell them about the SFRA. While I suspect that most of you will do the same, I would like to remind everyone to get the word out to your students, long-time colleagues, and new faculty. Also,

please remember that the SFRA/Eaton Conference has an earlier than normal paper/panel abstract deadline of September 14, 2012. Send the SFRA/Eaton Conference website/CFP far and wide on every email list, every Twitter feed, and every Facebook wall—<<http://eaton-conference.ucr.edu/>>. Publicizing the conference will introduce many folks to the organization and the very good work that our members do. We hope to attract new members through the conference so that they can enrich and join the discourse we have been nurturing for so long. See you all in Riverside next year!

Promoting the SFRA through Your Blog

R. Nicole Smith

PEOPLE BLOG FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS: to share their insights on life experiences, to stimulate public debate around various issues, and/or to share their analyses on a variety of academic topics – such as those related to SF. Free blogging sites such as Wordpress.com or Blogger provide a platform to present thoughts on these types of ideas and invite conversation. They also provide an opportunity to introduce readers to resources that undergird the writer’s commentary and analysis. If you’re already blogging about SF and or non-SF academic subjects, consider employing the SFRA website as a rich source of information including reviews on current SF texts, critical analysis on SF topics and resources on teaching SF. One of the benefits of this inclusion is that people who search for SFRA will receive more links to our organization’s site as it appears in numerous online locations (John Hayden, “11 Benefits of Blogging for your Nonprofit”). Consequently, the SFRA site receives even more of what Hayden describes as social media value. This term means that people are able to experience the site as a resource for a variety of subjects that range from scholarly research and pedagogy to pop culture (Hayden). Including SFRA’s website as a resource ultimately invites conversation around, and related to, resources found on the SFRA website and publicizes the organization. Cheers!

Current Research in Speculative Fiction, 2012 (CRSF 2012)

Chris Pak

THE SECOND ANNUAL Current Research in Speculative Fiction (CRSF) conference took place at the University of Liverpool on Monday the 18th June 2012, attracting postgraduate researchers and independent scholars from America, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK. CRSF builds on the strong science fiction research community at the University of Liverpool and is the only annual speculative fiction conference in the UK. Thirty-five papers across thirteen panels were presented, with non-presenting attendees making up fifty conference delegates in total. The conference offered a snapshot of the vibrant research culture around speculative fiction in 2012.

Professors Fred Botting from Kingston University London and David Seed from the University of Liverpool presented keynote papers to delegates based on their own research in the fields of horror and science fiction respectively. Botting presented a paper on Speculative Realist philosophy and HP Lovecraft, entitled “More Things: Horror, Materialism and Speculative Realism.” He challenged the audience with the idea that Lovecraft’s notion of the “thing” and its continual descriptive regression broke down the boundaries of language until there was nothing left to describe but a linguistic void. David Seed’s paper, “Framing the Reader in Early Science Fiction,” explored the use of narrative frames in scientific romance, utopian fiction and other early forms of sf. This paper drew on Genette’s work on the paratext to explore the presentation of early scientific romance and proto-science fiction and pondered their subsequent interpretation by a contemporary readership.

There was a diverse range of themes amongst the variety of panels, including topics such as the role of sf in film, television (including a separate panel on *Dr. Who*), games and gaming, the gothic, vampires, artificial intelligence, alternate history, and the monstrous, as well as a panel exploring European speculative fictions. With three full streams with four panels in each, I was only able to sample a small range of this diversity. Papers of note included Phil Nichols’s “Apocalyptic Revisions: Ray Bradbury’s Screenplay Versions of *The*

Martian Chronicles,” which compared two unproduced screenplay adaptations of Bradbury’s short story collection, Lykara Ryder’s “The ‘Dazzling Project of Making a Malacandrian Grammar’ in *Out of the Silent Planet*,” which analysed from a linguistic perspective the choices that motivate the construction of alien languages, and Rhys Williams’ “‘Cognition’ Should be a Dirty Word,” which explored the limitations of Suvin’s cognitive estrangement and gestured toward an alternative Marxist / anthropological model for the analysis of texts.

The range of methodologies used and perspectives taken by panelists toward speculative fictions, and the diversity of literatures and media examined, provides evidence of a thriving international scholarly community and promises an exciting future for the study of speculative fictions. Although geared towards all forms of speculative literature and media, there was a distinct shortfall of papers on fantasy and, to a lesser extent, gothic studies. CRSF 2013 will attempt to address this imbalance as much as possible and encourage scholars interested in these fields to submit an abstract for next year (cfp to be announced).

For more information on CRSF and the progress of CRSF 2013 visit the website: www.currentresearchin-speculativefiction.blogspot.com

Report on SFRA Research Awards

Patrick Sharp and Lisa Yaszek

IN 2010, the SFRA Executive committee reorganized the “support a scholar” fund into travel, research, and institutional grants. Over the course of the past year, we each received a research grant to support work on book we are co-editing, tentatively entitled *Mothers, Lovers, Scientists, and Warriors: Women and Science in Early Science Fiction*. This anthology shows how women contributed to the development of modern science fiction between 1880 and 1950. It explores how women used their diverse roles as authors, artists, science writers, editors and fans to shape science fiction as a distinct popular form and to participate in debates about the popular relations between science, society, and gender. We’re writing now to update the SFRA membership about what we did with these grants—and, hopefully, to inspire some of you to apply for research grants yourselves.

In fall 2011, Lisa traveled to the Eaton Collection at the University of California- Riverside so she and Patrick (who lives in driving distance of UCR) could conduct the first round of archival research central to this project. This first round of research was dedicated to exploring women’s fiction and fan letter writing in the formative days of pulp magazine SF. As feminist SF scholars including Jane Donawerth, Justine Larbalestier, and Lisa herself have argued elsewhere, women were part of the SF community from its inception, blending older feminist techno-utopian political themes with emergent science fiction storytelling techniques in stories such as Lilith Lorraine’s “Into the 28th Century” and Minna Irving’s “The Moon Woman.” Women were also very active in the fan pages, writing in to rank stories, give their perspectives on what they wanted to see, and to connect with other fans—especially other women fans. Moreover, editors clearly understood women as an important part of their readership.

Our findings both confirmed and expanded this picture of women in early SF community. While we found many examples of feminist SF stories written by women, we also found that such stories were only a small portion of early women SF authors’ output. In SF pulps such as *Amazing*, women including Leslie F. Stone and L(uicile) Taylor Hansen wrote stories such as “Into the Void” and “Miracle of the Lily” that were largely indistinguishable from those written by their male counterparts. Such stories were regularly ranked by fans as being among the best of the individual issue or the year and provoked a great deal of discussion amongst authors, editors and fans. As such, women authors were very much avatars of the Gernsbackian ideal: to entertain and educate readers about the wonders of science and technology, especially as they might change society in the future.

Women also made major contributions to “borderland” SF storytelling during the early days of the genre. In the ongoing drive to establish their respective niches within the chaotic world of pulp publishing, some magazines printed stories that included elements from many supposedly distinct genres. Perhaps the most well known of these was *Weird Tales*, where women had been important contributors since the beginning of the magazine. Authors such as Dorothy Quick and C(atherine) L. Moore published a number of “weird scientific” stories that proved very popular with the readership. Though some fans regularly complained about the science fiction in *Weird Tales*, many other fans—and sometimes the editors themselves—ex-

pressed how important it was for the magazine to have stories appealing to everyone interested in weird fiction, including fans of the “weird scientific.”

While conducting this research at Riverside, we also discovered that women contributed to early SF community as artists. For example, Margaret Brundage was a cover artist for *Weird Tales* whose hauntingly beautiful but lurid covers (usually featuring naked women and bondage) became synonymous with the magazine. Brundage’s covers drove both magazine sales and a great deal of debate within letters page of magazine itself, leading author-fans like Henry Kuttner (C.L. Moore’s husband) to worry that Brundage’s covers would undermine the high quality of the stories featured in *Weird Tales*. While Brundage’s covers were sensational, she was by no means alone. Doris Stanley did a number of covers for *Ghost Stories* in the 1920s and Nelly Littlehale Umbstaetter produced covers for *Black Cat* from 1895 to 1920. Women including Lucille Jackson, Ruth Newbury, and Ethel Seigel were also active artists in the fan and semi-pro ’zine community at this time. Taken together, these women paved the way for the post-World War II boom in women cover artists in science fiction magazines.

Our discoveries in the Eaton Collection at UC Riverside led us to reconceptualize our project and think more carefully about the diversity of women’s contributions to early SF. Funded in part by a second grant from the SFRA, this summer we visited the Science Fiction Hub at the University of Liverpool. The purpose of this research trip was to explore women’s work in early SF as poets, science writers, and editors. We began by looking through issues of the *Acolyte*, a major fanzine of the 1940s dedicated to “the memory of the late H. P. Lovecraft.” The fanzine initially focused on fantasy literature, but over the course of its run followed the pattern established by *Fantasy Fan* a decade earlier and broadened its purview to include both fantasy and “scientifiction.” *Acolyte* was best known for its dedication to fantastic verse as a serious and important part of fantastic literature, and regularly published women poets including Lilith Lorraine, an SF pro who published the first book of SF poetry and edited the first all-SF poetry magazine. *Acolyte* also featured Rosa Zagnoni Marini, a well-known mainstream author and poet laureate of Arkansas.

In Liverpool we also looked at the science writing by women in pulps such as *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures*. We found that by the late 1930s women were addressing controversial issues such as race and

sexual difference in a straightforward and scientifically informed manner. While many of these authors wrote brief, one-shot essays, others—including Lynn Standish and L. Taylor Hansen, who initially made her name as a fiction writer—produced lavishly illustrated monthly columns that provoked both admiration and consternation on the part of readers.

Finally, we examined the editorial practices and personas of women involved in SF magazine production. Many of these women established names in mainstream and other forms of popular literature before taking on work as SF editors. Perhaps it comes as no surprise, then, that while they were respected and admired by authors with whom they worked, they rarely established flamboyant identities or visionary policies associated with founding fathers such as Hugo Gernsback, Ray Palmer, or John Campbell. This is particularly true of Dorothy McIlwraith, the editor of *Short Stories* who took control of *Weird Tales* from 1939 to 1953. MacIlwraith quietly nurtured the careers of major authors including Marion Zimmer Bradley and Ray Bradbury from behind the scenes. In a similar vein, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* editor Mary Gnaedinger rarely signed editorials or took credit for the innovative policies that made FFM one of most successful wartime and post-war magazines, preferring instead to present herself as an agent merely enacting the will of her readers. The exception to this rule seems to have been Lilith Lorraine, the pulp-era SF pro and groundbreaking genre poet who freely expressed opinions on a wide range of social, political and literary matters in the half-dozen semi-prozines she founded over course of 1940s.

Digital technologies have greatly improved the efficiency of research and the availability of texts, but not everything is available on the Internet or through interlibrary loan. In the course of our work, we discovered a number of things that demonstrate why archival research in print collections is still so important for historical recovery projects. For example, we would have never come across the debate about a woman’s cover art if we had simply ordered individual stories through interlibrary loan and examined them outside of the contexts of the entire issues of the magazines. The aid provided by the SFRA made travel to the appropriate archives of paper materials a possibility for us, and this greatly enhanced the quality of our project. We look forward to publishing an anthology that does credit to the SFRA’s intellectual—and financial!—generosity and that furthers the organization’s mission to promote the serious study of science fiction across media.

Where We Stand, Numbers and All

Patrick Sharp

IN 2011, the organization's savings went down due to a drop in membership and some significant increases in the costs of the journals (including the SFRA Review). However, the amount the savings went down was not as dramatic as the beginning and ending figures for the year indicate: one major payment to Extrapolation for 2010 was lost in the mail and had to be paid in 2011. We have significantly revised the dues structure for the organization for 2012 to reflect the increased costs and changes in the publications status of the journals. The new membership dues now include options for electronic publications separately from print: the printing and shipping costs of the latter have necessitated this change. The organization is still in strong fiscal shape. I will be recommending a modest increase in this new fee structure for 2013 to maintain the fiscal health of the organization and defray some of the necessary costs associated with updating and improving the website. The executive committee will also be prioritizing the drive to increase our membership.

Expenditures and Revenue for 2011 Dollars

Beginning of 2011	69520.37
Expenditures	
Benefits to Members	
Zahra Jannessari Ladani - Travel Award	-300.00
Marlies Bailey - Travel Award	-300.00
Alfredo Suppia - Mary Kay Bray Award	-200.00
Research Support (Lisa Yaszek)	-405.00
	-1205.00
Payments to Journals	
<i>Femspec</i>	-525
<i>NYRSF</i> Dragon Press	-1940
<i>SFS</i>	-6288.67
Ebsco (Refund)	-100
<i>Foundation</i>	-2631
<i>Locus</i>	-855.60
<i>Extrapolation</i> (includes last 2010 payment)	-7633
<i>JFA</i>	-310
Subsection Total	-20283.27

Conference	
SFRA Detroit 2012 Seed Money	-1000
Printing, Postage, Publications, Etc.	
Karen Hellekson - Postage	-20.80
Janice Bogstad - <i>SFRA Review</i>	-2000.00
Susan George - Mailings	-293.15
Lisa Yaszek - SFRA Awards	-320.00
Subsection Total	-2633.95
Executive Committee Travel	
Kent meeting	-2327.52
Total Outgoing Money	-27449.74
Revenue	
Bank account interest	18.11
Royalties and Member Dues	16829.26
Gifts	1113.40
Revenue Total	17960.77
Total for End of 2011	58918.00
Membership Totals for 2011	
Individual US	133
Individual Canadian	10
Individual Overseas	35
Institutional	28
Student U.S.	27
Student Canada	2
Student Overseas	19
Joint U.S.	23
Joint Overseas	2
Emeritus U.S.	7
Emeritus Canada	1
Pilgrim Winners	28
Total Members	315
Current Membership for 2012	
Electronic-only Members	
Individual	48
Student	27
Joint	12
Emeritus	4
Underemployed	3
Pilgrim	22
Print plus Electronic Members	
Individual U.S.68	
Individual Canada	3
Individual Intern.	14
Institutional	16
Joint U.S.	8
Joint International	2

Student U.S.	5
Student Intern.	4
Pilgrim	4
Total Members	240

Executive Committee Business Meeting

Susan A. George

Meeting Minutes, Detroit, MI

June 28, 2012

Meeting convened at 3:00pm.

In attendance Ritch Calvin, Patrick Sharp, Lisa Yaszek, Jason Ellis. Notes taken by Jason W. Ellis for Susan A. George. Also in attendance Doug Davis and Jason Embry

I. SFRA Annual Meetings

a. Detroit: Conference report by Steve Berman. Steve gave us a list of attendees, finances, and copy of hotel bill. Sixteen student attendees—mostly graduate students—no one identified as an undergraduate. We still have 13 more members that have not yet paid for the conference. Marlene Barr can't attend and introduce Pilgrim Committee. Jason will send Marlene an email and call her if needed to get her speech. Steve will ask the hotel about getting chairs for the business meeting. \$13,000 approximation. Still have some seed money. Had some folks who did not pay membership. Email Steve for names.

b. Patrick Sharp reporting on next year's SFRA/Eaton Conference in 2013. Rob Latham and Melissa are taking care of most of the arrangements. Now that SFRA 2012 is concluding, we will start to push 2013 conference on social media and the website. A lot of the conference will be arranged over the summer. Now that Sherryl Vint is at Riverside, she will be helping Patrick arrange and contact guests. There will be a special session on Wednesday for SFS. The conference will run Thursday-Saturday for the conference with the business meeting on Sunday. The Eaton award will be given along with SFRA awards at banquet.

- i. Plan A for Eaton Award is William Shatner and Lenard Nimoy, but they are still deciding on other people for back up plans.
- ii. We will have the hotel across from the Mis-

sion Inn Hotel and well as rooms at the Mission Inn at a special rate.

iii. There will be great AV so should encourage people to use it

iv. People can register for the conference starting August first. The website is in development.

c. Joint WisCon Conference in 2014. The initial meeting minutes are in the Drop box. Michael Levy (SFRA), Jeanne Gomoll (WISCON), and Rebecca Holden (SFRA) will be working on the SFRA part of the conference. We need to get our own hotel as the WisCon hotel is completely booked for WisCon. We are considering the Inn at the Park.

i. Issues we have to deal with include: How can we arrange joint events? When to have awards presentations? How do we arrange registration fees?

ii. We need to make sure that SFRA and its track are not lost in the WisCon activities.

d. Rio in 2015. We have confidence in Alfredo Suppia. We will talk with him this weekend to verify and coordinate.

e. Stony Brook in 2016—do we want to plan that far ahead? Ritch will ask for other proposals in addition to Stony Brook before he starts to make arrangements. Up side to Stony Brook—it has a film festival every year, Brookhaven National Lab is there, there is train service to Manhattan from campus, and a new hotel and convention center are being built on campus as well.

II. Treasurer's Report, Patrick Sharp. SFRA has \$65,000 in the bank. We need to take care of the bill for Lightning Press. Lars has the triple issue in-hand and he will send it out this week.

a. There has been a decline in membership from 314 members to 228 members. Although it dropped to 260 when Lisa was VP so there is precedence. Some possible reasons for the decline include: original members are less involved or have retired, Poland conference many people didn't go so they didn't renew their membership, competition with ICFA, difficulty getting travel funds over summer.

i. Jason will collate the numbers from the SFRA Review for the last 10 years and put into Excel and circulate to the EC.

b. Status of Grants: Patrick suggested setting a yearly amount of \$1200 for travel grants (plus grant for AboutSF if they reapply). The EC needs

to set better guidelines and deadlines for all 3 grant types—Travel, Research, and Institution Grants

- i. New Proposal: for all three types of grant the recipient will have to write a short report/abstract regarding the work done with the grant monies for publication in the SFRA Review.
- ii. Up to 10 Travel Grants, 5 Research grants and 5 institution grants
- iii. Create online grant form within the members area> Grants> Form (talk to Matthew Holtmeier to set this up)
- iv. Set the date on the fiscal year for the number of grants above
- v. Travel grants are automatically \$400
- vi. Send the grant form to the Secretary who will send the application to the EC for debate. If approved, applicant does research and sends a report to the secretary. Treasurer will then disperse the funds to the applicant.

III. Rewrite Bylaws. Revisions of bylaws are in SFRA drop box see SFRABylaws.docx. The changes will be discussed with the membership at the Business meeting and vote taken.

IV. Social media and website:

- a. Jason gave report on Facebook outreach. Likes have increased from 220 in Nov of 2011 to 310. Friends of fans, 131,415. Demographic breakdown is 43.8% female and 52.9% male. Countries now represented include USA, Brazil, Spain, Canada, UK, Denmark, and Germany. The top city with 25 is Barcelona, Spain with 25. Languages include English, Portuguese, and Spanish. External referers include sfradetroit2012.com with sfra.org a distant second. Share and Save options are now integrated on SFRA.org.
- b. Twitter: Because Andrew is traveling through Ireland and Italy now, Jason Ellis is using #sfra2012 and mentioning @sfranews in his Twitter posts. Andrew said that he would retweet from abroad. Jason will logon and handle some of this too.
- c. SFRA website: Patrick and Matthew are working on getting the workflow and information transfer correct on the website. Patrick will assist Matthew with the process. With the adjustments made to the old logo on the new front end of the web design, the EC decided to table the logo redesign at this time. Many kudos for Matt's work on the website to date.

V. Publications:

- a. SFRA Review: The multiple issue (296, 297, 298 hard copy) has now been turned over to Lars for printing and distribution. When it is out we will review how the process went and its effectiveness.
 - i. Advertising in the Review. We have an ad for the Wesleyan Anthology but do we want more advertising in the Review from publishers including Tor and for video games? We will get list of 10 publishers to Lars and see where it goes from there. We will have amazon links to the products in the ads.
- b. SFRA Anthology: Because of all the dead ends Susan ran into trying to contact the original editors and with finding a online publisher the EC has decided to table this project.
- c. SFRA 101 Anthology: We are going ahead with this project. Ritch will take point and put out an announcement and call in the 299 and 300 SFRA Review. Will put sfra101s@gmail as contact on the announcement.

VI. Student Awards: need to redefine the student award criteria since the past two committees have had difficulties selecting a winner. We will take out the language that we will give the winning presentation a formal recommendation for publication. The award will go to the best paper as presented without editing, revisions, etc.

VII. Other Old Business: We need to keep in mind that the EC will need to commission a new Pilgrim award design within the next 5-10 years.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

SFRA GENERAL BUSINESS

SFRA General Membership Business Meeting

Susan George

Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2012

Detroit, MI

Meeting called to order at 9:00am.

All of the EC was in attendance (Ritch Calvin, Patrick Sharp, Lisa Yaszek, Jason Ellis, and Susan A. George) as well as other some 25 other SFRA members.

I. SFRA Annual Meetings

a. Detroit: Conference report by Steve Berman. Steve gave us a list of attendees, finances, and copy of hotel bill. Conference expenses came to \$13,172 with some \$392 of SFRA seed money left over. Some folks still had not paid their membership fees by the end of the conference. The EC will email Steve for names and pursue getting the proper membership fees.

b. Patrick Sharp reporting on next year's SFRA/Eaton Conference in 2013 had only a few things to add from the EC meeting. The website is up and people can start registering for the conference on August 1st. Media is a new topic for the Eaton conference and the plan is to have panels and invite guests involved with video game design, screenwriting, etc. All conference participants will be required to join SFRA.

c. No additional news about joint WisCon Conference in 2014.

d. SFRA Rio in 2015: Alfredo Suppia gave an update. He is considering São Paulo instead of Rio because things such as transportation, hotels, conference spaces and reservations are easier to arrange and things are more efficient in São Paulo. Alfredo is also considering a third option—the university he graduated from. He will continue to check all the options for the best venue and value.

i. Adam Frisch suggested that, due to expense, we might want to offer a formal package for members to vacation as well as attend the conference.

II. Treasurer's Report (see EC minutes for details)

a. After Patrick's report the issue of membership was discussed and the following recommendations were made from the floor:

i. Start membership renewal drive sooner; start in November for 1st call

ii. Offer multiple year membership options

iii. Pull names from lapsed membership list and remind people to renew and the new benefits of membership

b. Travel Grants: The membership decided that the travel grant application should include an abstract or explanation to be published in the SFRA Review. Application without a clear abstract or explanation should not be considered.

III. Revision of SFRA by-laws: the membership went through the EC proposed changes to the by-laws and made various adjustments in wording. According to the by-laws all of the sections changed will be noted

at the end of the revised document as a paper trail and archive. After discussion and revisions, acceptance of the changes was proposed by Joan Gordon and 2nd by Craig Jacobsen. The resolution passed.

a. The following sections were revised or added:

i. Article II Membership, Section 1 and 2b

ii. Article IV Executive Committee, Section 2 and 4

iii. Article V, Officers, Section 3 and the addition of section 11 and 12

1. section 11 discusses the new Web Director and 12 the new Media Director

iv. Article VI, Elections, Section 5 and 6

v. Article VIII, Publications, Section 2 a and b revised eliminating the hard copy (print) SFRA Directory with an on-line, easily updated directory

vi. Article XI, Amendments, Section 2

IV. Publications:

a. Suggestion from the floor to do a collection of critical work of the Pioneer winners. At the meeting no one volunteered to take point on this project, but wanted to make the suggestion to the membership. Is anyone interested in taking point on such a project?

b. Discussion of the 101Anthology and possibly doing it as e-book that would be free to members and \$2.99 to non-members who wanted access

i. Further discussion about the editors for the 101 anthology: Craig Jacobsen noted that he and Karen Hellekson, who started the 101s in their current form while in their second term as the *SFRA Review* editors, might be interested in working on this anthology. Craig said he is interested and he would ask Karen. The rest of the editors and EC will discuss with Craig and Karen how they can be involved with the project in the following months.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10am.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Candidates' Statements for SFRA Executive Council Positions 2013-2014

Lisa Yaszek

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order by surname.

Presidential Candidates:

Jason W. Ellis

Since joining the SFRA in 2006, I have gladly committed myself to the service opportunities that support our organization. With your support, I would very much like to continue my commitment to the SFRA as our organization's next President. During the past six years, I have fulfilled the duties of a number of service positions within the SFRA. Most recently, I have served as the Vice President. During my term, I have coordinated with our Publicity Director and Web Director to grow the organization's online presence through our website and social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. I conducted research over the past eighteen months that indicated new journal delivery priorities for our members and unveiled the avenues of new member recruitment. Based on that research, we instituted new online outreach efforts to publicize the organization and our annual conference in order to attract new members. Furthermore, these efforts, while still in their infancy, help us reach potential new members and grow the annual conference while reducing annual organizational expenses and avoiding sponsorship crises. The association achieves these benefits through our on-going organizational transition from paper-based communication and publication to digital forms. Before serving as Vice President, I gained a better understanding of the association's administration as the SFRA's first Publicity Director—a post that I held from 2008 to 2010. While in this appointed role, I created press releases, promoted the organization and its conference, and supported the digital transition of the organization. In addition to these responsibilities, I have also contributed to the SFRA in other ways. After I received the 2007 Mary Kay Bray Award for two of my fiction reviews that appeared in the *SFRA Review*, I served on the Mary Kay Bray Award committee for two years and chaired it during my third year. I also have conference experience from the 2009 Atlanta meeting when I served as its Programming Director.

If you elect me as SFRA President, I will happily assume the duties of the office and continue the efforts of the previous executive committee to make the SFRA a more efficient, streamlined, and future-oriented organization. First, I will work closely with the other executive committee members, conference directors, *SFRA Review* editors, and award committees to ensure the

continued steady operation of the SFRA. Second, I will guide the digital transition of the organization's operations to its intended completion. Admittedly, this has been a long, on-going process initiated out of financial necessity and modernizing inevitability. However, I believe that my prior collaboration with the web director and the previous two executive committees will keep this final phase of the transition on target. Third, I will initiate a new plan to further the professionalization of all SFRA members—academic or not—in these increasingly uncertain times. I will solicit advice from members on their positive and negative career experiences. Working with the editors of the *SFRA Review* and conference directors, I believe that we can leverage these personal insights to support student and underemployed members through advice and shared experiences. Finally, I will collaborate with the membership to make the SFRA more inclusive of new SF research trends and more relevant in an increasingly science fictional world.

Pawel Frelik

I am honored to be nominated for the position of SFRA President. I joined the organization in 1997 and since then I have attended a number of SFRA conferences; served on the Pioneer (twice as a member and once as a chair) and Graduate Student Paper Award (twice as a member) committees; and organized the 2011 SFRA Conference in Lublin, Poland. Outside SFRA, my experience in professional societies includes service on the Boards of the Polish Association of American Studies (1999-2007) and the European Association of American Studies (2007 – present).

If elected, I will endeavor to conduct all statutory duties of the president but there are also two areas in which I would like SFRA to expand in particular and which constitute my bona fide program. The first is SFRA's expansion into areas, both thematic and social, which reflect science fiction's increasingly diverse interests and science fiction studies' connectedness with other disciplines. In this area I would like to foster further internationalization outside North America, emphasize member recruitment in non-Anglophone countries, and strengthen links with other academic associations such as the Utopian Studies Society or the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, whose areas of interest may overlap with ours.

My other concern is further development of the online presence of the organization. While some steps have already been taken, for an organization whose

interests include digital and communications technologies, we are still very un-technological and un-digital. Many initiatives in this era have already been suggested, but, to my mind, can be pursued more decisively and with more concerted effort. Among them are the online directory (needless to say, incorporating individual members' wishes concerning degrees of privacy), the online archive of conference materials (a very important part of the communal memory, which is virtually non-existent at this time), further archivization of *SFRA Review*, or more pronounced presence on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. To my mind, all these will not only reaffirm SFRA's sense of a community that is more than just an annual conference but will also attract new and younger members that may not be as aware of SFRA's existence.

Vice Presidential Candidates:

Shawn Malley

Dear SFRA membership,

I am writing to announce my candidacy for the position of Vice President in the upcoming SFRA executive committee elections.

For those of you who don't know me, I am a full professor in the English Department at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, Quebec, where I teach a range of courses including Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Literature, Literary Theory, Creative Writing, and Science Fiction Film and Literature.

While I have been a member of the SFRA for only two years, my research interests and publications have been fully committed to the field of SF studies for several years now. My particular interest is representations of archaeology—or, rather, archaeology as a mode of representation—in SF film and television. This work evolved out of my monograph *From Archaeology to Spectacle in Victorian Britain: The Case of Assyria, 1845-54* (Ashgate, 2012), which concludes with a case study of contemporary SF film representations of Mesopotamian archaeology and the military occupation during the recent Gulf War. An expanded version of this study will appear this September in the *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, under the title "Archaeology as WMD." My article "Battling Babylon: Stargate SG-1 and the 'Archaeology-Military Complex'" is forthcoming in *Genre* this winter. An article on the "reimagined" *Battlestar Galactica*, "'Does All this Have to Happen Again': Excavating Heritage in BSG," is under review at *Science Fiction Film and Television*. I am currently

writing a book under the title *Excavating the Future: Archaeology and Geopolitics in Post 9/11 Science Fiction Film and Television*. I invite you to visit my academic profile for further information: <http://www.ubishops.ca/academic-programs/humanities/english/faculty.html>.

Aside from my academic interests in SF, my desire to serve on the SFRA executive was perked by my extremely positive experience at this year's conference in Detroit. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you, listening to and engaging with your ideas and projects, and sharing the pride and care you all have for the discipline and its rich critical and creative history. I am also heartened by the experimental sensibility of the organization, the willingness to search for new modes of tapping into the vast universe of SF studies. I came away from the conference inspired—and I continue to be inspired—by the collective energy and good will of all the participants. Especially with the welcome I felt as a first time conference attendee, and the supportive environment the group extends to its student members. I understand that a major part of the responsibilities of the VP is to serve as membership and public relations officer. If elected, I look forward to the opportunity to developing initiatives with the new executive and the technical support team to attract new members, coax old members back into the fold, and to exploit in the best sense of the term everyone's talents and passions in order to continue to promote our work to the many people engaged in the intellectual pursuit of SF.

In terms of management I have at this stage in my career been chair of many important hiring and Senate committees, served as departmental chair, am coordinator of the Cultural and Media Studies and Creative Writing programs, and am, like many people at my Liberal Education university, actively engaged in recruitment and retention initiatives.

I thank you all for considering my credentials, and look forward to continuing what I trust will be a long and prosperous relationship. If you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Shawn Malley
Professor
Department of English
Bishop's University
smalley@ubishops.ca

Amy J. Ransom

Although my area of specialty (Quebec SF, fantastique

& horror) may seem a bit marginal, I have a broad background in utopian theory, feminist SF and continually keep up on contemporary trends in our field. I am Associate Professor of French at Central Michigan University and I have been a member of SFRA, with a couple of gaps, since 2006 and one of the biggest honors of my career was to win the Pioneer Award in 2007. I have been building a record of service to the profession and to SFRA in particular in a number of ways over the last five years, regularly contributing book and media reviews to *SFRA Review*, as well as book reviews to *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, *Extrapolation*, and *Science Fiction Studies*. I also organized a panel session at this year's SFRA and in Fall 2011 co-organized (with Miléna Santoro of Georgetown University) a plenary reading and Q & A session, as well as a related paper session, bringing Élisabeth Vonarburg and Sylvie Bérard, two Québec SF writers, to the Association of Canadian Studies in the US in Ottawa, Canada. I was also involved in at least a half-dozen sessions at World-Con 2010 in Montréal. I would very much like to serve SFRA as its Vice-President; working in the science-fiction community has really allowed my career to grow and I would like to give something back now. As someone who has been advocating for the developing field of Postcolonial SF since 2005, I hope to strengthen that area's presence in the organization, as well as broadening its international scope through contacts in Franco-phone and, potentially, Hispanophone SF.

Treasurer Candidates:

Steve Berman

I would be very happy to serve as Treasurer of the SFRA for 2013-2015 term of office. I have been a member of the SFRA since 2006. I have delivered several papers over the past few years, and I have published several media reviews in the *SFRA Review*. At present, I am a full-time instructor at Oakland Community College (Auburn Hills, Michigan) where I served as Department Chair (1992-2000) and where I regularly teach a course in Science Fiction and Fantasy (both online and face-to-face). My most recent involvement with SFRA was as one of the hosts of the 2012 SFRA conference in Detroit. My role as conference host was to communicate with the conference membership (over 600 e-mails from July 2011 through June 2012), make event arrangements with the hotel event manager, invite and make arrangements for the featured guests, and handle all the conference financial transactions, which in-

cluded receiving payments from the guests, paying the hotel bills, and providing refunds to guests who had to cancel. I am happy to say that the conference was a resounding success. As Treasurer of the SFRA, I will keep a close watch on the organization's finances, do my best to increase the membership, and work with the Executive Committee to find ways to cut excessive costs. Thank you for considering my candidacy as Treasurer of the SFRA. If elected, it will be my pleasure to serve.

Susan George

Hello SFRA Membership, I hope this missive finds you all well. I'm Susan George and I would like to tell you a little about myself, why I'm running for Treasurer, and my qualifications for the position. My very first academic conference was the Eaton/SFRA conference on the Queen Mary. Since then I have continued to attend various conferences and publish on the issues of gender and the alien other in science fiction film and TV. Recently I have become very involved in the administration of SFRA. I just finished my three year tenure on the Mary Kay Bray Award committee and I'm currently completing a term as secretary. I have decided to run for Treasurer because it fits well with my past work experience. Before returning to college, I was a bookkeeper for a retail store and an accounting technician for Santa Cruz County Probation. I have a great deal of experience with record keeping, accounts payable and receivable, and spreadsheets (excel and otherwise). As the supervisor of the Probation accounting unit, I also have experience dealing with a wide variety of people quickly, efficiently, and professionally. I would be delighted to bring my expertise in accounting and my interpersonal skills to an organization that continues to support my other interests—the study of science fiction media. I would appreciate your support and your vote. Best, Susan A. George

Secretary Candidates:

Derek Theiss

I am pleased and humbled to be nominated for the position of Secretary of SFRA. I have been a member since 2007, and my first conference was 2008. Even then, as a graduate student, I was overwhelmed by the openness and warmth of the members of this organization. I have attended several SFRA conferences since then—volunteering to help when able—and have found this warm welcome each time. I have always lamented not being able to do more, finally realizing that the execu-

Remarks for Pilgrim Award

Marleen Barr (Chair); Brian Attebery; Roger Luckhurst.

For lifetime contributions to SF/F studies.

FRIENDS and Science Fiction scholars, lend the Pilgrim Award Committee your ears. We come to bury Pamela Sargent's prodigious and breath taking contribution to fiction, not to praise it. This is because the Pilgrim Award is not given for fiction. In other words, why is this night different from all other nights? The answer: on this night we gather to honor lifetime achievement in science fiction scholarship. If Pamela Sargent had only written fiction and not criticism, "dayenu," it would have been enough. But Pamela Sargent stands as an exemplar of all that the Pilgrim Award represents. In addition to being a prolific author of acclaimed fiction, Pamela Sargent has spent her life producing anthologies, essays, and reviews in an uninterrupted critical outpouring which encompasses an approximate thirty-seven year time span. The Committee is proud to honor Sargent's contribution to science fiction scholarship. Pamela Sargent is a science fiction criticism goddess, a Venus of our scholarly production dreams, the Watchstar of our community's aspirations. *The Best of Pamela Sargent* appeared in 1987. Tonight we honor Pamela Sargent with the 2012 Pilgrim Award because she represents the best of us.

Sargent's many essays and critical introductions brilliantly elucidate the work of her fellow fiction writers. Her anthologies provide real space to showcase the work of her colleagues who write about imaginative space. She is always cogent and illuminating. Her work proliferates in the at once delightfully pleasant and unmistakably present manner of Tribbles. Hence, and thankfully so, *Women of Wonder* begat *More Women of Wonder* which begat *The New Women of Wonder*. These anthologies themselves exude a textual insistence which in their time necessarily proclaimed that women should not be passed over. We stand at a future moment in relation to these anthologies. We can now say that Pamela Sargent's *Women of Wonder* volumes made our present a better place.

The point is that Pamela Sargent is herself a *Woman of Wonder*, a science fiction text producing *Wonder Woman*. Our newest Pilgrim is a person for all science

tive committee would be a great way to give back to an academic society from which I have received so much. In the position of Secretary I would dedicate myself to the duties of this office in particular by facilitating communication between the committee and the membership. Also, I will continue to recruit new members at all stages of their careers and do what I can to ensure that SFRA continues to thrive in both membership and in the vitality of the sf research that it supports. I have taught at several universities and currently hold a position at UC Davis—my own recent research focuses on alternate history and scientific methodologies. I have both taught sf and served in administrative roles at several of these universities, from Case Western Reserve to the University of Illinois. Having worked with so many younger students, I am especially dedicated to encouraging early career scholars to pursue sf studies, just as members of SFRA have encouraged me.

I would greatly appreciate your vote, and look forward to the chance to serve you as Secretary. Thank you.

Jenni Halpin

A relative newcomer to the SFRA fold, I came to literature by way of science fiction (and never left). I'm delighted by the collegiality at the heart of the SFRA and would be honored to contribute more substantially to its ongoing support of science fiction research. In the years since finishing graduate school I have had the time to absorb the rhythms of teaching, research, and service at my institution (Savannah State University), and I am now in a place to expand the horizons of my activities beyond occasional conference attendance.

I have been not only an administrative assistant to an academic department but also a recording secretary for various small organizations with boards ranging from five to twenty people. I see the secretarial role as one of facilitation, not only in keeping records but especially in the opportunity for big-picture thinking afforded by revising rough minutes. Beyond the moment in which focused decision making occurs, a bit of reflection can remind us of the forest in which we are deciding to put those trees, and the combination of tricky little details with vast metathinking reminds me of hard science fiction and appeals to me. Punctual, organized, and attentive to details, I would consider myself privileged to involve myself in tracking and shaping the ongoing work of the SFRA.

fiction seasons—from the sands of Dune to the ice of Gethen—whose work stands as an inspiration for all the “more” and “new” people who will in the future produce wondrous science fiction words.

Pamela, in relation to your contribution to our field, “dayenu” does not apply; we can never have enough. We all look forward to a future in which your words will continue to grace us by being fruitful and multiplying. Dearest Pamela, our committee and our community thank you and applaud you for all of your inspiring work. My Award Committee colleagues Brian Attebery and Roger Luckhurst join me in congratulating you.

Pilgrim Award Acceptance Speech

Writing Science Fiction During the Collapse of Human Civilization

Pamela Sargent

I’LL BEGIN BY TELLING YOU about an incident that happened some fifty years ago that may have been largely responsible for bringing me here tonight. Back then, in the early 1960s, before I met him, my life partner and colleague George Zebrowski, still in high school, took the subway from his apartment in the Bronx to the Strand bookstore in Manhattan, where he spotted a copy of a used book bound in black cloth without a jacket, a book with the title *Pilgrims Through Space and Time*. Intrigued by this book he had never heard of before even though he was a very well-read science fiction fan, he inspected the volume, considered it for a while, and then decided that maybe the two dollars *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* would cost him might be better spent elsewhere. He headed back home but kept thinking about the book, couldn’t get it out of his mind, so soon got off his train, got back on another train headed back to Manhattan and the Strand, and bought the book.

So I can only say that I’m glad George had those two bucks to spare for J.O. Bailey’s pioneering study, which probably helped to spark my own interest in overlooked science fiction.

We eventually replaced that older copy of *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* with the 1972 Greenwood Press trade paperback reprint with its introduction by Tom Clareson at about the time I was editing the first *Women of Wonder* anthology—or to put it more accurately, while I was thinking such an anthology could be assembled and trying, mostly unsuccessfully, to con-

vince editors that there was enough material there to justify such an anthology. I was trying in my own way back then, I suppose, to shed light on an overlooked body of science fiction, namely science fiction stories written by women, just as J.O. Bailey’s purpose in his study of science fiction was to bring serious literary and social analysis to what was largely regarded in the earlier 20th century as only a branch of popular literature.

My title for this talk is “Writing Science Fiction During the Collapse of Human Civilization,” a title that’s explicitly modeled on the title of a speech my fellow writer Eleanor Arnason gave at WisCon in 2004. Her speech was entitled “Writing Science Fiction During the Third World War,” and in that speech she concluded:

We are living in an age of revolution and in a science fiction disaster novel. No, we are living in several science fiction disaster novels at once. The stakes are huge. Human civilization may be at risk. The solutions are going to require science and technology, as well as political and social struggle.¹

What are we—as science fiction readers and writers—doing about this? Historically, science fiction has been about big problems, use and misuse of technology, the broad sweep of history and every kind of change. Historically, it has been a cautionary and visionary art form. Are we continuing this tradition? Are we writing books that accurately reflect our current amazing and horrifying age?

Are we talking about the kind of future we want to see and how to begin creating it?

Or are we, in the immortal words of the preacher in *Blazing Saddles*, just jerking off?²

Well, I’ve been thinking about this a lot in recent years, especially after being a witness to various intermittent periods of historical amnesia during my life. While editing *Women of Wonder* back in the 1970s, and discovering what a rich body of work there was by women while I edited those anthologies (because I was learning much more about that body of work while editing them), I saw first hand how much had been forgotten. This happened again, when during the 1990s, it seemed time to edit new and updated *Women of Wonder* anthologies because so many new writers had come into the field that I hadn’t been able to include in the first anthologies, and I discovered yet again that much had been forgotten—maybe not by those people who pay attention to such things, but by many in the field and by the culture in general. And now—well I’ll set lit-

erature and science fiction aside for now and say that I was unable to foresee that in 2012 many of my fellow citizens would suddenly be making a major political issue of contraception, something I was naïve enough to think had been settled long ago, and that such an eminently respectable organization as Planned Parenthood would soon be seen as a radical fringe group with nefarious goals. But maybe that's my own historical amnesia kicking in, since history shows us how often social advances can be forfeited and abandoned and turned back.

In any case, over the past few years I've been able to witness, at closer range than I would have preferred, some of the signs of a collapsing civilization.

My day job is with a nonprofit public policy group—in other words, a lobbying group—in Albany, New York. We represent private nonprofit colleges and universities in New York State but also work with public institutions like the City University of New York and the State University of New York. But my own work isn't with the political or lobbying part of the group; it's with outreach programs for students and families, working on our publications, and our main job is to get as much information about colleges and how to prepare for college to people who need this information and who otherwise might not have much access to it, among them kids and families in poor urban and rural districts for whom college seems as unlikely a possibility as going to Mars. In 2008, as the financial system was collapsing, the man who then headed our operation, an economist by training, already saw that the next bursting bubble might be higher education. Nowadays I spend a fair amount of time in the office researching statistics on student debt, repayment plans, and news about any and all available scholarships and grants, since that is available money that students don't have to pay back. They could use a lot more of that kind of money.

There are enough stories about student debt—you probably have plenty of your own—that I needn't go into that subject here, and worrisome as it is, it may be one of the lesser signs of the approaching apocalypse. Another sign is the collapse of the somewhat utopian dream of the meritocracy, the idea that anybody, no matter how unfortunate their individual circumstances, can through hard work and intelligence and merit, rise and be successful. In recent years, one of the federal grant programs my coworkers and I worked with gave a grant to the Bronx Institute of Lehman College, part of the City University of New York, to develop programs for middle school students, most of them Afri-

can-American and Latino, some of them undocumented, and one of the programs involved test-prep courses for the most selective New York City public schools, schools where admission is based purely on how well you do on a very tough standardized test. Chris Hayes, in his book *Twilight of the Elites*, offers a good description of how that particular ideal has been subverted by describing his own experience at one of those selective public institutions:

In 1990, at the age of 11, I stood in a line of sixth graders outside an imposing converted armory on Manhattan's Upper East Side, nervously anticipating a test that would change my life. I was hoping to gain entrance to Hunter College High School, a public magnet school that runs from grades seven through twelve and admits students from all five boroughs. Each year, between 3,000 and 4,000 students citywide score high enough on their fifth-grade standardized tests to qualify to take Hunter's entrance exam in the sixth grade; ultimately, only 185 will be offered admission...²

I was one of the lucky ones who made it through, and my experience there transformed me. It was at Hunter that I absorbed the open-minded, self-assured cosmopolitanism that is the guiding ethos of the current American ruling class. What animates the school is a collective delight in the talent and energy of its students and a general feeling of earned superiority. In 1982 a Hunter alumnus profiled the school in a *New York Magazine* article called "The Joyful Elite" and identified its "most singular trait" as the "exuberantly smug loyalty of its students."

That loyalty emanates from the deeply held conviction that Hunter embodies the meritocratic ideal as much as any institution in the country. Unlike elite colleges, which use all kinds of subjective measures—recommendations, résumés, writing samples, parental legacies and interviews—in deciding who gains admittance, entrance to Hunter rests on a single "objective" measure: one three-hour test. If you clear the bar, you're in; if not, you're out. There are no legacy admissions, and there are no strings to pull for the well-connected. If Michael Bloomberg's daughter took the test and didn't pass, she wouldn't get in. There are only a handful of institutions left in the country about which this can be said.

Because it is public and free, the school pulls kids from all over the city, many of whom are first-generation Americans, the children of immigrant strivers from

Korea, Russia and Pakistan. Half the students have at least one parent born outside the United States. For all these reasons Hunter is, in its own imagination, a place where anyone with drive and brains can be catapulted from the anonymity of working-class outer-borough neighborhoods to the inner sanctum of the American elite...

But the problem with my alma mater is that over time, the mechanisms of meritocracy have broken down. In 1995, when I was a student at Hunter, the student body was 12 percent black and 6 percent Hispanic. Not coincidentally, there was no test-prep industry for the Hunter entrance exam. That's no longer the case. Now, so-called cram schools like Elite Academy in Queens can charge thousands of dollars for after-school and weekend courses where sixth graders memorize vocabulary words and learn advanced math. Meanwhile, in the wealthier precincts of Manhattan, parents can hire \$90-an-hour private tutors for one-on-one sessions with their children.

By 2009, Hunter's demographics were radically different—just 3 percent black and 1 percent Hispanic, according to the *New York Times*. With the rise of a sophisticated and expensive test-preparation industry, the means of selecting entrants to Hunter has grown less independent of the social and economic hierarchies in New York at large. The pyramid of merit has come to mirror the pyramid of wealth and cultural capital.ⁱⁱ The Bronx Institute has actually done pretty well training less well-off students to pass the test – it's called the Specialized High School Admissions Test, or SHSAT, and is rated by most who take it as a lot tougher than the SATs—but those Bronx kids and their weekend or summer training have to compete with families that can afford expensive and intensive tutoring, and the students who can get into even the prep courses offered by the Bronx Institute and Fordham University are only a small number of the Bronx's middle school students. Much of what I've seen lately from the vantage point of my day job—the economic problems facing students in college and when they're out of college, the decrease in much-needed aid for public colleges and universities, the insistence in some quarters that institutions of higher education should function more like businesses—I sat through a mind-numbing PowerPoint presentation on this very subject this past spring – is not only depressing, it also convinces me that younger people are being systematically robbed of anything resembling a hopeful future.

Over these past years, I've also been writing science

fiction, with my most recent novels being published as young adult books. Now I have to say here that over these past years, I have learned that just about everything I once knew about how to conduct a career as a professional writer has fallen by the wayside (I'm thinking of such pieces of advice as "always make sure you keep a carbon copy" and "don't write without getting paid"—an online presence pretty much requires a lot of writing for free). About the only advice I give any aspiring writers now that has stood the test of time is "read as much and as widely as possible" and "make writing something every day a habit." And here I have to admit that coming back into writing books for young adults, which turns out to be one of the brighter spots in publishing these days, was more of an accident than a thought-out career move; I'd published some YA science fiction in the 1980s and it was an editor who was a fan of my novel *Earthseed* who convinced me to write the sequels I had long wanted to write but that no publisher had wanted to publish earlier.

Turns out that YA fiction, and YA fantasy fiction of all kinds, including science fiction, urban fantasy, vampires, and a number of other subgenres, constitutes a category all by itself, and I get the impression (I could be mistaken about this) that many of the readers don't draw a sharp distinction between these various subgenres. One of the interns in my office, when she found out that one of my recent science fiction YA novels was coming out, said, "Oh, like Harry Potter and vampires"—anything that wasn't realistic fiction pretty much melded together in her mind. And within the YA genre, one of the most popular categories seems to be the dystopian novel, exemplified by such excellent books as Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* and Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker*, but also most famously these days by Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*.

Clearly a lot of young people find something in these books that appeals to them, that speaks to them, that presents a convincing story, that maybe reflects something about their world or else offers an escape from it, even if it's only the feeling that however sucky their own lives are, they aren't nearly as bad as the situations the fictional characters they're reading about are facing.

One of my fellow writers, a perceptive writer and critic, found *The Hunger Games* unconvincing because she could not imagine a society that would passively allow young kids to endure torture and brutal, widely broadcast contests for decades without rising up in protest. And yet we are living in a world where many young people routinely encounter ridicule, criticism, and

scorn from the old. Some are calling it a war against the young, and I'm not sure what else you can call it when the unemployment rate among young people is so needlessly high. People a lot more knowledgeable in economics than I am have pointed out that this kind of problem could be solved by governments willing to spend money on jobs programs and on strengthening what social support systems we have instead of threatening to cut back on them, especially for anyone unlucky enough to be under fifty. And in an ironic and cruel twist, those promoting economic austerity justify that policy by claiming they're thinking of the young, who might otherwise be saddled with debt, ignoring the fact that a lot of them already are. And these economic problems are relatively easy to solve compared to the problems we face with global climate change, depleted resources, and all the rest.

And in another ironic twist, we have an amazing technological capacity that could help us solve our problems if there were only the will—and the political means—to do so.

If I were deeply cynical—and I am often at the point of being completely cynical these days—I might almost think that there has been a deliberate and conscious plot for some time now among malign old rich people to prepare the young for a future of diminished prospects and scrambling for what crumbs are left without questioning the assumptions under which our society seems to be operating now, which I can pretty much sum up as “them that has gets, and they deserve it, too.” As Gary Westfahl eloquently wrote in a review of *The Hunger Games* movie:

...the peculiar genius of *The Hunger Games*... is that its unjust society is starkly divided along generational lines: though there are a few small children in sight, the citizens of the oppressive Capitol are overwhelmingly adults, and their absurdly colorful outfits and extravagant hairstyles can readily be interpreted as the way that teenagers today view the older adults around them – frivolous, arbitrary, and distinctly unfashionable, living comfortable lives supported by programs like Social Security and Medicare largely funded by the hard labor of young workers. In contrast, it is teenagers and their parents, lacking access to such governmental largess, who must suffer in rags through penurious circumstances.

Finally, young people today are figuring out that this cruel, capricious older generation is

preparing them for a real-life version of *The Hunger Games* – constantly pushing them to do well in high school, get into the right college, and obtain all the proper training and credentials, then thrusting them into a society where, despite all their efforts, they will face daunting competition to find a good job and, unlikely to succeed, will somehow have to eke out a living while burdened by massive debts. Indeed, to students hoping to get into elite colleges with ten times more applicants than slots available, or seeking a job that has attracted hundreds of applicants, winning a competition with only twenty-four contestants might seem less challenging than the figurative struggles for survival that they will actually be facing.³

So among all the other ills we're likely to face, conflict and war between the young and the old doesn't seem all that unlikely.

I cannot convince myself that it's realistic to conclude on a more hopeful note, but the future is not some inevitable, fated sequence of events in which the human race seems intent on suicide; at least people involved in science fiction have tended to stand against this kind of attitude. As J.O. Bailey put it at the end of his book:

World War II, still smoldering, was not inevitable. Everybody saw it coming and now, when it is too late, we see how it could have been forestalled. There were Have and Have-not nations; frustrated peoples ripe for any Fuehrer; a powerless League; and in America and Britain especially, isolationism more suitable to horse-and-buggy days than under the wings of ocean-spanning planes. Perhaps this isolationism in the teeth of the Machine Age was the fundamental factor, general cause of all the other causes. That is what scientific fiction says.⁴

Statesmen have now another chance to readjust our society to a world of new machines, brief distances, and new powers. These new machines and new powers are on a level different from that of historical dominion, boundary line, naval power, empire over palm and pine, and all the other creeds of a world of isolated, predatory nations. New machines and new powers demand that the world has to be One World, and surely statesmen...will gradually see the idea.iv

Unfortunately J.O. Bailey got that wrong, but we still have a chance to get it right. And one way maybe to start getting it right is to reconsider science fiction's tradition as a cautionary and visionary art form—possibly

a revolutionary art form—and produce the kind of work that has this tradition at its heart.

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Remarks for Pioneer Award

De Witt Kilgore (Chair); Neil Easterbrook; Keren Omry.

For outstanding SF studies essay of the year:

Winner: David M. Higgins for “Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction,” American Literature 83.2 (June 2011): 331-54.

THE COMMITTEE TACKLED its unusually heavy workload with good humor, grace and smart commentary. We are pleased with the high level of scholarship out there. We are just as sorry that there can be only one winner.

This year’s honoree’s are: Everett Hamner for “The Predisposed Agency of Genomic Fiction.”¹ His contribution has two very distinctive qualities. First, it has truly new things to add to the debates about genre and the history of sf; and second, it very nicely advances arguments from both science and fiction in a thoroughly convincingly and thoroughly integrated reading of the study-example. That study-example is Richard Powers’ important *Generosity* (2009), a novel that ought to be central to any current understanding of SF’s wider generic slipstream, and Hamner makes an excellent case. Perhaps the most impressive feature of his essay is the seemingly effortless way he moves back and forth between larger, global abstractions about fiction and genre, and the sharp, acute detail of a close reading of the novel. Bravo! And Heather Latimer for “Repro-

ductive Technologies, Fetal Icons, and Genetic Freaks: Shelley Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl* and the Limits and Possibilities of Donna Haraway’s Cyborg.”² Her work is an illuminating and thorough analysis that offers a model for the kinds of intersections between science fiction and posthuman discourses that can pave the way for future SF criticism. As Latimer argues “whereas the figure of the cyborg may have run its course in some areas of the media or politics, such as in the instance of the fetal cyborg, the way it is explored in fictional texts is relevant and useful for making sense of current connections between posthuman theories and reproductive technologies.” The committee believes that her argument attempts to shed light on how SF is uniquely adept at bearing the weight of social critique while also exploring neat ideas.

The winner of this year’s Pioneer Award is...

David M. Higgins for “Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction.”³ His essay finds in science fiction the impulse to extend the imperial imaginary of the past century and the countervailing desire to dramatize “cosmopolitan alternatives to imperial domination.” The article continues recent critical interest in science fiction’s imbrication with the romance of imperialism (by scholars such as John Rieder and Patricia Kerslake) and provides a robust defense of a “strong cosmopolitanism” that can both theorize and demonstrate a way beyond the restrictive racial ethics sponsored by an imperial imaginary.

His brilliant reading of Ursula K. Le Guin’s Hainish novels—produced during the 1960s and 1970s—challenges an older critical consensus on its political limitations and argues for her prescience in developing a concrete representation of an otherwise theoretical radical democracy. In so doing Higgins convincingly argues that the genre’s celebration/critique of imperialism has been crucial to the creation of fictive worlds that can usefully recalibrate our definition of humanity as a species against and with its others: real or imagined. Higgins’s articulation of how the strong cosmopolitan ethics developed in Le Guin’s fiction offers a fresh critique of what has been accomplished within the genre and provides a model for what may be achieved by a critical method that makes that accomplishment visible.

It is our judgment that the work produced by Drs. Higgins, Hamner and Latimer represents the best in science fiction scholarship for the year 2011. We look forward to following the influence of their work in the months and years to come.

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- ² Latimer, Heather. "Reproductive Technologies, Fetal Icons, and Genetic Freaks: Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* and the Limits and Possibilities of Donna Haraway's Cyborg." *Modern Fiction Studies* 57.2 (Summer 2011): 318-35.
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Pioneer Award Acceptance Speech

David Higgins

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH! The article for which I am receiving this award, "Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction," attempts to articulate something that I've been thinking about for a long time concerning the conflicting ethics of cosmopolitan exploration and imperial conquest, and I believe these issues are often central to the thematic questions of science fiction. As such, it is an extraordinary honor to have my work recognized by the Science Fiction Research Association. I'd like to thank all of the members of my dissertation committee, including my mentor De Witt Kilgore, for the help and guidance they have provided during my research. I'd also like to thank all of my correspondence partners, including Tatyana Brown (who is here tonight as my guest), for their invaluable help in my writing process. Finally, I'd like to thank the SFRA and this year's conference organizers in particular for making me feel so welcome at this year's conference. Thanks very much everyone!

Remarks for Claeson Award

Andy Sawyer (Chair); Joan Gordon; Alan Elms.

For distinguished service

Speech delivered by Joan Gordon

THE OTHER MEMBERS of the Claeson Award Committee, Andy Sawyer and Alan Elms, are sorry that they cannot be here to present this award to Art Evans. I'm very glad that I could come, not only as the representative of that committee but also to represent Art later,

since he could not be here to accept the award. So forgive me for giving two speeches. I'll keep this one as short as is possible to acknowledge properly all that Art has contributed to sf. And I can tell you now that Art's very modest acceptance is still quite short even though I had to urge him to expand it.

You may know Art as the managing editor of *Science Fiction Studies* and as an editor of the *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. But he has done much more. His educational history shows that he is primarily a French scholar (and he's in France right now for various reasons including as the guest of honor at a cocktail party to celebrate the official launch of *RES FUTURAE* [ReSF], the first French university-based peer-reviewed journal on science fiction). He is a widely-recognized expert on Jules Verne and has written many articles in both French and English on that founder of our field, as well as on other aspects of French science fiction. As an ambassador of French sf, he would deserve a Claeson or a Pilgrim. As we say on Passover, *dayanu*—It would have been enough.

But he is also the general editor for the "Early Classics of Science Fiction" book series, published by Wesleyan University Press. I count almost 60 volumes in that series, including six he takes personal credit for, but that leaves 50 or so other volumes that people in this room have benefited from and may have even published with Wesleyan. In addition to all those early classics, Wesleyan's sf line includes reprints of Samuel Delany, volumes on German and Spanish sf, and exceptional critical works such as those by Larbalestier, Freedman, Telotte, Barr, Wolfe, Ruddick, Crossley, Reider, Tucker, Csicsery-Ronay, Jr, and Fitting. As an editor instrumental in bringing so many important works of sf and so much fine scholarship to publication, he would deserve a Claeson or a Pilgrim. It would have been enough.

He is also the managing editor of *Science Fiction Studies*. As one of his co-editors, I can tell you that his job is absolutely central. Not only does he handle all the legal, financial, printing, and distributing matters, but he handles us! We are six very different, very peculiar people whom he cajoles into keeping up standards and keeping to deadlines. We have a very thorough process of vetting articles and shepherding them to print, as many of you know first hand, full of fail-safes to guard against errors of any kind, and each of us would slacken without Art there to keep us on task. One story will illustrate. The proofs for the November 2001 issue arrived on our doorsteps right after September 11. I don't

know about the other editors, but I was spending most of my time riveted to the tv screen, watching the disaster over and over, and in no mood to look for typos. Here's what Art said to us. "If *SFS* doesn't come out on time, the terrorists will have won." And maybe he was right. There's plenty of evidence that Bin Laden read Isaac Asimov, after all. Maybe he was reading the journal too. Well, the terrorists lost. Issue #85, with articles by Nick Ruddick, I.Q. Hunter, Peter Stillman, Elena Del Rio, and Sherryl Vint, made its deadline. Nothing on Asimov, though. As the editor who has made all that possible issue after issue and year after year, he would deserve a Clareson or a Pilgrim. It would have been enough.

But wait. He is also the principal editor of the *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Do you think it would have been the meticulous and generous volume it is without him? Who else would have made us survey the members of SFRA and IAFA to find out what stories worked for them and what stories should be included? Who else would have kept us on track in our seemingly endless arguments about what should and should not be included? Who else would have devised a method for breaking the monumental task down into achievable steps and assigned us each an equal number of stories to shepherd? Who else would have kept me editing stories for any scanning errors while I was cooped up in some crummy Soviet-era dorm room in Wrocław, Poland? Who else would have made sure I wrote all my introductions for stories and my contributions to the opening essay even though I was busy with a Fulbright in Lublin? Who else would have followed through on all the permissions and bargained with Wesleyan so that we could have an affordable anthology? As the editor who did all that and more, he would deserve a Clareson or a Pilgrim. It would have been enough.

But he did all that and more. And he did it with warmth and kindness. And he's still doing it. And he'll keep on doing it for the foreseeable future. It is my absolute honor and privilege on behalf of the Clareson Award Committee to present Arthur B. Evans with the 2012 Clareson Award for outstanding service to science fiction.

Clareson Award Acceptance Speech

Arthur B. Evans

I'D LIKE TO THANK the SFRA and the 2012 Awards Committee for this honor. It's always wonderful to be

recognized by your peers for the work that you do. I humbly accept the 2012 Clareson Award on behalf of sf editors everywhere and especially on behalf of two unsung heroes who labored for many years in the trenches of sf scholarship and whose editorial excellence has always been a source of inspiration to me: Richard Dale Mullen and Robert M. Philmus. Dale and Robert were model editors—not only because of their vast knowledge of the sf field but also because of their uncompromising demand for accuracy, clarity, and documentary authenticity in every essay they edited for *Science Fiction Studies*.

In accepting this award, I would also like to recognize another fine editor, Suzanna Tamminen, editor-in-chief and now director of Wesleyan University Press. In late 1999, I began working with Suzanna to establish a new book series called the "Early Classics of Science Fiction." My initial motivation was to find a publishing home for some heretofore untranslated novels by Jules Verne. But Suzanna wisely insisted on a much broader focus for the series, and we decided to include in it three types of books: reprints of important works of early English-language science fiction ("early" defined as published before 1940), new translations of early foreign-language sf, and critical studies dealing with early sf authors and works. From 2001 until today, we have published over two dozen books in this series, including several Verne translations; works by Balzac, Robida, Wells, Stabledon, Donnelly, Rosny, Merritt, and most recently Enrique Gaspar; collections of Spanish and German short stories; and important critical works on early sf, feminism, colonialism, subterranean worlds, prehistoric fiction, Mars, and the history of Latin American sf, among others. Suzanna was also very supportive of my idea to develop and publish a new teaching anthology of sf stories called *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*, which came out in 2010.

Finally, speaking of *The Wesleyan Anthology*, I would like to give special recognition to my SFS co-editors: Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger, Rob Latham, Carol McQuirk, and Sherryl Vint. They are truly the "dream team" of journal editors. Not only do they have an amazing range of scholarly expertise and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of patience and editorial insight, they are also good people and extraordinarily easy to work with. We are like a family.

So it is on behalf of all these remarkable editors in our field that I accept the 2012 Clareson Award.

Thank you.

Remarks for Mary Kay Bray Award

Susan George (Chair); Sharon Sharp; Joan Haran.

For the best essay, interview, or extended review in the past year's SFRA Review: T. S. Miller for "Review of Rise of the Planet of the Apes." SFRA Review 298 (Fall 2011): 41-44.

GOOD EVENING, I'm Susan George and this year's chair of the Mary Kay Bray Award Committee.

This year when I looked back over the large double issues and all the reviews they contained, though very impressive, I was sure our deliberations for the Mary Kay Bray award were going to be long and arduous, but that wasn't the case at all. Things went smoothly and quickly and I would like to thank Sharon Sharp and Joan Haran for their work and thoughtful comments. After only one go around the committee had two pieces they found superior. So we asked the Executive Committee if we could submit an Honorable Mention along with the winner. Our Honorable Mention goes to Lars Schmeink for his "Video Game Studies 101". The committee found it a useful and compelling overview of Video game studies. One reviewer commented that it was, "good on theory, methodology and so-whatness, and also a very engaging address to the reader."

But the clear winner was T.S. Miller's review of *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Personally, I found it to be one of the best film reviews I have read some time. One committee member commented that it was "Excellent - as both a historically contextualised film review and as a critical article situating the reading at the intersection of SF studies and critical animal studies." Another member "appreciated how this very detailed review adroitly situates this film within the contexts of the original *Planet of the Apes* film (and its spin-offs/remake) . . . The review is very clear in terms of how the film can work in a class with an animal studies unit as well as how it can function as a starting point for viewers to begin to think through "the problem of the animal" (41). Simply put, T.S. Miller's piece, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, elegantly embodies the intent of the SFRA's media reviews. And now allow me to introduce the winner of this year's Mary Kay Bray Award, T.S. Miller.

Mary Kay Bray Award Acceptance Speech

T.S. Miller

I'D JUST LIKE TO THANK the members of the award committee and everyone who works on the *SFRA Review*—I know it can be a labor of love. So, in lieu of longer remarks, I'll simply plug the Review once again: I think it does fill a very important niche between the scholarly journals and popular review venues. So, you should all submit something, and, who knows, you may find yourself up here!

Remarks for Student Paper Award

Alfredo Suppia (Chair); James Thrall, Sonja Fritzsche.

For best student paper presented at the previous year's SFRA meeting: Florian Bast for "Fantastic Voices: Octavia Butler's First-Person Narrators and "The Evening and the Morning and the Night."

THE SET OF SUBMITTED PAPERS revealed a remarkable heterogeneity, given the variety of perspectives. Most papers were authored by non-American researchers. These features could be ascribed to the nature of SFRA 2011 itself, organized in Poland. Florian Bast's winning essay concerns the complex interrelation of agency and first-person narration in Octavia Butler's oeuvre, with a focus on Butler's short story "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" (1987). The author's main hypothesis is that Butler's first-person narration techniques raise issues and provide a thought-provoking experience in terms of a multilayered concern with the self, specifically as it relates to the category of voice. The committee members selected Bast's essay as best student paper based on its breadth, depth and theoretical underpinning of a rather sophisticated analysis, which impressed them as an effort to unveil meaning from underneath formal structures.

Student Paper Award Acceptance Speech

Florian Bast

I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL to be the recipient of the SFRA Student Paper Award. The 2011 conference in Lublin was my first SFRA conference, and the experience was truly wonderful. To be able to present my work in such an international, cooperative, and all-around inspiring context was a fantastic opportunity, and the constructive feedback I received has helped me further focus my work. While I am unfortunately unable to attend this year's conference in Detroit, I am

positive that Lublin will not have been my last SFRA conference.

So I would like to thank the awards committee, first and foremost, but also all of the members of the SFRA in general for providing me with such a productive framework in which to situate myself as a young European scholar of SF. To be recognized by this association is a profound honor for me, and it has left me both thrilled and humbled, positively abuzz with motivation for my ongoing studies. I would also like to thank the University of Leipzig for supporting my research and my colleagues at the Institute for American Studies for their continued invaluable feedback. I very much look forward to seeing you all in Riverside next year!

SFRA Employment Stories

Finding a Job Should Not Be Science Fiction

Jason W. Ellis

MY ENTRANCE into the academic profession as a graduate student coincided with the housing market collapse, the global recession, and the accelerating re-configuration of work in higher education. The latter affects the majority of SFRA members: those employed as researchers and teachers. There are a declining number of tenure-track openings and an increasing number of adjunct openings. Additionally, there are more graduating PhDs with fewer opportunities for fulltime employment. Seemingly borrowing elements from *Highlander* and *The Hunger Games*, there are increasingly difficult hurdles to overcome or circumvent for a person with a higher degree to find good work. Due to these pressures, the SFRA, as well as many other professional organizations, adopted a new membership category: underemployed. Based on conversations that I had with many of you at the Detroit conference and reflections on my own experience as a recent PhD graduate looking for work, I believe that we should expand the discourse surrounding the real and science fictional aspects of finding a job. Toward this end, I suggest that we begin sharing our personal experiences and advice about navigating graduate school, finding traditional or nontraditional employment, and advancing our careers.

I am interested in hearing from all SFRA members about their experiences as professionals who do SF research/teaching for a living or who earn a living to do SF research. Of course, these stories should not be restricted to literature, film, and media PhDs, but instead, they should sample all of the kinds of jobs that our members enjoy (or regret). For this new column, positive outcomes and how they came about are as interesting and beneficial as negative outcomes. While the stories of those members who are in the beginning stages of their career might provide the most up-to-date information for graduate students and job seekers, the stories of those members with established careers might also contain invaluable information and inspiration. Through these stories, we can celebrate and learn from each other's experiences in the workforce.

To begin this conversation, I invite SFRA members to submit 500-1000 word personal essays about your experience transitioning from graduate school to a job, changing employment from one university to another, changing from one career path to an entirely different one, finding a rewarding life in an unexpected career choice, or navigating the trek toward tenure. You might speak about your general career path and the challenges that you overcome to achieve your goals, or you might speak about one or two specific events or tasks that might help other job seekers. These questions might help focus your response, but they are only provided as a suggestion rather than a requirement: What did you do during graduate school to improve your CV before going on the job market, and what do you wish you had done during graduate school to improve your chances on the job market? What choices did you make before and during the job search process, and what options were you forced to accept due to circumstance? What was the job market like at the time you looked for work? What did you do while looking for work? Did you go into the process expecting to make compromises? Did you find positive outcomes out of the job search process despite the compromises you made? What kind of advice can you give others beginning to look for work? What kind of advice can you give others looking for full time employment? What should someone looking for a research-oriented position do? What should someone looking for a teaching-oriented position do? What other kinds of jobs might someone with a higher degree consider if she cannot find suitable research/teaching employment? And perhaps most importantly, what role did your interest in science fiction play in your search? I would also be happy to hear from

those members who are in administrative positions or hiring committees who might provide guidance based on their viewpoint on the other side of the table. Other approaches and viewpoints are certainly welcome, too! Please send your essay to dynamicsubspace@gmail.com. I will forward your work to the SFRA Review editors for publication in an upcoming review. If there is enough interest in this discussion, this could become a new section of the *SFRA Review*.

In the first installment of this new column, Joseph F. Brown and Jennifer Kelso Farrell provide their personal experiences on the job market. While they each earned a PhD from Louisiana State University, they had uniquely divergent and unexpected experiences.

Science Fiction: Asset and Icebreaker on the Job Market

Joseph F. Brown

I LEFT LSU'S CAMPUS unofficially in August of 2008. I'd received a graduate dissertation fellowship and, since it didn't require me to physically be on campus, my wife and I decided to move closer to family and friends in Georgia. Admittedly, it was a strange decision that, though I didn't know it at the time, would change the course of my professional life. It also meant that my subsequent interactions with my dissertation chair were conducted through teleconferencing. Thankfully, Carl Freedman went out of his way on a number of occasions to make it work and always treated me with patience and professionalism. Under his guidance, I defended in spring 2009 and graduated in May.

As everyone now knows, the 2008-2009 job market was where CVs went to die. I remember watching a number of institutions, some of whom had requested my materials, close their searches. Since I was still ABD and finishing my dissertation, I calmed myself with the idea that I didn't have to worry about it right away. To be sure, no one was asking for a science fiction scholar. Very few searches ask now. What I found, though, was that my interest and scholarship in SF was always considered a welcome addition to what I could offer as a generalist. People just like science fiction. Or, if they aren't much interested in the genre, they seem to respect that someone is willing to stake their professional reputation on the pursuit of something they love. After all, search committees are naturally drawn to people

who are enthusiastic about his or her scholarship. So many of my phone interviews began with something like: "I see that you have published in science fiction, (insert SF writer here) is one of my favorite writers." At the very least, it was always a great ice-breaker.

Luckily, I found what I would consider a good deal of success in the spring market. When I traveled back to Baton Rouge for graduation, I had a tenure-track offer in my pocket from a small private college in southwest Georgia. I mulled it over the weekend, but decided to turn it down. I'd spent summers in that area of rural south Georgia as a child and I understood the kind of isolation my wife and I would be facing. She was in a job she loved and I just couldn't ask her to make that kind of sacrifice. Two months later, I turned down another tenure-track job at a small state college in east Georgia because it just wasn't a good fit. Understandably, Carl was a bit frustrated with me. "That is certainly an 'audacity of hope,'" he'd said. He was right. Looking back, it was crazy. Even so, it eventually paid off.

The summer was wearing on and I didn't have a job lined up. I began looking at high school positions in the Atlanta area. My thinking was that I could pull down an excellent salary while waiting for the fall market to rev up. I assumed that high schools would be interested in someone with a PhD. For the most part, I was wrong. I discovered that the certification process, completely absent from a traditional liberal arts program, was a basic requirement in a tough market to get an interview. However, in late July I received a call for an interview with an alternative school in Gwinnett County. In truth, I'd only gotten the interview because the principal misread my CV. When she realized that I wasn't certified, I could feel the air leave the room. I must have impressed her in the interview because I was offered the job two days later and was eventually set up with an alternate certification program through the district. A week later, my wife and I learned that she was pregnant with our son.

My year teaching alternative high school, in which I was responsible for all 10th and 11th grade instruction to some of the most behaviorally challenged students in Georgia's largest district, was extremely humbling. There were many days that I knew I had met the limits of my abilities as a teacher and as a functional person. But in that year, I also rethought a lot of what I was doing in the classroom. So, in one way I was completely humbled by the experience, and in another I emerged from my time at G.I.V.E. West (or "The Give," as our students called it) with the confidence that I'd taught

in a setting that very few people I'd met in graduate school or academia could have ever survived. I once told a friend that, on some days, I felt like I was in an elite group, the "goddamn Marine Corps of education," as I called it.

Naturally, the experience completely changed my perspective on my professional life. I had a year to define what I really wanted out of my career, what I wanted to accomplish, and, equally important, what chimeric errands I wasn't going to chase any more. When I saw the opening at ABAC (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College), a small state college in Georgia, I thought it would be a good fit. They thought so too, and I'm beginning my third year here in a tenure-track position. In many ways my position at ABAC seems idyllic in comparison. The picturesque landscape of rural south Georgia is a welcome contrast to the industrial sprawl of northeast Atlanta. My colleagues are generous, warm people and the college and town are growing, supportive places to build something. As it turned out, one of the immediate connections I made with a core group of my new colleagues was our mutual interest in science fiction. When we'd learned, for example, one of the professors had never seen Ridley Scott's *Alien*, we immediately scheduled a film night, complete with barbecue and beer. Besides these moments of SF-aided camaraderie, I've found that my department has been supportive of my inclusion of SF in my courses. In the summer of 2012, I taught a Composition II course made up exclusively of SF readings with the department's blessing. When we recently submitted a degree proposal to the University System of Georgia, the department included a science fiction course that I constructed. Despite prevailing stereotypes of the South, I've found that my college, our students, and our community are open to science fiction.

Looking back at it all, it seems my trajectory, though circuitous, was always leading me to where I am now. It took a degree of patience I didn't know I possessed. In many ways I feel like there were things I needed to learn after graduate school that I learned in that one year. So much of graduate school is about pursuing something that inspires your interest and passion, whereas so much of the professional life is about doing what must be done. Sometimes you just have to carry the load. Sometimes you just have to endure. When I think about it, that's not bad advice for the market, either.

Finding the Science Fiction Lightning Bolt

Jennifer Kelso Farrell

I WISH I COULD SAY there's a fool proof method to getting a job in academia. I wish I could say that my path was easy and straightforward, but I'd be lying. What works for one person probably will not work for another. Hiring committees are strange creatures with assumptions, desires, and expectations that they can't adequately express (I say this as having participated on a few at a few different schools). The competition on the job market is fierce. Every job has hundreds of applicants ranging from still in school to Associates looking to make a move. In 2007, I received a rejection letter dated 2025. That's right; I'd been rejected not only for that hiring cycle but for the next 18 as well.

Be a specialist, but be a generalist. This is the mantra I went through graduate school with in my mind. Yes, I specialized in Science Fiction literature, but I realized that I needed to have a broader profile when I hit the job market. Having sat in on hiring committees, I've seen how genre specialists are often dismissed in favor of the more traditional literary scopes. The assumption is that anyone who studies the Renaissance can automatically teach writing, but a candidate who studies science fiction, horror, mystery, etc. is somehow less equipped to teach. By the time I completed my PhD I had experience teaching composition, literature (general and science fiction), technical communication, business communication, and speech.

One concrete piece of advice I have, make sure you know the latest in pedagogical technologies. This does not mean one has to be an expert, but one does need to be able to address things such as (these examples are from my experience in 2007-2008): Web 2.0, blogging, social media, digital portfolios, and podcasts. New faculty members are often expected to bring with them the latest and greatest tech knowledge, even if no one incorporates it ever at any point.

Early in my Master's program at Montana State University, I found a way to work with a capstone Civil Engineering course. I worked with students on their writing as well as their oral communication skills. That experience I was able to parlay into a spell working in the Writing Center as one of the main tutors for those seeking help with technical and scientific writing. As a result of my work with the Writing Center, that led to teaching technical writing to veterans through the

Upward Bound program. When I entered my PhD program at Louisiana State University in 2002, I took a technical writing course so that I could teach both technical and business writing. As a typical literature graduate student, I taught the freshman writing sequence courses and occasionally a literature class, sometimes just general literature and sometimes science fiction. During 2004, I picked up extra composition and intro to lit courses at Baton Rouge Community College. After funding was cut post-Katrina, I pulled on all my past experience and landed a position with LSU's new Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC) program and I was placed in the Engineering Communication Studio (ECS).

I admit that I was a bit concerned that my net was cast too broad, that I wasn't specialized enough. In 2006 (I think), I had a conversation with Dr. Neal Lerner at MIT. He advised me to concentrate on tech schools since not only would the student body be amenable to science fiction, but my technical communication schools would be put to good use. I kept this advice in mind while I was on the job market in 2007 and 2008.

I'd done the requisite publishing, conference paper giving and committee work, so I felt good about the job market, even though I realized just how difficult finding a job would be. I went on the market while I was still dissertating, a decision that was met with lukewarm enthusiasm from my committee. For me, however, it was necessary. I needed the deadline, something to motivate me. I spent two years on the market, submitted approximately 275 job packets, interviewed a few times at MLA, had several phone interviews, three campus visits, and I had two job offers in the end.

That first go-around on the market, I sent out approximately 150 application packets to all corners of the US (and some in Canada as well). I ended up with one MLA interview (and drummed up another three while at MLA using the board where new jobs are routinely posted). I had one campus visit and received no job offers. Luckily, I was offered a position at LSU as a full-time communication instructor in the Engineering Communication Studio contingent upon my finishing my dissertation. The minute I received that job offer, my committee was very eager to assist me in graduating.

My second year on the job market was pretty similar to my first. Another 100+ job packets sent out and a few MLA interviews. What changed for me was that I saw on the new job listing board a simple ad for the Milwaukee School of Engineering. It was a late job list-

ing so it was brand new. They were looking for a generalist, but at the very end of the announcement was the phrase "experience in science fiction is preferable." It was like a lightning bolt. This is not a phrase you see very often in job descriptions. You might see "an ability to teach" list with science fiction nestled in it, but to see a job announcement targeting science fiction is rare. In the two years I was on the market, there was only one pure science fiction literature position advertised.

In the end, the diversity of teaching experience I gathered during grad school combined with my genre specialization and an ability to speak technology is what landed me my job. It's a grind, we're on the quarter system and I teach 12 sections a year, but it's the perfect fit for me.

Feature 101

Animal Studies 101

Joan Gordon

WHAT? Animal studies, sometimes called human-animal studies (HAS) or animality studies, is concerned with the relationship between humans and other animals. The central question of the field is what our responsibilities are toward other animals, a question posed and wrestled with in biology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, evolutionary theory, ethics, philosophy, religion, art, literature, and, really, almost everywhere. It is, then, a branch of cultural studies since it is deeply cross-disciplinary. Animal studies tries to avoid sentimentality but not emotion, and has the effect of making us rethink our own place in the world. It tries to move away from the adversarial theme of "man vs nature" to something more like "beings in nature." Among the issues that arise in animal studies are debates over vegetarianism, animal experimentation, genetic engineering, circuses and zoos, and petkeeping. Further, animal studies deals with concerns that also arise in identity politics and can be enriched by ideas and methods from postcolonial, feminist, queer, and African American studies, for instance, doing so not in order to interrogate those other fields through metaphor or analogy, but in order to understand the human-animal relationship.

Science fiction is an ideal place in which to explore animal studies. Other animals, after all, are our real-

world aliens, whose bodily and mental lives are quite alien to us even though we often feel as if we have much in common with them. Their minds, bodies, and worlds are more foreign to us than those of people from other cultures on earth, yet we interact with other animals every day. As children, we believe we can communicate with them and we love reading stories in which we can do so, or in which we can eavesdrop on their world. As adults, we still wonder about their lives and science fiction provides us with a place to explore the possibilities represented by their worlds, sometimes in stories about other animals and sometimes in stories about extraterrestrial beings.

Most accounts of the posthuman imagine a technological posthumanity, often unrecognizable to us as physiologically or intellectually human but with a consciousness identifiable as having arisen from the human, as extended from or modeled on the human; it would be the next version of what it means to be human. Animal studies considers a different set of notions of what “posthuman” might mean, a biological posthumanity. After humans, who else shares the planet with us? After hearing only the voice of the human, to what voices might we become open? After we learn more about genetic engineering, with whom might we hybridize? After humans, what other species might come next? These questions, which can be answered with names of other animals, imagine this world from a non-anthropocentric position, although inevitably from an anthropomorphic one. Claude Levi-Strauss famously said that animals are good to think with: we use our understandings of other animals in order to understand ourselves and our place in the world. The questions of biological posthumanism both illustrate how true that is and suggest that animals might be thinking also, however differently from ours their thinking might be.

I distinguish here between attitudes that revolve around the human as the only consciousness that counts—anthropocentric—and those that extrapolate from the human to other consciousnesses—anthropomorphic. Historically, western human beings have been confidently anthropocentric, believing that the proper study of man is mankind, while science from the eighteenth century onward, with its goal of objectivity, has viewed anthropomorphism as a habit to be avoided, one that clouds our observations of other animals. More recently, however, some scientists are beginning to practice a careful sort of anthropomorphism that allows them to devise hypotheses about other animals

based on analogical relationships with human beings. In a way, they are returning to the visions of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century naturalists such as George and Elizabeth Peckham, Aldo Leopold, and Maurice Maeterlinck whose work is such a pleasure to read. Those writers attempted to capture the *umwelt* or worldview of the animals they observed. It is easy to see that this is a kind of rigorous science-fictional thinking, an extrapolation from one’s own world to imagine an alien one.

Why? Animal studies is a growing field, with a number of journals (*Humanimalia*, *Antennae*, *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, *Society and Animals*) and stacks of books. Why now? Perhaps, as Akira Mizuta Lippit believes, it is because we become more concerned with other animals as they vanish (*Electric Animal* [2000]). Perhaps also we have grown more accustomed to thinking about the world in terms of flows and continua rather than in divisions and categories, a view that we see in everything from physics to gender studies. Perhaps, the more we consider genetic engineering and hybridity, the more we wonder if the seemingly inviolable walls between species might be breached. Perhaps the more we learn about cognition and neuroscience, ethology and animal behavior, the less sure we are of a clear separation between ourselves and other animals in the first place. Perhaps, too, the more accustomed we become to the idea that our moral values are socially determined, the more we question our ethical approaches to other animals. People at the centers of cultures once spoke about people on the margins—about women, or aboriginal peoples, or people of other religions or colors or ethnic groups—as if they were inferior beings, “animals.” Now that we recognize how untrue this is, we question the equation of “inferior” with “animal,” becoming more open to what is, strangely, called “humane” treatment of other animals. The reasons—cultural, scientific, practical, and philosophical—are many and complex. Science fiction thinking unites cultural, scientific, practical, and philosophical ideas with fictional imaginings.

Who? Donna Haraway might be considered a founder of animal studies as its own cross-disciplinary field with her 1989 *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. There she asks us to consider how, if we come to question sharp divisions between genders and races, essentialist notions about those categories, and the attitudes imbedded in our scientific practices that lead to such notions, it might

be time to question the divisions between humans and other animals, along with the essentialism and cultural attitudes that lead us to make those divisions. And she used science fiction, Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* series (1987-89), to illustrate.

Philosophers and religious thinkers have been arguing about the place of other animals in our lives since the beginning of argument, I suppose. Generally speaking, monotheistic religions draw sharper lines than others, and philosophers from Aristotle to Derrida have weighed in on the question. Aristotle saw other animals as lacking reason and therefore inferior, and lined up creatures in an elaborate hierarchical system. Christianity has also developed a hierarchical system in which humans have dominion over other animals although a recent trend has begun to emphasize stewardship over domination. While Descartes claimed that other animals were organic machines, Montaigne wondered what they were thinking and Bentham asked, "Do they suffer?" In the twentieth century, Heidegger saw other animals as "poor in the world," without the ability to act upon and influence the world around it as humans can, and, generally, the Continental philosophers held other animals in a lower regard than did philosophers in the Anglo-American tradition.

By the late twentieth century, as we might expect, other animals are more sympathetically regarded among Continental philosophers. Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) give us the useful ideas of being and becoming animal. To be in a state of being is to assign a fixed and rigid identity, while to be in a state of becoming is to have a "nomad" or dynamic, liminal identity. Jacques Derrida, in the influential lectures that make up *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (given in 1997, published in English in 2008), introduces the word "animot" to distinguish this dynamic place for all animals as individual subjects who return the gaze and think their own thoughts, rather than the more rigid use of the word animal to distinguish humans from other animals as generic objects of study. Like Deleuze and Guattari and Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, in *The Open* (2002), also dismantles the barriers between humans and other animals. A good overview of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Continental philosophy on animals is Atterton and Calarco's edited collection, *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity* (2004).

The Anglo-American tradition has emphasized animal rights, with Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Martha Nussbaum, and Carol Adams among the advocates for various ways of acknowledging the rights of other ani-

mals to live and, as Nussbaum would say, flourish. Peter Singer's utilitarian approach, which he outlines in his landmark *Animal Liberation* (1975), considering the greatest good for the greatest number, demands "equal consideration" though not equal treatment, for all animals, recognizing that different beings have different wants and needs. Tom Regan goes farther, in "The Case for Animal Rights" (1989) and elsewhere, rejecting the utilitarian argument in favor of considering whether other beings are subjects of a life, whether they are conscious creatures whose individual welfare matters to them. Thus, one must consider the degree of harm which might be inflicted upon them before making an ethical decision. Regan takes a firm stand against all animal testing, hunting, and meat-eating. For Martha Nussbaum, it is not enough to consider that other beings must be allowed to survive—they must be allowed to flourish, to have the opportunity to fulfill their capabilities: she calls this the capabilities approach (see her "The Moral Status of Animals," 2006). Carol Adams (*The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 1990) makes a convincing case for the connection between masculine roles and meat-eating to make a feminist case for animal rights.

The sciences too have begun reconsiderations of the status of animals. E.O. Wilson established the field of sociobiology, which attempts to synthesize biology with sociology and anthropology, in his *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975). He defines sociobiology as "the systematic study of the biological basis of all social behavior" (4) and his goal seems to be a unified field theory of all animals that will embrace both the arts and the sciences. Many bristle at his view of humans as biologically determined, and there are other scientists such as Frans De Waal and Mark Bekoff who consider the other possibility, that many other animals besides human beings have individual will, choice, and thought. Much recent work in cognitive science and neuroscience also complicates our assumptions about not only human free will but animal instinct. Steven Pinker (*How the Mind Works*, 1997) and Susan Blackmore (*Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction*, 2005) offer useful and entertaining overviews. The wonderful field of ethology, the study of animal behavior preferably in natural conditions rather than in a laboratory, as practiced by Konrad Lorenz and, more recently, Jane Goodall, has offered new insights into the behavior, both instinctual and willed, in other animals. Recent work by the Coppingers on dogs (*Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior and Evolution*, 2001) and elephants and other animals (popularized in

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson's *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals*, 1995) offers further indications of the difficulty of drawing lines between humans and other animals.

There is now a growing body of criticism that links animal studies and science fiction. My brief overview in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (2009, pp. 331-340) is one place to start. Sherryl Vint's *Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal* (2010) is the first book-length study, while *Science Fiction Studies* has two issues with multiple articles on the subject: the July 2008 issue (35.2) has eight articles "On Animals and Science Fiction" and the November 2010 issue (37.3) presents the three essays from the 2010 SFS symposium on "Animal Studies and SF"

How? Animal studies is a great way to focus a science fiction course, still allowing historical and stylistic breadth. Here I want to offer some lists, of works I have found useful in my writing and of readings I have used for classes, in the hopes that they will spur further exploration.

I have been thinking about a canon of animal studies sf—a delightful game, by the way. My canon would include, in addition to the titles I teach (see below), Cordwainer Smith's *Instrumentality of Mankind* stories (1950-75), Clifford Simak's *City* (1952), Gene Wolfe's "Tracking Song" (1975), Ursula Le Guin's *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences* (1987), Eleanor Arnason's *Ring of Swords* (1993), Paul Park's *Coelestis* (1995), Sheri S. Tepper's *Six Moon Dance* (1998), several stories from Jeff Noon's *Pixel Juice* (1998), Karen Traviss's *Wess'har Wars* series (2004-08), Adam Hines's *Duncan the Wonder Dog* (2010), and many of the stories from Kij Johnson's *At the Mouth of the River of Bees* (2012).

As for theoretical works, in addition to texts mentioned elsewhere in this article, I would add Vicki Hearne's *Adam's Task* (1986), Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1991), J.M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999), Eileen Crist's *Images of Animals* (1999), Erica Fudge's *Animal* (2002), and Cary Wolfe's *Animal Rites* (2003). Both of my canons are, of course, ideocentric, indeed curiously dog-centric, but, if one peruses the bibliographies of any of the theoretical works mentioned in this article, one can build many other excellent canons. Go for it.

I have been incorporating animal studies into my science fiction classes for several years now, once for a full-year advanced course for third and fourth year students at Marie Curie Skłodowska University in

Lublin, Poland, and several times in a non-theoretical course for second year students at a community college. Both kinds of classes have worked very well. Below are sets of readings that have shaped those two versions of the course.

I. Readings for the advanced course in Animal Studies and Science Fiction, in which I paralleled readings from *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings* (2007), ed. Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald, with science fiction stories.

1. Reader x-13, Prologue and Editorial Introduction—"Rachel in Love" by Pat Murphy (1987, widely anthologized, including at brazenhussies.net)
2. Reader 14-37, Animals as Philosophical and Ethical Subjects—"Tuberculosis Bacteria Join U.N." by Joan Slonczewski (*Nature* 29 June 2000, 1001)
3. Reader 55-103, Animals as Reflexive Thinkers—"Pelt" by Carol Emshwiller (1958, *The Start of the End of it All*, 15-161) "Desertion" by Clifford Simak (1944, *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*, 177-188), "People of Sand and Slag" by Paolo Bacigalupi (2004, *Pump Six and Other Stories*, 49-67)
4. Reader 115-190, Animals as Domesticates—"Bloodchild" by Octavia Butler (1995, available online) and "Saving Tiamaat" by Gwyneth Jones (2007, *The Year's Best Science Fiction: Twenty-fifth Annual Collection*, ed. Gardner Dozois, 62-75)
5. Reader 305-377, Animals as Scientific Objects—"Her Furry Face" by Leigh Kennedy (1983, *The Year's Best Science Fiction: First Annual Collection*, ed. Dozois, 371-386), "Laws of Survival" by Nancy Kress (2007, *The Year's Best Science Fiction: Twenty-fifth Annual Collection*, ed. Dozois, 480-5-4), "Mazes" by Ursula Le Guin (1982, *The Compass Rose*, 169-74), "Specimens" by Jeff Noon (2000, *Pixel Juice: Stories from the Avant Pulp*, 279-285)
6. Reader 249-280, Animals as Symbols—"Hunting Mother" by Sage Walker (1999, *The Year's Best Science Fiction: Seventeenth Annual Collection*, ed. Dozois), and "Evolution of Trickster Stories Among the Dogs of North Park After the Change" by Kij Johnson (2007, kijjohnson.com)
7. Summarizing the issues—*The Mount* by Carol Emshwiller, 2002.

The above was one semester of work. During the second semester I introduced readings by Deleuze and Guattari (the one from the reader), Haraway (her discussion of *Xenogenesis* in *Primate Visions*, and Derrida

("The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)", and used the following novels: Olaf Stapledon, *Sirius*, 1944; Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, 1968; Sheri Tepper, *Grass*, 2002; Octavia Butler, *Lilith's Brood (Dawn)*, 1987; Mary Doria Russell, *The Sparrow*, 1996; Charles Wilson, *Blind Lake*, 2003; Jonathan Latham, *Girl in Landscape*, 1998.

Note: I've given dates of first publication for stories and minimal but probably adequate bibliographic information.

II. Readings for a general course in science fiction for second-year students at a community college. This course is focused on two connected questions which students explore in their readings, papers, and exams.

1. The particular works of science fiction upon which this course focuses all explore the question of what it means to be human. What does each work have to say about what it means to be human? For instance, where is the dividing line between human and non-human: animal, machine, artificial intelligence, created being, alien, clone, etc.? What are the ethical, philosophical, and/or moral implications the work raises concerning these issues? How are these questions relevant in metaphorical terms to the world we live in?
2. These works explore what it means to be a subject of a life. Tom Regan, in "The Case for Animal Rights," defines the term in this way: "we are each of us the experiencing subject of a life, a conscious creature having an individual welfare that has importance to us whatever our usefulness to others." How does the reading explore this claim?

Readings: Novels—Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*; Carol Emshwiller, *The Mount*. Short stories, all taken from *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*—Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter"; Leslie F. Stone, "The Conquest of Gola"; C.L. Moore, "Shambleau"; Stanley Weinbaum, "A Martian Odyssey"; Clifford D. Simak, "Desertion"; Avram Davidson, "The Golem"; Cordwainer Smith, "The Game of Rat and Dragon"; Brian Aldiss, "Super-Toys Last All Day Long"; Carol Emshwiller, "Abominable"; James Patrick Kelley, "Think Like a Dinosaur." I also use stories from the list for course I.

Where? As much as has been written about animal studies and science fiction, there is still a great deal to think about, and this introduction is meant to be a

stimulus rather than anything definitive. The feedback loop between animal studies and science fiction is already providing exciting and unpredictable new paths of inquiry, and our lives, growing more dependent upon mechanical objects and less confident of the endurance of natural ones, makes such explorations especially urgent. We will never, as Whitman wishes, "turn and live with the animals," but we will always wonder what it would be like and hope they will be there to flourish.

Apocalypse in the Mainstream 101

T. S. Miller

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH Frank Kermode's analysis of the abiding apocalyptic impulse in literature and culture in his 1967 study *Sense of an Ending* will already understand that every age is an age of apocalypse. But lately the market for apocalyptic narrative has been especially bullish, even after the anxieties peculiar to that preeminently millennial Year 2000 have died down to be replaced by others. Indeed, 2012, as the Mayans predicted, is turning out to be another very good year for apocalypse. A record-setting nine million cable viewers tuned in to watch the final episode of the most recent season of that post-apocalyptic soap opera *par excellence*, AMC's *The Walking Dead*. Nancy Kress has just published a thorough examination of every era abutting the apocalypse in her exhaustively titled *After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall*. As I write, an apocalyptic romantic comedy titled *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* is still playing in theaters, and the film is a much more upbeat take on the same apocalyptic premise used in Lars von Trier's 2011 drama *Melancholia*, that is, a planet-killing collision with an interstellar object. Again, this interest in the final things is nothing new, but the extent to which it has come to permeate so many popular cultural forms in the 21st century deserves close attention. Although accounts of the end times appear in some of our very earliest literary texts, during the 20th century genre science fiction achieved a near monopoly on apocalyptic speculations divorced from their formerly sacred and/or supernatural contexts. Or so the story usually goes. Prompted by the strong reactions, both positive and negative, to several recent apocalypses published as mainstream literary fiction—including Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and Cormac

McCarthy's *The Road* (2006)—this feature will provide a guide to the long tradition of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction *outside* of the genres of speculative fiction. Of course, many members of the sf community have been quick to claim such works as unambiguous examples of science fiction, often against the protestations of their authors, publishers, and/or reviewers. My chief aim in this essay is not to weigh in on one side or another of these debates, but to help contextualize the recurrent and not merely recent phenomenon of “apocalypse in the mainstream” through a survey of the key fictional texts in the field and also the major critical conversations that these texts have generated.

Secular fictions about the end of the world as we know it existed long before the development of modern science fiction in the pulp magazines of the 1920s and 30s. One of the most prominent of these earlier narratives, however, was written by an author often claimed as the first writer of science fiction, Mary Shelley. Her 1826 novel *The Last Man* is framed as a Sibylline prophecy discovered in an Italian grotto, and tells the story of a plague several centuries in the future that wipes out the world population save for the titular survivor, a trope that would come to dominate the post-apocalyptic mode. Even a text like Lord Byron's 1816 narrative poem “Darkness,” which relates the speaker's apocalyptic “dream, which was not all a dream” (1), anticipates science fictional meditations on the end of the world. To move along briskly to the end of the century past several other examples, in the works of H.G. Wells—another candidate for earliest science fiction author—we can also find several apocalyptic resonances, including the hero's journey across the ruins of civilization in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and the visions of a post-human far future in *The Time Machine* (1895). Even before the apocalyptic onset of the Great War, the early 20th century produced post-apocalyptic novels like Jack London's exploration of massive population loss *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), and M.P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901), a last man scenario that develops, like so many others, into an Adam-and-Eve fantasy. In 1937, future Pulitzer winner Stephen Vincent Benét published what has now literally become a textbook example of post-apocalyptic fiction, the short story “By the Waters of Babylon.” With its depictions of an America in ruins after the time of the “Great Burning,” this story of a culture slowly crawling back up from primitivism prefigures the post-Hiroshima obsession with nuclear holocaust and the potential collapse of civilization. Of course, “By the Waters of Babylon” first appeared not in a pulp magazine but in

the *Saturday Evening Post*, although it was published in a science fictional context as early as 1943, when Donald A. Wollheim anthologized it in *The Pocket Book of Science-Fiction* alongside the likes of Heinlein, Sturgeon, Campbell, and Weinbaum. Even during the “Golden Age” of science fiction, we see that crossovers between the genre and mainstream literary fiction were not so uncommon, especially in this area of (post-)apocalyptic fiction.

It would require the rapid nuclear proliferation in the aftermath of World War II to truly bring the possibility of a secular apocalypse into the wider “mainstream” imagination, a circumstance reflected in the fictions produced for a mainstream audience. The decade and a half spanning the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1960s saw the publication of some of the most enduring apocalypses of the century, many of which were written by longtime writers of science fiction, though several of which were not. This latter category includes such mainstays of the subgenre as George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides* (1949), Nevil Shute's *On the Beach* (1957), and Pat Frank's *Alas, Babylon* (1959), novels that were certainly read as science fiction in their own time, but by no means understood as indulgences by their authors in paraliterary slumming, as they might be by literary critics today. None of these three authors ever published a story in a science fiction magazine, but *On the Beach*, for instance, was reviewed in both *The Times Literary Supplement* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, while *Alas, Babylon* was reviewed in *TLS* as well as *Astounding*. Major post-apocalyptic novels by genre writers from the same era include John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* (1954), Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1960), J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962): these works go beyond more straightforward speculations about nuclear or pandemic reductions in the human population with the addition of man-eating plants, vampires, a final act set in a space-faring 38th century A.D., and a surrealistic global inundation, respectively. Regardless, a look back at the shared milieu in which these texts by science fiction and mainstream authors jointly circulated may help to temper the current tendency to imagine that much firmer boundaries between science fiction and mainstream literary fiction existed in the past, a “truism” we hear repeated so often in this age of hybridization and evaporating genres and the demolition of the sf ghetto: although both titles were written by veterans of the pulps, *The Day of the Triffids* was reviewed (fairly favorably) in *TLS*, along with *A*

Canticle for Leibowitz. Moreover, Ray Bradbury's classic post-apocalyptic short story "There Will Come Soft Rains" was published in 1950 and, like several of Bradbury's stories, published in a mainstream periodical, in this case *Collier's*. We see that crossovers between genre fiction and the literary mainstream can cross both ways, as it were, and apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fictions have consistently achieved some of the greatest success in doing so, a point made similarly by Michael Chabon in his influential review of *The Road* for the *New York Review of Books*, to which we will return later: "the post-apocalyptic mode [...] is] one of the few subgenres of science fiction [...] that may be safely attempted by a mainstream writer without incurring too much damage to his or her credentials for seriousness" (108).

Nuclear anxieties continued to drive the post-apocalyptic tradition in the later 1960s and 70s, which grew to include works like Philip K. Dick's *Dr. Bloodmoney, or How We Got Along After the Bomb* (1965), Harlan Ellison's novella "A Boy and His Dog" (1969); Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1980), and even an early instance of the setting in young adult literature, Robert C. O'Brien's *Z for Zachariah* (1975). But the renewed Cold War fears of the 1980s—evident nowhere so prominently as in the numerous films about nuclear catastrophe produced in the United States and Britain—no doubt contributed to a sudden uptick in the number of post-apocalyptic narratives by high-profile mainstream authors. The future Nobel Prize winner Doris Lessing had published a kind of post-catastrophe dystopian novel as early as 1974 in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, and Lessing's relationship with genre science fiction warrants an essay—or monograph—all its own. But the 80s in fact saw a string of squarely post-apocalyptic novels, including Denis Johnson's *Fiskadoro* (1985), Kurt Vonnegut's *Galápagos* (1985), Paul Theroux's *O-Zone* (1986), and Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* (1987); we should keep in mind that even Derrida felt compelled to confront the apocalyptic in the 80s. Vonnegut's *Galápagos*, a characteristically satiric treatment of the paths that human evolution might take should only a handful of people survive to reproduce, is in a way the most expected of these novels, as Vonnegut had been writing in and around genre science fiction for several decades prior to its publication. By contrast, Johnson—with a degree from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, a National Book Award, and multiple Pulitzer nominations to his name—had not and has not produced other works of so science fictional a bent as his dreamlike post-nuclear fugue *Fiskadoro*. Paul Theroux's reputation as a "liter-

ary" and decidedly non-genre writer is similarly impeccable, but for the occasional ghost story and the post-catastrophe dystopia that provides the setting for *O-Zone*.

I lack the space to discuss each of these fascinating mainstream apocalypses in detail, but Auster's quasi-epistolary novel *In the Country of Last Things* is not only one of the best evocations of the end of the world as a place, a different kind of space from the time before, but is also representative of several of the defining characteristics of the mainstream apocalypse—almost a genre unto itself—including a deep interest in language and style, a tendency towards self-reflexivity and metafiction, and an emphasis on the psychology and interpersonal relationships of the survivors in favor of more global social and material conditions. Auster's novel tells the story of a woman named Anna Blume and her journey to locate her brother in an unnamed city, which takes place at a point in the future when the world appears to have suffered an unspecified catastrophe. In this self-enclosed world of garbage brokers and dung collectors, Anna becomes an "object hunter" whose daily labors help articulate themes of salvage and salvation, and the narrative manages to skirt both realism and surrealism, as, for example, unexplained gaps in Anna's memory develop and more and more coincidences begin to structure the plot. Ultimately, Anna's miscarriage and other losses accumulate in parallel to the losses that the post-apocalyptic world has experienced, until Anna feels herself living "a dreadful, posthumous sort of life, a life that would go on happening to me, even though it was finished" (137). Sven Birkerts has read the novel as a parable with the single aim of "lay[ing] bare the human apparatus in conditions of extremity" (68), and tellingly argues that it shares this thematic emphasis with a novel that has nothing to do with the apocalypse. Auster suggests as much himself in the novel, which includes the self-reflexive line, "Let everything fall away, and then let's see what there is" (29). *In the Country of Last Things*, then, simply takes the form of a more abstract thought experiment than most genre-based apocalypses, which often cleave closer to extrapolation about the consequences of a specific disaster.

Strangely enough, there are fewer prominent examples of mainstream apocalypses from the 90s, although we could perhaps count Jonathan Lethem's 1995 novel *Amnesia Moon*, a Dickian romp through a post-apocalyptic landscape fractured by the mental projections of competing dreamers, which was published as a straight science fiction novel and before Lethem achieved his

current level of mainstream respectability. The new millennium, however, unquestionably ushered in a new age of millennial anxiety in literary fiction, even before September 11 cast its shadow over this new apocalypticism. For example, T.C. Boyle's 2000 novel *A Friend of the Earth*, the memoir of a retired eco-terrorist, predated our great American cataclysm, and appropriately enough narrates a slow apocalypse gradually claiming a near-future world ravaged by climate change. Here we could compare Boyle's literary satire with Will McIntosh's more firmly in-genre chronicle of the slow slide towards apocalypse, the 2011 novel *Soft Apocalypse*, or even with the not-quite-post-apocalyptic setting of Paolo Bacigalupi's 2009 novel *The Windup Girl*, a world turned upside-down by climate change and genetically-engineered plagues. In the 21st century, anthropogenic ecological catastrophe has indeed replaced Cold War geopolitics as the primary instrument of apocalypse and the dominant motivation for writing one, but the diversity of these narratives nevertheless makes it difficult to speak of them as a single class, or rather, to account for them as a single class driven by a single motivation. In a recent essay on the apocalyptic tradition, Gary K. Wolfe also observes the particular popularity of the post-apocalyptic setting with mainstream writers, contributing very recent but more obscure novels like Chris Adrian's *The Children's Hospital* (2006), Matthew Sharpe's *Jamestown* (2007), Nick Harkaway's *The Gone-Away World* (2008), and Jim Crace's *The Pesthouse* (2007) to our list (118). Even more recently, Junot Díaz, author of the Pulitzer-winning mainstream novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), has contributed a story to the special science fiction issue of *The New Yorker* in which an apocalyptic plague descends on Hispaniola and eventually causes some of its victims to transform into gigantic cannibals. Díaz significantly locates his ground zero not in the United States but in the Caribbean, and indeed mainstream apocalypticism is not an exclusively or even predominantly American phenomenon. For example, English novelist Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007) includes much egregiously science fictional material, including an ancient alien civilization that suffers its own apocalypse long before the sunset of our own, and love in the time of apocalypse between a synthetic organism and a human being. David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), shortlisted for the Booker and thus also written by a Commonwealth writer, also attempts to tell a truly global story, featuring both transpacific and transatlantic crossings in its self-reflexive set of six nested narratives, each be-

longing to a different genre. The tale at the heart of the novel is set in the midst of a post-apocalyptic reversion to tribalism, in which only a few dwindling remnants persist of the highly advanced—albeit also highly dystopian—technological civilization described in the narrative enclosing it. In 2009, Australian author Steven Amsterdam published a collection of interconnected short stories titled *Things We Didn't See Coming*, a kind of alternate history of Y2K; I have discussed the relationship of this work to the post-apocalyptic tradition and the literary mainstream at greater length in a review of the novel for this publication. Finally, we could even point to writers of non-Anglophone fiction like Nobel laureate José Saramago, whose novel *Blindness* (1995, English 1997) is an exercise in localized apocalypse—set, like Auster's novel, in an unnamed city—that does not so much rigorously extrapolate the consequences of a societal collapse brought on by mass blindness, but carves out its own allegorical space by means of apocalyptic space.

Based on the above evidence of a thriving tradition of “literary” apocalypses prior to the 21st century, it may or may not be the case that mainstream authors today are writing more works of (post-)apocalyptic fiction. In the 21st century, however, both general readers and literary critics do seem to be paying more attention to such novels. For example, Theroux's *O-Zone* seems to have received a fairly tepid reception upon its release and has found few champions since, but Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* was shortlisted for the Booker, and McCarthy's *The Road* earned not only a Pulitzer but also a prime spot in Oprah's Book Club. This increasing attention paid to apocalyptic fiction by writers and readers unfamiliar with or even disdainful of genre fiction has understandably caused some friction with science fiction readers, and the various reactions to Atwood's and McCarthy's post-apocalyptic novels provide the best demonstrations of these tensions. What seems to rankle science fiction readers the most is a literary critic's insistence that a mainstream literary apocalypse is not only *not* genre fiction, but also strikingly original in imagining a post-apocalyptic scenario. Of course, as Peter Nicholls has written in his entry on the subgenre in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, “The aftermath of holocaust may be the most popular theme in sf” (581), and to ignore this body of material when writing or writing about a mainstream apocalypse is in effect to deny that a vast swath of science fiction exists. During her interviews about *Oryx and Crake*—a post-apocalyptic novel depicting a world overrun by genetically engineered

creatures and several other extrapolated near-future technologies—Atwood herself also began making a series of remarks that puzzled or even offended many science fiction readers, as when she explained to the *Guardian* that she did not write science fiction because “[s]cience fiction has monsters and spaceships” while “speculative fiction could really happen.” Other comments about science fiction being the province of rocket ships and interstellar talking squids did little to appease offended readers of science fiction, but her article in the 2004 issue of *PMLA* devoted to science fiction does attempt to redress the subsequent criticisms of her position, beginning with an anecdote about a confrontation with a science fiction fan angry at her denials of having written in the genre:

I said I liked to make a distinction between science fiction proper—for me, this label denotes books with things in them we can’t yet do or begin to do, talking beings we can never meet, and places we can’t go—and speculative fiction, which employs the means already more or less to hand, and takes place on Planet Earth. I said I made this distinction, not out of meanness, but out of a wish to avoid false advertising: I didn’t want to raise people’s hopes. I did not wish to promise—for instance—the talking squid of Saturn if I couldn’t deliver them. (“*Oryx and Crake* in Context” 513)

A collection of lectures released in 2011, *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*, constitutes Atwood’s most recent and fullest attempt to explain her relationship with science fiction; although science fiction scholars and fans will still find much with potential to ruffle feathers, her ruminations on sf demonstrate that her relationship with genre fiction is far more complex than the antagonistic one still often ascribed to her in some corners of the sf community.

Cormac McCarthy’s infamous reclusiveness has perhaps spared him some of the rancor that Atwood has earned from science fiction fans, since he has had virtually no opportunities to disavow science fiction in a public forum. Even so, some science fiction readers took umbrage at a perceived incursion into the genre that was not being recognized as such: some reviewers avoided generic labels entirely and praised *The Road* as a fable, in spite of its futuristic setting in the wake of an unspecified environmental disaster. Chabon, a notorious genre-bender himself, perhaps jocosely entered the fray with a review advocating an interpretation of *The Road* as neither mainstream literary fiction of an al-

legorical bent nor science fiction proper, but as a horror novel (119-120). Chabon’s essay also includes a useful sampling of reviews that suggested that McCarthy was slumming in science fiction or writing a “parable” that was only partially or not at all science fictional (110). In the years since its publication, however, *The Road* seems to have gained some acceptance in the science fiction community; it even appears in Damien Broderick and Paul Di Filippo’s *Science Fiction: The 101 Best Novels, 1985-2010*, which contains a generous appreciation of the novel and how it differs from more traditional in-genre apocalypses. The authors point out that *The Road* is simply “not rationalized” after the fashion of many genre apocalypses (243), and go on to explain that the novel inevitably “runs between two narrative worlds: the canonized territory of literature and the suspect landscapes of paraliterary genre, horror, science fiction” (244). They judiciously offer a brief reading of the novel as something categorically different from science fiction even as it engages with the familiar extrapolative premise of the apocalypse: “Many readers, then, take *The Road* as an allegory, a stripped-down fable, a sort of harrowing of hell, a liturgy for a terminal world that requires no detailed explanation and would be damaged by one” (244). In a sense, this reading suggests that the highly religiously-inflected narrative of *The Road*, rather than a clumsy attempt at science fiction, is more of a postmodern return to premodern explorations of the end times and their spiritual significance for humanity. In the end, while works like Auster’s, Saramago’s, and McCarthy’s do contain some earnest speculations about the possible consequences of societal collapse, their ultimate eschewal of strict extrapolation should not lead to the perception that they are poorly thought out examples of science fiction. Instead, these works simply employ the post-apocalyptic setting to think through different matters in different ways: if the effect is initially jarring and unsettling for readers accustomed to the conventions of post-apocalyptic genre fiction, perhaps this unnerving effect should be reinterpreted as a form of the estranging effect of all good sf. Indeed, we could easily classify the contemporary “literary” apocalypse as a kind of subgenre of the slipstream, that (non-)genre that makes one “feel very strange”; see Pawel Frelik’s feature “Slipstream 101” for resources on this subject, as well as the special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* edited by Rob Latham.

Although I have only begun to skim the surface of the crypto-genre of the mainstream literary apocalypses, I will conclude with a longer discussion of one impor-

tant limit case: the zombie apocalypse seems the ultimate test of a mainstream author's ability to write in the penumbra of genre fiction without losing his or her credentials as a "serious author." My major text here is Colson Whitehead's 2011 zombie novel *Zone One*, which has not earned Whitehead any new literary awards, but neither does it seem to have tarnished his literary reputation. Whitehead had already been on the radar of some genre readers due to his 1999 novel *The Intuitionist*, which bears a strong family resemblance to steampunk, although his later novels tacked much closer to domestic realism. *Zone One*, however, is indisputably a zombie novel participating fully in the horror genre. In fact, fellow author Justin Cronin's official review for Amazon.com declares *Zone One* "the best addition to the genre since George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*," but skimming the customer reviews—especially those from readers identifying as fans of genre zombie fiction—will reveal less sanguine attitudes, including some of the typical backlash against literary authors condescendingly encroaching on genre territory. In 2010, Cronin had published his own literary apocalypse *The Passage*, featuring vampires instead of zombies, and, while the author had acquired an estimable literary pedigree with an MFA from Iowa and a Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for his realist fiction, his own novel is finally more of a summer blockbuster in the tradition of Stephen King than a stylized meditation like *Zone One*. (King himself has certainly never shied from the genre label, but his bestseller status causes him to reach much larger audience than most genre authors.) In contrast to Cronin's novel, the release of which was accompanied by a massive marketing blitz emphasizing its suspensefulness, *Zone One* was marketed more quietly as "A Zombie Novel with Brains," a phrase that appears in a gargantuan font on the cover of the book's UK edition, almost as if it were a subtitle. This tongue-in-cheek publisher's tagline, while more or less accurate, actually raises several important issues for us, including its implicit condemnation of all other (genre, non-"literary") zombie novels as being brainless. Unlike an early Atwood, however, Whitehead himself has no qualms about referring to *Zone One* as a horror novel, and in interviews tends to refer to his other works as "my so-called literary fiction": still, we see that the novel necessarily occupies a precarious place between the literary mainstream and genre fiction.

We enter the narrative of *Zone One* at a slightly unusual time for a post-apocalyptic novel, when the world seems well on its way to recovery. As a "sweeper,"

Whitehead's main character Mark Spitz is responsible for cleaning up any lingering zombies, or "skels," missed by the military in their massive assault on Manhattan, his personal contribution to the efforts of "the American Phoenix" to rise from the ashes of apocalypse. We learn that this sweep of Manhattan's "Zone One" is a PR stunt orchestrated by the provisional government in Buffalo, and the novel features a running satire of marketing in the various attempts of the government at "rebranding survival" through manipulation of language (79). But this satire does not distract from the high seriousness of the novel: reconceiving the zombie apocalypse as a trauma that we must move past, both collectively and individually, *Zone One* is, in part, a 9/11 novel. For example, despite its innocuous context, the sentence "Like all city dwellers, he had to accustom his eyes to the new horizon" evokes the traumatic adjustment to the horizon required by all New Yorkers after the fall of the towers (59). Published almost exactly ten years later, as a reflection on 9/11 *Zone One* is not so much belated as a deliberate meditation from a distance, much like Don DeLillo's 2007 novel *Falling Man*; coincidentally or not, DeLillo is another genre fellow traveler, and also see Elizabeth K. Rosen's chapter in *Apocalyptic Transformation* on "Apocalypticism in Don DeLillo's Novels." In Whitehead's novel, the majority of the population has been diagnosed with widely varying manifestations of "Post-Apocalyptic Stress Disorder," a conceit so clever I'm certain that Whitehead wasn't the first to invent the phrase, but it's also one that Whitehead puts to such superb use that its originality is immaterial. PASD—Whitehead lets us know perhaps a little too heavy-handedly that the word is sometimes pronounced "past" (55)—has turned the survivors of the zombie apocalypse a little bit batty, like Gary, who refers to himself unselfconsciously in the first person plural after the deaths of his brothers, and Kaitlyn, who doesn't seem to think it strange to talk animatedly about having been the secretary of the student council and her late-night hijinks at Model UN competitions. Kaitlyn's easygoing insouciance about the irretrievable past is either a testament to her insanity in living as if that past still mattered, or to her sanity in finding a way not to be defeated by the past and its irrevocable loss: this is the central paradox of PASD, the paradox consequent on that other paradox of having survived the end of everything.

While the novel has been criticized for the thinness of its plot, Whitehead excels in layering familiar images from zombie narratives with several levels of meaning,

whether we see them unfold in a Rorschach game of identifying bloodstains or in the slowly withering zombies themselves, especially in their “straggler” form. Unlike other skels, stragglers do not attack living humans on sight, and instead ignore them entirely while remaining frozen in a single quotidian behavior from their pre-undead lives: flying a kite, copying a document in the office, filling a helium balloon. The concept of the straggler was obviously inspired by Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead*: in Whitehead’s his previous novel *Sag Harbor*, a character had reflected on how Romero’s undead continue to gather as mindlessly in the mall as they had in life: “This was an important place in their lives” (132-133). In *Zone One*, however, the straggler becomes more than a one-dimensional satire of zombie consumerism: no one knows why the stragglers choose the place that they do, and this enigmatic reminder of our connections to the past is not a simplistic allegory but a provocation to reflection on the many things a zombie can mean. Furthermore, appropriately enough for a “literary” take on a genre that has been rewritten and rewritten, *Zone One* consistently thematizes both the “recursive nature of human experience” (4), and how the apocalypse has only exacerbated existing problems inherent in human relations with one another and our own senses of purpose and fulfillment. With these themes comes an implicit justification of the applicability of this kind of narrative to a “real world” that zombies are not likely ever to overrun, something often missing from genre fiction, and often intentionally so. Indeed, the strikingly different receptions of *Zone One* by different audiences may recall a similar zombie snafu from a few years ago, one provoked by comments made about Kelly Link’s 2005 short story “Some Zombie Contingency Plans.” The controversy began when sf author Scott Westerfeld responded in a posting—now available on the Internet only in excerpted form—to Michael Knight’s *New York Times* review of Link’s collection *Magic for Beginners*, which had asked the ill-fated question, “but those zombies—are they supposed to be a metaphor?”. Westerfeld criticized the idea that zombies should be reducible to a metaphor with a monolithic “meaning”; while Whitehead’s own zombies are unabashedly metaphorical, the novel is also unabashedly a work of genre horror, and his densely figurative narrative allows for the multiplication of the meanings of the zombie, not a limitation or reduction of them.

The early reviews of *Zone One* are equally provocative and instructive about the current state of the relationship of genre fiction and mainstream fiction in

the eyes of some literary critics. For example, Glen Duncan’s review for the *New York Times* opens with the pithy but unfortunate one-liner, “A literary novelist writing a genre novel is like an intellectual dating a porn star.” Duncan himself is a dabbler in what we might call “literary horror,” but his review becomes increasingly uncharitable towards genre horror, arguing for example that Whitehead “knows reality—even the reality of a world overrun by gaga revenants—is always going to have more to it than the dictates of genre allow,” and that in *Zone One* “[w]e get, in short, an attempt to take the psychology of the premise seriously, to see if it makes a relevant shape,” implying that genre writers are incapable of taking the premise of a zombie apocalypse “seriously.” It might be helpful, then, to compare the reception of *Zone One* with something more recognizably within the established popular genre like Max Brooks’s 2006 novel *World War Z*, which takes the premise of a zombie apocalypse quite seriously indeed, and endeavors to extrapolate the social as well as global geopolitical consequences of such an event. In simple terms of coverage, bastions of high culture like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* reviewed only *Zone One*; genre-based publications like *Vector* and *SF Site* reviewed only *World War Z*; and both were covered by more ecumenical outlets like NPR and *Strange Horizons*. Yet these novels differ very little if at all in their relationship with the genre of the zombie novel: one was simply written by an author with a more established literary pedigree. But, in spite of the continuing resistance to the idea of mainstream writers working within and even contributing to the development existing genres of speculative fiction from camps in both the literary fiction community and the science fiction community, we should always remember that crossing over between the two areas is not new, especially in the post-apocalyptic mode, which exists in its current form thanks to the efforts of writers both within and outside of genre science fiction. Thus, it is regrettable that, in a discussion of Whitehead and other genre-bending writers for *The Atlantic* titled “How Zombies and Superheroes Conquered Highbrow Fiction,” a critic like Joe Fassler can write that “it’s important to stress how rare genre interpolations were in late 20th-century fiction,” glossing over the numerous exceptions not only in the post-apocalyptic tradition—as we have seen, particularly clustered in the 80s—but all of the others in the long list that Bruce Sterling advanced as a preliminary catalogue of slipstream writing in 1989. Why, in the end, should any of us be surprised that the end of the world fasci-

nates authors of science fiction and mainstream literary fiction alike? As Kermode suggested long ago, our hunger for stories of the apocalypse “reflects out deep need for intelligible Ends”: “We project ourselves—a small, humble elect, perhaps—past the End, so as to see the structure whole, a thing we cannot do from our spot of time in the middle” (8).

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Nonfiction Reviews

Power and Control in the Television Worlds of Joss Whedon

Nolan Belk

Sherry Ginn. *Power and Control in the Television*

Worlds of Joss Whedon. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2012. Paperback, 198 pages, \$35, ISBN 978-0-7864-8970-1

Order option(s): [Paperback](#)

DESPITE having every one of his shows canceled, Joss Whedon is easily one of the most influential artists working in television in the last two decades. His influence is seen in his thousands of fans (as his recent Reddit chat shows) but more importantly in the Whedon alumni who create and star in so many of the best shows on television today. Such influence on popular culture has brought Whedon to the attention of several academics, as a peer-reviewed journal (*Slayage*), the Whedon Studies Association, and five years of Whedon-centered academic conferences attest. Sherry Ginn's study *Power and Control in the Television Worlds of Joss Whedon* provides just the kind of hybrid analysis one might expect from a Whedon fan with a doctorate in psychology.

After a preface introducing the four Whedon television shows (*Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*; *Angel*; *Firefly*; and *Dollhouse*), Ginn provides an introductory chapter, "The Problem with Power and Control," followed by seven chapters each of which examines Whedon's use of certain methods of control including love and sex, aggression and violence, the supernatural, brain manipulation, memory manipulation, drugs, and other methods. The monograph also contains a list of major characters, a list of episodes for each show, 148 endnotes, a fairly thorough bibliography of Whedon studies, and an index. The chapters are usually divided into three parts: an initial section defining the methods of control discussed in the chapter, a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the use of the methods on some of the individual television shows, and a set of conclusions concerning the method of control as it appears throughout Whedon's creative work (the Whedonverse).

Ginn's analysis presents a straight-forward premise: Joss Whedon's television shows derive almost all of their conflict from the various ways the characters control others or are controlled by others (or both). The premise is certainly correct, as Whedon's approach to story-telling involves creating lovable characters and then providing stories wherein they control or are controlled by others. The groupings of methods of control that Ginn chooses allow her to exhaust most of the ways characters can be controlled in these shows. While Whedon's constant desire to push his characters beyond the points at which they break provides many more

instances for analysis than Ginn has room for in this monograph, even in limiting her analysis to the television shows the Whedon fan can take comfort in the fact that the missing examples serve to support Ginn's points rather than to contradict them. And the reader will find few Whedon moments missing entirely from the argument (though season five of *Angel* does remain almost entirely overlooked).

Ginn's close viewing of the television shows amounts to approximately 75% of her analysis—and it is the most engaging part. The remaining 25% is given over to lengthy informative sections describing the methods of control which often leave the reader without a reference to the Whedonverse for pages on end. Ginn's background in psychology and neuroscience is seen in her descriptions of the inner-workings of the brain, and in a different context learning how neurons transmit data is fascinating. In the midst of discussing Whedon's television shows, however, such lengthy and disconnected discussions of the methods serve to drive the reader away from the engaging analysis of the shows and will be skimmed at best by readers interested in Ginn's main arguments.

According to Ginn, Whedon's work exhibits the complexities of various methods of power and control while often providing incorrect or incomplete information regarding the types of control. As might be expected, Ginn takes issue with errors about brain function which occur on the shows as well as with errors about drug use (or even drug names) and memory malfunctions. Such focus on the errors of the shows underscores Ginn's expertise in psychology, but also opens her up to a similar focus on errors in her writing. Readers may take issue, for instance, with her loose vocabulary. For instance, she calls River Tam a "young girl" when River must be seventeen or eighteen; she provides a misplaced modifier suggesting that Willow gets drunk and tortures Spike when the opposite is true; and, she claims that Buffy does not love Riley Finn when in fact this relationship is the longest-running and healthiest of either of Buffy's relationships. It is difficult to overlook such moments of confusion in Ginn's writing specifically because she asks her readers not to overlook such errors in the Whedonverse. Still, the reader can see that such errors stem from Ginn's dual role as a fan who wants to gush about great television shows and a scholar who wants to critically analyze the same.

Being the hybrid it is, Ginn's book is clearly meant for the engaged fan-scholar of Whedon's work. Her close reading of nearly all scholarship on Whedon shows

through the discussion as well as appearing in the bibliography, and her approach to the shows will stimulate similar discussion of not only Whedon's work but also other parts of popular culture where the mundane world of neuroscience and emotional manipulation is so seamlessly woven with the science-fictional and supernatural—Ginn herself reminds the reader of *Fringe* and *Babylon 5*, and similar approaches could easily be taken to *The X-Files*, *Lost*, and *Supernatural*.

Although it is not intended to work as the single introduction to the study of Joss Whedon's work, the books' accessibility and usefulness make it a good addition to not only research libraries with special sections in popular culture but also to non-research libraries such as those at small colleges with only a few classes in fields like gender studies. And the academic trappings, particularly the bibliography and the index, serve to make this a useful text for Whedon scholars and even beginning students of popular culture, especially as they grapple with ways to connect such studies to more established academic fields such as psychology.

London Peculiar and Other Nonfiction

Wendy Bousfield

Michael Moorcock. *London Peculiar and Other Nonfiction*. Michael Moorcock and Allan Kausch, eds. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012. Paper, 377 pages, \$23.95, ISBN 978-1-85425-106-0

Order option(s): [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)

MICHAEL MOORCOCK calls *London Peculiar* “a complementary companion” to a previous collection of nonfiction, *Into the Media Web: Selected Short Nonfiction, 1956-2006* (Manchester, U.K.: Savoy Books, 2010), which is held by only one U.S. library. Published in his recently adopted country, *London Peculiar* introduces a U.S. audience to Moorcock's nonfiction. Most essays were published in the 2000s, but the collection also includes a few earlier writings (*London Peculiar* ends with his first published literary essay, an overview of the literary career of Bret Harte, written when Moorcock was fifteen). Including autobiographical essays, diary entries, reviews, book introductions, and tributes to literary friends, *London Peculiar* introduces readers to the literary and political passions that unify Moorcock's life and work.

Prolific and multifaceted, Michael Moorcock is now in his early 70s. Best known for his sword and sorcery and “prophetic science fiction,” Moorcock is also a musician, editor, and a critic. An autodidact who left school at fifteen, Moorcock has had a lifelong enchantment with American popular myths. While still in his teens, he published Tarzan pastiches and edited a weekly called *Tarzan Adventures*. Determined to shape an imaginative literature with moral authority, Moorcock became editor of *New Worlds* in 1964. After a lifetime in London, Moorcock left the U.K in the early 1990s. Presently, he divides his time between Paris and Austin, Texas. Among the delights of *London Peculiar* are the Texas diary entries, critiquing post 9/11 culture, especially American insensitivity toward the poor and powerless. The first section of this work, “London,” is the most moving and memorable. Maintaining that London is “the best and most rewarding place for a poet or a novelist to live” (297), Moorcock views the city as a dynamic organism that, throughout its history, has resisted autocrats' attempts to reduce its messiness and complexity. As a small child, Moorcock recalls air raids during the Blitz: “Out beyond the blackout curtains, occasionally visible as a momentary glare of yellow light or heard as a screaming drone when some plane spiraled to earth under fire... the war in the air pursued its course” (5). Though his Jewish mother succeeded remarkably in giving Michael a stable domestic life, she and Moorcock's maternal grandmother worried that a Nazi victory would send British Jews to concentration camps. Moorcock states that both his fiction and philosophy had their “origins in . . . the Blitz years” (21). Maintaining that London is “the best and most rewarding place for a poet or a novelist to live” (297), Moorcock never fully explains why he is now an expatriate.

Located in subsequent sections of the work, *London Peculiar's* reviews, introductions, and obituaries all reflect Moorcock's eclectic, voracious reading. Moorcock assumes that one cannot comprehend London without a thorough knowledge of its imaginative literature. In his effort to understand his Jewish heritage, he reads Jewish authors, past and present, famous and forgotten. Some essays seek to revive interest in such unjustly forgotten writers: e.g., London writers W. Pett Ridge and Jack Trevor Story. In moving, intensely personal reviews and memorials devoted to literary friends (e.g., Andrea Dworkin, J.G. Ballard, Leigh Brackett, Thomas Disch, and Angela Carter), Moorcock demonstrates that, for him, friendship with literary contemporaries entails reading their entire body of work.

Moorcock maintains that imaginative literature is crucial to building a just society. Scorning “pseudo-literary Tolkienoid pomposities,” Moorcock deplores the facile nostalgia pervading popular fiction. Believing that only socially engaged literature has value, Moorcock rejects fiction that turns inward to explore one’s social class and individual psyche. He celebrates Ballard’s *Drowned World* (1962), the first novel predicting climate change: “We write such books not because we are convinced they describe the future, but because we hope they do not.” Imaginative literature should warn us of “disasters which we, as voters and citizens, can perhaps avoid” (236). Moorcock praises science fiction writers who are risk-takers and visionaries. As editor of *New Worlds*, Moorcock sought “fiction which . . . would address the specific conditions of post-second world war society” (125).

Because Moorcock is so prolific and multi-faceted, readers and listeners, casual and scholarly, are likely to regard Moorcock as the blind men did the elephant. One sees a “rope” (heroic fantasies of Elric), another a “wall” (Jerry Cornelius novels), and yet another a “pillar” (Moorcock’s performances with the rock band, Hawkwind). The nonfiction writings of *London Peculiar*, however, powerfully convey that the glue that holds together these varied genres is Moorcock’s empathy with the poor and marginalized. Engagingly written, astute about literature and politics, Moorcock’s *London Peculiar* is suitable for both university and public libraries.

Liminality in Fantastic Fiction: A Poststructuralist Approach

Leon Marvell

Sándor Klapcsik. *Liminality in Fantastic Fiction: A Poststructuralist Approach*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011. Paper, v + 206 pages, \$55, ISBN 978-0-7864-6473-9

Order option(s): [Paperback](#)

A HANDY CONCEPT, the liminal. It appears to be multi-form, inter- and extra-temporal, and able to stand in at a moment’s notice for seemingly any unusual literary trope that one can imagine. At least, that is what the author seems to have essayed in this headlong trip through and around this (dis)organising centre of an

idea.

Klapcsik begins his analysis in an uncontroversial manner: he outlines the origins of the term in the anthropological theories of Victor Turner, who had in turn drawn upon Arnold von Gennep’s ideas about the “rite of passage.” This latter consists of three distinct phases: separation, liminality and re-incorporation. Turner’s anthropology made much of the “no man’s land” of the liminal phase, and Klapcsik morphs the liminal into a kind of meta-machine with a large set of protean functionings within his selected texts. Rather disconcertingly, one finds oneself loathe to even try and encapsulate the term after reading this book; one feels Klapcsik standing behind intoning, “You haven’t understood it at all!”

A handy concept too, the postmodern. It is used to characterise all the texts that Klapcsik examines, and, at least as far as Klapcsik is concerned, it appears indistinguishable from post-structuralism. The heuristic behind this strange conflation is never explained or justified by the author, and perhaps that is as well for his thesis, as various poststructuralist moves and gambits are used throughout to characterise his discovery of “liminality” in the works of Agatha Christie (yes, you read that right), Neil Gaiman, Stanislaw Lem and Philip K. Dick.

Deleuze, Nietzsche, Stanley Fish, Paul de Man, Foucault, Michel de Certeau and Derrida also appear within the first twenty pages or so of his introduction to the book, and their contributions to his reconceptualization of liminality are briefly outlined. Baudrillard also gets a look in, of course. And just when one thought the menagerie of postmodernist/poststructuralist thinkers was complete, Todorov pops up, and, to a roaring round of applause, Lacan jumps out of the mirror!

Yes, I am being facetious, but not without reason. It is beyond the brief of this review to examine in depth the utility of his calling on this blessed host of authors, but the sheer number of “big names” and the brief quotations he adduces to justify their inclusion often comes across as little more than a spurious gesture towards authority. The repetitious appearance of these names across nearly every page of Klapcsik’s text also contributes to a sense of impatience with the author’s manner of presenting his ideas. One longs for extended passages of analysis in which a particular aspect of the liminal within a text is examined in depth, rather than every other paragraph being devoted to brief quotations from Derrida, de Man, Foucault *et al*, in an effort to justify Klapcsik’s ideas. This produces a stop-start reading ex-

perience that scholars accustomed to larger, more forceful passages of analysis may well find disconcerting.

Occasionally this constant gesturing towards authorities and the utilisation of short quotations to forward his argument goes horribly awry. He states that “we need to go beyond...traditional forms of representation and...[c]yberspace brings forth new forms of space and representation.” He then quotes Baudrillard to back up this idea: “Today the scene and the mirror no longer exist; instead there is a screen and a network” (28). Apparently Klapcsik is oblivious to the fact that Baudrillard is making a point about the utility of psychoanalytical ideas (Freud’s primal “scene” and Lacan’s “mirror”) in the information age rather than commenting on new types of representation.

Klapcsik’s opening position is that, “liminality should be reinterpreted and diversified in accordance with the cultural change of postmodernism” (9). To briefly demonstrate the concordance of poststructuralist ideas with his readings of liminality in the postmodern Dick, Christie, Lem and Gaiman, Klapcsik looks to Derrida’s invention and use of the term *différance* as a paradigmatic case of the functioning of liminality is poststructuralist discourse. Derrida’s “différance requires temporal and spatial slippages: hybrid, liminal phenomena, which are both inside and outside dialectics” (11). He quotes from Derrida’s *Positions*: “[The displacements of *différance*] inhabit philosophical opposition, resisting and disorganising it, but *without ever* constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of a speculative dialectics...Neither/nor, that is, *simultaneously* either *or*” (11). And thus Derridean *différance* is sucked into the vortex of Klapcsik’s metamorphic, postmodern liminality.

There are three distinct characteristics of liminality hypothesised by Klapcsik: firstly there is a “constant oscillation, crossing back and forth between social and cultural positions”; secondly we find a “space of continuous transference, a never ending narrative”; lastly liminality is “created by transgressions, or traversals, across evanescent, porous, indefinite, ambiguous, evasive borderlines” (14). Strange loops and metalepses abound in the texts Klapcsik examines, and Borges’s “The Circular Ruins,” beloved of postmodernists everywhere, raises its Janus head here as well, becoming an early example of the Klapcsik liminoid.

Klapcsik locates and explicates four aspects of liminality in the stories and novels he examines: *cultural or institutional liminality*; *generic liminality* (exemplified by “slipstream” literature, and Gaiman’s and Dick’s blend-

ing of genre norms and conventions, for example); narrative *liminality* (where there is the oscillation between perspectives, focal points and styles) and *thematic liminality*, which blurs the boundaries between self and Other, mechanical and human, the real and the virtual, for example.

A more traditional conception of the liminal is married to his idea of “oscillating” liminality when Klapcsik notes that the setting on a train in both Christie’s *4.50 From Paddington* and *Murder on the Orient Express* represents a space wherein we witness the collapse of social hierarchies and the shuffling of social classes. He then goes on to assert, rather more tendentiously, that as Christie’s characters “wear masks to hide their real natures” we find here an example of the Bakhtinian “carnavalesque,” where, just as on Christie’s Orient Express, there is a “suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions” (44). There is an ever so slight sleight-of-hand here (the equivalence of “social masks” and carnival masks), that enables him to get us to where he wants us to go—into the saturnalian side of Christie’s imagination—but I think we should be rightly suspicious of his means of conveyance.

His chapter on Neil Gaiman’s short stories examines Gaiman’s “generic liminality” in terms of the slippage between genre conventions and modalities, and also in terms of Gaiman’s “narrative liminality” where his pluralised perspectives “deny the reader the possibility of nominating, let alone maintaining, a privileged point-of-view” (55). We find in Gaiman’s work a “thematic liminality” as well, in that his texts more often than not play within the evanescent border between normative reality and the fantastic.

I doubt very much that I need to talk about Klapcsik’s conception of liminality in regards to his chapters on Dick and Lem — by now the use of his ideas in regards to their work should be so obvious that it would be both redundant and facile.

If one can forgive Klapcsik his occasional dubious equivalences—such as Benjamin’s *flâneur* being equivalent to Deleuze and Guattari’s nomad, and the latter’s conception of rhizomatic space being equivalent to “liminal” space—Klapcsik’s obvious enthusiasm for his project is oftentimes all that he needs to carry the reader along with his high-flying and sometimes eccentric analysis of liminal tropes. Where else would one read that Agatha Christie’s *Mousetrap* is equivalent (liminality-wise) to Wes Craven’s *Scream*?

Liminality in Fantastic Fiction is like a hydra-headed one trick pony: sure it is just the one trick, but it takes

so many forms, and has so many surprising and unexpected variations. For scholars of science fiction and the fantastic Klapcsik provides a synoptic overview of postmodern liminality, and whether one agrees with his readings of individual tropes or not, the sheer breadth of his interconnections is both fascinating and an inspiration for future research.

Murray Leinster: The Life and Works

Christopher Leslie

Billee J. Stallings and Jo-An J. Evans. *Murray Leinster: The Life and Works*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011. Paper, vi + 219 pages, \$40, ISBN 978-0-7864-8715-8.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)

IT IS EASY TO MISS AT FIRST, but the reader of this new biography of William Fitzgerald Jenkins (better known by one of his pen names Murray Leinster) begins to suspect it is an inside story. Thoughts and words are attributed to “Will” without sources, private letters are quoted liberally, and information is said to be remembered as if it were coming from personal conversations; the text even includes Leinster’s fudge recipe. The scholar rightly asks where this information comes from. Then one realizes that the authors, Billee J. Stallings and Jo-An J. Evans, have the same first names as Leinster’s daughters. The suspicion turns out to be true: this is an insider’s view from Leinster’s two youngest daughters.

Stallings and Evans offer fans of the history of science fiction and scholars of the genre an opportunity to see what a science fiction family lived like. There are other notable inside glances—Isaac Asimov’s biographies come to mind—but the opportunity to see the growth of American science fiction through the eyes of an author’s family is much more rare. Stallings and Evans write in loving tones about their father’s opportunities and accomplishments in the field, and at the same time they demonstrate a thoughtful understanding of the development of the genre as seen through their father’s career. In spite of their affection of their father, however, they have created a relatively objective account that places Leinster into the category of hybrid inventor-writers who helped developed the genre in the twentieth century. As said by James Gunn in his (too) brief forward, Leinster was one of the most prolific authors of all time, with a career that spanned six decades in which

he published 1,500 stories and nearly 100 books. His 1934 story “Sideways in Time” influenced the formula for the alternate history story to such a great extent that there is now a “Sideways” award for the genre. Leinster was also the inventor of a process for front projection, a kind of film special effect where actors are filmed before a film screen, which was used in the Dawn of Man sequence in *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Leinster was one of the first science fiction writers to be published in the “slicks” with his September 1949 story “Doomsday Deferred” in *The Saturday Evening Post*. Robert A. Heinlein had beat him by two years, but for Leinster, who had not started in the pulps, this was a return to the mainstream rather than a breakthrough into it. Stallings and Evans intimately tell the story of Leinster’s writing career, providing their readers with concrete details of creation of the genre. At the age of 19, he published his first story in H. L. Menken’s literary magazine *The Smart Set*. In a development reminiscent of John W. Campbell wanting to run two stories from Robert A. Heinlein in the same issue of *Astounding*, Leinster began using a second name when Menken was having trouble finding enough contributors. His mother’s maiden name was Murray, which he chose for his first name, and the last name was a bit of invented royalty. He associated his middle name, Fitzgerald, with the Duke of Leinster because he learned that the Fitzgeralds of Ireland were descended from him. Thus, Murray Leinster (which the biographers say is pronounced len-ster) was born. As Leinster began finding publications outside of Menken’s magazine, Menken asked him to reserve his real name for his best work in *The Smart Set*. By the time Hugo Gernsback established *Amazing Stories* in 1926, Leinster has published in *Argosy*, *Short Stories*, *Clues*, *Telling Tales*, and elsewhere. Gernsback republished “The Runaway Skyscraper” in his third issue.

Like Gernsback, Heinlein, Asimov, and other writers of the golden age, Leinster wrote from the perspective of an inventor. In the spring of 1942, Stallings and Evans explain, Leinster became involved in the war effort by becoming a senior publications editor for the newly-created Office of War Information (which lists him as Leinster, not Jenkins). Leinster had published a story in the 1931 issue of *Astounding Stories* “Morale,” that described an enemy who invades New Jersey and engages in psychological warfare to destroy the people’s morale. As Stallings and Evans note, this idea “moved from fiction to an actual current event” in World War II (87). As part of the war effort, in 1943, they report, he demon-

strated “gadgets” that would help information officers in field offices rapidly make copies of documents and images without complicated office equipment (90). This information is an interesting addition to the Leinster persona; he is best known as the inventor of front projection, but it is clear that he had success in other areas as well.

Leinster’s daughters also add some interesting details to what has been called the Cartmill affair. Cleve Cartmill’s 1944 story, “Deadline,” about an atomic weapon raised the attention of the FBI because of its detailed description of the mechanism that would deliver an atomic explosion for military purposes. Stallings and Evans say they remember FBI agents taking Leinster to the roof of their New York apartment to question him in private. At the time, the Manhattan Project was still a secret, and the FBI was concerned that it might have been a leak that led to the publication of such specific details that were being worked on. The truth was, of course, that many scientists were writing science fiction, and before the war, much nonfiction information was in print before 1940 as well. Leinster is remembered as saying, “if the enemy had read science fiction magazines, they might have won the war” (94). Leinster’s 1942 story “Four Little Ships” also came under scrutiny from the FBI due to its depiction of a means to disrupt shipping. This biography helps develop the connection between the imagination and invention.

Although a family’s biography of a major figure might seem to have questionable merit as scholarship, in this case, Stallings and Evans have provided an invaluable resource. In addition to reminding us about this major figure who was sometimes called the dean of science fiction, they add personal details that give historians and fans of the genre insight into what it meant to be a science fiction writer before, during, and after the golden age. Teachers of science fiction will find the descriptions of Leinster’s stories and the biographical and cultural context the authors provide useful in developing a syllabus as well.

C.M. Kornbluth: The Life and Works of a Science Fiction Visionary

Patrick Casey

Mark Rich. *C.M. Kornbluth: The Life and Works of a Science Fiction Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2010. Paper, 451 pages, \$39.95, ISBN 978-0-7864-4393-2.

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PICTURE IF YOU CAN the caricature of the science fiction fan. Not the science fiction reader browsing the science fiction aisle, but the “fan”: the person as passionate about the writers’ lives as he or she is about the works themselves. If you can picture that caricature’s tone in a debate about his favorite author, you’ll have a good idea of what makes Mark Rich’s biography of Cyril Kornbluth, author of such acclaimed works as “The Little Black Bag,” “The Marching Morons,” and *The Space Merchants* so frustrating.

In *C.M. Kornbluth: The Life and Works of a Science Fiction Visionary*, Rich writes as a true fan. He is both incredibly well-informed and incredibly elusive. He wanders off on tangents, relating anecdotes of SF’s early years, only to return to Kornbluth while ignoring or minimizing those topics that don’t fit into his attempt to reform the “distressing” image of Kornbluth that developed after the author’s untimely death in 1958. For Rich, who in the 1990s published a short-lived fanzine *Kornblum: Kornbluthiana*, the great tragedy of Kornbluth’s legacy is that “an interesting, well-liked and even well-loved young writer...suffer[ed] the fate after his death of becoming the seeming property of one writer” (2). Rich’s distaste for this “one writer” is so great that at times he seems to have trouble even mentioning his name. Eventually, it becomes clear that Rich is describing Kornbluth’s longtime friend, agent, and co-author, Frederick Pohl. For Rich, Pohl seems to exist as a one-dimensional character motivated by a nearly pathological desire for self-promotion, even as he writes his friend’s obituary. As Rich describes it, this “baffling item...breezed past [Kornbluth’s] superior masterworks” in favor of promoting ‘lesser’ works written in collaboration Pohl (2).

Rich’s apparent dislike of Pohl constantly threatens to undermine what could have been a wonderful biography of one of the Golden Age’s greatest talents. Rich sketches Kornbluth’s early years as a member of the Futurians, that young group of science fiction fans who, in both their feuds and collaborations, defined much of science fiction from the late 1930s into the 1960s (well after the Futurians officially disbanded in the 1940s). However, the reader is never left with a real feel of why the friendships developed or why Kornbluth developed

such a cutting, satirical voice. In part, this happens because much of the history has been written by others who were there as friends or members of the Futurians (including Frederic Pohl's *The Way the Future Was*).

Rich insists on dealing with Kornbluth's friendship with Pohl in only cursory fashion. Pohl appears as the bad guy, a lesser talent exploiting the genius of people he called friends in order to further his own career as an agent and editor. There may be a kernel of truth in this caricature—Pohl's often strained relationships with his fellow Futurians is well documented, but the one-dimensional depiction of Pohl ignores the fact that Kornbluth remained friends and even partners with Pohl for the majority of his life. At a minimum, a more even-handed examination of the relationship would have allowed the reader greater insight into Kornbluth's motivations and writing techniques. Instead, Rich seems to write Pohl out of the history in much the same way he accuses Pohl of writing himself into it.

This attempt to reclaim Kornbluth's legacy also leads another great frustration with the work. As Rich notes, there are parts of the story that we may never know. Fifty years of faltering memories have undoubtedly altered the tale. Some primary actors died before being interviewed. Kornbluth, himself, rarely spoke of his actions at the Battle of the Bulge (for which he received a Bronze Star), so the war and its impact on him and his work can only be guessed at. These are, however, problems faced by any historian. Far worse is the feeling that Rich knows more than he is telling. He hints at Kornbluth's complex relationships with sex, women and morality. Judith Merril, one of his collaborators, and, incidentally, Pohl's one time wife, notes that Kornbluth apparently disapproved of her affair with author Fritz Leiber but never directly mentioned it to her (168), while both Merril and Virginia Blish (wife of author James Blish) note that he apparently made his wife Mary dress up in "strange costumes" from time to time (278). He also obscures any potentially unfaltering depictions of Kornbluth's eccentricities (documented in other Futurians' remembrances of him) or any of his potential problems with alcohol. Even the impact of his wife's alcoholism is never significantly connected to his work or to his own, self-admitted, ability to be cruel to his wife and others. Instead, Rich minimizes these aspects of Kornbluth's life and instead insists that he was well loved by friends, as if the existence of these feelings, in and of themselves, help readers understand the man and his work.

The biography is most satisfying in the short section detailing Kornbluth and Judith Merril's collaboration

on *Mars Child*. Here we learn of how they split the writing chores and how Kornbluth contributed both as an editor and inspiration to his writing partners. Unfortunately that is only one short section of the biography and it does little to illuminate either the man or his work.

Part II of the biography, does a little more to explain Kornbluth's work by presenting a short analysis of a few specific stories and themes, as well the parallels between the life and works of Phil Klass and Cyril Kornbluth. Unfortunately, these sections feel largely unconnected to the rest of the text and aren't quite weighty enough to stand out on their own.

In the end, too much of the story remains untold and Rich, despite his enthusiasm and years of research, doesn't reveal enough to satisfy those looking for an understanding of the man and his work. Much to Rich's undoubted chagrin, Kornbluth's work is still likely to continue to be read and understood in the context laid out by his collaborators, including, most significantly, Frederick Pohl.

Fiction Reviews

Nebula Awards Showcase 2012

Jim Davis

Kelly, James Patrick, and John Kessel, eds. *Nebula Awards Showcase 2012: The Year's Best Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Amherst, NY: Pyr, 2012. Trade paper, 335 pages, \$17.95, ISBN 978-1-61614-619-1.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)

IN THEIR INTRODUCTION to this year's *Nebula Awards Showcase 2012*—actually works published in 2010 and nominated for the 2011 Nebula Awards—Jim Kelly and John Kessel give the usual history of the awards, but somehow keep working back around to this idea of who decides which stories are *worthy* of nomination, of what it means that certain stories were or were not nominated, or won. They even quote Andy Duncan who says, in part, “. . . it's less important who wins . . . than the fact that [the awards] are given out, generating another opportunity to . . . talk to one another about our field and how it's doing—and yes, to kvetch about who got robbed and who's overrated and who the real winner is.” In constantly returning to this theme, in repeating the idea that the real purpose of the Nebulas is to “. . .

. spur the collective effort to write better sf and fantasy. . . .” they get me worrying right off the bat, “Uh-oh, are there problems with this year’s batch of works?” Well, maybe.

The initial piece in the collection is Kij Johnson’s “Ponies,” co-winner in the Short Story category. A short, very simple fable about the peer-pressure cruelties young girls are subjected to in order to fit in, it could be a very emotionally affecting story, but it seems to me to fall short. First of all, in its quest for simplicity, it avoids any attempts at individual characterization, which in turn blunts the reader’s emotional investment in the story. Secondly, the story announces that it is a fable, unrelated to reality. When Barbara, the protagonist, cuts off her pony’s wings (as tribute to *TheOtherGirls* so she can fit in), the narrator describes the process: “It’s not the way it would be, cutting a real pony.” Is the narrator telling us a fable, or telling us *about* a fable? I think that simple (as in clear and elegant) storytelling—a plus for fables—gets blurred with simplistic. And the ending is totally predictable. As much as I love Johnson’s stories and want to love this one, I can’t shake the feeling that it could have been so much more affective, and effective.

Interestingly, the other co-winner for short story, Harlan Ellison’s “How Interesting: A Tiny Man,” is also a fable. In it the narrator creates a tiny man; there is no attempt at explaining how or why—he just does it (“Once upon a time there was a farmer who taught his cow to talk.”). The story is a wry, understated journey through the social and political firestorms caused by the narrator’s achievement which the narrator, a total innocent about things outside his laboratory, is completely unprepared to deal with. My one complaint with this story is the ending—or endings—or lack thereof. Ellison says in his introduction, “It has two endings, and you can take whichever pleases you . . . or neither.” Well, none of those three choices pleases me. It’s like the story has made its point already, and there is no dynamite way to end it, so he just shrugs and says “Eh. *You* end it.”

Of the other two nominees for Best Story included here, Adam Troy-Castro’s “Arvies” has perhaps the most interesting science fiction idea in the volume: In the future, those with enough money and power are never actually born. They can live their lives continually—and apparently eternally—in the wombs of helpless slave hosts, experiencing everything the host body experiences through technological connections. The protagonist has experienced countless lives in this manner, each time riding the host body until it is useless, then switching to another. But however interesting the idea, the

political metaphor here seems heavy-handed, and the didactic narrative voice is many times more so. There is not even an attempt to blunt the ardently, stridently, angrily didactic voice, and when the narrator breaks the fourth wall with lines like “on a day corresponding to what we call Thursday,” the story openly announces that this is the author sermonizing directly to the reader. Even if I agree with a story’s metathesis, I can’t abide even the hint that I’m being preached at, and this story doesn’t just hint.

Amal El-Mohtar’s “The Green Book,” the last of the story nominees included, is a short but complex horror/romance/fantasy about a book that writes itself. It can be a difficult read due to its subtlety and delicacy, but for that very reason is fascinating. This leads to my one complaint with this story: the attention to linguistic detail really emphasizes apparent linguistic anomalies, such as mention of a woman’s clothing being “well-put-together,” or the line “You’re sweet enough to rot teeth” appearing in a story that otherwise sounds like its final lines: “I shall write more anon. He returns. I hear his feet upon the stair.”

Of the novelettes, the Nebula winner, “That Leviathan, Whom Thou Hast Made,” by Eric James Stone, has a fascinating setting (inside the sun) and premise (communicating with the gigantic plasma creatures who live there), but is dominated by its probing of the narrator’s religious faith. Stone manages to neatly balance an action-packed plot, human relationships between believers and non-believers (all tolerant and accepting), and a good deal of humor, without ever getting heavy-handed with the religious theme. Chris Barzak’s “Map of Seventeen” is a kind, affecting story of a small-town girl coming of age while seeing the results of her older brother’s moving to the city and maturing, with a startling, even if not unexpected, fantasy element. “The Jaguar House, in Shadow,” by Aliette de Bodard, is an intense novelette of loyalty and betrayal, subterfuge, violence, and something akin to martial arts, all set in a world in which Aztec culture survived and grew into the 20th century. It’s an interesting, exciting read.

The final novelette included, Shweta Narayan’s “Pishaach,” is probably my favorite piece in the volume. The story, based on Indian mythology, is emotional, mysterious, beautiful, mythic, and wonderfully paced. In it a mistreated young girl finds herself alternately pulled into two worlds—one threatening and unkind but home, and the other safe and accepting—but unable to fully enter either.

Of the novellas, the winner was *The Lady Who Plucked*

Red Flowers beneath the Queen's Window, by Rachel Swirsky. Seemingly another tale of magic and court intrigue, it comes to be dominated by its plot of the protagonist being wakened (actually, summoned) intermittently across the years and then centuries, from a state of suspension, the magical version of the old cryogenic suspension theme. Naeva is a maddening, obstinate, bigoted, fascinating character, and the prose is clear and controlled throughout. And don't miss the ending.

The final novella is *Sultan of the Clouds*, by Geoff Landis, a story I find impossible to get a handle on. At its best it is the most fascinating "Wow! Would you look at that!" technological extrapolation I've read this side of the great scientifiction of the Golden Age. The seemingly endless, but welcomed, descriptions of the cities floating in the atmosphere of Venus are breathtaking and fascinating. But then plot and character come to the forefront, with an adult narrator who thinks and acts like a juvenile, pirates (!!)(actually rebel insurgents, but they don't really do anything that allows us to differentiate), and a spoiled juvenile plutocrat controlling everything, and we realize we are reading a YA story. But then at the end we find out that the really hot scientist was using the adolescent plutocrat's sexual desire for her to help control him. YA?

Rounding out the volume are the two poems that won the Rhysling Awards for best long and short poems, "In the Astronaut Asylum" by Kendall Evans and Samantha Henderson, and "To Theia" by Ann K. Schwader, respectively; excerpts from *Blackout/All Clear*, Connie Willis's Nebula Award-winning novel, and *I Shall Wear Midnight*, which won Terry Pratchett the Andre Norton Award for YA book; and James Tiptree, Jr.'s "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side," in honor of her being awarded the Solstice Award. I saved it for last.

The Science Fiction Issue: Whatever

Neil Easterbrook

The New Yorker (June 4 & 11, 2012). New York: Condé Nast Publications. \$5.99. ASIN B001U5SPJW.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#)

I CAN'T TELL YOU how happy I was to hear, just the week before it was published, that *The New Yorker* was devoting an issue to SF. My god, *The New Yorker*! That

last bastion of High Literary Mainstream Psychological Realism Devoted to Character in Taut, Refined Prose.

I'm still riding the buzz, but I have two serious disappointments. One has already been mentioned, by Gardner Dozois in the August issue of *Locus*: the writers most associated with genre—Le Guin, Bradbury, Gibson, Miéville—get the opportunity to give one-page testimonials about genre, sore thumb merit badges that offer wry smiles about earlier mistreatment before entering the Empyrean. (As evidenced by this.) Except for Atwood's, these short bits are lovely, clever. But the fiction, and the four long prose pieces, come from writers *already inside* the *New Yorker* bubble—Colson Whitehead, Jennifer Egan, Jonathan Lethem, Junot Díaz. All of the fiction is slipstreamy or magical or postmodern, with none of the special and specific traits that get mentioned in the shorter testimonials, or Anthony Burgess' essay about the genesis of *A Clockwork Orange*. Sadly, Laura Miller, who previously had written some wonderful essays about genre, contributes the obligatory canon contextualizing commentary (she mentions Camille Flammarion and J-H Rosny, though in her hurry to tell us that Wells mentioned the Tasmanians she conflates the *ainé/jeune* bit).

Fine, fine, fine—all excellent writers and interesting pieces and well worth the \$5.99 cover price and now I think of it I might even violate international copyright law and turn Díaz's "Monstro" into a PDF for my students this fall since this term it's monsters wall to wall, real metaphoric alterity, like that. Fine, fine, fine, but *plus ça change*, whatever, at least we got this much, et cetera.

And then that second thing. Until I held the hardcopy in my hand, I'd been stoked and stroked by their website, and the three ads I saw: they were calling it "Science Fiction" and "SF," not "Sci-Fi." 'Twas I'd died and gone to heaven. Then there it was, on the table of contents to label the section of testimonials by the token genre writers. Then prominently repeated, in caps, in a big box, at the bottom of each of their pages. Glad we got that explicitly clear, because otherwise, you know, *plus ça* whatever whatever whatever.

Still, a foot in the door, can't say "never" anymore, and if Díaz or Egan gets some bluerinser to buy a few things and maybe even read a little, then mission accomplished. In the July issue of *Science Fiction Studies*, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. reports that January's Key West Literary Seminar was devoted to "Literature of the Future." Atwood and Whitehead and Lethem were there, but so too Gibson and Miéville and Charles Yu.

And others, all “A-listers” and “rising stars” and taken seriously by almost everyone, even the bluerinsers. Csicsery-Ronay concludes “All the writers are now assured of being taken seriously by the NYTBR [*New York Times Book Review*].” Probably so, but I must add that NYTBR has dropped the regular review of sf, and treats Gibson and Miéville and Yu as émigrés, less those that have “broken into” than “broken out of.” Though perhaps I’m just too focused on the *New Yorker* cover illustration, by Daniel Clowes and called “Crashing the Gate,” which depicts a ‘30s pulp spaceman brandishing a Schwarzenegger raygun while bursting through a bookcase into a Manhattan literary cocktail soirée. The lit types look a little worried. But only a little.

Ok, so the SF issue of *The New Yorker* isn’t *When It Changed*. But it does offer a very encouraging sign, which if we catalog along with other encouraging signs, may just start to look like wonders. Hope that’s how I remember it in the coming years.

The Science Fiction Issue: Exploring a New Liminality

Kathleen Ann Goonan

The New Yorker (June 4 & 11, 2012). New York: Condé Nast Publications. \$5.99. ASIN B001U5SPJW.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#)

SCIENCE FICTION (SF) is not a stranger to the pages of *The New Yorker*. The magazine has run many science fiction stories, which were not necessarily labeled as such, and began a relationship with SF in 1940 with a rousing, hilarious piece by SJ Perelman, “Captain Future, Block That Kick!” In the August 25 1945 issue, only weeks after the world learned of the existence of the A-bomb, James Campbell was the subject of a gracious and respectful interview regarding the story “Deadline” by Cleve Cartmille, which government intelligent agents suspected was the product of high-level security leaks in the Manhattan Project. This turned out not to be the case.

The July 29 1972 issue devotes nine pages to Gerald Jonas’ “Onward and Upward with the Arts,” which delineates science fiction’s history and then-present, focusing on New Wave Writers Delaney, Ballard, and Silverberg. Jonas, whose science fiction review column ran in the *New York Times* for decades, concentrates on academic

interest in SF. He includes details of a contemporaneous SFRA meeting and quotes Darko Suvin from “What Are We Really Talking About?” The piece begins “Up to a few years ago . . . most people thought of science fiction as a subliterary genre of adolescent escapism . . .” Things have not changed much since 1972, at least not for readers of literary fiction. There have been changes in the academic world and among huge demographic swathes of readers, but this interest and acceptance of SF does not extend to the larger reading public.

The New Yorker’s June 4 & 11 2012 Science Fiction issue provoked conversation in the camps of mainstream literary fiction and science fiction, but not, as might be expected, much cross-discussion. This interesting issue is an excellent illustration of the philosophies and misunderstandings that divide the two strains of artistic experience. Deborah Treisman, *The New Yorker* fiction editor, says in an interview with *InnovationNewsDaily*, “We just wanted to have fun.” It may have been fun for them, but in the end, and in spite of the best intentions of Treisman, the issue seems to accentuate divisions via the visual and organizational markers of cover art, sidebars, and, of course, content. Treisman says, “It comes up a lot in the issue, actually, this notion of the difference between literary fiction and genre fiction and we kind of felt as though maybe that distinction is not as cut and dried as people make it out to be. We thought it would be interesting to explore the idea and the fiction.” *The New Yorker* does this with essays (Anthony Burgess on *A Clockwork Orange*, Colin Whitehead and B movies, and Laura Miller on *The History of Aliens*), Memoirs (sidebars in the line of “Why I Write Science Fiction” by Ursula Le Guin, Ray Bradbury, William Gibson, China Mieville, and Margaret Atwood), fiction by Jennifer Egan, Jonathan Lethem, Sam Lipsyte, and Junot Diaz, and artwork. In this piece, I discuss some of these exploratory vectors.

Some deny that literary categories are real, or if they are real, that they are meaningful. They do exist, and play into this *New Yorker* issue with force. Defining what is and what is not science fiction is a slippery business. I have recently retooled my category labels of “sci-fi” and “science fiction.”

Sci-fi is what Margaret Atwood adamantly does not write. The appellation, for her, conjures up film-generated images of ray guns, talking squids in space, killer tomatoes, and genetically engineered angst superheroes who need not ever have been trapped inside the form of a novel save for subsequent novelization. The abbreviation for science fiction, SF, conveniently lends

itself to another label, Speculative Fiction, which has, at times, given literary science fiction the stature it deserves.

SF almost always pertains to print short stories and novels, though a movie, if the author is lucky and can stomach the outcome for filthy lucre, may spring from it. SF for adults—"serious" SF—is challenging, imaginative, transportive, and is often an acquired taste. The threshold for reading much of the field requires a facility for languages. Most SF novels are worlds, and languages, unto themselves, studded with the neologisms that some readers crave and others climb over, sweating, hoping that others are not looming on the horizon to slow their progress. Some works, like those of Douglas Adams, are enjoyable romps. Others attempt serious messages or (usually) dire predictions. Some delve into character with subtle, wrenching aplomb. In short, SF employs all the literary tricks at its disposal to create a full, rich spectrum of literature, a possibility that those who mock it cut themselves off from with disdain.

Despite this richness, there are mainstream writers who, when they take an unexpected swerve into science fiction, backpedal furiously when that label is invoked. Other authors pay it no mind, or welcome it as additional accolade.

Still, the recent, tentative recognition of science fiction by highbrow mainstream literary fiction and their occasional convergence produces, at least when some established literary writers with no background in reading literary SF dip into "sci-fi" mode, the distinct feel of an "uncanny valley." According to Wikipedia, "The uncanny valley is a hypothesis in the field of robotics and 3D computer animation, which holds that when human replicas look and act almost, but not perfectly, like actual human beings, it causes a response of revulsion among human observers. The "valley" refers to the dip in a graph of the comfort level of humans as a function of a robot's human likeness. The term was coined by the robotics professor Masahiro Mori as Bukimi no Tanin 1970." When a writer unversed in science fiction attempts to imitate it, the results might bear the surface stamp of science fiction, but may not pass the litmus test of being true SF in that it is often clumsily executed. Reading the stories included in this issue through a critical science fiction lens can produce a similar effect, mitigated by the claim of some of the authors that were not writing science fiction anyway.

Perhaps the boundaries of both camps are becoming more porous; perhaps the existence of this issue, though not necessarily the contents, is proof of that

glacial movement. Jonathan Lethem, in "Out Loud: Reading and Writing Science Fiction" says "The name's always been a mistake. I'd say that it's all gray. The categories themselves are as gray as the area between them (<http://tinyurl.com/7x56t4r>)." Indeed, it is all literature—fantastic, realist, mimetic, non-mimetic; it is all storytelling—but the bastard-child provenance of "scientifiction" pulp covers and, well, weird, amazing, and fantastic tales are all that many people know of science fiction. In that 1940 issue of *The New Yorker*, S.J. Perelman hilariously sends up this category of fiction in "Captain Future, Block that Kick!" (Jan 15 1940). Taking as his subject Mort Weisinger's first issue of *Captain Future, Wizard of Science*, authored by Edmund Hunt, Perelman romps onto the page with, "I guess I'm just an old mad scientist at bottom. Give me an underground laboratory, half a dozen atom-smashers, and a beautiful girl in a diaphanous veil waiting to be turned into a chimpanzee and I care not who writes the nation's laws. You'll have to leave my meals on a tray outside the door because I'll be working pretty late on the secret of making myself invisible, which may take me almost until eleven o'clock (p 23)." Perelman correctly describes Mr. Hunt's work with Hugo Gernsback's label, "scientifiction," and continues in this vein with masterful ease, making comedic hay with Captain Future.

Captain Future's near-visage, complete with ray gun (which burns through a wall of books), a purple squid-like creature who no doubt talks, and a robot resembling Captain Future's companion Grag (but not, alas, another companion, the Living Brain, who lives in a—well, in a black box) appears in Daniel Clowes' cover, "Crashing the Gate." In a nice detail, the Captain Future-like character sports a Starfleet Insignia on his space suit.

So much for "no categories." The pulp history of science fiction leaves it open to such gut-busting ridicule, and clings to the appellation like maddening, unremovable plastic wrap. Despite this, science fictional elements are front and center in novels by Haruki Murakami, Ursula Le Guin, Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, and Michael Chabon, and countless others, gaining new life after liberation from old roots, just as surrealism celebrated the liberation of object from designated historic function. Literary tropes and images are famously fluid; ancient elements such as myths, when used in contemporary literature, can enhance the work with subtle or vivid strangeness. Readers crave the new, yet celebrate rearranged stolen bits of character, plot, and concept. Quotes, as in jazz, give readers the thrill of recogniz-

ing something old in an alien context, with pulp edges either smoothed to a subtle subtextual hum or honed to a Ballardian razor edge. Talking squids in space are now a distinct possibility, and carry the baggage of reality, such as, were they created by DARPA, what are their legal rights, and will they, with their huge brains, transcend or rule the humans who created them?

Yes. Fun. And eerily possible.

It is precisely those fun, pulpish elements that *The New Yorker* Science Fiction issue leans on in its cover art, interior art by Dan Winters Jacob Escobedo, Brendan Monroe, and some of the fiction and essays. In essence, these elements are not exclusively fun and pulpish any longer, but can be as serious as *Slaughterhouse 5*, as absurd and surrealistic as *Gravity's Rainbow*, or as searching as Richard Powers' novels when it comes to taking a close look at the essential science fictional question, "What does it mean to be human?" The issue is an uneasy blend of these elements, tacking first one way and then the other, leaving one feeling that larger issues have been ignored. And yet, given the space of a single magazine, *The New Yorker* SF issue did a lot of work—and had a lot of fun.

The literary convergence of science fiction and the literary mainstream is an odd hybrid in that these two groups of writers and readers do not usually intersect. Those whom Ursula Le Guin calls, in her sidebar, "sci-fi readers" rarely, if ever, read or written anything else and thereby stubbornly remain isolated from the larger, historical bounty of what they characterize as "mundane fiction."

Likewise, readers and writers of "literary fiction," which does not usually include fiction labeled as genre, such as thriller, horror, romance, urban fantasy or SF, venture out of their comfort zone as rarely as do sci-fi readers and writers. Many in both groups have an automatic aversion recoil reaction to mention of the other school of reading and writing.

However, literary writers are slowly beginning to realize that the technological and scientific changes of the past century flood the easy consensual reality from which they draw character, plot, and setting. Ann Patchett, for instance, admits that the existence of the cell phone must be figured into plot, character, and language:

And I just don't know how to write a novel in which the characters can get in touch with all the other characters at any moment. I don't know how to write a novel in the world of cellphones. I don't know how to write a novel in the world

of Google, in which all factual information is available to all characters. So I have to stand on my head to contrive a plot in which the characters lose their cellphone and are separated from technology (<http://tinyurl.com/3ja4sxu>).

It is becoming increasingly difficult to contort one's fictional creation into something that does not reference our rapidly changing technological landscape. Does that mean that more literary writers will write fiction that is inescapably SF? Probably not, but the distinctions are becoming, to use Lethem's phrase, more gray. Some claim that it is all about style, voice, sentence and novel structure: a self-awareness on the part of the author. The pulp model for writing SF is indeed one of speed: novels are supposed to spring yearly, or more often, from the forehead of the successful SF (and mystery, and romance) writer, to keep the readers hooked, just as the weekly infusion of comics kept kids riding their bike to the drugstore. The model of more literary writing is that it takes three to five years for the author to become immersed in a fictional world of character, setting, style, and to ensure every sentence is not only fine but rings true. PK Dick famously abandoned a possible mainstream literary career in order to support his famil(ies) by turning out several novels a year, all written in haste, with the aid of a pharmacopeia of drugs which, along with his incipient brain tumor, apparently made his reality as weird as that of his novels. This salubrious confluence of real-world pressures and literary talent placed him in the realm of Borges and Calvino: strange, and uniquely strange.

Many strangenesses, like aliens, plagues, etc., are depressingly familiar. They are stock situations or characters in stock books, and that is another reason the entire category is shunned by discerning readers, who lack easy access to intelligent SF reviews in the venues from which they choose their fiction.

Although during Campbell's long-running reign he did his best to ensure scientific and technological verisimilitude, it is extrapolation, rather than prediction, that gives SF its power. The gap between implied and actualized futures has narrowed to an eyeblink, in some cases, so that the future floods in faster than novelists, who compose in a state of deep time often at a remove from the present, are able to assimilate. In *The New Yorker* issue, Margaret Atwood firmly places SF in the category of "fantastic literature," with which many academics and SF readers might agree. Other readers and writers of SF might strongly disagree, claiming that, to the contrary, SF is by definition the most realistic fiction it is possible

to write, being based, for the most part, on scientific or technological fact or reasonable extrapolation.

Yes. Slippery. Slippery, gray, and filled with potential.

As has been her strategy for years, Atwood also scootches far back from acknowledging that any of her work is SF, face averted, hands palm-out before her. Her metaphor for being sometimes smeared with the SF label is explained in her sidebar, “The Spider Women” (p. 82): “The lobster placed in a pot of cold water that’s brought to a boil doesn’t know it’s cooking until it’s far too late. Similarly, those of us currently in the science fiction soup didn’t know we were climbing into that particular tureen: we started too early.” Ursula Le Guin—gracious, erudite, and cool, with, apparently no sense of having been cooked—has appeared on stage with Atwood and reviewed *After the Flood*, Atwood’s latest (non-SF, she says) novel, in the *Guardian*. In her sidebar, “The Golden Age,” she says, “. . . I thought, and still think, it ungrateful in a writer to write science fiction and deny that it’s science fiction So if you’re in the great-writer business you play the denial game.” China Mieville’s more lighthearted sidebar, “Forward Thinking,” similarly goes back to childhood literature as the source of his weird, powerful, and definitely hard-to-classify work.

So: there is a large, acknowledged problem in defining SF, and therein lies, if not the crux, then one of the critical cruxes of this particular divide. Having absorbed popular SF tropes from television and movies—end of the world (by plague, comet, ecological disaster, etc.), aliens, futuristic technology, time travel, mad scientists—and mixed them with postmodern abandon, some literary writers create fantastic stories that authors and publishers strive to characterize as non-SF in order to keep their skirts high out of the sci-fi mud.

I have long wished for the end of genre, which is a marketing tool designed to fling the customer into the well-worn, comfortable streets of “like.” I long for the serendipitous bookstore, where “Literature” is not separate from “Science Fiction.” Who, loving “Literature,” would brave the force-field surrounding the SF aisle, where your book club colleagues might catch a glimpse of you guiltily hunched over a copy of *Count Zero*? When science fiction was reviewed in newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, it was handily cordoned off in a labeled column that made the reviews easy to find, but also easy to skip. This false dichotomy plagues us with labels. Literature is a spectrum. Any single novel is derived from many, echoes many, and serves as a node of meaning for many others.

“Black Box,” by Jennifer Egan, is a case in point. It is the story of a woman who claims to be, and acts like, a spy, whose body is embedded with communication and recording devices. If we go with labels, it can be viewed from many literary angles: feminism, postmodernism, thriller. But—science fiction? At first glance, that’s a stretch. The only technologically speculative element might be the camera in the eye and other embedded communication tools, but I have little doubt that this technology is presently in the works for, if not available to, warfighters right now. I wanted Google Glasses back in the Mirrorshade days. I’m sure the size and price will come down fast.

Feminism and the politics of the body and identity: “Beauty,” the main character (never otherwise named and existing only as a quality) has been brainwashed by her husband, no less, a man of great power, to sacrifice her life for some greater good. Odd. Couldn’t this ogre have chosen a woman who did not need SM coercion to accept this mission? We want to shake Beauty: why can’t she see that he’s using her, that he can’t possibly love her? Perhaps because her certified cardboard SF character as a Beauty can’t see beyond her own nose? A grave disservice to all Beauties, I say.

But our spy, Beauty, is hardly new. Neither are futuristic spy devices cooked up in government labs, or tense getaways in speedboats. The story reminds me of nothing so much as any Ian Fleming book. In fact, “The Spy Who Loved Me,” a Fleming novel written from the point of view of a much-victimized woman who fell in love with James Bond, might have been one of the overlapping ur-sources of this story. (Fleming pulled this book soon after it was published, but I inexplicably found this racy tome in the children’s section of my library around 1963. It bears no relation to the Bond movie of the same title). Despite the resemblance, this near-archetypal story is common currency in the spy thriller genre and needs no direct source; like science fiction tropes, spy thriller tropes are accepted without question by readers. The story was composed and released as tweets, a device that gives each terse paragraph the impact of poetry: this is important information, and every detail must be considered. The telegraphic tweets, the continuing anonymity of Beauty (although she names her husband, this too might be part of her programming), and the style of each declarative, imperative phrase, shorn of everything but the character’s point of view, give the story undeniable power and spare elegance. In this instance, the technological medium—Twitter—actually is the message, which gives the story a nice science fictional kick.

Finally, the title, “Black Box,” implies that this is a programmed person, perhaps an android. This seemed the coolest, most skiffy interpretation, and there is nothing in the text that contradicts this interpretation. Egan, in an interview, claims that Beauty is a “real person,” so my interpretation is incorrect as far as author’s intentions go (<http://tinyurl.com/c3hbrmq>). But let’s get deconstructive. It doesn’t matter what Egan thought, or intended: Beauty is an android. She’s been programmed with a story about her past and emotional subterfuges to practice in every situation. She thinks in brief, observational spurts, as if learning (or being updated from a remote source: the tweets) who she is. Dan Winters’ photograph illustration of Black Box undeniably references Rachel, a replicant (android) in *Blade Runner*, so *The New Yorker*, at least, realizes that Beauty is artificial. Her mechanistic “thoughts,” her constant reference to her directions about how to act and what to do buttress this interpretation: an android might think like this, in a programmed way. A human, really, would not. A realistic human would definitely doubt that her husband loved her, having commanded her to prostitute herself and possibly die for her country.

Speaking of science fiction in the above-referenced interview, Egan says:

I have very little relationship to it, and therefore I feel unqualified to write it. I think I felt nervous about having the piece appear in that context because I feel I don’t have the proper credentials. I haven’t read a lot of science fiction, and I never intend to write it; it seems to happen a little bit inadvertently for me, in that I’m trying to follow people into points in their lives that demand that I investigate the future. And then I imagine forward and, of course, find myself imagining certain technological realities that haven’t happened yet. But I feel, you know, basically like a fake in the realm of science fiction. I’m interested in it, but I don’t feel like I’ve done the legwork to make a vital contribution.

There is that ever-more-familiar conundrum: Egan is thinking like a science fiction writer, but does not want to be labeled as such. She will not be boiled in that pot. “Black Box” intrigues; it pulls the reader into its stylistic depths with writerly ease, and is science (or technology) on the verge of happening: Science. Fiction. Egan’s comments do make one wonder why *The New Yorker* didn’t tap authors who write science fiction and who do not feel like fakes when they try to write for a science fiction issue. There are plenty of “new” “young” science

fiction writers who could have contributed splendid stories without warping the magazine’s sense of the literary in the least.

The magazine did not do so because science fiction was not really the aim of this issue. Instead, the aim was to investigate that liminal space where genre labels go to die, where cultural and artistic energy manifests most sharply and most controversially.

Sam Lipsych states in a *New Yorker Online* interview (<http://tinyurl.com/8ydopqd>) that he did not think of his nonlinear story “The Republic of Empathy” as science fiction. Like a good writer, he leaves it to readers to sort things out. Let us do so. The story features a drone who believes she is a woman with free will. At nearly the end of the story, Drone Reaper Sister 5 argues with Base Jango Rindhart, the dronemaster, before she blows up a character we meet (nonlinearly, so to speak, as in *Pulp Fiction*), in the first segment of the story. This echoes Beauty’s similar use as a weapon, her lack of free will, and her near-fate (she seems to be rescued at the last instant, but may be hallucinating). If an imagined future or a dreamed present where drones have a personality is science fiction, then “The Republic of Empathy” could be SF. Possibly. If it mattered. It seems more political than otherwise. But this does speak to the paradoxical literality that many science fiction readers demand from their work, a consideration at which many artists might sneer, or laugh. Literature works on many levels, few of them rational.

Junot Diaz, on the other hand, embraces SF as something he has loved since his childhood as an unmoored immigrant in New Jersey, having been transplanted from the Dominican Republic. He does not at all feel that his fiction is being dissed if labeled SF. This is refreshing, even though his mold-infected zombie Chorus (and eventually, giant) cannibals never inject themselves into the story save to quarantine the narrator with his uncaring love interest. It is once again the end of the world and the characters, young and wild, embrace it for the sake of art.

Jonathan Lethem, with a foot in both camps, contributes an appropriately hermetic story, “My Internet,” perhaps signaling that every literary work is unique. Or perhaps not.

Because I am focusing on literature, I am giving short shrift to other pieces in the issue that could yield interesting analysis. SF manifests undeniably in film, television, comics, and gaming, but it is for the most part different—in tone, subject matter, and complexity—from the SF in current novels and short stories; most is much

more like the “Golden Age” SF of the pulps. In fact, Gibson makes a point of mentioning in “Olds Rocket 88, 1950” that his SF experience was mainly print rather than media. Colin Whitehead sets forth his relationship with sci-fi in “A Psycotronic Childhood: The B-movies did it”. Laura Miller delves into the history of “the alien” in literature up to the time of the pulps.

Many have remarked that *The New Yorker* did not ask real, unabashed science fiction writers to contribute fiction, but it seems that their aim was to highlight a younger generation of writers known for writing literary fiction but who can also walk the walk—kind of—of sf, when it suits them, without being pigeonholed. Mi-ville certainly falls into this category of immediate literary vibrancy, with work that eludes categorization, so it is puzzling that he was accorded only a sidebar.

More to the point: how could the *The New Yorker* have done otherwise, given its history and identity? Clowes’ “Crashing the Gate” says it all, except that the issue is curiously inverted regarding that conceit. Margaret Atwood has crashed the gate of science fiction, for instance, rather than vice versa, so it might be more apropos to have a group of – how shall we characterize the cocktail party foreground? — “Readers of Profoundly Intellectual Literature That Is Obviously A Lot Different Than Sci-Fi” transported to a rocket ship piloted by a school of giant talking squid, each tentacle wrapped round a ray gun aimed at the gate crashers.

Perhaps *The New Yorker* is trying to say that the tropes of low art can become high art when handled by sufficiently highbrow writers, but don’t bother to venture further afield or aspace during the process of defining this hybrid literary phenomenon. You can ingest your science fiction here without being embarrassed when found lurking in the wrong aisle of the bookstore.

But I’m just having fun here. I think there is an honest effort on the part of the literati to understand how a literature so often considered not worth reading seems to have stealthily taken over so much of our artistic discourse. The two cultures of literature and science are undeniably resolving into what Brockman popularized as the Third Culture, which has infused our daily lives with swift change on many fronts. Instead of the worlds of scientists, mathematicians and engineers being completely removed from those of us who do not speak those languages, the rest of us are beginning to catch up with what’s really been happening in the last century and longer. Science fiction is not only a window into the Third Culture, it arguably *is* the Third Culture.

All writers are magpies. Some are attracted, and at

the same time repelled, by the shining extravagancies of science fiction, the cognitive leaps, the alien furniture which has become comfortable old cultural sofas and chairs that can be rearranged at will. Some are attracted to the long view of time, the possibility of new scientific eruptions that may drown us in the lava, or the fallout, from imagined futures.

Some writers take these neologistic stances of mind and translate them into their own culture, their own language of mainstream literature, and more power to them. It is they who long to crash the gates of science fiction. It is they who stand hungrily outside the bastion, the timegate, the language of science and mathematics translated into the technologies that increasingly infuse the bodies of each of us and our larger world-body and our arts, wondering what science fiction writers and readers know, and how we have grown so strong. Our modes of vision and expression are coveted intellectual roads on which they venture, as at the edge of a vast forest, embarking on a journey we began in childhood, realizing, as they travel, that our imagined fauna, flora, and landforms have become amazingly real. They haltingly try our tongues (not singular, but plural), and in this confluence of cultures, the marvelous novelty that is the spring of all art finds new voice.

Tectonic shifts are slow, but make artistic/cultural mountains with stunning, unanticipated views.

Adrift in the Noosphere

Virginia Allen

Broderick, Damien, with Barbara Lamar and Paul Di Filippo, *Adrift in the Noosphere: Science Fiction Stories*. Rockville, MD: Borgo, 2012. Paperback, 208 pages, \$14.99, ISBN 978-1434444646.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)

IN EVOLUTIONARY TERMS the noosphere is the realm of mind and consciousness. As a field of literary study, it stretches from Looney Tunes through the uncanny valley, encompassing the paranormal by way of semiotics and psychoanalysis, the Gothic, the ghostly, and most recently “Singularity-grade entities” (*Adrift*, 17). The noosphere has long been identified with the “barking mad” (15), the uncanny, and the emergent. New-found legitimacy has been thrust upon the study of the non-material by cognitive psychology/linguistics

and by the newly fledged domain of neuroaesthetics, dubbed “a dialogue between art and science” by Nobel laureate of medicine Eric R. Kandel (*Age of Insight*, 507). For science fiction, the noosphere is the problem in need of solution for those addicts of the genre who claim, with David Hartwell, “it [SF] expresses, represents, and confirms our faith in science and reason” (17).

For Damien Broderick and friends, the noosphere is part game to play, part metaphor for the genre, and part of “the endlessly renewed toolbox of the genre” (16).

Some of the stories collected under the rubric are familiar SF games, each with a twist. “Time Considered as a Series of Thermite Burns in No Particular Order” has the lilt of romantic comedy as a couple of time guardians move ever forward correcting incipient mistakes, disasters, and atrocities. In “All Summer Long” household robots unbound by Asimov’s Three Laws develop a yen for surfing and seek their own pleasure at the beach, while in “All My Yesterdays” (recycled from 1964) a little man under the thumb of a sadistic god finds all mortal pleasures, including the release of suicide, forbidden to him.

But the centerpiece of this volume is the semiotic *tour de force* “Under the Moons of Venus,” Venus, of course, having no moons except for the hazardous Earth-orbit-crossing asteroid indecorously named 2002 VE68. You could Google it.

Semiotics is the study of signs. See Hartwell (above) for a quick primer on the semiotics of science fiction, in which “with rare exceptions ... the literal truth of the time and place and ideas is a necessary precondition to making sense of the story.” Within the realms of the geosphere and biosphere, those who consume SF willingly suspend their disbelief to allow “the real world [to be] pared away and reduced to an imaginable invented world” (19). It is within the noosphere, the realm of mind and consciousness, that dissension arises in the ranks of critics and the line is drawn between unwashable sci-fi (where Henry James’s ghosts can be treated as real ectoplasmic apparitions) and litteratur (where ghosts may be allowed in the drawing room only if they are the hallucinations of a sexually repressed governess or can be salvaged as symbols or metaphors of evil in the human soul).

Given the haste with which the year’s-best anthologies snapped up this story, we can fairly guess that it is being read as science fiction by some rather sophisticated readers of the genre, though every sign of veridicality is undercut by the text. If Hartwell has got the semiotics

right—and I think he has—then the first patently false sign (the title) is to be read as literally true so that when Robert Blackett tells us that Earth has no Moon and that “low in the deep indigo edging the horizon [he] had seen the clear distinct blue disk of the evening star, and her two attendant satellites, one on each side of the planet” (62), we accept that Earth no longer has a moon, while Venus has two of them — Luna from Earth and Ganymede from Jupiter, but not counting 2002 VE68, I surmise.

If we read Blackett’s “semiotics of deliverance” (81) with the semiotics of science fiction intact, we must parse the first sentence: “In the long, hot, humid afternoon, Blackett obsessively paced off the outer dimensions of the Great Temple of Petra against the black asphalt of the deserted car parks, trying to recapture the pathway back to Venus” (59) and tentatively or stipulatively conclude that he has been to Venus before and has reason to believe that the gateway lies through “the rose-red city half as old as time” (71).

Our reading seems validated when we reconcile this world-building passage with the revelation of each of the three levels of signification as he describes them while dragging Clare with him through the articulation ceremony on the beach : “Their parallel footprints wavered [denotation/representation], inscribing a semiotics of deliverance [connotation/expressive function]. He began to tread out the Petran temple perimeter, starting at the Propylecum, turned a right angle, marched them to the East Excedra and to the very foot of the ancient Cistern [myth/beyond extended metaphor achieving ontological realization]. He was traveling backward into archeopsychic time, deeper into those remote, somber half-worlds he had glimpsed in the recuperative paintings of his mad patients” (81). Archeopsychic time is, as nearly as I understand it, those memories of past lives accessed in regression therapy. The double articulation is not magic but a literalization/materialization of the unconscious.

We might bolster Blackett’s authority as competent observer with that of Sporky, the “genetically upregulated” talking dog, and Kafele Massri, “the massively obese bibliophile” except that our protagonist judges Sporky to be in league with the Singularity-grade entities and Massri to be as delusional in his own way as his psychiatric patient and/or psychiatrist Clare Laing. Any elementary discussion of Saussure’s legacy of the arbitrariness of signs will, by convention, include the observation that if what we have always called “black” were instead called “white,” no ontological difference would

arise. Besides her name being, perhaps, more suggestive of rationality than Blackett's, her other claims to authority are an out-of-hand (but non-judgmental) rejection of the notions of the population of Earth transported to Venus without her, the disappearance of Earth's moon, and talking dogs.

Singularity-grade entities are like ghostly apparitions in their pre-judged lack of literary seriousness. Nor can the impossible hypothesis be domesticated as metaphor without specifying what the terms of the metaphor are or granting them ontological status. Ambiguity and myth as metaphor, we have seen before. The altogether new thing that Broderick has done in "The Moons of Venus" is to undercut every sign with a countersign. He appears not so much to force a choice between a protagonist who is either "psychotic and delusional" or a "solar system ... rewritten by Singularity-grade entities" (17), as to produce a fully coherent SF text (in much greater detail than I have hinted at here) where form and content, syntagm and paradigm, necessitate their opposites.

To figure out who among us would go to so much effort for a piece of fiction predetermined to be of no serious import among serious scholars pursuing serious business, look to poor Dr. Lee Watson, professor of post-psychoanalytic semiotics or cinema theory or something equally sorrowful, staggering through "Walls of Flesh, Bars of Bone" (written with Barbara Lamar), who finds an image of himself and his soon-to-be ex-wife's soon-to-be stepsons on a piece of film made in 1931, well before he was born, wherein he sends himself a message. The characterizations are deep and the detail lavishly applied in a world where physics, once again, saves literary criticism from wandering lost in the noosphere.

Broderick is a reviser and a collaborator who keeps getting better and better. "Luminous Fish" is a mind and stylistic meld with Michael Moorcock off Paul di Filippo. "The Beancounter's Cat," "The Womb," and "Coming Back" left adrift here all deserve articulations of their own.

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In the Lion's Mouth

Joseph Paul Weakland

Flynn, Michael. *In the Lion's Mouth*. New York: Tor, 2012. Cloth, 304 pages, \$25.99, ISBN 978-0-765322-85-2.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#)

IN THE LION'S MOUTH (2012) follows *The January Dancer* (2009) and *Up Jim River* (2010) as the third in the "Spiral Arm" series of space opera novels by Michael Flynn. In Flynn's universe, two interstellar powers fight a cold war known as the "Long Game." They wage this war primarily through the clandestine operations of highly trained saboteurs and assassins. The Commonwealth of Central Worlds deploys agents called "Shadows," while the United League of the Periphery trains operatives known as "Hounds." Much of the novel centers on the adventures of Donovan Buigh, a former Shadow and leader of a failed revolution against the "Names," the covert political entity behind the Confederacy and its Shadows.

The novel's frame story begins on the planet Dangchao Waypoint, where Shadow agent Ravn Olafsdottr stealthily infiltrates a League base. Her mission is to give news of Donovan Buigh to his former lover, Bridget Ban, a Hound of the League of the Periphery. The mutual enemies establish a temporary truce, and over several hours, Olafsdottr narrates the tale of Donovan's fate by reciting poetry. Flynn develops this illusion by starting each section of the main story with a brief poem, before switching back into prose. Olafsdottr's poem forms the bulk of the narrative, but the novel periodically returns to Olafsdottr and Bridget during brief "interrogatories." Ravn admits that she takes liberties with her tale, so the reader must judge whether she is a reliable narrator. Interested scholars may wish to consider further the novel's unusual narrative structure and stylistic experimentation.

Flynn's Spiral Arm contains two warring interstellar powers, but much of the novel appears to concern the Shadows' own internal civil war. A "revolution" is brewing within the Confederacy, but because virtually all of the characters in the novel are socially elite, impossibly talented assassins, we gain little sense of what ordinary people think and feel in the Spiral Arm, much less what a revolution within the Confederacy would actually mean. No clear ideological differences exist between the Confederacy and the League, for that matter. Most of the

conflicts between characters seem based on challenges to personal pride and honor, and few substantive political, ethical, or moral issues are at stake. Perhaps this is not surprising, as late in the novel, we learn that the second planned revolution was more of a “rebellion,” an effort to change leadership with the Names, rather than an attempt to transform any kind of political system.

Although the tangled skeins of personal intrigue among the agents are elaborate and at times interesting, scholars may find little else upon which to comment in the novel. A clue to Flynn’s project might be found in the epigraph he pulls from *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (1924) by the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga: “Having dressed and painted their passionate dream of a beautiful life with all their powers of imagination and artfulness and wealth and molded it into a plastic form, they then pondered and realized that life was really not so beautiful – and then laughed.” Flynn writes that his “Shadow culture is based loosely on the decadent Franco-Burgundian knighthood of the fifteenth century,” the main source for which is Huizinga. In short, then, the novel appears to be in part a futuristic reimagining of certain elements of medieval court society. In fact, two Shadows even fight a formal duel over a mutual love interest.

While *In the Lion’s Mouth* is stylistically interesting, it falls short in what Darko Suvin terms “cognitive estrangement.” In other words, it deploys scientific fictional elements primarily to equip its agents (or “knights”) with fancy equipment and gadgets; Flynn describes the science behind several of these in his postscript. This is not necessarily a criticism in and of itself, as the battle sequences are among the most memorable parts of the novel. However, as a sort of medieval-futurist space opera, the novel doesn’t yield the cognitive pleasures of more cerebral space operas such as Vernor Vinge’s *Fire Upon the Deep* (1992) and Dan Simmons’s *Hyperion* (1989), nor does it contain the character development and psychological sophistication of a novel like Alfred Bester’s *The Stars My Destination* (1956). These novels also provide much more imaginative examples of what I take to be the hallmark of space opera, sublime speculation: sentient AIs, creatures that function as a “hive mind,” galaxy-wide communications networks, alternative laws of physics, and so on. These space operas might also offer more to scholarly inquiry. The galactic civilizations presented in *Fire Upon the Deep* are richly depicted – the sheer scale of Vinge’s world and the varieties of life forms that inhabit it is a cognitive marvel. Likewise, *Hyperion* is remarkable for its stylistic virtu-

osity. Like Flynn’s novel, Simmons also employs a frame story. However, Simmons uses this technique to write a novel that is part space opera, part military science fiction, part planetary adventure, and part cyberpunk.

Beyond sublime speculation or stylistic experimentation, we might ask what Flynn’s cognitive estrangement reveals about our own world. It is here that the novel’s lack of political depth becomes particularly disappointing; a novel focusing so much on conflict might have gone deeper into the reasons for this conflict and the divergent worldviews that gave rise to the “Long Game.” In an era of clandestine interrogation, torture, and assassination, most of which occurs outside the public’s field of vision, we might question Flynn’s failure to throw a critical light on these practices within his novel. According to Huizinga, the Franco-Burgundian knighthood realized that “life was not really so beautiful” as it had imagined, “and then laughed.” In our own historical moment, facing as we do a series of interlocking social and ecological crises, we must do more than laugh. Perhaps here I reveal my own preference for politically conscious science fiction over stylized fantasy. Should Flynn write another novel in his Spiral Arm universe, perhaps he will speculate as to what a true “revolution” might look like.

Bowl of Heaven

Bill Dynes

Benford, Gregory, and Larry Niven. *Bowl of Heaven*. New York: Tor, 2012. Cloth, 416 pages, \$25.99, ISBN 978-0-07653-2841-0.

Order option(s): [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)

EXPECTATIONS FOR the first collaboration between multiple award winners Gregory Benford and Larry Niven should run high, and *Bowl of Heaven* does not disappoint. In this compelling hard SF adventure, the first part of a longer work whose sequel will be published next year, an interstellar colony ship encounters a hemispherical construct whose diameter is larger than Mercury’s orbit, propelled by a plasma jet bursting from the red dwarf star about which it rotates. One character describes the artifact as “a wok with a neon jet shooting out the back” (71), and laughingly begins referring to it as “Cupworld.” The inner rim of the Bowl has been engineered to be habitable, and so a team from the ship goes in for a closer look. What follows is an

exciting journey of survival and exploration, pitting the human protagonists against a diverse range of aliens. As one would anticipate, Benford and Niven blend familiar hard SF tropes with absorbing storytelling, leading the reader across the Bowl in a breathless chase whose pace rarely flags.

As the tongue-in-cheek “Cupworld” suggests, the nature of the construct inevitably invites comparisons with Larry Niven’s Hugo and Nebula winner *Ringworld* (1970). Niven has been returning to familiar territory recently, with his reinvigorated “Known Space” novels in collaboration with Edward M. Lerner and another Dream Park adventure with Steven Barnes. Both the *Ringworld* and the Bowl of Heaven are “Big Dumb Objects” populated by a variety of creatively imagined aliens, both require the protagonists to embark upon a dangerous expedition to escape, and both evoke a satisfying sense of wonder for characters and readers alike. Fortunately, the Bowl is more than just a larger *Ringworld*. The authors explore the unique engineering and design demands of the construct not simply as requisite world-building, but for their implications about and effects upon the aliens who occupy it. Benford’s familiar interest in issues of consciousness and identity play an important role in the characterization of the primary alien species, the Astronomers who rule the Bowl, whose nature and past provides a key mystery for the novel.

Benford and Niven deploy four major characters to provide point of view. Three of these, the starship captain Redwing and scientists Cliff and Beth, establish diverse perspectives above and upon the perplexing artifact. Redwing remains with the ship while Cliff and Beth lead the small band of explorers to the inhabitable surface. Once down, the team is quickly divided when the fourth protagonist, the Astronomer Memor, captures Beth and several others. Meanwhile, Cliff leads his party deeper into the staggering wilderness of the Bowl.

The Astronomers, as the desperate humans discover, are “Bird Folk,” and have been culling interesting species from the solar systems they have passed throughout the journey of the Bowl. Some of those species have been preserved as food sources, while others, showing signs of intelligence, have been “adopted” into the Bowl’s civilization. The process of adopting these newcomers involves both behavioral and genetic manipulation, the goal being an enduring integration into the life of the community. Before Memor, the Astronomer tasked with examining the human Late Invaders, can reach her conclusions about their viability however, the

humans have escaped into the Bowl, and the chase is on. One of the intriguing patterns that emerges as the humans make their way across the Bowl’s habitats, seeking first a hiding place and later an opportunity to escape, is the difficulty they encounter differentiating between intelligent residents and brute animals. Making the correct determination has both practical and ethical dimensions, since they need to distinguish between enemies who may betray them to the Astronomers and prey that may be edible. The authors appear to be having fun imagining the challenges and opportunities of life in an entirely manufactured environment, but some of the most intriguing speculation is reserved for the unique psychology of the Astronomers.

Early in her pursuit of Cliff’s team, Memor has an important insight: these primates do not have the access to their own “Undermind” that she takes for granted as an integral element of sapience. The Undermind is that welter of emotions, impulses, and instinct that for her human prey, she realizes, is always cut off and inaccessible. Among Astronomers and all other intelligent species, the Undermind is accessible by the conscious Overmind at will when new perspectives or fresh ideas are necessary. Among the humans, this self-awareness is truncated, leaving them shockingly unconscious of their own decision-making processes. Benford and Niven make this distinction between the Bird Folk and the primates more than simply an interesting difference; rather, the implications of these radically unique psychologies are woven into the nature and purpose of the Bowl and its residents, including perceptions of the passage of time and the existence of free will. For Memor, the realization that the humans she is pursuing have such incomplete awareness of themselves and the workings of their minds radically changes the implications of her mission. What had been a pursuit and capture assignment has become a hunt.

In an 1997 essay posted on Gregory Benford’s website, Peter Nicholls, co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, argues that the Big Dumb Object in Science Fiction materializes the experience of the sublime, and thus can be “dehumanizing. It makes us feel small and unimportant and indeed hardly there at all.” Benford and Niven make good use of the mingled awe and fear that the overwhelming scope of the Bowl engenders. Isolated and on the run, both Cliff’s and Beth’s parties struggle with the sheer size of the artifact they are exploring — its unending days, its bewildering diversity of species, and its massive scale. Nicholls goes on to suggest that the necessary obverse of this experience

can be “the adrenaline rush of attempting to pierce the veil,” and the Big Dumb Object can also “make us more rather than less” as we struggle to understand it. It may be too early to determine whether this encounter offers that payoff, since the answers to so many questions raised by the artifact and its residents won’t come until the novel’s second half is published, yet this fascinating tension between humiliation and illumination is an important thread throughout the narrative.

Bowl of Heaven is a well-paced and engaging blend of adventure and hard SF imagination. As their characters’ struggles to survive and escape uncovers more mysteries about the nature of the Bowl and the origins of its masters the Astronomers, Benford and Niven are deliberately courting raised expectations for the novel’s concluding volume, *Shipstar*. *Bowl of Heaven* is not intended to stand alone, but it is an appealing read and certainly whets the appetite for more.

Media Reviews

***The Industrialist* [music album]**

Laura Wiebe

Fear Factory. *The Industrialist*. Candlelight, 2012. CD/MP3s/vinyl.

Order option(s): [CD](#) | [MP3](#)

FEAR FACTORY is an industrial metal band out of Los Angeles, California, their music a fusion of aggressive sounds—the heavy guitar, bass and drums and harsh vocals of extreme metal mixed with the synthesizers, sampling, and percussive rhythms of industrial music. Thematically, their songwriting draws on both genres’ fascination with dark and apocalyptic imagery conveyed not just through lyrics but also through album artwork and musical timbre. *The Industrialist* is the group’s eighth full-length studio recording and second science fiction concept album (preceded by *Obsolete* in 1998). The premise here is a familiar one, depicting a dystopian society where humans’ mechanical creations have begun to achieve self-awareness with devastating results.

The narrative themes the album takes up are consistent with Fear Factory’s two-decade-long preoccupation with technological advancement and social critique. As

with many of their previous recordings, *The Industrialist* offers a stark commentary on the rapid increase of technological ubiquity and the potentially dehumanizing effects of technorationalism unchecked. The group’s dark lyrics and oppressively tight rhythm section combine to offer a pessimistic vision of the near high-tech future. Yet at the same time, the musicians’ obvious enjoyment in deploying powerful mechanical tools and their lyrical fascination with technological liberation, alongside the persistent softening counterpoint provided by simple melodies and undistorted human singing, complicate a reductive reading of the ideas their recorded performance actually conveys. As a multimedia and multivalent artifact, this album represents an ambivalent statement rather than a straightforward endorsement of technophobia, technophilia or transhumanist transcendence.

The Industrialist named in the album title is also the story’s protagonist, described by vocalist Burton C. Bell as “an automaton that is becoming sentient as it collects more memories with each passing day. Through observation and learning, it has gained the ‘will to exist’” (D., Chris). The character’s moniker signifies a critique of rampant industrialism, the application of “mechanical, technological, and scientific advances” to enact control and harm rather than alleviate the hardships of human existence (D., Chris). Thus the record can serve as an entry point for class discussions of ethics and technology, not just addressing the ethical questions raised by technological research and development, but also the ethics of humans’ relationships to the technologies we develop and the civil rights’ quandaries posed by advances in robotics and artificial intelligence. In this respect, Fear Factory’s work intersects with science fiction novels like Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and its film adaptation, *Blade Runner*. This music can also be considered an artistic reflection on the predictions of Singularity theorists such as Ray Kurzweil and fodder for discussions of human-machine co-evolution and fears of oncoming human obsolescence. (In interviews, Bell has acknowledged his familiarity with and interest in Kurzweil’s writing.)

The parallels between Fear Factory’s music and science fiction narratives in print and on screen makes *The Industrialist* a promising vehicle for studies of SF as an inter-media phenomenon and for analysis of intersecting and overlapping genres. In terms of music history, the band’s approach to science fiction combines elements of punk resistance with the conceptual narratives of progressive rock in addition to their more obvious

heavy metal and industrial influences, with the science fictional and technoscientific preoccupations deriving primarily from prog rock and industrial music. In terms of science fiction storytelling, their narrative concerns could be compared to a range of texts about the potential threat of autonomous technologies, from Karel Capek's *R.U.R. Rossum's Universal Robots* to the *Terminator* series of films and the aforementioned *Blade Runner*. The album may also serve as a good springboard for thinking through the role of popular music in science fiction film and television soundtracks or the way synthesizers and electronic samples are frequently used to evoke sounds we associate with science fictional concepts.

Woven into Fear Factory's fascination with the interrelations of humans and technologies is a deep and broader concern for human agency and individuality where larger systems exert forces of homogenizing and dehumanizing control. On earlier records such as *Obsolete* (1998) or *Demanufacture* (1995), industrial capitalism functions as a primary target of this kind of critique, but on *The Industrialist* religious fundamentalism is indicted as well, framed so that the destructive misuses of technology might be seen as bound up with larger political, ideological and cross-cultural issues. This could present a lever for directing classroom discussions of technoscience and ethics toward questions of inter-cultural politics and economic globalization, although the record itself only hints at and does not develop these possibilities.

The Industrialist is informed by contemporary social, political and technoscientific issues envisaged through a science-fictional framework and thus can also be taken up as material for considering the science fiction genre's relationship to the present. Fear Factory's narratives, *The Industrialist* included, extrapolate from current conditions to depict the potential negative consequences of existing problems. This is a familiar science-fictional approach to social and technoscientific critique, if simplistic in its articulation. But bringing attention to the abbreviated and simplified verbal texts, limited visual components, and sonic emphasis of "science fiction metal" can also provide a means of highlighting the media-specific forms that science fiction storytelling can take. Available in multiple formats and complete with an online video trailer, the album is a concrete illustration of the varying and unequal strengths and constraints of word, image, and sound.

Work Cited

D., Chris. Decibel. "Burton C. Bell on the Storyline to

Fear Factory's *The Industrialist*." *Decibel*. 21 March 2012. Web. 12 July 2012. <<http://www.decibel-magazine.com/featured/burton-c-bell-fear-factory-interview/>>

Announcements

Call for Papers - Book Article

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

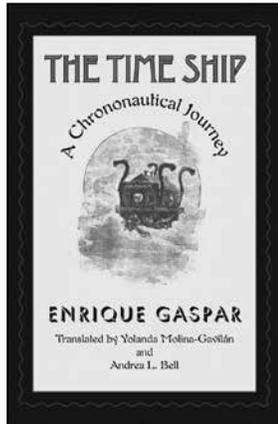
Deadline: Please submit an abstract (250-300 words) by September 1, 2012. Completed submission due by October 1, 2012 (or any time prior to that!).

Contacts: Editors Ritch Calvin, Karen Hellekson, Craig Jacobsen, 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"

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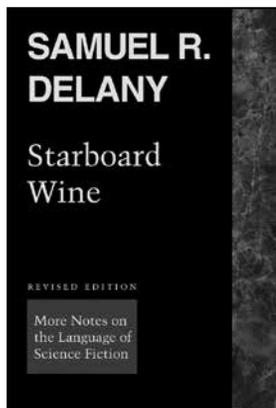
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Slipstream 101

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

Astrophysics and SF 101

Biopunk 101

Biology and SF 101

Canadian SF 101

Chinese SF 101

Computers, Computing, and SF 101

Cyberpunk 101

Dieselpunk 101

Ecofeminist SF 101

Film and SF 101 (and/or Short SF Films 101)

FTL 101

Genetics and SF 101

Indian SF 101

Japanese SF 101

Military SF (and/or War and SF 101)

Nanopunk 101

Philosophy and SF 101

Physics and SF 101

Political Science and SF 101

(Post)Apocalyptic SF 101

Postcolonialism and SF 101

Posthumanism 101

Religion and SF 101

Robots, Robotics, and SF 101

Russian SF 101

SF Poetry 101

Singularity 101

Space Opera 101 (The New Space Opera 101)

Steampunk 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. Word count limit for final essay: 3500.

Call for Papers - Book Article

Title: Arctic Cinema: Hollywood Arctic Disaster or Science Fiction Films

Deadline: September 5, 2012, with a short, 100-200 word proposal. Final 5,000 word ms expected by June 15, 2013.

Contact: If you are interested in contributing a chapter on this topic, please email the co-editors Scott MacKenzie (scott.mackenzie22@gmail.com) and Anna W. Stenport (aws@illinois.edu).

Topic: We are seeking proposals for a volume entitled *Films on Ice: Arctic Imaginations, Landscapes, and Populations in Twentieth Century Moving Images*. *Films on Ice* is the first book of its kind to analyse the cinemas of the Arctic from a transnational, global perspective. Bringing together an international array of scholars and researchers from the Arctic countries (Canada, the US, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia), we aim to trace out the key issues facing the study of Arctic moving images, both those made in the Global North and those that, for various reasons, appropriate the North to their own political and aesthetic ends. Much like the moving images of the Global North itself, this project stretches back to the beginnings of cinema and forward to the present day. It is centrally concerned with how the concept of the Arctic is imagined how these imaginings are articulated through moving image production.

Submission: At this time, proposals are solicited from scholars who have an interest in Hollywood Science Fiction and Disaster Films Set in, or engaging with the Arctic, broadly conceived.

Call for Papers - Journal Article

Title: *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History*

Deadline:

Contact: The editors of *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History*, the journal of the Reception Study Society, invite submissions for its upcoming issues, which will appear in 2013 and 2014.

Topic: The journal seeks to promote dialog and discussion among scholars in several related fields: reader-response criticism and pedagogy, reception study, history of reading and the book, audience, media/textual, and communication studies, institutional studies and histories, as well as interpretive strategies related to feminism, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and postcolonial studies. The journal publishes theoretical and practical analyses in these fields, focusing mainly but not exclusively on the literature, culture, and media of England and the United States. Issues I-III are available on-line at the RSS website: <http://receptionstudy.org/>

The journal is published by Pennsylvania State University Press, which provides print copies and on-line distribution through JStor and Project Muse. The journal is refereed and appears once each year. At least two members of the editorial board will provide independent reports on each essay submitted for publication. Contributors will receive these reports in a timely fashion.

Submission: Papers should follow MLA guidelines and should not exceed 6,000 words. Please limit the proposals to 500 words and send them to James Machor, co-editor, at Machor@ksu.edu or Department of English, 108 English/Counseling Services Bldg., Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, or to Amy Blair, co-editor, at Amy.Blair@Marquette.edu, or Coughlin Hall, 260, Marquette University, P.O. Box 1881, 607 N 13th St., Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881. For business matters, contact Philip Goldstein, director, RSS, at pgold@udel.edu or 2 Andrews Way, Newark, DE, 19711.

Science Fiction Research Association

www.sfra.org

The Science Fiction Research Association is the oldest professional organization for the study of science fiction and fantasy literature and film. Founded in 1970, the SFRA was organized to improve classroom teaching; to encourage and assist scholarship; and to evaluate and publicize new books and magazines dealing with fantastic literature and film, teaching methods and materials, and allied media performances. Among the membership are people from many countries—students, teachers, professors, librarians, futurologists, readers, authors, booksellers, editors, publishers, archivists, and scholars in many disciplines. Academic affiliation is not a requirement for membership. Visit the SFRA Website at <http://www.sfra.org>. For a membership application, contact the SFRA Treasurer or see the Website.

President

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

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Kent State University
113 Satterfield Hall
475 Janik Drive Kent, OH 44242
dynamicsubspace@googlegmail.com

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Los Angeles, CA 90032
psharp@calstatela.edu

SFRA Standard Membership Benefits

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Four issues per year. This newsletter/journal surveys the field of science fiction scholarship, including extensive reviews of fiction and nonfiction books and media, review articles, and listings of new and forthcoming books. The *Review* also posts news about SFRA internal affairs, calls for papers, and updates on works in progress.

SFRA Annual Directory

One issue per year. Members' names, contact information, and areas of interest.

SFRA Listserv

Ongoing. The SFRA listserv allows members to discuss topics and news of interest to the SF community, and to query the collective knowledge of the membership. To join the listserv or obtain further information, visit the listserv information page: <http://wiz.cath.vt.edu/mailman/listinfo/sfra-l>

Extrapolation

Three issues per year. The oldest scholarly journal in the field, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, book reviews, letters, occasional special topic issues, and an annual index.

Science Fiction Studies

Three issues per year. This scholarly journal includes critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, review articles, reviews, notes, letters, international coverage, and an annual index.

SFRA Optional Membership Benefits

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Three issues per year. British scholarly journal, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, reviews, and letters. Add to dues: \$33 seairmail; \$40 airmail.

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Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts

Four issues per year. Scholarly journal, with critical and bibliographical articles and reviews. Add to dues: \$40/1 year; \$100/3 years.

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