

# 306

## Fall 2013

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### 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

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## The SFRA Review Wants YOU

Doug Davis

IT IS TRUE. The *SFRA Review* does want you. But first, in the business section below, Pawel Frelik discusses the changes that are soon coming to the SFRA website and the changes that have already come to the organization's Twitter feed. Amy Ransom has some important words for our membership concerning the SFRA award committees and also provides a thorough introduction to SFRA/WisCon's guest scholar, Sherryl Vint. I have selected two essays from the forthcoming *Science Fiction 101* volume to showcase in the Feature 101 section of this issue: Keren Omry's "Israeli SF 101" and David M. Higgins's "New Wave SF 101." While we have several excellent nonfiction reviews along with a fine media review in this issue we do not have any fiction reviews, which in part is a result of the hard economics of the publishing industry. This is where you come in. Free copies of books are becoming scarcer and scarcer, even for publications dedicated to publishing reviews. Yet do not let the lack of a free book deter you from writing a fiction review. I read the SFRA email list. I know that our membership is reading new fiction without any prompting from our fiction review editor. Indeed, some of those emails could qualify as reviews in their own right. Right now, you are thinking about the new novels and collections you have recently read. Should anybody else read them? Would they work well in the classroom? Your fellow SFRA members want to know.

As Pawel notes below, this is that last issue of the *Review* for which both Michael Klein and I will serve as editors. Jim Davis and Ritch Calvin will continue to serve as area editors for fiction and media respectively. Jim is the one you want to get in touch with about that new fiction review you are thinking of writing. Cheers!

## Meanwhile, at the EC HQ . . .

Pawel Frelik

IT'S THE END OF THE YEAR so let me run a quick tally of what has been happening with and in SFRA since our last update.

First of all, allow me to thank for the first, but not the last, time the two editors of *SFRA Review*, Doug Davis and Michael Klein, who, after three years of excellent work, have decided to give others an opportunity to try their hand at editing. Along with the other editors, Doug and Michael have taken us through the depths and shallows of a difficult transition from print to e-form in the way that was nothing short of smooth and gliding. Thank you so much, guys! This also means that if you feel you'd like to step into these two pairs of shoes, you should contact any member of the EC immediately. In other news, we have finally commissioned the graphic redesign of the SFRA website. Although it was long overdue, it was not easy to find someone who would understand what we are about as an organization AND would not bankrupt us. We believe the result will be satisfying for everyone. The new look is tentatively scheduled to be unveiled by the time we meet in Madison for the joint SFRA/WisCon event in late May. We will also restructure and dramatically extend the selection of resources available on the website.

Also in the electronic department, we finally have an *active* Twitter feed, in which Andrew Ferguson has been posting all kinds of interesting links to news and resources. If you want to know about the history of South African sf, the Indian fantastic, or sf videogames, not to mention the latest CFPs and conference announcements, do follow us at @sfranews. And if you'd like Andrew to post or publicize anything, drop him a line at [af3pj@virginia.edu](mailto:af3pj@virginia.edu).

Last week we closed our SurveyMonkey poll regarding a possible SFRA conference in Rio de Janeiro – many thanks to all those who responded. We should have the final decision regarding the venue of our 2015 meeting within the next month or so.

Last but not least, do remember that February 22, 2014 is the deadline for paper proposals for this year's event in Madison, which Mike Levy, Rebecca J. Holden, and

Victor Raymond are organizing together with WisCon. If the intellectual stimulation is not a sufficient draw, do remember that the conference fee of 50 USD gets you into both events!

Have a great New Year! Over and out.

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Upcoming Joint WisCon/SFRA

Amy J. Ransom

THE CALL IS OUT! I hope that SFRA members are as excited as I am about the joint conference with WisCon, "Feminism, Fans, and the Future: Traveling the Shifting Worlds of Writers, Readers, Gender, and Race in Science Fiction," May 22-25, 2014 in Madison, WI. The complete call and deadline for proposals is now available on the SFRA website.

My favorite part of the annual conference is always the awards banquet. As a member of the Pioneer Award committee, I'd like to take advantage of this forum to call for your help. Committee Chair Keren Omry has been gathering eligible titles for the "the best critical essay-length work" on SF published in 2013; while it's easy to identify works in genre-associated journals or anthologies, great examples of scholarship often escape nomination if they are published in "mainstream" lit-crit journals or in edited volumes not on our radar. We'd like your help compiling our list, so please let us know about any articles or anthologies that particularly merit consideration. Send a complete citation of nominations (and/or a PDF of the full text) to komry@research.haifa.ac.il. Regarding collections, if you have edited a collection of critical essays on the genre and would like us to consider your contributors' work, it would be particularly helpful for the committee to receive at least one review copy (again, send info to Keren at the e-mail above). A final note on the awards—I'm sure other committee chairs are also interested in your nominations; above all, we'll need to add new awards committee members after the 2014 conference and we would love to have volunteers approach us, so please think about serving on an awards committee. See the website for all that info.

Our Guest Scholar at the 2014 convention, Sherryl Vint, is a past winner of the Pioneer Award, for her essay on "Speciesism and Species Being in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" (Mosaic, March 2007). Since

then, she has become one of the most prolific and respected scholars in our field, contributing half a dozen articles to *Science Fiction Studies*, as well as making appearances in the Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts, Extrapolation and Foundation. Indefatigable, in addition to contributing several articles to the online journal, Science Fiction Film and Television, which she co-edits with Mark Bould, this dynamic duo of SF studies also co-authored *The Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction* (2011) and contributed chapters to volumes on *Kim Stanley Robinson... (2009)* and *Reading Science Fiction* (2009). Not only is she incredibly productive, Vint's contributions to the field are of the highest quality. What is more impressive is that she maintains that quality while looking at a broad array of topics, as evidenced by her work on Southern writer Dorothy Allison and non-SF film and television, like *Fight Club* (1999) and *The Machinist* (2004), as well as her 2013 book on HBO's series, *The Wire* (2002-2008). (Frequently acclaimed as "the best television show ever made," if you haven't watched *The Wire*, you should; it's like mainstream television's *Battlestar Galactica* [2004-2009]. The Mexican-produced thriller *The Machinist* [dir. Brad Anderson] is also a brilliant Christian Bale vehicle, far superior to *American Psycho*.)

Vint's selection as SFRA guest scholar for our joint conference with the feminist-oriented WisCon is more than appropriate, as seen in her books *Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2010) and, particularly, *Bodies of Tomorrow: Technology, Subjectivity, Science Fiction* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007). The title of the latter book's introduction, "Problematic Selves and Unexpected Others," comes from a Donna Haraway quote, immediately suggesting the feminist nature of Vint's theoretical underpinnings, as does her invocation of Elizabeth Grosz and Teresa De Lauretis, among others. *Bodies of Tomorrow* explores questions of "identity, subjectivity, and embodiment" (5), interrogating in particular how contemporary science fiction problematizes the notion of an "authentic" self, and it includes chapters on Gwyneth Jones and Octavia Butler, among the most-studied women writers of SF today. Vint widens the scope of her study, examining as well the work of Iain M. Banks, Raphael Carter, Jack Womack and Neal Stephenson. Her chapter on cyberpunk offers a nuanced interpretation of the actual extent to which the sub-genre, typified by Sterling's *Neuromancer*, "interrogates embodied reality" (108), including a discussion of what women writers of

cyberpunk like Pat Cadigan do differently. Above all, this book represents a relatively early, rigorous examination of one of the current central strains in SF research, the problem of the posthuman, and it offers ideas “Towards An Ethical Posthumanism” in its conclusion. What is brilliant about Vint’s writing is that even in her theoretical introduction she exposes her ideas through seemingly transparent close analyses of SF texts, offering a balance between theoretical rigor and a grounding in the actual text, helping her reader access the tough concepts with which she grapples. I look forward to hearing her talk in May!

## New Wave SF 101

David M. Higgins

A PROFOUND TRANSFORMATION swept through science fiction during the 1960s. A new generation of SF authors emerged in Britain and America who developed a literary and experimental style of SF writing. These writers, who became known as science fiction’s New Wave, focused their creative imaginings on “soft” sciences like psychology and sociology rather than “hard” sciences like physics and astronomy, and they sought to subvert the pulp genre conventions that they felt had dominated SF since the Golden Age. A wide variety of authors were part of the New Wave movement. Some of them, such as J. G. Ballard, Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, and Philip K. Dick have achieved critical attention in the literary mainstream. Many others are known primarily as science fiction writers, and a short list of these includes Brian Aldiss, Barrington J. Bayley, John Brunner, Thomas M. Disch, Harlan Ellison, Philip Jose Farmer, M. John Harrison, Langdon Jones, Damon Knight, Michael Moorcock, Charles Platt, James Sallis, Robert Silverberg, John T. Sladek, Norman Spinrad, Roger Zelazny, and Pamela Zoline.

The New Wave had several precursors. In the 1950s, *Galaxy* magazine and the *Magazine of Science Fiction and Fantasy* had dabbled in publishing atypical stories that deviated from pulp traditions (focusing, for example, on average citizens rather than heroic scientist-adventurers), and authors such as Alfred Bester and Leigh Brackett wrote unusual SF narratives that broke the mold of pulp conventions in favor of more literary and introspective tales. Despite these earlier precursors, however, most writers, fans and historians agree that the New Wave crystalized in 1964 when Michael Moorcock took over as editor of the British SF magazine *New Worlds* and began publishing SF stories featuring the weird avant-garde experimentations that became characteristic of the movement. In his book *The Detached Retina*, Brian Aldiss notes that under Moorcock’s guidance at *New Worlds*, “galactic wars went out; drugs came in; there were fewer encounters with aliens, more in the bedroom. Experimentation with prose styles became one of the orders of the day, and the baleful influence of William Burroughs often threatened to gain the upper hand” (27).

Although *New Worlds* under Moorcock's editorship was one key center of New Wave publishing, the movement in a larger sense was occurring in several locations simultaneously. Judith Merrill anthologized many New Wave stories in her collection *England Swings SF* (1968) and in her *Annual of the Year's Best SF* anthologies. Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* anthologies in 1967 and 1972 were often considered to be the birthplace of the "American" New Wave. Indeed, *Dangerous Visions* was a turning point in publishing format—prior to the 1960s, most science fiction had been published as short stories or serials in magazine form, and magazines often had editorial policies that limited the range of authors' more radical expressions. In the 1960s, however, a significant SF book market emerged in the United States, and for the first time science fiction was being widely published in book form (as we experience it today) rather than just in magazines. Books had a much greater range of content and a wider diversity of audience; many new kinds of stories were published in books and anthologies that would not have been welcome in magazines, and eventually magazines had to become more open in their editorial policies in order to remain relevant. This transition in science fiction publishing from magazine to book format is one of the most long-lasting and revolutionary transformations to emerge from the New Wave period; magazine publishing has all but vanished in the contemporary context in favor of books, anthologies and newer emerging media forms.

Alongside Ellison's *Dangerous Visions*, Damon Knight's *Orbit* anthologies beginning in 1966 were also a key publication site for innovative new work coming out of the Milford writers workshops (which later became the famous Clarion workshops). Some also add Robert Silverberg's *New Dimensions* anthologies beginning in 1971 as a fifth New Wave publication node; by this time the impact of the New Wave had become widespread in the SF world.

In order to understand the New Wave, it is useful to consider some of the technological, social and political transformations that were taking place during the 1960s. In the Western world, there was an explosion of new technological advancements, and there were deep disagreements about the consequences of these new technologies. On the more optimistic side, some believed that technological progress would lead mankind into the stars. The Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, for example, eventually resulted in Neil Armstrong's historic moon landing in 1969, and many believed that this was just

one step toward an exciting and inevitable exploration of outer space. Others, however, were very concerned about the potential for new technologies to create negative and destructive changes. The first two world wars had demonstrated that technological progress could enable terrible conflict and destruction on a scale that had been previously unimaginable in human history.

Alongside this rapid technological advancement, the 1960s were also a time of transformative social change. Vibrant youth countercultures emerged throughout the Western world that were opposed to what they experienced as the conservatism and social conformity that had characterized Western life in the 1950s. These countercultures experimented with psychedelic drugs (which were still legal in the early 1960s); they rejected traditional limitations on sexual expression, and they protested against America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Also during this time, the Civil Rights movement transformed relations between whites and non-whites in the United States, and second wave feminism and the gay rights movement were striving to create greater social equality for women and homosexuals. All of these changes created an atmosphere of social tension in the west, and fears surrounding social change led to the assassinations of major public figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and John F. Kennedy.

At least one other very significant change was also taking place during the 1960s. In the aftermath of World War II, western European powers such as Great Britain were losing their colonial empires as former colonies (such as India and Egypt) won their independence. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sun never set on the British Empire, and western European empires dominated the world. After World War II, however, Europe lost its colonial dominance, and two new empires emerged—the Soviet Union, which was devoted to the spread of communism, and the United States, which enjoyed a tremendous economic and political upsurge in the postwar period and championed the expansion of capitalism throughout the world.

All of these dramatic technological, social and political changes were reflected in the transformations that occurred within science fiction in the 1960s. During this time, New Wave writers rebelled against what they viewed as the restrictive pulp-formula limitations that had dominated SF writing during the previous eras. They wanted to combine what they viewed as the best aspects of both science fiction and mainstream literary fiction into one new vibrant hybrid art form.

The dominant trend in science fiction prior to the

1960s had often been to focus on big, interesting, fantastic, scientific ideas, but this focus on ideas (and on rich settings) often came at the expense of a more sophisticated artistic development of characters, themes and subtleties of tone, style and language. Moorcock, for example, wrote in 1963 that much of the science fiction prior to the 1960s lacked “passion, subtlety, irony, original characterization, original and good style, a sense of involvement in human affairs, colour, density, depth, and on the whole, real feeling from the writer” (123). J. G. Ballard articulates similar sentiments in a 1962 editorial commentary: “I’ve often wondered why s-f shows so little of the experimental enthusiasm which has characterized painting, music and the cinema during the last four or five decades, particularly as these have become wholeheartedly speculative, more and more concerned with the creation of new states of mind, constructing fresh symbols and languages where the old cease to be valid” (117). New Wave authors such as Moorcock and Ballard wanted to draw upon avant-garde literary traditions and techniques in order to give science fictional ideas what they felt could be a more sophisticated and socially relevant aesthetic expression.

On the technological front, New Wave authors tended to display critical rather than optimistic views regarding scientific progress. Many of the futures they imagined were bleak and dystopian rather than upbeat and hopeful; if the original *Star Trek* television series represented a mainstream science fictional vision of a harmonious future in outer space, New Wave imaginings instead often prophesized apocalyptic portents of doom and catastrophe. New Wave writers also turned away from the “hard” sciences (such as physics, biology and mathematics) that had been the emphasis of many earlier science fiction narratives. Instead, these authors turned their attentions toward the emerging “soft” sciences (such as psychology and sociology) that were gaining widespread popular attention in the 1960s.

If earlier science fiction had often been characterized by an optimism regarding technological progress, the New Wave instead often focused upon the scientific inevitability of entropy, breakdown and decay. Colin Greenland’s *The Entropy Exhibition* (1983), an in-depth look at the British New Wave, argues that entropy was the movement’s central extrapolative theme:

The distinctive themes of NW writers —ontological insecurity, alienation, the hidden and hostile dimensions of media and machines, the disintegration of objectivity into subjective worlds of inner space, the dangerously exhilarating multiplication of “possibilities”—are all

primary concerns of their times, though they came to them rather in advance of popular assent. The concept of entropy, a degeneration inevitable from either over-organization or chaos, is the center of this imaginative cluster; hence the frequency with which the writers return to the term, and its fashionability, even for those who use it least scientifically. (201)

Roger Luckhurst’s *Science Fiction* (2005) further situates the New Wave’s emphasis on entropy in the historical context of decolonization. Luckhurst notes that English SF transforms after 1945 due to the dismantling of Empire; he also observes that the UK produces a new round of disaster fictions after World War Two, and that “the British disaster narrative always addressed disenchantment with the imperialist ‘civilizing’ mission” (131). Luckhurst views the emphasis on entropy within the British New Wave as a continuation of this SF disaster tradition, but instead of portraying such breakdowns as negative, his key examples (Ballard, Moorcock and Zoline) actively embrace and valorize entropic decay.

New Wave authors also shared a commitment to challenging taken-for-granted social norms. If earlier science fiction narratives often celebrated mainstream Western values (such as the male-dominated middle class nuclear family), New Wave writers often used SF to challenge unspoken cultural assumptions about sex, race, gender, and other normative cultural values. Female New Wave authors, in particular, were at the forefront of certain kinds of social critique. Pamela Zoline’s short story, “The Heat Death of the Universe” (1967), for example, suggests that a domestic housewife is asked to accomplish the same impossible and unfair work that Maxwell’s demon is required to perform in the realm of thermodynamic physics. Kit Reed wrote moral fables sharply criticizing unfair social conditions; her novel *Armed Camps* (1969) tells the story of a decaying America where neither a male soldier nor a female pacifist can offer a solution to entropic decline. Sandra Dorman-Hess and Zenna Henderson both use alien characters to explore themes of race, immigration and alienation; Dorman-Hess’s short story “When I Was Miss Dow” (1966) uses aliens as a narrative tool to reflect on human conditions rather than as a racial enemy to be eliminated.

Finally, the New Wave also responded to the decline of Western European colonialism and the rise of the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Before the 1960s, many science fiction stories celebrated an outward colonization of space and other worlds; science fiction often drew upon patterns and tropes drawn from European colonial adventure narratives and American

westerns to tell new stories of colonization and conquest in fantastic imaginative locations. One iconic example of this is Edgar Rice Burroughs's *A Princess of Mars* (1917), in which the heroic John Carter demonstrates his mastery over Martian natives in order to eventually become their leader and savior. As John Rieder notes in his book *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, science fiction itself emerged during a period of European imperialist expansion, and much of early science fiction is concerned with the celebration of colonial conquest. During the 1960s, however, as Western European colonization was declining and many former colonies were winning their independence, suddenly colonialism begins to look like a bad thing rather than a shining heroic ideal. Before World War II one might aspire to be an imperialist in the West, because imperialism was associated with growth, expansion, adventure, and progress. After World War II (and in the aftermath of decolonization), imperialism became a bad word, a synonym for unjust and cruel domination—Soviets accused Americans of being imperialists and vice versa, and both sides in the Cold War fought to “free” portions of the world from the “imperialist” influence of their counterpart.

This shift in the meaning of imperialism was reflected in science fiction. Very few science fiction narratives in the 1960s celebrated the colonization of outer space, and New Wave writers in particular were highly critical of imperial and colonial expansion. In addition, many New Wave writers rejected outer-space stories entirely in favor of exploring the new frontiers of “inner space.” J. G. Ballard, for example, wrote in his famous essay “Which Way to Inner Space” that the most exciting “alien” planet to explore was Earth itself: “The biggest developments of the immediate future will take place, not on the Moon or Mars, but on Earth, and it is *inner space*, not outer, that need to be explored. The only truly alien planet is Earth. In the past the scientific bias of s-f has been towards the physical sciences—rocketry, electronics, cybernetics—and the emphasis should switch to the biological sciences. Accuracy, that last refuge of the unimaginative, doesn't matter a hoot.... It is that *inner space-suit* which is still needed, and it is up to science fiction to build it!” (117).

The New Wave emphasis on inner space explorations was influenced by avant-garde artistic movements that often emphasized the importance of defamiliarization, or the power of art to help us look at taken-for-granted things in a new and transformative way. The mid-century emergence of psychology and sociology as popular sciences that captured mainstream imagination, as well as the celebrity of radical anti-psychiatrists such as R.D.

Laing, also shaped the New Wave fascination with inner space. At the same time, however, one of the other major factors that motivated the New Wave turn toward inner space was that the movement occurred within the context of a cultural moment influenced by the emergence of LSD and psychedelic counterculture. In *The Entropy Exhibition*, Greenland suggests that the introduction of LSD played a major role in the development of counterculture in the 1960s; he notes that during this time a populist revolution against normative consensual reality spread from the West Coast of America throughout Europe, and that an active psychedelic counterculture interested in exploring new terrains of perception and new modes of expression influenced the aesthetic and political agendas of New Wave science fiction. In this regard, New Wave writers stand alongside other artists and self-styled revolutionaries in the 1960s who were interested in defining the subjectivity of inner space as a new frontier that should be explored for personal, social and political growth in the face of subjective ideological stagnation. John Hellman observes a similar agenda in the work of New Journalists such as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote and Tom Wolfe; New Journalism is motivated by a dissatisfaction with the consensual reality portrayed by the mass media and a desire to explore beyond this frontier of perception to gain access to a more authentic subjective truth. Artists within the New Wave, New Journalism, and psychedelic counterculture (in the form of hallucinogenic pioneers such as Kesey and Timothy Leary) were united in their dissatisfaction with consensual reality and their determination to explore new transgressive subjective terrains of inner space. On the whole, New Wave writers were critical of technological progress, suspicious of national power and imperialism, and devoted to a celebration of cultural revolution. In many cases, New Wave writers emphasized the dystopian decay of Western culture in order to critique the social and political conditions of their time.

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### Note

My brief discussion of Pamela Zoline, Kit Reed and Sandra Dorman-Hess in this article is adapted from an entry I wrote for a reference volume called *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*: Higgins, David. "Science Fiction, 1960-2005: Novels and Short Fiction." *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume One: Overviews*. Ed. Robin Anne Reid. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2009. 73-83. Print.

## Israeli SF 101

Keren Omry

### What, Who, Where, When, and How

THIS SURVEY will dispense with the oft-rehearsed and always controversial genre definitions and be satisfied by determining as its object of study a nationally circumscribed tradition of literature that deals in the familiar tropes of SF. This notwithstanding, when determining a subject through nationally-defined limitations it bears thinking on how these limitations are determined—not least in a nation whose very definitions are often so fraught.

First and foremost, this survey will examine only texts written in Hebrew. Of necessity this omits a sizable minority of texts, self-defined as Israeli, and yet not written in Hebrew: perhaps unsurprising considering the richness of its past literary contributions to the form, we are witness in recent decades to a burgeoning collection of Russian-language SF novels and stories being produced in Israel by writers such as Daniel Kluger, Emmanuel Pesach and Alexander Ribalka. Moreover, in keeping with the history of SF's establishment in Israel as a contemporary popular form within the English-speaking communities, writers—among them Ada Aharoni, David Brauner (Robert Morris), Elana Gomel, and Guy Hasson—are producing local fantasy and SF fiction in English. Finally, although not a major trend by any means, a smattering of Israeli writers write within an SF genre in Arabic, arguably the most central of these being the Israeli-Palestinian Emile Habibi, a prominent politician and writer in the 20th century.

This survey, moreover, focuses on prose fiction, despite the several SF poems, plays, TV shows and—most significantly—films being produced. Indeed, David Avidan, a renowned Israeli poet, who wrote numerous explicitly SF poems, is often more well known for his contributions to SF cinema in Israel. From the short *Ha-Kol Efshari* [Everything Is Possible]<sup>1</sup> in 1968 through the 1981 *Sheder Min HaAtid* [Message from the Future] Avidan was one of the earliest and most consistent explorers of local SF cinema. The relatively high budgets traditionally required of SF films, together with a general disregard for genre films prevalent until the 1990s, restricted the field to often sophisticated and interesting but short or student films, among them those by Rama Drimer, Doron Eran, Isaac Florentine, and Riki Shelach. Ari Folman is perhaps the best known Israeli film-maker whose full-length Hebrew-language *Made in Israel* (2001) can be identified as both SF and locally produced.

Without doubt the sub-genre that has enjoyed the most dramatic rise in public attention, more than doubling the number of publications in the past decade alone, is fantasy. As it lies beyond the scope of this survey, I can do no more than list some of the more prolific, influential, and imaginative writers of fantasy: Asaf Ashery, Shalom Babayoff, Miki Ben Canaan, Sahara Blau, Ofir Touché Gafra, Elisha Glezer, Orly Kastel-Bloom, Alona Kimhi, and Hagar Yanai. Finally, due primarily to space limitations, this survey will focus principally on works written for adult readers, despite a plethora of YA novels and children's literature written in the SF mode.

### In the Beginning

Although the main sections of this survey aim to provide an introduction to Israeli SF, the number of early SF or even proto-SF texts written in Hebrew prior to the formal establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 is sufficiently rich to warrant a brief overview.<sup>2</sup>

The first extant manuscript revealing an interest in astronomy and depicting a journey through space is the *Book of Enoch*, one of the Deuterocanonical books, evidently written between the third and fourth century BC. The text's description of a rebellious and profane resistance to the Divine includes what can be seen as inter-

<sup>1</sup> Unless the works being discussed were themselves published in English, I will be using the original titles, transliterated, followed by a bracketed translation. These translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> For this section I am particularly indebted to the introductory section of Eli Eshed's bibliography of Original Hebrew SF, Thesis, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1999, which proved an invaluable resource in the preparation for this survey.

species breeding (between the fallen angels and human females) and descriptions of Enoch's travels through the heavens, as well as an analysis of the stars that served to construct a Solar calendar that remained influential over time. There are those, of course, who interpret events from the Hebrew Bible itself as representing proto-SF components. Among these are alternate scientific systems of physics (Book of Genesis), encounters with alien beings (Book of Ezekiel), and non-standard time schemes (see Methuselah). Furthermore, we encounter fantastic creatures and beasts in the imaginative voyages of the Reb bar bar Hanna of the third century CE (tales which eventually found their way into much more well-known travels of Sinbad the Sailor). Over the centuries we have numerous examples of SF-related motifs. The Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, offers an early episode of time travel (Menahot 29b), where Moses is briefly sent by God to the future and back. Eldad HaDani, a traveler and merchant of the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, describes in his writings a utopian, independent Jewish state in what is today Eastern Africa, most probably Ethiopia. One of the earliest and most-famous prototypes for modern SF is the figure of the *golem*, first described in the Talmud of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, describing the First Man, Adam, as a shapeless mass made of dust who is animated through God's will. It is only in the Middle Ages that this figure is translated into the more familiar Golem of European Jewish folklore who begins a long tradition of man-made artificial life that has the ability to overpower or even destroy its creator.

These literary precursors set out five principal categories according to which we can sort contemporary Hebrew-Language SF from Israel: Social SF; Space Travel and encounters with Alien species; Time-travel and Alternate Histories; Hard SF (under which I am including Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Bodies, and Future Technologies); and Fantasy.

### **It is Not a Dream** (-T. Herzl)

By far the largest category of SF written in Hebrew is Soft (or Social) SF, under which I include Utopian fiction and Dystopian or Post-Apocalyptic Fiction. This may not come as a great surprise considering the very founding of the nation can be attributed to utopian visions set out by at least two key literary texts: *Altneuland* by Theodor Herzl (1902) and before this, the lesser known *A Journey to the Land of Israel in the Year 800 to the Sixth Thousand* by Elhanan Leib Levinsky (1892), said by some to be the first fiction novel written in modern Hebrew. The ideologically based narrative of social construction becomes

rather darker as the realities of local history set their course post-1948. Although utopian texts are still being written (e.g. those by Yehoshua Bar Yosef, Hillel Ettinger, and Itzhak Oren), the vision is more often translated into a dark dystopian one expressing a variety of anxieties. Amos Kenan's *The Road to Ein Harod* (1984) depicts a paralyzed Israel taken-over by a military junta that evicted all its Arab population, in which the protagonist sets out from Tel-Aviv to Ein Harod on a journey which requires him to reevaluate his ideals, his politics and his loyalties. The fear of an ideologically hostile take-over has been explored in numerous texts depicting the widely diverse visions of Israel in existence. Some describe a land or a time when Jewish Israelis are threatened by a joint Palestinian and Neo-Nazi plot, as in Zeev Ben-Yosef's *Shalom al Israel* [Peace on Israel] (1993); others as in *Pargod HaBdolach* [The Crystal Screen] by Yehoshua Granot (1969) imagine an Israel where Arab Israelis and other minorities are persecuted by a futuristic totalitarian government; still others imagine a country over-taken by religious or Orthodox Jews threatening the existence of secular Jews, such as *Angels Are Coming*, by Yitzhak Ben Ner (1987), *Beshem Shamayim* [In the Name of God], by Hedy Ben-Amar (1998) and *Ha-Ir HaPnimit* [The Inner City], by Michal Peleg (1998). *Kfor* [Frost], an imaginative mystery novel by Shimon Adaf (2010), the award-winning poet and prose writer, is a complex vision of a future Orthodox Tel-Aviv.

Asaf Givron's *Hydromania* (2008) is a particularly strong example that extrapolates on many contemporary concerns, extending the dystopian future to a post-apocalyptic one. Givron creates a near future in which Israel's war of survival has effectively failed, its remaining territory limited to Tel-Aviv and a few other settlements. The country is reeling from the loss of the Sea of Galilee, its primary water source, and writhing under the draconic regulations of the Water Corporations. With uncanny foresight Givron's novel includes an apparatus eerily resembling the now-familiar Google Glass, futuristic water-purifying technologies, and anti-corporation community ethos, as well as being a murder mystery whence emerges a gradually empowered female. Lavie Tidhar, a prolific and award winning writer, collaborated with Nir Yaniv, author and chief editor, and the two published *The Tel Aviv Dossier* (2009), a delightful and disturbing post-apocalyptic supernatural thriller. Short stories by Hagy Averbuch, as in his collected *Kaleidoscope* (2006) and others by Vered Tochtermann, the founding editor of *Chalomot Be'aspamia*—an Israeli magazine of science fiction and fantasy stories—collected in *Sometimes It's Different*,

all offer witty, sharp and thoughtful comments on social phenomena by means of a pithy SF form. *Yemama* [Day] (2005), one of a number of post-apocalyptic novels written by Yaakov Kamin (himself a translator, editor, and bookseller, prominent in the field of SF), includes space colonization, extended lifespans, and a colorful array of AIs. The novel focuses on a handful of characters living among the now luxuriously sparse population of North America during twenty-four hours that prove fateful for the nature of Humanity.

Although the alternate reality thus enables a critical distance often necessary for social critique, this distance has not yet produced the kind of imaginative feminist voice already familiar in other SF traditions, although Efrat Roman-Asher's dark and powerful *Iroshalem* [a play on the name Jerusalem] (2003) is a notable exception which often disrupts any knee-jerk expectations of female characters. Sayed Kashua, an Arab-Israeli journalist, on the other hand, makes good use of the form and in his 2006 *Let It Be Morning* writes an elegant and searing critique of the tensions of every-day life for an Arab Israeli in a narrative arc that spirals into a dark apocalyptic surrealism.

**Not by chance we swiftly crossed worlds** (-D. Avidan)  
The nature of Humanity is further called into question when it faces alien intelligence, cultures or habitats. Many of the novels in this vein rehearse themes familiar from more well-known space-travel/alien encounter texts, though with slight locally colored adjustments. Yosef Ofer's *Zohar HaArgaman* [The Scarlet Glow] (1970) discloses that an alien race has been trying to overtake Earth since time began by infusing an impulse for war and destruction, a plot nearing its fulfillment in a future 1975 by means of a Third World War set in motion by a Nazi scientist. Yaakov Avisar's 1988 *Anashim MeKochav Acher* [People from a Different Planet] describes an Israeli spaceship that meets and allies with Hebrew-speaking aliens who help them defeat a third war-mongering alien species and thus acquire nearly endless resources. Relating the future of space travel to the roots of the past, Yosef Soyka's rather mystical novel, *Sod HaOlam HaSheni* [Secret of the Second World] (1998), tells of the discovery of ancient texts according to which the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, living in underground tunnels, had contacted alien species who have been watching over mankind since then. Yehuda Israely and Dor Raveh update the sub-genre in their co-written 2010 *Mesopotamia-Silence of the Stars* (published in English as two separate novels) that intertwines two

narrative strands. The one, more akin to fantasy, takes place in ancient Sumeria and concerns a healer and his apprentice who are sent to purge the King's son of his possession by a demon. The second narrative thread takes place in a far future where Earth has been nearly destroyed by religious wars. Here we are given a classic, operatic science-fictional clash of three civilizations, with the very survival of the galaxy at stake.

**I have many times, like many watches** (-Y. Amichai)  
Although published in 1946 before the establishment of the State, Jacob Weinshall's *HaYehudi HaAchron: Sipur* [The Last Jew: A Story] warrants consideration as it sets the tone for much that was to follow in Hebrew-language Alternate Histories in that they tend to dwell on the nature of a Jewish home for the Jews. The novel depicts the last remaining Jew in a world run by Nazis whose plan to pull the moon closer so that they may colonize it ultimately fails. Amiram Pal's 1980 *Masa be-Merchavy HaZman* [Journey in the Realm of Time] depicts the opposite—here, the world is *entirely* Jewish and yet the land of Israel is miniscule. The protagonist goes back in time to try and fix this and in his journey effectively re-establishes History as we know it. *The Jewish War II*, by Reuven Rupin (1994), takes readers back to the Roman Empire and the Great Revolt of 70AD. This time, the Jews defeat the Romans, using sophisticated technologies and tactics, and establish an independent state, only to have this ultimately crumble due to conflicts between religion and state.

The last decade has seen a plethora of Alternate Histories with Nava Semel, Yoav Avni and Yair Hasdiel standing at the fore. Semel's *IsraIsland* (2005) is a trilogy of intertwined novellas, each of which rewrites the non-fictional account of Mordechai Manuel Noah attempting in 1825 to establish Grand Island as a safe haven for Jews, incorporating tropes of Realism, Fantasy writing, and Alternate History. Similarly, *Herzl Amar* [Herzl Said] by Yoav Avni (2011) is a clever transposition of defining features of contemporary Israeli life onto the fictional and alternative State of Israel established in the African continent following the historical Uganda proposal. In Avni's world, the Holocaust never happened; the Middle East is entirely Arab with only the fewest of Jewish inhabitants living in Palestine and divided strictly into two groups: secular Kibbutz-Jews and ultra-Orthodox Jews. Yair Hasdiel's 2012 novel, *Tel-Aviv*, plays on similar notions. Here too, in an alternate 2012, there was no Holocaust; the largest concentration of Jews are living in Poland and the city of Tel-Aviv itself lies in ru-

ins after a Zionist scheme failed. Although stylistically and structurally the two novels stand distinctly apart, in both the protagonists travel from their fictional homes to the radically defamiliarized Israel/Palestine. The shift away from teleological chronology to stories of alternatives is reflected in the numerous short stories and novellas of Etgar Keret. Although not strictly speaking a writer of alternate histories or even of SF per se, the often grotesquely extrapolated mundanities explored in Keret's writing offer sharp, tangy and even twisted commentary on contemporary Israeli culture, with *Pipelines* (1992) possibly standing as the collection most closely associated with SF features.

### **I can't get your electro-encyclopedagram out of my mind** (-N. Alterman)

In the realm of Hard SF, Hebrew-language SF offers much of the standard fare, often with some locally relevant innovations. There are some death-rays and lasers, as in Yehuda Harel's 1961 *Sod Karney Sdom* [The Secret of Sodom Rays] which is revealed to be a Nazi plot; there is a kind of virtual reality in Neora Shem Shaul's prescient 1963 *Roman Digitali* [Digital Affair] that links an Israeli and a Palestinian in an online romance; and, rather less typically, there are some commercial organ transplants in Chaim Chaimoff's *HaChava* [The Ranch] (1998), a dystopian mystery novel. The use of futuristic medicine to take over power is explored in *Haydak Katlani* [A Deadly Microbe] by Bo'az Ginsburg (1997), which depicts a Mossad agent trying to thwart an intricate Hamas plan to disseminate a German-made lethal microbe in Israel. Ram Moav's *Zirmat Chachamim* [Genes for Geniuses, Inc.] (1982) and Eitan Israeli's *Kesher HaAmazonot* [The Amazon Connection] (1994) both play with the possibilities and implications of genetic engineering. The former offers a moral debate on the relative ethics of genetic manipulation, having both the Nazis and the Israelis in the novel with the capacity and possible intention of putting this technology to use. The latter takes place in a near future when a group of women warriors threatens the stability of humankind by causing only female children to be born, only to be thwarted by scientists. Intriguingly, Nathan Alterman, the renowned playwright, poet and journalist wrote a very early AI play, *Pythagorean Theorem*, about an intelligent computer that tries to understand and solve the problems of humans. The play was first performed on stage in 1965 but is better known today for its spectacular failure than for its literary or dramatic quality. Recently, on the other hand, Moshe Menasheof's

2009 *HaKafil HaVirtuali* [The Virtual Double] depicts a unique scientific experiment that exponentially multiplies problems by creating an entire duplicate world, identical to our own, inhabitants and all.

### **Accordingly, We Are Here Assembled** (-Y. Sarid)

The world of Israeli Hebrew-language SF has thus seen its fair share of ups and downs, recently displaying a distinct preference for fantasy fiction. Echoing trends familiar from the Anglo-American genre-industry, science fictional texts have gradually gained widespread legitimacy as the SF tropes and structures are incorporated into even the most mainstream media. Concomitant to the dramatic increase in works of SF fiction, there is a clear rise in both fan-based and scholar-based responses. Three principal SF festivals that take place yearly and incorporate to varying degrees fan activities, guest speakers and critical analyses are *Icon*, *Olamot-Con* [Worlds], and the recently established *UTOPIAFest*. The year 1996 saw the foundation of the Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy by the eminent editor and translator Amos Geffen, the researcher and prolific translator of science fiction Emanuel Lottem, Aharon Hauptman (a senior researcher at the Unit for Technology & Society Foresight), and other key figures in the field. The society not only hosts the Geffen Prize, awarded each year for best original and translated fiction published that year, but has its own publications: *The Tenth Dimension*, which publishes original, translated and critical work on SF; and *The Online Magazine*, which contains articles, stories, reviews, columns, and SF-related news. *Fantasia2000*, which ran between 1978-84, a publication devoted to original and translated SF and Fantasy, was the first of its kind and its foundational role in establishing the SF community in Israel is still recognized.

The increasingly fertile field naturally invites growing scholarly attention and this is in evidence in the major universities in the country. Scholars, graduates, critics, reviewers, and bloggers are all producing more and more sophisticated critical responses to Israeli Hebrew-language SF. Among these, Orzion Bartana, Eli Eshed, Elana Gomel, Ehud Maimon, Inbal Sagiv-Nakdimon, and others offer consistent and valuable contributions to SF scholarship in the country. As the field grows richer so too does the pleasure and insights the locally produced genre fiction provides, leaning less and less as of yore on Anglo-American themes, traditions and locations and becoming more quintessentially and more complexly itself: Hebrew-language Israeli SF.

**Lois McMaster Bujold:  
Essays on a Modern Master of  
Science Fiction and Fantasy**

Amy J. Ransom

Janet Brennan Croft, ed. *Lois McMaster Bujold: Essays on a Modern Master of Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2013. Paper, 216 pages, \$40.00, ISBN 978-0-7864-6833-1.

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LOIS MCMASTER BUJOLD, the author of the Vorkosigan Saga (1986-2012), comprised of twenty science-fiction novels and novellas, the Chalion fantasy trilogy (2001-2005), the four-volume novel *The Sharing Knife* (2006-2009), and two more stand alone novels, has won two Nebula and five Hugo awards for her fiction. And yet, as John Lennard observes, “her academic standing remains slight” (172), something that he and the other contributors to Janet Brennan Croft’s new edited volume on Bujold seek to change. This collection of eleven essays and an interview effectively doubles the scholarly literature on Bujold’s writing. While there is some repetition and overlap, for the most part it fulfills Croft’s “aim to increase reader’s appreciation of Bujold and to point the way for new scholarly study” (5).

For my part, as I read a good sampling of Bujold’s fiction to prepare this review, I certainly have come to appreciate this writer’s talent as a riveting storyteller, but I can also understand Croft’s assertion that “critics generally haven’t seemed to know quite what to do with Bujold” (3). As Bujold began publishing in the mid-1980s, not only had she missed the initial thrust of the feminist sf wave, the space opera cycle she had begun with the strong female lead, Cordelia Naismith, in *Shards of Honor* (1986), was a—gasp—love story, and its focalizing character quickly shifted from Cordelia to her son Miles Naismith Vorkosigan. Like many of her “misfit” characters, as these are described in Shannan Palma’s contribution to the volume, Bujold’s work did not seem to fit existing models of feminist sf or its criticism. The recent revisionist work on the history of science fiction, which both reclaims a larger role for women writers in sf’s early days, and which rereads texts which may not at first glance adhere to orthodox forms of feminism,

however, has opened up a place for Bujold’s work. Thus, Regina Yung Lee’s chapter “Legitimacy and Legibility: Reading Civil Discourse through Feminist Figurations in *Cordelia’s Honor*” fruitfully applies the feminist theories of Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway to representations of gender in the 1999 Baen reprint of *Shards of Honor* and its sequel *Barrayar* (1991) in one tome (a great place to start reading Bujold, incidentally).

Several of the volume’s contributors combine feminist theory with concepts borrowed from another field, such as Palma’s application of feminist disability theory in “Difference and Ability: Conceptualizing Bodily Variation in the Vorkosigan Series.” Likewise, drawing on the work of Carol Gilligan, Sandra J. Lindow discusses feminist ethics in “The Influence of Family and Moral Development in Bujold’s Vorkosigan Series.” Bujold’s writing is frequently referred to—by both herself and critics—as “character-based.” Lindow’s study examines how the author foregrounds character’s dual meaning: the literary personage *and* the individual’s moral profile. She argues that “the Vorkosigan Series books can be seen as thought experiments in moral development” (51), and that in addition to their entertainment value, Bujold’s fiction offers, “subtly subversive attacks on long accepted theories of moral development” (50). Croft’s own contribution (apart from her brief but useful introduction), “The Soldier and the Cipher: Miles, Mark, and the Naming Plots of Bujold’s Vorkosiverse,” looks at the intersection between the saga’s central character and the story behind his name. Andrew Hallam’s “The Emperor’s Shoe: Power, Home, and the Other in the Vorkosigan Saga,” complements the work of Lindow and Croft, offering a close reading of a key incident in *Barrayar* both as a “feminized naming plot” and as illustrating that in Bujold’s “Vorkosiverse,” “neither power nor morality” are universals, but rather situated, contextualized problems (81).

Clearly, the volume’s coverage of the Vorkosigan saga is heavy, with eight of its essays and Lindow’s interview with Bujold covering her then most recent novel in the cycle, *CryoBurn* (2010). Since its central character is disabled, critics within (and outside) this volume have successfully applied the concepts of disability theory to Bujold’s fiction. In addition to Palma, mentioned above, Virginia Bemis uses typologies developed by G. Thomas Crouser and Arthur Frank in “Chaos and Quest: Miles Vorkosigan’s Disability Narrative.” Linda Wight effectively unites Judith Butler’s notions of gendered identity as performative with Thomas J. Gerschick and Adam S. Miller’s theorization of the disabled male’s responses

to forms of hegemonic masculinity in “Broken Brothers in Arms: Acting the Man in *The Warrior’s Apprentice* [1986].” Sylvia Kelso’s “The Decay of the Cyborg Body in Bujold’s *Memory* [1996],” also focuses on the grotesque aspects of Miles’s body, affected in utero by the teratogenic antidote for a poison used during an assassination attempt on his father. It is not only Miles—and his cloned brother Mark whose “normal” development is villainously altered to reproduce the injuries Miles had suffered—who are disabled in Bujold’s work. As Palma points out, “[w]hat makes Bujold’s series stand out from the standard disability-themed literature is its insistence across the board on ability as a contingent state. *Everyone* is disabled in certain contexts. Everyone is enabled in others. Her characters’ choices, not their bodies, are what define them” (145).

Indeed, the central character of Bujold’s more recent four-part fantasy novel *The Sharing Knife* has lost his left hand; John Lennard examines this text—along with her other fantasy works—in “(Absent) Gods and Sharing Knives: The Purposes of Lois McMaster Bujold’s Fantastic Ir/Religions.” As his title suggests, Lennard analyzes the role of the constructed theologies in this cycle, situated in a post-apocalyptic Great Lakes region patrolled by Lakewalkers who can be read as Native American, and who protect “Farmers” from evil entities called “malices.” He also discusses Bujold’s historical fantasy, the Chalion trilogy, which completely reimagines Christianity’s Trinity and Holy Family in the fictional Quintarianism, a more gender equitable religion which elevates mother, father, son and daughter to the status of deities, including a trickster-figure “bastard” in its orthodox form, but absent in the Quadrene heresy. David D. Oberhelman explicitly outlines how this historical fantasy is based on “Iberia in the 1300s and 1400s” (163) in “From Iberian to Ibran and Catholic to Quintarian: Bujold’s Alternate History of the Spanish Reconquest in the Chalion Series.” While purists will question his use of the term alternate history for a narrative without an obvious point of divergence, set in a fictional universe much too distinct from our own, Oberhelman convincingly demonstrates that Bujold did have this period and region in mind as a model for Chalion.

Clearly, Croft’s contributors reveal that critics indeed can find a number of theoretical approaches to Bujold’s work that illuminate the complexities that underlie her deceptively transparent, reader-friendly writing style. And yet, the frequent overlaps, which on the one hand lead to complementary analyses of similar problems, on the other hand perhaps reveal that some critical limita-

tions remain. Since disability studies, feminist theories of ethics and gender/identity as performance have been covered here, along with analyses of the cyborg and grotesque body in Bujold’s work, there still remains a good bit of ground open. In her interview, Bujold opens her work up to applications of Marxist theory and discussions of class and political economy, as she reveals the critical edge with which she approaches her universe-building: “I still find defining people by their economic utility to be toxic [...] both governments and corporations are human mental constructs [...]. They are, at most, consensus realities” (12). Furthermore, analyses of Betan society in relation to utopian/dystopian theory, the application of ecocriticism to *The Sharing Knife*, as well as Bujold’s treatment of race, remain to be pursued. While a bit more variety in approach within this very first volume on Bujold might have been desired, Croft and her contributors have nonetheless clearly achieved their aim of raising the academic profile of a prolific, prize-winning author with a host of adoring fans—a creative relationship explored by Amy H. Sturgis in her chapter, “From Both Sides Now: Bujold and the Fan Fiction Phenomenon.” The volume offers a thorough introduction to Bujold’s work, one that is, in Croft’s own words, “scholarly yet readable prose—thought-provoking and challenging but always accessible” (4).

## ***We Modern People: Science Fiction and the Making of Russian Modernity***

John J. Pierce

Anindita Banerjee. *We Modern People: Science Fiction and the Making of Russian Modernity*. Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press, 2012. Paper, 230 pages, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-8195-7334-6.

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Science and technology are defining modern reality by transforming not just everyday life, but the very ways in which we think and imagine. A new kind of writing called *nauchnaia fantastika*, scientific fantasy, is playing a not inconsequential role in this process.

THIS QUOTATION appeared in an editorial note to

the fifth anniversary issue of *Priroda i Liudi* (*Nature and People*), a popular science magazine founded by Petr Petrovich Soikin in 1889. That the magazine didn't take credit for the term, at least in 1894, suggests that it may have already been in use. The magazine had been running translations of French sf from the start (<http://www.bibliograph.ru/Antology/Soikin/Soikin.html>).

Anindita Banerjee, associate professor of comparative literature at Cornell University, is the first to have traced *nauchnaia fantastika* that far back, and argues that sf was thus a "recognized" genre in Russia "long before" Hugo Gernsback introduced "science fiction" in 1926. But "roman scientifique" and "scientific fiction" had been in use since the early 1870s for the works of Jules Verne and others, and Louis Figuier had adopted the former for an sf section in *La Science Illustrée*, launched in 1888 (*New York Review of Science Fiction* 283, p. 4); some of that magazine's sf later appeared in Soikin's. Incidentally, it was "scientifiction" that Gernsback coined for *Amazing Stories*—"science fiction" came in 1929 with *Science Wonder Stories*.

Nevertheless there was a *consciousness* of *nauchnaia fantastika* early on in Russia, and Banerjee argues that it played a key role in the emergence of modernist thought in Russia. Nearly 30 years after its appearance in *Nature and People*, Yevgeny Zamyatin embraced the same *sense* of the term in declaring *nauchnaia fantastika* to be "the kind of literature that best commands the attention and wins the belief of us modern people." But "modern" and "modernity" don't always mean the same thing in different places, and her thesis is that Russia's history and culture put their stamp on its modernity.

Russia had long looked to its vast East as a land of opportunity, and construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad between 1892 and 1905 was a national obsession. But as Banerjee points out, Prince Vladimir Odoevsky's utopia *The Year 4338* (begun in 1838) imagines St. Petersburg and Peking linked by an "electrical railroad." Not only that, but Russia and China are the centers of civilization (although Russia has led the way), whereas Western Europe has declined into seeming insignificance; Odoevsky, Banerjee observes, thought Russia had an "organic force" lacking in the West.

*The Year 4338*, reprinted in 1926, may have had an influence far beyond its time, as witness Leonid Leonov's *The Road to Ocean*, published in 1935. Too recent to be cited by Banerjee, it has a Soviet railway official dream of a future socialist utopia centered at Ocean, a city on the former site of Shanghai. But as Banerjee points out, Odoevsky was hardly alone in looking to the East: Niko-

lai Danilevsky, a charter member of the Russian Geographical Society, for example, was among those calling for Russia to identify with Asia rather than Europe.

Yet the emerging Russian take on modernity was hardly just a matter of geography; and Banerjee marshals an impressive array of sources, taking a fresh look at familiar figures in Russian sf and philosophy, to make her case. Her readings of key writers and works contrast with those in studies of Russian and Soviet sf like Patrick L. McGuire's *Red Stars: Political Aspects of Soviet Science Fiction* (1985) and Richard Stites' *Revolutionary Dreams* (2006). She sees a quest for spirituality and even immortality, and a rejection of Darwinism and materialism, as key elements.

Banerjee argues, for example, that the foundation of Aleksandr Bogdanov's Martian utopia *Red Star* (1908) isn't Marxism, but the "vision of humanity transformed into a practically immortal collective organism through the mutual exchange of blood" (142)—Bogdanov was obsessed with that idea in his non-fiction writings, even before *Red Star*. Konstantin Tsiolkovsky is usually seen as a pioneering rocket scientist; but here that is of secondary importance to his "panpsychism," an animistic vision of the universe, and to space becoming the home for a transhuman "self-sufficient, unified, immortal collective organism" (140). Tsiolkovsky was strongly influenced by philosopher Nikolai Fedorov, who believed in "cosmic intersubjectivity" and "universal salvation" (106). Stites sees Vladimir Shelonsky's *In the Future World* (1892) as a critique of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (with a religious elite ruling a future Russian technological utopia). But for Banerjee it is a "mythic space" in which "electricity evolves into a technological means to achieve immortality" (108).

*Nature and People* celebrated Ernst Haeckel rather than Charles Darwin as the true "father of evolutionary biology" (126), and Banerjee notes that Haeckel's "philosophy of the innate spirituality of all matter became instantly popular in Russia" (126). Haeckel also favored Lamarck's theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics—which would become the basis of Lysenkoism in Soviet times. Also cited as a key influence on Russian Modernist thought (including Bogdanov's) is Ernst Mach, who held that material reality is subjective, much to the annoyance of Lenin, a champion of objective reality (141).

Was Russian Modernity really that much like New Age thought? Certainly Russian sf writers shared some common ground. Zamyatin rejected mechanization of humanity, and so did Nikolai Fedorov (no relation to the

philosopher of the same name), who wrote the anti-utopian *An Evening in 2217* (1905). Banerjee duly contrasts the ideals of Modernist Russian sf with the mechanistic ideology of Alexei Gastev and his ilk (152-55) in early Soviet years. But was it not possible to believe in human dignity without believing in electricity or blood transfusions as magical forces? Zamyatin and Fedorov are cases in point; there may have been others, unheralded here.

## ***Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives***

Jenni G. Halpin

David Seed. *Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives*. Kent, OH: The Kent St UP, 2013. Cloth, 312 pages, \$60.00, ISBN 978-1-60635-8.

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*UNDER THE SHADOW* centrally offers that, “Nuclear narratives in their different ways all evoke massive ruptures to life but then explore possibilities of survival” (8). To that end, it provides an abundance of examples from an array of sources, chiefly novels. Complicating this fundamental purpose are a recurring emphasis on the difficulty of putting words to the bomb or nuclear warfare and also a consideration of the disruptions bomb narratives pose not only to descriptions of space and time but also to narrative conclusion.

David Seed’s wide-ranging discussion addresses thematic and structural trends in novels and movies presenting nuclear narratives from the 1890s near to the present. His treatment offers a wealth of associations indicating a rich archive. Yet the sheer accumulation of detail often gets in its own way, obscuring rather than revealing a point. Despite eloquent transitional paragraphs linking one chapter to the next, segues and transitions are often lacking on the smaller scale, generating confusion at times regarding which text (or even what broad topic) is under consideration. Seed’s associative method leads to certain repetitions and redundancies in the text, as various sources appear in conjunction with multiple of the book’s interests; these repetitions are rarely acknowledged as such, perhaps an artifact of this book’s similarities to his 1999 *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*.

The first chapter, an overview of narrative approaches to radium and the atomic bomb, opens with an argu-

ment that these scientific discoveries spurred paradigm shifts not only in physics but also in narrative itself, fostering a genre in which characters in future settings found themselves working out the details of their societal pasts. Discussing early nuclear science fictions (e.g. *Krakatit*, *The Doomsday Men*, and *The Crack of Doom*) and their contemporaneous science and popular science writing, Seed paints a progression from scientific discovery to military application, turning then to a consideration of Leo Szilard’s post-World War Two efforts to warn of the dangers of the bomb. Seed’s second chapter continues to provide background information, looking at journalistic and biographical representations offered as eyewitness accounts of the test at Alamogordo and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The following chapter shifts into a consideration of the often unspoken anxieties about nuclear fallout, anxieties masked by overt instructions for preparing to endure unscathed the blasting of the initial explosion. Including an extended treatment of Judith Merrill’s *Shadow on the Hearth*, this third chapter effectively presents some narrative responses to the implausibility of the American fallout shelter program. The fourth chapter focuses on *Alas, Babylon* as Pat Frank’s more optimistic take on the survivability of nuclear warfare.

Chapter five provides a close reading of Philip Wylie’s *Tomorrow!* and *Triumph*, with reference to 1940s and ’50s culture, concluding that Wylie’s advocacy of civil defense was somewhat undermined by his “quasi-religious fascination with spectacles of destruction” (94). The next chapter picks up on the religious note Seed strikes, focusing now on Walter M. Miller’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. This study is the most effective in the book at drawing together Seed’s concern with the overlapping distortions to representative language and to spatiotemporality engendered by the bomb, with the overarching focus of the chapter, as its title suggests, being the novel’s representation of “cultural cycles” (95).

Chapter seven continues the emphasis on linguistic instability, addressing Bernard Wolfe’s *Limbo* as an absurdist treatise on the mechanization of warfare, with some emphasis on the Freudian humor (built of condensation, double meaning, and repetition) at work in the novel. (Seed will take up absurdism and black humor more directly in chapter eleven, on *Dr. Strangelove*.) In the eighth chapter Seed finds in *Level 7* by Mordecai Roshwald a still more focused indictment of the automation of nuclear strike and preemptive strike.

Next Seed dives into nuclear submarines, offering comparisons between *Moby-Dick* and *The Bedford Incident*

(both the film and the novel) and ultimately focusing on the subjectivity created in submariners by their isolation and on the contrast between the hiddenness of a submarine hunt and the manifestation of a nuclear torpedo explosion.

The tenth chapter attempts to explain fail-safe planning for avoiding unnecessary nuclear warfare and discusses the novel *Fail-Safe*. Seed briefly but thoughtfully considers the authors' evocative description of the "man-machines" of which the War Room of the novel is comprised (170). Continuing the interest expressed in chapters seven and eight in the reduction and remastering of people into integrated machinic parts of the war machine, Seed offers several allusions to the integration of human beings into a largely mechanized or computerized system for waging war but never fully develops his point.

The final three chapters ostensibly draw together the argument of the book. Chapter twelve addresses the destruction of geographic and political maps in the aftermath of nuclear war, noting that post-war characters often plumb the relics of the past in their efforts to establish their current physical landscapes. Chapter thirteen analyzes fictional reports of future wars (in venues such as *Life* magazine as well as in a variety of novels). The final chapter begins to work on the problem of novelizing nuclear war once the Soviet Union is no longer the obvious antagonist to an American superpower. A more substantial treatment of the themes announced in the introduction as well as a deliberate tying up of the topics seeded throughout the main nine chapters would have been much appreciated, though scholars interested in one or more of the texts Seed reads may find individual chapters useful.

## Review Essay: Dictionaries of Invented Languages

Bruce A. Beatie

Stephen D. Rogers. *The Dictionary of Made-up Languages. From Adûnaic to Elvish, Zaun to Klingon—the Anwa (Real) Origins of Invented Languages*. Avon, MA: Adamsmedia, 2011. Cloth, x + 294 pages, \$16.95, ISBN 1-4405-2817-9.

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

Eileen Marie Moore. *Comparative Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus of Tolkien's Languages: English/Elvish, Elvish/English*. Edition 10.75. Cleveland, OH: Self-published, March 2012. Available from the author on one CD, \$20. Contact: [elvishetym@gmail.com](mailto:elvishetym@gmail.com).

THOUGH THESE TWO PUBLICATIONS are both "dictionaries of invented languages" and are similar in that both are works of compilation rather than individual creativity, they are about as different from one another as two such works can be: approach, intended audience, mode of publication. Neither one is likely to have come to the attention of readers of the *SFRA Review*, yet each is valuable in its own way and should be of interest to those readers.

**I**  
Adamsmedia is the publisher of "The Everything Series": short paperbacks (140+ pages) with titles like *The Everything Guide to Catholicism* or *The Everything Marijuana Book*. Rogers's *Dictionary* is more substantial, but is also clearly aimed at a popular audience. Following a brief introduction, Part I of the *Dictionary* (pp. 1-250) has 126 short (average 2 pages) alphabetically ordered entries on invented languages. Part II (251-264) gives suggestions on how to "Construct Your Own language," and Part III (265-271) provides brief descriptions of 13 "Language Games." After a one-page "Bibliography" (272), Appendix A is an alphabetical cross-reference index to "Works, Language Creators, and the Languages Associated with Them" (273-278) which lists 86 creators, counting both J. R. R. and Christopher Tolkien as a single creator—the list of 13 languages is the same for the two of them. Most creators were responsible for a single language, though the entry for Ursula K. Le Guin has seven and Poul Anderson has four. Appendix B (279-282) is a mostly linguistic "Glossary," and the book concludes with a fairly thorough "Index" (283-293) of names, titles and subjects.

Rogers' "Introduction" lists the types of information included and the order of presentation. **Language** is the headword of each entry. **Spoken by** gives the ethnic or other group that uses the language, in some cases a single person, and **Documented by** most often lists the book(s), game, film, or television series where the language is used; only these two types are given for every entry. **Derivation of the language** gives the source(s) or model(s) of the language, often in one or more natural languages (not included in 63 entries). **Character-**

**istics of the language** gives two or three linguistic or lexical traits (not included in 49 entries), and **A taste of the language** offers a short list of words with their English equivalents (not included in 39 entries). Similar are **Some useful phrases** (included on only 36 entries) and **Numbering system** (included in only 32 entries). **Philological fact(s)** often parallels the “characteristics” or offers some background information (not included in 17 entries). **In their own words** (included in only 15 entries) presents either a version of the Lord’s Prayer or the Biblical description of the Tower of Babel in the language, while **If you’re interested in learning the language** most often references a website (included in only 28 entries). The last type mentioned in the “Introduction,” **For more information** (not included in only 7 entries) usually begins “Review the works listed above [sometimes there is none], the resources listed in the bibliography, and [usually] the web page(s) . . . .” [usually only one].

Since each entry begins a new page there is a lot of unused space, some filled by notes on a “Universal Translator” device in some fiction (e.g., the translator chip that Alex Rogan receives in *The Last Starfighter*, 14), bits of general information about invented languages, or (titled “Speaking of Languages”) one or more short quotes talking about language in general (e.g., Caliban’s words from *The Tempest*: “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is, I know how to curse”).

Since Rogers uses the Quenya word *anwa* in his title, the entries for Tolkien’s thirteen languages will serve as examples. Most of the languages are derived ultimately from **Primitive Elvish** (179-80), the language of the Quendi, the first Elves to awake in Middle-earth; though the entries are alphabetical, it is interesting to read the ones for the Elvish languages in “historical” order. **Common Eldarin** (44-5), derived from Primitive Quendian, is the language of the Eldar, the Elves of the Great March to Valinor. Its dialects are **Avarin** (28-9), spoken by the Avari, the Elves who refused the call to Valinor; **Nandorin** (151-2), the language of the Green elves who began the march but wouldn’t cross the Misty Mountains; and **Doriathrin** (52-3), spoken in Thnigol’s secret kingdom of Doriath. The three languages spoken by the Elves who reached Valinor are **Quenya** (183-5), the High Languages of the Vanyar, the Elves who were closest to the Valar; spoken later by some of the Men of Númenor and Gondor; **Goldogrin** (75-6), the language of Féanor and the Noldor, the Deep Elves who created the Rings of Power; and **Telerin** (220-1), spoken by the Sea-Elves of the Lonely Isle (of whom Elrond is *not* a

descendant, as Rogers claims [220]). The version of Elvish most common in the Middle-earth of *The Lord of the Rings* is **Sindarin** (201-2), derived from Doriathrin and Old Noldorin, the language of the Elves of Rivendell and Lothlórien.

Rogers says that Primitive Elvish (Quendian) is “the root of all languages save those of Valarin and Khudzul” (179)—Valarin, not in the *Dictionary*, is the language of Valinor, the “Undying Lands,” and **Khuzdul** (105-6) is the language made for the Dwarves by their creator, the Vala Aulë. **Black Speech** (34-5 (2)) is the language created by Sauron for the inhabitants of Mordor; since Sauron was originally a Maya living in Valinor, it may be a debased form of Valarin.

Apparently unrelated to the Elvish languages is **Adúnaic** (2-4), the language of the Men of Númenor; Rogers says it is derived “from the Bëorian and Hadorian dialects of Taliska” (3); in any case, it is the source of the **Westron** (245-6), spoken by men and hobbits of western Middle-earth (and even by orcs). Rogers mentions no native language either for the hobbits or the Men of Rohan, though it is clear that the Rohirrim speak a variety of Old English—King Théoden, restored by Gandalf, is greeted by his nephew Éomer with the phrase *Westu Théoden hal!*, a phrase borrowed from *Beowulf*. And the hobbits’ native language is related to that of Rohan: *mathom*, their word for gifts regifted, is from Old English *maðm*, “a precious thing,” and Théoden recognizes the Halflings as people “that some among us call the Holbytlan.”

Overall, Rogers’s *Dictionary* is, as noted, a work of compilation aimed at a popular audience, but as such it’s both useful and interesting, especially to the reader, writer or critic of SF and fantasy. I found no errors, and its information, though selective, is generally well selected. Of the references listed in the short bibliography, two should be of interest to readers of the *SFRA Review*: Walter E. Meyers’s *Aliens and Linguists: Language Study and Science Fiction* (University of Georgia Press, 1980), and Arika Okrent’s much more recent *In the Land of Invented Languages* (Spiegel & Grau, 2009); her Appendix A is a chronological list of 500 invented languages (selected from more than 900 she is aware of).

## II

Eileen Marie Moore’s *Comparative Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus of Tolkien’s Languages* is a labor of love. By profession a soprano who has performed widely and a teacher of voice at Cleveland State University since 1987, she is also a lover of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*

and has studied his work in a way that few professional scholars and critics have done. By the time I met her in a class on Tolkien that I taught in 2003, she had compiled what she then called “a good rough draft” of her *English/Elvish—Elvish/English Dictionary* (347 pages). Over the years she has updated it regularly, and it now has 1638 pages in landscape format. Thus far she has made the CD of her *Dictionary* available principally to the Tolkien scholars and critics who attend the annual International Medieval Conference at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo).

The *Dictionary*'s format presents the information in four columns. In the Elvish/English section, the columns are headed “Quenya” (the source language), “Sindarin” (its main derivative), “Other,” and “English.” In the “Other” column appear occasional derivatives of Quenya in 17 other Elvish languages or dialects as well as related words in Dwarf and Black Speech (indexed in Rogers), Westron, Common Speech, Hobbit, and Rohan. Even more rarely, the “Other” column includes words in non-invented language (e.g., Old English, Gothic) that are related to the Elvish root. The same four columns are used in the English/Elvish section, but with “English” as the first column.

While every entry headword, whether Quenya or English, appears in alphabetical order, many if not most of the entries on some pages are cross-references. On the first page of the English/Elvish section, for example, there are only two full entries. The first is **abhor, feel disgust at** (1); the second column gives **feuya** as the Quenya, **fuio** as the Sindarin, and (in the “Other” column) **phuióbe** as the Old Noldorin equivalents; the entry under **feuya** in the Elvish/English dictionary (1037) gives the same information in reverse, though following the English word **abhor** it cross-references Quenya **saur** and **yelma**. The second is the preposition **about, concerning**, which is Sindarin “**o, h- before vowel**”—no Quenya root. Combining or compound forms, preceded by a slash [/], follow the main entry: **/about (prefix); /concerning Elves; /cut around, amputate, he amputates; /city, walled town, fortress; /underground fortress, city in underground caves**—all followed by the Sindarin equivalents. **/city** is followed by **osto** in Quenya, **/ost, [oth]** in Sindarin, and (under “Other”) the same forms in Goldogrin). Following these are eleven cross-referenced English phrases in italics using or implying “about, concerning,” such as “*barren hill coun-*

try about Nen Hithoel *see: hill<sup>1</sup>, secret<sup>2</sup>* All of the other entries on page 1 are cross-references to other English words.

The entries in the Elvish/English dictionary give (in very small subscript to the headword) the entry's source(s) in Tolkien's work. The entry for **alcar, alkar**, and **alkare** (the different forms are found, respectively, in the recording *The Road Goes ever On*, *The Silmarillion*, and *The Lost Road*) have the English meanings “glory, radiance, brilliance” (903); following the English meaning are cross-references to the Elvish synonyms **alata; faire, glaw; ril**]; and in the “Other” column the Goldogrin forms **/glarosta-, glartha** “to dazzle,” from Tolkien's own Quenya Lexicon, published in *Parma Eldalamberon* No. 12. The Sindarin derivatives are **/claur** “splendor, glory,” apparently derived from Old English **/glæm, /aglar'ni** “my praises” and **/eglerio** “praise!”—the last two words from the men that “cried in many voices and many tongues” in praise of Sam and Frodo in *The Return of the King*.

The Appendix (1615-1638) gathers a number of the English/Elvish entries under 26 categories, from birds, body parts, and conjugations, through “Heirs of Elendil: Northern Line” to trees, vowels and weapons. Seven of the categories are grammatical, providing the material for a much more thorough description of the structure of the Elvish languages than has appeared thus far.

In compiling her dictionary, Moore has indexed not only the works published during Tolkien's life, but seven of the twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*, Tolkien's letters, Donald Swann's song cycle, partial lexica published earlier, and even a website containing “words devised by David Salo for Peter Jackson's movie trilogy” (iii).

Moore's *Dictionary and Thesaurus* is a scholarly reference work of almost unparalleled exhaustiveness. While its possible audience is much smaller than that for Rogers's *Dictionary*, it should be of interest and practical use to many more people interested in Tolkien than those attending the annual Kalamazoo conference. In its present form, it has only two (correctible) problems: the near-illegibility of the source references, and the fact that, on the CD, its 1638 pages are divided into thirteen separate documents. Moore plans, when “it's no longer a ‘work in progress’” (email, 4-26-12), to reformat the *Dictionary* as a single PDF file.

## ***Pacific Rim* [film]**

Catherine Coker

*Pacific Rim*. Dir. Del Toro. Perf. Idris Elba, Charlie Hunnam, Rinko Kikuchi. Legendary Pictures, 2013.

Order option(s): [DVD](#) | [Blu-ray](#)

*PACIFIC RIM* is probably the most subversive action film in American film history, which may seem surprising considering its description can be easily condensed into “people in giant mech suits beat up giant monsters to save the world.” And yet, both of these things are true. Director Guillermo del Toro is the director-auteur of such historical horror-fantasies as *The Devil’s Backbone* and *Pan’s Labyrinth*, as well as the gleefully pulpy *Hellboy* films. His film sensibility combines an exquisite sensitivity to emotion and a gung-ho, go-for-broke daring. You think it’s silly to care about rock ’em, sock ’em fights? Del Toro will make you care.

The film opens with solemn, documentary-style exposition that combines snippets of real-world news footage with CGI monsters and devastation. *Pacific Rim* takes place in our world, in as much as it can take place anywhere. This typical trope of “governments join to fight a greater foe” is then quickly undercut through news programs in the background throughout the movie’s remainder. For example, a politician explains that much of the population has been moved inland for safety even as a reporter counters “that’s the rich and powerful—what about us?” Elements of utopia (inter-government cooperation) and dystopia (wages are paid in ration booklets) combine to reveal that the near future is not much different than today, albeit with real monsters.

An international cast demonstrates real and fictional diversity. The American jaeger—or mech—pilots are played by Charlie Hunnam, an English actor, and Rinko Kikuchi, who is Japanese. Idris Elba enchants as Marshall Stacker Pentecost, the cookie cutter war leader who is given the task of delivering the obligatory hackneyed St. Crispin’s speech heard in snippets in trailers and TV spots. “Today we are cancellin’ the Apocalypse” would likely be cringeworthy if not performed with the stentorian tones and Shakespearian gravitas of Elba. Kikuchi especially shines as the woman action hero, Mako Mori, many of us have been waiting for: allowed moments of self-effacement, self-doubt and mistakes, and

yet never once doubted by any of the other characters.

Indeed, Hunnam’s Raleigh Becket spends much of the film encouraging Mako, preferring her as his co-pilot to the male candidates he is presented with; his role is to be the emotional nurturer that is traditionally assigned to a woman’s part. Further, Raleigh is initially presented as the rugged American individualist we have come to expect from the action genre—disobeying orders and playing hero only to be slapped down by command. However, a third of the way through the film Mako explains that these very traits make him “dangerous” and “not the right man” for the job. It is instead by conforming to international command, taking orders as assigned, and working in a cooperative group that Becket succeeds.

A consistent criticism of the film has been of the simplicity of its plot. Yes, it is simple, and perhaps given the recent fashion for overly elaborate twists and turns, it makes sense for a straightforward story to be read as “too easy.” That said, in contrast with the other two summer SF blockbusters, *Iron Man 3* and *Star Trek: Into Darkness*, *Pacific Rim* didn’t need to pepper us with ironic quips to be entertaining, nor have characters change sides so often the entirety of the film was unintelligible after the fact. *Rim* was also the only SF film that wasn’t the latest in a long-running franchise, seemingly an increasingly rare beast in the genre. Instead, it was an original film that was genuinely sincere in its portrait of good characters trying to save the world. Simple, yes—and also refreshing.

*Pacific Rim* will likely be of primary interest to those who wish to study Guillermo del Toro’s genre work as an exercise in auteurism, those interested in *kaiju* and monster films, and those interested in gender in popular film. After leaving the theater—and again, recently rewatching a DVD copy—I was struck by how far from conventional the “love story” (if you can call it that; the phrase encompasses both less and more what is seen onscreen) between Mako and Raleigh is and how it functions within the film itself. Over and over again, the notion of a neural drift, a literal “meeting of minds” is iterated as being the most important aspect in fighting and surviving. Most often, it is shown that drift compatibility is strongest between those with familial ties (brothers, father and son, married couples), but it is once shown with the two feuding scientists. What it demonstrates is that the strongest relationships require equality and trust—itsself a very simple idea, and yet one that is seldom shown in the depictions of modern romance. Concluding a popular action film with this concept is a very noteworthy seed that we can only hope will be repeated more often.

### Call for Papers—Conference

**Title:** Stage The Future: The First International Conference on Science Fiction Theatre

**Deadline:** 28 February 2014

**Conference Date:** Saturday, April 26, 2014

School of English, University of Royal Holloway, London, UK

**Contact:** [stagethefuture@gmail.com](mailto:stagethefuture@gmail.com)

Keynote Speakers: Jen Gunnels (*New York Review of Science Fiction*) Dr. Nick Lowe (University of Royal Holloway)

**Topic:** Science Fiction Theatre doesn't officially exist. You won't find it listed as a sub-genre of either science fiction or theatre and you won't find it on wikipedia (though you will find a 1950s TV series with the same title – luckily, there is a theatre entry in the SF Encyclopaedia.) Apart from that, there seems to be only one book on the subject so far, called “Science Fiction and the Theatre” and that was more than twenty years ago. And yet Theatre itself was born out of the Fantastic. It began as a religious ceremony filled with metaphysical concepts and mythological beings, and it went on with fairy tales (especially as children's theatre) and fantasy (see *A Midnight Summer's Dream*, *Faust*, and many more), never denouncing its mystical roots. Even when it seemed to convert to Realism, it gave birth to the Absurd. Still one cannot help but notice that, though its performance has undergone major changes in the digital era, thematically theatre seems hesitant to take the next big step and follow cinema and literature to the science-fictional future.

This is strange because there have been many science fiction plays, some of them quite important in the history of theatre. Consider Beckett's *Endgame* and its post-apocalyptic setting. Consider Karel Čapek who actually coined the term “Robot” in his science-fiction play “R.U.R.”, recently added to Gollancz's “SF Master-

works” series. Consider even *Rocky Horror Show* and the *Little Shop of Horrors*.

But in the end, even if there had been no robots, aliens or demigods in theatre so far, now would be the time for them to dominate the stage. In the age where real robots are sent to Mars, in the age of *Star Wars*, *Avatar* and the *Matrix* (and so many superhero films every year), theatre cannot stay behind.

This conference is the first of its kind and hopes to raise awareness of the need for a new theatre that is already here; a theatre that has its roots in the past and its eyes on the future. This event aims to bring together scholars, critics, writers and performers for the first international academic conference on Science Fiction Theatre. Papers are welcome on any topic related to speculative theatre.

Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Depictions of future times
- Utopia and Dystopia
- Proto-science-fiction in theatre
- Ancient Speculative Theatre (Prophets, Monsters, Gods)
- Theatrical adaptations of science fiction novels and films
- Science and Theatre
- Science and the Human
- Performing the Non-Human and the Post-Human
- Temporality, SF and Theatre
- Dramaturgical Analysis of the Unknown
- Space Opera and Science Fiction Opera
- Theatre and the Weird
- Other fantastical theatres (Horror, Fantasy, Supernatural)

**Submission:** The conference welcomes proposals for individual papers and panels from any discipline and theoretical perspective. Please send a title and a 300 word abstract for a 20 minute paper along with your name, affiliation and 100 word professional biography to [stagethefuture@gmail.com](mailto:stagethefuture@gmail.com) by 28 February 2014.

**Title:** Biology and Manners: The Worlds of Lois McMaster Bujold

**Deadline:** 31 March 2014

**Conference Date:** Wednesday, August 20, 2014

**Contact:** [una.mccormack@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:una.mccormack@anglia.ac.uk)

Keynote Speaker: Edward James

**Topic:** Potential contributors are invited to submit an abstract for a one-day conference to be held at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, on August 20th 2014. This inter-disciplinary conference will explore the works of Hugo and Nebula Award winning writer Lois McMaster Bujold, encompassing both her science fiction and her fantasy novels. Papers and pre-formed panels are invited on issues related to (but not limited to) any of the following themes related to the works of Lois McMaster Bujold:

- space opera
- fantasy
- american fantasy
- fantasy and environmentalism
- feminist science fiction
- science fiction and biotechnology
- science fiction and gender
- science fiction and sexuality
- science fiction and race
- utopias and dystopias
- embodiment
- disability studies

**Submission:** 300 word abstracts should be submitted by 31st March 2014. Abstracts should be submitted to the conference organizer, Dr Una McCormack: [una.mccormack@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:una.mccormack@anglia.ac.uk).

Emails should be entitled Biology and Manners Conference: Abstract, and should contain the following information: a) author(s) of paper/panel; b) affiliation; c) title of abstract; d) body of abstract.

**Title:** Star Trek Symposium

**Deadline:** 31 March 2014

**Conference Date:** July 10-11, 2014

University of Malta, Msaid, Malta

**Contact:** [info@startreksymposium.com](mailto:info@startreksymposium.com)

**Topic:** The Star Trek Symposium will be held in Malta at the Atlantis Room at the Dolmen Hotel on 10-11 July 2014 (Thursday and Friday). This event will be held under the aegis of HUMS at the University of Malta (<http://www.um.edu.mt/nocentries/opportunities/startreksymposium10-14jul14>). This is an *academic* symposium on Star Trek. Abstracts of proposed oral presentations must contain a scholarly message, preferably dealing with the interface of medicine or science and the humanities.

**Submission:** If you are interested in submitting an abstract in order to present a paper at this meeting, then please follow the instructions on the event's website. The organisers reserve the right to extend the meeting to the 12 July (Saturday) if sufficient abstracts of the required quality are received. The deadline to submit an abstract is Monday 31 March 2014. All abstracts must be submitted online via the website abstract submission page. Any proposals received by email will be deleted and not sent for review. Please see FAQs on the website: [www.startreksymposium.com](http://www.startreksymposium.com).

# Science Fiction Research Association

[www.sfra.org](http://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 [www.sfra.org](http://www.sfra.org). For a membership application, contact the SFRA Treasurer or see the Website.

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### *The New York Review of Science Fiction*

Twelve issues per year. Reviews and features. Add to dues: \$28 domestic; \$30 domestic institutional; \$34 Canada; \$40 UK and Europe; \$42 Pacific and Australia.

### *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.

### *Femspec*

Critical and creative works. Add to dues: \$40 domestic individual; \$96 domestic institutional; \$50 international individual; \$105 international institutional.

