

#257

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SUBMISSIONS

The *SFRAR* Review editors encourage submissions, including essays, review essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. Please send submissions or queries to *both* coeditors. If you would like to review nonfiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor and/or email sfra_review@yahoo.com.

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News

Gene Wolfe and John Crowley
 These writers are the subjects of three chapbooks published May 2001 by the fan press, Sirius Fiction, Box 6248, Albany, CA 94706-0248, run by Michael Andre-Driussi (lists all publications). The Wolfe booklets are stapled, 8½ x 5½, 32 p.; the Crowley booklet is 7 x 8½, 63 p.; each is \$5 plus \$1 shipping and 8% sales tax for CA residents. *Cicerone Sinister: A Guide to Gene Wolfe's The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, by Robert Borski and Andre-Driussi, provides a concordance to and ancillary material about the three linked novellas (Scribner, 1972), including four pages of maps. Most of the text is included at the site, . *Peace Indexicon* by Doug Eigsti attempts to decode *Peace* (1975) and includes a concordance, maps and genealogical charts on the inside covers. More ambitious is *Snake's-Hands*, a Chapbook About the Fiction of John Crowley, ed. By Andre-Driussi and Alice K. Turner (fiction editor of *Playboy*). Crowley's major works, *Little, Big; The Deep; Beasts*; and the *Aegypt* series are the subjects of reprinted reviews and some original text by the editors John Clute, Tom Disch and William Ansley. Harold Bloom contributed an appreciative one-page preface. Wolfe has been the subject of more published criticism than Crowley, but both are writers of distinction who reward investigation.

-Neil Barron

SFRA member Shelley Rodrigo-Blanchard had been named to this year's Philip K. Dick Award jury.

-Mike Levy

Hal Hall Named Hoadley/Friends Professor

The Texas A&M University Libraries named Hal W. Hall as the Irene B. Hoadley/Friends of the Sterling C. Evans Library Professor. Hall is the

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

The date of this *SFRA Review* mailing establishes a 30-day timeline for anybody who wants to be nominated by petition. You must send (yes, USPS) the to the current secretary: Wendy Bousfield Reference Department, Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY, 13244-2010. As soon as the 30 days are up, the secretary will mail out ballots.

Office Statement: President

Peter Brigg

I have been an SFRA member since 1972 (with a year out spent in China) and I'm completing a term as Vice-President. I've taught SF since 1971. I've published on SF in SFS, *Extrapolation*, the *SFRA Review*, *Foundation*, and *Mosaic* as well as producing chapters in the *Taplinger* books on Arthur C. Clarke and Ursula K. Le Guin. I wrote a *Starmont* volume on J.G. Ballard and I have, forthcoming in Fall 2002 (their current promise, not mine) a book from McFarland on the genre boundary issue. I don't even want to try to remember all the encyclopedia bits I've written over the years. Right now Neal Stephenson has my attention.

My intentions as President of SFRA will be to see to the long term well-being of the association. We need more members (I've been at that as Vice-president and I'm well aware of the difficulties) and we need executives drawn from the younger layers of the association. We need good and useful integration between those of us who have "been around" and those who are picking up speed in the field. I want to see the Association, which will forever have Tom Clareson's name stamped upon it, encourage the kind of growth and variety that he did.

Douglas Barbour

Douglas Barbour completed his PhD on the Science Fiction of Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Joanna Russ in 1976. He has published widely in the field, with *Worlds Out of Words: The SF Novels of Samuel R. Delany* appearing in 1979. Articles in *Science-Fiction Studies*, *Foundation*, and elsewhere. He has published over 10 books of poetry, and monographs on various Canadian writers, including Michael Ondaatje (Twayne 1993). He teaches Canadian Literature, SF & F, modern and contemporary poetry, & creative writing at the University of Alberta. I have continued to read, review, write articles on, and teach SF & F over the years, and have been a member of the SFRA since the late 70s. It would be an honour to represent the SFRA as its president.

Office Statement: Vice President

Bruce Rockwood

I am a life long SF reader and fan, and a professor of legal studies who writes and teaches about law and literature. I have edited a symposium about law in SF for the *Legal Studies Forum*, and through that effort came in contact with the SFRA, which I joined a few years ago. When I attended the Schenectady meeting I enjoyed meeting the membership and learning more about SFRA activities, and I would like to help out in any way I can. I have experience planning symposia and conferences, enjoy networking across disciplines, and see working with the SFRA as a way to combine professional service with giving something back to a field that gives my entire family a lot of joy.

Janice Bogstad

As a long time member of SFRA, (I joined when three earlier members helped me with a foundering graduate career in 1975), I am pleased with the opportunity to serve an organization that has meant a lot to my development as a feminist, professor, scholar, and bibliographer. When a few of us started the feminist SF

convention, WisCon, in 1976, it was to early SFRA members and publications that I looked for ideas and ideals. My areas of formal graduate training include an MLS in Librarianship and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature for Twentieth Century Anglo-American, French and Chinese Literature as well as feminist theory and history of Chinese language and literature, but when it came to write a thesis, it was Science Fiction and Fantasy that allowed me, and still allows me to work out intersections of these interests. As a professor and Head of Collection Development for U of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, I find myself teaching SF and Women's studies courses, mentoring students and serving on MA committees or supervising MA theses for our English department. SFRA has been a rich human and intellectual resource for that journey from graduate student to faculty, and I am very much committed to seeing this function continue for new generations of scholars. This is also a good time for me to take up a new challenge as I've just finished six years on a Health Care board, hired a replacement librarian for my unit so I can go back to doing one person's job and bought my first new laptop in 15 years.

Officer Statement: Secretary

Margaret McBride

At my first SFRA Convention, I sat across the table at lunch from Gene Wolfe, I had a conversation with Octavia Butler in a room with only three other people, and I gave a paper on *Gate to Women's Country* with Sheri Tepper in the room. At subsequent SFRA Conferences, I had a casual conversation with John Brunner in line for the buffet; and in my paper on *Virtual Girl*, my mention of having counted the times characters used the restroom in the book (SF has come into maturity when authors admit that people even in the future will have bodies) gave Amy Thomson the giggles. I feel I owe something to the organization that gave me such pleasures so that other people including new members can have conversations with authors and other people interested in speculative fiction. A position as SFRA secretary would also combine the two aspects of my teaching: Business Writing and Science Fiction (often an eyebrow-raising combination when I meet new people). You could also vote for me because I have a new Dell computer at home and will be able to do the computer work fairly easily or because I have the best science fiction vests of anyone from SFRA!

Warren G. Rochelle

I have been an active scholar and teacher of science fiction since graduate school, and a reader and writer of the genre for many years more. I have presented at SAMLA several times and have served as Secretary and Chair of the SAMLA Science Fiction/Fantasy Literature Discussion Circle. My critical essays and book reviews have appeared in *Foundation*, *Extrapolation*, *Children's Literature Quarterly*,* and the *SFRA Review*.* I have designed and taught courses in science fiction at both Limestone and Mary Washington College. I have also published a book on Ursula K. Le Guin and my first novel, both in 2001. I am presently the English 101 Coordinator at MWC, where I also serve on various faculty committees. All of this is to indicate I have the experience, interest, and ability to serve as Secretary of the SFRA. I am running for Secretary because I am passionate about the teaching and scholarly study of science fiction and want to be involved in the betterment of each. I want SFRA to continue to thrive and feel that active participation of the membership is essential for this to happen. If elected, I will do the best job that I can.

Office Statement: Treasurer

Dave Mead

As Treasurer for the last two years, I have established effective, regular method of handling SFRA's accounts, reporting to the IRS, and so forth. Having spent a fair amount of time setting up the process and learning the software, I now have the

Curator of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection at the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives. Named for Irene B. Hoadley, former director of the Sterling C. Evans Library, the Hoadley/Friends Professorship is awarded to a librarian scholar for an outstanding research project. Hall's project, "Marketing a Research Collection: Developing Scholarly Tools as a Method of Marketing Library Research Collections," will develop three important research tools. Hall will create the first web-based register of library collections of science fiction and fantasy. He will also develop a register of individual author collections in libraries and of book manuscripts. He will continue work on the Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database through 2003.

"The Cushing Library's science fiction and fantasy collection is already widely recognized and heavily used. These new tools developed by Hal Hall will facilitate access to and use of the collection for researchers around the world," explained University Libraries Dean Fred M. Heath in making the award.

NOVEL RELEASE

Barbara Chepatis' new novel, These Dreams, is in the world and can be found at your favorite virtual or real bookstore. For more info, see <http://www.simonsays.com>

STRANGE HORIZONS UPDATE

Strange Horizons is officially a pro market by SFWA standards. This decision is retroactive back to the first issue (September 2000).

OBITUARIES

RA LAFFERTY

RA Lafferty, author of 21 novels and over 200 short stories, died on March 18 in Broken Arrow, OK. He was 87. In 1973, he the Hugo Award from the World for his short story

"Eurema's Damn."

VIRGINIA HAMILTON

Virginia Hamilton, author of many works of children's and young adult fantasy and science fiction, died of breast cancer February 19, 2002. During her life, Hamilton was awarded American Library Association Coretta Scott King and Newbery Awards for literacy excellence in books for children and young adults.

JOHN ROBINSON PIERCE

John Robinson Pierce, musician, electrical engineer, and science fiction writer died April 2, 2002. He was 92. Pierce, who coined the word "transistor," won engineering's prestigious, Draper Prize, with Fellow satellite pioneer Harold Rosen in 1995. Pierce wrote under the pen name J.J. Coupling.

DAMON KNIGHT

Damon Knight, whose contributions to the field are exceeded by words like writer, editor, teacher, died on April 14, 2002 in Eugene, OR. Knight founded SFWA, started the Nebula Awards, co-founded the Milford and Clarion Writers Workshops, began N3F (National Fantasy Fan Federation), and started the Milford workshops.

SPRING 2002 ISSUE OF FEMSPEC ANNOUNCED

Femspec, an interdisciplinary journal dedicated to critical and creative works that use beyond-real, speculative techniques to question gender, announces its spring issue, 3.2 For more information about the journal, see <http://www.csuohio.edu/femspec/>. Regular subscriptions are \$30; institutional, \$50; low income, \$20. Order form available on our home page. The journal currently comes out of Cleveland State University.

2001 ARTHUR C. CLARKE AWARD

the winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award for the best science fiction novel of 2001 is Bold as Love by

skills and knowledge to do the job of Treasurer with some efficiency. Be kind to my opponent; reelect Dave.

Joseph Milicia

I am a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Sheboygan and a long time member of SFRA. I would be willing to fill the position of Treasurer but have the highest confidence in the current Treasurer, Dave Mead.

SFRA AWARDS

**CLARESON AWARD
PRESENTATION SPEECH 2001**

Hello, SFRA members and honored guests at this Year 2001 banquet. The 2001 Clareson Award Committee comprises Edra Bogle, Carolyn Wendell, and myself, Carol Stevens, as chair. We would also like to acknowledge the help and support of last year's chair, Muriel Becker, and all those who wrote to us with nominations. Additionally, my special gratitude goes to Muriel and Carolyn, as well as Alice Clareson (who sends her warmest regards but cannot be here because of a previous commitment), all of whom have contributed to this presentation speech. Our welcome duty is to present this year's Thomas D. Clareson Award.

For those of you who never had the privilege of knowing him, Tom was a First Fan who, in 1958, chaired the first Seminar on Science Fiction at the Modern Language Association. In 1971, he served as the first president of SFRA, and was editor of *Extrapolation* from its inception in 1959 through its movement to Kent State and its transition to its current editor, which took place in 1989/90. He devoted himself to Science Fiction throughout his career, guiding its development as a field of study through his own scholarly and service activities, and by serving as mentor to countless younger scholars. This award's establishment in 1995 memorializes his lifelong dedication to service in the field by recognizing "outstanding service activities [and] promotion of SF teaching and study, editing, reviewing, editorial writing, publishing, organizing meetings, mentoring, leadership in SF/fantasy organizations," etc.

Despite a solid list of worthy nominees, there is no question that this year's recipient more than deserves our honor and gratitude, and we have no doubt that Tom would have approved our choice: Donald M. Hassler, known with great affection to most of us as "Mack."

It is characteristic of our honoree that when I called to interview him in preparation for this presentation, he spent more time talking about Tom Clareson than he did about himself, mentioning the growth of his love and respect for Tom through a long professional association that matured into a solid friendship, and praising a commitment to Science Fiction which he termed "genuinely heroic" at the end of Tom's life.

Carolyn Wendell mentions meeting Mack at one of the first SFRA meetings she ever attended. She remarks that he always remembered her, and that she "certainly never missed him, with that booming voice, huge smile, and . . . ah . . . distinctive tonsure." She also recalls that he and his spouse Sue, one of the few husband/wife pair members of SFRA, have had an unfailing gift not only for being at ease with others but for putting others at their ease. Given the locale of next year's conference, Carolyn takes delight in reminding us that their joint membership evidenced itself in Sue's attendance even at business meetings. One year the meeting was held in a large lecture hall. Sue, as Carolyn recounts it, was seated near the top of the nosebleed section when the topic of a future meeting in Europe arose, causing ferocious buzzing from the higher regions. Sue, when the president recognized her, announced in clarion tones, "The faculty spouses would like to register their approval and encouragement of SFRA to hold a conference in Europe." She's had to wait a long time, but we hope to see her and Mack at the

New Lanark conference. We know that Mack deserves this award, but when he's spoken with me about accepting it, he's consistently said "Sue and I."

With typical good humor, he mentioned his own stint as Treasurer of SFRA in 1983-84 under Pat Warrick's presidency, especially the shock he experienced when he realized that despite accounting experience limited primarily to balancing his own checkbook Pat expected him to produce professional financial reports including detailed spreadsheets. He served as president of SFRA in 1985/1986, and if memory serves, coordinated a conference at Kent.

His curriculum vitae lists a staggering range of publication: ten books, one of them co-edited with Sue Strong Hassler, twenty chapters of books, articles and reviews by the dozen, with his Science Fiction work the most prominent in a diverse field. Many of us know that he has received the J. Lloyd Eaton Award for best book of Science Fiction Criticism, and we have been reading his SF scholarship at least since he published his first *Extrapolation* article, "Images for an Ethos, Images for Change and Style," in 1979, the prelude to a long and fruitful association with the journal whose editorship he assumed in 1990, after several years as Kent State University's faculty liaison to the editorial staff.

Like this conference the journal is now "Looking Forward While Remembering the Past" as it moves with "SF in[to] the Next Millennium." Mack is providing expert guidance over that transition as *Extrapolation* leaves Kent State University Press, its home for the past twenty years. He has patiently and generously mentored an entire generation, more young scholars and students of Science Fiction than we are ever likely to know about, including many of us here this evening.

Mack's work in Science Fiction is grounded in a solid professionalism also evidenced by his dedication to students, which includes serving as his university's current Director of Undergraduate Studies and as adviser to the Kent State University chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honorary society. In preparing for this presentation, I realized with a shock that his time at Kent State, from when he arrived as a young instructor in 1965 to his current status as professor, overlapped my time there as well as my husband David's, encompassing the turbulent years of 1969/1970. Some years ago, I spoke with Mack after placing flowers at the Hillel Memorial on the KSU campus. I mention this because Mack's work as a member of the May 4 Committee and his helping to realize the Hillel Memorial, which mentions the names of the four students who were killed, show the extent to which his work stems from a deep ethical commitment and sense of personal responsibility.

On a happier note, one might be tempted to assume that only a work-obsessed hermit could remain so consistently productive, but Alice Claerson assures us that's not so, and provides some insight into the ways in which Mack maintains balance in his life. She mentions particularly the Hasslers' children and grandchildren, some of whom have visited the Claerson household, their beloved West Highland terriers, and their Michigan retreat, without telephone or e-mail and with only a General Delivery address, from whence Mack and Sue join us this evening. She also mentions Mack's Ben-Franklin-esque hours, which include rising most mornings at five to pursue his creative writing, especially his poetry. It is a little-known secret among the SF community that Mack has over a hundred published poems to his credit, including such titles as "Sonnet for the Astronauts' Rendezvous" and "F is for Fantasy."

I hope that a scholar whose own work stems from his engagement with Eighteenth-Century Literature and Erasmus Darwin will forgive me for going back a bit further, to Renaissance Italy, where Baldessare Castiglione used an untranslatable word, "*sprezzatura*," to describe people like Mack, who wear their enormous and wide-ranging accomplishments lightly and with apparently effortless grace. We in the twenty-first century Science Fiction Research Association have to present awards to say the same thing. We thank you for your many years of scholarly endeavor, your work as an editor and mentor, and your long service both to SFRA and to the field of Science Fiction in general. We are honored

Gwyneth Jones.

The other titles on the shortlist were *Pashazade* by Jon Courtenay Grimwood, *Fallen Dragon* by Peter F Hamilton, *The Secret of Life* by Paul McAuley, *Mappa Mundi* by Justina Robson and *Passage* by Connie Willis. The judges were: Paul Billinger & Tony Cullen for the BSFA, Doug Millard for the Science Museum, Liz Sourbut and Lisa Tuttle for the Science Fiction Foundation.

The judges for the 2003 award will be: Tony Cullen and Iain Emsley for the BSFA, Doug Millard for the Science Museum, Paul McAuley and Liz Sourbut for the Foundation.

2002 HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED

ConJose has announced the nominees for the 2002 Hugo Awards.

BEST NOVEL

The Curse of Chalion by Lois McMaster Bujold (HarperCollins/Eos)
American Gods by Neil Gaiman (Morrow); *Perdido Street Station* by China Miéville (Del Rey); *Cosmonaut Keep* by Ken MacLeod (Tor); *Passage* by Connie Willis (Bantam); *The Chronoliths* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor)

BEST NOVELLA

"May Be Some Time" by Brenda W. Clough (Analog 4/01); "The Diamond Pit" by Jack Dann (Jubilee, HarperCollins/Voyager Australia; F&SF 6/01); "The Chief Designer" by Andy Duncan (Asimov's 6/01); "Stealing Alabama" by Allen Steele (Asimov's 1/01); "Fast Times at Fairmont High" by Vernor Vinge (The Collected Stories of Vernor Vinge, Tor)

BEST NOVELETTE

"Hell Is the Absence of God" by Ted Chiang (Starlight 3, Tor); "Undone" by James Patrick Kelly (Asimov's 6/01)
"The Days Between" by Allen Steele (Asimov's 3/01); "Lobsters" by Charles Stross (Asimov's 6/01)

“The Return of Spring” by Shane Tourtellotte (Analog 11/01)
BEST SHORT STORY (331 ballots cast)

“The Ghost Pit” by Stephen Baxter (Asimov’s 7/01); “Spaceships” by Michael A. Burstein (Analog 6/01)
“The Bones of the Earth” by Ursula K. Le Guin (Tales from Earthsea, Harcourt); “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” by Mike Resnick (Asimov’s 9/01); “The Dog Said Bow-Wow” by Michael Swanwick (Asimov’s 10-11/01)

BEST RELATED BOOK

The Art of Richard Powers by Jane Frank (Paper Tiger); Meditations on Middle-Earth by Karen Haber, ed. (St. Martin’s Press/A Byron Preiss Book)
The Art of Chesley Bonestell by Ron Miller & Frederick C. Durant III (Paper Tiger); I Have This Nifty Idea...Now What Do I Do With It? by Mike Resnick (Wildside Press); J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century by Tom Shippey (HarperCollins); Being Gardner Dozois by Michael Swanwick (Old Earth Books)

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone (1492 Pictures/Heyday Films/Warner Bros.) Directed by Chris Columbus; Screenplay by Steven Kloves; David Heyman, Producer; Michael Barthan, Chris Columbus, Duncan Henderson & Mark Radcliff, Executive Producers.

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (New Line Cinema/The Saul Zaentz Company/WingNut Films) Directed by Peter Jackson; Screenplay by Fran Walsh & Phillipa Boyens & Peter Jackson; Peter Jackson, Barrie M. Osborne and Tim Sanders, Producers; Michael Lynne, Mark Ordesky, Robert Shaye, Bob Weinstein and Harvey Weinstein, Executive Producers.

Monsters, Inc. (Pixar Animation Studios/Walt Disney Pictures) Di-

to present the Thomas D. Clareson Award, along with our gratitude and affection, to you, Donald Mack Hassler.

NONFICTION REVIEW

A.E. VAN VOGT: SCIENCE FANTASY’S ICON

Neil Barron

Addendum: James Gunn

Drake, H.L. *A.E. van Vogt: Science Fantasy’s Icon*. Author, 2001. 116 p. Credit card orders to www.booklocker.com/bookpages/vogt.html, \$12.95 + \$4.95 shipping, trade paper; \$6.95 as pdf file. 1-59113-054-9

Van Vogt died in January 2000, more than half a century after his most popular fiction had been published, from 1939 to 1950. From 1950 to the 1980s he was active in the dianetics movement in California, launched by a positive Campbell article in *Astounding* in 1950, and by Hubbard’s book later that year, which is still heavily promoted, along with his Scientology publications. Neither dianetics, nor general semantics, nor any of van Vogt’s other eccentric enthusiasms prevented the Alzheimers that blighted his final decade.

Drake, retired from Pennsylvania’s Millersville University, shared some of van Vogt’s interests, most notably general semantics, and interviewed him in 1974, 1982 and 1985. The 18 page list of sources, supplementing the 98 pages of text, indicates that he did his homework. His concluding page says the “goal of this book has been to offer a better understanding of A.E. van Vogt by presenting some of his personal life interests as they related to select and representative works.”

Chapters 2-9 discuss van Vogt’s fiction, chapter 10 an unpublished play (a sequel to Molière’s *La Malade Imaginaire*, a result of van Vogt’s eccentric dream therapy), and chapter 11 his nonfiction: a privately published co-authored book on hypnotism, which includes links to general semantics; his reflections on “angry men,” presented fictionally in *The Mind Cage* (1957) and in the nonfiction book, *The Violent Man* (1962), as well as in 1965 radio broadcasts in the LA area; and the 1972 self-help book, *The Money Personality*, one of his many attempts to revive his writing career.

Drake admits he’s a fan of van Vogt, which undercuts any effort at critical objectivity. An outside editor might have helped in this respect and improved the often poorly written narrative. He uses throughout the cumbersome phrase, “Socratic-Plato dialogic syndrome,” “to indicate that van Vogt expressed his real life beliefs through dialogue and thoughts of fictitious characters” (so what else is new?). Some of these beliefs centered on the general semantics ideas of the Polish-born Alfred Korzybski, as elaborated mostly in his 1933 book, *Science and Sanity*, and in those of his followers, like Stuart Chase and S.I. Hayakawa, former president of San Francisco State and a drowsy U.S. senator. When I read van Vogt as a teenager, I’m sure I ignored such notions in favor of the pell mell adventure and screwball plots. When preparing this review, I checked several sources to see Korzybski’s standing today. Steven Pinker, in *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (1994), rejects K’s assumptions and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of “linguistic determinism, stating that people’s thoughts are determined by the categories made available by their language.” David Crystal, in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (1997), says that general semantics “attracted considerable popular interest in the 1930s and 1940s...It still has a certain following in the U.S. though its emphasis on word meaning (rather than on sentences or contexts) has not made the approach appeal to modern semanticists.”

When *Locus* polled its readers in 1973, 1988 and 1999 to vote for the best all-time SF author, van Vogt was not in the top 50. But his fellow SFWA writers voted him the Grand Master award in 1985. Several of his best works are still in print, including *Slan*, *The World of Null-A*, *The Empire of Isher*, *The Book of Ptath*

and *The War Against the Rull*. I don't know whether you'd learn more about van Vogt by reading one of his novels rather than Drake's study, but you'd have a lot more fun.

Addendum by James Gunn: Hal Drake attended one of my early Institutes when he was teaching at a college in Nebraska and, some twenty years later, one of my Writers Workshops in Science Fiction, and for most of that time he was working on his study of van Vogt, a study that was in the inventory of Borgo Press (along with Karen Hellekson's Cordwainer Smith book and those of many other SFRA members) when it was shut down. So I have a good deal of sympathy for Hal's labor-of-love as well as an abiding fondness for van Vogt's "fairy tales of science," which is what I called them in *The Road to Science Fiction*. Hal's work may better be considered as a part of that honorable tradition in science fiction, fan scholarship-sometimes uneven, usually less objective than scholars might like, but driven to exhaustive labors by dedication.

My attitude also is influenced by a conversation I had with Robert Scholes after the publication of his book (with Eric Rabkin) *Science Fiction: History-Science-Vision*. He and Eric, I thought, hadn't understood van Vogt's appeal (Damon Knight didn't come to terms with it either in his famous, destructive review of *The World of Null-A*). When Bob became series editor of the Oxford University Press SF author studies, he offered me the chance to write about van Vogt, and I was tempted but finally decided Asimov was more central to the genre. That doesn't diminish my admiration for Van's narrative drive and his ability to make SF drama out of scientific theories, surely one of SF's principal virtues, even when the theories are abstruse or discredited. Van had many enthusiasms and his success as a writer lies in how he used them, not on their validity; it is noteworthy, nevertheless, that interest in General Semantics and in Korzybski jumped markedly after the publication of Van's *The World of Null-A*, a singular accomplishment for an SF novel and one that other writers can only aspire to. Van occupies an important position in science fiction, what Brian Aldiss called "the dreaming pole." Books like Hal Drake's may begin the process of dealing with that part of the SF spectrum and with the fascinating psychology and narrative techniques of the person who represented it better than anyone, A. E. van Vogt.

NONFICTION REVIEW

BEING GARDNER DOZOIS

Philip Snyder

Swanwick, Michael. *Being Gardner Dozois*. Baltimore: Old Earth Books, PO Box 19951, Baltimore MD, 2001. Hardcover, 248 pages. \$25. ISBN 1-882968-19-0.

Dipping into Michael Swanwick's book-long interview with Gardner Dozois is a little like attending a great panel discussion, a bit like hanging out with Unca Mike and his buddy Gardner, and easily one of the most pleasurable insider's guides available on how science fiction gets made. For seekers after historical, critical, and biographical insights, the volume is a small treasure, and for connoisseurs of the well made author interview, watching Swanwick play Boswell to Dozois's Johnson is pure catnip.

Being Gardner Dozois is an opportunity for Dozois the writer to step away for a moment from the formidable shadow of Dozois the editor, and to shed light on 30-plus years of his fiction. In the course of the book, Swanwick elicits recollections, assessments, information, and opinion about some 50 stories, beginning with "The Empty Man" in 1966 and ending with 1999's "A Knight of Ghosts and Shadows." This substantial body of work is treated to a wide-ranging discussion, touching on everything from the composition, publication, and reception of individual stories, to the aesthetics of short fiction, the evolu-

rected by Pete Docter, David Silverman and Lee Unkrich. Story by Jill Culton, Peter Docter, Ralph Eggleston and Jeff Pidgeon. Darla K. Anderson, Producer. John Lasseter and Andrew Stanton, Executive Producers. Buffy the Vampire Slayer "Once More, With Feeling" (Fox Television Studios/Mutant Enemy, Inc.) Written & Directed by Joss Whedon. Joss Whedon and Marti Noxon, Executive Producers.

Shrek (DreamWorks SKG/Pacific Data Images). Directed by Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson. Written by Ted Elliott & Terry Rossio and Joe Stillman and Roger S. H. Schulman. Jeffrey Katzenberg, Aron Warner and John H. Williams, Producers. Penney Finkelman Cox and Sandra Rabins, Executive Producers.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Ellen Datlow (*SCI FICTION and anthologies*)

Gardner Dozois (Asimov's)

Patrick Nielsen Hayden (Tor Books; Starlight anthology series)

Stanley Schmidt (Analog)

Gordon Van Gelder (F&SF)

BEST PRO ARTIST

Jim Burns, Bob Eggleton, Frank Kelly Freas, Donato Giancola, Michael Whelan

BEST SEMIPROZINE

Absolute Magnitude, edited by Warren Lapine

Interzone, edited by David Pringle

Locus, edited by Charles N. Brown

The New York Review of Science Fiction, edited by Kathryn Cramer,

David Hartwell & Kevin J. Maroney

Speculations, edited by Susan Fry, published by Kent Brewster

BEST FANZINE

File 770, edited by Mike Glycer

Ansible, edited by Dave Langford

Challenger, edited by Guy Lillian III

Mimosa, edited by Richard & Nicki Lynch

Plokta, edited by Alison Scott, Steve

Davies & Mike Scott

BEST FAN WRITER

Jeff Berkwits, Bob Devney, John L. Flynn
Mike Glycer, Dave Langford, Steven H. Silver

BEST FAN ARTIST

Sheryl Birkhead, Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason, Frank Wu

BEST WEB SITE

Locus Online, Mark R. Kelly editor/webmaster (www.locusmag.com)

SciFi.com, Craig Engler, executive producer (www.scifi.com)

SF Site, Rodger Turner, publisher/managing editor (www.sfsite.com)

Strange Horizons, Mary Anne Mohanraj, editor-in-chief (www.strangehorizons.com)

Tangent Online, Dave Truesdale, senior editor; Tobias Buckell, webmaster (www.tangentonline.com)

Each Worldcon has the right to add one special category, good only for that year and not binding upon any future Worldcon committees. ConJose exercised this right and will award a Hugo Award for Best Web Site.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD for BEST NEW WRITER OF 2000/2001
Tobias S. Buckell (second year of eligibility)

Alexander C. Irvine (second year of eligibility)

Wen Spencer (first year of eligibility)

Jo Walton (second year of eligibility)

Ken Wharton (second year of eligibility)

The John W. Campbell Award, sponsored by Dell Magazines, is not a Hugo Award, but appears on the same ballot as the Hugo Awards and is administered in the same way as the Hugo Awards.

The 2002 Worldcon, known as ConJose, will take place at the McEnery Convention Center, San Jose, California from 29 August through 2 September 2002. More information about ConJose, including current membership rates, is available from its web site (<http://>

tion of recent SF, and the dynamics of the writing community. The talk is invigorating, the insights valuable, and the gossip is wicked fun.

Much of the book's pleasure derives from the smart but relaxed camaraderie between Swanwick and Dozois, making abundantly clear why their frequent collaborative writing ventures have been so consistently successful. At one point, for instance, Swanwick offers a brilliant (but mistaken) interpretation of a story, prompting Dozois to reply that "[y]our readings of my stories are always so much cleverer than the stories themselves that it's always disappointing to straighten you out." The remark is typical of Dozois's interview persona, which emerges as bright, modest, wry, colloquial, and funny. And generous: in discussing the collaborations of the "Fiction Factory" of Dozois, Swanwick, and Jack Dann. Dozois is careful to point out the contributions of his partners, and is especially vocal in his praise of Dann's energy and enthusiasm on those projects. (Ditto for Dozois's partner, Susan Casper, who makes a sort of cameo appearance for several pages of the interview.)

Swanwick, for his part, brings considerable craft to bear on the shape and direction of the conversation. He gets Dozois to talk about the nature of creative energy cycles, about the nuts and bolts of drafts and rewrites, about the deliberate strategies of narrative, and about the accidents of publication and payment. We learn about the role of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* in Dozois's SF of the 80s, and we are treated to the indispensable information that Dozois wrote a chapter of his novel *Strangers* in a notebook while sitting on the floor in a friend's bathroom. ("This is the kind of thing that makes me smile," Dozois adds, "when young writers tell me they can't work without an office of their own and a word processor.") From the ridiculous to the sublime, it's all here.

While there are occasional *longeurs*, and perhaps a few pages of chat that were conceivably more interesting in person than they now appear in print, the book is consistently readable and full of intriguing information and opinion. As story after story comes under scrutiny, Dozois the writer subjects himself to the blue pencil of Dozois the editor, and the reader is invited to share his thinking on taste, on touchstones, and on literary judgments. (About the alienation of many of his characters, for instance, we are told that the "basic Dozois story, stripped to its fundamentals, will be one person in deteriorating mental or emotional condition staggering around observing a lot of stuff that's happening that he really doesn't have much to do with.") Dozois is penetrating about the incidental and even accidental meanings that can merge in a work of fiction, surprisingly candid about the sometimes uneasy relationship between literary aims and the expectation of the genre audience, and sometimes painfully frank about what he perceives as his own shortcomings and disappointments as a writer. Despite the often playful banter in which it is couched, there is wisdom as well as amusement to be had here.

Toward the end of the book, Dozois mock-compliments Swanwick for pulling off "one of those completely useless but impressive accomplishments, like making a replica of the Titanic out of marzipan, or building the Eiffel Tower life-sized out of old used Q-Tips." The comment is typical of his self-deprecating humor throughout the interview, but in no wise reflects the book's true value. *Being Gardner Dozois* is in fact a marvel of illumination as well as entertainment, and Old Earth Books is to be congratulated for hosting this memorable meeting of two major SF minds.

**TOLKIEN'S ART: A MYTHOLOGY FOR ENGLAND
& THE LORD OF THE RINGS:
THE MYTHOLOGY OF POWER**

Philip E. Kaveny

- Chance, Jane. *Tolkien's Art: A Mythology for England*. University Press of Kentucky, 663 S. Limestone St., Lexington, KY 40508-4008. Paperback. 262 pages, revised edition (November 2001). ISBN: 0813190207.
- Chance, Jane. *The Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power*. University Press of Kentucky, 663 S. Limestone St., Lexington, KY 40508-4008. Paperback. 162 pages, revised edition (October 2001). ISBN: 0813190177.

The first of these two books is of interest to the reader of science fiction, fantasy, and criticism of both genres, and this for several reasons. The most salient one is that *Tolkien's Art: A Mythology for England* is an example of retrospective conversion in reverse. This is the process by which a writer like Poe in the 19th or Swift in the 18th or perhaps even Bacon in the 17th century is treated as if they were in fact a science or fiction or fantasy writer for critical purposes even though these genres did not exist in the modern sense at the time these writers were working. This book reverses the critical process so that J.R.R. Tolkien (even with the success of the Harry Potter books), certainly the most read fantasy author in the English-speaking world over the last seven decades, becomes inseparably linked to medieval literature and sensibilities. Chance's arguments work well since she is preaching in a sense to the converted in that I think they are directed to a medieval studies audience, but not so well to someone like myself who is not part of that particular congregation, or for that matter any other.

Both of these books brought out the resistant reader in me. As I read though and prepared to review them, which involved a lot of painstaking source checking using other established and creditable sources in the field, I found myself progressively becoming more and more resistant to her interpretation. By the time I finished the second book, *The Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power*, I found myself becoming absolutely contentious towards nearly everything the author had to say in both books. Yet, "Jane Chance is Professor of English at Rice University, where she has taught since 1973. Her research interests center on mythology and myth-making, the reception of classical mythology and medieval Latin literature in the Middle Ages, particularly in England (especially in relation to Chaucer and Gower); medieval women writers (Christine de Pisan in particular) and the study of gender; and modern medievalism (Tolkien in particular)" according to her own web page. Therefore it is safe to say that Jane Chance has indisputable credentials within the field of medieval studies and modern medievalism to write incisively about J.R.R. Tolkien.

I take my job as the resistant reader seriously. Over the last several weeks I was drawn back to reread several other works by or about J.R.R. Tolkien. Among them were *The Evocation of Virgil in The Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* by Robert Morse 1986; *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* by Humphrey Carpenter 1981; *J.R.R. Tolkien: a Biography* by Humphrey Carpenter, 1977, re-issued in 2000; *J.R.R. Tolkien Artist & Illustrator*, Hammond & Scull, 1996; *War of The Jewels*, Christopher Tolkien, 1996; Norman Cantor's chapter on the "Oxford Fantasists" in his 1991 *Inventing The Middle Ages*; and, of course, *J.R.R. Tolkien Author of The Century*, Shippey 2001. And I have even listened to audio versions of *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of The Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. Together all of these books work to present a portrait of J.R.R. Tolkien that does not separate the events of his life from the major events of the 20th Century and in a sense modernism, which he seemed to abhor. This distaste excepted only the tape recorder, which according to Carpenter Tolkien became quite proficient with even to the point of doing his own sound effects for radio productions for the dramatization of his own works.

www.conjose.org/ or by writing to info@conjose.org.

FORTHCOMING

- Alkon, Paul K. *Science Fiction Before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology*. Routledge, Feb 2002. Reprint of Twayne, 1994 ed
- Anderson, Craig. *Science Fiction Films of the Seventies*. McFarland, Jan 2002
- Applebaum, Robert. *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge UP, Feb 2002
- Attebery, Brian. *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*. Routledge, Sep 2002
- Banker, Ashok. *Stephen King. Pocket Essentials, distributed by Trafalgar Square*, Mar 2002
- Belford, Barbara. *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula. Da Capo*, Feb 02. Reprint of 1996 ed.
- Bridger, Francis. *A Charmed Life: the Spirituality of Potterworld*. Image Books, Oct 2002
- Burgess, Catherine. *A.S. Byatt's Possession: A Reader's Guide*. Continuum, Mar 2002
- Campbell, Janis & Cathy Collison. *Authors By Request: An Inside Look at Your Favorite Writers*. Beyond Words Pub, Jun 2002
- Carter, Steven. *A Do-It-Yourself Dystopia: the Americanization of Big Brother*. UP of America, Apr 2002
- Cavallaro, Dani. *The Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear*. Continuum, Mar 2002
- Colbert, David. *The Magical Worlds of Harry Potter: a Treasury of Myths, Legends, and Fascinating Facts*. Berkley, Jun 2002
- Conte, Joseph Mark. *Design and Debris: A Chaotics of Postmodern American Fiction*. U of Alabama Pr, Apr 2002
- Cooke, Brett. *Human Nature in Utopia: Zamyatin's We*. Northwest-

ern UP, Jan 2002

Dighe, Ranjit S. *The Historian's Wizard of Oz: Reading L. Frank Baum's Classic as a Political and Monetary Allegory*. Praeger, Apr 2002

Fenner, Cathi & Arnie. *Spectrum 9: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*. Underwood, Oct 2002

Heilman, Elizabeth., ed. *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*. Routledge Falmer,

Hogle, Jerrold E. *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge UP, Oct 2002

Jancovich, Mark. *Horror, the Film Reader*. Routledge, Feb 2002

Kelleghan, Fiona. *Classics of Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Magill, 2 vols, Jan 2002

Larbalestier, Justine. *The Battle of the Sexes in Science Fiction*. Wesleyan UP, Jun 2002

Leggett, Paul. *Terence Fisher: Horror, Myth and Religion*. McFarland, Jan 2002

Lewis, Leon. *Eccentric Individuality in William Kotzwinkle's The Fan Man, E.T., Doctor Rat, and Other Works of Fiction and Fantasy*. Edwin Mellen Press, Mar 2002

Lucanio, Patrick & Gary Coville. *Smokin' Rockets: The Romance of Technology in American Film, Radio and Television*. McFarland, Jun 2002

Martin, Philip. *The Writer's Guide to Fantasy Literature from Dragon's Lair to Hero's Quest*. Writer Books, Feb 2002

Marvin, Thomas E. *Kurt Vonnegut: A Critical Companion*. Greenwood, Apr 2002

Miles, Robert. *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy*. 2d ed. Manchester UP, Mar 2002

Morgan, Jack. *The Biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*. Southern IL UP, Oct 2002

Mulhall, Stephen. *On Film*. Routledge, Jan 2002

Olson, Paul A. *The Kingdom of Sci-*

All aforementioned books work together to convince me that J.R.R. Tolkien was twice as clever as nearly the entire body of his critics. He left them with the fragments so that they might create the mythology out of the shards and fragments of his imagination. Thus his mythology became a kind of living thing rather than something he set down with almost pedestrian intentionality at a particular point in time.

Much of Jane Chance's argument for *Tolkien's Art: A Mythology for England* is grounded upon a section she has cut and pasted from an excerpt from Letter 131 in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. The letter is addressed to the publisher Milton Waldman in 1951. As Chance presents to us that excerpt she claims that J.R.R. Tolkien does clearly state his intention to create a "Mythology for England with a Northern Flavor." But what she does not state is that the letter is several thousand words long and she has taken one small part out of context. To me, reading the letter in its entirety tells us more about Tolkien's intentions than any excerpt. Tolkien is making an argument before what he thinks is a sympathetic publisher. This losing argument was for the inseparability of *The Lord of The Rings* from *The Silmarillion* after Rayner Unwin and his son deemed the *Silmarillion* to be unpublishable in its current form in 1951. Buried elsewhere in that same letter, J.R.R. Tolkien refers to himself almost as a working scientist creating a thought experiment with language, which perhaps gives validity to a science fictional reading of his work others have done elsewhere.

I am not wholly qualified to judge if Jane Chance is correct to so extensively integrate Tolkien's use of medieval sources in the body of his life's work. But I think it gives far too little weight to the role history (in the smaller personal sense) takes. Tolkien's personal distance from economic necessity, and the rules of the publishing game, also played a part in the construction of Middle Earth. For example, in a letter to Rayner Unwin dated June 22, 1952, (after publisher Milton Waldman also finds *The Lord of the Rings* unpublishable in the author's preferred form), we find a very contrite Tolkien—faced with the prospect of an impoverished retirement of paper grading, and tutoring—willing to cave in on the delayed publication of the *Silmarillion* (which we can now say, with historical hindsight, was in an unpublishable form at that time). Perhaps this is because of the multiple forms in which his drafts were found. The unfeasibility of Tolkien's attempts to integrate it into *The Lord of the Rings* is evidenced by its rejection by two sympathetic publishers, both Waldman and Unwin.

I think in *The Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power* Jane Chance shows her weakest link. Chance assumes she can speak about the history of the last half of the twentieth century English-speaking world with the same authority that she speaks of the Middle Ages. To quote the blurb from *Library Journal* on the back cover: "The author has taken a complex convoluted masterpiece, and dissected it with a clear and concise style. Fans of the Tolkien classic will love it." I am forced to ask, almost rhetorically, why they should, since this is the way J.R.R. Tolkien least liked to see literature treated. After all, J.R.R. Tolkien "Preferred the Soup to the Bones" according to Guy Gavriel Kay, an allegorical reference to the folly of dismantling the old tower made of different types of stone to find its purpose (Carpenter & Shippey). Finally an illuminating piece is added to this puzzle by one of the last published letters of Tolkien's lifetime, letter 346 (Dec 13 1972). This letter was in reply to a reader who asked for Tolkien's help in an academic project. "See *The Lord of The Rings* Vol. 1, p. 272[.] 'he [or she] who breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.' I should not seem inclined to help with these destructive processes."

Lest you think I am some kind of critical Luddite arguing for the impossibility of critical treatments, it can and has been done by many: Humphrey Carpenter, Verlyn Fleigher, and Richard West as well as Douglas Anderson, Tom Shippey, and of course Christopher Tolkien most of all. But it must be done with the greatest care. Again from that same letter . . . "It is also that I [p 93] 'Do not meddle in the affairs of Wizards for they are subtle and quick to anger.'"

Applying Tolkien's caution to Chance's linking of Tolkien's work to the Horrors of World War Two and The German Submarine Blockade of 1946, one must point out that WW II ended in 1945. To link Tolkien's popularity to the Cold War may work, but not the Korean War, since it ended in 1953, a year before the first appearance of *The Fellowship of The Ring*. These quibbles are a bit mean spirited on my part, and in a sense not outside the warrant of Chance's rhetorical license. But suggesting that the French and English academic worlds were analogous enough to make the use of Foucault's theories of institutional power relevant to power in *The Lord of The Rings* left me breathless with indignation. Besides, anything French was right behind allegory in Tolkien's hit list of cordial dislikes, as is this kind of criticism, in which it feels like both the subject and the reader are pushed off the page.

NONFICTION REVIEW

STAR TREK: THE HUMAN FRONTIER

Susan Eisenhour

Barrett, Michèle and Duncan Barrett. *Star Trek: The Human Frontier*. Routledge, 29, West 35th Street, New York, NY, 2001. xv + 244 p. ills. \$18.95. ISBN 0-415-92982-2 (pkb).

This book looks at the entire *Star Trek* franchise as a way to explore what it means to be human, particularly in contrast to various non-humans; and how this preoccupation with humanity has changed, in the growth of the series, from a modern to a post-modern perspective.

The authors' (mother and teen-aged son) begin this examination of the *Trek* journey with a lengthy chapter on the nautical, "starry sea" metaphor. They compare it to several examples of maritime narratives, particularly Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. They delve into the place exploration has in colonialism and the role the sea itself plays, either as a simple backdrop or an active character. This body of literature is explored as a forerunner to the use of space as an integral part of the *Star Trek* world, and it is well-done, though I found the criticism of Melville and Conrad rather more lengthy and exhaustive than necessary in a book ostensibly concerning *Star Trek*.

More interesting were the two chapters dealing with *Trek's* exploration of the nature of humanity and the post-modern feel of the later series, *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*.

Principally in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, humanity was shown as being on trial for its actions both past and present. The first and last episodes of this series provided a frame of this trial and several of the episodes dealt with the question of humanity's behavior, goals and morals. As the authors' show, *The Next Generation* made a case for the defense: humans, having made Earth a paradise, are trying to spread this to the rest of the known universe. The Barretts site many examples in specific episodes to highlight the humanist, modern viewpoint first offered by Gene Roddenberry in the original series.

When *Deep Space Nine* debuted, however, it was advertised as a darker vision of the *Star Trek* world, and lived up to this promise. We found a station where conflict was not limited to "us" against "them": the crew against the alien of the week. There was tension and disagreement between the regular personnel of the station; between the Federation officers and their Bajoran comrades; between the Bajoran leaders and dissident factions; between even Federation officers in space and the distant leaders on Earth. The Barretts have provided a telling exploration of the post-modern features of both this series and *Voyager*.

This book is unusual for a critique of *Star Trek* in that the authors' explore not only the various television series, but also published novels and fan fiction. This implies that they see the changing vision of *Star Trek* not just as a function of a particular person (as the original series and *The Next Generation*



ence: *Literary Utopianism and British Education, 1612-1870*. U of Nebraska Pr, Dec 2002

Palmer, Chris. *Philip D. Dick and the Postmodern*. Liverpool UP, distributed by ISBS, May 2002

Pepetone, Gregory G. *Gothic Perspectives in the American Experience*. Peter Lang, May 2002

Pierson, Michele. *Special Effects: Still In Search of Wonder*. Columbia UP, Jul 2002

Rackham, Arthur. *Rackham's Fairy Tales Illustrations in Full Color*. Dover, Feb 2002

Rockoff, Adam. *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film, 1978-1986*. McFarland, Jan 2002

Rosenberg, Teya. *Diana Wynne Jones: An Exciting and Exacting Wisdom*. Peter Lang, Mar 2002

Russell, Sharon A. *Revisiting Stephen King: A Critical Companion*. Greenwood, Jul 2002

Salomon, Roger B. *Mazes of the Serpent: An Anatomy of Horror Narrative*. Cornell UP, Aug 2002

Schakel, Peter J. *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis: Journeying to Narnia and Other Worlds*. U of Missouri Pr, Jul 2002

Senf, Carol A. *Science and Social Science in Bram Stoker's Fiction*. Greenwood, Oct 2002

Shapiro, Jerome Franklin. *Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film*. Routledge, Mar 2002

Smith, Don G. *H.G. Wells on Film: The Utopian Nightmare*. McFarland, Feb 2002

Svehla, Gary & Susan. *Memories of Hammer*. Luminary Press (Baltimore), Mar 2002

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels: Based on the 1726 Text: Contexts, Criticism*. Norton, Jan 2002. Lack editor's name

The Art of Jeffrey Jones.
Underwood, Aug 2002

Valente, Joseph. *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood*. U of IL Pr, Jan 2002

Weaver, Tom. *Science Fiction Confidential: Interviews with 23 Monster stars and Filmmakers*. McFarland, Feb 2002

Wein, Toni. *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824*. Palgrave, Mar 2002

Westfahl, Gary, George E. Slusser & David Leiby, eds. *World Enough and Time: Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Greenwood, Jul 2002

Winter, Douglas E. *Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic*. HarperCollins, UK, Dec 2001

Yaszek, Lisa. *The Self Wired: Technology and Subjectivity in Contemporary Narrative*. Routledge, July 2002

Yorke, Malcolm. *Mervyn Peake, A Life: My Eyes Mint Gold*

CFPs

WHAT: "What Might Be Going to Have Been: Dark Myths and Legends."

WHO: The 24th International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts

WHERE: Fort Lauderdale Airport Hilton

WHEN: March 19 to March 23, 2003

TOPICS: The conference theme is "Dark Myths and Legends" and special guests will include Charles de Lint, Ramsey Campbell, and S.T. Joshi. Proposals should be submitted to the appropriate Division Head by 15 October 2003. The Division Head for Science Fiction Literature and Theory is Greg Beatty, University of Phoenix On-Line (e-mail: gbeatty@earthlink.net). More information about the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts and about the upcoming conference can be found at the IFAF website: <http://www.iafa.org>.

were certainly Gene Roddenberry's vision) but of a change in the culture this series mirrors.

There are many pictures of the various *Star Trek* casts, perhaps to illustrate the multi-cultural make-up of the crews for those who might not be familiar with the actors. Or, since probably only fans would pick up this book in the first place, perhaps because fans like pictures of the show.

It has an index of episodes discussed, which makes it easy for fans to look up their most loved or most hated show without having to read the whole book. There is also a general index and a very nice bibliography, covering not only *Trek* criticism, but colonial and maritime studies, humanism, post-modernism, cyborg studies cultural theory and *Trek* novels.

NONFICTION REVIEW

STAR TREK AND SACRED GROUND: EXPLORATIONS OF STAR TREK, RELIGION, AND AMERICAN CULTURE

Edward F. Higgins

Porter, Jennifer E. and Darcee L. McLaren. *Star Trek and Sacred Ground: Explorations of Star Trek, Religion, and American Culture*. State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, N. Y., 12246, November 1999. vii + 315 p. \$63.50. 0-791-44333-7; \$21.95, trade paper, 0-791-44334-5. Orders to 800-666-2211.

Porter and McLaren bring together thirteen interesting essays on their focus topic of religion in Star Trek. The various essays range over identified aspects of spirituality, mythic, and religious themes and motifs from the original TV series through *Voyager* and the Star Trek movies. There's also a look at the quasi-religious treatment by fans of Star Trek as modern myth and futuristic vision. The several contributors (the editors themselves each have separate essays, with another co-authored, and their introduction) all come out of religious and/or cultural studies fields. This sometimes betrays a lack of literary critical sophistication, but such turf snootiness on my part isn't to minimize the interpretative insights and overall excellence brought to bear from their own disciplinary perspectives.

The essays are grouped around three section headings: six essays, under "Religion in Star Trek," examine the successive television series; four essays in the second section, "Religious and Mythic Themes," trace more global aspects of the series and films, such as biblical imagery, spiritual quest, death/life meditations, and other symbolic parallels found in storylines and themes; a final three-essay section, "Religion and Ritual in Fandom," addresses fan appropriation of meaning and religious-like values through meta-narratives and mythology.

The undergirding claim of the volume's approach is that while Star Trek's treatment of religion as an explicit focus has been minimal, religious themes and symbols are nevertheless significantly present as "a consistent subtext throughout the entire Star Trek franchise." While no coherent portrayal or treatment of religion emerges from the Star Trek world, the contributors readily make the case for a much "informed by" religious take reflecting general cultural and societal attitudes towards religion. In this regard, the essayists limit themselves to American cultural versions of historical Christianity—although Native American and New Age spirituality do extend these boundaries. No exploration of Eastern, Islamic, or Jewish religious echoes or probable contributions are explored.

Until DS9 and *Voyager* with its more positive portrayal of religion and religious characters (mainly Worf, Kira, Chakotay), faith-based religion is primarily a negative presentation: seen as outdated, superstitious, or irrational. Roddenberry's own scientism and secular humanism are understood to have provided this negative focus, as an analysis of the Classic Star Trek series strongly reveals. A more

affirming notion of religious faith values emerges in the later series, however. While given a conscious and more thoughtful treatment this later view tends to be “local” religion, still largely marginalized by a normative Federation scientific and technological worldview. Still, much of the explicit questioning of this secular-scientific ethos finds moderating and mediating influences in episodes and instances depicting the spiritual experiences of Commander Chakotay, Kes, Sisko as Emissary, or even Captain Janeway herself in a key third season Voyager episode titled, “Sacred Ground.” Directly, and with main-focus characters in some of the later series episodes, religion is legitimately upheld alongside science as an informing human value for given individuals as well as whole societies.

The fandom discussions struck me as the least interesting, but likely this only reveals my lack of curiosity about such. Someone more invested in fan culture analysis would no doubt find the social science-anthropology treatments more appealing, or indeed useful. Porter herself has an intriguing essay on fan conventions, exploring their “liminality and communitas” as echoing traditional religious pilgrimage experience. (Her theological pop-culture analysis might well awaken the nature of one’s own next quasi-religious journey to a Star Trek or other Con!)

I think this collection would definitely be of interest and use to anyone teaching or researching the religious, philosophical, or mythopoetic worldview in Star Trek. The volume provides a convenient bibliography of Star Trek-related and other studies of academic religio-cultural analysis. There’s a good general index to all the essays and a separate index to the TV episodes and movies cited. This collection performs well its intended task of a substantive analysis of Star Trek’s negative to positive religious diversity and spirituality. Along with the more recently published *Religions of Star Trek* (Westview Press, 2001), this study should be a welcome addition to the growing study of the canon’s presumptive sacred ground.

NONFICTION REVIEW

INTERACTING WITH BABYLON 5

Rebecca Lucy Busker

Lancaster, Kurt. *Interacting with Babylon 5*. Austin: U Texas Press, 2001. 256 pages, paperback, \$22.95. ISBN 0-292-74722-5.

In his introduction to *Interacting with Babylon 5*, media scholar Henry Jenkins argues that scholarly treatment of role-playing games is long overdue. Kurt Lancaster’s intriguing application of performance theory to *Babylon 5*-related activities examines the ways in which role-playing games, war games, collectible card games, CD-ROM, fan fiction, and web sites allow fans to immerse themselves in a fictional universe, recapturing and extending the experience of the source material.

Approaching the material both as a scholar and as an experienced role-player, Lancaster brings an insider’s perspective to his treatment. He begins by establishing the context for fan interaction with *Babylon 5*, and simultaneously establishing his theory, through a history of creator J. Michael Straczynski’s internet participation. He then moves on to examine how the role-playing game, the war game, and the collectible card game all allow players to draw on the shared experience of program episodes and characters to immerse themselves in the *Babylon 5* universe, recreating and even expanding on the television experience. Lancaster critiques the *Official Guide to Babylon 5* CD-ROM, arguing that the advertising rhetoric promises a degree of interactivity that the product itself fails to deliver. Finally, he examines how fan fiction and fan web sites allow fans to participate in the construction of the fictional universe.

Lancaster’s own experience as a role player clearly informs his analysis, and the perspective is refreshing. He is especially skilled at describing

WHAT: *Classical Myths in Recent Literature and Film (Paper Session)*

WHO: *The Southwest Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association*

WHERE: *The 24th Annual Meeting at the Albuquerque Hilton and Fairfield Inn by Marriott in Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

WHEN: *February 12-15, 2003*

TOPICS: *Papers on any aspect of classical mythology in modern literature and film are eligible for consideration. Possible topics include (but are not limited to): film versions of ancient myths; modern adaptations of classical material in film, music, or literature; the classical heroic figure in modern film or literature; historical fiction in modern film or literature; and classical myth in children’s literature or film.*

SUBMISSIONS: *Presentations will be limited to 20 minutes. Basic information about the site, travel, and other conference matters can be found on the web site: www.swtexaspca.org. Check back periodically for updates as conference preparations progress!*

CONTACT: *Direct abstracts to Kirsten Day at lkday@uark.edu. All abstracts should be limited to 500 words.*

DEADLINE: *December 10, 2002.*

WHAT: *The Fourth Annual Conference on English Studies and the Uses of Popular Culture.*

WHO: *The University of Rhode Island Graduate Students of English.*

WHERE: *University of Rhode Island’s Kingston Campus.*

WHEN: *Friday and Saturday October 11-12, 2002.*

TOPICS: *This conference has been established to explore how the English academic community uses popular culture to inform, understand, teach, and articulate the literary canon, rhetorical studies, critical theory, pedagogy, and the other fields comprising English studies. While the conference is not a*

discussion of popular culture in itself, it does deign to examine how popular culture can affect and has affected English studies, and how those who study English incorporate notions arising out of popular culture into their work. Papers could include discussions of film versions of literature, exploring how to use popular culture in a teaching environment, examinations of the popular culture of any given literary era and how that popular culture has filtered down or adapted to the modern day, or any other concept combining popular culture and English studies.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit papers or 250-word abstracts.

DEADLINE: August 1, 2002.

CONTACT:Theresa DeFrancis, Department of English, Independence Hall, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881. E-mail:

tdef6304@postoffice.uri.edu

WHAT:Celtic Popular Culture (Conference)

WHO: Center for Celtic Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

WHEN: October 5, 2002

WHERE:The Irish Cultural and Heritage Center in Milwaukee

TOPIC:The Center for Celtic Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee invites papers for a one-day conference on the theme of the Celtic influences on popular culture. The conference will be a broad examination of the everyday life of Celtic societies past and present. This conference is designed to bring together the academic and the lay scholar in an exploration of the ways in which a cultural group's statement of quotidian experience survives and thrives through changing times, politics and geographies. What are the links between popular culture and history, politics, economics, language, and psychology in the Celtic regions and those countries influenced by them?

the principles and procedures of the various games, even the fairly complex system of the collectible card game. His explanations of his theory are equally clear: he lays out the basics of performance theory with a minimum of jargon. Nor does he allow his clear admiration of the program and its creator to overly color his analysis, as his critique of the CD-Rom demonstrates.

If Lancaster's study has one conceptual flaw, it is a lack of distinction between games which are based on television shows, movies, and books, and those whose fictional universes are original to the games. Lancaster claims that "the general principles comprising the experience as a certain type of performance are universal" (xxv). However, the common theme of his analysis is the ability of fans to draw on the collective experience of the television program to construct those performances. While players of role-playing, war, and collectible card games not based on existing sources certainly do immerse themselves in a shared fictional universe, they are not (as Lancaster claims of *Babylon 5*-related games) recreating and expanding on existing characters and scenes.

Also, while any study of participatory media fandom would be incomplete without mention of fan fiction, Lancaster might have been better served by avoiding the topic. His four-page treatment of *Babylon 5* fan fiction adds little to the existing treatments of the topic. More importantly, it overlooks the gendered nature of fan fiction; having mentioned in the introduction that the typical role player is a white male, Lancaster's failure to indicate in any way that fan fiction is a predominantly female activity is an odd omission.

Despite these issues, Lancaster's examination is both intriguing and entertaining. Accessible both to the scholar unfamiliar with gaming and the fan/gamer unfamiliar with performance theory, *Interacting with Babylon 5* is a must-read for the scholar-fan.

NONFICTION REVIEW

**SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA:
FROM OUTERSPACE TO CYBERSPACE**

Bruce A. Beatie

Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska. *Science Fiction Cinema. From Outerspace to Cyberspace*. London: Wallflower Press, 2000; distributed by Columbia University Press, December 2001 (Short Cuts: Introductions to Film Studies). x + 128 pages. \$16.95. ISBN 1-90336-403-5.

The authors of this little monograph acknowledge thanks to "the students on our 'Science Fictions' module at Brunei University" (ix), and indeed the book seems aimed more at students than at scholars or the general reader, especially considering the odd "Glossary" (114-118) which, though it includes such technical terms as "Manga" and "diegetic music," also defines "rationality" and "science." After a brief introduction, titled "Spectacle and Speculation" (1-8) that lays out the topics to be covered, the next 50 pages are a long chapter defining science fiction in terms of its narrative themes. The chapter's coverage is clear from its subheadings: Science Fiction as a Genre (9-11), Humanity versus Science, Technology and Rationality (11-13), Rational Dreams and Technological Nightmares: Utopia and Dystopia in Science Fiction Cinema (13-22), Travels in Space, Time and Scale (22-37), Gender, Sex and Science Fiction (37-43), Madmen, Sceptics and Nerds: Images of the Scientist (43-50), Horror and Science Fiction (50-54), and Science Fiction and the Postmodern (54-57). The discussion is more descriptive than analytical; in general, when discussing a given theme, several films are listed by title as examples, without specifics.

The second chapter, titled "Industrial Light and Magic," turns to the technicalities of film. The subheadings again provide the best description of the chapter contents—and the headings are sometimes more interesting than the text: Science Fiction, Spectacle and the 'New Hollywood' (58-60), Blockbusters

(60-63), Special Effects (63-68), 'Sounds Weird': Music and Sound in Science Fiction Cinema (68-72), Shaping Things to Come: The Design of Science Fiction (72-82), Robots and Rayguns: Computers, Gadgets and Gizmos (82-90), and Interactivity and Immersion: Beyond the Second Dimension (90-94). This last section, which speculates on the future interrelationships between SF films, computer games, and "virtual reality," is more interesting than most; but after imagining some far-reaching possibilities, the authors conclude that "The themes explored by interactive or immersive forms of science fiction are generally familiar ones from the genre and there is no evidence of any near-future shift to a radically new dimension of big-screen entertainment . . ." (94).

The final chapter is a "Case Study: *Star Wars: Episode 1—The Phantom Menace*" (95-113), and is probably the best part of the book, though it is overly terse and somewhat slanted, beginning with a rather Marxian analysis of the way economics determines content, and concluding with a reminder that "the heroic figures of *The Phantom Menace* are white males, constructed according to the dictates of a white and male-dominated society rather than any universal realm." (112)

The book has no index (a real frustration, if one wishes to check the comments on any one film), and ends with a glossary (mentioned above), a filmography, and a bibliography. The filmography lists the titles only of 151 films, with director, date, and country of origin (plus 11 television series). J. P. Telotte's slightly more recent *Science Fiction Film* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), reviewed separately in this journal, also offers a "Select Filmography of the American Science Fiction Film" (225-244) that lists 151 films—but Telotte provides much more information about each film. Only 67 films turn up in both filmographies. The final bibliography is as short, proportionally, as the rest of the book (124-128), but its "Essential Reading" section (124-125) does annotate the entries briefly. Vivian Sobchack's *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film* (2nd enlarged ed., Rutgers University Press, 1997) offers a much more extensive bibliography. The collection of essays edited by I. Q. Hunter as *British Science Fiction Cinema* (Routledge, 1999) offers an extensive filmography ordered by date, rather than alphabetically, and includes a number of films also in the King/Krzywinska and Telotte lists.

NONFICTION REVIEW

WHAT IF? 2: EMINENT HISTORIANS IMAGINE WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Ed McKnight

Cowley, Robert (ed.). *What If? 2: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*. Putnam Publishing Group, 1 Grossett Drive, Kirkwood, NY, 2001. 416 pages, \$28.95, Hardback ISBN 0399147950.

I have two chief complaints about much of the "non-fiction" alternative history (known by the historians that produce it as "counterfactual history") published in such popular anthologies as Niall Ferguson's *Virtual History* (1997) and Robert Cowley's *What If?* (1999).

First, it is almost always premised on an alternative outcome to a military conflict, or a different set of strategic conditions going into one, rather than on the innumerable possible variations in history that might have arisen from changes in the economic, religious, artistic, technological, scientific, philosophical, or political realms. This is a weakness it shares with many fictional alternative histories, from the "Napoleon wins at Waterloo" scenario to its even more popular cousin, "Lee wins at Gettysburg."

Second, it rarely ventures far from its starting point. The alternative history essay often concludes where an alternative history novel begins—by contemplating the profound importance of a particular historical event, and won-

The conference will address such questions as how do Celtic traditions survive and percolate through to the present? In what ways do the cultures of Celtic societies differ between and within each other? In a globalizing world, what is the relevance of maintaining notions of Celtic identity? How has Celtic popular culture been transformed in its encounters with other, often radically different societies, both in America and elsewhere? What does the future of Celtic Studies hold?

We invite papers from scholars and practitioners in all disciplines who are interested in exploring and discussing the above-mentioned themes. Work is especially invited from graduate students and independent scholars. All papers will be considered for publication in *ekeltoi*, the electronic journal of the Center for Celtic Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

The featured keynote speaker is Lawrence McCaffrey. The event will be held at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center in Milwaukee, and will include lively musical and artistic performances. The cost of registration is ten dollars.

Paper topics could include but are not limited to the following areas: film, sport, food, clothing, books, music, dance, language, television, painting and advertising.

SUBMISSION: Send brief abstracts and biographical information.

CONTACT: akincaid@uwm.edu.

DEADLINE: August 21 2002

WHAT: Blacks In Science Fiction: A New Frontier (Conference)

WHERE: Howard University, Washington, D.C.

WHEN: March 27-28, 2003

TOPIC: This interdisciplinary conference aims to engage the literature of African-American science fiction writers and their role in defining the genre. Cre-

ating a forum that will produce research and other materials necessary to further analyze the writing of black bodies in fiction and Popular Culture are all crucial goals for this conference. At its core are exchanges of ideas and identity theories surrounding the African-American in a genre of literature and film that has only recently been considered as a viable space for Black experiences.

Topics to be covered will include, but not be limited to, the list below. Contributions focusing on the works of Octavia Butler (Key Note Speaker), Tananarive Due, Nalo Hopkinson, Samuel Delaney, Steven Barnes, and LeVar Burton are particularly welcome. *The Absence/Presence of Race in Science Fiction; African-American/ Caribbean Folklore and Science Fiction; Matriarchies and Patriarchies of the Future; Speculative Fiction vs Science Fiction; Gender Construction in the Past/ Present/ Future; Embracing Difference; Sacrifice and Survival; Time Travel for the African-American; Memory as a Time Machine; Slave Narratives of the Future; Aliens and Black Bodies; Immortality and the Ancestors; Robots and Slaves; White and Other on the Silver Screen; Lilith and Other Black Witches.* SUBMISSIONS: To submit essays or get more information about conference and participants please contact the conference organizer:

CONTACT: Gregory J. Hampton, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of African-American Literature, Department of English, Howard University, Locke Hall 212, 2400 Sixth Street, Washington, D.C. 20059. Phone: (202) 806-5611. E-mail: ghampton@howard.edu.

WHAT: Technoscience, Material Culture, and Everyday Life (Conference)

WHERE: The Chinese University of Hong Kong:

WHEN: March 27 - March 29, 2003

TOPIC: This conference will explore

dering what changes might have resulted from a different outcome.

(The last line of one such essay in Cowley's previous anthology reads, frustratingly, "One might speculate upon the outcome of the battle [of Midway] had not the *Enterprise* been out of harm's way on December 7." So why doesn't one?) Unlike my first complaint, this is a weakness peculiar to the non-fiction alternative history. The science-fiction writer will readily imagine an entirely different world stemming from an alternative outcome to a single battle fought a thousand years ago, while the historian—who is arguably better qualified to speculate about history—refuses to venture beyond the timid acknowledgment that perhaps things might have turned out differently.

The subtitle of Cowley's newest anthology is "Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been." This is a change from the previous anthology's "The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been," so one might hope that my first complaint would not apply to this volume.

And to some extent this is so. The eminent historian William H. McNeill examines the impact on European (and, consequently, colonial) history if Pizarro had not discovered potatoes in Peru, concluding that "Silver and gold glittered, all right, but potatoes, inconspicuous and unnoticed at first, nevertheless were more important, since they altered the course of human history in far reaching ways, and did so repeatedly, from the time Pizarro first encountered and disdained them." In another look at the age of exploration, Theodore F. Cook, Jr. discusses the possibilities behind "The Chinese Discovery of the New World, 15th Century."

The influential role of Christianity in world history is explored in a compelling pair of essays by author Robert Katz and Carlos M. N. Eire, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Yale. In the essay with perhaps the most sweeping scale of the entire volume, Eire imagines the shape of Christianity over the course of several centuries had Pontius Pilate spared Jesus. Katz, on the other hand, examines the missed opportunities of Pope Pius XII to speak out against the Holocaust. By arguing persuasively that there were at least two historical moments at which the full weight of the Catholic Church might have brought about a change in Nazi policy toward the Jews, Katz implicates the Vatican as a passive participant in the Holocaust, and demonstrates the unique effectiveness of counterfactual argument.

But these essays are sprinkled in with a score of others about the battles of Delium, Actium, and Hastings. No fewer than seven focus on various aspects of the Second World War, from an Allied failure to crack the Enigma code to an early end to the war under Patton's inspired leadership. Each is intriguing, even fascinating, in itself, but collectively they add to the widespread belief that it is chiefly war that shapes history.

As to my second complaint, that counterfactual historians are timid creatures when compared to their colleagues across the fictional divide—how does Cowley's most recent volume measure up? Thomas Fleming indulges his imagination in "Napoleon's Invasion of North America," and Victor Davis Hanson shows a willingness to speculate about the impact on contemporary philosophy of the premature death of Socrates in 424 B.C. But most of these writers prefer to use a little bit of historical speculation in order to emphasize the significance of an actual event ("Hastings deserves its reputation as the greatest battle in English history, and a major turning point in the history of the world"), rather than to use the historical turning point as the basis for more intense speculation.

It is difficult to blame anyone with the depth of historical knowledge evidenced by these essays for wanting to stick close to what they know, rather than venturing out into the unknowable realm of mere speculation. But this is pretty weak tea when compared to the stronger brew provided by such writers as Harry Turtledove and Kim Stanley Robinson.

THE HORROR GENRE: FROM BEELZEBUB TO BLAIR WITCH

Kenneth Andrews

Wells, Paul. *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*. Wallflower Publishing Limited, London, 2001. \$16.95, paperback, 144 pages. ISBN: 1-903364-00-0.

This short book of 112 pages consists of three chapters: "Configuring the Monster," "Consensus and Constraint 1919-1960," and "Chaos and Collapse 1960-2000". "Notes" (1 p.) lists nine websites on the horror genre. "Glossary" (2 pp.) gives definitions for terms like camp, Grand Guignol, and serial killer. "Filmography" (9 pp.) from the Internet Movie DataBase has an alphabetical list of horror films, and the date and country of release. The "Bibliography" (4 pp.) is subdivided into "Essential Reading" and "Secondary Reading." There is no content index.

Paul Wells, a professor at Teesside University, developed the book from his BBC Radio series *Spinechillers: A History of the Horror Film*. The first chapter traces the evolution of the horror genre from its beginnings in gothic literature. In five pages Wells outlines critical theories of the horror genre from Marxist, Darwinian, Nietzschean, and Freudian perspectives. Later in the chapter he adds another seven pages to the Freudian discussion. The doppelganger, personal anxieties that contribute to our responses to the genre, and "reader" (or "viewer") response theory comprise the bulk of the remainder of the first chapter. Perhaps the most interesting part of the first chapter is a condensation of "viewer" responses from a series of British focus groups ("each composed of twelve people, six of each sex") and "age-graded" (16-25, 25-40, 40-55, and 55-80 years old) to their recollections of "the most frightening moment from a horror film, the behavioural impact and enduring effects of having seen particular horror texts, the reasons for having a horror genre and wanting to watch horror films, the perceived limits of the genre, and the changing nature of the genre over time" (27).

The book is ordered in approximate historical sequence. Chapter 2 (1919-1960) elaborates on the monster in gothic literature, fairy tale, and myth. Wells discusses the horror films of the silent era and the emergence of the sequel. Later in the chapter he links the social and political fears of Western (i.e., largely American) societies in the years before, during, and after the World Wars to horror films of those periods. Chapter 3 (1960-2000) looks at *Psycho* as the movie that redefined the genre in largely "psychosexual" terms (75). "The post-*Psycho* years ... opened the floodgates for horror intrinsically related to bodily torture and mutilation" (78). Based on quotes from Wes Craven and Stephen King (93-4), Wells suggests that the horror film genre has become "McDonaldized," that is, market-driven exercises in churning out an endless series of formulaic film adaptations and sequels that make the audience jump without really causing them to respond to any fundamental personal or social problem. The chapter concludes with an examination of animated horror films and urban legends.

According to the dust cover, *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch* is supposed to be "a comprehensive introduction to the history and key themes of the horror film, the main issues and debates surrounding the genre, and the approaches and theories that have been applied to horror texts." Furthermore, this text is supposed to address "the horror film in social and historical context." Two short blurbs from academicians at the University of Southampton and University College Northampton tout it as "a valuable contribution to the body of teaching texts ... a book for all undergraduates" and "informed ... high readable ... theoretically broad."

The end of Chapter 2 illustrates the frustrations of the text and the potential difficulties in using it in the undergraduate classroom. Spanish horror

the growing interconnectedness of technoscience, culture, and everyday life in the twenty-first-century global village. With the previously separated categories of science and technology inexorably merging in postmodern society, technoscience is reshaping not only our daily lives, but also the ways that we define who we are. As the new mechanisms of technoscience change our cultural forms and practices, and as the diverse implications of new means of storing and communicating information affect how we view our communities, our identities, and our bodies, cultural critics need to examine how all these factors are altering our conditions of perception and the prevailing structure of cultural experience.

One area of investigation might be the literature and scholarship of science fiction, considered as exemplary texts illustrating what goes on and what will happen in our cultural imaginary of complete human-machine interfaces, although other genres, media, and forms of societal statement can also provide insights. Issues such as feeling, embodiedness, social space, expenses, language, agency, and technological artifacts could be placed within a feedback loop of hythenation and splicing, or a projection and reciprocation dialectic. Papers which address these issues as well as the ways that technoscience can have a transformative effect on global societies — with particular attention to the kaleidoscopically diverse cultures of Hong Kong and the Asian-Pacific region — would be especially welcome.

Papers for the conference might focus on any of the following areas: science fiction and technoscience culture; technology and the media, including science fiction, action, and martial-arts films, the impact of digital special effects, and computer games; cyberfeminism, gender and technoscience, virtual gen-

der, embodiment as intercorporeality, and feminist science studies; biotechnology, genetic engineering, and material cultures; cybercultures, youth identities and communities in an online world, cyberdemocracy, cities and civic networks, virtualities, and cyberspace textuality; machine culture, human-machine interface, machine-human symbiosis, and posthumanism; and technoscience, cultural theory, and philosophy.

SUBMISSIONS: This conference is jointly sponsored by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of California, Riverside. Paper proposals may be mailed or e-mailed to either of the addresses below. Expedited letters of acceptance for applications for financial support can be provided upon request.

CONTACTS: Wong Kin Yuen, Coordinator, Chairman and Division Head, Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong CHINA. E-mail: bl14766@mailserv.cuhk.edu.hk. OR Gary Westfahl, Coordinator, The Learning Center, University of California, Riverside, California 91711 UNITED STATES. E-mail:

gary.westfahl@ucr.edu. OR Amy Chan, Coordinator, Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong, CHINA. E-mail: amykschan@cuhk.edu.hk.

DEADLINE: January 10, 2003.

WHAT: Papers for the Mid-Atlantic PCA/ACA annual conference (Conference)

WHERE: Pittsburgh, PA

WHEN: Nov. 1-3, 2002

TOPIC: Please visit

www.sunynassau.edu/users/ash2/march02.html to find the Call for Papers for the Mid-Atlantic PCA/ACA

films of the era are covered in one page. Then Wells remarks, "Similar work emerged from France and Poland, and even in Bollywood and China ..." (71). (Bollywood is repeated twice on the following page. Apparently it is a typo. However, since there is no content index, it is impossible to retrace terms without rereading the entire book.) From Spanish horror films, Wells concludes the chapter by mentioning Mexican horror films, "magic realism," and Chilean horror films, all within two pages. ("Magic realism" receives six lines in the entire book.) The author's ordering principle is also illustrated in the last chapter. Wells mentions Stephen King's "McDonaldisation" remark (above) and uses it as the entrée to film adaptations of King's works by Stanley Kubrick (*The Shining*), Rob Reiner (*Misery*), and Brian De Palma (*Carrie*). Having introduced De Palma, Wells spends one page on his contributions to the horror genre. Then Wells returns to the "McDonaldization" issue (i.e., routinized commercialization) by jumping to the *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchises. Wells also has a disconcerting habit of quoting material without providing a proper citation.

All in all, I only recommend this book as a "quick and dirty" overview of the horror genre and its manifestation in horror films. You can read it in three or four hours and come away with a modest grasp of the main issues in the genre. However, this text does not have enough depth of coverage to use in the undergraduate classroom.

NONFICTION REVIEW

FANTASY OF THE 20TH CENTURY: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

Neil Barron

Broecker, Randy. *Fantasy of the 20th Century. An Illustrated History*. Collectors Press, Box 230986, Portland, OR 907281, November 2001. 256 p. \$60. 1-888054-52-2. Orders to 800-423-1848

This is the third and final book in the publisher's trio of heavily illustrated coffee table books preceded by the SF (1999) and horror (2000) volumes, both reviewed in these pages. The author, a Chicago resident, is said to be a long-time artist and collector, but he isn't listed in any of the standard works on fantasy illustration or literature.

As with the companion volumes, the text is dominated by the illustrations, and much of the narrative is little more than a seemingly endless listing of authors and titles. The sequence of chapters is roughly chronological, beginning with an obligatory sketch of the progenitors of modern fantasy, including *Beowulf*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Faerie Queen*, Shakespeare, Morris, MacDonald, Dunsany, etc. The popular lost race theme is discussed in the works of Haggard, Doyle, Burroughs, Merritt (an apparent favorite of the author), Francis Stevens, Mundy, etc., with some attention paid to illustrators of the period such as Brundage, Bok and Finlay. *Unknown* gets a chapter, followed by later pulps such as *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* and *Avon Fantasy Reader* leading to the digests and mass market paperbacks as the successors of the pulps. Sword and sorcery is explored in some detail. SF and horror film are treated as distinct genres, but fantasy film is not in the same sense, and few outstanding works are discussed in the film chapter. Lin Carter's editing of Ballantine's Adult Fantasy line, which lasted five years, is praised. A chapter each is devoted to British writers and to contemporary tellers of fantasy tales.

The scope of the book is largely limited to Anglo-American writers and further limited to genre fantasy, too much of it formulaic. (The cover of a sorcerer and the end papers featuring toothy dragons, both by Donato Giancola, reinforce the formulaic nature of the book.) There's no mention of the tradition of magic realism, non-English language writers are rarely mentioned, nor are most writers not identified as "fantasy" writers, such as Barth, Barthelme, Angela Carter,

Jonathan Carroll, etc. But these colorful surveys aren't intended to be systematic histories, much less critical accounts, so one approaches them with modest expectations. Collectors will enjoy the images of the pristine books and magazines, and they are the main audience. Most libraries and scholars can skip.

FICTION REVIEW

JENNA STARBORN

Amelia A. Rutledge

Sharon Shinn, *Jenna Starborn*, New York: Ace, 2002. (Reviewed from uncorrected page proofs.) 381 pages. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN 0-441-00900-X.

The cover of *Jenna Starborn* proclaims its plot—a “new twist on” Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Jenna is rejected by the woman who commissioned her *in vitro* gestation in favor of the son born via a prosthetic “artificial womb.” Classified in her rigidly hierarchical society as a “half-cit[izen],” Jenna is trained at a harsh, but not abusive school as a nuclear systems technician. Employed by the wealthy Everett Ravenbeck, she is befriended by the housekeeper, Mrs. Farraday, her employer’s ward, and the latter’s governess, Janet Ayerson. She falls in love with Ravenbeck and those familiar with Brontë’s novel can predict the outcome.

Innumerable popular romances have adapted the plot structure of *Jane Eyre* without such obtrusively pervasive allusions. Ironically, dependence on the 1847 novel defeats the science fiction potential of Shinn’s novel. The social structure that disenfranchises highly-trained technicians (the heavily-taxed half-cits cannot inherit property and have little chance to purchase a higher rank) is more described than subjected to critical consideration. Janet Ayerson, who seizes her one chance to rise in society, is relegated to a moment of pathos and an allusion to a career potentially more engaging than that of the protagonist; her story would be the *real* updating of Brontë. Cyborg technology creates a harrowing case study in the demented wife, and the conversation between Jenna and Everett after the fatal revelation raises a novel’s worth of serious issues, none of which are pursued.

Shinn has demonstrated a penchant for romanticized plots, but also more originality, in her “Samaria” novels. *Jenna Starborn* may amuse as we wonder how the next episode will be reworked, but it is a *jeu d’esprit* that goes on far too long.

FICTION REVIEW

PICOVERSE

Matthew Wolf-Meyer

Metzger, Robert A. *Picoverse*. New York: Ace, 2002. 389 p. \$22.95, hardcover. ISBN: 0-441-00899-2

With a cover quote from, and a special thanks to, Gregory Benford, the former situating Metzger’s work as “a hard SF read at high velocity,” *Picoverse* raises a number of questions, not so much about itself being hard SF (which I make no claims to argue for or against), but rather about the state of the art of hard SF *en toto*.

Picoverse, technologically speaking, relies on a machine referred to as a Sonomak – a super-super-collider that, as a side effect, creates time-space anomalies that result in wormholes opening to other, parallel realities. These realities spawn from the reality where the Sonomak is present, and due to some form of relativity, move at a faster rate than the original universe moves at, so a person can go into one of these parallel universes for only a matter of “real-time” seconds, and come back greatly aged. I’m not sure whether this is “science” or “philoso-

annual conference. It is to be held this year Nov. 1-3, 2002 in Pittsburgh, PA. Submissions of individual papers and panels in established areas as well as open topics are welcomed from faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students.

WHAT: *Tough Women in Contemporary Popular Culture: a New Anthology on Depictions of Tough Women in Popular Culture (Anthology)*

TOPIC: *For a new anthology on the depiction of tough women in contemporary popular culture (1985-present), I am seeking essays that explore the complex depictions of tough women in popular culture. How are women’s roles influenced and shaped by depictions of tough women? How do different popular genres depict tough women? Are these new depictions progressive? How does popular culture depict tough women from different races, classes, and ethnic backgrounds? How is toughness in women constituted differently than in men? The range of materials that could be addressed is vast: toys, television shows, films, video games, comic books, to name just a few. Essays that adopt an interdisciplinary approach to their material are welcome, as are ones that discuss race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Essays should be lively, vibrant, and engaging; they should be of broad interest to scholars in many academic disciplines from the humanities, including history, women’s studies, English, American studies, Chicana Studies, Asian-American studies, and African-American studies.*

SUBMISSIONS: *Articles should be 8,000 to 10,000 words (including notes and references); accompanying photographs are welcome. Please send completed article and curriculum vita.*
CONTACT: *Dr. Sherrie A. Inness, Department of English, 1601 Peck Boulevard, Miami University, Hamilton, Ohio 45011 (inness@muohio.edu).*

DEADLINE: October 1, 2002. *Early submissions are encouraged.*

WHAT: *The Influence of Children's Literature (Essay Collection)*

TOPIC: *Submissions are invited for a collection of essays on the influence of children's literature on writers for adults. Writers for adults are generally acknowledged to be deeply influenced by their childhood reading, both in theme and technique; I invite proposals or completed articles that investigate the way in which childhood reading is internalized and then constantly transformed. (For example, Hemingway acknowledged a debt to Treasure Island; how has his love for this book affected his work stylistically or thematically?) Both scholarly treatments of such influences and essays from creative writers themselves will be included.*

SUBMISSIONS: *Send abstracts (with working titles) or completed papers.*

CONTACT: Betty Greenway, Dept. of English, Youngstown State University, One University Plaza, Youngstown, OH 44555. E-mail queries welcome (bettygreenway@aol.com).

DEADLINE: 30 October 2002

WHAT: *Zines and Everyday Life: The Anatomy of an Independent Medium (Essay Collection)*

TOPIC: *Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "Zines and Everyday Life: The Anatomy of an Independent Medium." The purpose of this book is to evaluate the role of zines as a method of communication and as a form of cultural production. Ideally this collection will be a comprehensive introductory textbook for the study of zines, independent media, and culture, and will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.*

Possible topics include historical interrogations of zines, and their cultural significance, as well as media-based

phy" (or whether these categories are entirely meaningless at this point), but it seems plausible enough, within our understanding of science, to propel a novel.

This is not to imply that I disliked *Picoverse*—quite the opposite, actually. Because *Picoverse* is so theoretical in nature, it seems more at home in the realm of purely speculative, or fantastic, science fiction, much more than historical hard SF, tied as it is to the strict possibilities of science. Metzger may cringe to read this, but, quite simply, *Picoverse* shows how non-scientific (in the boring sense) science has become. The rise of quantum theory, and the further implication of relativity in everyday life, means that hard SF, at least of this sort, isn't really "hard" anymore—this is the sort of science fiction, however fantastic it might be, that applies to real life (it might be worth reading Paul Virilio in this sense, an architect that has embraced abstract theory, particularly 2001's *A Landscape of Events*, for a further discussion of time and relativity). But this is not to say that Metzger is concerned with "everyday life."

The plot of *Picoverse* strains between the absurd and the fantastic: The standard "king of the universe," or "prince" in the case of young Anthony, is quickly overshadowed by a "god in the form of man," who work together toward the resolution of the novel. And this is even further complicated, but for the sake of the potential reader, it is worth glossing over—*Picoverse* is in some senses a mystery, both for the characters, and the readers, as the true natures and motives of the diverse cast are only slowly revealed, and often with strange aplomb. Metzger does a superb job of making his characters believable, as fantastic as they may be, and grounding his story in their interactions, rather than abstract science. In a strange turn, Metzger's version of historical characters, who show up in the parallel universes that the protagonists travel through, are more unbelievable than the fictional characters that he creates. Or maybe, even for a non-scientist, it's very hard to want to believe in an Albert Einstein that's a religious zealot.

Picoverse, the first novel from Metzger, is a promising one. It may not sate hard SF readers, but Metzger does such a superb job of working the line between hard SF and pure speculation to entertain. I look forward to his career in science fiction, knowing that his work is both compelling to read, and the implications a joy to think about—like the best hard SF *should* be.

FICTION REVIEW

OMBRIA IN SHADOW

Warren G. Rochelle

McKillip, Patricia A. *Ombria in Shadow*. New York: Ace Books, 2002. 298 pages, paper (reviewed from uncorrected bound proofs), \$22.95. ISBN 0-441-00895-X.

The word *ombre* means having "colors or tones that shade into each other" and is "used especially of fabrics in which the color is graduated from light to dark," and so it is in Ombria, a city-kingdom of shadows, one layered over the other, layers of magic, reality, darkness and light, and power. What is real and what isn't is sometimes hard to distinguish, as one does shade into the other in McKillip's tale, a high modern fantasy, as defined in Clute and Grant's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. High fantasies are those "set in otherworlds, specifically secondary worlds (an autonomous world or venue, which is not bound to mundane reality (847)) and which deal with matters affecting the destiny of such worlds" (466). Ombria is in danger: its prince is dying, the heir is a child, the regent a sorceress. And the shadow-Ombria is all too close.

Ombria in Shadow is also a tale of the humans who must cope with the vicissitudes of such a world: Lydea, a tavern-keeper's daughter, the mistress of a dying prince; and Ducon, a "footloose artist," the bastard nephew of the prince,

whose father is a mystery. It is a tale of Mag, apprentice to a sorceress, carrier of messages laden with magic, and of Faey, the sorceress, who lives underneath the city, whose magic is for sale, for love potions, for murder, for power. It is a tale of Domina Pearl—the Black Pearl—the great-aunt of Kyel, the prince's child-heir, who becomes regent, and who is unnaturally old and ancient, versed in the black arts. As befitting a fantasy, there are multiple quests: can Lydea, cast out of the palace when the prince dies, save Kyel from his great-aunt's evil machinations? Can Ducon do the same? Can Ducon rescue Ombria itself from the Black Pearl, whose laughter is like "a little scuddering of dry leaves" (McKillip 9)? Can Ducon find out who he is, who his father is, and why the answer to these questions is vitally important? Can Mag find out who she is, and whether she is truly human or just a made thing, Faey's "waxling"? The "ancient city" of Ombria itself is a character, as its alter ego of shadow moves, and shifts, moving and shaping reality with it.

This realm of the fantastic, with its shifts between what is real and what isn't, between one world and another, is one whose terrain World Fantasy Award-winner McKillip knows well: rich, textured, delicate, yet strong and well-made, a realm entirely believable once the reader has entered therein. McKillip, in the April 2002 Science Fiction Book Club catalog, describes this novel as her "art-and-laundry novel," inspired by the dilapidated house she was living in and renovating when she was writing the novel. She credits the house with inspiring her dilapidated city and her dilapidated sorceress living beneath it, and the art I would argue is both hers and that of Ducon. (McKillip has no idea where the laundry comes from in her original working title.) I find the novel to have echoes of *Winter Rose*, a house, like the city, needing rebuilding, a world with shifting times and blurred uncertain realities. It also reminds me of her children's fantasy series, *Riddle of Stars* (*The Riddle-master of Hed*, *Heir of Sea and Fire*, and *Harpist in the Wind*) in which those who rule are bound integrally to their country, countries whose fabric is woven with magic.

In addition to the context of McKillip's fiction, *Ombria in Shadow* is also a novel that can be contextualized as a feminist reinterpretation of fantasy, whose women characters are every bit as powerful and important as their male companions. Lydea, something of a Cinderella—tavern keeper daughter, mistress of the prince, and once again back to the Rose and Thorn—is both rescuer and rescued. She loves Kyel, the five-year-old who succeeds his father, Royce, to the Ombrian throne, so much so that she ventures back into the palace, disguised, to become his teacher and assistant to his tutor. Mag, the waxling, ward of the sorceress, comes of age as she discovers she is a person, someone whose actions and beliefs matter and have weight. She, too, is both rescuer and rescued. The two most powerful characters, both sorceresses, are women, Domina Pearl and Faey, one in love with power and self-preservation, the other believing she can be detached from responsibility, selling magic regardless of its intended use. Their confrontation changes the world. Ducon, who in a more traditional story would be *the* hero, shares that title with Mag and Lydea. He is a somewhat unlikely hero—a bastard, whose father is of the world of shadow, an artist, whose weapon is the charcoal with which he draws, whose drawings rescue those who need rescuing.

Such a story as is *Ombria in Shadow* would fit nicely in a course designed to emphasize contemporary women fantasists, such as Robin McKinley, Tanith Lee, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. It would also fit in a more general course of modern fantasy, which could possibly include such writers (in addition to those just mentioned) as John Crowley and Richard Grant, among others. I could even see it being used in a classical rhetoric class, as a possible example of Plato's Myth of the Cave—which might be stretching it a bit, except that in

analyses of zines and their differential aspects. Studies of the aesthetics of zines, the embodiment of politics, modes of discourse and power in independent cultures, modes of consumption and production of "non-capitalist" mediums, identity formation, and bricolage. Studies should not limit themselves to music and traditional fanzines, but also include those focused upon politics, humor, sports, shopping, etc.

Studies of Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Class, Sexuality, Technology and any number of methodological approaches are appropriate and not limited to: Phenomenology, Sociology, Literary Analysis, Anthropology, Ethnography, Post-colonial Studies, Culture Studies, Historical Analysis, Psychology, Semiotics, Folklore, Journalism, Feminist and Gender Studies, etc.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length).

CONTACT: Reconstruction Reader Submissions, Kristen Schilt, 104 East Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226. E-mail: kschilt@reconstruction.ws

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of completed papers is December 31st, 2002.

WHAT: *The Slash Reader: Fan Communities and Fictions of Desire* (Essay Collection)

TOPIC: Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "The Slash Reader: Fan Communities and Fictions of Desire." The purpose of this book is to explore the cultural significance of slash fiction from a variety of scholarly approaches and perspectives. Ideally this collection will be a comprehensive introductory textbook that explores the critical intersection between media fandom and desire and will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Possible Topics include the bound-

aries of consumption and production, the politics of representation, and the fluidity of desire. Critical comparisons of fan fiction from Pokémon to Knight Rider, to Star Trek are also encouraged. Submissions that explore the sexual identities of the characters as well as those of the creators are also anticipated. Papers that deal with the inner workings of the slash writing community, as well as those that explore the boundaries between slash writers and the larger fan communities are welcomed, too. Studies of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Class, Sexuality, Media, and Desire are encouraged. Any number of methodological approaches are appropriate and not limited to: Performance Studies, Feminism, Sociology, Literary Analysis, Anthropology, Ethnography, Culture Studies, Historical Analysis, Psychology, Queer Theory, Folklore, etc.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length).

CONTACT: Reconstruction Reader Submissions, Christine Bichler, 104 East Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226. E-mail: cbichler@reconstruction.ws.

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of completed papers is August 16th, 2002.

WHAT: *Extreme Bodies: Cultures of Body Modification and Discourses of Beauty* (Essay Collection)

TOPIC: Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "Extreme Bodies: Cultures of Body Modification and Discourses of Beauty." The purpose of this book is to explore the cultural significance of bodies and body modifications from a variety of scholarly approaches and perspectives. Ideally this collection will be a comprehensive introductory textbook for the growing interest in bodies and will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

McKillip's novel, as in Plato's Myth, reality is a matter of perception, perspective, and creation. What would happen if we entered the world of the shadows cast by the cave's fire?

McKillip's tale is compelling and I believed in its world and I cared for its people. I strongly recommend it.

FICTION REVIEW
MARS PROBES
 Bill Dynes

Crowther, Peter, ed. *Mars Probes*. New York: Daw Books, 2002. 320 pages, paper, \$6.99. ISBN: 0-7564-0080-0.

It seems the right time for an anthology of stories devoted to Mars. The early success of the Mars Odyssey orbiter and the ongoing scientific debate about the history of Martian water has kept the planet in the public eye. "It gets to you, this world," admits a character in James Lovegrove's "Out of the Blue, Into the Red," and the recent spate of fiction about Mars certainly substantiates that claim. This collection offers a broad and entertaining assortment of stories, though it perhaps will appeal primarily to a niche market rather than to a scholarly or academic one. While I have some reservations about the book, overall the stories are engaging and occasionally thought-provoking, surely the most important criteria for an edition such as this.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of the book is the range of authors that it includes. Following a brief introduction by British astronomer Patrick Moore, the first story is Ray Bradbury's "The Love Affair," which the cover copy claims has never been published in the US. Other writers represented here include Brian Aldiss, Stephen Baxter, Ian McDonald, Michael Moorcock, and Gene Wolfe. Altogether, the book collects 17 stories, ranging in style from fantasy to parody to requiem. It is perhaps surprising that of the recent company of novelists to have published longer works concerning Mars, only Paul McAuley is represented here, but perhaps this collection offers a refreshing response to the epics of writers like Robinson and Bova.

Alastair Reynold's "The Real Story" introduces us to Jim Grossart, the first astronaut on Mars, who has succumbed to the stress of his journey and discoveries by fracturing into three personalities, each with a distinct opinion about the colonization of Mars. This seems a very apt metaphor for this anthology and for the presence of Mars in current science fiction generally. The fascination and allure of Mars is pervasive, yet radically different responses to that fascination are at work across these stories. One prominent theme, of course, is the question of Martian life, and the responsibilities that the discovery either of Mars' fecundity or barrenness imposes. Bradbury approaches this theme from the point of view of one of the Martians threatened by the arrival of colonists; the story of Sio's attraction to a beautiful girl from Earth, who can only mean death to him, is poignant and effective. In "The Me After the Rock," by Patrick O'Leary, two astronauts returned from Mars insist that the planet is lifeless, yet one has been profoundly changed by his contact with its alien isolation. And researchers in Stephen Baxter's "Martian Autumn" discover in Mars' fossil record clues that help explain the tragic changes now affecting the earth, though the explanation may come too late.

Another motif at work in a number of these stories uses Mars as a symbol for loneliness. The cold desert wastes of the planet and its distance from the Earth serve as powerful tools for exploring these traumas. O'Leary's astronauts struggle with the seclusion they've encountered on Mars, and Lovegrove's epistolary story depicts a father and son reaching out to one another across the gaps of time and space that imitate those of the human heart. In "A Walk Across

Mars," a journalist discovers that a story of heroism has its roots in betrayal and infidelity.

Perhaps the most charming stories in this collection are those that reflect upon the various ways Mars has already been captured in the popular imagination. James Morrow's "The War of the Worldviews" offers a Martian invasion radically different from that described by Wells; Morrow's Martians aren't interested in conquering the Earth, they merely want a convenient neutral territory for their own battles. Resnick and Bell offer a delightful parody of Burrough's epic fantasies in "Flower Children of Mars," as John Carter look- and sound-alike James Carruthers is disgusted to find Mars populated by free-loving hippies who aren't the least interested in his outdated values. Similarly, Paul DiFilippo tweaks the adolescent enthusiasms of the pulps with "A Martian Theodicy," bringing a stereotypic team of adventurers, including Captain Harrison, sporting the requisite "chiseled chin," and the "gorgeous blond" Fancy Long, the brightest sight in millions of miles" (43) to a confrontation with the dastardly traitor Dick Jarvis. Jarvis has abandoned his fellow humans for reasons that the 40s SF editor might not have found suitable for publication, but Fancy Long does get her revenge.

Readers coming to this collection from the hard science fiction of Robinson, Bova, Landis, and others, may notice the lack of specific areological detail in these stories; although the back cover copy claims that "ongoing NASA missions to Mars begin to turn science fiction into science fact," beyond occasional references to place names and probes, the stories do not engage the ongoing scientific discoveries particularly deeply. Indeed, some of the collection's finest stories do not take place on Mars at all; Scott Edelman's "Mom, the Martians, and Me" is a persuasive look at the psychology of loss and hurt, while "Under Mars," by Paul McAuley, is set in a Florida theme park where tourists experience the Mars of Burroughs and Wells with the help of summer workers in sweaty costumes. This may raise the question, why Mars? Yet most of these stories do not seem to have been arbitrarily set on the Red Planet simply to fit into the topic of the collection; the quest for life, the exploration of loneliness, and the exploration of the SF traditions of Mars make for very entertaining reading.

FICTION REVIEW

THRESHOLD

Philip Snyder

Kiernan, Caitlin. *Threshold*. New York: Roc, 2001. 259 pages, paper, \$14.00. ISBN 0-451-45858-3.

In an era of slipstream, crossover, and stealth raids across genre frontiers, SF readers are often well advised to keep one eye on territories bordering our own. For anyone whose "writers to watch" list already includes such writers as Jonathan Lethem, China Mieville, or Kelly Link, another name to consider adding might be Caitlin Kiernan's. With her debut novel, *Silk*, Kiernan won the International Horror Guild award for best first novel, and was a Bram Stoker award finalist in the same category. Now, with the publication of *Threshold*, Kiernan has produced a horror novel that may prove of surprising interest to readers of science fiction.

On the face of it, *Threshold* is the story of Chance Mathews, a young woman caught up in mysteries occasioned by the suicides of her friend and her grandmother, by the eerie visions of a 16-year-old albino runaway, and by a terrifying encounter in a waterworks tunnel in Birmingham, Alabama. Before the novel is over, these mysteries will be linked, in turn, to everything from hallucinatory hitchhikers to *Beowulf* to the fossil of a creature that could never possibly have existed. Add to these a psychic boyfriend, lots of goth clothing and jewelry and makeup, plenty of sumptuously depressing atmosphere, and an often decadently gorgeous prose style, and you have the makings of a pretty impressive piece of literary horror.

Possible topics include social constructions and performances of Beauty, as well as theoretical analyses of Body Modification Culture (from grooming habits to amputation fetishes). Examples include: practices of permanent body modification (tattooing or branding) within "mainstream" and sub-cultures; plastic/cosmetic surgery; the negotiation of cultural boundaries between "normative" and "acceptable" modifications vs. "extreme," "aberrant," "devious" etc.; and the future of body modification in light of new medical technologies.

Studies of Gender and Sexuality, Race, Ethnicity, and Class are encouraged and any number of methodological/theoretical approaches are appropriate, including but limited to: Performance, Women's Studies, Sociology, Literary Analysis, Anthropology, Culture Studies, Historical Analysis, Psychology, Folklore, etc.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length).

CONTACT: Reconstruction Reader Submissions, Jeremiah Smith, 104 East Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226. E-mail: jsmith@reconstruction.ws

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of completed papers is August 16th, 2002.

WHAT: Postmodern Science: Science in the Culture of Shifting Paradigms (Essay Collection)

TOPIC: Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "Postmodern Science: Science in the Culture of Shifting Paradigms." The purpose of this book is to explore the significance and/or origins of shifts in the sciences and their relationship to the postmodern thought. Ideally this collection will be a comprehensive introductory textbook for culture studies scholars interested in the dia-

lectual intersections of science and culture and will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Possible topics include the cultural effects of relativity, quantum mechanics, and nonlinear math. Studies of economics, engineering, science, technology and technoculture which explore structural shifts in the way that research is conducted are highly encouraged. Metascholarship might include discussions of the appeal of postmodern science by culture studies scholars, particularly the interest in chaos and strange attractors. Other studies might include popular conceptions of "Fuzzy Math" or "the Butterfly Effect" and their representation in fiction and film. Also considered are discussions of conspiracies of science, medicine, and social control.

Studies of Ethics, Technology, and the History of Science are encouraged. Any number of methodological approaches are appropriate and not limited to: Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Literary Analysis, Anthropology, Post-colonial Studies, Ethnography, Culture Studies, Historical Analysis, Folklore, etc.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length).

CONTACT: Reconstruction Reader Submissions, 104 East Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226. E-mail: rfroemke@reconstruction.ws

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of completed papers is August 16th, 2002.

WHAT: *The Games Reader: An Introduction to Games, Game Players, and Gaming Culture* (Essay Collection)

TOPIC: Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "The Games Reader: An Introduction to Games, Game Players, and Gaming Culture". The purpose of this book

That aforementioned fossil, it turns out, is one of the many components that nudges *Threshold* nearer to the SF end of the spectrum. Originally titled *Trilobite*, Kiernan's novel carries the subtitle "A Novel of Deep Time," and is accompanied with surprisingly science-oriented attachments, including a formal acknowledgment of Riccardo Levi-Setti's 1993 study of the biology and evolution of Trilobita, along with a three-page, 34-item glossary of paleontological and geological terms. The narrative itself is powered by plot devices that include, among other science fictional touches, a geologist's notebook full of mystifying equations, speculations on the movement of the Pangean supercontinent, a race of lost creatures from the dawn of time, and what might best be described as a timetraveling dreamvision of the Paleozoic Era. Among the book's principal characters, Chance's grandfather is a geologist and her grandmother a paleontologist, while Chance is herself a graduate student in paleontology, allowing for several fascinating paleo-infodumps, which Kiernan serves up with evident pleasure. And in the wonderful character of Alice Sprinkle, Chance's thesis advisor, Kiernan resembles Gregory Benford in her acutely observed presentation of the workings of real-world scientists, showcasing the pursuit of science in all its mundanity as well as its sublimity.

But it is Kiernan's evocation of this sublimity, finally, which brings *Threshold* closest to the heart of science fiction. Some of the novel's most lyrical passages, in fact, are devoted to such phenomena as the elegance of travertine flowstone formations, the beauties of transgressive and regressive marine sedimentation cycles, the poetry of "the stratified remains of peat bogs and vast river deltas, lowland forests and barrier islands that had long ago lined the shores of a shallow, western sea at the edge of a great floodplain." In a novel crowded with supernatural incidents, some of the most powerful mysteries and revelations are those which bring to the reader, as they do to Chance, "a deeper respect for the methods of science and a deeper faith in the constant foreseeable patterns of nature."

It seems altogether fitting, then, that one of the novel's characters should be a passionate reader of Ben Bova and Robert Heinlein, or that copies of *Dune*, and *Dandelion Wine*, and *Again, Dangerous Visions*, show up in the background. Writing of Kiernan's first novel, Poppy Z. Brite has suggested that Kiernan's "unfolding of strange events evokes not horror, but a far larger sense of awe." Her remark may be even more germane to *Threshold*, where the sense of awe so often resembles that old-fashioned SF desideratum, the fabled sense of wonder. If read in the proper light, *Threshold* could offer an intriguing way to smuggle a little SF into a gothic fiction course, or to give SF students an unexpected excursion into the dark side of science and its mysteries.

(Kiernan's website – which includes several interesting paleontology links – can be found at www.caitlin-r-kiernan.com.)

FICTION REVIEW

THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT

Farah Mendlesohn

Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Years of Rice and Salt*. New York: Bantam, 2002.

If Kim Stanley Robinson were not such a superb writer, were his prose not so breathtaking, did he not have such a reputation as a skilful writer of expansive speculation, I wonder if *The Years of Rice and Salt* would garner any critical consideration? That is, of course, a speculation into alternative history. *The Years of Rice and Salt*, despite its packaging, is not.

The book rests on twin conceits: that the Plague wiped out all of Europe and that souls are reborn in connected groups, *jati*, doomed to rework their group destiny whether or not they even meet up, each one affecting the future of the other—reincarnation as a communal exercise. Of these caryatids, one is flawed,

the other a fascinating but unstable lady who may even be propping up a quite different building.

It is extremely unlikely that a plague could wipe out a whole subcontinent: the epidemiology is nonsensical. But one has to allow sf and fantasy writers a few passes with the magic wand and one could overlook this idiocy were it not that the epidemic in Europe has had fascinating and unlikely side effects. Robinson's new Earth has relegated Christianity to a minority religion hiding in the nooks and crannies of the Caucasus. Its death in Europe has miraculously extinguished (almost without comment) its presence in Africa and in the Russias, and its evangelical zeal. As far as I can tell, the plague appears to have extinguished Africa and Russia altogether. These landmasses play no part in our alternate history once the Mongols have left the Asian plains. There are other consequences, of which more later, but on to our second carayetid, whose eyes gaze in a very different direction.

The Years of Rice and Salt consists of ten books. Each narrates the story of the same group of souls: John Clute and Roz Kaveney have already explored this fascinating idea so I will not. In each book the souls are reincarnated, between each book they seek to escape or to move on from the bardo, a dentist's waiting room in eternity. The scenes in the bardo are intimate and moving, in ways equalled only by the first, fourth and six of the main chapters. They might have been filleted from the over sauced meat and served on a platter of their own. They do not belong in this book, and they do not *belong* because the structure of *The Years of Rice and Salt* is ostensibly polysemic, that being the baseline of all alternative histories, while the scenes in the bardo insist on the Truth. Robinson has a perfect right, of course, to argue for the primacy of a particular religious take on the world, but in a text which is exploring the affect of an absent Christianity, the presentation of *one* of the remaining interpretations as a universal truth seems inappropriate and oddly evangelical.

This insistence on an overarching interpretation of spiritual dynamics infects the whole book. Robinson, in writing out Christianity, is making an honest attempt to envisage an Other world but his vision is limited by prejudice and a rudimentary understanding of the dynamics of history. Although he attempts to create a different tempo for the emergence of scientific understanding, Robinson is locked into a belief that "when it is steam engine time," it is steam engine time, without ever understanding that this is a statement about economic and scientific determinism and not about chronology. There is no sign that he has read Jared Diamond's seminal text, *Guns, Germs, and Steel; the Fates of Human Societies* which might seem the appropriate primer. Instead, Robinson's vision is (despite the role of chaos theory in constructing alternative history) deterministic and Whig-ish: he assumes that because we got to where we are by a particular route, that route is both the only one, and its end point inevitable: so in *Years of Rice and Salt*, so that he relentlessly seeks to parallel the developments of exploration and science in the western world. While the initial creative burst is later, from then on there is a certain parallel. The renaissance takes place in Samarqand as it might have done in Europe in a similar fifteenth century: the only difference is a more hostile environment. Widow Kang writes her great works of philosophy about the time that European philosophers were developing the major underpinnings of the Enlightenment. The Great Age of Progress occurs contemporaneous with the Industrial revolution, and the big trench war comes along just as predicted at the beginning of the modern era but lasts eighty years because no one has thought "Ah! If bullets are flying towards me and there are huge ditches in the ground, I need a big, moving shield which will roll over them." The tank is hardly one of the more ingenious inventions of western society, and it certainly isn't dependent upon a Christian understanding of the world, but then it isn't clear that Robinson understands the inter-relationship between science, technology and society. Instead, he is wedded to two essentially orientalist ideas: that some cultures are unchanging, fixed in mason jars forever, and that Islam does not have the capacity for the *independent* cultural and scientific development nurtured by the

is to explore the cultural significance of games from a variety of scholarly approaches and perspectives. Ideally this collection will be a comprehensive introductory textbook for the growing field of game studies and will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Possible topics may include but are not limited to: Role-Playing Games, Video Games, Board Games, Game Shows, Game Shops, Card Games (including Collectible Card Games), Gaming Groups, Gaming Conventions, Tournaments, as well as Playground Games, Gambling and Historical Analyses of Games in Society. Studies of Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and Class are greatly encouraged, as well as theoretical analyses of Game Culture. Any number of methodological approaches are appropriate and not limited to: Sociology; Literary Analysis, Anthropology, Ethnography, Culture Studies; Historical Analysis, Psychology, Folklore, etc.

SUBMISSIONS: Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length).

CONTACT: Games Reader Submissions, Matthew Wolf-Meyer, American Culture Studies, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226.
E-mail:

mwolfmeyer@reconstruction.ws.

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of completed papers is August 16th, 2002.

WHAT: Teaching of Fantasy and Science Fiction: Academic Exchange Quarterly, Winter 2002, Volume 6, Issue 4; Expanded issue up to 400+ pages.

TOPIC: Articles on various topics plus the following special section. Manuscripts on various topics ought to be sent ASAP if authors wish to reserve an early place in the review queue and have more revision time. Teaching of Fantasy and Science Fiction. Both fantasy and science fiction tend to be

“subversive.” That is, authors often use these genres in order to present controversial ideas about ethics, philosophy, religion, personal sexual behavior, society, economics, and government. Even the “accepted” works of fantasy and science fiction, such as Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (themes of art and of sexuality), Wells’ *The Time Machine* (attacks on socialism and democracy, as well as imperialism), or Stoker’s *Dracula* (themes of sex, seduction, marriage, and family), are well stocked with ideas and concepts that may be difficult to present in the classroom without paying special attention to pedagogical procedure. The articles will deal with approaches in general and in relation to specific texts.

SUBMISSIONS: Submission Procedure: <http://rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/rufen1.htm> or <http://www.higher-ed.org/AEQ/rufen1.htm>. Please identify your submission with keyword: FICTION
CONTACT: Issue/Subject Editor: Dr. Lloyd Worley, Professor of English, University of Northern Colorado; E-mail: ldworle@unco.edu

DEADLINE: Regular deadline: any time until the end of August. All accepted submissions will be published in this Winter issue, December. Short deadline: September or October. All accepted submissions will be published in this Winter issue or in later issues. Note: in case of too many submissions, preference will be given to the one submitted earlier as indicated by submission number. We encourage you to submit a draft of the manuscript ASAP in order to reserve an early place in a queue.

WHAT: American Heroes: Figures of Americana in Comic Books (Essay Collection)

TOPIC: American Heroes is under heavy consideration from a major university press and will be a collection of scholarly essays dealing with comic

Christian and Buddhist world (Hinduism rather disappears also). But the absence of Christianity is the great argument of *The Years of Rice and Salt* and it is here that one either accepts Robinson’s arguments or one does not.

It is perfectly possible to argue that Christianity is solely responsible for the emergence of the scientific and capitalist world, but it is problematic. Not all sects of Christianity have been thrilled by science or by capitalism, and if Christianity has produced branches that broke with this fear, why then would Islam not? Particularly as most historians would now argue that Christianity developed Protestantism to encompass the spread of capitalism, and non-conformity emerged from industrialism, not the other way around. And if Christian scientists built on the works of Islamic thinkers, why might not an Islamic scientist take advantage of the rich material resources of that neatly packaged little Island of Britain to develop industry? One argument is that the Koran is not as malleable as the New Testament; its originator existed within historical memory, and a unified text was produced (and others disposed of) by the Caliphate. But while this reduces the opportunities for a Higher Criticism to emerge, it does not prevent the emergence of a protestantism through interpretation or, as he acknowledges, the hadiths: yet while one whole chapter is devoted to a reformed Islam, as with the myths of Atlantis, by the end of the book enlightenment is the prerogative of mysterious and elusive predecessors.

Buddhism is portrayed with great sensitivity in *Years of Rice and Salt*. There is an attempt to depict Amerindian and Hindu pantheism in all their complexities, and Buddhism in particular is seen to change and develop. In contrast, the portrayal of Islam is curiously homogenous and internally static: there are a number aspects to this portrayal. The first, as I have already indicated, is the failure to envisage a reformed Islam as the Muslim world spreads and, without Christendom to induce solidarity, begins to fragment with growing distance and the surely inevitable deviating theologies. Of more concern is the extent to which Islam in this book is *only* inclined towards reform when influenced by other cultures: I hesitate to bring this one up because it is important to recognise that Robinson’s aim is to show the influence of the *jati* on each other, and that his recognition of the importance of cross-cultural intercourse is sensitive, but it remains unnerving that wherever Islam is seen to be reformed it is through the influence of an individual from a non-Islamic culture, for example the Tibetan smith, or the Chinese Widow. One might argue that the influence is both ways, but that is not the impression created. There is no sense that a more confident Islam might, like insurgent Christianity, have developed its own internal impetus to reform.

The final element to the impression of hegemony which Robinson creates seems trivial but to this reviewer, living and working among Muslims, it grated continuously, and that is the continual harping on the issue of “the veil” and the treatment of women. The vision of Islam in *The Years of Rice and Salt* emerges almost unscathed from the pages of nineteenth century travelogues, Victorian pornography and from both nineteenth- and twentieth-century critiques of fundamentalist Islam. It is an outsider’s vision, not an insider’s, a vision developed to allow Victorians to feel smug about their “better” treatment of women. The harem scene, in which a specially bred white skinned, red haired slave is wheeled in for perfunctory sex made it blindingly clear which material Robinson had been consulting.¹

The focus on the veil was deeply revealing. First, it became the symbol within the book for what is “wrong” with Islam. One would also assume that the status of women was, is and always will be, the major reform issue of Islam. Why on earth would this necessarily be the case in an alternative world? With the exception of a hand removal (set in a period when English justice would have done much the same) there is little discussion of the very complex code of sharia law with its emphasis on mercy and negotiation (a murderer’s family may buy clemency if the victim’s family agree—Georgia has yet to agree to such an enlightened approach). It is as if the entire Islamic world is judged by the standards

of Saudi Arabia so that if one accepted Robinson's depiction one would assume that all Muslims believe in veiling women, a complete nonsense. And while as late as 1910 any woman going bareheaded in the streets of New York or London would have been considered a prostitute (or at best loose) we are not asked to believe that the hat is a symbol of repression gladly discarded with feminism.

Most modern Islamic women do not talk about "the veil". It isn't a meaningful term: instead they distinguish between wearing a headscarf, the hijab, the chador or the burka. While the second two are seen by many Islamic feminists as oppressive, the scarf and the hijab are often worn out of choice, as a personal statement of their own piety or an indication of which part of the Muslim world they come from. My Bosnian students, for example, wear large shawls which completely cover their hair, neck and shoulders, but the shawls are bright and colourful and attract attention. Significantly, to a person brought up in a religion (Judaism) in which orthodox children were discouraged from interaction with the less pious, I note that in any given group of young Muslim women in my street or at my University there will be a range of approaches, from bare heads, through various kinds of scarves and the hijab. In families one also sees older women wearing the chador while their daughters do not.

Anyone reading the above might assume that my critique is wholly political and therefore inappropriate. I disagree with Robinson's take in Islam and therefore with the book, but what I am pointing to is a failure of the sf-nal imagination which fatally undermines the project. *The Years of Rice and Salt* purports to be an alternative history, but between over-determinism and antipathy to Islam the end result is a world in which the major consequences are merely cartographic.

1 And as the only redhead in the fourth generation of a family that was *wholly* ginger one hundred years ago, I also wonder about his understanding of genetics. This, more than anything, convinces me that his source was a Victorian pornographer and a fake travelogue.

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book figures with strongly American ties. Essays should be essentially historicist in nature but can inculcate much from Popular Culture and Critical Theory as they examine the mystique, charm, and relevance of comic book figures distinctly American. Special emphasis will be placed on essays exploring patriot-themed heroes, but those that explore how heroes or heroines that are not distinctly patriot-themed but have at one time or another explored Americana/American culture will be considered as well.

A partial list of patriot-heroes is provided below. A few of these figures are being written on already, but that does not mean we will not examine other essays on the topic or figure. We do feel, though, that we should inform possible submitters that the editors ourselves feel we have thoroughly covered Captain America in our own research. Further, essays that attempt to draw numerous figures into one document are welcomed.

American Flagg, Captain America, Captain Battle, Captain Battle, Jr., Captain Confederacy, Deathlok, The Eagle, Fightin' Army, Fighting American, Fighting Marines, Fighting Yank, Freedom Fighters, Fury, Nick; G.I. Joe, G.I. War Tales, Heroes and other 9/11 tributes, Hex, Jonah; Invaders, Justice Inc., Judge Dredd, JLA, JSA, Major Victory, Marshal Law, The Martha Washington series of comics, The Mighty Crusaders, Milestone Comics, Our Army at War, Pep Comics, The Pitt, Rising Stars, Sgt. Rock, S.H.I.E.L.D., The Shield, Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E., Team America, T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents, Uncle Sam, U.S. Agent, U.S. 1, Vigilante, War Machine.

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DEADLINE: A tentative deadline for submissions has been set for September 1, 2002

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